

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

OMB NO. 1024-0018, NPS FORM

RECEIVED

333

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets. Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Osborne Apartments

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 205 West 57th Street | | not for publication

city, town New York | | vicinity

state New York code NY county New York code 061 zip code 10019

3. Classification

Ownership of property	Category	Number of resources within property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
☒ private	☒ building(s)	1	buildings
☐ public-local	☐ district		sites
☐ public-State	☐ site		structures
☐ public-Federal	☐ structure		objects
	☐ object		
		1	0
			Total

Name of related multiple property listings: na

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, this property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official
Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

3/14/93
Date

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I hereby, certify that this property is:

☒ entered in the National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the National Register. ☐ see continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.

☐ removed from the National Register.

☐ other, (explain:)

Entered in the
National Register

Delores Byers

4/22/93

Signature of keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

(enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

Current Functions

(enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Italian Renaissance

Romanesque

Materials(enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls stone

roof tar

other copper

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Osborne Apartment building is located on the northwest corner of Seventh Avenue and West 57th Street in mid-town Manhattan [1]. The Osborne is surrounded by four significant buildings, all of which it pre-dates. These are: Carnegie Hall (1891, NR listed), Alwyn Court Apartments (1909, NR listed), Rodin Studios (date, and the Art Students League (1892, NR listed). All of these buildings (including the Osborne) are designated New York City Landmarks. Among the first luxury apartments constructed in Manhattan, the Osborne is a rare surviving example of its period and type. The building was constructed in 1883-5; in 1906, two bays were added on 57th Street to the west of the original. The large, eleven-story building has two street facades. The primary facade, 175 feet along 57th Street, is sheathed in rough-cut stone and rhythmically pierced by deeply set windows and varied by three-sided oriels. The secondary elevation, 100 feet, five inches on Seventh Avenue, is less elaborate and is painted. This elevation is not as wide and features eight bays demarcated by single windows. Broad cornices, creating strong horizontal divisions, wrap around both sides of the building above the second, sixth and ninth stories.

57th Street Facade

The large-scale stone entranceway, located near the center of the 57th Street facade, is flush with the main plane of the building, although it originally projected from it. The segmentally arched opening with an eared enframing topped by a garlanded keystone is encompassed by a full entablature supported by paired pilasters. Within the arch are deeply recessed double wooden doors with a large vertically divided transom, subdivided by geometrically patterned leaded glass. Large glass and metal lanterns flank the entrance. The ground story on both facades contains storefronts that have been continuously modernized since they were added in 1919 (one historic storefront, now a shoe repair shop, remains on the Seventh Avenue side of the building). Above the stores, a plain, slightly projecting bandcourse separates the first from the second story.

At the second story, the original section of the building has eight bays. At the center are four round-arched windows with flat keystones, each with small-paned metal casement sash (not original). This section was originally fronted by a columned loggia that was removed when the ground story entranceway was pushed back to the main plain of the building. To each side of this central section are two paired windows within round-arched frames that have stone mullions forming transoms. These windows, like those above, have one-over-one double-hung sash. Beneath these four windows are decorative, carved stone panels. Paired, square-headed windows form the outside group at this level. They are set in surrounds with stone mullions forming transoms.

The projecting bracketed cornice that caps the second story originally had a stone balustrade that is no longer extant. The cornice is cut back over the center four bays, where the loggia was originally located.

[X] See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Osborne Apartments
New York City, New York County, New York

Section 7 page 2

The four stories above this cornice are symmetrically arranged with three-sided oriel windows at the end bays and the two center bays. The other bays have paired, square-headed windows. At the fifth story, these windows are fronted by narrow stone. All of the windows are deeply set in the wall; those at the third, fourth and fifth stories have stone mullions separating them from stained-glass transoms, most of which are intact. Beneath the windows of the fourth story, the carved stone spandrels display swags, putti, lions' heads and other classical elements. The sixth story, like the second, is capped by a bracketed cornice, which was carried a stone balustrade. At approximately the fifth and sixth story levels, a bartizan-like form, of the same rusticated stone, projects from each corner of the building and merges with the sixth-story cornice.

Between this cornice and a similar one above the ninth story, the seventh, eight and ninth stories are again symmetrical and identical to each other. The outermost bays and the two central bays have three windows each, while the two bays between each group have paired windows. The windows at the seventh and eighth stories have stained-glass transoms. Smooth-cut ashlar stone and paneled spandrels link the bays vertically within these stories. The tenth story has square-headed windows, arranged in pairs that conform to the bays of the stories below. A narrow band course crowns this story. Above, the top story has single, square-headed windows containing a variety of replacement sash types, each with a plain stone enframement and set between narrowly projecting pilasters. The stonework on these top two stories has deteriorated. The flat stone cornice above is crowned by finials and is undergoing restoration that will reproduce the original copper cornice.

In 1906 two bays were added to the western side of the building. The horizontal lines of the original portion of the 57th Street facade continue, but the addition is one story shorter and is topped by a stone balustrade. At each story of the easternmost bay of the addition is a single, small window with one-over-one double-hung sash. The western bay has a three-window metal-clad oriel that rises the height of the building. Broad projections occur at the same levels as the building's original cornices and the addition is crowned by a mansard roof above the ninth story. The top story has a three-window bay that does not project. Two more bartizan-like forms are found on the addition, at the same level as the originals.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Osborne Apartments
New York City, New York County, New York

Section 7 page 3

Seventh Avenue Facade

The horizontal divisions continue on Seventh Avenue at the same levels as on 57th Street. The two northernmost bays, however, correspond to lower ceiling heights, creating more stories. This facade is eight bays wide, each bays having a single, square-headed window (most with transoms), except the northernmost one, which has three windows.

The storefronts continue on the ground story of the Seventh Avenue facade. Above the first cornice, the center bay at the next four stories projects with a three-sided oriel joining two windows. At the third story on the oriel a carved stone panel indicates the date 1885 surrounded by ornamental motifs. The spandrels of the fourth-story windows are marked by carved stone ornament in a manner similar to that on the 57th Street facade, while two balconies are found on the windows of the fifth story. The northernmost bay contains three windows in an oriel, while the next bay to its south has small, single windows that mark the transition between the duplex floor levels. Another bartizan-like form is found at the northern corner of this facade.

Between the next two cornices, all but the northernmost bay of the seventh, eight and ninth stories have evenly spaced single windows with smooth stone surrounds. Above the top cornice are two stories with recently repaired stonework. The top story, which originally covered approximately half of the building, was extended over the entire building in an alteration of 1889. The irregularly spaced windows of this story do not correspond to the bays below them. The simple copper cornice, added in 1989, is a reproduction of the original.

Interior

On the interior, the Osborne is especially distinguished by its major public spaces, the entrance vestibule and lobby. These lavishly decorated spaces have been variously attributed to Louis Comfort Tiffany, Stanford White, John LaFarge and J.A. Holzer. Despite this speculation, an interior panel attributes the decoration to Holzer. Further research would be necessary to document conclusively the involvement of another designer.

