

KEUFFEL & ESSER COMPANY BUILDING, 127 Fulton Street (aka 42 Ann Street), Manhattan. Built 1892-93; [Theodore W. E.] De Lemos & [August W.] Cordes, architects.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 91, Lot 12.

On March 29, 2005, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Keuffel & Esser Co. Building and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 3). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Seven people spoke in favor of designation, including representatives of the Lower Manhattan Emergency Preservation Fund, Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society in America, Historic Districts Council, New York Landmarks Conservancy, and Fine Arts Federation of New York. In addition, the Commission has received several letters in support of designation, including those from the Municipal Art Society of New York and the Oughtred Society (slide rule collectors and historians).

Summary

The 8-story Keuffel & Esser Co. Building was constructed in 1892-93 to the design of De Lemos & Cordes as the general offices and salesrooms for the firm that imported and manufactured drawing materials, drafting tools, and mathematical and surveying equipment. The richly-detailed Renaissance Revival style primary façade on Fulton Street has a tripartite division: a 2-story, arched cast-iron storefront that bears the firm's name and representations of its products; and buff brick- and terracotta-clad upper stories, with the midsection having a recessed monumental round-arched window capped by a foliated sculptural relief of a knight's helmet, shield, and winged orb, and the upper section featuring a 2-story angled metal window bay and culminating in a decorative cornice and balustrade. There is a secondary articulated façade on Ann Street. Theodore W. E. De Lemos & August W. Cordes, born and educated in Germany, established their firm in 1884 and were active within New York's German-American community, becoming noted for commercial structures and large department stores. The Keuffel & Esser Co., the first American company solely devoted to drawing and drafting materials, was founded in 1867 on Nassau Street by two other German émigrés, Wilhelm J. D. Keuffel and Herman Esser. Early on, the firm was successful and continually expanded, tentatively starting manufacture in 1870, opening a retail store in 1872, moving to 127 Fulton Street in 1878, and constructing a factory in Hoboken, N.J., in 1880-81. K&E introduced imported slide rules in 1880, began their first American manufacture in 1891, and became the nation's foremost producer. Herman Esser was bought out in 1902, and the firm remained privately owned and managed by the Keuffel family until 1965. K&E played a nationally significant role in the technological development of the United States, both as a leading manufacturer of drafting equipment, surveying instruments, and related products, and as the developer of continually advanced systems, until the 1980s. This building, which remained in use by K&E for nearly seven decades, is one of the best-preserved and distinguished of the smaller late-19th-century office buildings in the area of lower Manhattan between the financial district and City Hall.



1991 Photo

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Keuffel & Esser Co.¹

The Keuffel & Esser Co. was founded in 1867 at 79 Nassau Street by two German émigrés, Wilhelm Johann Diedrich Keuffel and Herman Esser, as importers and jobbers of European drawing and drafting materials. Keuffel (1838-1908), born in Walbeck, Germany, was employed in the hardware business in Germany and in Birmingham, England, prior to his immigration to Hoboken, N.J., in 1866. The next year, he joined with Herman Esser (1845-1908), who was originally from Wuppertal-Elberfeld. By 1869, Keuffel & Esser [hereafter K&E] advertised “DRAWING MATERIALS. Drawing Paper, Tracing Cloth, Swiss Instruments, Colors, Rubber Triangles, etc., etc., especially for Architects and Engineers, at wholesale and retail.”² The singular role of this firm was indicated by the *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*:

*Drafting was at that time in its infancy in the United States, and Mr. Keuffel soon appreciated its importance in relation to the phenomenal development of American manufacturing and engineering enterprise. To supply all the requirements, in office and field, of the surveyor, engineer, architect and draftsman and make a specialty of this business was the purpose of the new firm, and Mr. Keuffel can well be called the pioneer in this line, because up to 1867 drafting supplies had not been carried exclusively by any house in this country.*³

Early on, the firm was successful and continually expanded, moving locations several times.⁴ K&E tentatively started manufacture and published its first instruments catalogue in 1870; opened its first retail store with a showroom in Manhattan in 1872; transferred its manufacturing to Hoboken, N.J., in 1875; moved its headquarters to 127 Fulton Street in 1878; and constructed a new factory building in Hoboken in 1880-81 (which was expanded in 1884, 1892, and 1900). The firm was incorporated in 1889, with Keuffel serving as president until his death. K&E, which had introduced imported slide rules in 1880, began their first American manufacture in 1891. The company became strongly associated with the product as the nation’s foremost manufacturer, credited with popularizing slide rules in the United States. In 1892-93, K&E constructed a new building at 127 Fulton Street to serve as its retail salesrooms and general offices.

