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Landmarks Preservation Commission  
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CENTRAL INTAKE  
DEPT. OF CITY PLANNING

(FORMER) CENTURY ASSOCIATION BUILDING

109-111 East 15th Street, Manhattan.  
Built 1869; architects Gambrill & Richardson.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 871, Lot 10.

On December 12, 1989, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the (Former) Century Club Building and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 27). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Thirteen witnesses spoke in favor of designation. A representative of the owner did not take a position regarding the designation and no witnesses spoke in opposition to designation. The hearing was continued on April 3, 1990 (Item No. 22). At that time eight letters were read into the official record, including one letter from the owner, expressing opposition to designation, and seven letters in favor of designation. The Commission has received other letters in favor of designation.

#### Summary

The Century Association Building was designed by the firm of Gambrill & Richardson, whose partners were both members of the association and one of whom, Henry Hobson Richardson, went on to become one of this country's most prominent architects. Built in 1869, the building appears to be Manhattan's oldest surviving structure erected as a clubhouse. Its exterior, which remains remarkably intact, heralded a wave of neo-Grec buildings in the early 1870s. The Century Association, founded in 1847 to promote interest in literature and the arts, attracted authors, artists, and amateurs of letters and the fine arts, many of whom were national leaders in their fields. During the era when the Union Square vicinity flourished as New York's amusement district, the organization established its first permanent home in 1857 on this East 15th Street site in an existing dwelling. The Centurions rebuilt the clubhouse in 1869 to the designs of Gambrill & Richardson and remained there until 1891. The Century Association Building is a concrete reminder of the distinguished history of one of New York's most prominent institutions.

## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

### Early History of the Neighborhood<sup>1</sup>

Union Square, designated a public space in 1832 and opened to the public in 1839, was quickly thereafter encircled with rowhouses and larger town houses, churches and small hotels, becoming the city's most fashionable neighborhood during the 1840s. The blocks extending from the east side of Union Square also were characterized by their rowhouses, except for East 15th Street, which in addition contained an industrial complex of five buildings on the south side of the street and two large frame dwellings, one of which was soon to be remodeled for the Century Association, on the north side of the street. Shops began to appear on the square in the 1860s and during the subsequent years the neighborhood developed into an amusement district, featuring the Academy of Music, many theaters, piano companies and showrooms, music stores, music publishers, public art galleries, studios for painters, photographers, and sculptors, restaurants, and private clubhouses, including that of the Century Association.

### The Century Association<sup>2</sup>

During the second quarter of the nineteenth century, a few private clubs were formed by men of similar social standing or shared interests. Among these organizations was the Sketch Club, founded in 1829, which promoted interest in literature and the arts. In 1847 it merged with an organization of Columbia University alumni, the Column Club, to form The Century.<sup>3</sup> The association's founders, including poet and editor William Cullen Bryant and Gulian C. Verplanck, an author and congressman, adopted its first constitution in January, 1847, and invited one hundred gentlemen -- authors, artists, and amateurs of letters and the fine arts -- to join the group. The organization's name was a product of the number originally invited to be members. Dedicated to "plain living and high thinking," Centurions were men of culture and achievement noted for their informal social intercourse, frugal dinners and refreshments, inspiring art exhibitions, and jovial Twelfth Night celebrations.

Like other New York clubs during that era, the Century had several temporary locations, eventually settling in the area of Manhattan near Union and Madison squares, now known as Ladies Mile. At first the Century met at No. 495 Broadway, over Del Vecchio's picture store. Subsequently the members rented rooms in No. 435 Broome Street and then in No. 575 Broadway, over a millinery shop. An increase in membership required larger facilities for the semi-monthly meetings, so the club moved to No. 24 Clinton Place (now 46 East 8th Street) in 1852.

During the spring of 1857 The Century was incorporated as the Century Association, increased its maximum number of resident memberships to 250, and purchased No. 42 East 15th Street (now known as No. 109-111, see fig. 1), remaining at that location for thirty-four years. During the first decades of the club's existence, its membership rolls increased dramatically, comprising a veritable "Who's Who" of American artists, architects, authors, publishers, actors, statesmen, businessmen, and educators. (See appendix A for lists of significant Centurions of that period.)

Many other social, political, and special interest clubs formed in the nineteenth century; however, apparently none of these clubhouses remain. Some of the clubs never erected specialized buildings in the first place, simply converting existing dwellings for their purposes. The other organizations built clubhouses which they later sold in order to move uptown and these buildings were either demolished or unrecognizably altered.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, it seems that the Century Association Building on East 15th Street is the oldest surviving clubhouse in Manhattan.

