

CITIES SERVICE BUILDING, FIRST FLOOR INTERIOR, consisting of the main lobby spaces and fixtures and components of these spaces, including but not limited to, wall and ceiling surfaces, floor surfaces, stairs leading to basement lobby and second floor, vestibules, shop fronts, information kiosk, entrance doors, revolving door enclosures, elevator doors, grilles, railings, lighting fixtures, and signs; 70 Pine Street (aka 66-76 Pine Street, 2-18 Cedar Street, 171-185 Pearl Street), Manhattan. Built 1930-32; Clinton & Russell, Holton & George, architects.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 41, Lot 1

On May 10, 2011, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a hearing on the proposed designation of the Cities Service Building, First Floor Interior (Item No. 2). The hearing was duly advertised according to provisions of law. Six people spoke in favor of designation, including representatives of the owners, Manhattan Community Board 1, the Historic Districts Council, and the New York Landmarks Conservancy.



Summary

The first floor of the 66-story Cities Service Building contains one of the most impressive office building lobbies in New York City. Designed by Clinton & Russell, Holton & George in 1930-32, it is a superb example of the Art Deco style, with stunning marble walls and floors, molded plaster ceilings and cast aluminum details that express the original owner's role in the production and delivery of energy. The lobby has four entrances, divided equally between Pine and Cedar Streets. To compensate for a deeply sloping site, the east portals open to spacious vestibules that incorporate wide staircases that rise to the first floor and descend to the basement lobby. The Cedar Street and Center (east-west) halls contain rows of elevators, while the widest hall, near Pine Street, has four glazed storefronts with aluminum details, as well as two handsome staircases. Particularly fine are the groups of aluminum reliefs above the entrances and the figurative panels that decorate the elevator doors, credited to one of the era's best-known architectural sculptors, Rene P. Chambellan. Throughout the lobby are the original cast glass lighting fixtures and a distinctive plaster ceiling, embellished with stepped polychrome corbels and an unusual faceted pattern that suggests light waves. Founded by Henry L. Doherty in 1910, the Cities Service Company grew to become one of the largest corporations in the United States, controlling approximately 150 energy firms in 38 states and Canada. This building served as its headquarters for more than 40 years and was sold to the American International Group, commonly called AIG, in 1976. A respectful renovation of the first floor lobby was undertaken during the 1990s. Following the financial collapse of AIG in 2008 and a subsequent bailout by the U.S. government, the building was acquired by Sahn Eagle LLC. Many noteworthy Art Deco style skyscrapers were built during the late 1920s and early 1930s, but relatively few buildings from this era can boast such a large, ornate, and well-preserved public interior.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Interior design was one of the highest achievements of the Art Deco era. With office buildings reaching unsurpassed heights by the late 1920s, elevator lobbies grew in size and became significant public spaces. Functional concerns like circulation were certainly important to owners, but so was the need to leave a lasting impression with both tenants and visitors. Inspired by contemporary European and American design trends, lobbies typically display an impressive combination of natural and man-made materials. Juxtaposing richly-colored marbles with striking aluminum details, the first floor of the former headquarters of the Cities Service Company is an important example of the Art Deco style and one of most memorable lobbies in New York City.

Henry L(atham) Doherty and the Cities Service Company

The Cities Service Company was chartered in 1910 to “distribute light, heat, and power.”¹ Backed by various New York City investors, it was headed by Henry L. Doherty (1870-1939), a shrewd businessman and a “self-trained engineer” with 150 patents to his credit.² Born in Columbus, Ohio, Doherty managed several Midwestern utility companies before moving east to organize Henry L. Doherty & Company in 1905, with substantial investments throughout the United States, Mexico and Canada. In tandem with Cities Service, Doherty controlled approximately 150 businesses, most of which involved oil production or the delivery of gas and electricity. Doherty became a multimillionaire and his companies, serving 9,000 communities in 38 states and 600,000 stockholders, enjoyed record profits throughout the 1920s.³ Many lawsuits, however, were brought against Doherty and his billion-dollar corporations and while he allegedly relinquished control of the company in 1935, it was not until his death in 1939 that W. Alton Jones officially succeeded him as chief executive.⁴

Doherty held substantial investments in real estate, with numerous properties in Florida and New York City. In December 1924, he purchased 60 Wall Street (1903-5, later demolished), where his offices had been since 1906, for \$3 million.⁵ Designed by Clinton & Russell, this building had an unusual layout, incorporating a 15-story structure on Wall Street linked to a 27-story structure on Pine Street.⁶ Doherty owned several additional properties in lower Manhattan, as well as “50,000 square feet of partly improved land” east of Battery Park, where, as early as 1919, he hoped to build “a great business centre, rivaling Wall Street.”⁷ Doherty wished to consolidate his workplace at this location and when the project failed to go forward he looked elsewhere, establishing the Pine Street Realty Company by early 1929.⁸

When schemes to enlarge 60 Wall Street failed to win approval from the Department of Buildings, the Pine Street Realty Company (later known as 60 Wall Tower, Inc.) began to purchase parcels on the north side of Pine Street, where the Cities Service Building was eventually built. The 32,000 square foot site was assembled by purchase and lease during 1929 and 1930, with a total of 247 feet on Pine Street, 247 feet on Cedar Street, and 116 feet on Pearl Street. The reported cost was \$2 million – far less than many comparable sites in lower Manhattan.⁹ Edwin C. Hill, a newspaper writer who authored a congratulatory booklet on the building, claimed:

It formed a site of unusual depth and offered attractive and inspirational opportunities to architects. For this a substantial figure has been paid and yet it represented one of the most economical assemblages of real estate in the history of Manhattan Island.¹⁰

It was an optimistic period for the Manhattan real estate market and several significant skyscrapers were rising in the vicinity, including One Wall Street (Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker, 1928-31) and the Manhattan Company Building (H. Craig Severance; Yasuo Matsui, 1929-30, both designated New York City Landmarks).