K&E played a nationally significant role in the technological development of the United States. K&E products, which included measuring tapes and compasses, were used in countless construction and engineering projects, such as the Brooklyn Bridge, of the post-Civil War boom years, and K&E surveying equipment is considered to have been critical to the westward expansion and development of the country. Herman Esser retired and was bought out in 1902 (he moved back to Germany), and K&E remained privately owned and managed by the Keuffel family.⁵ After a 1905 fire destroyed part of the company’s Hoboken factory complex, a large new annex was constructed of reinforced concrete (an early such structure in the U. S.) in 1906-07. The general offices were moved to Hoboken in time for the firm’s 40th anniversary. K&E was so successful as the world’s leading manufacturer of drafting equipment and surveying instruments that it expanded with branches in Chicago (1891), St. Louis (1894), San Francisco (1901), and Montreal (1908). The company performed a vital role during World War I by greatly increasing production of drafting equipment and developing and manufacturing optical and precision instruments for scientific and military purposes, which was particularly critical since the war ended the import of such material from Europe.

By 1930, the K&E catalogue carried over 5,000 items, which necessitated increased attention to product distribution. The firm survived the Depression years through the vast numbers of orders associated with the federal government’s public works projects after 1934. K&E developed new techniques for blueprinting and photographic reproduction. The company’s level of business required further factory expansions in Hoboken, and new branches opened in Detroit (1936) and Los Angeles (1939). During World War II, K&E successfully met the huge demand for large quantities of equipment that had to be produced quickly and efficiently. In the 1950s, K&E began to sell its factory buildings in Hoboken. Moving into further advanced technologies, in 1959 a division was formed “specializing in the development and manufacture of optical, mechanical, and electronic systems for the precise measurement of lengths and angles.”⁶ K&E left its salesrooms building at 127 Fulton Street in 1961, after 83 years at this location, and became a public corporation in 1965. At the time of the company’s centennial in 1967, there were some 10,000 K&E products featured in its catalogue that were considered staples of architecture, engineering, surveying, and scientific offices. The firm moved its headquarters and research laboratory in 1968 to Morristown and its manufacturing plant to Rockaway, N.J. Despite K&E’s successful advances in such fields as mapping and microfilm systems and photogrammetry, the technology market shifted radically in the 1970s with the introduction of electronic pocket calculators, computer-assisted drafting (CAD) systems, and laser surveying.

K&E was forced to abandon the manufacture of the slide rule, and then its assets were acquired by other firms starting in 1981.

Keuffel & Esser Co. Building⁷

K&E's offices and salesrooms had been located at 127 Fulton Street since 1878. This address was close in proximity to the financial district and the offices of many architects and engineering firms. Over the next 13 years, "business increased, doubling and redoubling in volume, year after year,"⁸ leading the firm to require larger quarters. As stated in a later company history,

*The four-story headquarters office at 127 Fulton Street in a few years proved too small. K&E was growing in every way: in sales, manufacturing, breadth of product line, and number of employees. Its name was known all over the United States and Europe. ... To administer what was now a national and even international business required space for a sizeable office force. At the insistence of William Keuffel, the company in 1892 took a bold step.*⁹

In May 1891, the architectural firm of De Lemos & Cordes filed for a new 8-story (plus basement) Keuffel & Esser Co. Building, to house the company's primary retail salesrooms and general offices, that was projected to cost \$60,000. The plans were amended several times, however, and construction was not begun until May 1892. The nearly 25-foot-wide, fireproof steel-and-cast-iron-framed structure was completed in February 1893. The Keuffel & Esser Co. was actually a leaseholder, as the land on which the building was constructed had been continually owned since 1791 by the Minister, Elders and Deacons of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church.

It was later said in company literature that "the size of the new headquarters dismayed the more conservative executives. There was ample space for several times the number of employees the company had that year,"¹⁰ but that "it was not very long afterwards when Mr. Keuffel's predictions were fulfilled and the growth of the business demanded every available inch of space."¹¹ De Lemos & Cordes added an "iron shed" penthouse to the building in 1897. In 1907, K&E's general offices were removed from 127 Fulton Street to its expanded factory complex in Hoboken. K&E then called this building its "parent house," which remained the primary New York City salesrooms, as well as the patent and blueprinting departments. The *National Cyclopaedia* later described the business here:

*The main store in New York city is a model establishment, where every requisite of the engineer and draftsman can be found, and where unusual facilities are afforded for examining and testing the many delicate instruments of precision included in this line.*¹²

After K&E opened a midtown store in 1925, the Fulton Street building housed its "Retail, City Order and Blueprint Departments."¹³