The entrance vestibule is a cube, measuring approximately twenty by twenty feet. Three marble steps and five steps clad in repousse copper lead to the main lobby, which measures ninety-two feet long,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Osborne Apartments
New York City, New York County, New York

Section 7 page 4

fourteen feet wide and fifteen feet high. The lobby is decorated with varicolored marbles, bronzes, mosaics, wood carvings, plaques, decorative plaster and filigree brass work. The rich vermeil coloring of the walls on the east and west ends was achieved by an overlay of gold on aluminum foil. The Tiffany influence can be seen in the lavish use of stained glass and in the gold-leafed backed mosaics on the two great Romanesque arches. The lobby is lighted by sixteen double sconces of bronze dore and four magnificent chandeliers, also of repousse copper. There are two sweeping marble staircases. A recent restoration of the lobby is near completion.

Above the lobby, each floor of the Osborne was originally divided into only four apartments. Thus, the entire building accommodated only thirty-eight families, including two apartments on the ground floor. Each apartment was laid out in a linear fashion, with the public rooms (parlour, library) on the Fifty-Seventh Street facade and the other spaces behind them in a hierarchical manner (i.e., master bedroom, dining room, kitchen, smaller bedrooms and servants' rooms). In order to provide all four apartments on each floor with light and air, the Osborne was designed in a U shape, around a central open light well. When an addition was added to the west elevation of the building in 1907, another small light well was created between the west elevation and the annex.

Apartments in the Osborne were originally distinguished by fifteen foot ceilings in the public rooms, stained-glass transoms, extensive mahogany woodwork, bronze mantels, crystal chandeliers and elaborate marquetry flooring. Service and sleeping rooms have eight-foot ceilings. The Osborne had 201 flues, and most still lead to working fireplaces, with mantels of richly varied designs, many with brass fittings and faience tiles. The eleventh (attic) floor was used for storage and service.

Originally completed with eleven stories in the front and fourteen in the rear, the incomplete attic was extended in 1899 to cover the entire building, creating fifteen stories in the rear. In 1907, the Osborne was extended to the west by twenty-five feet through the construction of the annex. Although of steel-frame construction, the facade of the annex harmonizes with the rest of the building.

Beginning in 1919, the ground-floor apartments were converted into commercial spaces. Since 1922, many of the larger apartments on floors one through ten were subdivided into smaller units. In 1941, the eleventh floor was divided into apartments. Today, the Osborne contains 109 apartments. Fourteen of the original apartments

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Osborne Apartments
New York City, New York County, New York

Section 7 page 5

survive with much of the original detailing, including the marquetry floors. Overall, the Osborne retains an excellent level of integrity.

NOTES

1. This nomination is derived almost entirely from the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission Designation Report, LP-1770, prepared by Virginia Kurshan and edited by Elisa Urbanelli, 1991.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of significance

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Architecture

c1883-c1920

c1883

c1907

Cultural Affiliation

na

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

na

James E. Ware

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Osborne Apartment Building is significant under criterion C in the area of architecture as an outstanding example of an early luxury apartment building in New York City and as an outstanding example of a Romanesque Revival style high-rise designed by the prominent period architect James E. Ware. Constructed in c1883-5 in the vicinity of Central Park, and in what was soon to become the city's first apartment house district, the Osborne is a rare survivor from the early stages of upper-income multi-family housing in Manhattan. Although multiple dwellings were common in Manhattan throughout the nineteenth century, it was not until the last third of the century that apartment living became acceptable for the middle and upper classes. The Osborne represents the fullest development of the luxury type and, at the time of its completion, boasted fireproof construction, modern plumbing, steam heat, electricity, elevator service, large duplex apartments with double-height parlors and dining rooms, fine interior woodwork and cabinetry, three-bay oriel windows to provide increased light and air and an elaborate entrance and lavishly embellished lobby.

The Osborne is also significant as an example of the work of the prominent New York architect James E. Ware, who is known for his designs for a wide variety of different building types, including model tenements, churches, armories and warehouses, among others. Combining elements of the Renaissance and Romanesque Revival styles, Ware's design illustrates the adaptation of conventional styles to the forms of ever-taller high-rises at the end of the nineteenth century. In his design for the Osborne, Ware combined the rusticated surfaces of the Romanesque with the massing of a Renaissance palazzo, simply extended upward, with appropriate horizontal divisions to break the large expanse.

In the early twentieth century, the Osborne was adapted for ground-level storefronts and received two small extensions. On the interior, the lobby and entrance vestibule are elaborately decorated and retain an excellent level of integrity. Although many of the apartments have been subdivided, much original detail and decoration survives. Other than these changes, the building is virtually intact from its period of construction.

Development of the Apartment House in New York [1]

With Manhattan's buildable area limited by its natural water boundaries as its population increased, land was a premium. During New York's earliest period of settlement, living "over the store" was an acceptable residential arrangement. By the nineteenth century, however, those who had a choice moved away from their places of business, generally to new, more northerly neighborhoods. Fewer and fewer people,

[X] See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEETOsborne Apartments
New York City, New York County, New York

Section 8 page 2

however, could afford a spacious home at some distance from their work. It is not surprising, therefore, that multiple dwellings for those with lower incomes began to exist in New York early in its development. By the early 1800s, those who could not afford single-family homes lived in boarding houses, hotels or subdivided rowhouses. Tenements for the poor appeared during the first half of the nineteenth century, as developers discovered they could make more of a return on their money by fitting several families in the same building on a standard lot. By mid-century, more commodious French flats were promoted as multiple dwellings for people whose economic level put them above the working class. It was not until 1869-70, however, with Richard Morris Hunt's Stuyvesant Apartments, which had the cachet of a well-known designer and a facade that exhibited its more lofty intentions, that apartment living began to be seen as acceptable for the middle and upper classes [2]. The Stuyvesant marked the broader acceptance of multi-family living so that by the end of the 1870s, several hundred apartment houses geared to the middle class had been constructed in New York, with ninety more built in the five years from 1880 until 1885 [3].

In addition to the economic advantages of apartment buildings to both the developer and the tenant, there were certain sociological and technological considerations that had an impact on the growing acceptance of this type of living situation [4]. During the middle of the nineteenth century, certain concepts of propriety were widely acknowledged and greatly valued by many in the middle and upper classes. These included the strong sense of "home" and the idea that home was to be a safe haven from the rest of the world; the importance of privacy for the family unit; and the idea that an individual's life was to be lived among one's social and economic peers and should not include a mixing of societal levels. Over time, and with a new set of social realities, these views were gradually adjusted to accommodate multi-family living arrangements, encouraged by new technology that made group living advantageous. Compared to a small home, a large apartment building was more economical and efficient in the provision of steam heat, running water, indoor plumbing and, later, electricity for its inhabitants. Some apartment buildings even centralized household work, providing laundry, cooking and shopping services for their residents. Maintenance of the home was also easier, since apartments had the living area all on one floor. Thus, fewer servants were required, the retention of which, even in the 1880s, was becoming a difficult problem.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEETOsborne Apartments
New York City, New York County, New York

