

**63 NASSAU STREET BUILDING**, 63 Nassau Street, Manhattan. Built c. 1844; cast-iron facade c.1857-59, attributed to James Bogardus.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 65, Lot 2.

On November 14, 2006, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the 63 Nassau Street Building and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 5). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Seven people spoke in favor of designation, including representatives of Margot Gayle, founder of the Friends of Cast Iron Architecture (who was present), the Municipal Art Society of New York, New York Landmarks Conservancy, Historic Districts Council, and Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society in America. A representative of the building's owner testified against designation. In addition, the Commission received several communications in support of designation, including a resolution from Manhattan Community Board 1. The building had been previously heard by the Commission on December 27, 1966, and January 31, 1967 (LP-0600).

### Summary

The 5-story, Italianate style cast-iron front facade on the building at No. 63 Nassau Street was almost certainly produced c. 1857-59 by James Bogardus, the pioneer of cast iron architecture in America, making it an extremely rare extant example of his work – it is one of only five known Bogardus buildings in the U.S. (four in New York City). It is also one of the oldest surviving cast-iron-fronted buildings in the city, and one of the very few located in Lower Manhattan, the oldest part of the city and its original financial center. This was a remodeling of a c. 1844 structure, occupied by Thomas Thomas, kitchen tinware manufacturer (on this site since 1827), and constructed by his son Augustus Thomas. Following the father's death in 1856, the new iron facade was evidently commissioned as a speculative venture to capitalize on the commercial changes in the area around Maiden Lane, including Nassau Street, which was being transformed into a major jewelry district. Augustus Thomas was a business associate of William V. Curtis (owner of this property in 1856-60) in a silkgoods import firm which was then located in the Milhau Pharmacy Building, Bogardus' first iron-front commission (1848) one block away at No. 183 Broadway. Thomas



and Curtis thus had first-hand knowledge of Bogardus' work and cast-iron-fronted buildings. The attribution of this facade to Bogardus was originally made by Margot Gayle, a founder of the Friends of Cast Iron Architecture and co-author of the definitive monograph on Bogardus, based primarily on a "signature" characteristic known only to buildings definitely linked to Bogardus, namely bas-relief medallions of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin (only the two of Franklin survive today) found on the third story. This attribution is made more conclusive by the connection between Thomas, Curtis, and Bogardus' first commission. The building was owned from 1860 to 1946 by Julien Gauton, a French-born bootmaker, and his heirs in the Carroll family. Many of the tenants, through the 1950s, have been associated with the watch and jewelry trades. The elegant and finely detailed design originally featured (the ground story was first altered in 1919) superimposed 2- and 3-story arcades formed by elongated fluted Corinthian columns (most of the capitals' leaves are now missing), rope moldings, arches with faceted keystones, and foliate spandrels. The facade is terminated by a widely-projecting, modillioned foliate cornice supported by a corbel table. It is an early and significant surviving commercial building dating from the 1840s-50s, when the jewelry district was first created in the vicinity of Maiden Lane.

## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

### James Bogardus and Cast-Iron-Fronted Buildings in New York City<sup>1</sup>

Cast iron was used as an architectural material for entire facades of American commercial buildings in the mid-to-late-19<sup>th</sup> century, and was particularly popular in New York City. Cast iron, mostly imported from England, had been used for decorative and structural purposes in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century – one rare surviving cast-iron storefront at No. 506 Canal Street is believed to date from the construction of the building in 1826.<sup>2</sup> Philadelphia architect John Haviland employed a veneer of cast-iron plates on the Miners Bank (1830-31), Pottsville, Pa. Later promoted and manufactured by pioneers James Bogardus and Daniel D. Badger, cast-iron facade parts were exported nationally for assembly on the site. Touted virtues of cast iron included its low cost, strength, durability, supposed fireproof nature, ease of assembly and of parts replacement, ability to provide a wide variety of inexpensive ornament, and paintable surfaces. The further economy of cast-iron construction lay in the possibilities inherent in prefabrication: identical elements and motifs could be continually repeated and, in fact, could be later reproduced on a building addition, thus extending the original design.

Born near Catskill, N.Y., James Bogardus (1800-1874) was apprenticed as a teenager to a local watchmaker and trained in the crafts of engraving and die-sinking. After a sojourn c. 1820-22 in Savannah, Ga., he returned to Catskill by 1823 and set up shop as a watchmaker and repairer. He also began to invent, and started c. 1828 with a mantle clock. Around 1828-29, he moved to New York City, where he worked as an independent journeyman in a jewelry and watchmaking firm, but also pursued a career as an inventor. He received thirteen patents, his inventions including clocks, cotton spinning machinery, an iron grinding mill, a dry gas meter, a glass-pressing device, and engraving machines, including for banknotes. Bogardus went to London in 1836 in an attempt to obtain a British patent for his gas meter. He remained there for four years, working as an engraver, then embarked upon a tour of Paris and Italy where, as he later wrote, he conceived the idea in 1840 to emulate the facades of historic buildings in cast iron.

Returning to New York in 1840, Bogardus established a business as a “machinest,” also manufacturing his grinding mills on a modest commercial basis. By 1846, he had moved to No. 40 Eldridge Street, which he shared with an iron founder. The business had sufficiently prospered by 1847 to warrant a new factory, at Centre and Duane Streets, which Bogardus intended to be constructed entirely of iron. After work on the foundations and framework in 1848, the project was halted due to two commissions he received for cast-iron facades. The first was from Dr. John Milhau, a prominent pharmacist of aristocratic French lineage, for a 5-story pharmacy at No. 183 Broadway (1848; facade removed), called by Margot and Carol Gayle “the first multistoried, self-supporting total iron front for a building anywhere in the country.”<sup>3</sup> The other was from merchant Edgar H. Laing for a row of five 4-story stores (1849; demolished) at Washington and Murray Streets, which were leased to businesses associated with the nearby Washington Market. In 1849, Bogardus completed his 4-story factory (now demolished), which he claimed was “not only the first building erected entirely of cast-iron in this country, but the first in any part of the world,”<sup>4</sup> including the facades and all interior framing (this assertion has been debated by historians). These first Bogardus designs were relatively simple, reflecting a greater concern for construction than for aesthetics, and featured wide expanses of glass. Bogardus received a patent in 1850 for aspects of his cast-iron construction system.