### The East 15th Street Clubhouse and its Early Transformations<sup>5</sup>

A two-and-one-half-story frame dwelling of forty-by-twenty square feet stood on this site as early as 1847, when tax assessments began to be recorded for properties on East 15th Street. The dwelling was purchased in 1855 by builder Isaac Lewis, who then sold it to the Century Association in 1857 for \$24,000. The club immediately renovated the property to suit its needs, relying on member Joseph C. Wells, an architect, to oversee the work, which cost \$11,000. Additions included a masonry rear extension, which at fifty-by-twenty square feet had a larger footprint than the original residence, and a stately new facade, in the Italianate *palazzo* mode. Either sheathed in ashlar stone or stuccoed and scored to resemble stone, the facade was set behind a balustraded staircase and areaways demarcated by balustraded fences. Four shuttered openings with multi-pane windows pierced the surface of the raised basement. The first-story entrance, articulated by pilasters and a pedimented entablature, was flanked by four shuttered openings with pedimented surrounds and multi-pane windows. Five second-story openings repeated this form but were slightly shorter. The cornice was surmounted by a broad central pediment which featured an oval window.

Within a few years the increased membership of the club and its expanding program of activities necessitated larger facilities, particularly for meetings and servants. In early 1866 a Committee of Thirteen

was appointed to study the question of whether the club members should relocate or rebuild their clubhouse. Due to financial concerns, the committee recommended improving the site on East 15th Street. One member of the committee, Charles D. Gambrill, submitted his proposal for alterations, which included a new front -- finished in brick, trimmed in Lockport limestone, and capped by a mansard roof -- and a rear extension to accommodate a first-story billiard room and a second-story art gallery. In May, 1867, the firm of Gambrill & Post submitted the proposal for the rear extension to the Department of Buildings and it was subsequently executed.

For reasons not documented, other interior changes and a new facade were stalled for almost two years; the architect or architects involved in the planning may have been changed and may have modified the proposed alterations. Between early 1866, when the committee was formed, and March, 1869, when the building impasse was resolved, architect Henry Hobson Richardson became a Centurion and replaced George B. Post as Gambrill's partner.<sup>6</sup> A contract for construction was settled in early 1869 and when the Department of Buildings issued a permit to build, the architects of record were listed as Gambrill & Richardson. This lag of time between the original proposal and actual construction would have provided an opportunity for Richardson's involvement, though there is no proof of it. The alterations, which included the extension of the attic into a third story and the erection of a new facade (fig. 2), were carried out in 1869 and cost \$21,000. The vague description of the new facade as first proposed (see above) resembles the facade as built, but we cannot know for certain if changes were introduced before the final proposal was approved.<sup>7</sup>

#### Gambrill & Richardson

Charles Dexter Gambrill (1832-1880)<sup>8</sup> was an alumnus of Harvard College who apprenticed in the architectural offices of George Snell in Boston and Richard M. Hunt in New York. He first practiced with George B. Post and then joined Henry H. Richardson in a partnership that lasted from 1867 until 1878, though Richardson moved to Brookline, Massachusetts in 1874. Later, as a partner of H.E. Ficken, Gambrill was responsible for No. 16 Washington Mews (1880, now in the Greenwich Village Historic District). He is also remembered as a specialist in Queen Anne residences and was among the first Fellows of the American Institute of Architects.

One of this country's foremost architects, Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886)<sup>9</sup> studied at Harvard College and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Upon returning to the United States, he settled in New York where he briefly maintained an independent practice before establishing a partnership with

Gambrill in 1867. That same year Richardson married and the couple lived in a house of his design, "Arrochar," at 45 McClean Avenue (1868-69) in the Clifton section of Staten Island, until their departure for Brookline in 1874. In addition to his connection to the Century Association Building, Richardson's New York *oeuvre* includes the Jonathan Sturges Residence (1869-70, demolished) at 38 Park Avenue and Frederick Sturges Residence (1869-70, demolished) at 40 East 36th Street; the memorial (1876-77) to Rev. Henry Eglinton Montgomery at the Church of the Incarnation; alterations (1875, demolished) to All Souls' Church on Fourth Avenue; and alterations to five midtown residences (all demolished).

Richardson's fame derives from the development of his highly personal, yet influential style, best seen in projects outside New York. His most prominent ecclesiastical commissions are Trinity Church (1872-77) and Rectory (1879-80) in Boston. His most memorable public and commercial buildings include the New York State Capitol (1875 and later) in Albany, the Allegheny County Courthouse and Jail (1883-88) in Pittsburgh, and the Marshall Field Wholesale Store (1885-87, demolished) in Chicago. Richardson's residential work is highlighted by the Watts Sherman House (1875-76) in Newport, Rhode Island, the Stoughton House (1882-83) in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and the Glessner House (1885-87) in Chicago. He designed many stations for the Boston and Albany Railroad as well as public libraries throughout eastern Massachusetts.

The question of who was the actual designer of the Century Association Building remains unanswered.<sup>10</sup> Based on Mariana Van Rensselaer's portrayal of Gambrill and Richardson's partnership as being a purely convenient business arrangement with no artistic interaction, later accounts preclude any creative collaboration between the two men. Henry-Russell Hitchcock even denigrates Gambrill's design ability, despite the architect's obituary, which noted that he "was remarkable for the refinement and intelligence which characterized his artistic thought, and all his work bears the impression of a scholarly and singularly fastidious mind."<sup>11</sup> Further research on the relationship between the two architects must be done before historians can state with certainty that they practiced independently.