By the time that the Pine Street Realty Company filed plans with the Department of Buildings (NB 118-30) in May 1930, however, the economic climate had changed considerably. Despite an increasingly pessimistic forecast following the Wall Street crash of October 1929, Doherty persevered, claiming the \$7 million tower would be the “first of [a] series of structures which will be erected on four acres of sites controlled by the company in various sections of the financial district.”¹¹ Of these buildings, however, only Cities Service would be built. Rather than use a conventional mortgage to finance construction, Henry L. Doherty & Co. issued stock, selling more than \$15.7 million in shares to investors. This interest-free strategy would allow the company to portray the project as “financially unique among large New York office buildings.”¹²

Construction

Crews began to clear the west half of the site in early 1930. Excavations, which reached a depth of sixty feet, removed more than 100,000 tons of rock and earth.¹³ According to early estimates, the west half of the building was scheduled to be completed in May 1931, and the east portion – where the tower would stand – in May 1932. James Stewart & Company was the contractor. Founded in 1845, it grew to be one of the “so-called ‘big five’ in the field of American building construction,” with offices in the United States and abroad. In 1930, this company was the nation’s third most active builder, behind George A. Fuller and Marc Eidlitz & Son, with more than \$22 million in new contracts.¹⁴ Under senior member A. M. Stewart, it received many important jobs in New York City, erecting such designated Landmarks as Mecca Temple (now City Center, H.P. Knowles with Clinton & Russell, 1922-24), the New York Central Building (1927-29) and the United States Courthouse (1933-36) on Foley Square. Engineer J(ohn) M. Parrish acted as general superintendent of construction.¹⁵

Work commenced in May 1930. By April 1931, the steel framing had reached the 27th floor, and by July 1931, the 59th floor.¹⁶ On average, three floors were added each week.¹⁷ About six hundred men were involved in the project, requiring 24,000 tons of steel and 119,000 man hours in which “no fatal injury or lost-time accident was recorded.”¹⁸ The tapered stainless steel spire, which rises from the observation gallery at the 66th floor, was installed in October 1931.¹⁹ To connect the building to 60 Wall Street, a tunnel was constructed beneath Pine Street, as well as an enclosed pedestrian bridge at the 16th floor.²⁰ Completed by February 1932, this mid-air link connected the two buildings and allowed the new tower to gain a more prestigious address.²¹

By early 1932, work was described as “rapidly nearing completion” and during subsequent months, advertisements for office space appeared in local newspapers. Promoted as “Sixty Wall Tower,” the completed structure was described as “The Aristocrat of Skyscrapers . . . The distinctive beauty of its exterior and interior have been united in a harmonious alliance of its architects, engineers and builders.”²² A temporary certificate of occupancy was awarded by the Department of Buildings in March 1932 and a permanent one in August 1932.

Planning the First Floor Lobby

The Cities Service Building rises from a trapezoidal lot, bordered by Pine Street, Cedar Street, and Pearl Street. The site is less than ideal as the parcel slopes down towards Pearl Street, where the Third Avenue elevated railway operated until 1950, and the adjoining streets are unusually narrow.²³ Pine Street, for example, is just 25 feet wide, and Cedar Street, 35 feet.²⁴

Nevertheless, it was a convenient and desirable location, close to the banks of Wall Street and Broadway, as well as several subway stations. To take full advantage of the site, Clinton & Russell, Holton & George positioned the lobby slightly to the west, away from the elevated tracks that ran to South Ferry. This lopsided arrangement had significant benefits. Not only were the west entrances at grade, but on Pine Street, Cities Service employees could easily exit the building and enter 60 Wall Street, which the company continued to own until the mid-1970s.

In the late 1920s, real estate developers competed to construct the world's tallest building. Height was certainly important, but so was total square footage and the rent it could generate. The Cities Service Building was planned for seven to eight thousand workers – surpassing all but a few skyscrapers.²⁵ To move such numbers in and out of the building, several times a day, multiple entrances and elevators, as well as generously-proportioned lobbies, were needed. These spaces, however, were more than just corridors. Built by skilled craftsmen, with costly and often exotic materials, lobbies were intended to create an unmistakable impression of sustained success and permanence. Not only would it impress employees of the Cities Service Company, but also future tenants, who were expected to fill many floors.

The first floor lobby has four entrances, two facing Pine Street and two facing Cedar Street. Whereas the west entrances were built with pairs of revolving doors, the east entrances had conventional doors that swung out toward the street. There are six hallways, arranged in a lattice-like configuration; the east and west halls extend approximately 110 feet, serving as an interior concourse between Pine and Cedar Streets, while the three east-west halls are about 140-foot-long. The width of each passage varies from about 10 to 20 feet. The widest corridor is closest to Pine Street, permitting space for a circular information kiosk²⁶ where it intersects with the central hall. Additionally, there are four glazed storefronts along the south side, and along the separated north walls, twin pairs of open stairs that connect the first floor lobby to the second floor and basement lobby (not part of this designation). A second lobby was not unusual in early 20th-century skyscrapers. While some towers were designed with open mezzanine levels, such as the Singer Building (1906-8, demolished) and the Woolworth Building (1910-13); the Chrysler Building (1929-30) and the former RCA Building (1932-33) at 30 Rockefeller Plaza, contain concourses on a lower level that connect directly to the subway.

In the Cities Service Building, the main purpose of the basement lobby was to improve circulation. Tenants could choose to enter from Pearl Street and enter the lower cabs of the eight double-deck elevators. This was the first time that this technology had been used in an office building, doubling the capacity of a third of the shafts. Not only was less space sacrificed on the upper floors, meaning greater revenue, but because there were half as many stops, elevator service was expected to be faster. The syndicated columnist named Sam Love, however, lamented this innovation; he claimed there would be more delays and that it would “cut the possibility of elevator flirtations exactly in half . . . The odds and the evens in the Cities Service Building will never see each other although they are the nearest neighbors.”²⁷ According to the 1988 *AIA Guide to New York City*, he was right – the double-deck elevators proved unpopular with tenants and were replaced with conventional models in 1972.²⁸

There are 24 lobby elevators, arranged in six groups of four. Since the introduction of the elevator in the Haughwout Store (1857, a designated New York City Landmark) and the original Equitable Life Insurance Building (1869, demolished) on lower Broadway, architects have experimented with various configurations. Early skyscraper plans often placed the elevators and stairs together, side by side, but as buildings grew taller elevators began to take over lobbies and architects experimented with more efficient layouts. For instance, in three buildings designed by the pioneering skyscraper architect Francis H. Kimball – the Empire Building (1895-98) and the

Trinity and United States Realty Buildings (1904-7) – the elevators were placed in long rows along one side of the lobby, while in the Park Row Building (R. H. Robertson, 1896-98) the elevators were organized in a three-quarter circle towards the rear of the site.²⁹ In the 1920s, the number of people working in office buildings grew dramatically. To alleviate crowding and improve circulation, elevators were grouped to serve specific floors. In the Cities Service Building, for instance, the elevators in the Cedar Street hall serve only the lower floors, while the “intermediate” and “high-rise” elevators are on opposite sides of the center (east-west) hall, labeled “Elevator Hall” on early plans.