Section 8 page 3

With the acceptance of French flats, New York's architects and developers elaborated the apartment house idea so that, through the 1870s and early 1880s, true luxury apartment buildings for the upper classes began to be built in New York [5]. In 1871, David H. Haight remodeled an old mansion on Fifth Avenue and 15th Street, added an elevator, and turned it into the Haight House (demolished). With the provision of elevators allowing for habitable buildings taller than the typical six or seven story tenement, a class of tenant could be attracted that would not consider living in a walk-up; such a building thus stood to be more profitable in generating higher rents. In 1876, the first Osborne Apartments (demolished) was completed by the firm of Duggin and Crossman at Fifth Avenue between 52nd and 53rd Streets. The six-story building was promoted as the finest apartment house in the city, with its attention to good planning as well as elegant design. (Aside from the name, this building had no relationship to the current apartment house.) The Bradley Apartments (demolished) on 59th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, built in 1877 and designed by John G. Prague, was considered New York's prototypical luxury apartment house. Edward Clark commissioned architect Henry J. Hardenbergh in 1879 to design a seven-story apartment building, the Van Corlear (demolished), which filled the blockfront from 55th to 56th Streets on Seventh Avenue. Their successful collaboration in this project perhaps led to their work on the Dakota, with its distinctive chateausque design and celebrity residents, is one of New York's best known apartment buildings. Shortly after construction began on the Dakota, a group of eight buildings, known collectively as the Central Park Apartments or the Navarro Flats (demolished), was begun on 59th Street between Sixth and Seventh Avenues. Designed by Hubert, Pirsson and Company, these buildings were intended to be the most elegant apartments the city had ever seen. the early years of the 1880s saw a number of large luxury apartment houses begun in New York City, with the present Osborne among the earliest; few of these pioneering buildings survive.

The Apartment House District

Many of the early apartment buildings in New York City were constructed in the 1880s in the newly developing area near Central Park. While some smaller apartment houses were constructed downtown, near shopping and theaters, the broad expanse of Central Park made possible the development of larger buildings around the park's perimeter. Wide streets and avenues could accommodate the large structures, which would have overpowered smaller streets and squares, while allowing ample light and air to all buildings. Thus

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEETOsborne Apartments
New York City, New York County, New York

Section 8 page 4

57th and 59th Streets, west of the city's most elegant residential neighborhood, were particularly favored locations for this new building type. Fifty-Seventh Street had begun to develop its high-toned character when Cornelius Vanderbilt II erected his enormous mansion on the corner of Fifth Avenue in 1879-82. Other palatial residences followed. By 1885, the neighborhood became known as "the very best in the city" [6], a factor that attracted developers seeking wealthy clients for their new apartment houses. The early luxury apartment buildings seemed to incite more construction of the same type and by the end of the decade the area to the south of Central Park, from Fifth Avenue to Broadway, became known as the apartment house district [7]. In addition to luxury residential buildings, 57th Street already had or would soon have a number of artistically related buildings such as the Sherwood and Rembrandt Studios (both demolished), which provided living and working spaces for artists, Carnegie Hall (1889-91, a designated New York City Landmark) and its studios, and the Fine Arts Society Building (1891-2, a designated new York City Landmark).

Building the Osborne

The Osborne Apartment was the conception of Thomas Osborne, whose desire was to build the tallest apartment house in the city. Osborne, who had immigrated to this country from Ireland, had a successful stone-cutting business on Manhattan's east side. He had been involved in building for several years before this venture and even announced further projects as soon as this apartment house was under way [8].

The property at 57th Street and Seventh Avenue, surrounded by small businesses and stables, was purchased in 1883 from the well-known restaurateur John Taylor for \$210,000 [9]. Osborne commissioned James E. Ware to design his luxury building, which was promoted as "one of the most substantially built structures of the kind in the city." It was to be completely fireproof, with four Otis elevators for ease of internal movement, staircases of marble and iron, steam heat, electricity, and modern plumbing. The spacious apartments -- some with duplex levels -- were to have interiors fitted with fine woodwork and cabinetry. Plans called for a florist, a doctor and a chemist to be located in the basement for the convenience of the residents and the ultimate luxury of an all-weather croquet ground on the roof so that those living there could obtain exercise year-round [10; The croquet court was apparently never constructed.] The elaborate entrance and lobby areas, designed to set the tone of the building as soon as one entered, were the work of Swiss-born and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Osborne Apartments
New York City, New York County, New York

Section 8 page 5

Paris-trained artist J.A. Holzer, with contributions by Augustus Saint-Gaudens and John LaFarge [11]. Holzer created an ornate lobby for the Osborne that included mosaics, marble, gold leaf, leaded glass, a coffered ceiling and murals.

From the outset, Osborne planned to sell this building. As early as October 1883, an investment company was formed to purchase the structure [12]. For reasons as yet undiscovered, this sale was not carried out. Osborne still hoped to sell the building, as announced in 1884, before construction was complete [13]. The Record & Guide reported the sale of the property in December 1885 [14], although no transaction was recorded in the Register's office until 1887, when the property was conveyed to John H. Taylor, the son of the person from whom Osborne had originally purchased the land and who held his mortgage [15]. The building was completed as planned, although the high costs of construction of this luxury building had forced Osborne into bankruptcy. Osborne's original idea, however, of a well-appointed large apartment house intended to appeal to the wealthy, has proven successful for more than one hundred years.

James E. Ware [16]

The architect for the Osborne was James E. Ware, who was responsible for numerous types of projects during the almost fifty years of his architectural career. A native New Yorker, James Edward Ware (1846-1918) was educated at the college of the City of New York and apprenticed in the office of R.G. Hatfield, a noted mid-nineteenth century New York architect. Ware established his own office in 1869 and, beginning in 1879, worked in partnership with his son, Franklin B., and later with his second son, Arthur. Briefly, in the late 1890s, Ware also formed a partnership with Herbert Spencer Styne-Harde. Ware had an extensive practice during which he produced city and country houses, grand hotels, school buildings, churches, apartment buildings, tenements and warehouses. Although he was trained in the Second Empire style, Ware worked comfortably in a variety of styles, including the Queen Anne, as seen in a group of rowhouses built in 1878-80 for Ira Doying on East 67th Street [17]. Other major works included the Gothic Revival Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church at 917 Madison Avenue (1899-1900, in the Upper East Side Historic District) and the Twelfth Regiment Armory at Columbus Avenue and 61st Street (1886-7, demolished). One of his major concerns was for fireproof warehouses and he designed two such buildings for the Manhattan Warehouse Company, one at Lexington and 42nd Street and another at Seventh Avenue and 52nd Street (both demolished). Ware did work on model tenement design, creating what

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEETOsborne Apartments
New York City, New York County, New York

Section 8 page 6

came to be known as the "dumbbell" plan for which he won a competition sponsored by the magazine, The Plumber and Sanitary Engineer, in 1878. Although later criticized, this plan, which was incorporated into the Tenement House Act of 1879, was a significant advancement in rational planning and in the introduction of more light and air into dark, overcrowded tenement buildings [18]. In 1896, Ware won second prize in a competition for model tenements sponsored by the Improved Housing Council. The designs were based on Ernest Flagg's premise of square buildings with central light courts to provide the best light and ventilation while still covering enough of the lot to provide a fair return to the investors. Shortly thereafter, Ware was commissioned by the City and Suburban Homes Company to rework his competition designs for several buildings of its First Avenue Estate (1898-1915, a designated New York City Landmark).