During the 1850s, Bogardus became a contractor and builder of cast-iron-fronted buildings, that were executed in more sophisticated styles, often inspired by Venetian *palazzi*. The 5-story, corner-sited *Baltimore Sun* Iron Building (1850-51; destroyed 1904), Baltimore, was designed in collaboration with New York architect Robert G. Hatfield, with ironwork supplied by a number of Baltimore and New York firms, including Badger’s Architectural Ironworks. In 1850-54, Bogardus went into partnership with Hamilton Hoppin in the firm of Bogardus & Hoppin. By 1855, Bogardus advertised

*the mode of putting together [my cast iron buildings] is the most simple and yet perfect of any known, as it combines the greatest advantages of economy and of strength. The most elaborate styles of architecture are in an especial manner adapted to iron; every beautiful and graceful design which would be too costly in stone can be produced with perfection in iron.*<sup>5</sup>

Of his over three dozen known commissions for iron fronts, there are today only five surviving buildings documented by, or attributed to, Bogardus: the Bruce Building (1856-57), 254-260 Canal Street; Hopkins Bros.

Building (1857), 75 Murray Street; No. 63 Nassau Street (c. 1857-59); and Kitchen, Montross & Wilcox Store (1860-61), 85 Leonard Street, all in New York City;<sup>6</sup> and the “Iron Clad” Building (1862), Cooperstown, N.Y. Other major New York structures, such as the block-long Tompkins Market/Seventh Regiment Armory (designed 1855, built 1857-60) have been demolished, as have Bogardus iron-fronted buildings in Baltimore, Washington, Albany, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Havana, Cuba. Bogardus also produced other types of structures, such as a cast-iron fire watch tower on West 33<sup>rd</sup> Street (1851; demolished), and shot towers (1855-56; demolished) on Centre and Beekman Streets. The Harlem Watchtower, Mt. Morris Park (1856, Julius Kroehl) was based on Bogardus’ patented system (he had to sue for patent infringement).<sup>7</sup> Bogardus is not known to have constructed any iron structures after 1862.

Once a building was completed, Bogardus apparently retained ownership of the wooden patterns for the iron molds. He is known to have re-used patterns – for instance, elements found on the *Sun* Building were used again on a number of occasions – on the 5-story Harper & Bros. Printing House (1854-55, with John B. Corlies; demolished), New York; Swain Building (1857-58, John McArthur, Jr.; demolished), Philadelphia; and Blunt & Syms Building (1854-55; demolished), 50 Murray Street, New York. In time, as he received other commissions, Bogardus appears to have offered his clients, as did his competitors, various options: manufacture of new castings from designs prepared by their architect; replication of previous building designs in whole or in part; or a re-combination of stock elements within new designs, for clients wishing to forgo the expense of hiring an architect. It is unknown whether or not Bogardus personally prepared the designs.

Bogardus’ promotion and development of cast-iron facades, and Badger’s manufacture and construction of hundreds of cast-iron storefronts and facades (Badger’s first full iron front was in 1853), elevated the use of cast iron to one of prominence in the field of commercial architecture that lasted until just past the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The material was popularly employed for commercial (store-and-loft, warehouse, and office) buildings in the Venetian *palazzi* mode from the mid-1850s through the 1860s. Designed in imitation of masonry and featuring round-arched fenestration, this mode is best exemplified by Badger’s Cary Building (1856-57, King & Kellum), 105-107 Chambers Street, and Haughwout Building (1856-57, John P. Gaynor), 488-492 Broadway.<sup>8</sup>

After the Civil War, the French Second Empire style began to influence designs in cast iron into the 1880s, generally articulated with segmental-arched fenestration framed by columns and pilasters, large areas of glass, and a certain abstraction and paring-down of elements combined with the usage of variations on classically-inspired ornament.<sup>9</sup> The arrangement of cast-iron fronts, with their layered stories of arcades and colonnades, in turn influenced the design of contemporary masonry commercial buildings in New York. A third type of cast-iron front, which emerged after about 1870, fully exploited the possibilities of the material and featured a basic grid of large rectangular fenestration framed by columns/pilasters and vertical members that were highly abstracted and greatly reduced in width.<sup>10</sup> In a few instances, major architects produced more exotic works,<sup>11</sup> and in the 1870s and 80s, popular contemporary styles influenced cast-iron ornamentation. Neo-Grec style motifs, including incised lines and sharp geometric abstraction, further expressed the crisp “metallic” qualities of cast iron. With the knowledge that buildings of cast iron were not in fact fireproof, however, particularly after the Boston and Chicago fires of 1872 and the 1879 New York fire that destroyed rows of such structures on Worth and Thomas Streets, restrictive revisions were made to the New York City building code in 1885. This contributed to ending the era of cast-iron fronts in the city, although they continued to some extent until the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Maiden Lane, Nassau Street, and the Jewelry District <sup>12</sup>

Maiden Lane, for much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was the center of New York City’s jewelry and watch trade. In the earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century, the commercial character of the street came to be defined by specialty shops and drygoods and fancy hardware businesses. It was part of the district that received early gas lighting in the late 1820s, by the New York Gas-Light Co. By 1840, Maiden Lane saw an influx of jewelry and watch firms and, by around 1850, a jewelry district developed that extended onto nearby streets, including Nassau Street. According to one account,