The first floor lobby was conceived as part of a multi-level space. Though the adjoining floors are visually independent, they can be reached by handsome staircases, located in the Pine Street hall, as well as through the east vestibules, facing Pine and Cedar Streets. This arrangement was originally complemented by a pair of escalators, positioned just north of where the west hall and Cedar Street hall meet. While the Empire State Building (Shreve Lamb & Harmon, 1930-31, a designated New York City Interior Landmark) provided escalators to a mezzanine, Cities Service was the first office building modeled on department stores, with escalators on the first through sixth floors, where most of the company’s clerical staff was located.

Escalators were decided upon after carefully checked studies had shown they would do the job required and relieve the regular elevators of inter-floor traffic at critical times . . . A sufficient number of elevators will do this, but there is a limit to the number of elevator shafts that a modern office building, with its tremendously valuable floor space, can use with profit.³⁰

In *Architectural Forum* magazine, a writer described this innovation as part of an “important building trend.”³¹ To further increase capacity, the escalators could be reversed to run in a single direction, accommodating a reported six thousand people an hour.³² Promotional materials claimed they were “capable of emptying the first six stories of the building in 10 minutes.” And in combination with the elevators, the entire tower in 35 minutes.³³ It has not been determined how long all or some of the escalators remained in use; they are currently hidden behind a faux marble wall.

Art Deco Design

A superb example of the Art Deco style, the first floor lobby has magnificent marble walls and floors, distinctive plaster ceilings, and handsome cast aluminum metalwork with design motifs that relate to the original owner’s role in the production and delivery of energy. The contrast between materials – natural and man-made – suggests that American architecture was at a crossroads, somewhere between the restrained opulence of the late City Beautiful movement and the more austere leanings of the Bauhaus and European functionalism. In the 1920s, neo-Classicism fell from favor and lobby designs began to incorporate a richer, more dramatic palette. While many early 20th century examples featured light-colored marbles, the Art Deco period was distinguished by richly saturated colors and abstract patterning. While such trends certainly gained traction following the 1925 Exposition des Arts Decoratifs and Industriels in Paris, this approach was already present in the memorable public spaces of the 1913 Woolworth Building, which has remarkable expanses of yellow marble and neo-Gothic ornament.

Doherty reportedly told his architects, Clinton & Russell, Holton & George, to avoid “the garish, the flamboyant and the over colorful” but the resulting lobby is one of Manhattan’s most

lavish.³⁴ The marbles were sourced domestically and abroad, creating an environment that is notable for its luxuriousness. Edwin C. Hill, a journalist who authored a congratulatory booklet on the building's creation, claimed the "tapestried marbles" were quarried in France, Italy and Spain.³⁵ Smooth yellow panels predominate, cladding most of the walls, and brownish-red marble was used to accent or frame the more significant architectural features, such as the corner piers, steps, shop fronts and wall base. The brownish-red piers, which wrap the corners and divide the walls in sections, have shallow projecting ribs. This vaguely classical treatment resembles fluting and directs the eye toward the ceiling. The flooring, in contrast, displays a much livelier design. There are checkerboard patterns of white and pink marble, as well as near the end of each hall, rows of dark purple rectangles with white veining. Such materials were probably chosen for their color and durability.³⁶

Of particular interest is the plaster ceiling, which incorporates bulky stepped corbels and thin bands of abstract geometric relief that were painted in earth tones to complement the marble walls. These polychrome elements, as well as the stepped pediments that frame the elevators, may suggest the influence of Pre-Columbian architecture and art, which attracted interest from the American architects Frank Lloyd Wright and Ely Jacques Kahn during the 1910s and 1920s.³⁷ In addition, where the bands of relief intersect are flower-like lighting fixtures, fabricated with sinuous cast glass and metal.

The rest of the ceiling is painted white and has a vaguely Expressionist spirit, suggesting the crooked geometries of early 20th-century German painting and architecture. Lines spread out from each lighting fixture, as if light waves were sculpting the surface of the ceiling. This faceted three-dimensional treatment is similar to the ceilings in the side (north and south) lobbies of the Empire State Building, where sections of angled plasterwork repeat the shape of the lighting fixtures that flank it. Light seems to have been a significant concern for Doherty, who as owner of Cities Service was a major supplier of electricity. Not only were the elevations enhanced with an elaborate lighting program, but during the building's dedication a "moonbeam" condenser was used to transmit his voice nationwide.³⁸

Handsome metalwork is found throughout the lobby. Executed by designer Clif(f?) Parkhurst (c. 1885-1965), the silvery aluminum details give the marble interiors a contemporary cast. A resident of Elmhurst Queens, he purportedly needed "no introduction to the architectural world. He [Parkhurst] has designed some of the most exquisite work in metal in the country."³⁹ During this period, he collaborated with many notable architectural firms. Evidence of his skill could be found in the Shelton Hotel (Arthur Loomis Harmon, 1924), Western Union Building (Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker, 1928-30, a designated New York City Landmark and Interior) and One Wall Street (Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker, 1929-30, a designated New York City Landmark). Parkhurst was also a frequent contributor to the short-lived commercial journal *Metalcraft*, writing one of the only-known illustrated articles on the Cities Service Building. Though hardly an impartial observer, he called it:

. . . a structure of restrained modern design which reflects skilful [sic] craftsmanship and the most advanced engineering knowledge . . . Special reference is made in this brief statement concerning the architectural and decorative metal. This work was executed under the supervision of the Parkhurst Organization . . . [it] will stand for some time as an example of excellence in design and workmanship . . . The idea of permanency is at once appreciated and the effects sought by the architects have been faithfully reproduced.⁴⁰

Aluminum was one of the signature materials of the Art Deco and Moderne styles. Though introduced commercially in the last years of the 19th century, it did not gain popularity until the cost dropped in the 1920s. This light weight, non-corrosive metal was used extensively in the Empire State Building and appears throughout the Cities Service Building. Entering the lobby, one passes beneath a row of cast aluminum panels depicting pairs of butterflies pecking at sunflowers, a possible allusion to oil production. This theme also repeats above where a newsstand originally operated at the intersection of the Center (north-south) hall and Cedar Street elevator hall. Set into a stepped archway on the north wall is a wide aluminum grille, incorporating twelve slender panels that depict sunflowers flourishing atop long stems. Aluminum was also used to embellish the storefronts around the perimeter of the lobby, all doors, signs, radiator grilles, railings and staircases.

The elevator doors are particularly attractive, rivaling those found in the lobbies of the Fred F. French Building (1926-27), the Goelet Building (1930-32) and the Chrysler Building (1929-31, all are designated Interior Landmarks). At Cities Service, each elevator has two sliding doors and a stepped pediment that incorporates a triangular glass indicator light framed by trefoil, the symbol of the owner. Diamond-shaped patterns, similar to the plaster ceiling, as well as small trefoils, extend in vertical rows across the aluminum surface. The facing was “poured in one piece” and “secured to the steel cores by means of binding channels with no visible fastening.”⁴¹

Octagonal reliefs at the center of each elevator door were created by the celebrated architectural sculptor and modeler Rene P(aul) Chambellan (1893-1958). Two images alternate: one panel appears to depict a woman holding an ancient-style oil lamp, and the other, a man with what appears to be an electric turbine. Chambellan, who trained in New York City and Paris in the 1910s, worked on such prominent projects as the Level Club (Clinton & Russell, Holton & George, 1927-28) and the vestibules of the Chanin Building (1929), where gilt bas-reliefs celebrate New York as the “City of Opportunity.” In the case of the Cities Service Building, his contribution served a similar purpose – to temporarily divert those waiting for the arrival of elevators and to remind them of the company’s role in the production and distribution of energy.

Clinton & Russell, Holton & George

The architect of the Cities Service Building was Clinton & Russell, Holton & George. Founded by Charles W. Clinton (1838-1910) and William Hamilton Russell (1857-1907), this prolific architectural firm was active from 1894 to 1947. Specializing in the design of office buildings and apartment houses, it was responsible for such designated New York City Landmarks as Graham Court (1899-1901), the Broad Exchange Building (1900-02), the Beaver Building (1903-4), and the Aphthorp Apartments (1906-8). Following the deaths of Russell and Clinton, the firm kept its name under the leadership of James Hollis Wells (1864-1926), Alfred J. S. Holton, and Thomas J. George. Wells died in 1926 and the firm became known as Clinton & Russell, Holton & George.⁴²

Alfred J. S. Holton (c. 1879-1936) joined the firm around 1897. Born and educated in Ontario, Canada, he was a Brooklyn resident and a veteran of the First World War, having served in the Office Reserve Corps. Thomas J(ohn) George grew up in Rome, New York, and trained as an architect at Cornell University (B.A., 1896), where his thesis examined Italian Renaissance architecture. Following graduation, he moved to New York City and joined Clinton & Russell. Like Holton, he remained there for the rest of his career and was likely to have been the firm’s lead designer on many projects. An official biography reported that George was “in charge of almost all of the designs” and was, at the time of his death, called: “retired senior

partner of the architectural firm Clinton & Russell of New York and architect of the Cities Service Building.”⁴³

In the 1920s, Clinton & Russell were based in lower Manhattan, near many of their clients, at 17 John Street. While most of the firm’s early commissions had been executed in the neo-Renaissance style, following the First World War it moved gradually away from classicism, using restrained Moorish, Gothic and Art Deco style elements. Two projects, in particular, anticipate the Cities Service Building. One Cedar Street (24 stories, aka 104-106 Maiden Lane, 187-97 Pearl Street, 1929-30), completed on the adjoining block, displays similar massing and restrained Art Deco style details. The other project, built for the New Amsterdam Causality Company at 60 John Street (31 stories, 1928-31), at the southwest corner of John and William Streets, features a similarly restrained palette, executed in limestone and granite.⁴⁴

Cities Service would be the last and most important building designed by Clinton & Russell, Holton & George. Though this firm continued to operate throughout the Depression years, the office received few, if any, commissions for new structures and most of the firm’s work involved refurbishing office interiors.

Sixty Wall Tower

On May 13, 1932 a formal ceremony was held to open 60 Wall Tower, headquarters of Henry L. Doherty & Company and the Cities Service Company. Like the dedication of the Empire State Building, a year earlier, it provided a welcome moment of confidence in dark economic times. From the start, in fact, 60 Wall Tower was a modest financial success. Three thousand company employees were reportedly based here, on at least the first seven floors, and in the upper floors.⁴⁵

Most of the upper floors were rented to legal firms that benefited from the convenience of an extensive tenants-only law library on the 29th floor.⁴⁶ In 1933 the building was described as “about two-thirds rented, in spite of having to begin business during the Depression.”⁴⁷ Though almost a decade passed before a 90% occupancy rate was reached, because there was no mortgage the building quickly earned a profit, reporting \$500,000 income in 1936.⁴⁸ An early tenant of some renown was McGovern’s, occupying the seventh floor. Artie McGovern was a former boxer and trainer, whose clients included such athletes as Babe Ruth and many well-known businessmen. Previously located on East 42nd Street, the 25,000 square-foot athletic facility incorporated a gymnasium facing Pearl Street, as well as six handball and squash courts, and areas for ping pong and golf. Reportedly, a thousand men visited McGovern’s each day. Advertisements described it as the “World’s Largest Private Gymnasium.”⁴⁹

Recent History

Following the Second World War, Cities Service reduced its staff in New York City and began to lease the lower floors to outside tenants, including the investment firm Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Beane, which signed a 25-year lease for ten floors in 1957.⁵⁰ Cities Service began to market gasoline under the name CITGO in 1965 and in 1973 announced plans to move the executive offices to Tulsa, Oklahoma, where six of the company’s operating divisions were located.⁵¹ About 250 employees were involved. Three years later, in May 1976, the building was acquired by the American International Group (AIG), which undertook a major restoration of the exterior and lobby in 1990s.⁵² During this decade, 70 Pine Street was sometimes referred to as the American International Building. Following AIG’s financial collapse in 2008 and a subsequent bailout by the U.S. government, in August 2009 the building was acquired by Sahn Eagle LLC.