Though normally associated with the style of his mature work that has come to be called "Richardsonian Romanesque," Richardson was trained from 1859 to 1865 in Paris, where he was exposed to the impressive *hôtels particuliers* and more modest *habitations bourgeoises*. The latter building type more closely corresponded to American needs and can be seen as a model for his Agawam National Bank (1869-70, fig. 3) in Springfield, Massachusetts, and his William Dorsheimer

Residence (1868-71, fig. 4) in Buffalo, erected for a fellow Centurion. The contemporary French character of those two structures is echoed in the less refined design of the Century Association Building (erected 1869), so it does seem possible that Richardson played some part in the design of the clubhouse, at least for the new facade.

#### Design of the Century Association Building<sup>12</sup>

Reflecting the architectural developments in Paris, a city much admired at that time for its leadership in architecture and style, the Century Association Building features a facade in the neo-Grec mode (fig. 5). This style, also called "graeco-Romantic" and epitomized in Henri Labrousse's masterpiece, the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève (1843-50), was a progressive attempt to formulate a modern architectural expression of the era. In America, the neo-Grec vocabulary was characterized by abstracted classical motifs, angular forms, and machine-cut, incised ornament (especially on lintels), producing a style well suited to cast iron, or, in this case, brick trimmed in stone. The typical horizontal banding functioned as support at points of structural stress or as design emphasis; eventually, architects began to design staggered bands which were created by connecting stone window lintels or sills with bands across intervening piers.

Richard Morris Hunt's Studio Building (1857, demolished) at 15 West 10th Street was a very early example of the style in New York. The neo-Grec Century Association clubhouse was erected to designs by Gambrell & Richardson twelve years later (1869), just before a wave of neo-Grec buildings appeared. In several of his works built in the 1870s, Hunt again relied on the neo-Grec vocabulary or combined the neo-Grec idiom with the forms of the more popular Victorian Gothic aesthetic.<sup>13</sup> Other architects in New York and Boston employed a simplified version of the style for prominent building commissions, and the style quickly spread to other American cities. Many of the most visible neo-Grec structures in Manhattan are mercantile buildings in the downtown commercial district now known as Tribeca.

#### Subsequent History of No. 109-111 East 15th Street

As New York's fashionable neighborhoods moved further uptown and the Centurions again outgrew their clubhouse<sup>14</sup> on East 15th Street, the association sold that building and moved into its present home, No. 7 West 43rd Street (1889-91, a designated New York City Landmark), designed by the firm of McKim, Mead & White, and an exemplar of the grand club architecture that has come to characterize midtown. The Century Association continues to thrive as a prominent institution, its limits for resident and nonresident members having

reached 1,200 and 900 respectively. [See appendix B for lists of prominent men who became Centurions after the club moved to West 43rd Street.]

Relatively few alterations have occurred to the former Century Association Building despite its occupation by several subsequent groups.<sup>15</sup> While still inhabited by the Century Association in 1878, fire damaged part of the clubhouse, but it was soon repaired to designs by Gambrell & Richardson. In 1890 the structure was purchased by the Lager Beer Brewers Board of Trade, which erected a one-story rear extension. Identified as the United States Brewers' Association in *King's Handbook of New York* (1893), this organization represented the interests of its approximately 1,000 members who were distributed throughout the country. During the late 1920s and early 1930s, the building was owned by the Manhattan chapter of the Sons of Italy Hall and then the Galicia Sporting Club, which affected interior alterations so that the basement and first two floors were used as a clubhouse and the third story accommodated a caretaker's apartment. During the mid-twentieth century, the building was occupied by the New York Joint Board of Shirt, Leisureware, Robe and Sportswear Workers Union. It is currently occupied by an Asian-American trading company. A drycleaning shop is located in the basement.

Among the alterations to the facade are the painting of the stone, removal of the iron cresting at the roof, installation of a vertically-mounted flagpole, and replacement of most of the window sash. Most of the changes have occurred at the base in conjunction with the removal of sidewalk projections: filling in the areaways and removing the areaway fences, changes to the cheek walls when the entryway steps were set back, removal of the rusticated stonework except for the keyed quoins at the window openings, the conversion of basement windows into doorways, and replacement of the entrance doors and transom.<sup>16</sup>