*Watches were not made in the City before 1853. English levers and Swiss watches had been imported and all a watchmaker did was to mend and regulate them. New York City [wa]s noted for the making of gold cases for watches, rather than the making of the works.* <sup>13</sup>

By the mid-1850s, New York City handled more than a third of American exports and around two-thirds

of the imports, as well as being the financial center of the country. Much of the city's expanding economy was linked to the increasingly restive American South, since raw bulk cotton from the South was shipped through New York to mills in Europe, and New York merchants and banking houses offered Southern planters goods and credit. While the earlier (non-jewelry) business located on the site of No. 63 Nassau Street had advertised, in part, to a Southern clientele, it is not known whether the later jewelry businesses in this building had Southern clients. It is likely that wealthy Southerners purchased jewelry and watches from the New York district. Such were the economic ties that Mayor Fernando Wood proposed as late as December 1861 that New York City should secede from the rest of the state and become a "free city."

Several factors contributed to economic setbacks mid-century. A number of jewelry firms suffered damage in a fire on Maiden Lane in June 1855. The financial Panic of 1857 and the advent of the Civil War caused significant slowdowns in the jewelry business, though a "ready market" was later found in the large number of soldiers.<sup>14</sup> The *New York Times* carried a brief item at the end of 1860, indicating that "quite a number of our wholesale merchants seem inclined to imitate the example set in 1857, of converting their stores into retail establishments during the depression of business."<sup>15</sup> After the war, the jewelry district prospered and emerged as the most important jewelry center in the United States for wholesale jobbers, supply houses, and retail jewelry firms. Virtually every American watch manufacturer is said to have had an office on or near Maiden Lane, in order to facilitate orders to retail stores around the nation. Businesses often changed addresses frequently, as they needed only a few rooms for their operations.

#### 63 Nassau Street Building <sup>16</sup>

Based on surviving historic evidence, the 5-story, cast-iron front facade on the building at No. 63 Nassau Street was almost certainly produced by James Bogardus c. 1857-59 as a remodeling of an earlier structure. It was evidently commissioned by the family long associated with the site as its place of business, as a speculative venture to capitalize on the commercial changes in the area, which was largely being transformed into the jewelry district. The need at that time for new commercial buildings to house jewelry firms was increased by the effects of the 1855 Maiden Lane fire.

Beginning in 1827, Thomas Thomas had a "kitchen furniture" (including grates and fenders) warehouse business at No. 63-65 Nassau Street; he had been listed in city directories as early as 1816 in kitchen furniture at No. 31 Nassau Street. From about 1833 to 1837, he was a partner with his son, Cornelius W. Thomas, in the firm of T[homas]. Thomas & Son. During the same period (c. 1834-37), his other son, Augustus Thomas, was associated with the jewelry trade, listed as a manufacturer of thimbles, spectacles, and silver pencil cases at No. 62 Nassau Street. From 1838 to 1847, Augustus Thomas joined his father in T. Thomas & Son. According to property conveyance records and tax assessments, Augustus Thomas entered into a party wall agreement in 1844 with the new owner of No. 65 Nassau Street, and constructed a new building at No. 63 (on a single lot). This building continued to be used until 1856 by T. Thomas & Son (T. Thomas & Co. after 1853). An advertisement in 1849 listed the firm as

*manufacturers of Block Tin Ware of every variety, brass, iron, wire & bronzed fenders, andirons, shovels & tongs, Suitable to the Southern and Western Markets. Hotels and Steamboats fitted out with Copper Dishes, Stands and Covers, Urns, &c., of every size.*<sup>17</sup>

Thomas Thomas died in 1856, leaving a wife and a large family of heirs from his eight children and five step-children. Augustus Thomas served as an executor of his father's estate, along with a stepbrother, Richard J. Larcombe, then a partner in Larcombe, [William S.] Hicks & [Henry] Mitchell, manufacturers of "gold and silver pencil and pen cases" at No. 20 Maiden Lane in 1852-57.<sup>18</sup> Augustus Thomas worked in the silkgoods import business after 1847, briefly (c. 1850-52) with his brother in the firm of C.W. & A. Thomas, then afterwards in A[ugustus]. Thomas & Co. An associate in the firm after 1854 was William V. Curtis. In 1856-58, the business address of A. Thomas & Co. was No. 183 Broadway – the Milhau Pharmacy Building that was James Bogardus' first iron-front commission in 1848 – located just one block away from No. 63 Nassau Street. An 1856 rendering of the Milhau building displays the signage "A. Thomas & Co. Importers of Silks, Ribbons, Flowers, Feathers, &c."<sup>19</sup> Thus, Thomas and Curtis had first-hand knowledge of Bogardus' work and cast-iron-fronted buildings. Augustus Thomas and his wife, Catherine A., transferred the No. 63 Nassau Street property to Curtis in July 1856, for \$28,750 (the transaction was not officially recorded until February 1859, and Thomas was continually listed

in the city's tax assessments for the property from 1846 to 1860). The new iron facade on No. 63 was evidently completed by the time of the recorded transfer. That this was a remodeling at the time, rather than a completely new building, is indicated by the tax assessments: the structure was already listed as "5-1/2 stories" in 1858 (the first year that the number of stories were indicated), and though there is some variation in actual assessment (\$18,000 in 1854-56; \$20,000 in 1857-61; and \$18,000 in 1862-65), the proportionate assessment (compared to the adjacent property at No. 65-67) is higher after 1858.