Description

The first floor lobby contains three north-south hallways and three east-west hallways. The west hallway extends from Pine Street to Cedar Street. The east hallway extends from Pine Street to Cedar Street, with similar vestibules at the north and south ends. These spaces contain wide staircases that rise to the first floor lobby and descend to the basement.

Historic: Marble floors, marble walls, painted stepped plaster corbels, painted bands of relief, plaster relief on ceilings, glass lighting fixtures.

West hall: west side, south end, glazed storefront with aluminum details; directory board frame aligned with center hall; windows and ornamental panels above north and south entrances, revolving door at south end, two revolving doors at north end; fan-like marble pattern with alternating colors beneath revolving doors.

East Hall: east side, metalwork framing north and south offices; directory board frame aligned with center hall; north of directory, staircase flanked by marble walls; south of directory, metal and glass door; windows with aluminum mullions overlooking Cedar Street and Pine Street vestibules; band of polychrome plasterwork on ceiling where east hall meets Pine and Cedar Street halls.

Pine Street hall: south side, glazed storefronts with aluminum details; staircases to second floor, stair rails and handrails; information kiosk screened by glass and aluminum details, aluminum desk in kiosk; radiator covers; north side, east and west ends, aluminum railing beside stairs to basement.

Center elevator hall (east-west): elevator doors; illuminated signs (non-historic glass) indicating floors served; south side, east end, mail chutes; north side, west of central hall, mid-rise elevator control panel

Center hall (north-south): west side, near Cedar Street hall, small two-door panel on wall; elevator floor sign; west side, door

Cedar Street elevator hall: elevator doors; north side, decorative grillwork facing center hall; south of center hall, elevator and escalator panels, glazed aluminum doors that open to north vestibule, Cedar Street sign.

Pine Street (south) vestibule: lighting fixtures, stair railings and handrails, aluminum and glass doors leading to Pine Street, the first floor lobby, and basement lobby; radiator grilles, windows facing into east hallway in lobby, ornamental panels above doors to Pine Street.

Cedar Street (north) vestibule: see description of Pine Street vestibule.

Alterations: Most of the alterations are presumed to date to the 1990s, including the large and small elevator call plates. The square “L” signs are not historic.

West hall: Pine Street entrance, west door; sign beside Pine Street stairs that lead to basement; air conditioning (ac) grille above second storefront from south end; down light above door and to left of directory board, directory board images; ac grilles above and below directory board; four turnstiles at west end of Center and Cedar Street halls; marble wall and doors disguising escalators in northeast corner; Cedar Street, east side, gate in front of stairs to basement.

East hall: east wall, directory images; ac grille above door to north office; ac grilles above and below directory; ac grille above door to south office; west side, security in front of Pine Street stairs, recessed lighting fixtures in Pine Street stairs; south end, emergency light (top left) in window to Pine Street vestibule.

Pine Street hall: north side, above east stairs, down light; north side, outside east stairs, ac grille; north side, outside west stairs, ac grille.

Center elevator hall (east-west): south side, near center hall, no smoking sign; north side, elevator control panel.

Center hall (north-south): east side, aluminum ac grilles; east side, near center elevator hall, elevator control panel with glass panels.

Cedar Street elevator hall: roll-down gate facing center hall; security turnstiles at west end

Pine Street vestibule: glazed doors may be “in kind” replacement; windows above door; north side, bottom of stairs, ventilation grille is missing.

Cedar Street vestibule: painted plaster ceiling is entirely white, glazed doors may be “in kind” replacements; windows above doors.

For detailed documentation of the building in early 2011 and copies of the original drawings, see materials supplied by building owner in LPC Research files. Also, consult images in *Daniel M. Abramson, Skyscraper Rivals: The AIG Building and the Architecture of Wall Street* (2001).

Researched and written by
Matthew A. Postal
Research Department

NOTES

¹ “\$50,000,000 Co. Charter,” *New York Times*, September 3, 1910, 1.

² Daniel M. Abramson, *Skyscraper Rivals: The AIG Building and the Architecture of Wall Street* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2001), 21-23.

³ “Cities Service Sets Records during Year,” *Hartford Courant*, December 29, 1929, E26; Edwin C. Hill, *Sixty Wall Tower* (New York, 1932), 3.

⁴ “HL Doherty, Cities Service Head, Dies at 69,” *Washington Post*, December 27, 1939; “Doherty Quits Control Over Cities Service,” *Washington Post*, October 16, 1935, 14.

⁵ HL Doherty & Co, Buy 60 Wall Street, *New York Times*, December 20, 1924, 8.

⁶ “60 Wall Street,” *Insurance Engineering*, Volume 10 (1905), 143, viewed at Googlebooks.com

⁷ *Ibid.* Also see “Battery Harbor View Attracting Realty Operators,” *Wall Street Journal*, December 1, 1919, 10.

⁸ “Other Manhattan Sales,” *New York Times*, January 26, 1929, 35.

⁹ “12 Buildings Are Sold to HL Doherty & Co.,” *New York Times*, January 29, 1929; “Seek to Enlarge Skyscraper Site,” *New York Times*, November 30, 1929, 39; “Bishop Heirs Lease Two Large Sites,” *New York Times*, July 12, 1930, 28; Abramson, 25. In comparison, One Wall Street (1928-31), at the corner of Broadway, was built on land costing \$14.5 million. See *1 Wall Street Building (LP-2029)* (New York: City of New York, 2001), prepared by Virginia Kurshan, 3.

