

**THE WHITEHALL BUILDING**, 17 Battery Place (aka 1-17 West Street), Manhattan.  
Built 1902-04; architect, Henry J. Hardenbergh.  
Extension 1908-10; architects, Clinton & Russell.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 15, Lot 7501, in part, consisting of the land on which 17 Battery Place (aka 1-17 West Street) is situated.

On February 8, 2000, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Whitehall Building and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 2). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. A representative of the Historic Districts Council spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. The Commission has received a letter in support of designation from the building's owners.

#### Summary

The twenty-story Whitehall Building, named for Peter Stuyvesant's seventeenth-century house that had been located nearby, was constructed in 1902-04 and designed by the preeminent turn-of-the-century architect Henry J. Hardenbergh. This highly visible site at the southernmost tip of Manhattan, overlooking Battery Park, inspired the architect to create a building with bold design features and a dramatic color scheme. Built as a speculative office tower by the real estate and development firm of Robert A. and William H. Chesebrough, the building was an immediate success and the developers began plans to build an addition. They hired the prolific architectural firm of Clinton & Russell to design a thirty-one-story addition facing West Street, with a tower overlooking the original building. Constructed in 1908-10, the Greater Whitehall, as the addition was called, was the largest office structure in the city at the time of its completion. The building's huge size coupled with its location on landfill at the edge of Manhattan island created the need for unusual types of foundations and methods for their installation. The elegant limestone facade, designed in a neo-Renaissance style with a traditional organization of base, shaft, and capital complements the original structure. Together the two sections of the building create a dramatic visual introduction to the towers of Manhattan.



## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

### Lower Manhattan and the Battery Place Realty Company<sup>1</sup>

The southernmost tip of Manhattan was the area first inhabited by the European settlers. One of the first building projects of the Dutch settlers was Fort Amsterdam, located just south of what is now Bowling Green Park. In 1655, Governor Peter Stuyvesant built his home called "the White Hall" at the intersection of what is now Whitehall and State Streets. Development was clustered in this part of lower Manhattan with a resulting density of population. Beginning with the Dutch, New Yorkers began using landfill, or filling in lots under water, to create more useable land. In this way the land which is now Battery Park, among other areas, was created.<sup>2</sup>

The entire block of West Street, from Battery Place to Morris Street was also built upon land filling in the Hudson River during the early years of the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> The earliest occupants of this block purchased standard twenty-five-foot lots and constructed individual houses on them. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the city's increasing population, changes in the location of prestigious residential neighborhoods, as well as changes in types of businesses and their needs meant that residences relocated farther uptown, leaving lower Manhattan primarily for business use. In the 1870s, piers were first constructed along the west side of the island and the facing blocks began to be used for warehouses and other commercial purposes.

Beginning in 1901 the Battery Place Realty Company, a privately-held development company, purchased numerous lots on the southern end of the block bounded by West, Washington, and Morris Streets, and Battery Place. By 1904 their ownership extended to the first 150 feet of the block facing both West and Washington Streets.<sup>4</sup> Battery Place Realty Company was owned and operated by Robert A. Chesebrough and his son William H. Chesebrough.<sup>5</sup> The Chesebroughs were descended from a family who had come to America in 1830,<sup>6</sup> and they inherited extensive family real estate holdings.

In the mid 1850s, Robert Chesebrough (1837-1933) was working as a chemist in an illuminating-oil business. Intrigued by stories of a miraculous healing substance that formed as a residue of petroleum on the rods of pumps in the oil fields, he attempted to create the material in the laboratory. After years of research, in 1870 he invented and patented the substance known as Vaseline Petroleum Jelly, basing the name on the Saxon word for water, *wasser*, and the Greek word for

oil, *oleon*. He formed the Chesebrough Manufacturing Company and set up a refinery in Brooklyn.<sup>7</sup> The company opened a sales office in London and soon established subsidiaries in France and Spain. This company was bought by Standard Oil in 1881, with Robert Chesebrough remaining at its head until 1909.

During this time, Robert Chesebrough was involved in numerous civic activities including a run for Congress in 1894. Building on his family's existing holdings, he invested in considerable amounts of New York real estate with his oldest son, William H. Chesebrough (1867-1917) and helped organize the New York Real Estate Exchange. The Chesebrough's Battery Place Realty Company erected several office skyscrapers close to Battery Park. They include the Chesebrough, the South Ferry, the Battery Place, and the Maritime Buildings (all demolished), which almost filled the two blocks south of the U. S. Customs House between State Street and Broadway, and the Broad Exchange Building near the New York Stock Exchange on Broad Street (a designated New York City Landmark). The *Real Estate Record & Guide* stated that "William H. Chesebrough has been personally responsible for practically all of the recent developments in this section around Battery Park."<sup>8</sup> Chesebrough also organized the Century Realty Company (which developed the Bank of North America Building, among others) and in 1909 sold the Battery Place Realty Company to the United States Realty Company, becoming that company's vice president.<sup>9</sup>

One of the largest developments in this section of Manhattan was the Whitehall Building. In 1902, the Battery Place Realty Company hired the well-known architect Henry Hardenbergh to design an office tower for the site overlooking Battery Park. Although Broadway had been considered the most desirable address, no suitable building sites were available, forcing the company to look west to the area above Battery Park. This turned out to be a prime location, since the park guaranteed a visually prominent building with uninterrupted light and air. Hardenbergh's building was so commercially successful that the Chesebroughs decided to build an addition almost immediately. In 1905 and 1906, under the name of the Century Realty Company and the Century Investing Company, they purchased several lots to the north of the existing Whitehall Building.<sup>10</sup> These were transferred in 1909 to the Battery Place Realty Company<sup>11</sup> which, along with the Century Investing Company, hired the architectural firm of Clinton & Russell to build a large extension to the existing office

building.<sup>12</sup> The Whitehall and the Greater Whitehall buildings are among the few extant downtown buildings developed by this significant New York real estate company. During construction, in 1910, the property ownership was transferred to the United States Realty & Improvement Company which held it until 1932.

Henry J. Hardenbergh (1847-1918)<sup>13</sup>

Born in New Brunswick, New Jersey of Dutch lineage, Henry Janeway Hardenbergh attended the Hasbrouck Institute in Jersey City and received architectural training in the office of Beaux-Arts-trained Detlef Lienau in 1865-70. Hardenbergh, who began his own architectural practice in New York in 1870, became one of the city's most distinguished architects. Recognized for their picturesque compositions and practical planning, his buildings often took their design inspiration from the French, Dutch, Italian, and German Renaissance styles. Hardenbergh was a prolific architect and designed many types of buildings, including numerous country homes and city rowhouses, such as the picturesque rows on West 73<sup>rd</sup> Street (Nos. 15A-19, and Nos. 41-65 West 73<sup>rd</sup> Street, in the Upper West Side/ Central Park West Historic District) built in 1882 for Edward S. Clark. Some of Hardenbergh's best known designs are for luxury hotel and apartment houses, including the German Renaissance style Dakota Apartments (1880-84, 1 West 72<sup>nd</sup> Street, a designated New York City Landmark and located within the Upper West Side/ Central Park West Historic District), the Waldorf (1893-95, Fifth Avenue and West 33<sup>rd</sup> Street) and its addition, the Astoria (1895-97, Fifth Avenue and West 34<sup>th</sup> Street, both demolished), and the Plaza Hotel (1905-07, 2 Central Park South, a designated New York City Landmark). His French-influenced American Fine Arts Society Building at 215 West 57<sup>th</sup> Street (1891-92, a designated New York City Landmark) and the seven Northern Renaissance style buildings in the Hardenbergh/ Rhinelander Historic District attest to the variety of his work.