William V. Curtis, and his wife, Amy C., sold the property for \$24,000 in April 1860 to Julien Gauton (c. 1820-1871), a French-born bootmaker, whose business was located a block away at No. 89 Nassau Street, and Gauton then sold three lots in midtown to Curtis for \$21,700. If the Thomas family, and/or Curtis, intended No. 63 Nassau Street as a long-term speculative venture, the significant economic realities of the Panic of 1857, the impending Civil War, and the accompanying slowdowns in the jewelry trade, intervened, and undoubtedly influenced the decision on ownership. Gauton, active with the French Benevolent Society (organized in 1809 to provide French immigrants with medical, financial, food, clothing and temporary housing assistance), provides an intriguing link in a French immigrant social nexus associated with this building, that also included Dr. Milhau and many of the earliest tenants. The ownership of No. 63 Nassau Street remained in the family of Gauton and his heirs from 1860 to 1946. Julien Gauton's will left his real estate (which also included properties in Brooklyn, College Point, Long Island, and three houses at 310-314 East 38<sup>th</sup> Street), with authorization to sell or lease, to his executors – his second wife, Maria Louise Gauton (died 1889), and daughter, Maria Gauton (Mrs. Francis P.) Carroll – in order to provide for their annuities. A codicil to the will left an additional annuity to a sister, Josephine Thomas, which indicates a probable familial connection to Thomas and Augustus Thomas. The property was inherited from Maria Gauton Carroll by her six children (and their heirs).<sup>20</sup>

The facade of No. 63 Nassau Street has long been "attributed" to James Bogardus based on the pioneering research of Margot Gayle, a founder of the Friends of Cast Iron Architecture. She included the building in her earlier work, with Edmund V. Gillon, Jr., *Cast-Iron Architecture in New York: A Photographic Survey* (1974), as well as in the later, definitive monograph on the life and career of James Bogardus, with her daughter, Carol Gayle, *Cast Iron Architecture in America: The Significance of James Bogardus* (1998). Since the building lacks a founder's plate bearing Bogardus' name (the ground story was altered in 1919), and no written evidence has come to light explicitly tying it to Bogardus, their "attribution" was based primarily on a characteristic known only to buildings by Bogardus, namely the four bas-relief medallions of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, framed by wreaths, originally found on the bases of the columns on the third story (only the two of Franklin survive today). Identical medallions were also found on four other buildings (now all demolished), known definitely to have been produced by Bogardus: the *Baltimore Sun* Iron Building (1850-51); Harper & Bros. Printing House (1854-55); Blunt & Syms Building (1854-55); and Swain Building (1857-58). These medallions comprise a "signature" of the work of Bogardus, one that he undoubtedly had the rights to. The now-known direct connection between Augustus Thomas, William V. Curtis, and Bogardus' Milhau Pharmacy Building further corroborates the Gayles' "attribution." As a building associated with the emerging jewelry district, No. 63 Nassau Street has other interesting connections, in the facts that Bogardus early on was a watch and clock maker and inventor, and that Augustus Thomas and Richard Larcombe both had early jewelry trade associations. Finally, there is the circumstance of a cast-iron front being placed on a building whose site had for three decades been employed by the same family metalwork firm.

The elegant and finely detailed Italianate style design of No. 63 Nassau Street features what was (originally – prior to the ground-story alteration) a composition of superimposed arcades, with a 2-story arcade capped by an intermediate modillioned cornice, surmounted by a 3-story arcade which is terminated by a widely-projecting, modillioned foliate cornice supported by a corbel table. The arcades are formed by elongated fluted Corinthian columns (most of the capitals' leaves are now missing), rope moldings, molded arches with faceted keystones, and foliate spandrels. Several of these elements are stylistically similar to Bogardus' slightly later Kitchen, Montross & Wilcox Store (1860-61), 85 Leonard Street, including the superimposed arcade composition, monumental fluted columns, faceted keystones, rope moldings, and foliate spandrels. No. 63 Nassau Street is also part of a significant, small group of extant early cast-iron-fronted buildings of so-called "sperm candle" design (having 2- to 3-story arcades supported by thin columns resembling sperm whale oil candles) that includes such examples as No. 85 Leonard Street and Condict Store (1861, John Kellum & Son), 55 White Street.<sup>21</sup> Though an

architect has not been found in connection with No. 63 Nassau Street, the use of both arcades and a corbel table below the cornice bears a similarity to the work of John Kellum & Son in their Tefft, Weller & Co. Store (1859-60; demolished), 320-330 Broadway; No. 502-504 Broadway (1860);<sup>22</sup> and the Condict Store.

Today, No. 63 Nassau Street survives as an extremely rare surviving example of the work of the pioneer of cast iron architecture in America, James Bogardus – one of only five known buildings by Bogardus in the U.S. (four in New York City). It is, as well, one of the oldest surviving cast-iron-fronted buildings in New York City, and one of the very few located in Lower Manhattan, the oldest part of the city and its original financial center. Furthermore, it is an early and significant surviving commercial building dating from the 1840s-50s, when a major commercial jewelry district was first being created on Maiden Lane and adjacent streets, including Nassau Street.

### 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Tenants of No. 63 Nassau Street <sup>23</sup>

Most of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century tenants in the upper stories of No. 63 Nassau Street were associated with the Maiden Lane jewelry district. The earliest known tenant, from 1860 to 1887, was the watch/import firm of the Abry family. Auguste A. Abry (c. 1787-1870), born in Switzerland, moved to the watchmaking center of Besancon, France, apparently establishing a firm there in 1827, then immigrating to New York City in 1832. His son, Jean Auguste Abry (c. 1817- ), worked with and succeeded him (the location of their business in 1859 was No. 3 Maiden Lane). The family moved to Cranford, N.J., in the 1850s. Augustus Abry was last listed in city directories in 1863-64, and Jean retired by the late 1870s. His son, Charles Leo Abry (c. 1837-1895), was a “manufacturer and importer of Swiss watches and dealer in American watches” and sole North American agent for Vacheron & Constantin watches,<sup>24</sup> the oldest watch company in Geneva (established 1755).