The Keuffel & Esser Co. Building was designed during the period when architects in New York City were searching for the appropriate expression for increasingly tall office structures in lower Manhattan. New York architects overall favored the tripartite classical-column formula for articulation, with the Renaissance Revival style especially popular. The period also saw a lightening of the color palette for materials used to clad these buildings, the use of a mixture of materials, such as stone, several varieties of brick, and terra cotta, and eclectic ornamentation. De Lemos & Cordes' richly-detailed Renaissance Revival style design for the Keuffel & Esser Co. Building's primary façade on Fulton Street features a strong and eclectic tripartite division. The base has a 2-story, arched cast-iron storefront (a rarity today in New York), framed by slender colonettes, bearing the firm's name, small shields with the firm's initials, and representations of its products; originally, there was a deeply inset entrance surmounted by a curved, projecting iron balcony and large show windows. The upper stories are clad in buff brick and terra cotta, the entire upper facade ornamented by diamond-pattern terra-cotta banding. The midsection has a transitional third story with rectangular fenestration, surmounted by a recessed monumental round-arched window capped by a foliated sculptural relief of a knight's helmet, shield, and winged orb (the latter apparently a variation on K&E's trademark logo), flanked by narrow windows (the 5th-story lintels of which bear the dates 1867 and 1892) with iron grilles, the section capped by a bracketed cornice. The upper section, framed by Ionic pilasters and featuring a 2-story angled metal window bay with ornamental pilasters and spandrel, culminates in a decorative cornice and tall balustrade with end finials. The secondary articulated façade on Ann Street is tripartite and flanked by brick piers with rockfaced stone banding and features a base with a central cast-iron pier and denticulated cast-iron cornice; a midsection with terra-cotta blocks on the outer piers and rectangular fenestration (except the top story, which has a wide segmental arch) divided by cast-iron piers; and an upper section with rectangular fenestration (except the top story, which has round arches) divided by brick piers and a corbeled brick cornice. The building was included in the *Architectural Record* in 1893.¹⁴

The Keuffel & Esser Co. Building remains one of the best-preserved and distinguished of the smaller late-19th-century office buildings in the area of lower Manhattan between the financial district and City Hall. Still visible on the western facade of the Ann Street portion of the building is an historic painted advertisement reading “KEUFFEL & ESSER CO./ DRAWING MATERIALS/ SURVEYING INSTRUMENTS/ MEASURING TAPES.”

The Architects¹⁵

Theodore William Emile De Lemos and August William Cordes were both born and educated in Germany and immigrated to the United States in the early 1880s. The firm of De Lemos & Cordes, established in 1884, was active within New York’s German-American community and became noted for its commercial structures and, later, for large department stores. De Lemos (1850-1909), born in Holstein, Germany, was educated at the Bauakademie, Berlin. He gained a reputation as a young architect through his designs for buildings for the German army, but left for New York City in 1881. His first commission, with Henry Fernbach (who died in 1883), was the French Renaissance Revival style Eden Musee (1881-84; demolished), 55 West 23rd Street. De Lemos was also responsible for the design of a number of buildings in Mexico City, including the Mutual Life Insurance Co. Building. Cordes (1850-?), born in Hamburg, studied with Martin Gropius and Heino Schmieden in Berlin and Theophil von Hansen in Vienna. After arriving in New York City, he worked as a draftsman from 1882 to 1884, when he joined with De Lemos in partnership.

In 1888, *Illustrated New York: the Metropolis of Today* already noted of the firm:

*There is perhaps not one among the many noteworthy firms of architects that have come to the front in New York city within a recent period who have achieved more distinction in their profession than that of Messrs. De Lemos & Cordes.... This flourishing and popular firm... at its very inception may be said to have virtually bounded into prominence and public favor, owing to the uniform satisfaction rendered in every instance to which their professional services have been called into requisition.... The firm execute plans, etc., for all classes of buildings... but devote special attention to fire-proof business structures and public buildings....*¹⁶

The firm tended to favor a Renaissance Revival stylistic vocabulary, and its commissions were often executed in a picturesque manner with notable ornamentation and a mixture of materials, including brick, stone, and terra cotta. Among the notable oeuvre of De Lemos & Cordes, which encompassed store-and-loft, office, club, bank, and warehouse buildings and residences, were the Queen Anne style Music Hall (1885), Tarrytown, N.Y.; Arion Society Club (1885-87; demolished), Fourth (Park) Avenue and East 59th Street; Thomson Building (1886-87; demolished), 38 Wall Street; Hoyt Building addition (1888), 873-879 Broadway, in the Ladies’ Mile Historic District; German Hospital and Dispensary addition (1888-89; demolished), Fourth (Park) Avenue and East 77th Street; No. 241-249 Centre Street (1888-91); John Eichler Residence (1889-90), Fulton Avenue and East 169th Street, the Bronx; Armeny Building (1890), 124 Fulton Street; No. 102-106 Wooster Street (1890-91), in the SoHo-Cast-Iron Historic District; *Chattanooga Times* Building (1891-92), for Adolph S. Ochs, Chattanooga, Tenn.; Fulton Building (1891-93), 130 Fulton Street, where the firm had its offices; Mietz Building (1892, 1897), 128-138 Mott Street; Kuhn, Loeb & Co. Building (1894; demolished), 27-29 Pine Street; Boskowitz Building (1894-95), 704-706 Broadway, and Empire State Building (1896-97), 640 Broadway, both in the NoHo Historic District; United Hebrew Charities Building (1898-99; demolished), 356-360 Second Avenue; and Speyer & Co. Building (1901-03; demolished), 24 Pine Street.

