

Look at your clothes. What do you like about your clothing? Does it have a special shape, color, or pattern? Clothes come in many different shapes, colors, and patterns, and clothes have many different uses — heavy coats for winter, shorts for summer. People **design** (decide how they should look) clothes, and people also design buildings. Buildings have many uses — they provide the shelter people need to live, work, go to school, and play. We design buildings to meet specific needs, but often we design buildings to look beautiful, too. Let's explore how we talk about **architecture** — design, parts of a building, style, decoration, and building types.

ALL ABOUT DESIGN

Shape and form, lines, texture, color, and pattern — all of these contribute to design of a building.

Find each design element on the building **façade** (the front of a building) on the next page.

- **SHAPE AND FORM.** A shape is two-dimensional and is made when a line is closed. Shapes can have many sides, like a hexagon (six sides), or just one, like a circle. A form is a three-dimensional shape that takes up real space. It can be a cone, pyramid, cube, sphere, cylinder, or block.
- **LINES** connect two end points and can be thick, thin, straight, curved, angular, wavy, short, or long.

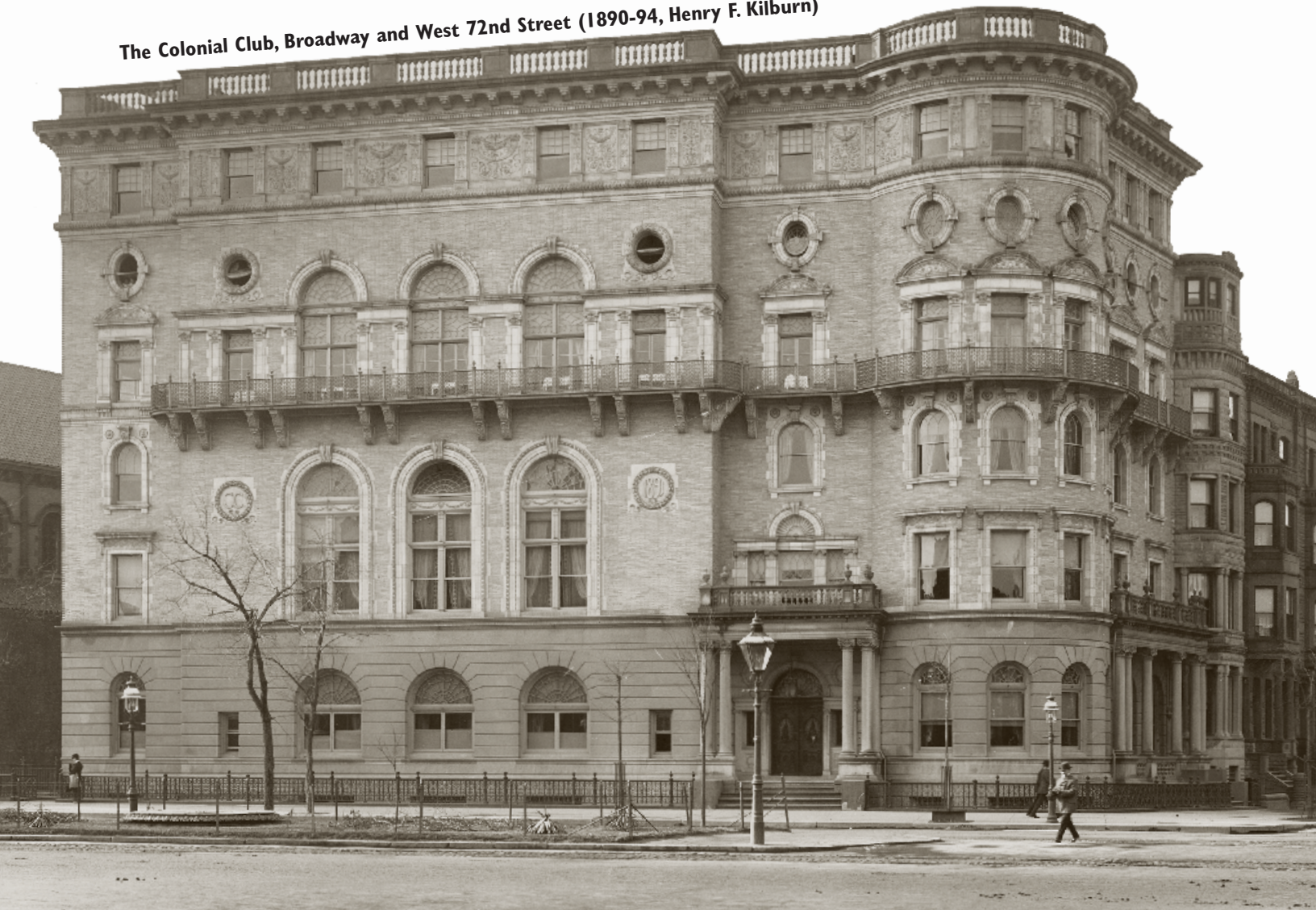
- **TEXTURE** describes a material's surface. Textures can be hard, soft, sharp, moist, gooey, slimy, dry, furry, coarse, grainy, smooth, rough, pebbly, spongy, scratchy, greasy, grooved, slippery, or slick.
- **COLOR** on buildings can be created by the colors of the materials used, like marble, brownstone, brick, metal, wood, or paint.
- **PATTERN** is created when line, color, shape, form, or texture is repeated. Examples include stripes, plaid, polka-dots, herringbone, diagonal, and fluted.