Other early jewelry tenants included: Edward Boband and Louis Cordier, watch case polishers (1864-67); [John A.] Manzini & [Samuel] Lawson, jewelry manufacturers (1866-72), succeeded by Samuel Lawson (1873-83); Peter Reuter, jeweler (c. 1868-70); Louis Squadrilli (of Naples, Italy), jeweler and wholesale dealer in coral, cameos, malachite, lapis lazuli, mosaic, lava, and garnet goods (c. 1868-70); T. Dendi & Co., jeweler (1870); C.H. Zimmermann, diamonds (1870); Alois Kohn & Son, gold chains (1870); Dorreeve & [Antoine] Troll, jewelers/gold chains (1870-71); [Isidor, Leopold, and Nathan] Stern Bros. & Co., watches/importers (c. 1870-75); and Jules RoCHAT, watch manufacturer and importer (1893-97).

The ground story housed a restaurant/saloon for many years: first operated by Albert Bossert and Frederick Schmid (1864-70); and later by John E. Bartz (1895-96); Charles J. Britz (1896-98); and James A. Logan/ James A. Logan Buffet Co. (Nassau Café) (1898-1917). Miscellaneous business tenants included S[amuel]. H. Cohen & Bro., cloths (c. 1868-75); L[emen]. K. Strouse & Co., a law book publishing firm (1890-94); and William Friedlander, tailor (1898-1908).

### Later History <sup>25</sup>

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, aside from the Nassau Café and tailoring business of William Friedlander, No. 63 Nassau Street housed the [Samuel L. and Bernhart] Golden Shoe Co. (1911-15). In 1919, the entire original storefront was removed (Alt. 124-1919, Springsteen & Goldhammer) and two separate stores created, with an entrance to the upper stories at the south end. Jewelry firms continued to be tenants through the 1950s, including: Ben Stoltz, jewelry boxes (c. 1922); O. Blaug, jewelry manufacturing/watches (c. 1928-29); M. Waldman, jewelry (c. 1929); Molino & Ambrosini, jewelry (c. 1945); Bon Ton Findings/United Chain Mfg. Co., jewelry manufacturing (c. 1950-59); Erwin Tazelt, jewelry (c. 1950-59); and Waldorf Jewelry Mfg. (c. 1950-59). Other businesses have included Abraham Wesson, sporting goods (c. 1921-34); Bonnie Briar Coffee Shoppe (2<sup>nd</sup> story, c. 1923-35); Fanny Farmer Candy Shop (c. 1925); Nassau Specialty Shop, hosiery, gloves, underwear, corsets (c. 1928-29); Stewart’s Millinery (c. 1935-45); Wadsworth Co., engraving (c. 1935-40); Well-Worth Sandwich Shop (c. 1935); The Shelf, restaurant (c. 1950); Nassau Milk Bar (c. 1950-59); Warren’s Brand, fishing tackle (c. 1955); and Vienna American Restaurant (c. 1959).

In 1946, after 86 years of ownership in the Gauton-Carroll family, this property was sold by the Carroll Estate. It was very briefly held by Herman Miller, transferred in 1947 to the 63 Nassau Street Corp. (Pauline Sandrow, president), acquired in 1957 by the Realty Surplus Corp., and sold in 1959 to Jafin Properties, Inc. No. 63 Nassau Street has been owned since 1960 by Jack M. and Rose Ullman/ Ullman Realty Co./ Ullman 63 Realty Co. The ground story was remodeled c. 1961, eliminating the entrance to the upper stories;<sup>26</sup> the Bag Shoppe has

continued as a tenant in the northern store, with its same storefront, since that time. The second story was later (after 1993) put into use as an extension of the southern store. Commercial tenants in the southern store, remodeled several times, have included Singer Co. Sewing Center (c. 1965-70); several women's clothing shops (c. 1975-94); and a nail salon (2007).

### Description

The 5-story, 3-bay Italianate style cast-iron front facade was originally composed (the ground story was first altered in 1919) of superimposed arcades, with a 2-story arcade capped by an intermediate modillioned foliate cornice, surmounted by a 3-story arcade. The arcades are formed by elongated fluted Corinthian columns (most of the capitals' leaves are now missing); rope moldings, which also surround the spandrel panels; molded arches with faceted keystones and molded paneled reveals; and foliate spandrels. On the column bases on the third story are two surviving bas-relief medallions of Benjamin Franklin, framed by wreaths (the two of George Washington were removed c. 1970s). The facade is terminated by a widely-projecting, modillioned foliate cornice supported by a corbel table. Windows were originally two-over-two double-hung wood sash (only the fifth-story southernmost original window survives); these were replaced by wood casement windows with transoms (pre-1928) on the upper three stories, and by single-pane windows on the second story (c. 1980-94). Ground Story: The northern storefront (c. 1961) consists of a deeply recessed entrance (with glass door and transom) with flanking show windows set above recessed bases, and a mosaic tile floor. A metallic signage band extends partially into the second story. The southern metal-and-glass storefront is non-historic, with a fixed awning. Southern Facade: This facade, visible above the adjacent building, is parged.

Report prepared by  
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### NOTES

1. Margot Gayle and Carol Gayle, *Cast Iron Architecture in America: The Significance of James Bogardus* (N.Y.: W.W. Norton & Co., 1998); Margot Gayle and Edmund V. Gillon, Jr., *Cast-Iron Architecture in New York: A Photographic Survey* (N.Y.: Dover Publ., 1974); "John J. de Milhau," *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* 2 (N.Y.: James T. White & Co., 1921), 226; LPC, *No. 254-260 Canal Street Designation Report* (LP-1458)(N.Y.: City of New York, 1982), prepared by Gale Harris, and *No. 361 Broadway Building Designation Report* (LP-1225)(N.Y.: City of New York, 1982), prepared by Anthony W. Robins.
2. This building is a designated New York City Landmark.
3. Gayle and Gayle, 81.
4. James Bogardus, "Cast-Iron Buildings," *New York Times (NYT)*, July 28, 1853, 1.
5. James Bogardus, advertisement, *NYT*, May 7, 1855, 7.
6. These buildings are all designated New York City Landmarks.
7. The tower is a designated New York City Landmark.