The success of De Lemos & Cordes led to several commissions for large department stores, which are among the most notable such extant structures in New York City: Siegel, Cooper & Co. Department Store (1895-97) and annex (1899-1900), 616-632 Sixth Avenue, and Adams & Co. Dry Goods Store (1900-02), 675-691 Sixth Avenue, both in the Ladies’ Mile Historic District; and R.H. Macy & Co. Department Store (1901-02), Broadway and West 34th Street. The firm also designed the Siegel, Cooper & Co. warehouse (1902), 236-242 West 18th Street. One of De Lemos & Cordes’ last buildings was the New York County National Bank (1906-07, with Rudolph L. Daus), 77-79 Eighth Avenue, a designated New York City Landmark. Daus became the successor to the firm. After De Lemos’ death in 1909, Cordes continued to practice. He designed a number of structures with Elisha H. Janes, including the New York Women’s League for Animals Building (1913), 348-354 Lafayette Street, in the NoHo Historic District, and the Refrigeration Plant and Wholesale Market and Storage Buildings (1925-29) at the Bronx Terminal Market.

Later History¹⁷

The Keuffel & Esser Co., after nearly seven decades in this building, vacated in 1961. Later tenants included wholesaler, personnel, trading and shipping, realty consulting, microfilm, carpentry, hardware, messenger, stationery, and florist firms. The Minister, Elders and Deacons of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church sold the property in 2004 to the Fulton K&E LLC.

Description

Fulton Street Façade The 8-story Keuffel & Esser Co. Building's primary façade features a tripartite division. The upper stories are clad in buff brick and terra cotta, the entire upper facade ornamented by diamond-pattern terra-cotta banding. Original sash and frames were bronze kalomein (removed on the midsection in 1947). **Base** The base has an historic 2-story, arched cast-iron storefront, framed by slender colonettes, with spandrels bearing small shields with the firm's initials and representations of its products. The storefront's entablature bears the firm's name and two plaques with the address number "127." The 2nd story has single-pane arched windows. Originally, there was a deeply inset entrance surmounted by a curved, projecting iron balcony (removed in 1947) and large show windows. Within the historic storefront are a non-historic upstairs entrance with metal-and-glass doors and a transom; and a non-historic metal-and-glass storefront with double doors with a transom and a roll-down gate. An awning has been placed over the ground story. **Midsection** The midsection has a transitional third story with a rectangular central tripartite window with transoms, framed by decorative moldings and lintel, which is flanked by narrow windows with transoms, voussoirs, and keystones. The third story is capped by a cornice with a projecting corbeled ledge, and is surmounted by a recessed monumental (two-story) round-arched window with multiple outer panes (originally with a circle pattern), decorative spandrel, molded enframing, and reveals with rosettes. This window is capped by a foliated sculptural relief of a knight's helmet, shield, and winged orb, and is flanked by narrow windows with iron grilles (which are rounded on the 5th story); the 5th-story windows have pedimented lintels bearing the dates 1867 and 1892. The section is capped by a bracketed cornice with rosettes. **Upper Section** The upper section, flanked by Ionic pilasters, features a 2-story angled metal window bay with ornamental pilasters and spandrel and one-over-one windows (one upper sash on the 7th story has original leaded glass). The 7th story culminates in a decorative cornice with rosettes and a tall balustrade flanked by shields and surmounted by end finials. The building sets back with a terrace on the 8th story. The recessed portion of the building has rectangular windows.

East Façade The east facade, clad in red brick, has been painted and parged on the Fulton Street portion and the lower portion along Ann Street. It is pierced by windows in the center.

West Façade The west facade, clad in red brick, has been parged and painted with a non-historic advertisement on the Fulton Street portion. and parged on the lower portion along Ann Street. It is pierced by windows in the center. On the Ann Street portion is an historic painted advertisement reading "KEUFFEL & ESSER CO./ DRAWING MATERIALS/ SURVEYING INSTRUMENTS/ MEASURING TAPES."