#### Description

The only part of the former clubhouse which currently is visible from the street is its symmetrical, three-bay facade (figs. 5-7), which is faced in stone (now painted blue-gray), red brick, and gray slate tiles. The raised basement of chiseled ashlar (a simplification of the original stonework) has doorways (originally window openings) in the side bays, each of which is framed by quoining, contains a pair of glazed metal doors, and is reached via a staircase with historic iron railings. (The signage at the eastern doorway was installed in 1992.) The band course above the base is interrupted by the central segmentally-arched entrance which is flanked by narrow cheek walls, contains a pair of glazed metal doors and a plexiglass transom, and is reached by marble steps. The cheek walls support a stone

enframement with a cornice supported by end brackets and a raised keystone. Running along the bottom of the first story, a broad stone band is interrupted at the side bays by the window surrounds, which are simplified versions of the central surround and contain historic iron grilles. The second story features three stone-framed openings that rest on a stone cornice. The slightly wavy brick surface of these two stories is almost flush with its white mortar. The terminal cornice is surmounted by a steeply sloped mansard roof, covered with slate tiles, pierced by three dormers, and framed between brick end walls with coping. A historic two-over-two double-hung wood sash window survives at the western bay of the attic; the remaining openings have different configurations of wood sash windows. A metal downspout survives at the east side of the facade and a flagpole has been added at the center bay.

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#### NOTES

1. Charles Lockwood, *Manhattan Moves Uptown* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976), 159-178, 290-293; Christine Boyer, *Manhattan Manners* (New York: Rizzoli, 1985), passim; LPC, *Ladies' Mile Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1609) (New York: City of New York, 1989).
  2. Board of Managers and Monthly Meeting Minutes, ms. at Century Association Library, esp. I, 11, 41, 201; John H. Gourlie, *The Origin and History of "The Century"* (New York: William C. Bryant & Co., 1856); Francis Gerry Fairfield, *The Clubs of New York* (1873), rpt. (New York: Arno Press, 1975), 40-41; I.N. Phelps Stokes, *Iconography of Manhattan Island, 1498-1909* vol. 5 (New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1915), s.v. 1800; William Thompson Bonner, *New York: The World's Metropolis 1623/4-1923/4* (New York: R.L. Polk & Co., 1924), 196, 207; Century Association, *The Century, 1847-1946* (New York: Century Association, 1947), 3-14; Rufus Rockwell Wilson, *New York in Literature: The Story Told in the Landmarks of Town and Country* (Elmira, N.Y.: Primavera Press, 1947), 63, 70-71, 127; Boyer, 83; Century Association, *The Century Yearbook 1988* (New York: Century Association, [1989]), vii.
  3. Centurions (members of the Century Association) have traced the club's roots back as far as the American Academy of the Fine Arts, organized in 1802. See John Durand, *Prehistoric Notes of the Century Club* (n.p.: n.p., 1882), 5-6.
  4. A review of the following clubs has turned up no clubhouses which predate the Century Association Building: American Jockey Club, Arion Club, Army and Navy Club, Blossom (Democratic) Club, Association of the Bar of the City of New York, Athenaeum, Deutscherverein, Free Masons, German Club, German Lese-Verein, Grolier Club, Harmonie Club, Lambs' Club, Lotos Club, Manhattan Club, Merchants Club, New-York Caledonian Club, New-York Club, New York Press Club, New York Turn-Verein, Olympic Athletic Club, Palette Club, Racquet and Tennis Club, Republic Club, Saint-Nicholas Club, Salmagundi Club, Sorosis Club, Standard Club, Tammany Hall, Travellers' Club, Union Club, and Union League Club, University Club, Verein Freundschaft, Xavier Union Club, and Young Men's Democratic Club.
- Robert A.M. Stern mistakenly claims that the Union League Club built the first clubhouse following a design competition held in 1879. Stern et.al., *New York 1900* (New York: Rizzoli, 1983), 228. See also "Clubs - Club Life - Some New York Clubs," *Galaxy* 22 (Aug., 1876) (rpt. New York: Arno Press, 1965), 227-238.
5. Board of Managers ms, I, 165-69, 226-27; II, 116-19, 161-65, 188-89, 221, 273. Century Association, *Report of the Committee upon Removal or Rebuilding* (n.p.: n.p., [1866]). William Perris, *Maps of the City of New York* (New York: William Perris, 1853), vol. 4, pl. 52; (1857-62), vol. 4, pl. 44. *Atlas of the Entire City of New York* (New York: Geo.

W. Bromley & E. Robinson, 1879), pl. 12; New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, L. 679, pp. 478-80; L. 743, pp. 224-25; L. 2347, pp. 88-89. New York City, Tax Assessment Records, Municipal Archives and Records Center [1847-1880]. New York City, Department of Buildings, Manhattan. Plans, Permits and Dockets, Block 871, Lot 10. ALT 140-1867; ALT 323-1869. "The Century Club," *New York Times*, Jan. 11, 1870, p.2; Century Association, *The Century, 1847-1946*, 14-32.

The facade erected in 1857 is illustrated in an undated photograph in the library of the Century Association and in the Century Association, *The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Founding of the Century* (New York: The Century Association, 1897), photograph after p. 8.