8. The Cary and Haughwout Buildings are designated New York City Landmarks, and are also included, respectively, within the Tribeca South and SoHo-Cast Iron Historic Districts.
9. One example is the Arnold Constable Store (1868-76, Griffith Thomas), 881-887 Broadway, located within the Ladies' Mile Historic District.
10. One example is No. 361 Broadway (1881-82, Smith), a designated New York City Landmark.
11. Examples are the Moorish style Van Rensselaer Store (1871-72, Richard Morris Hunt; demolished), 474-476 Broadway, and No. 435 Broome Street (1873, William Appleton Potter), with Eastlake decoration, located within the SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District.
12. I.N. Phelps Stokes, *The Iconography of Manhattan Island* (N.Y.: Robert H. Dodd, 1926); Albert Ullman, *Maiden Lane: the Story of a Single Street* (N.Y.: Maiden Lane Histl. Soc., 1931); William T. Bonner, *New York the World's Metropolis 1623-4 – 1923-4* (N. Y.: R.L. Polk & Co., 1924), 686; Stacy Baker, "A Short History of Maiden Lane," National Assn. Of Watch & Clock Collectors, Inc. website.
13. Bonner.
14. Ullman, 84.
15. "More Retailing," *NYT*, Dec. 20, 1860, 4.
16. New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, including liber 445, p. 289 (Feb. 21, 1844), liber 769, p. 574 (July 15, 1856), liber 809, p. 402 (Apr. 13, 1860), and liber 817, p. 221 (May 1, 1860); New York Tax Assessments (1842-1869); *New York City Directories* (1816-89); N.Y. County, Office of the Surrogate, Thomas Thomas Will, liber 119, p. 267 (Dec. 30, 1856); "Legal Notices" [Thomas Thomas], *NYT*, Aug. 14, 1857, 7, and Feb. 5, 1858, 7; "Julien Gotten [sic -- Gauton]," U.S. Census (New York, 1860); French Benevolent Society, advertisement, *NYT*, Dec. 28, 1861, 7; "La Societe Francaise de Bienfaisance," in Moses King, *King's Handbook of New York* (N.Y.: M. King, 1893), 448; N.Y. County, Julien Gauton Will, liber 195, p. 459 (June 14, 1871), and Marie Louise Gauton Will, liber 427, p. 211 (Dec. 12, 1889); "Recorded Mortgages," *NYT*, Jan. 31, 1906, 15; "Edward Goett," "Armand J. Carroll," "Marie L. Collins," and "Clotilde M. Carroll," U.S. Census (1910, Bronx); "Foreclosure Sale," *NYT*, Nov. 6, 1911, 13; "Results at Auction," *NYT*, Nov. 11, 1911, 17; "Auction Sales This Week," *NYT*, Nov. 26, 1911, xx3; "Real Estate Transfers," *NYT*, Jan. 26, 1912, 17; "Results at Auction," *NYT*, June 11, 1912, 16; "Real Estate Transfers," *NYT*, Apr. 16, 1913, 17, and Dec. 2, 1913, 18; "Results at Auction," *NYT*, Jan. 21, 1914, 16; Clotilde M. Carroll obit. listing, *NYT*, June 25, 1936, 43; Pierre G. Carroll obit. listing, *NYT*, Mar. 12, 1937, 23; Marie L. Collins obit. listing, *NYT*, Apr. 9, 1958, 33.  
Note: Three historic photographs of the building have been located: Robert L. Bracklow Collection (1912), box 9, folder 37, and Subway Collection (1928), box 138, folder 451-500, New-York Historical Society; and NYC Dept. of Taxes (c. 1939).
17. T. Thomas & Son, advertisement, in E. Porter Belden, *New York: Past, Present and Future* (N.Y.: G.P. Putnam, 1849), 158.
18. "Copartnership," *NYT*, Jan. 24, 1852, 3, and "Copartnership Notices," *NYT*, Jan. 3, 1857, 6.
19. Winston R. Weismann, "Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial Building by James Bogardus," *Monumentum* 9 (Sept. 1973), 70.
20. Maria Gauton Carroll's children were: Pierre Gauton Carroll ( -1937), listed in real estate in city directories, serving as well as a board member of the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum (his wife nee Anne E. Keary); Armand J. Carroll (c. 1883- ) (his wife nee Louise E. Goett); Marie Louise Carroll (Mrs. Charles Henry) Collins (c. 1870-1958); Clotilde M. Carroll (c. 1859-1936); Cecilia M. Carroll Manning; and Isabelle L. Carroll (Mrs. Frank G.) Goldmann.