Hardenbergh designed several important early office buildings in Manhattan, including the Western Union Telegraph Company Building at Fifth Avenue and 23<sup>rd</sup> Street (1884, located within the Ladies Mile Historic District), the Astor Building on Wall Street (1885, demolished), and an early 12-story, steel-framed skyscraper, the Dutch Renaissance style John Wolfe Building at Maiden Lane and William Street (1895, demolished). As technology changed to allow taller buildings, Hardenbergh was able to adapt his designs to true skyscrapers. In both the Whitehall Building and his later Con Edison Building (1919, 4 Irving Place),

Hardenbergh created balanced and pleasing large-scale compositions while retaining the enriching details that continue to make his buildings so satisfying to observers.

Clinton & Russell<sup>14</sup>

Charles William Clinton (1838-1910)

William Hamilton Russell (1856-1907)

Charles W. Clinton, a native New Yorker, received his architectural training in the office of Richard Upjohn. From 1859 until 1862, he worked in partnership with Anthony B. McDonald, and for the next thirty-two years he practiced alone, designing numerous office buildings generally based on Italian Renaissance prototypes. A strong design feature of all these works was a pronounced layering of the facade into horizontal sections with monumental pilasters or piers carrying cornice bands, a common approach to tall buildings during the end of the nineteenth century. Clinton, however, did not restrict himself to the Renaissance Revival style. In 1876-77 he designed "Glenview," the country estate of James Bond Trevor in Yonkers, using the Victorian Gothic mode. Clinton was also responsible for a row of Renaissance revival style houses in the Upper West Side/ Central Park West Historic District, one of which survives. Clinton's design for the Seventh Regiment Armory (1877-80, Park Avenue between East 66<sup>th</sup> and 67<sup>th</sup> Streets, a designated New York City Landmark) established his reputation as an armory designer.

William Hamilton Russell, also from New York, studied at the Columbia School of Mines before joining the architectural firm of his great-uncle, James Renwick, in 1878. He became a partner in this firm and stayed there until 1894 during which time the firm became known as Renwick, Aspinwall, & Russell.

In 1894, Clinton & Russell formed an architectural partnership, becoming one of New York's leading architectural firms at the turn of the century. They designed numerous buildings including hotels and apartment houses, institutions and early skyscrapers, creating some of New York's most well-known structures of this period. Their apartment houses included the Beaux-Arts style Langham Apartments (1904-07, 135 Central Park West) located within the Upper West Side/ Central Park West Historic District. The Graham Court Apartments (1901, West 116<sup>th</sup> Street and Seventh Avenue, a designated New York City Landmark), the Astor Apartments (1901-05, 2141 Broadway), and the Apthorp (1908, 2102-2119 Broadway, a designated New York City Landmark) were all constructed for members of the Astor family.

Their residential buildings were monumental, classically-inspired, and included design features typically found on their commercial structures. The firm typically designed office buildings of brick and masonry, with a base of two horizontal sections, a shaft characterized by a monumental arcade expressing the verticality of the structure, and a prominent roof entablature crowned with additional stories. After Russell's death, Clinton continued to practice under the name Clinton & Russell.

A civil engineer who worked in the office of Clinton & Russell, J. Hollis Wells, is credited for his engineering designs on the Whitehall extension.<sup>15</sup> He was a prolific writer in the architectural and engineering press, including several articles about the engineering and design of armories and office towers. His system for caisson foundations used in the Greater Whitehall was similar to that used on the Hudson Terminal Buildings and was described in his 1910 article on the subject.<sup>16</sup>

### The Whitehall Building

The name Whitehall was derived from the proximity of this building to the historic location of "White Hall," home of Governor Stuyvesant constructed in 1658 at what is now the intersection of Whitehall and State Streets. At the beginning of the twentieth century, New Yorkers were very concerned about the proper locations for their buildings since a good site insured advantageous rents. When the Whitehall Building was constructed on the western edge of Manhattan, Broadway was considered the best location for quality office space. With the completion of the new U. S. Customs House (1899-1907, Cass Gilbert, a designated New York City Landmark) facing Bowling Green and the further development of office towers by the Chesebrough interests in the blocks to the south of this structure, locations near Broadway became more acceptable. The *Real Estate Record & Guide* claimed that these new buildings "have revolutionized the entire neighborhood and have emphasized its possibilities for office purposes."<sup>17</sup>

The original Whitehall Building, designed by Henry Hardenbergh, was constructed from 1902-04, with twenty stories facing Battery Park.<sup>18</sup> The building's location directly across from the park guaranteed that no other tall buildings would later block the view of it from New York Harbor. Therefore Hardenbergh limited the applied ornament and concentrated on massing and color to create a design using large-scale, symmetrical elements, easily legible from afar. Using the conventional three-part division of a tall building into base, shaft and capital, Hardenbergh

set off the lower stories of the building with a facing of rusticated limestone, with full, rounded forms. In the mid-section, the broad central area sets back slightly from the two side sections and is distinguished by being faced in plain red brick with matching mortar, creating a sense of solidity. The two side sections, which continue around to both side elevations, are faced in yellow brick alternating with narrow pink-brick strips, creating a striped effect. The eighteenth story serves as a transition to the top section, with large-scale, terra-cotta ornamentation on the piers and around the windows. The prominent cornice above this floor marks the top section, which is distinguished by continuous brick piers designed to echo the rustication of the base. The triangular brick pediment that rises above the twentieth story has a highly elaborate oculus which, along with the open balustrade (removed) that originally ringed the perimeter of the roof, created a strong finale to the building. In his article about the Whitehall, the prominent architectural critic Russell Sturgis applauded the "simplicity and the obvious nature of the design ...and ...the use of external color to give variety and movement to a large flat front."<sup>19</sup>

With rents slightly lower than those charged on Broadway, the Whitehall Building was an immediate financial success prompting the owners to expand the building. The Battery Place Realty Company and the Century Realty Company began buying more property to the north of the building by 1903 and had completed the purchases by 1906. The prominent architectural partnership of Clinton & Russell was hired to draw plans for the building, which were filed with the New York City Building Department in 1908.<sup>20</sup> Construction by the George Fuller Construction Company began almost immediately after the demolition of seventeen small buildings on the site.

The Whitehall Extension (later Greater Whitehall) was built to the north of the original Whitehall Building, facing West Street and was five times larger than the first part of the building.<sup>21</sup> The main part of this structure is rectangular in plan, 31 stories high, with a tower at the southern end that overlooks the original building. An open court separates this section from the original, with a link at the first two stories of the West Street facade and at the elevator bay on the interior court. With 12,000,000 cubic feet of space, this expanded building was the largest single office building in Manhattan and was "one of the largest commercial structures in the world."<sup>22</sup>

Designed to complement the original building and continue its neo-Renaissance style, Clinton & Russell's extension was also based on a tripartite vertical division. The lower floors are faced in limestone up

through the eighth story, which sits on a bandcourse located at the same height as the lowest bandcourse of the Hardenbergh section. The central section, faced in brick with simple moldings, has rectangular window openings and extends for sixteen stories. A projecting cornice above the 25th floor marks the upper section that provides the building's cap. This section is dominated by vertically-articulated arcades six stories high, which continue on all four sides of the building. Faced in limestone, and tan and yellow brick, the building's subdued decorative scheme sets off the more colorful Hardenbergh building. The upper stories, which are higher than the first building, receive the most decorative emphasis, with elongated arcades and large-scale, terra-cotta ornament. The south-facing tower with its over-scaled, rounded pediment echoes and restates the oculus form in Hardenbergh's crowning pediment below.