6. The relationship between Richardson and the Committee of Thirteen is undetermined; however, we do know that in addition to forming a partnership with Gambrill, Richardson was probably a relative of committee member John Priestley (Richardson's mother was a Priestley).
7. For a drawing of the facade as originally built, see the frontispiece in Century Association, *Reports, Constitution, By-Laws . . . 1889* (New York: Century Association, 1890).
8. Charles Dexter Gambrill obituary, *American Architect & Building News* 8 (Sept. 18, 1880), 133; "Gambrill, Charles D.," *Who Was Who in America, Historical Volume* (Chicago: A.N. Marquis Co., 1963), 196; Henry F. Withey and Elsie R. Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1970), 229; LPC, *Greenwich Village Historic District Designation Report* (LP-0489) (New York: City of New York, 1969), vol. 1, 50.
9. Peter B. Wight, "H.H. Richardson," *Inland Architect and Builder* 7 (May, 1886), 59-61; Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer, *Henry Hobson Richardson and His Works*, 1888, rpt. with intro by William Morgan (New York: Dover, 1969); W.A. Langton, "The Method of H.H. Richardson," *Architect and Contract Reporter* 63 (Mar. 9, 1900), 156-58; Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *The Architecture of H.H. Richardson and His Times*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass. and London: M.I.T. Press, 1961); Hitchcock, *Richardson as a Victorian Architect* (Baltimore: Barton Gillet, 1966); James F. O'Gorman, *H.H. Richardson and his Office: A Centennial of His Move to Boston, 1874. Selected Drawings* (Cambridge, Mass.: Department of Printing and Graphic Arts, Harvard College Library, 1974); Francis R. Kowsky, "The William Dorsheimer House: A Reflection of French Suburban Architecture in the Early Work of H.H. Richardson," *Art Bulletin* 62, no. 1 (Mar., 1980), 134-45; William H. Pierson, Jr., "Richardson, H.H.," *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, ed. Adolf K. Placzek, vol. 3 (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Free Press, 1982), 558-75; Jeffery Karl Ochsner, *H.H. Richardson, Complete Architectural Works* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: M.I.T. Press, 1982).
10. See Van Rensselaer (1888); Hitchcock (1961) and (1966); Kowsky (1980); and Pierson (1982). One possible scenario is that Gambrill produced the design and supervised its construction without Richardson's involvement. Christopher Gray, "Richardson's Lost Work Discovered Housing a Travel Agency on East 15th," *NYT*, Dec. 11, 1988, real estate sec., p.10, hypothesizes that Richardson alone was responsible for the building. A third possibility, of course, is that the two architects collaborated on the project.
11. Charles Dexter Gambrill obituary, *American Architect & Building News* 8 (Sept. 18, 1880), 133.
12. For an extensive discussion of the French roots of the American neo-Grec style, see Neil Arthur Levine, *Architectural Reasoning in the Age of Positivism. The Neo-Grec Idea of Henri Labrousse's Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1975). For an account of Hunt's role in introducing the style into the United States, see Sarah Bradford Landau, "Richard Morris Hunt: Architectural Innovator and Father of a 'Distinctive' American School," in *The Architecture of Richard Morris Hunt*, ed. Susan R. Stein (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 46-77.
13. For example, Hunt was responsible for at least two significant neo-Grec monuments: the New York Tribune Building (1873-75, demolished) at Nassau and Spruce streets; and the Coal and Iron Exchange (1873-76, later the Delaware & Hudson Canal Company Building, demolished) at 17-21 Cortlandt Street. See Moses King, *King's Handbook of New York City* (Boston: Moses King, 1893), 130-131, 676-677; Landau (1986), 50-51, 54-60. At his Administration Building of Presbyterian Hospital (1869-72) on East 17th Street, Hunt combined the neo-Grec and Victorian Gothic styles.

A review of the photographs in *King's Handbook* (1893) points out that the total number of important neo-Grec buildings

is relatively few. This is because the height in popularity of the neo-Grec style coincided with a lull in building activity, following the Financial Panic of 1873.

14. Resident membership was increased to 800 in 1890. According to Century Association, *Suggestions for a Club House for the Century Association* (n.p.: Century Association, n.d.), 4, another motive for the move was the loss of adequate natural light, due to the erection of Steinway Hall on the south side of the street, across from the clubhouse.
15. King, 798. New York County, Office of the Register, Block Index of Reindexed Conveyances and Abstract Index, Block 871, Lot 10. NYC, Department of Buildings, Manhattan. Plans, Permits and Dockets, Block 871, Lot 10. ALT 34-1878; ALT 2548-1927; C of O 14140 (1928); MC 1951-1945; ALT 827-1964.
16. Department of Building records for this lot do not clearly show the dates of these various alterations.