¹⁰ Edwin C. Hill, *Sixty Wall Tower* (New York, 1932), 6.

¹¹ “Doherty Files Plans for Tower of 63 Stories,” *New York Herald Tribune*, May 9, 1930, LPC files.

¹² Abramson, 29; “No Mortgage on Sixty Wall Tower,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 10, 1932, 2.

¹³ “Sixty Wall Tower Opens on May 13,” *New York Times*, May 8, 1932, RE1.

¹⁴ “George A. Fuller Led 1930 Builders,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 16, 1931, 15.

¹⁵ “A. M. Stewart Dies, Noted Builder,” *New York Times*, December 22, 1939; “J.M. Parrish Dies, A Noted Engineer,” *New York Times*, December 18, 1932, 29.

¹⁶ “Doherty Realty Holdings Large,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 16, 1931, 15.

¹⁷ “Doherty Bldg. Ready By May,” *Wall Street Journal*, February 25, 1932.

¹⁸ “Provide Terraces In Office Building,” *New York Times*, July 12, 1931, RE8; “Sixty Wall Tower Opens.”

¹⁹ “Eight-Ton Mast Set in Place,” *New York Times*, October 21, 1931, 42.

²⁰ The bridge is mentioned briefly in articles when plans were filed in May 1932, “Doherty-Cities Service Tower to Feature Unique Facilities, *Real Estate Record and Builder’s Guide* (May 30, 1932), 8. It does not, however, appear in the drawings filed with the DOB in May and October 1930. The tunnel is mentioned in as well as in “Sixty Wall Tower Ready,” *New York Times*, April 30, 1932, 28. In February 1932, the Pine Street Realty Company officially changed its name to Sixty Wall Tower. See *New York Times*, February 18, 1932, 38.

²¹ The bridge was razed in May 1975, when Cities Service demolished 60 Wall Street “to make the property more attractive to potential developers.” The site is presently occupied by 60 Wall Street, formerly headquarters of JP Morgan Bank and Deutsche Bank. See “A Skywalk Demolished in Wall St. Razing Plan,” *New York Times*, May 13, 1975, 71.

²² At this time, Pine Street Realty changed its name to “Sixty Wall Tower, Inc., A Cities Service Unit.” In subsequent decades, it would be referred to as both Sixty Wall Tower and the Cities Service Building. See advertisement, *New York Times*, February 17, 1932, 38; “Upper Floors Rented in 60 Wall Tower,” *New York Times*, February 17, 1932, 43; “Corporate Changes,” *New York Times*, February 18, 1932, 38.

²³ The Third Avenue elevated railway was built in 1877-78. The nearest stations were at Hanover Square and Fulton Street.

²⁴ Pine Street was originally called King Street. It was reportedly named for the trees on Jan Jansen Damen’s farm in the 17th century. Cedar Street was laid out in 1692 and has similar origins. Both were renamed following the American Revolution. See Henry Moscow, *The Street Book: An Encyclopedia of Manhattan Street Names and Their Origins*, viewed at <http://Googlebooks.com>.

²⁵ Abramson, 156; Hill, 17.

²⁶ This marble kiosk has glass screens and a cast aluminum door. Because the diameter is quite small, it was later replaced by a security desk in the west hall, near Cedar Street.

²⁷ Love’s column was known as “New York: Inside Out.” See *The Citizen Advertiser, Auburn, New York*, October 24, 1931, no page visible. Viewed at www.fultonhistory.com

²⁸ AIA, 36; Abramson, 84.

²⁹ Each of these buildings are designated New York City Landmarks.

³⁰ *Hartford Courant*, May 10, 1931, B1.

³¹ *Architectural Forum*, (December 1932), 18.

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- ³² “Escalators Adopted in Skyscrapers,” *Hartford Courant*, May 10, 1931, B1; “Escalators to Serve New Office Buildings,” *New York Times*, May 17, 1931, 155; “Will Install Escalators,” *New York Times*, February 12, 1932, 39 Abramson, 86.
- ³³ Hill, 16-17.
- ³⁴ Hill, 9. The Traitel Marble Company is likely to have supplied the marble. It also supplied marble to the Chrysler and Empire State Building.
- ³⁵ According to the owner, ABC Stone reported that the red/orange marble used on the wall and information desk is Rosa Verona from Italy, and the yellow/gold marble is Giallo Reale from Italy.
- ³⁶ “Sixty Wall Tower Opened,” *Real Estate Guide and Record* (May 14, 1932), 8. According to the owner, ABC stone reported that the dark and light pink marble used on the steps and floor was from Tennessee, and the dark red (Rosa Lovanto) from Italy.
- ³⁷ See Abramson, 145.
- ³⁸ ‘Dancing’ Moonbeam Carries Human Voice,” *New York Times*, May 14, 1932, 17.
- ³⁹ *Metalcraft* (April 1929), 179; “By the Way,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, February 20, 1937. Parkhurst was variously described as an interior designer and artist.
- ⁴⁰ Clif Parkhurst, “Skilful Craftsmanship and Advanced Engineering Knowledge Reflected in Manhattan’s Newest Skyscraper,” *Metalcraft*, Vol. 8, No. 1, (July 1932), 4-9.
- ⁴¹ The doors were manufactured by the Dahlstrom Metallic Door Company of Jamestown, New York. See *Metalcraft*, (June 1932), 233, 246.
- ⁴² “Copartnership Notice,” *New York Tribune*, December 22, 1909, 11.
- ⁴³ Cited by Abramson, 34, fn 6; “TJ George Dead; Retired Architect,” *New York Times*, February 9, 1947, 61.
- ⁴⁴ “New John Street Building,” *New York Times*, July 20, 1930, RE7.
- ⁴⁵ Cited by Abramson, 158.
- ⁴⁶ “Upper Floors Rented in 60 Wall Tower,” *New York Times*, February 17, 1932; Abramson, 156.
- ⁴⁷ Cities Service Company, *Annual Report* (1933), 4.
- ⁴⁸ Abramson, fn 30, 189-90.
- ⁴⁹ Abramson, 156.
- ⁵⁰ “Ten Floors Leased,” *New York Times*, June 13, 1957, 52.
- ⁵¹ “Advertising: New Name and Emblem at Cities Service,” *New York Times*, May 5, 1965, 64.
- ⁵² The American International Group was founded in China in 1919. According to the *New York Times*, it has been based in New York City since 1939, occupying various buildings in lower Manhattan. For most of the company’s history, it operated as a management company for various foreign and domestic insurers. At the time that the Cities Service Building was purchased, it had 2,400 employees based downtown. See “AIG Is Moving Offices in Wall St. Area.” *New York Times*, March 22, 1978, D14.