Although the construction of the Whitehall followed the conventional steel framing system, with hollow-tile floor arches and partitions and concrete subfloor, its foundation system was somewhat unusual.<sup>23</sup> Because of the building's location on landfill at the western edge of Manhattan island and the great size of the structure, the foundations had to be especially strong and watertight. The model for the foundations was a system designed by O'Rourke Engineering Construction Company for Clinton & Russell's earlier Hudson Terminal Buildings. At the Whitehall, the firm also created a system that included timber-lined pneumatic caissons sunk to hardpan, steel-lined pneumatic caissons sunk to rock, and a reinforced concrete coffer dam with a 2-foot-thick floor and continuous 7-foot-thick walls. This system supports the huge building and seals the substructure which was designed to hold the boilers and generating equipment in a basement that is below water level.

#### Description

*The original Whitehall Building* consists of that part of the structure which faces south onto Battery Park and extends from Washington to West Street. The side facades of this section extend north on West Street for 60 feet and on Washington Street (now Western Union Plaza) for 50 feet. It is twenty stories high and arranged in a format of base, shaft and crown. On the second part of the building, the *Greater Whitehall*, the main facade faces West Street and is connected to the original building by a two-story extension on West Street, and at the elevator bays which are recessed behind a small court. Thirty-one stories high, this section also has a tower which faces south and overlooks the original building. Its horizontal divisions

reflect and complement those of the earlier structure. A third section of the building, facing Washington Street (Western Union Plaza) was constructed in 1969<sup>24</sup> and is not included in this designation. Throughout the building, most of the windows have been replaced with one-over-one aluminum sash, and the doors are non-historic.

**Battery Place Facade:** This facade is symmetrical and divided vertically into three sections: the six central bays are faced differently and slightly recessed from the three bays on each side.

**Base:** The building sits on a raised granite basement, above which the first and mezzanine stories are faced with rounded, rusticated limestone. The center section has three large openings, each reached by stone stairs; only the center one is historic. On the west is a recessed entryway with non-historic metal and glass doors. The opening maintains its original stone lintel with a grotesque head mounted on the center keystone and flanking disks. The eastern bay has a similar, original lintel, with a stairway and entrance which are under construction. Above the recessed glass and metal doorway in the central opening is a stone plaque with "17 Battery Place" engraved upon it, and lion's heads and bellflower ornaments flanking it. To each side of this opening is a large, historic, copper and glass lantern. Above each of these, at the mezzanine level, is a stone panel embellished by a torch, wings and entwined serpents. Above each of the three main openings is a semi-circular transom window with multi-layered stone keystones and fixed glass. (The center transom has fixed sash while the two side transoms retain their historic window configuration consisting of a central, double-hung window flanked by fixed openings. That on the west has replacement, metal-framed windows.)

Each of the two side sections of the base is three bays wide, with a smaller central, non-historic doorway and two flanking, fixed-pane windows on the first story and three windows on the mezzanine story. All these openings are topped by flat-arches with bold, rounded voussoirs. On the second story, non-historic windows are set in the original frames and topped by small transoms. A plain, broad limestone bandcourse separates this lowest part of the building from that above.

**Mid-section:** The next, transitional section is four stories high, topped again by another terra-cotta bandcourse. This section is faced with tan brick with stone trim, the brick laid with deep recesses to simulate rustication. Within each bay are paired, square-headed windows joined by a narrow cast-iron pilaster. The windows and the terra-cotta spandrels, which are

embellished by ornamented cartouches and tablets are slightly recessed to create the effect of continuous piers between the bays. In the center section, these piers are edged with stone and have concave corners. The fourth story window openings are more highly ornamented, with narrow, ornate cast-iron railings in front of the sash and voussoirs and pediments above the windows on the two side sections. On the recessed center section, each window of the fourth story has a prominent keystone and swags which run across the top and down the sides. The paired, fifth-story windows are plain, with brick and terra cotta piers between them. The piers at the four corners of the side sections are ornamented by large, square, embellished terra-cotta tablets.

The largest section of the building rises from the sixth through the sixteenth story. The six central bays are faced with red brick, the darker color making this part of the building appear to recede even more than it does. On the two flanking sections, the brickwork is yellow alternating with recessed narrow, red brick bands. Throughout this portion of the building the windows are plain, square-headed, and paired in each bay, with terra-cotta sills. The windows of the center section have brick voussoirs.

**Top section:** The top section of the building is set off by an elaborate terra-cotta bandcourse above the sixteenth story. Each bay has paired windows with broad brick piers between them. Large, rounded, and embellished terra-cotta tablets are affixed to each pier at the seventeenth story. Above the seventeenth story is a projecting, replacement cornice. In the two stories above this cornice, each bay holds a squared window opening with paired windows and terra-cotta spandrels. The windows of the nineteenth story are fronted by ornate cast-iron railings and topped by brick voussoirs. The brick piers between each bay have simulated rustication and each is crowned by a terra cotta ornament with foliate swags hanging from each side. A narrower, replacement fiberglass cornice crowns the building above this floor. In the center of this facade, a shallow, triangular, brick-faced pediment rises above this cornice with an oculus window embellished by torches and swags in the highest part. Turrets topped by pyramid-like forms in terra cotta rise above the building at the corners of each side section, the only remaining indication of the balustrade which originally crowned the structure and was replaced by a low brick parapet.

**West Street Facade:** *Original Whitehall Building.* This facade continues the motifs and materials that were used on the Battery Place facade of the Hardenbergh building. The lower two stories are faced

in rusticated limestone, a four-story transitional section is faced in tan brick, and the upper stories are faced in yellow brick with recessed narrow red brick bands. This facade is five bays wide. At the ground story level, the windows have been replaced by fixed metal sash and the center bay retains four steps to what was once an entrance but is now a window. The two metal cornices located near the top of the Battery Place facade have been removed on this side (and the Washington Street facade) and replaced by plain brick. An open court separates this part of the building from the Greater Whitehall which is located north of it on West Street. Some of the northern facade of the original building is visible above the open court. It has plain brick walls and window openings and the top parapet has been removed and replaced with a metal railing.

**Greater Whitehall Building:** Recessed behind an open courtyard to the north of the Original Whitehall, and rising to the twenty-first story, is a plain, two-bay section parallel to West Street. This joins to another part which is convexly-curved, five bays wide, and clad in cast-iron. This, in turn, adjoins another section of the Greater Whitehall with three bays which face south displaying unadorned, square-headed windows.

Above this linked section, this facade of the Greater Whitehall faces south and is five bays wide and generally carries the same motifs as described on the West Street facade. The paired windows in the two outside bays are encased in an elongated arch, running from the 24<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> story as on the West Street facade. The next bay to the inside of these bays, has plain, single, unadorned windows. The wide bay in the center has four windows at each story and extends higher than the side bays, to a broad, round-arched parapet which projects above the cornice line at the center of this facade. Crowning the parapet is a raked stone balustrade flanked by volutes. A low, brick replacement parapet extends to each side of this balustrade. The cornice over the round-arched section is under construction and that above the side sections has been replaced by a plain wall. Ornate terra-cotta ornaments, including huge human figures are located on each side of this arch.