The Landmarks Preservation Commission did not designate the Colonial Club a landmark. It was not protected by the Landmarks Law, and the building was demolished and replaced by an ordinary glass tower in 2006.

- What design elements do you see?
- Draw the shapes, lines and patterns you see on this building.
- How does color add to the design of a building?

The Colonial Club, Broadway and West 72nd Street (1890-94, Henry F. Kilburn)



THE PARTS MAKE THE WHOLE

Your clothes are designed with different parts. Sleeves cover our arms to protect them from the sun and cold. Buttons are necessary so we can get in and out of our clothes. But sleeves and buttons are also decorative. Tiny buttons can make a shirt beautiful; huge polka-dot buttons on a clown's costume can be funny. Think of dividing a building into parts. Like the sleeves and buttons on our clothes, these parts can be both functional and decorative. Windows allow light and air into a building, but they come in many shapes and sizes. Let's look at the many functional and decorative parts that make up a building.

WALK IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Look for cornices, columns, stoops, and other building parts.

Look at windows, entrances, and roofs. They can provide clues to how a building is used — like the steeple on a church or the entrance to an apartment building.

Find other examples.

Draw your favorite building parts from two or more buildings.

Design your own building using your favorite building parts.

341 West End Avenue
(1891, Lamb & Rich)





BUILDING PARTS TREASURE HUNT

Think about how the parts of a building function and contribute to the building.

Find these parts on the building façade on these two pages:

- A ROOF:** the top of the building which protects it from the elements.
- B WINDOW:** the eyes of a building, allowing light and air inside.
- C ENTRANCE OR DOOR:** the way to enter a building.
- D STOOP:** the steps leading up to the building entrance.
- E CORNICE:** the molding that projects out from the top of a building.
- F ARCH:** a structural way to span an opening, either curved or pointed, over a door or window.
- G DORMER:** a window that sticks out from a roof to provide more light and air.
- H BAY WINDOW:** a window that sticks out of the façade of a building to capture more light.
- I BRACKET:** a piece of wood or stone used to hold up another building part, such as a cornice or a balcony.

BLOOMING BUILDINGS

Look up! Why do certain buildings have a special “personality” or style? What features do you notice?

The buildings of the Upper West Side are covered with ornament and decoration. Ornament may be carved, painted, molded, or attached for decoration. An architect uses ornament as part of the building’s design. It makes the building more interesting to look at.

Our story begins with the designers and craftsmen of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. We don’t know the names of these artists, but we do know they were mostly immigrants from England, Scotland, Germany, Italy, and Russia. After the Civil War, African-Americans from the South also joined the group of skilled artisans. Architects who were designing buildings sometimes bought pieces of ornament ready-made. Other times, they chose what they wanted from sketches in books about ornament and decoration. The artisans usually interpreted the

subjects. They used their imaginations, humor, and new American ideals. For example, if asked to carve a face, the artisan might create a happy, scary, or funny face with hair made of leaves.

Look at buildings and find:

- animals
- plants
- creatures that are half-human and half-animal
- creatures that are two animals combined
- geometric shapes
- patterns

Now, identify what material they are made of.