The Design of the Osborne Apartments

With the development of large apartment houses, architects presented these pioneering buildings in various ways. While some chose to dress these two turrets and towers (such as the Navarro Flats and the Dakota), in an attempt to create individuality within the context of a large multi-family living arrangement, Ware's conceptions was somewhat different. The exterior of his building was designed to appear both substantial and refined, an outgrowth of the finely planned interior arrangements. To this end, he combined the Romanesque Revival styles in a bold and original manner, which was not only unusual for this period in New York City but also resulted in an architecturally impressive design. The robust Romanesque Revival style had achieved popularity at this time, largely due to the influence of the work of H.H. Richardson and other innovative architects. Characteristic elements of this style found on the Osborne include the rough-cut stone finish, the deep-set windows, the grand, round-arched entrance and round-arched window openings. Stanford White had used rock-faced rustication and a large round-arched entrance on the multi-unit Tiffany residence (1882-4, demolished) at Madison Avenue and East 72nd Street [19]. Similar elements can be seen on numerous, somewhat later buildings of the Chicago School. The bartizan-like forms at the corners of the Osborne, reminiscent of medieval fortresses, are also found on the slightly later Rookery (Burnham and Root, 1885-6). Ware probably designed the rhythmically arranged three-bay orioles in an attempt to introduce more light and air into the apartments. While few example of this fenestration are found on large buildings in New York from this period, similar elements were included on many later

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEETOsborne Apartments
New York City, New York County, New York

Section 8 page 7

commercial structures in Chicago, such as the Monadnock Building (Burnham and Root, 1889-91). The emphatic rustication of the Osborne, although usually associated with buildings by Richardson (such as the later Marshall Field Wholesale Store, 1885-7) and his followers, was likely a response to the developer Thomas Osborne and his stone-cutting business. In its massing, however, the Osborne resembles a vertically extended Italian Renaissance palazzo, reflecting the emerging popularity in New York of the Renaissance Revival style at the time this building was constructed. The regularity of its fenestration and the emphasis on horizontal divisions that break up the huge mass of the building (less obvious now due to the removal of the balustrades) exemplify this stylistic trend. The panels of carved stone in numerous spandrels bear such classical motifs as lions, putti, swags and garlands. These panels, plus numerous stained-glass transoms, help to lighten the heaviness of the building. The result is one of the most striking apartment buildings in New York City.

When constructed, the building had a frontage of 150 feet on 57th Street and 100 feet on Seventh Avenue. It was built with duplex apartments, creating eleven stories in the front and fourteen stories in the rear, a fact that becomes obvious at the change of window levels in the northernmost bay on the Seventh Avenue facade. The original plan of three apartments per floor had the high-ceilinged living and dining rooms of each unit in the front, with two rear extensions separated by a narrow court. By 1889, an alteration by Ware raised the roof level, making it the same height all across the building and providing extra rooms for servants at the upper stories, while creating fifteen stories at the rear of the building [20]. Responding to a need for even larger apartments with more bedrooms, a twenty-five foot wide extension was made to the western side of the building in 1906, designed by S.G. Taylor [21]. Taylor, a relative of John Taylor, who had taken over the building from Osborne, was also part owner of the premises. Taylor's addition blends with Ware's original conception in a harmonious manner, using rounded metal-framed bays set in a rough-cut stone at each level.

Further alterations in 1919 changed the lower stories [22]. A broad areaway that originally surrounded the building like a moat was filled in. Stories were inserted into the ground level spaces and the entrance portal on 57th Street was moved back to the main plane of the facade. The loggia, which had been located above the entrance, was removed.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Osborne Apartments
New York City, New York County, New York

Section 8 page 8

The Taylor family held Osborne until 1961 [23]; the Taylors were responsible for modernization of the building, including subdivision of many of the original suites. Many huge apartments survived, however, and the building drew many wealthy and famous tenants. With its location across from Carnegie Hall and near other arts facilities, artists have consistently been among the population. In 1961, the Taylor family sold the building to a real estate concern, the Linland Corporation. The building's tenants then joined together to form a cooperative for themselves [24]. Today, the Osborne is a well-maintained apartment building.

NOTES

1. This nomination is derived almost entirely from the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission Designation Report, LP-1770, prepared by Virginia Kurshan and edited by Elisa Urbanelli, 1991. The section of that report dealing with the history of apartment houses in New York City was derived from Elizabeth Collins Cromley, Alone Together, A History of New York's Early Apartments (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990).

2. For information on the Stuyvesant and other contemporary apartment houses, see Sarah Bradford Landau, "Richard Morris Hunt: Architectural Innovator and Father of a 'Distinctive' American School," The Architecture of Richard Morris Hunt, ed. Susan R. Stein (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986), 61-6.

3. Real Estate Record & Guide 35 (February 7, 1885), 127.

4. See esp. Cromley, Chapter 4.

5. Much of the following material is from M. Christine Boyer, Manhattan Manners, Architecture and Style, 1850-1900 (New York: Rizzoli, 1985), 154-161.

6. Record & Guide 35 (February 7, 1885), 132.

7. Boyer, 155-7.

8. Little information has been uncovered regarding Osborne. A short obituary appeared in Real Estate Record & Guide 50 (October 15, 1892), 477. While Osborne was involved in several building projects in Manhattan, it does not appear, however, that he had anything to do with the first Osborne Apartments. Osborne developed

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Osborne Apartments
New York City, New York County, New York

Section 8 page 9

a seven-story apartment building at 223-5 East 17 Street (in the Stuyvesant Square Historic District), constructed at the same time as the Osborne, in 1883. Additionally, on July 21, 1883, the Record & Guide announced that Thomas Osborne was about to build three new tenements for his workers near his stone cutting business (p. 525).

9. New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 1731, p. 51, May 2, 1883.

10. Record & Guide 33 (March 22, 1884), 289. See also New York City, Department of Buildings, Manhattan, Plans, Permits and Dockets, NB 538-183.

11. Thieme-Becker, Kunstler-Lexikon (Leipzig: Seemann, 1924), 415; M. Fielding, Dictionary of American Painters, Sculptors and Engravers (New York: Struck, 1945), 174; and Davida Deutsch, "The Osborne, New York City," Antiques (July 1986), 157.

12. Record & Guide 32 (October 20, 1883), 809.

13. Record & Guide 33 (March 22, 1884), 289.

14. Record & Guide 36 (December 19, 1885), 1393.

15. Liber 2056, p. 75.

16. Information about Ware was taken from the research files of the Landmarks Preservation Commission and LPC, City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate Designation Report (LP-1692), prepared by Gale Harris (New York, 1990).

17. These buildings, although severely altered, are located in the Upper East Side Historic District. They were published as "Houses in East 67th Street for I.E. Doying, Esq.," American Architect and Building News 8 (September 18, 1880), pl. 247, 138.