## 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 (former) Century Association Building has a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the (former) Century Association Building was designed by the firm of Gambrill & Richardson, whose partners were both members of the association and one of whom, Henry Hobson Richardson, went on to become one of this country's most prominent architects; that the building, which was built in 1869, is the oldest known surviving structure erected as a clubhouse in Manhattan; that its stone-trimmed brick exterior, which remains remarkably intact, heralded a wave of neo-Grec buildings in the early 1870s; that the building replaced the organization's first permanent home, which had been established near Union Square in 1857, when that vicinity flourished as the city's amusement district; that the Century Association, founded in 1847 to promote interest in literature and the arts, attracted authors, artists, and amateurs of letters and the fine arts, many of whom were national leaders in their fields, and remained at this site until 1891; and that the building survives as a concrete reminder of the distinguished history of one of New York's most prominent institutions.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 (formerly Section 534 of Chapter 21), 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 (former) Century Association Building, 109-111 East 15th Street, Borough of Manhattan and designates as its Landmarks Site Manhattan Tax Map Block 871, Lot 10.



APPENDIX A: Selected notable Centurions associated with the clubhouse on East 15th Street and the years of their membership in the organization

Actors

Edwin Booth 1861-93

Architects and landscape architects

Leopold Eidlitz 1859-1908  
 Charles D. Gambrill 1859-80  
 Charles C. Haight 1873-1917  
 Richard Morris Hunt 1855-95  
 Edward H. Kendall 1883-1901  
 Josiah Lane 1852-72  
 Charles F. McKim 1882-1909  
 William R. Mead 1890-1928  
 Frederick L. Olmsted 1859-1903  
 George B. Post 1863-1913  
 Edward T. Potter 1867-1904  
 William A. Potter 1877-1905  
 James Renwick 1858-63  
 James Renwick, Jr. 1858-95  
 Robert H. Robertson 1876-1919  
 Ehrick K. Rossiter 1890-1941  
 Russell Sturgis 1870-1909  
 Joseph Trench 1847-53  
 Calvert Vaux 1859-95  
 William R. Ware 1882-1903  
 Stanford White 1886-1906

Artists

Albert Bierstadt 1862-1902  
 Frederick E. Church 1850-1900  
 Frederick S. Church 1889-92  
 Asher B. Durand 1847-86  
 Francis D. Millet 1884-1912  
 Samuel F.B. Morse 1858-60  
 Augustus Saint-Gaudens 1886-1907  
 Charles C. Tiffany 1875-1907

Businessmen

John Jacob Astor, Jr. 1856-74?  
 Samuel D. Babcock 1878-1902  
 J. Pierpont Morgan 1862-1913  
 Alexander T. Stewart 1864-76  
 Cornelius Vanderbilt 1880-99

Literary men and educators

William C. Bryant 1847-78  
 Richard Watson Gilder 1880-1909  
 Henry James, Jr. 1875-78  
 Seth Low 1890-1916  
 Montgomery Schuyler 1885-1914  
 Charles Scribner 1879-1930  
 Gullian C. Verplanck 1847-70  
 Andrew D. White 1866-1918

Statesmen and attorneys

Grover Cleveland 1890-1904  
 William Dorsheimer 1864-88  
 Hamilton Fish 1857?  
 Theodore Roosevelt 1884-1919  
 Elihu Root 1886-1937  
 Samuel J. Tilden 1866-86

APPENDIX B: Selected notable Centurions since the club's move to West 43rd Street

Actors and playwrights

Edward Albee	1977-78
John Barrymore	1924-42
James Cagney	1969-82
Hume Cronyn	1959-72

Architects and landscape architects

Grosvenor Atterbury	1900-56
Henry Bacon	1907-24
William A. Boring	1895-1937
Marcel Breuer	1962-76
Daniel H. Burnham	1895-1912
J. Cleveland Cady	1891-1919
John M. Carrère	1897-1911
Henry Ives Cobb, Jr.	1968-88
Ralph Adams Cram	1908-42
Paul P. Cret	1927-45
Cyrus L.W. Eidlitz	1891-1921
J. André Fouilhoux	1942-45
R. Buckminster Fuller	1955-83
Cass Gilbert	1899-1934
Romaldo Giurgola	1981-83
Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue	1911-24
Henry J. Hardenbergh	1892-1918
Wallace K. Harrison	1933-81
George L. Heins	1893-1907
John Mead Howells	1937-54
Joseph Hudnut	1930-36
Harold VanBuren Magonigle	1930-35
Benjamin Wistar Morris	1911-44
Nathaniel A. Owings	1959-84
John Russell Pope	1920-37
Bruce Price	1891-1903
Philip Sawyer	1901-49
Egerton Swartwout	1919-43
Stephen Francis Voorhees	1929-65

Architectural historians and critics

Alan Burnham	1959-84
Royal Cortissov	1920-48
William Bell Dinsmore	1928-73
Hugh Ferriss	1948-62
Henry-Russell Hitchcock	1972-87
Edgar Kaufmann, Jr.	1961-80
Fiske Kimball	1924-55
George A. Kubler	1946-51
Carroll L.V. Meeks	1956-66
Vincent Scully	1978-
Isaac Newton Phelps Stokes	1911-32