Are they made of:

- natural stone like carved brownstone or marble
- cast stone like terra cotta, cement, or plaster which is ground up, liquified, and poured into molds, then cooled so it gets rock hard
- cast metal melted down and poured into molds
- hammered wrought iron that is heated and bent into shapes

Winged mythical lion capital, brownstone



Floral and abstract geometric panels, stainless steel

Acanthus face on keystone, brownstone

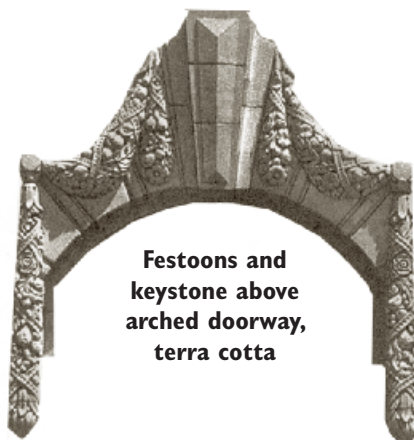


ORNAMENT HUNT

Search for the animals, plants, and creatures that cover the buildings in your neighborhood. The photographs on these two pages are some examples of ornamentation found on the Upper West Side. Try to find as many as you can. Look for other ornaments on your hunt. Make a list. Happy hunting!

- **MASKS** or **FACES** go back to the popular harvest games of ancient Greece when all the actors wore masks.
- **GARGOYLES** were originally water spouts to get rainwater off the roof so there were no leaks. They were carved into mythical creatures with scary faces.
- Artists designed their own **LEAVES** and **FLOWERS** that cannot be identified as any specific plant. This is called abstracting or stylizing ornament from nature.

- **FESTOONS** or **GARLANDS** are fruits tied in a bunch with leaves and flowers. They have been used as building decoration since ancient times.
- Oak and maple leaves, roses, **GRAPE LEAVES**, lilies, and bluebells are some of the natural looking plants you will see. Can you find any other plants?
- The **ACANTHUS** leaf on the bracket is abstracted from the plant called “akanthos” found in Greece. It is often found in patterns on buildings in many shapes and sizes.
- Fabulous monsters and invented creatures decorate buildings. The **GRIFFIN** is a mythical animal from ancient Greece symbolizing power and wisdom, has a lion’s body, an eagle’s head and wings, and was very popular as ornamentation.



Festoons and
keystone above
arched doorway,
terra cotta

Woman's face
with shells,
terra cotta



Grapevine and acanthus leaf
bracket under a bay window,
painted brownstone

YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE STYLE

"Style is the way a building looks. It is form, not function. Throughout history, different styles of architecture have been popular at different times. Each style has its own way of arranging building parts and using ornaments."

Maddox, Diane. Architects Make Zigzags: Looking at Architecture From A to Z. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1995.