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 Cities Service Building, First Floor Interior, has a special character and special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City; and that the interior is one which is customarily open and accessible to the public and to which the public is customarily invited.

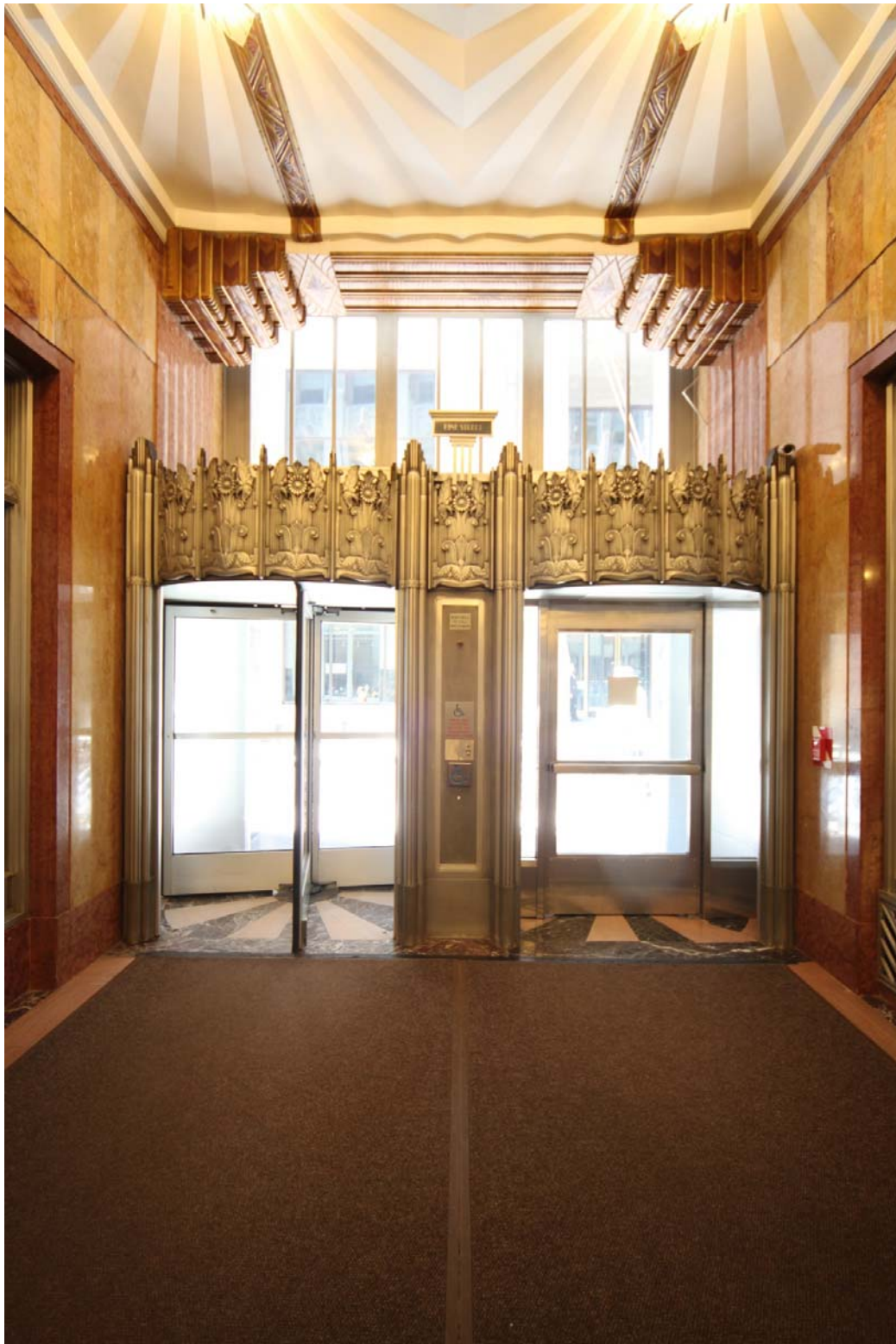
The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Cities Service Building, First Floor Interior is a superb example of the Art Deco style; that it is located in the base of a 66-story skyscraper built in 1930-32 by the architects Clinton & Russell Holton & George; that this interior has stunning marble walls and floors, molded plaster ceilings and cast aluminum details that express the original owner's role in the production and delivery of energy; that it has four entrances, divided equally between Pine Street and Cedar Street; that to compensate for a sloping site, the east portals open to large vestibules that incorporate wide staircases that rise to the first floor lobby and descend to the basement lobby; that the Cedar Street and central halls contain rows of elevators, while the widest hall, near Pine Street, has four glazed storefronts, as well as two open staircases that rise to the second floor; that the aluminum reliefs that decorate the entrances were likely to have been designed by Clif Parkhurst, and the reliefs on the elevators doors are by Rene P. Chambellan, one of the era's best-known architectural sculptors and modelers; that throughout the lobby are the original cast glass lighting fixtures and a distinctive plaster ceiling, embellished with stepped polychrome corbels and an unusual faceted pattern that suggests light waves; that the Cities Service Company was founded by Henry L. Doherty in 1905 and grew to become one of the largest corporations in the United States; that the building was sold to American International Group, commonly called AIG, in 1976, which sponsored a respectful renovation of the first floor lobby during the 1990s; and among various noteworthy skyscrapers built during the late 1920s and 1930s, few examples in New York City can boast such a large, ornate and well-preserved lobby interior.