*The Greater Whitehall* has eleven bays facing West Street. Although it is much taller than the original Whitehall, it carries many of the horizontal divisions of the earlier building.

**Base:** The two-story rusticated, limestone-faced base (consisting of the first story and a mezzanine floor), which extends south for two bays to join with the earlier building, is topped by a string course at the same level as that of the original building.<sup>25</sup> The square-

headed window openings have recessed, paired windows, joined by thin pilasters between them and metal spandrels between the floors. The entrance to this part of the building is located in the second to last bay toward the south. The double-height entrance is located within a stone portico formed by double columns supporting a simple entablature engraved with the words, "Whitehall Building." Two pyramidal pylons support a plain stone parapet above this. Four bays to the north is a plain, non-historic vehicular entrance. Paired, non-historic service doors are located in the northernmost bay on this facade and are reached by a short stairway.

The next four transitional stories are also faced in limestone, with continuous piers between the bays which are marked by capitals and terra-cotta ornament at the top. Flat, stone panels highlight the spandrels of this section. A terra-cotta, egg-and-dart motif bandcourse tops this section. Above, the sixth story is faced with terra-cotta panels on the piers between each bay. Another modillioned, terra-cotta cornice caps this story.

**Mid-section:** The main section of the building extends from the seventh to the twenty-second stories. Simple, paired, square-headed windows with stone sills fill each bay while continuous wide, brick piers rise between the bays. Large, terra-cotta ornamented tablets are located between each bay at the seventh story and hang down between each bay at the twenty-second story. The corner piers have a rusticated effect.

**Top section:** Terra-cotta bandcourses above and below the 23<sup>rd</sup> story another create the transition to the top section. This story is also marked by brick panels on the piers between each bay. The windows of the 24<sup>th</sup> story are more highly decorated, with scroll brackets between them which support small balconettes at the 25<sup>th</sup> story.<sup>26</sup> These and the decorative panels between the bays at this level are non-historic, fibreglass material. Between the 25<sup>th</sup> and the 29<sup>th</sup> stories, the piers rise continuously between paired, recessed windows to form a round-arched arcade. The double windows of the 30<sup>th</sup> story are also round-headed within the arcade. Between the rounded arches of the large

arcade, are large terra-cotta ornaments including disks, panels and heads, which joins with the terra-cotta cornice above this level. The 31<sup>st</sup> story has elaborate terra-cotta ornament around each of the paired, square-headed windows. A brick parapet tops this level and is crowned by non-historic metal railings. Recessed behind this railing is an historic 32<sup>nd</sup> story with new penthouses under construction. At the southern end of the roof is a large, non-historic water tower.

**East Facade:** The east facade of the *original Whitehall Building* is the same as the west facade except that it has four bays instead of three.

The *Greater Whitehall* extends to the north for five bays near the center of the rear of the original building. It then steps back one bay and continues north for eight more bays, continuing the same ornamentation and patterns as on the West Street facade.

**North Facade:** This facade of the *Greater Whitehall* is visible from West Street, over a low garage which adjoins the building just to the north. This facade is faced in yellow brick and is mostly plain, with rustication continuing on each corner pier. It is three bays wide with paired windows in the central bay and single ones on each side. Above the twenty-fourth story cornice, the three bays are articulated in the form of an arcade, as on the other facades. The windows of the thirtieth story are round-headed. The 31<sup>st</sup> story has single, square-headed windows with terra-cotta ornament between them. The cornice has been removed from above this level but there is a raked parapet in the form of a blind colonnade which projects above the building, creating a visual focus on this side of the structure and balancing the larger parapet on the southern facade. Recessed behind this parapet is an early, gable-roofed structure. The westernmost corner of this parapet has been removed and is being rebuilt.

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## NOTES

1. For historical information, see Kenneth T. Jackson, ed., *The Encyclopedia of New York City* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1995), various entries, including "Battery Park," "fortifications," and "Stuyvesant, Peter."

2. The shoreline was repeatedly extended from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries, resulting in a park which today occupies eighty acres. Battery Park was named for the gun batteries which were originally housed by the bulkhead, and then at Castle Clinton which is near the western edge of the park. This circular, red sandstone fort was located approximately 100 yards offshore when it was constructed in 1811.
3. This occurred in accordance with the terms of certain water grants made by the city. See "West St. Building Has No Basement," *The New York Times* (Dec. 7, 1930), Sec. II, 18:2.
4. New York County Register's Office, Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 67, p.272, Dec. 18,1901; Liber 68, p.115, Feb. 1, 1902; Liber 75, p. 36, Nov. 10, 1902; Liber 81, p. 151, Oct. 26, 1903; Liber 84, p. 106, April 21, 1904.
5. Information on the Chesebroughs and their investments comes from the following sources: "R. A. Chesebrough Dead at Age of 96," *The New York Times* (Sept. 9, 1933), 13; "William H. Chesebrough," *NYT* (Dec. 4, 1917), 13; "W.H. Chesebrough Left \$500,000," *NYT* (Dec. 11, 1917), 7; "Old Broadway Corner Will Be Improved; Held by Chesebrough Family Since 1782," *NYT* (Feb. 24, 1939), 36; and a company history, *The Story of Chesebrough-Pond's Inc.* in the research files of the Landmarks Preservation Commission.
6. Chesebrough's ancestor, William Chesebrough had come to this country in 1630 with John Winthrop, first governor of the Massachusetts Colony and had founded Stonington, Connecticut.
7. The Chesebrough Manufacturing Company maintained a factory building at 24 State Street in Brooklyn for its products. See *King's Handbook of New York*, (Boston, Mass.: Moses King, 1893), p. 948.
8. *Real Estate Record & Guide* (Sept. 5, 1908), p.461.
9. This important development concern had begun with the consolidation of several realty firms in 1901 and the acquisition of a large percentage of the George A. Fuller Construction Company. During the early years of the U. S. Realty Company's existence, it acquired and developed a substantial number of unimproved building sites in lower Manhattan, and became a major force in the real estate market in New York City. *RER & G* (June 5, 1909), p.1131; *NYT* (Dec. 4, 1917); and LPC, *Trinity Building Designation Report (LP-1557)*, (NY: City of New York, 1988), report prepared by Elisa Urbanelli.
10. NY County Register's Office. Liber 95, p. 242, May 31, 1905; Liber 104, p.113, Apr. 30, 1906; Liber 106, p. 242, July 3, 1906; Liber 101, p. 462, Dec. 31, 1906.
11. Liber 123, p. 444, and Liber 124, p. 405.
12. The property was conveyed again in 1910 to the United States Realty and Improvement Company, Liber 127, p.99, Feb. 21, 1910.
13. This information comes from architects' files of the Landmarks Preservation Commission and LPC, *Hotel Martinique Designation Report (LP-1983)*, (New York: City of New York, 1998), and "Architects' Appendix," *Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District (LP-1647)*.
14. Information in this section was taken from the architects' files of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, Clinton & Russell; LPC. "Architects' Appendix," *Upper West Side/ Central Park West Historic District (LP-1647)*(New York, 1990); "Architects' Appendix," *Expanded Carnegie Hill Historic District (LP-1834)* (New York, 1993).
15. Little could be ascertained about the background of Mr. Wells. His name appears as a designer of the Whitehall, although he is noted in his articles as being a civil engineer.
16. See "A Terminal Station," *The American Architect and Building News* vol.97 (Jan. 19, 1910), pp.32-38; "Armories for the organized Militia," *Brickbuilder* vol. 17 (1908), pp.120-127, 139-147, 155-162; "Modern Commercial Buildings," *The American Architect and Building News* vol.97 (1910), pp 29-31.
17. "Newest of the City's Structural Giants," *RER&G* (Dec. 4, 1909), p.994.
18. New York City, Department of Buildings, New Building Application 258-1902. Although the Building Department records show that the building was completed in 1904, Sarah Landau wrote a letter to the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission stating that "other evidence from period sources indicated to



me that the first building was actually completed in 1903 rather than 1904.”