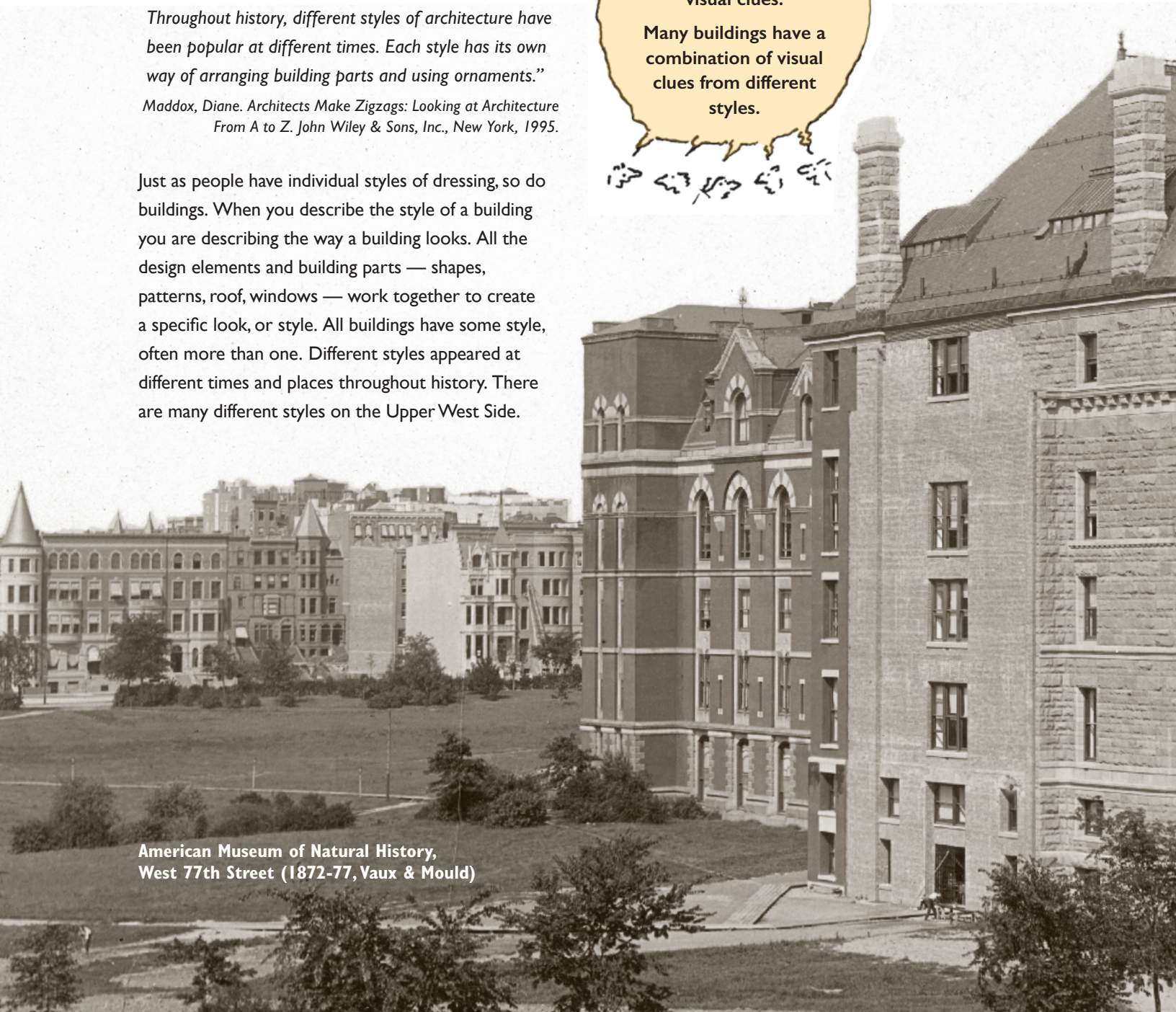
Just as people have individual styles of dressing, so do buildings. When you describe the style of a building you are describing the way a building looks. All the design elements and building parts — shapes, patterns, roof, windows — work together to create a specific look, or style. All buildings have some style, often more than one. Different styles appeared at different times and places throughout history. There are many different styles on the Upper West Side.

WALK IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Find examples of the
visual clues.

Many buildings have a
combination of visual
clues from different
styles.

American Museum of Natural History,
West 77th Street (1872-77, Vaux & Mould)