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 Cities Service Building, First Floor Interior, consisting of the main lobby spaces and fixtures and components of these spaces, including but not limited to, wall and ceiling surfaces, floor surfaces, stairs leading to lower lobby and second floor, vestibules, shop fronts, information kiosk, entrance doors, revolving door enclosures, elevator doors, grilles, railings, lighting fixtures, and signs; 70 Pine Street (aka 66-76 Pine Street, 2-18 Cedar Street, 171-185 Pearl Street), Borough of Manhattan, Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 41, Lot 1, as its Landmark Site.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair

Michael Devonshire, Michael Goldblum

Christopher Moore, Margery Perlmutter, Elizabeth Ryan, Commissioners



Cities Service Building

70 Pine Street (aka 66-76 Pine Street, 2-18 Cedar Street, 171-185 Pearl Street)
Borough of Manhattan

Pine Street entrance, West Hall

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2011



Cities Service Building
Pine Street vestibule, view south
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2011



Cities Service Building
Pine Street vestibule, view north
Pine Street Hall, view west
Photos: Christopher D. Brazee, 2011



Cities Service Building
Pine Street Hall, east stairs
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2011



Cities Service Building

Pine Street Hall, view west and toward Center Hall

Pine Street Hall, typical ceiling detail

Photos: Christopher D. Brazee, 2011



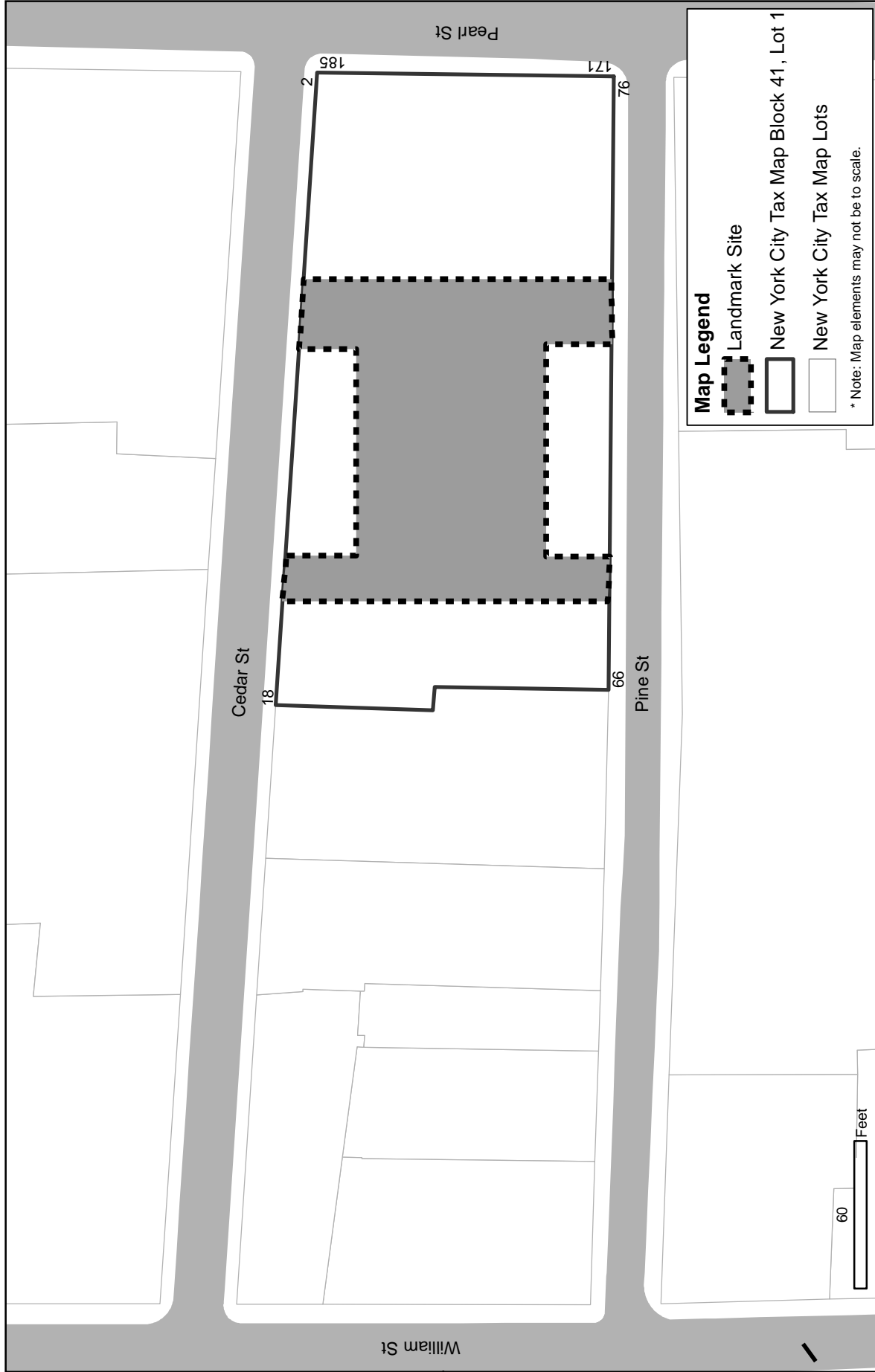
Cities Service Building
Elevators, Center Hall
Directory, West Hall
Photos: Christopher D. Brazee, 2011



Cities Service Building
Center Hall, view north toward Cedar Street
Photos: Christopher D. Brazee, 2011



Cities Service Building
Main Elevator Hall, view west
Photos: Christopher D. Brazee, 2011



CITIES SERVICE BUILDING, FIRST FLOOR INTERIOR (LP-2442), 70 Pine Street (aka 66-76 Pine Street; 2-18 Cedar Street; 171-185 Pearl Street)
 Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map Block 41, Lot 1, consisting of the main lobby spaces and fixtures and components of these spaces, including but not limited to, wall and ceiling surfaces, floor surfaces, stairs leading to lower lobby and second floor, vestibules, shop fronts, information kiosk, entrance doors, revolving door enclosures, elevator doors, grilles, railings, lighting fixtures, and signs.

Designated: June 21, 2011