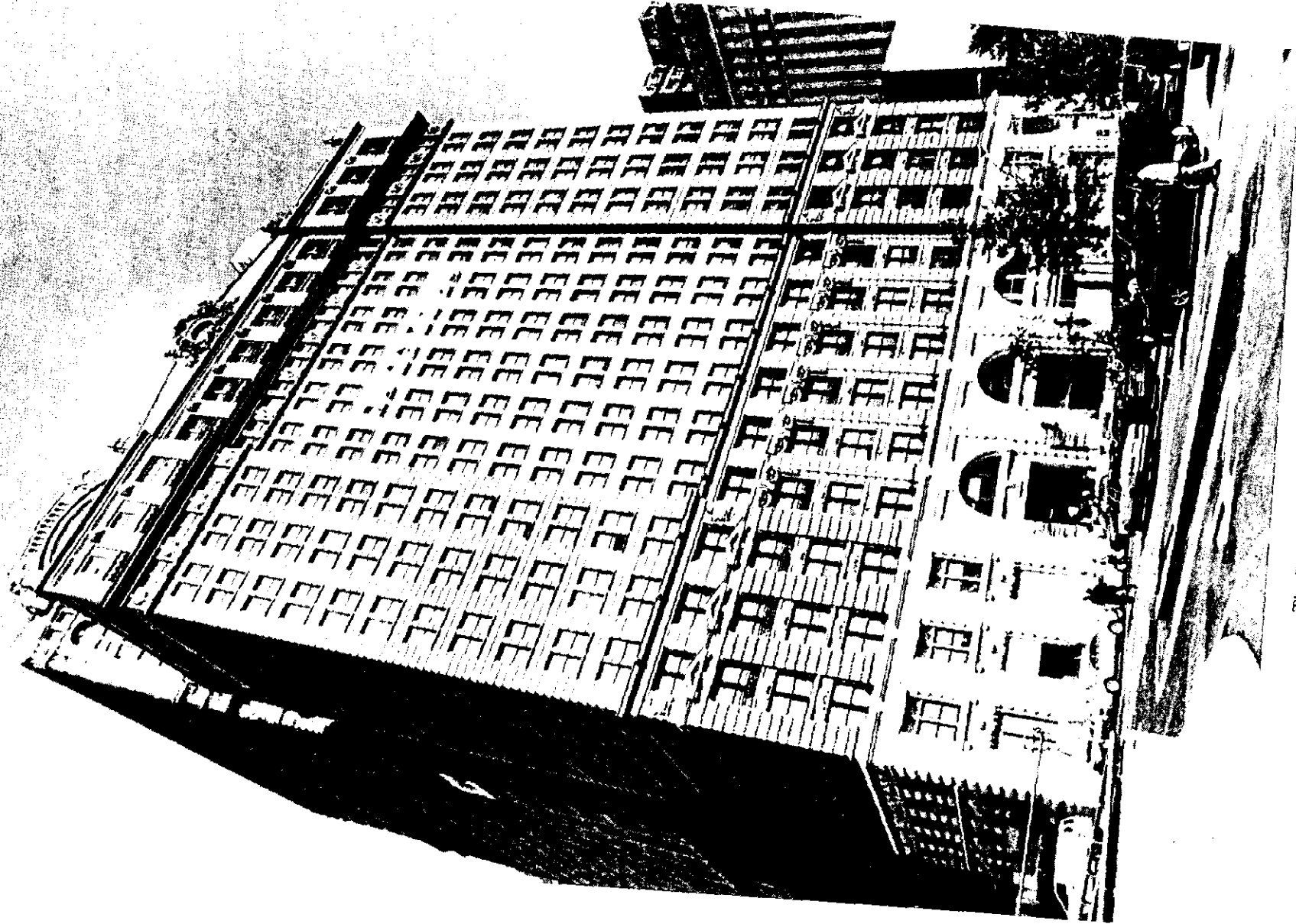
19. Russell Sturgis “The Whitehall,” *Architectural Record* 14 (July, 1903), 70-73.
20. Department of Buildings, New Building Application 109-1908. Buildings Department records show that work was started on the Whitehall Extension in 1909 and completed in 1912, although Sarah Landau believes that work on this part of the building was concluded in 1911. See footnote 18 above.
21. Another section of the building was planned to face Washington Street but that was not constructed at the time.
22. *RER &G*, (Dec. 4, 1909).
23. Sarah Bradford Landau and Carl Condit, *Rise of the New York Skyscraper 1865-1913* ( New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1996), pp. 329-330; “Pneumatic Caisson Foundations, Whitehall Building, New York,” *Engineering Record* vol. 61 (June 18, 1910), pp. 792-94; “Construction of the Whitehall Building Extension,” *Engineering Record* vol. 62 (Sept. 3, 1910), pp. 277-78.
24. Department of Buildings, Alteration 246, 1969.
25. The base incorporates two stories on the Hardenbergh building but three stories on the Clinton & Russell extension.
26. One original copper panel still exists, in the easternmost bay of the southern facade of the Greater Whitehall Building, at the 25<sup>th</sup> story level.

## FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

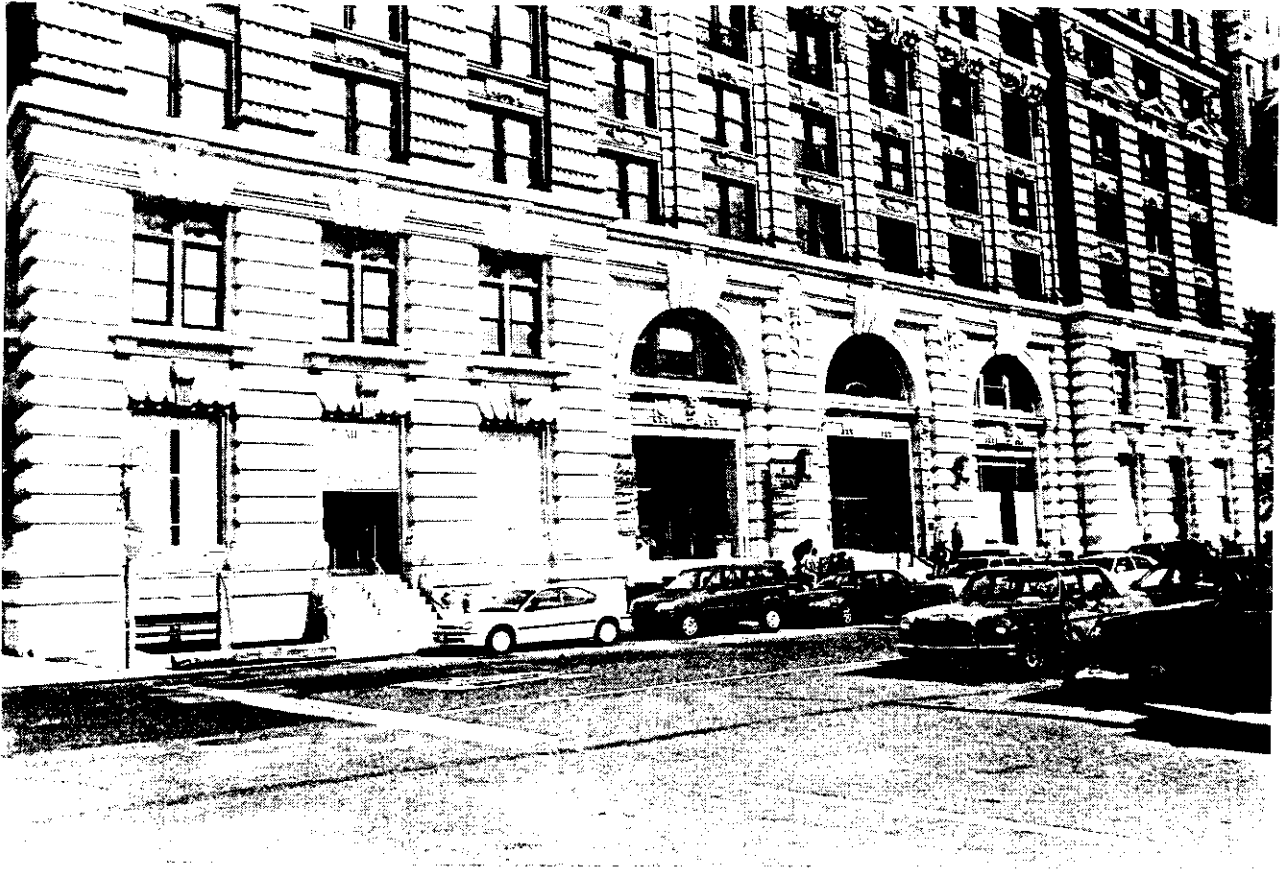
On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Whitehall Building has a special character and special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage,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

The Commission further finds that, the Whitehall Building, is one of the few remaining speculative office towers developed by Robert A. and William H. Chesebrough, whose company, the Battery Place Realty Company was responsible for popularizing the southern tip of Manhattan as a prime office location; that the first part of this structure was built in 1902-04 to the designs of the eminent New York architect Henry Janeway Hardenbergh; that the building, named for Peter Stuyvesant's home, the White Hall, which was located near this site, is a visually prominent building, able to be seen from great distances across Battery Park and the Hudson River due to its location facing Battery Park; that the architect relied on bold colors and dramatic massing to create a distinctive building that was an immediate financial success; that this success led to the expansion of the building in 1908-10 to the designs of the prominent architectural firm of Clinton & Russell; that the expanded thirty-one story building was one of the largest commercial structures in the world at the time of its construction; that, because it was built on landfill at the edge of the island, it relied on an innovative foundation system of caissons and cofferdams below the water line to support the huge structure and to keep the substructure dry; that Clinton & Russell's brick and stone, neo-Renaissance style building complements Hardenbergh's original design without overwhelming it, carrying on the same rusticated stone base, the same lines of bandcourses, and similar terra-cotta neo-Renaissance style detailing that was on the first building; that the two buildings, set perpendicular to each other, with the over-scaled, rounded pediment of the latter structure above the oculus of the first, form an unusual composition and memorable visual introduction to the towers of lower Manhattan.

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 Whitehall Building, 17 Battery Place (aka 1-17 West Street), Borough of Manhattan, and designates Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 15, Lot 7501, in part, consisting of the land on which 17 Battery Place (aka 1-17 West Street) is situated as its Landmark Site.