Ann Street Façade The tripartite secondary façade, clad in buff brick, is flanked by piers with rockfaced stone banding and has paneled brick spandrels. The 1-1/2-story base has a central cast-iron pier, paneled spandrels, multi-pane windows, and a coved and denticulated cast-iron cornice. Two non-historic doors, brick and concrete infill, and a louver have been inserted on the ground story. The 4-story midsection has terra-cotta blocks on the outer piers and rectangular fenestration (except for the 6th story, which has a wide segmental arch) divided by cast-iron piers. The 3-story upper section has rectangular fenestration (except the top story, which has round arches) divided by brick piers, and a corbeled brick cornice. A fire escape extends the height of the facade.

Roof Visible on the roof are the "iron shed" penthouse (1897, De Lemos & Cordes) (partially re-clad), a chainlink fence along the edges, brick parapet walls on the east and west sides, and a water tower.

Report prepared by
JAY SHOCKLEY
Research Department

NOTES

1. "Wilhelm J.D. Keuffel," *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* 17 (N.Y.: James T. White & Co., 1927), 186-187; W.J.D. Keuffel obit., *New York Times (NYT)*, Oct. 3, 1908, 9; Keuffel & Esser Co., *Keuffel & Esser Co.: Its Origin, Growth and Present Scope* (1909), *Through the Years* (1942), by Carl M. Bergenau, and *Partners in Creating the First Century of K&E 1867-1967* (1967); "Keuffel & Esser Co.," www.surveyhistory.com website; Keuffel & Esser Co., advertisement, *Scientific American*, Feb. 13, 1869, 112, and Apr. 13, 1869, 220; "Instruments for Mechanical Drawing," *The Manufacturer & Builder (M&B)* (Feb. 1877), 29; "A New Perspective Drawing Tool," *M&B* (Jan. 1878), 11; "Building Intelligence," *M&B* (May 1881), 114, and (May 1884), 104; Keuffel & Esser Co., advertisement, *M&B* (Dec. 1894), 11; "New Catalogues," *M&B* (Nov. 1894), 264; "\$100,000 Fire in Hoboken," *NYT*, Dec. 9, 1905, 1; "Marks 75th Anniversary," *NYT*, July 21, 1942, 30; Carl Bergenau obit., *NYT*, Sept. 7, 1948, 25; "Keuffel & Esser Get Showroom," *NYT*, July 10, 1952, 45; "Azoplate Corporation Formed," *NYT*, Oct. 24, 1952, 39; "Jersey City Stores Conveyed by Estate," *NYT*, Apr. 10, 1953, 37; "3-Story Building in Hoboken Sold," *NYT*, Nov. 4, 1955, 49; "K&E Ninety Years Young in Instrument Making," *NYT*, Aug. 20, 1957, 35; "Slide Rule Built Thriving Concern," *NYT*, July 30, 1967, 130; "Alas, Poor Mastadon of Mathematics," *NYT*, July 11, 1976, 97; "Slide Rule Going the Way of Abacus...," *NYT*, Oct. 10, 1977, 62; "Factory Will Become Housing," *NYT*, Sept. 1, 1974, 52; "Old Building in Hoboken is Given New Life," *NYT*, Oct. 28, 1976, 92; "James River Seeks 70% of Keuffel Stake," *NYT*, Sept. 22, 1981, D4; "Technology's Martyrs: the Slide Rule," *NYT*, Jan. 3, 1982, F17; "Azon: Company Profile," www.azon.com website.
2. *Scientific American*, Feb. 13, 1869.
3. "Wilhelm J.D. Keuffel," 186.
4. Keuffel & Esser was located at 79 Nassau Street (1867-68), 71 Nassau Street (1868-70), 116 Fulton Street (1870-74), 119 Fulton Street (1874-78), and 127 Fulton Street (1878-1961).
5. Later company presidents were: William G. Keuffel, the founder's son, 1908 to 1942; Carl M. Bergenau, the founder's son-in-law, 1942-46; Karl Keller, another son-in-law, 1946-50; Carl W. Keuffel, son of a second cousin (Wilhelm L.E. Keuffel, from Texas) of the founder, 1950-61; and Alfred E. Busch, grandson of the founder, 1961 on.
6. *Partners in Creating...*, 28.
7. NYC, Dept. of Buildings (NB 756-1891); New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances. Historic photographs of the building are included in: *Architectural Record* (July-Sept. 1893); and Keuffel & Esser Co., *Catalogue* (1906 and 1907), *Keuffel & Esser Co.: Its Origin, Growth and Present Scope*, and *Partners in Creating the First Century of K&E 1867-1967*.
8. Bergenau, 2.
9. *Partners in Creating...*, 15.
10. Ibid.
11. Bergenau, 2.
12. "Wilhelm J.D. Keuffel," 186.
13. Keuffel & Esser Co., *Catalogue* (1927), vii.
14. "The Keuffel & Esser Co.'s Building," *Architectural Record* (July-Sept. 1893), 84.
15. Dennis S. Francis, *Architects in Practice, New York City 1840-1900* (N.Y.: Comm. for the Pres. of Archl. Recs., 1979); James Ward, *Architects in Practice, New York City 1900-1940* (N.Y.: Comm. for the Pres. of Archl. Recs., 1989), 16, 19; "August William Cordes" and "Theodore W. E. De Lemos," *American Art Annual* 3, 104-105; De Lemos obit., *NYT*, Apr. 12, 1909, 7, *AIA Quarterly Bulletin* (1909), 40, and *American Art Annual* 7 (1909-10), 75; Record and Guide, *A History of Real Estate, Building and Architecture in New York* (New York: Arno Pr., 1967), reprint of 1898 edition, 677; Moses King, *Notable New Yorkers of 1896-1899* (Boston: M. King, 1899), 401; NYC, Dept. of Buildings; LPC, *NoHo Historic District Designation Report* (LP-2039) (N.Y.: City of New York, 1999) and Architects files; Robert A.M. Stern, Thomas Mellins, and David Fishman, *New York 1880* (N.Y.: Monacelli Pr.,