Artists, photographers, and museum directors

Alexander S. Calder	1914-37
Jean Dubuffet	1974-76
Walker Evans	1954-75
Daniel Chester French	1894-1931
Charles Dana Gibson	1919-44
C. Grant LaFarge	1892-1938
James Johnson Sweeney	1945-86

Businessmen

John D. Rockefeller, Jr.	1930-60
John D. Rockefeller III	1939-78
Frederick A.O. Schwarz	1950-74

Educators, writers, and publishers

Henry Adams	1892-1918
Saul Bellow	1966-77
Stephen Vincent Benét	1934-43
John Cheever	1958-75
Theodore DeVinne	1893-1914
John R. Dos Passos	1959-70
William Dean Howells	1897-1920
Aldous Huxley	1958-63
Rudyard Kipling	1895-1936
Dumas Malone	1947-86
Eric Sevareid	1963-67
Arthur Hays Sulzberger	1938-68
Arnold J. Toynbee	1956-75
Christopher Tunnard	1961-79
John Updike	1972-77
Thornton Wilder	1930-75

Musicians

Benny Goodman	1967-86
Andre Kostelanetz	1978-80
Ignace J. Paderewski	1923-60
Isaac Stern	1962-65

Statesmen and attorneys

William J. Brennan, Jr.	1958-60
Zbigniew Brzezinski	1974-81
Benjamin N. Cardozo	1926-38
Dwight D. Eisenhower	1948-62
Herbert Hoover	1919-64
Henry Cabot Lodge	1892-1924
Nelson A. Rockefeller	1937-79
Franklin D. Roosevelt	1922-45
Dean Rusk	1953-73
Carl Schurz	1892-1906
Adlai Stevenson	1952-65
William Howard Taft	1913-30