18. See Richard A. Plunz, A History of Housing in New York City: Dwelling Type and Social Change in the American Metropolis (New York: Columbia UP, 1990), 24-8.

19. See William C. Shopsin and Mosette Glaser Broderick, The Villard Houses (New York: Viking, 1980), 44-6.

20. Alt. 1195-1889.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Osborne Apartments
New York City, New York County, New York

Section 8 page 10

21. Alt. 2104-1906.
22. Alt. 2558-1919.
23. Liber 2119, p. 217.
24. New York Times, March 3, 1962.

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested	☒ See continuation sheet
☐ previously listed in the National Register	Primary location of additional data:
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register	☒ State historic preservation office
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark	☐ Other State agency
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____	☐ Federal agency
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____	☐ Local government
	☐ University
	☐ Other
	Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A 18 586020 4513020
Zone Easting Northing

C
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

D
Zone Easting Northing

☐ See continuation sheet

The nomination boundary is outlined with a heavy line on the enclosed map.

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nomination boundary includes the current property associated with the Osborne, which is coincident with its historic property.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title CONTACT: Kathleen LaFrank - see continuation sheet -
organization Division for Historic Preservation date November 1992
street & number Peebles Island, Box 189 telephone 518-237-8643
city or town Waterford state NY zip code 12188-0189

[X] See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Osborne Apartments
New York City, New York County, New York

Section 9 page 2

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barnett, Edmond. "Osborne, Home of Artists, to Become a Co-Op." New York Times 3 March 1962.
- Boyer, M. Christine. Manhattan Manners, Architecture and Style, 1850-1900. New York: Rizzoli, 1985.
- Cromley, Elizabeth Collins. Alone Together: A History of New York's Early Apartments. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990.
- Deutsch, Davida Tenenbaum. "The Osborne, New York City." Antiques (July 1986): 151-158.
- Duggan, Dennis. "Tenants of the Osborne Rescue 77-Year-Old Apartment House." New York Times 8 July 1962, p. 1.
- Fielding, M. Dictionary of American Painters, Sculptors and Engravers. New York: Struck, 1945.
- "The Highest Building in New York." New York Times 15 May 1883, p. 8.
- "Houses in East 67th Street." American Architect and Building News 8 (18 September 1880): pl. 247, 138.
- King, Moses. King's Handbook of New York City. Boston: King, 1893.
- Landmarks Preservation Commission. City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate Designation Report (LP-1692). Report prepared by Gale Harris. New York: LPC, 1990.
- "Mr. Osborne's Proposed Building." New York Times 17 May 1883, p. 8.
- New York City. Department of Buildings, Manhattan. Plans, Permits and Dockets. [Block 1029, Lot 27].
- New York County, Office of the Register. Liber Deeds and Conveyances.
- Plunz, Richard. A History of Housing in New York City: Dwelling Type and Social Change in the American Metropolis. New York: Columbia UP, 1990.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Osborne Apartments
New York City, New York County, New York

Section 9 page 3

Real Estate Record and Guide 32 (21 July 1883): 525; 32 (20 October 1883): 809; "Prominent Buildings Under Way." 33 (22 March 1884): 289; "How the Great Apartment Houses Have Paid. 35 (7 February 1885): 127-8; "Real Estate Department." 35 (7 February 1885): 132; "Gossip of the Week." 36 (19 December 1885): 1393; "Thomas Osborne" [obituary]. 50 (15 October 1892): 477.

Reif, Rita. "'Save the Osborne' Is Music In Tenants' Ears at Luxury Apartment House." New York Times 18 February 1961, p. 13.

"Selling the Osborne Flats." New York Times 7 March 1888, p. 8.

Shopsin, William C. and Broderick, Mosette Glaser. The Villard Houses: Life Story of a Landmark. New York: Viking, 1980.

Thieme-Becker. Kunstler-Lexikon. Leipzig: Seemann, 1924.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Osborne Apartments
New York City, New York County, New York

Section 11 page 2

This nomination is taken almost entirely from the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission Designation Report, LP-1770, prepared by Virginia Kurshan and edited by Elisa Urbanelli, 1991. The section of that report detailing the history of apartment houses in New York City was derived from Elizabeth Collins Cromley, Alone Together: A History of New York's Early Apartments (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990).

Additional research and documentation provided by:

Nis Adolph Petersen, President
Board of Directors, Osborne Tenants Corp.
205 West 57th Street
New York, NY 10019
212-247-5917

Osborne Apartment House NY, NY Co, NY

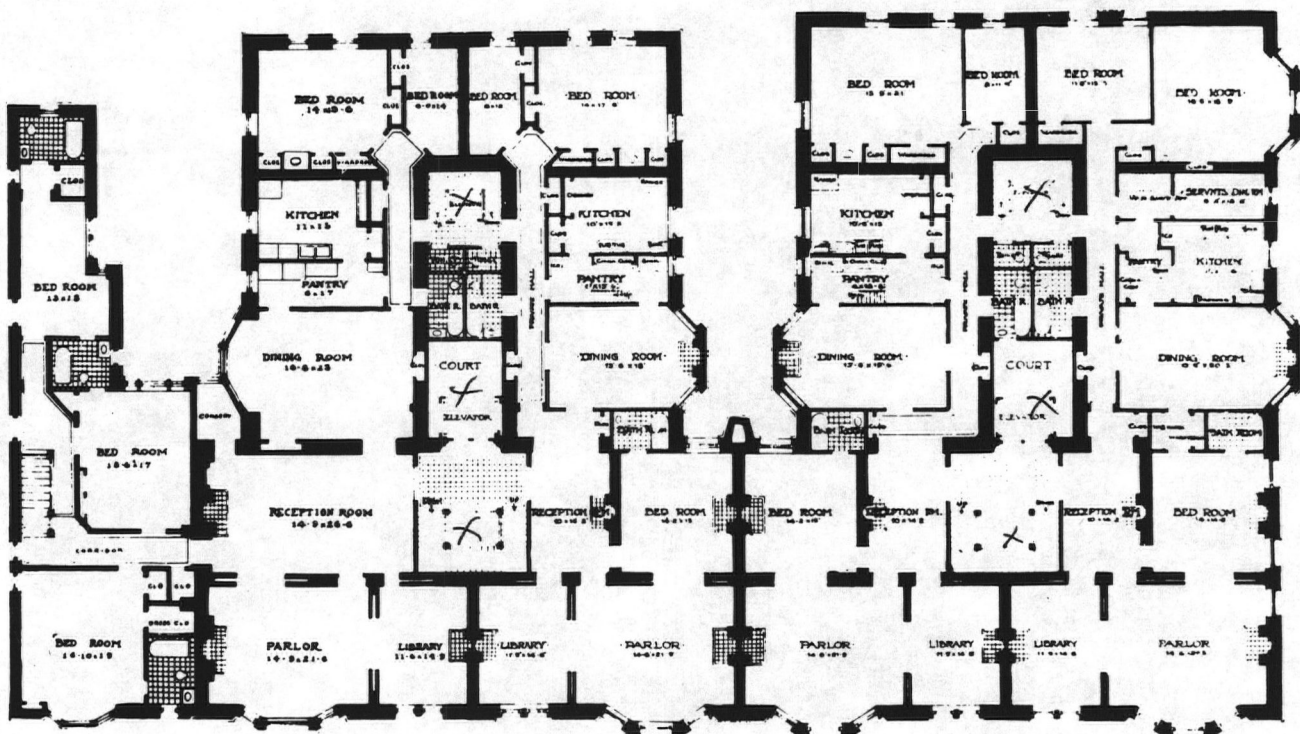
The Osborne
205 West 57th Street

Architect: James E. Ware
Builder: Thomas Osborne
John Taylor
Built: 1885
Addition: 1910 1906-7
Architect: Taylor and Levi
Builder: Taylor, Freeman and Ely