1999); Robert A.M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin and John Massengale, *New York 1900*(N.Y.: Rizzoli, 1983); Andria Darby, “De Lemos & Cordes,” Columbia University paper (2005).

16. *Illustrated New York: the Metropolis of Today* (N.Y.: International Publg. Co., 1888), 110.
17. *Manhattan Address Directory*(1929-1993); New York County; “Mental Patients Guided into Jobs,” *NYT*, July 10, 1960, 61; “Stores - Manhattan” [127 Fulton Street], *NYT*, Feb. 19, 1961, 351; “Other Business Leases,” *NYT*, Apr. 21, 1961, 55; Andrew S. Dolkart, *Lower Manhattan Architectural Survey Report* (N.Y.: Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, 1987); David W. Dunlap, “Waiting, Waiting on a Plan for the Fulton Corridor,” *NYT*, Jan. 20, 2005; Historic Districts Council, “John Street/Maiden Lane Historic District Walking Tour” (c. 2005).

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 Keuffel & Esser Co. Building has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the 8-story Keuffel & Esser Co. Building was constructed in 1892-93 to the design of De Lemos & Cordes as the general offices and salesrooms for the firm that imported and manufactured drawing materials, drafting tools, and mathematical and surveying equipment; that Theodore W. E. De Lemos and August W. Cordes, born and educated in Germany, established their firm in 1884 and were active within New York's German-American community, becoming noted for commercial structures and large department stores; that the Keuffel & Esser Co., the first American company solely devoted to drawing and drafting materials, was founded in 1867 on Nassau Street by two other German émigrés, Wilhelm J. D. Keuffel and Herman Esser, and that, early on, the firm was successful and continually expanded, tentatively starting manufacture in 1870, opening a retail store in 1872, moving to 127 Fulton Street in 1878, and constructing a factory in Hoboken, N.J., in 1880-81; that K&E introduced imported slide rules in 1880, began their first American manufacture in 1891, and became the nation's foremost producer, and that after Herman Esser was bought out in 1902, the firm remained privately owned and managed by the Keuffel family until 1965; that K&E played a nationally significant role in the technological development of the United States, both as a leading manufacturer of drafting equipment, surveying instruments, and related products, and as the developer of continually advanced systems, until the 1980s; that the richly-detailed Renaissance Revival style primary façade of this building on Fulton Street has a tripartite division, with a 2-story, arched cast-iron storefront that bears the firm's name and representations of its products, and buff brick- and terra-cotta-clad upper stories, with the midsection having a recessed monumental round-arched window capped by a foliated sculptural relief of a knight's helmet, shield, and winged orb, and the upper section featuring a 2-story angled metal window bay and culminating in a decorative cornice and balustrade, and that there is a secondary articulated façade on Ann Street; and that the Keuffel & Esser Co. Building, which remained in use by K&E for nearly seven decades, is one of the best-preserved and distinguished of the smaller late-19th-century office buildings in the area of lower Manhattan between the financial district and City Hall.