The Whitehall Building  
17 Battery Place, Manhattan  
*Photo: Carl Forster*

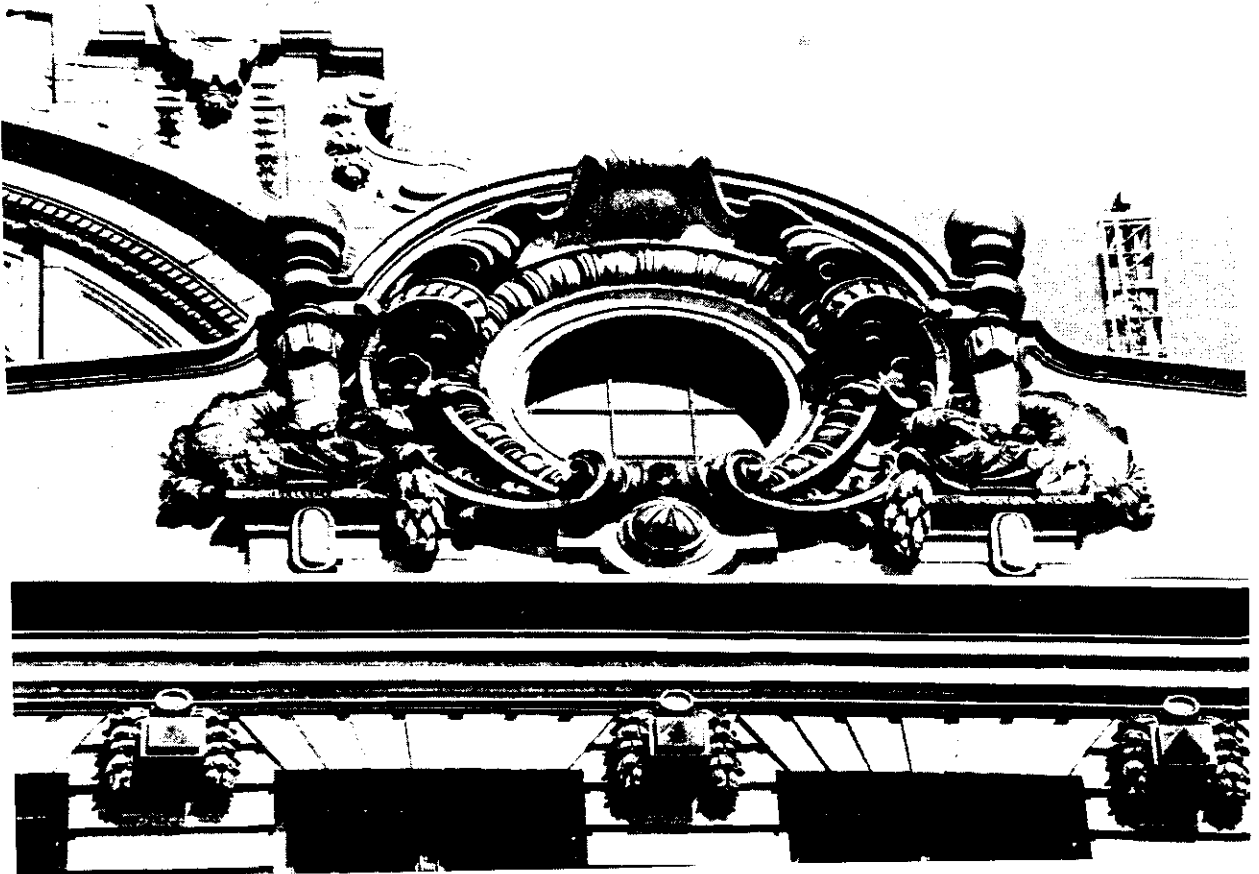


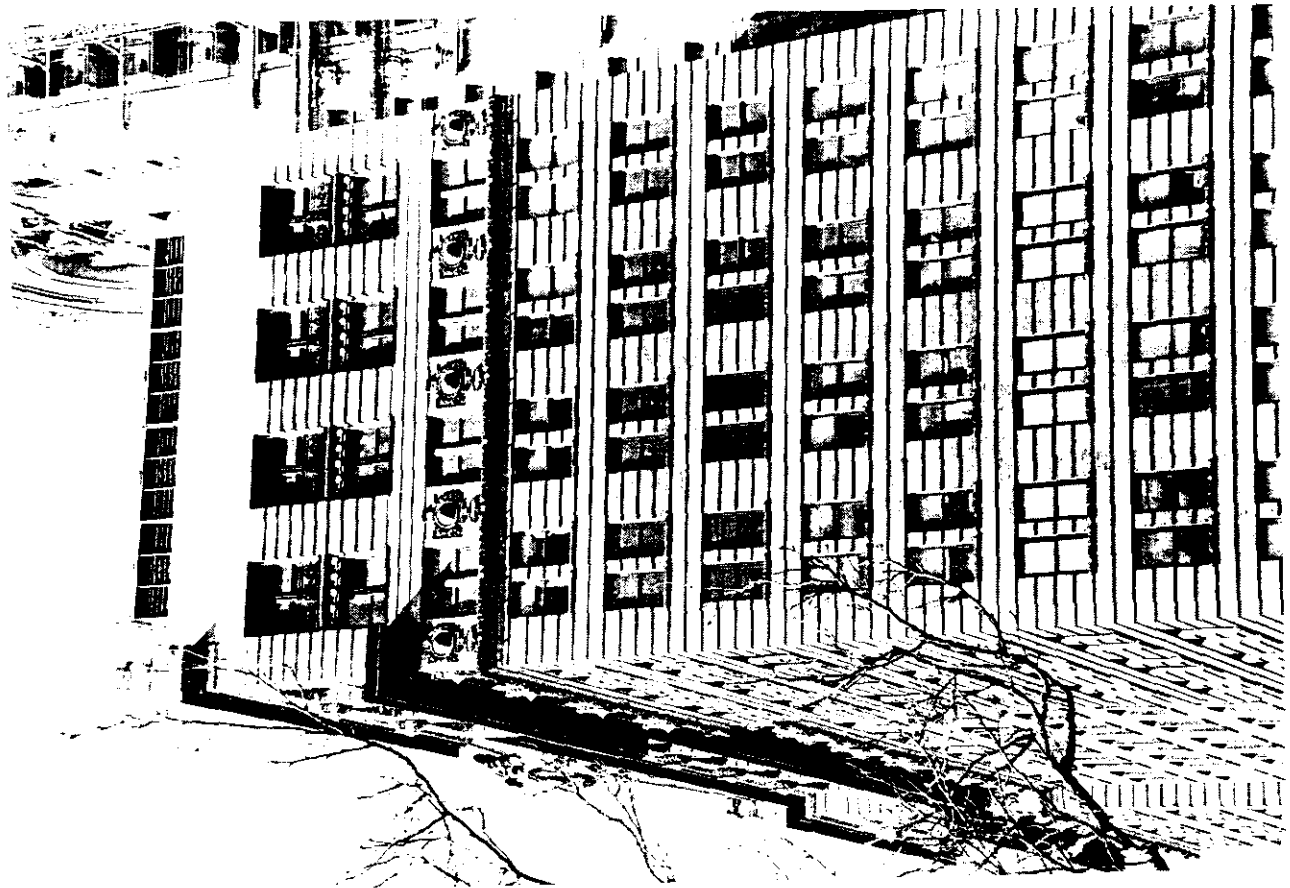
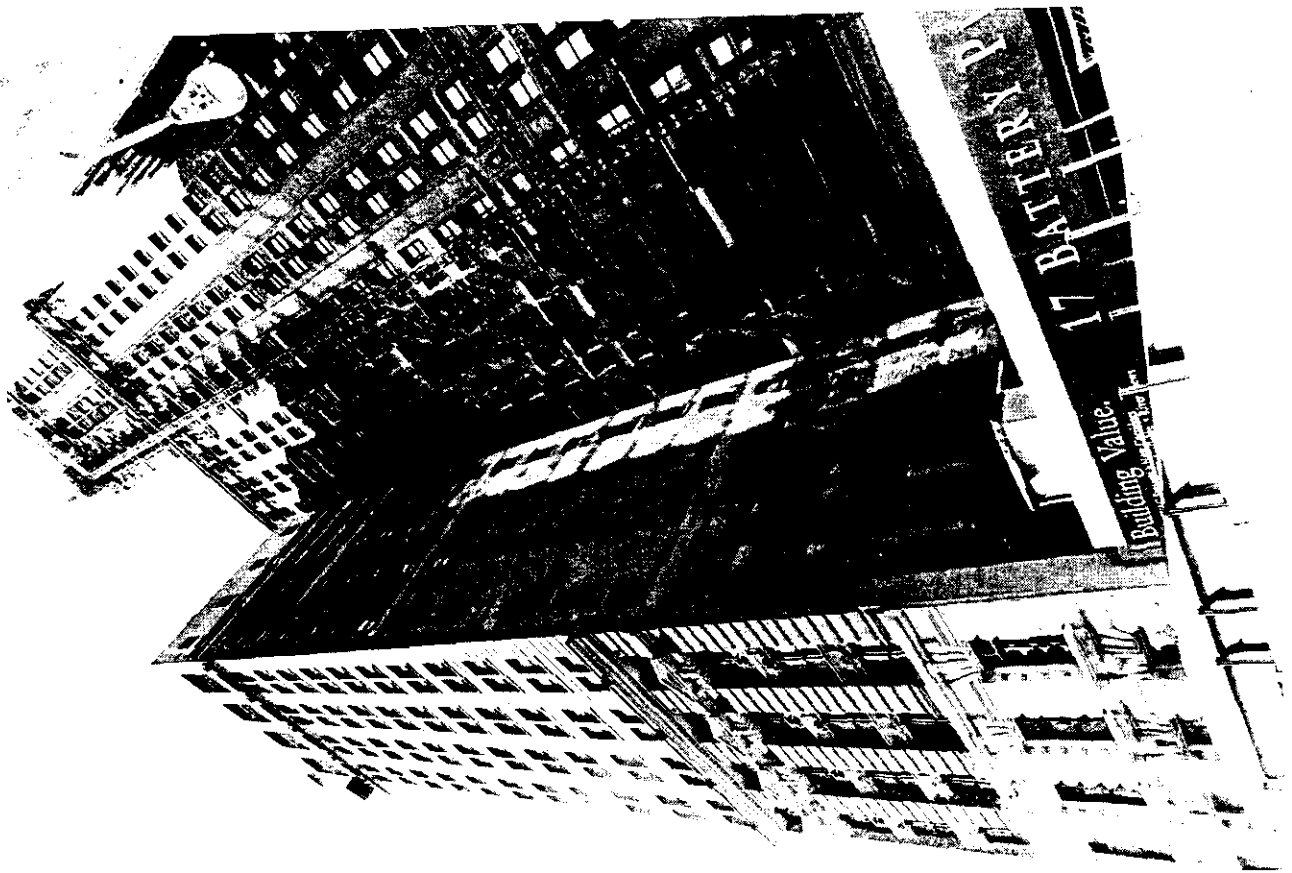
The Whitehall Building  
Entrance details, Battery Place facade  
*Photos: Carl Forster*