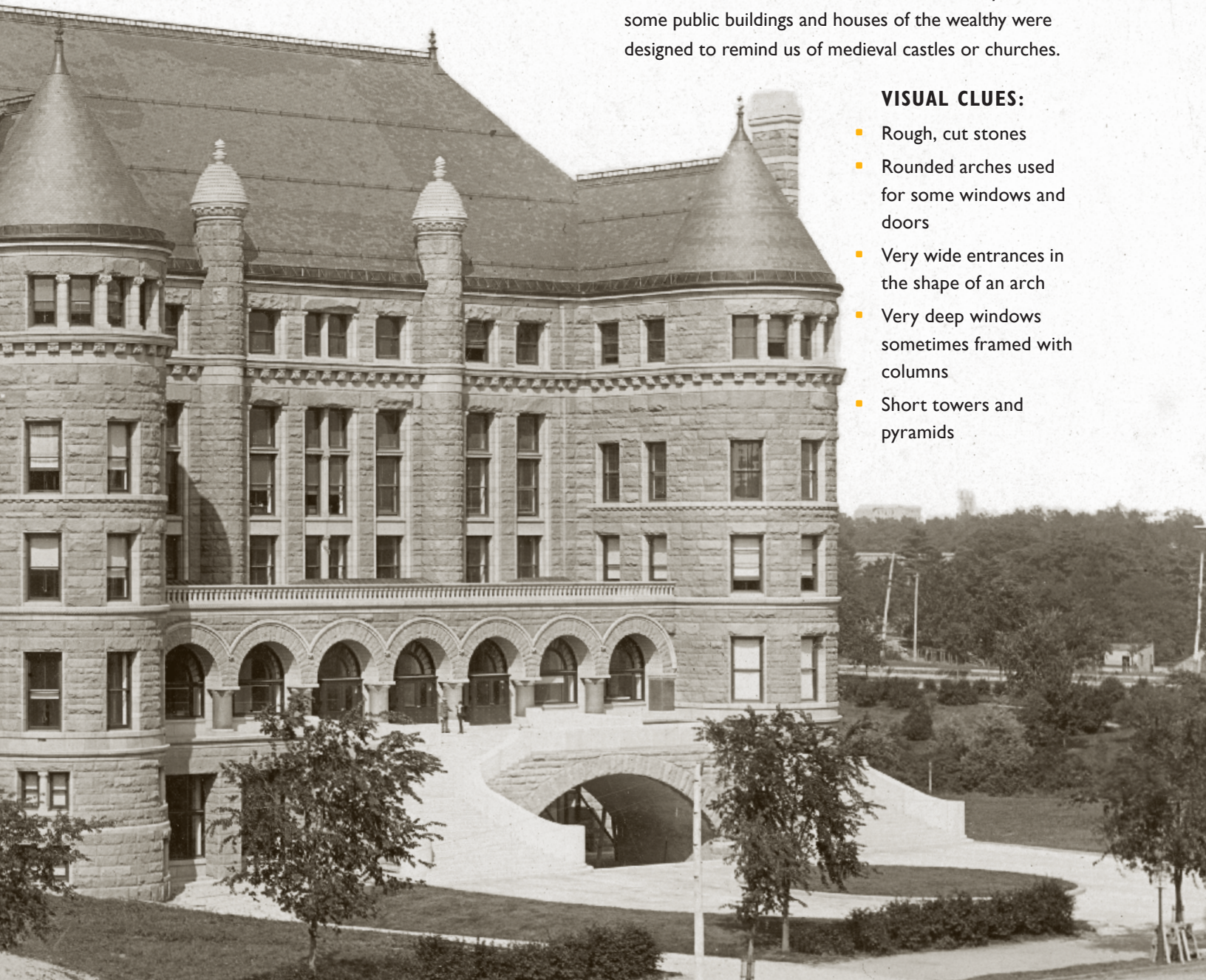


ROMANESQUE REVIVAL

This is an old photograph of the American Museum of Natural History. The style is Romanesque Revival. In the United States from about 1880 to the early 1900s, some public buildings and houses of the wealthy were designed to remind us of medieval castles or churches.

VISUAL CLUES:

- Rough, cut stones
- Rounded arches used for some windows and doors
- Very wide entrances in the shape of an arch
- Very deep windows sometimes framed with columns
- Short towers and pyramids