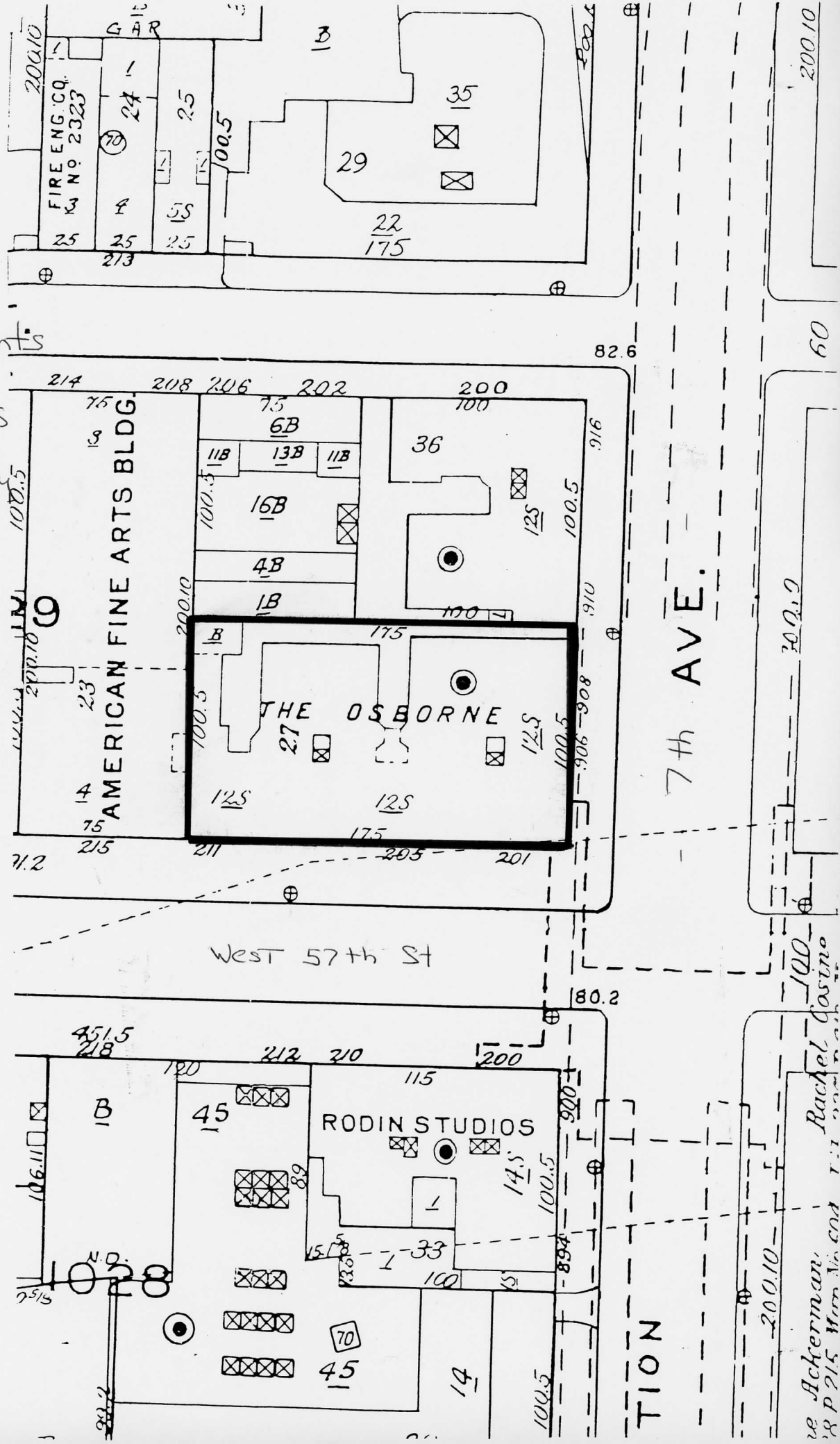
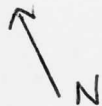
Floor plan of the Osborne with the courts opening on to Central Park, 600' to the north. "X's" mark the light and air shafts in addition to that provided by the oriel windows.

Source: Alpern, Andrew. Apartment House for the Affluent. NY: McGraw, 1979, p. 22.

Due to its proximity to Carnegie Hall and its solid, sound-resistive construction, **The Osborne** has long housed musicians and others in the arts in a heavily rusticated Renaissance palazzo style. The building was begun by Thomas Osborne, a stone contractor, and was completed by John Taylor, a hotel operator, after Osborne went bankrupt. The interiors are ponderously lavish, with extensive mahogany woodwork, bronze mantels, crystal chandeliers and elaborate parquet flooring. The entrance lobby, ornately decorated in marble and stone, includes mosaic-encrusted walls, bronze bas-relief sculpture panels and two sweeping staircases. The front section of the building contains the major rooms of each apartment, with 15-foot ceilings. The service and sleeping rooms in the back have 8-foot ceilings providing semi-duplex apartments. In 1910 a narrow extension was placed on the building (so skillfully that it is virtually indistinguishable from the original building) containing additional bedrooms for the extreme westerly apartments. The plan shown below is from that period. In more recent years many of the apartments have been subdivided, the entrance portico removed and the first floor converted to stores. One of them, The Grenoble Market, is a remnant of a contemporary hotel of that name which formerly stood across the street from **The Osborne**.



Alpe
Alpen

$$1'' = 60'$$


UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Osborne Apartments

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, New York

DATE RECEIVED: 3/23/93

DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/06/93

DATE OF 16TH DAY: 4/22/93

DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/07/93

DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 93000333

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 4/22/93 DATE

Entered in the
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA
REVIEWER
DISCIPLINE
DATE