21. No. 55 White Street is a designated New York City Landmark. See: Sarah Bradford Landau, "The Tall Office Building Artistically Reconsidered: Arcaded Buildings of the New York School, c. 1870-1890," in Helen Searing, edit., *In Search of Modern Architecture: A Tribute to Henry-Russell Hitchcock* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Pr., 1982), 140-141.
22. This building is included within the SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District.
23. *New York City Directories* (1859-1915); Paige Abry Morrison, email communication (Feb. 2007); "Augustus Abry," U.S. Census (1860, New Jersey); Auguste Abry obit. listing, *NYT*, Aug. 4, 1870, 5; "John A. Abry," U.S. Census (1870, New Jersey); *New York State Business Directory & Gazetteer* (1870); *Boyd's Business Directory* (1870); "Charles Leo Abry," in Richard Edwards, edit., *New York's Great Industries. Exchange & Commercial Review* (N.Y.: Histl. Publ. Co., 1884), 141; Charles Leo Abry obit., *NYT*, Apr. 24, 1895, 5; "Albert Bossert," U.S. Census (New York, 1870); "Extraordinary Larceny," *NYT*, Dec. 23, 1870, 3; "Misplaced Chivalry," *NYT*, Feb. 14, 1871, 2; "Samuel Lawson," *Illustrated New York: the Metropolis of To-day* (N.Y.: Intl. Publ. Co., 1888), 158; "L.K. Strouse & Co.," in U.S. Bureau of Education, *Addresses of Publishers* (Washington: Govt. Prtg. Office, 1893), xv; Lemen K. Strouse obit., *NYT*, Jan. 15, 1929, 23; "Recorded Leases," *NYT*, July 16, 1895, 13, Sept. 25, 1895, 15, and May 13, 1897, 10; "Yesterday's Fires," *NYT*, Nov. 16, 1895, 5; "A Broker's Liquor Business," *NYT*, May 2, 1901, 14; "Receiver for a Liquor Saloon," *NYT*, May 12, 1901, 25; "Business Troubles," *NYT*, June 12, 1902, 14, and Sept. 18, 1902, 6.
24. "Charles Leo Abry."
25. *New York City Directories* (1900-34); *Manhattan Address Directories* (1929-86); N.Y. County (Register), including liber 4454, p. 149 (May 7, 1946); NYC, Dept. of Buildings (Alts. 124-1919, 346-1921) and Certificates of Occupancy (1923, 1961, 1961, 1993, 1996); "Latest Dealings in the Realty Field," *NYT*, Apr. 1, 1917, RE1; "Commercial Leases," *NYT*, Nov. 5, 1921, 28, and Mar. 11, 1925, 37; "Business Leases," *NYT*, Feb. 28, 1931, 39; "Assignments" and "Judgments," *NYT*, July 12, 1932, 26; "Business Leases," *NYT*, Feb. 5, 1934, 32; "Quarters Leased to Apparel Firms," *NYT*, Mar. 8, 1935, 41; "Investor Acquires East Side Building," *NYT*, Aug. 7, 1946, 46; "Manhattan Transfers," *NYT*, Aug. 12, 1946, 31, Nov. 15, 1946, 48, Jan. 10, 1947, 35, and Apr. 17, 1957, 64; "Nassau St. Purchase," *NYT*, Sept. 15, 1960, 61; "Building Bought on Nassau Street," *NYT*, Nov. 10, 1960, 83; Andrew S. Dolkart, *Lower Manhattan Architectural Survey* (N.Y.: Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, 1988), 90, and *Forging a Metropolis: Walking Tours of Lower Manhattan Architecture* (N.Y.: Lower Manhattan Cultural Council/Whitney Museum of American Art, 1990), 16; "Hidden Corners of Lower Manhattan," *NYT*, Sept. 15, 1991, xx15, 24; Jack M. Ullman obit. listing, *NYT*, July 24, 1994, 39; "A Distant Urban Past is Just a Local Stop," *NYT*, Apr. 28, 2003, B1, 4; "Fulton Street," [www.wirednewyork.com](http://www.wirednewyork.com) website (Aug. 2006); Historic Districts Council, "John Street/Maiden Lane Historic District Walking Tour" (c. 2006); Andrew S. Dolkart, *Survey of Cast-Iron Fronts in New York City* (N.Y.: Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society in America, 2006), 25.
26. The owners decided to leave the upper stories vacant, and only utilize the ground story.

## 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 63 Nassau Street 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 5-story, Italianate style cast-iron front facade on the building at No. 63 Nassau Street was almost certainly produced c. 1857-59 by James Bogardus, the pioneer of cast iron architecture in America, making it an extremely rare extant example of the work of Bogardus, one of only five known Bogardus buildings in the U.S. (four in New York City), as well as one of the oldest surviving cast-iron-fronted buildings in the city, and one of the very few located in Lower Manhattan, the oldest part of the city and its original financial center; that this was a remodeling of a c. 1844 structure occupied by Thomas Thomas, manufacturer of kitchen tinware (on this site since 1827), and constructed by his son Augustus Thomas; that, following the father's death in 1856, the new iron facade was evidently commissioned as a speculative venture to capitalize on the commercial changes in the area around Maiden Lane, including Nassau Street, which was being transformed into a major jewelry district; that Augustus Thomas was a business associate of William V. Curtis (owner of this property in 1856-60) in a silkgoods import firm which was then located in the Milhau Pharmacy Building, Bogardus' first iron-front commission (1848) one block away at No. 183 Broadway, and that Thomas and Curtis thus had first-hand knowledge of Bogardus' work and cast-iron-fronted buildings; that the attribution of this facade to Bogardus was originally made by Margot Gayle, a founder of the Friends of Cast Iron Architecture and co-author of the definitive monograph on Bogardus, based primarily on a "signature" characteristic known only to buildings definitely linked to Bogardus, namely bas-relief medallions of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin (only the two of Franklin survive today) found on the third story, and that this attribution is made more conclusive by the connection between Thomas, Curtis, and Bogardus' first commission; that the building was owned from 1860 to 1946 by Julien Gauton, a French-born bootmaker, and his heirs in the Carroll family, and that many of the tenants, through the 1950s, have been associated with the watch and jewelry trades; that the elegant and finely detailed design originally featured (the ground story was first altered in 1919) superimposed 2- and 3-story arcades formed by elongated fluted Corinthian columns (most of the capitals' leaves are now missing), rope moldings, arches with faceted keystones, and foliate spandrels, with the facade terminated by a widely-projecting, modillioned foliate cornice supported by a corbel table; and that today, it is an early and significant surviving commercial building dating from the 1840s-50s when the jewelry district was first created in the vicinity of Maiden Lane.