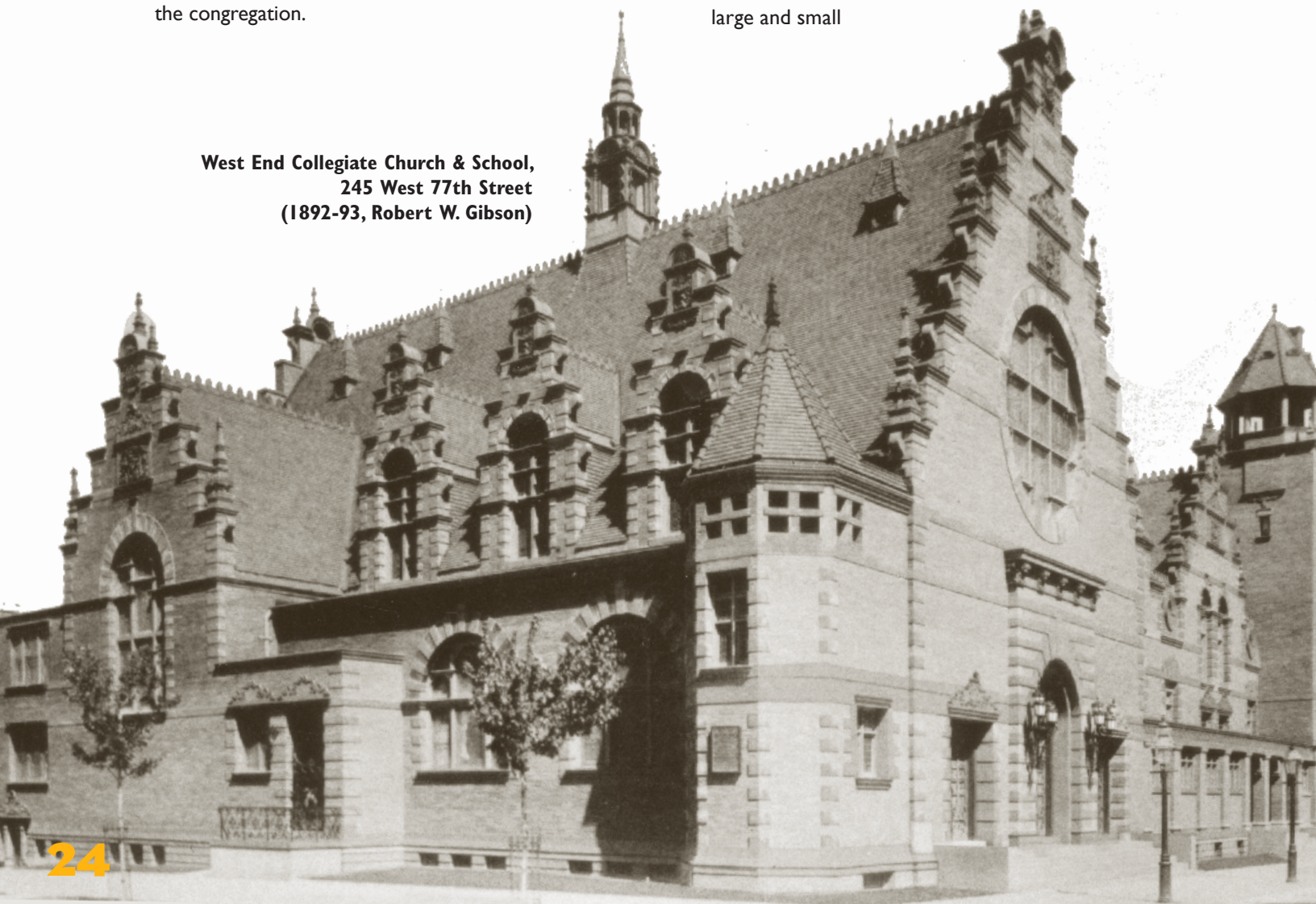
DUTCH REVIVAL

The West End Collegiate Church was built in 1892, during a time when many people were moving to the Upper West Side. A new row of houses was built on West End Avenue and West 83rd Street in an older Dutch style. Using an older style is called a **revival**. The Church was part of this revival in the area, but its structure also represents the Dutch roots of the congregation.

VISUAL CLUES:

- Decorative brick and stonework
- Dormers — windows that stick out from the roof
- Very steep roof with stepped gables (the triangular tops of walls)
- Quoins — stones at the corners of buildings that are placed in a special way, alternating large and small

West End Collegiate Church & School,
245 West 77th Street
(1892-93, Robert W. Gibson)



A black and white photograph of the 4567 Broadway building, a tall Art Deco skyscraper with a stepped, ziggurat-like top. The building features many windows and decorative vertical elements. In the foreground, there is a street with a vintage car, a person standing, and a sign that reads "4567 BROADWAY 4567 ROOMS 1000 S. HEAVY SLEEPING".

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BEAUX ARTS

Many American architects from the late 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century studied in France and were influenced by the ideas and designs that had been used for buildings there for over 250 years. The Ansonia, pictured here, is a grand example of this style in America. It reminds us of a fancy wedding cake. The Beaux-Arts (Beaux rhymes with rose) style was often used for large public buildings.

VISUAL CLUES:

- Columns in pairs
- Very grand entrance
- Ornamental swags, medallions, and sculpture
- Elaborate iron railings

**Ansonia Hotel,
2109 Broadway
(1899-1904, Paul
E.M. Duboy)**



GOthic REVIVAL

This style grew out of a fascination with romantic stories that took place in the Middle Ages. From 1830 to 1860, it was often used for churches, colleges, and other buildings. The fanciful Studio Building on the Upper West Side shows you many of the visual clues for Gothic Revival style.

VISUAL CLUES:

- Pointed arches
- Towers
- Columns clustered together
- Pinnacles — pointed ornaments on the top of towers or roofs
- Tracery — ornament that looks like lace
- Gargoyles

**Studio Building, 44 West 77th Street
(1909, Harde & Short)**



HOUSING TYPES ON THE UPPER WEST SIDE

A CASE STUDY: THE MANHASSET

The **Manhasset** is an 11-story apartment house located on Broadway between West 108th and 109th Streets on the Upper West Side. Apartment houses were a brand new building type imported from France. When they began appearing on the Upper West Side in the 1880s, families had to adjust to the idea of living in the same building as other families. Advantages of apartment living included not needing so many servants and having elevators, which were new technology then.