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

CLASSIFICATION

___count

___resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

___historic

___current

DESCRIPTION

___architectural classification

___materials

___descriptive text

SIGNIFICANCE

Period

Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

___summary paragraph

___completeness

___clarity

___applicable criteria

___justification of areas checked

___relating significance to the resource

___context

___relationship of integrity to significance

___justification of exception

___other

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

___acreage

___verbal boundary description

___UTMs

___boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

___sketch maps

___USGS maps

___photographs

___presentation

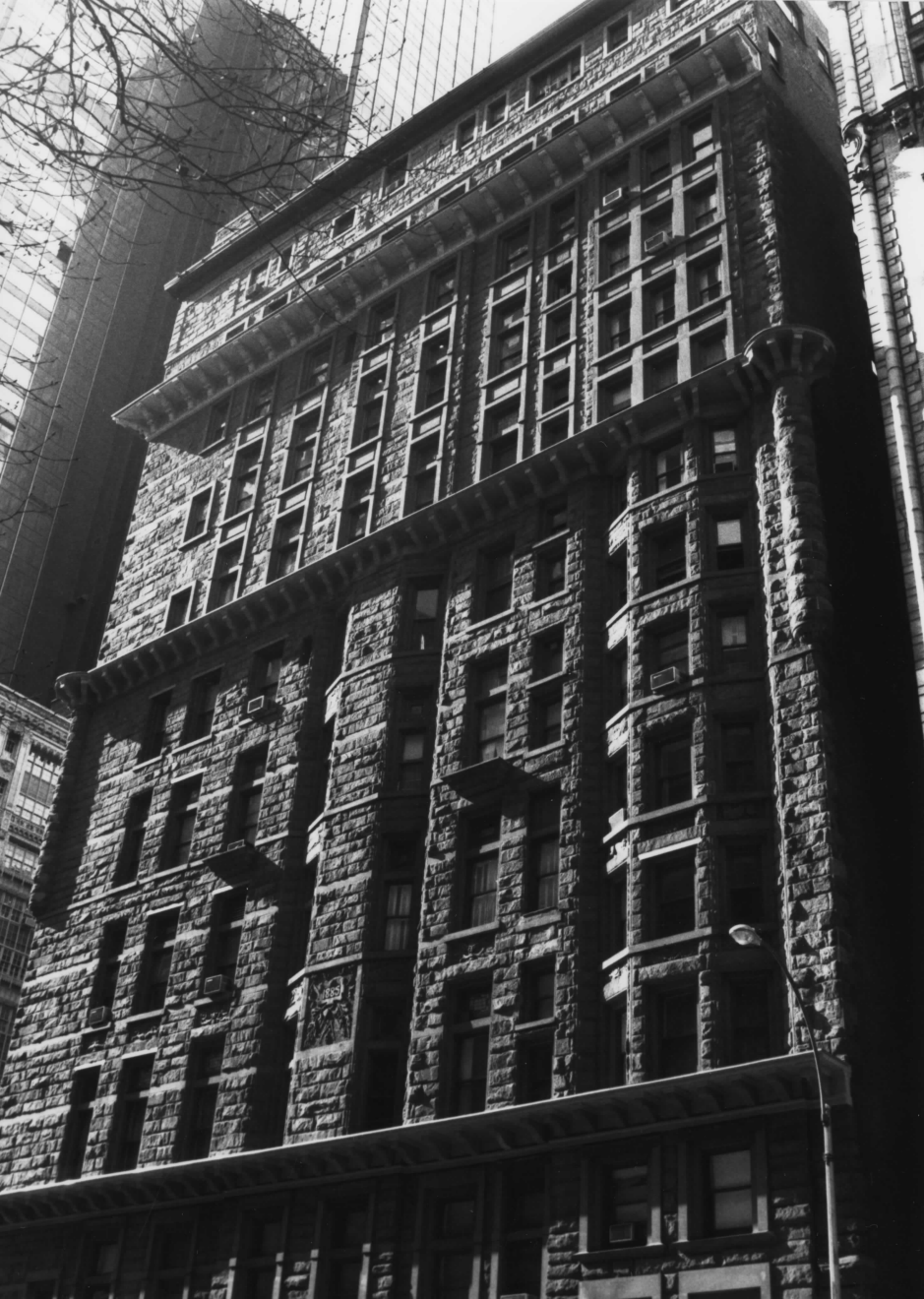
OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