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 63 Nassau Street Building, 63 Nassau Street, Borough of Manhattan, and designates Manhattan Tax Map Block 65, Lot 2, as its Landmark Site.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair; Pablo Vengoechea, Vice Chair;  
Stephen Byrnes, Roberta Brandes Gratz, Christopher Moore, Richard Olcott, Margery Perlmutter, Elizabeth Ryan, Commissioners



**63 Nassau Street Building**, Manhattan

Photo: New York City, Dept. of Taxes (c. 1939); computer-enhanced image by Amanda Davis



**63 Nassau Street Building**, Manhattan

Photo: LPC, John Barrington Bayley (1965)



**502-504 Broadway** (1860, John Kellum & Son), masonry façade

Photo: LPC (c. 1972)



**Kitchen, Montross & Wilcox Store** (1860-61, James Bogardus), cast-iron façade

Photo: LPC, Carl Forster



**63 Nassau Street Building, Manhattan**

Photo: LPC, Carl Forster



63 Nassau Street Building, Manhattan

Photo: LPC, Carl Forster



63 Nassau Street Building, second story

Photo: LPC, Carl Forster





**63 Nassau Street Building**, second story detail

Photo: LPC, Carl Forster



**63 Nassau Street Building, cornice**

Photo: LPC, Carl Forster



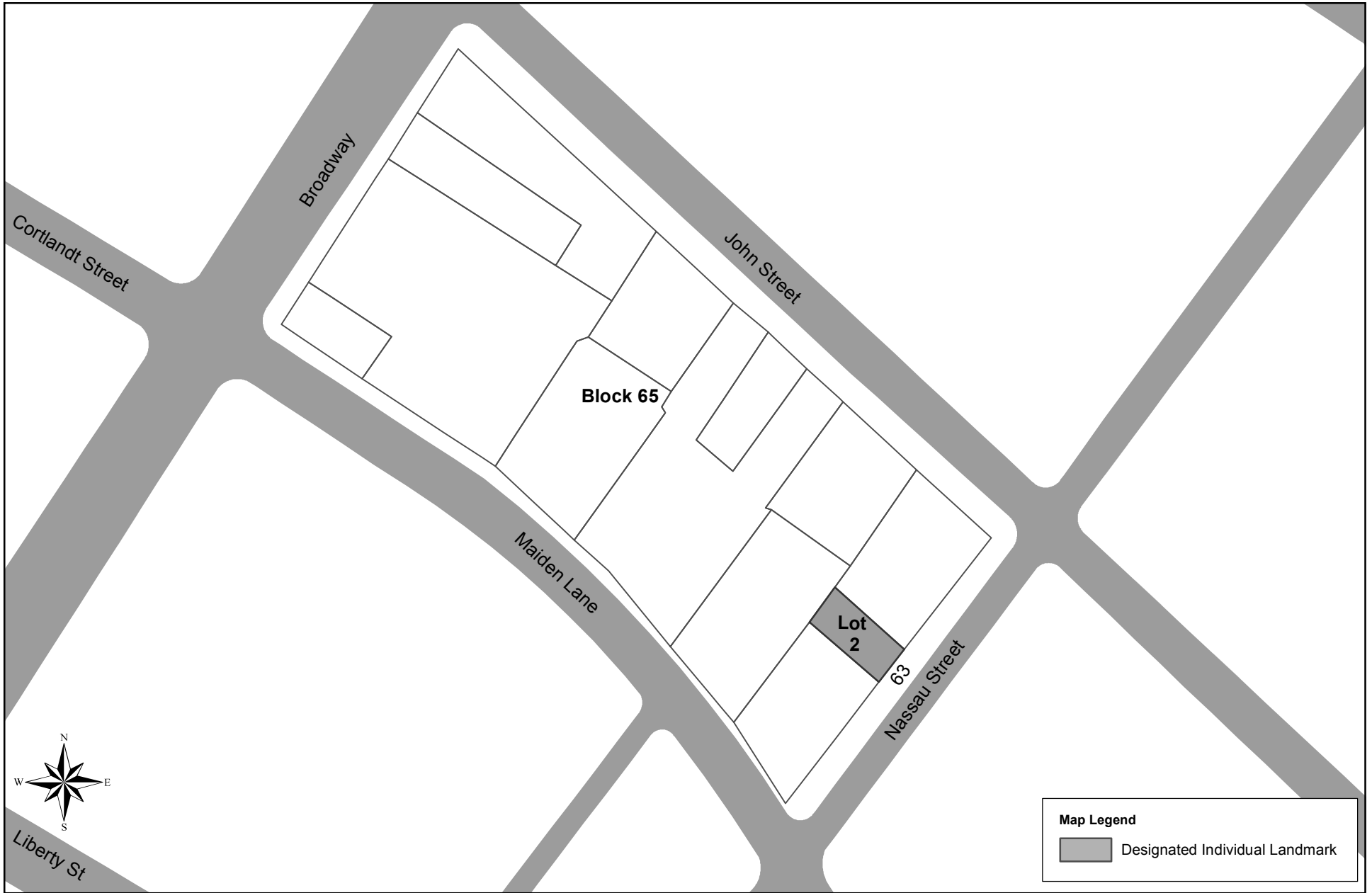
**63 Nassau Street Building**, medallion of Benjamin Franklin on third story

Photo: LPC, Carl Forster



63 Nassau Street Building, Bag Shoppe storefront (c. 1961)

Photo: LPC, Carl Forster



63 NASSAU STREET BUILDING (LP-2213), 63 Nassau Street.  
 Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 65, Lot 2.

Designated: May 15, 2007