The Whitehall Building  
Roof details, southern facade  
*Photos: Carl Forster*

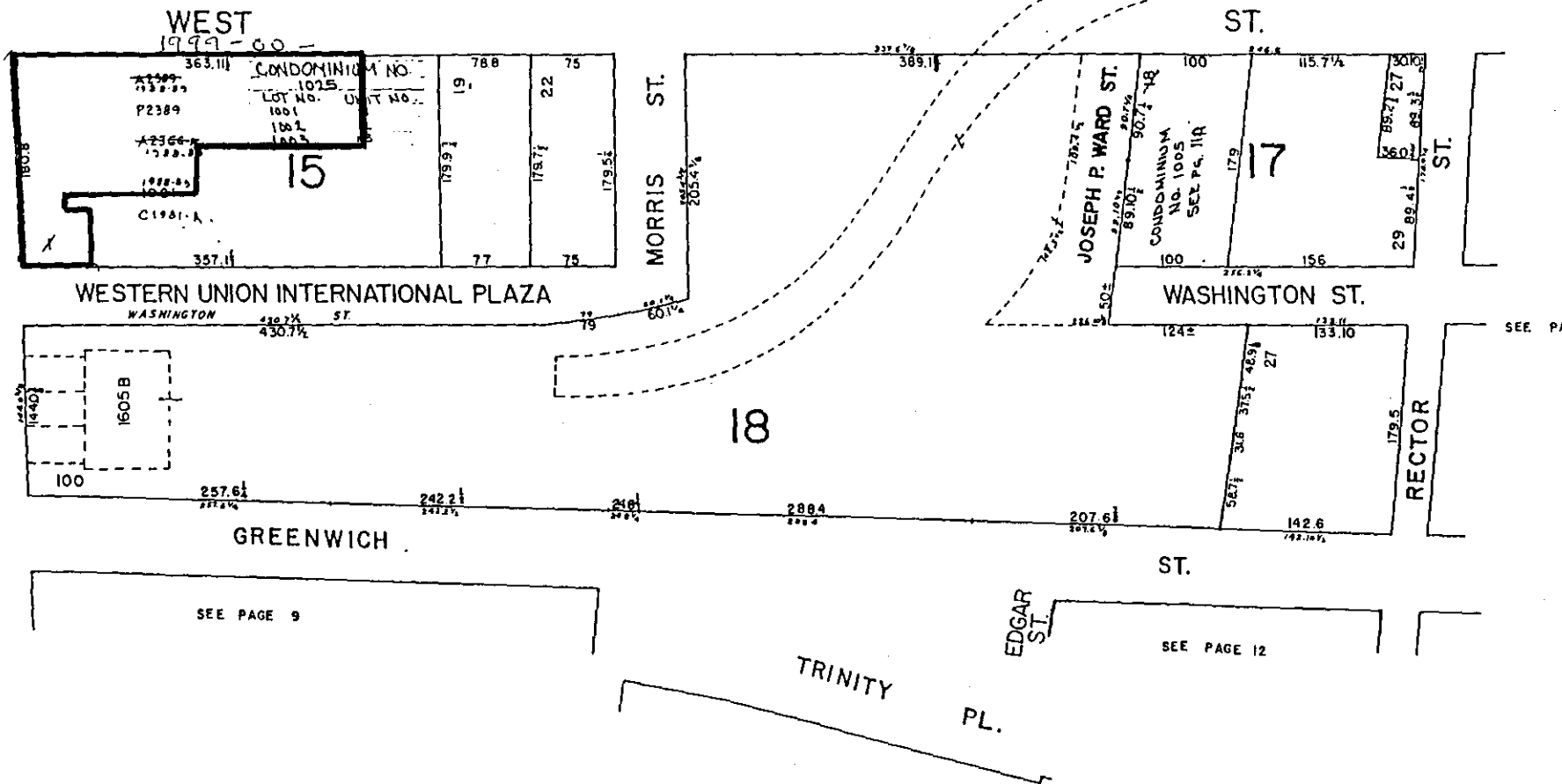




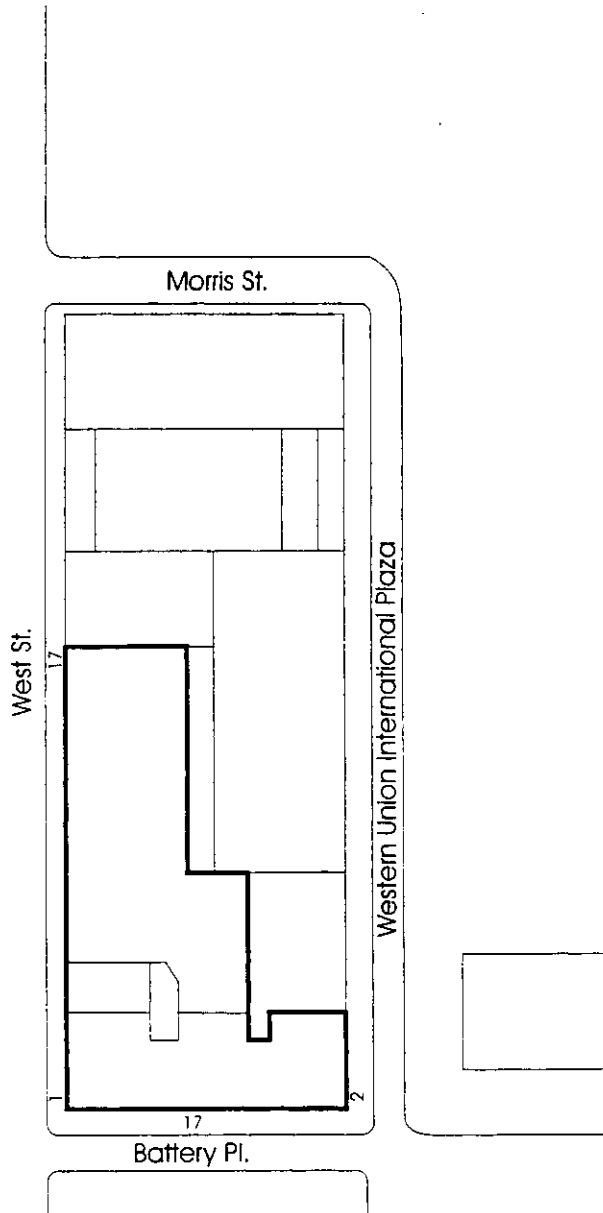
The Whitehall Building  
Upper stories, Washington Street facade  
*Photos: Carl Forster*

SEE PAGE 10A

BATTERY



**The Whitehall Building, 17 Battery Place (aka 1-17 West Street)**  
 Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 15, Lot 7501, in part,  
 consisting of the land on which 17 Battery Place (aka 1-17 West Street) is situated  
 Source: New York City Department of Finance, City Surveyor, Tax Map




**The Whitehall Building**  
**LP-2056**  
**17 Battery Place**

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 15, Lot 7501, in part,  
 consisting of the land on which 17 Battery Place (aka 1-17 West Street) is situated.

Designated October 17, 2000  
 Landmarks Preservation Commission

— Site Boundaries

N  


Map for Illustrative Purposes Only