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 Keuffel & Esser Co. Building, 127 Fulton Street (aka 42 Ann Street), Manhattan, and designates Manhattan Tax Map Block 91, Lot 12, as its Landmark Site.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair; Pablo Vengoechea, Vice Chair
Stephen Byrns, Roberta Brandes Gratz, Christopher Moore, Richard Olcott, Thomas Pike, Jan Pokorny, Elizabeth Ryan, Vicki Match Suna, Commissioners



Keuffel & Esser Company Building
Fulton Street facade
Photo: Pat Garbe (1991)



De Lemos and Cordes
Source: Moses King, *Notable New Yorkers of 1896-1899*



Keuffel & Esser Company Building
Cast-iron storefront
Photo: Carl Forster



Keuffel & Esser Company Building
Cast-iron storefront entablature with company name and address number plaques
Photo: Carl Forster



Keuffel & Esser Company Building
Cast-iron storefront with shield with company initials and representation of products
Photo: Carl Forster



Keuffel & Esser Company Building
Midsection
Photo: Carl Forster



Keuffel & Esser Company Building
Foliated sculptural relief with knight's helmet, shield, and winged orb
Photo: Carl Forster



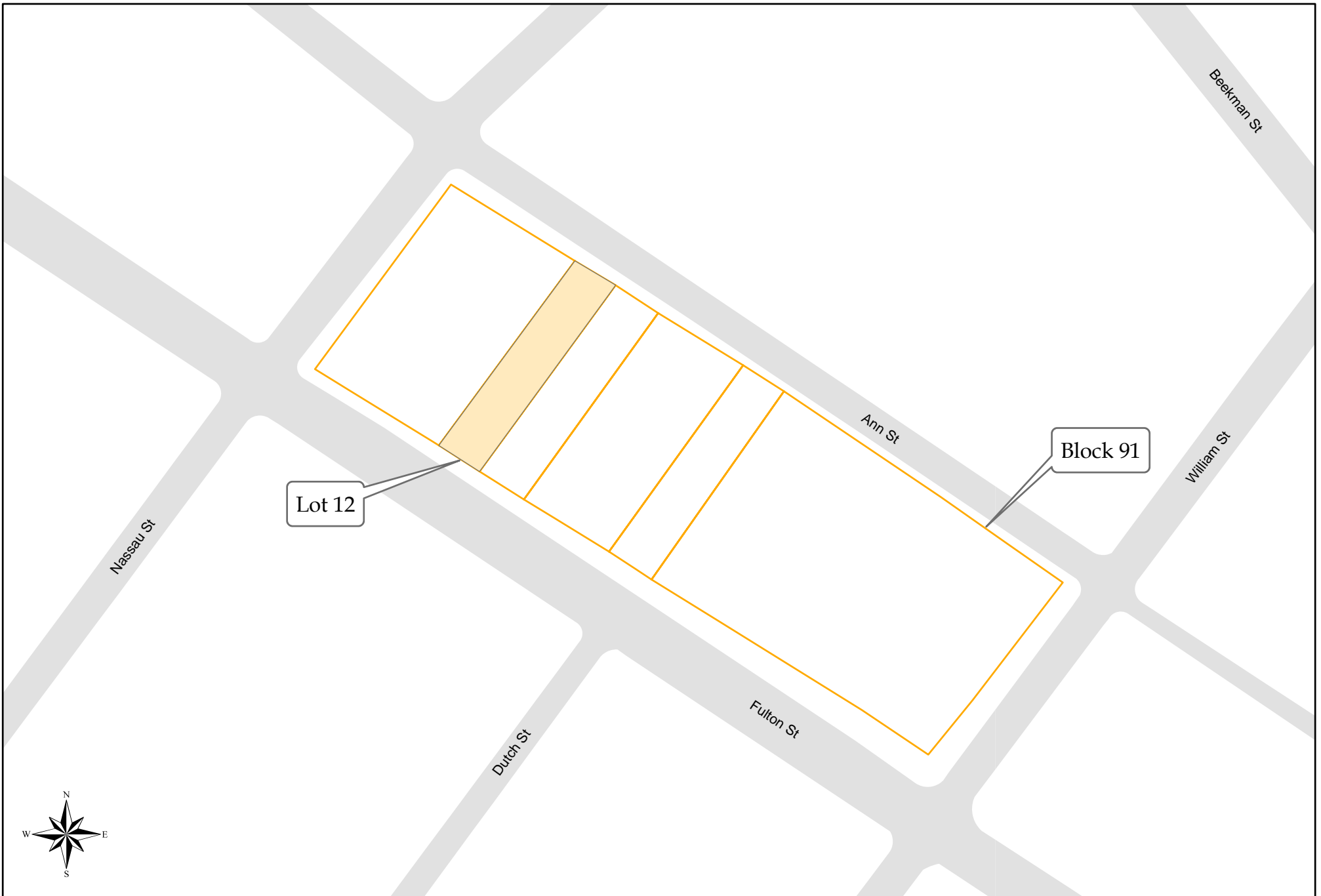
Keuffel & Esser Company Building
5th-story window detail
Photo: Carl Forster