Phone

Signed

Date



1 OSBORNE APARTMENTS
205 W 57th STREET
NEW YORK, NY
NEW YORK COUNTY

PHOTO By: NIS PETERSEN
1993

EAST FACADE, FACING
SEVENTH AVENUE

NEGATIVES: OSBORNE ARCHIVES
205 W. 57 ST
NYC, NY 10019



ONE WAY

CAFE RESTAURANT

HOTEL

2 OSBORNE APARTMENTS
205 WEST 57th ST
NEW YORK, N.Y., 10019
NEW YORK COUNTY

PHOTO BY NIS PETERSEN
1993

VIEW OF
SOUTH FACADE FACING
57th STREET; PART
OF EAST FACADE
FACING 7th AVE
←

NEGATIVES: OSBORNE ARCHIVES
205 WEST 57th ST
NYC, N.Y. 10019



3 OSBORNE APARTMENTS
205 WEST 57 STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y.
NEW YORK COUNTY

PHOTO BY: MRS PETERSEN
1993

VIEW OF SOUTH FACADE
FACING 57th STREET

NEGATIVES! OSBORNE ARCHIVES
205 W 57 ST.
Nyc, N.Y. 10019

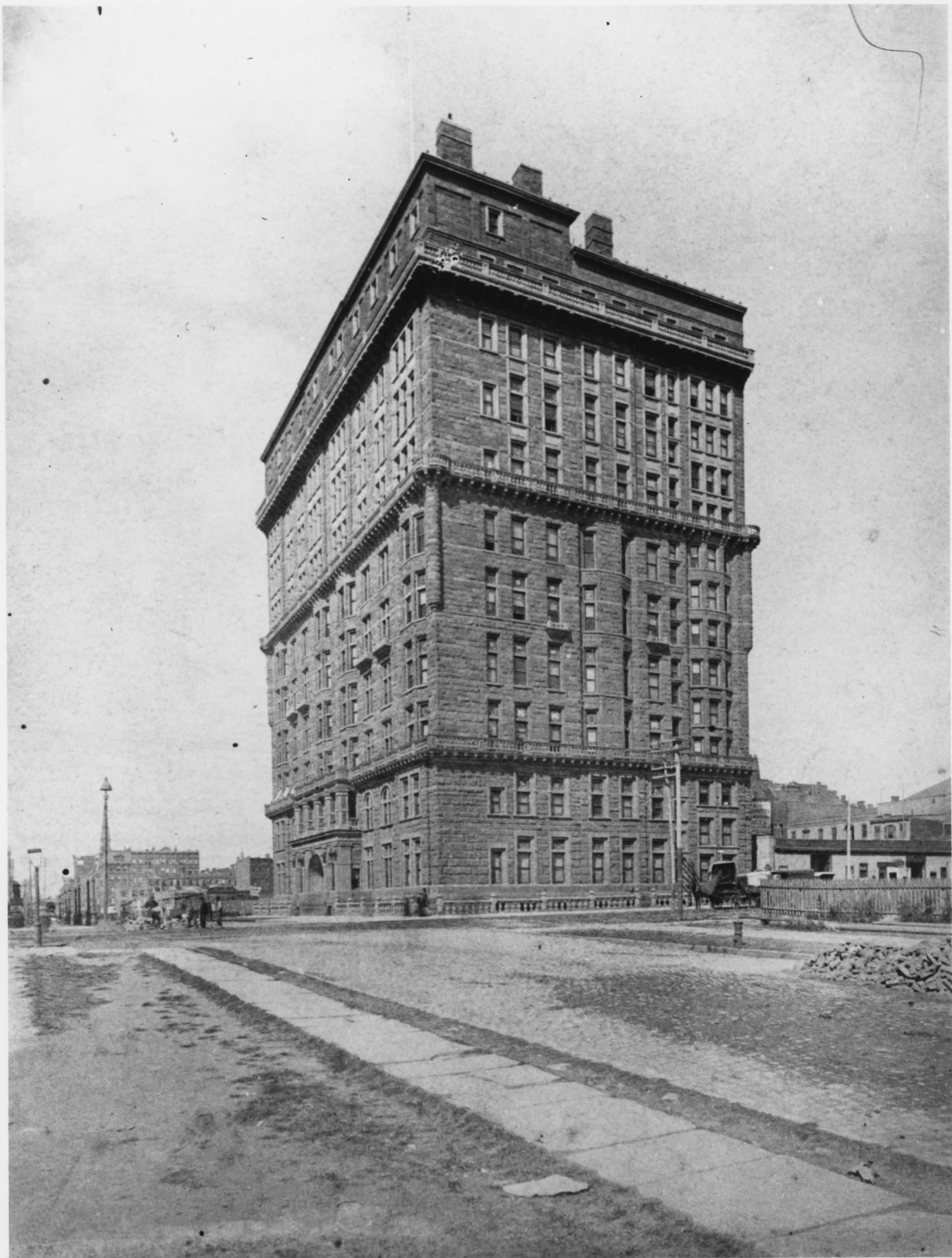


4 OSBORNE APARTMENTS
205 WEST 57 STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y.
NEW YORK COUNTY

PHOTO BY: NIS PETERSEN
1993

VIEW OF MAIN LOBBY
FROM WEST

NEGATIVES: OSBORNE ARCHIVES
205 W. 57 ST
NYC, N.Y., 10019



5

Osborne Apartments
NY, NY Co, NYS

Copy of historic view: C1885-9
credit: see below

5

THE NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
170 CENTRAL PARK WEST, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10024

Neg. No. 40966

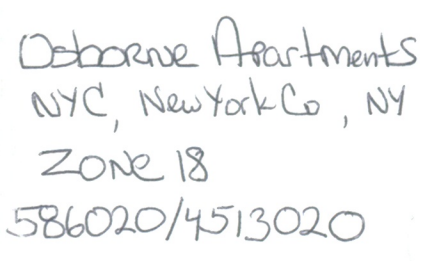
Acc. No.

"THE OSBORNE APARTMENTS, 57TH
STREET AND SEVENTH AVENUE,
N.Y.C." PHOTO, C. 1885

This photograph is not to be reproduced in any form without written
permission of The New-York Historical Society. Any reproduction
must be accompanied by the credit line:

"Courtesy of The New-York Historical Society, New York City"

CENTRAL PARK QUADRANGLE
NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
SW/4 HARLEM 15' QUADRANGLE



Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

 Interstate Route  U. S. Route  State Route

DMA 6265 IV SW-SERIES V821

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of

the National or State reservations shown on this map



Irene Zelnick
Chairman

COMMUNITY BOARD #5, MANHATTAN

99 Madison Avenue
Room 606
New York, New York 10016
686-7806

Feb '85

Joan E. Ramer
District Manager

February 15, 1985

Ms. Lenore Norman
Executive Director
Landmarks Preservation Commission
20 Vesey Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Lenore:

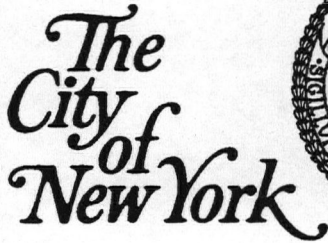
At the regularly scheduled monthly meeting of Community Board #5 on February 14, 1985, the Board passed the following resolution by a vote of 17 in favor; 7 opposed; 2 abstentions:

RESOLVED that Community Board #5 finds that the exterior of the Osborne apartment house, at 205 West 57th Street, diagonally across from Carnegie Hall meets the historical and aesthetic criteria to be designated a landmark. Given the unique condition of the exterior of this building, we urge that the Landmarks Commission and the shareholders of the Osborne cooperative work together to establish a master plan that addresses the problems of repair and maintenance of the facade. We also urge the Landmarks Commission to work with the owner of the commercial space to restore and renovate the facade in a harmonious and appropriate fashion.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,


Irene Zelnick
Chairman



MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FIVE

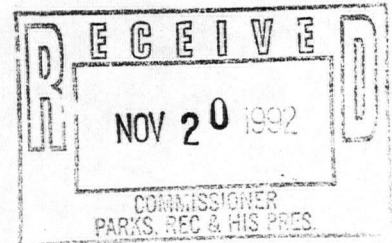
118 East 28th Street
Suite 201-203
New York, New York 10016
(212) 686-7806

FACSIMILE: (212) 696-5913

Michael Presser
Chairman

Joan E. Ramer
District Manager

Orin Lehman
State Historic Preservation Officer
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
The Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza
Agency Building 1
Albany, NY 11238



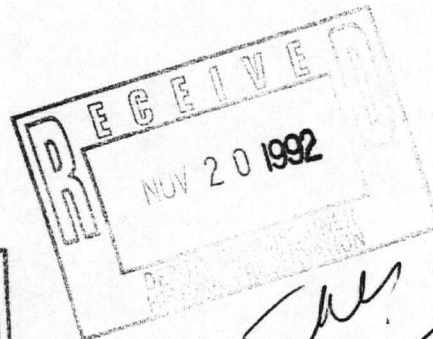
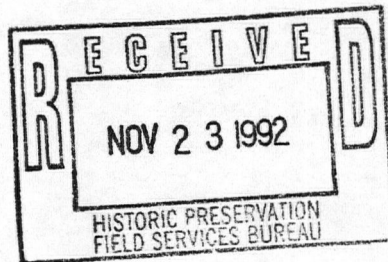
Dear Mr. Lehman:

In reference to your November 6, 1992 letter requesting comment on the landmarking of the Osborne Apartments, please refer to previous Board action to stand as our position.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Michael Presser
Chair





LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

225 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

(212) 553-1100

*Stoken
DL*
*app'd
action*

January 11, 1993

Mr. Orin Lehman, Commissioner
New York State Office of Parks,
Recreation and Historic Preservation
The Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller
Empire State Plaza
Agency Building 1
Albany, NY 12238-0001



Dear Commissioner Lehman:

Thank you for your letter dated November 6, 1992, which has been forwarded to the Landmarks Preservation Commission by Mayor Dinkins.

We are pleased to hear that the Osborne Apartments at 205 West 57th Street in Manhattan will be considered by the State Review Board for nomination to the National and State Registers of Historic Places. The Osborne Apartments is a designated New York City Landmark.

As always, the Landmarks Commission looks forward to working together with you to preserve New York City's heritage and culture.

If you have any questions feel free to call me at (212) 553-1110.

Very truly yours,

Merin Elizabeth Urban
Merin Elizabeth Urban
Executive Director

MEU/rt
attachments

cc: Barbara J. Fife
Laurie Beckelman