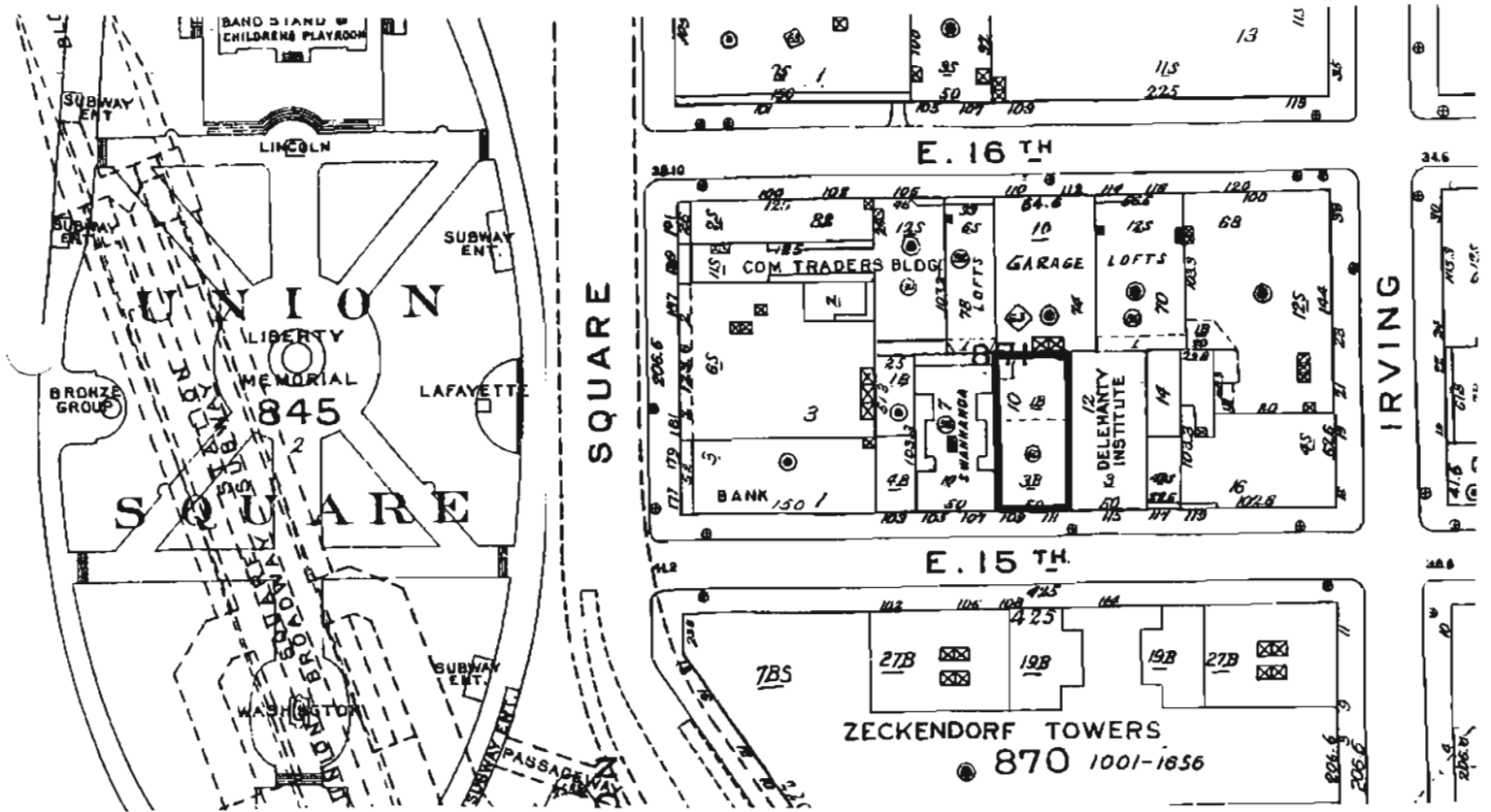


Fig. 1: Sanborn, *Manhattan Land Book* (1991-92), pl. 44



Fig. 2: Century Association, *Reports, Constitution, By-Laws ... 1889* (1890), frontispiece

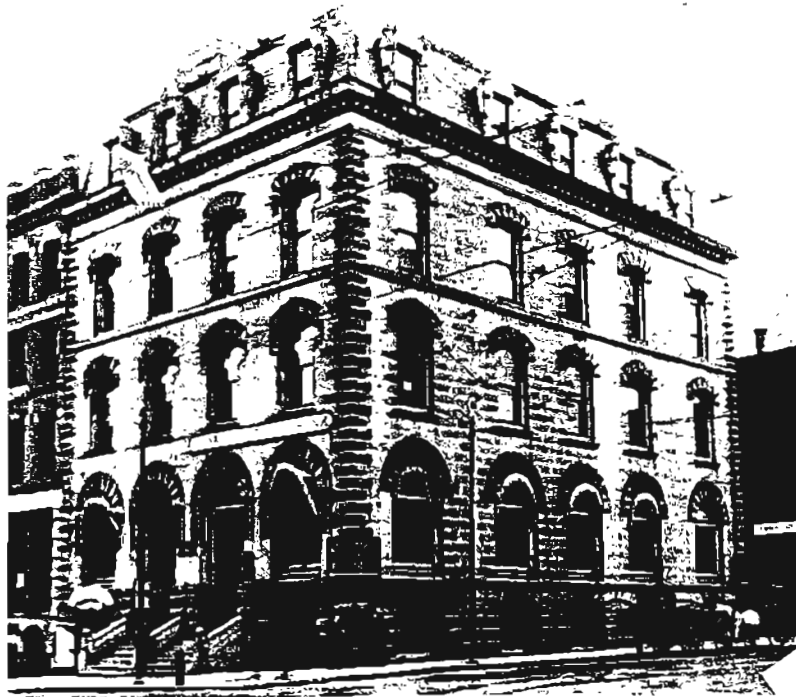


Fig. 3: Agawam National Bank (1869-70) [Ochsner (1982), 64]



Fig. 4: William E. Dorsheimer Residence (1868-71) [Ochsner (1982), 55]



Fig. 5: (Former) Century Association Building, 109-111 East 15th Street [photo: DMB]



Fig. 6: (Former) Century Association Building, detail of window [photo: DMB]

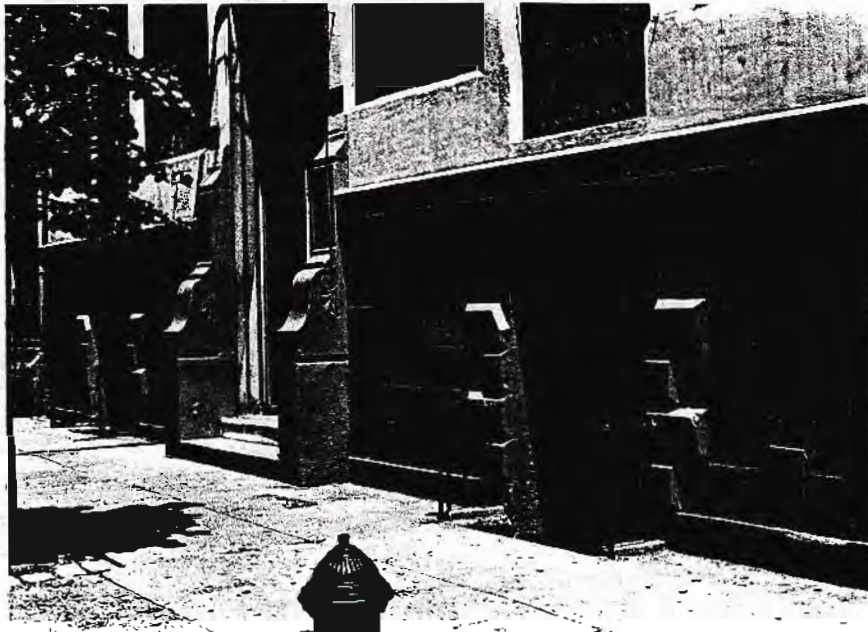


Fig. 7: (Former) Century Association Building, detail of base [photo: DMB]