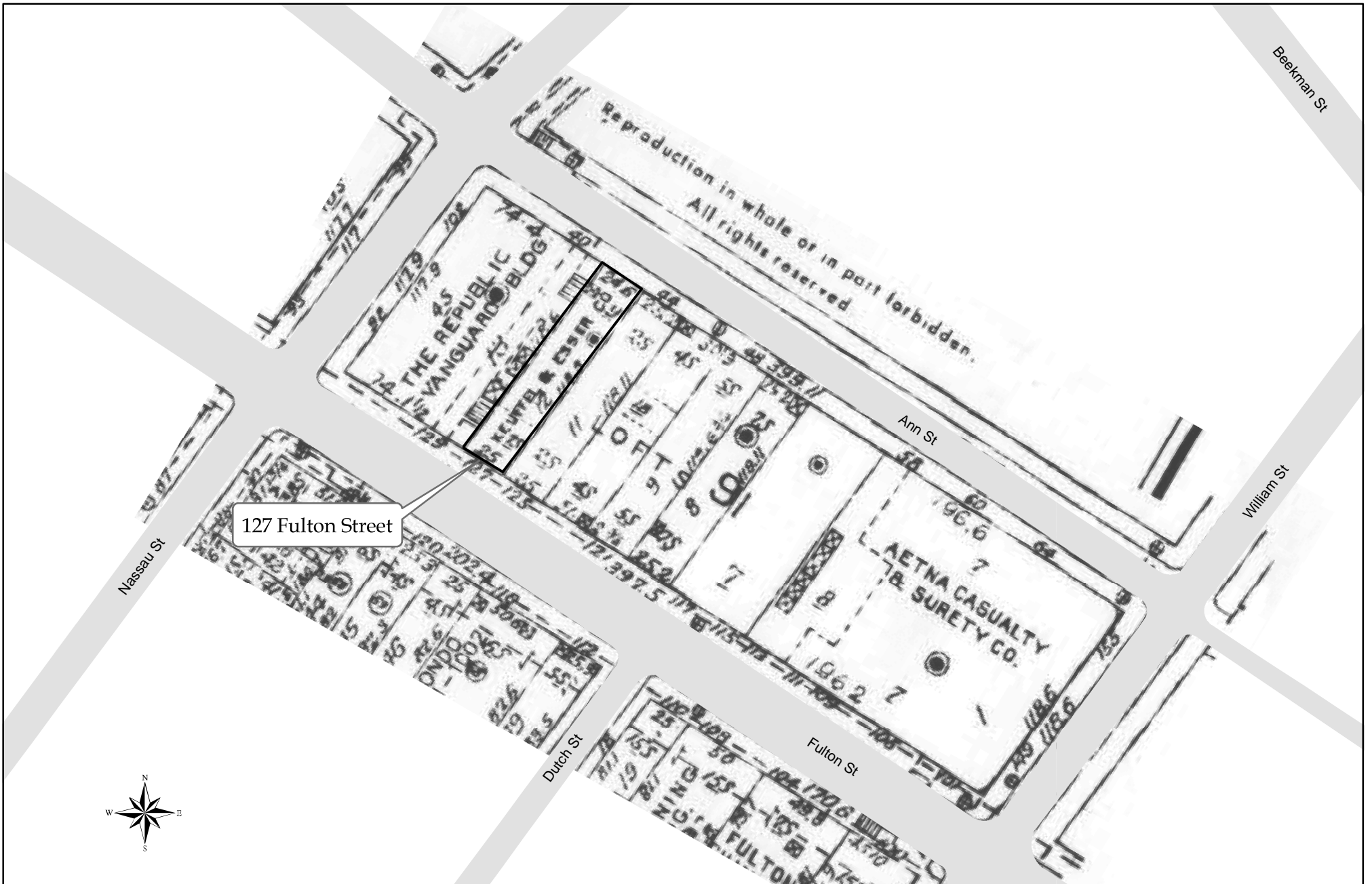
Keuffel & Esser Company Building
Upper section
Photo: Carl Forster



Keuffel & Esser Company Building
Ann Street facade
Photo: Carl Forster



Keuffel & Esser Company Building, 127 Fulton Street (aka 42 Ann Street), Manhattan
Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 91, Lot 12
Graphic Source: New York City Department of City Planning, MapPLUTO, Edition 03C, December 2003



Keuffel & Esser Company Building, 127 Fulton Street (aka 42 Ann Street), Manhattan
Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 91, Lot 12
Graphic Source: Sanborn, Manhattan Landbook, Vol. 1, Plate 3, 2004-2005