Built in 1899, the Manhasset is colorful and grand. The top floor roofs have a special form called **mansard**. The building covers the entire block-front, and, because it is located where Broadway makes a curve, it can be seen from many blocks away. Originally, the Manhasset was an eight-story apartment house. A few years later it was redesigned by two famous architects, Janes and Leo. In addition to making it taller, they added many shops on the first floor after the opening of the subway in 1904.



The Manhasset Apartments entrance,
301 West 108th Street



FUN FACT

People did not commonly have air conditioners in their homes until the 1950s. Before that, awnings were installed over windows to create shade and keep apartments from heating up. As you can see in the 1905 photograph of the Manhasset, many people who lived there used awnings to keep their apartments cool.

VISUAL CLUES:

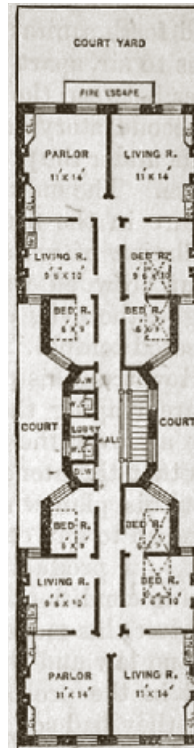
- Highly ornamented façades in different historical styles
- Lobbies, doormen and building staff
- Ten to fourteen stories tall with elevators
- Built mostly on the wider and fancier boulevards, like Broadway, Central Park West, and Riverside Drive

The Manhasset also tells us about the history of the people who lived in the building.

The original 77 apartments, planned for upper middle class families, contained six, seven, or nine rooms with one to three baths. In 1905, the New York Census records the presence of many professional and business people. Most of the renters were born in the United States, but there were also a number of adults who were immigrants from Germany as well as others from Ireland, France, and Canada. As would be expected on the diverse Upper West Side, the residents appear to have been from various ethnic groups and religions and included Catholics, Protestants, and Jews. Each apartment included a single servant's room, and most residents had one or two live-in servants.

(Andrew Scott Dolkart, LANDMARK WEST! Newsletter, Spring 1996)

The Manhasset Apartments, 301 West 108th Street
(1901-1904, Janes & Leo), c. 1905



This is a dumbbell-shaped “Old Law” tenement floor plan, which is like a map of a building. It is as if there is no roof and you can see straight down.

**460 Amsterdam Avenue
(1877, John G. Prague)**

TENEMENTS

Tenements were the first building type in New York City made for more than one family. The word “tenement” comes from the word tenant, someone who rents his apartment from the owner of the building. Tenements were first built in the 1830s for poor people who had come from other countries to live here and did not yet have the means to live in single-family homes. The tenements were often extremely crowded. The first tenements were four stories high without elevators. They were 25 feet wide and had four tiny apartments on each floor with three rooms and one window per apartment.

The **Tenement House Act of 1867** mandated fire escapes, at least one bathroom for every 20 people, and no large farm animals in the building!

But, this was not enough improvement, and in 1879, there was another law, now called the “**Old Law.**” The Old Law stated that every room had to have a window. So new tenement buildings were five stories tall and built in a “dumbbell” shape creating two light shafts. Unfortunately, the windows were so small and there were so many people sharing the same small light shaft that this still did not solve the problem of making the tenements healthy places to live.

West side of Amsterdam
Avenue between 49th and
50th Streets, May 15, 1932



FUN FACT

460 Amsterdam Avenue was built under the 1867 law, and is the oldest surviving tenement on the Upper West Side. It was built with storefronts on the ground floor, but without bathrooms, and there could have been small farm animals living there too!

In 1901, another law was passed. This is called the “**New Law**.” The New Law demanded that new tenements be much wider and that they have space around the buildings, creating courtyards rather than shafts. They were also usually six or seven stories tall, still with no elevator, but they were more spacious with better air circulation.

VISUAL CLUES:

- Style often matched rowhouses on nearby side streets
- Highly ornamented façades in different historical styles
- Ornamental fire escapes
- Four to seven stories tall without an elevator
- Stores on the ground floor
- Built mostly on Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues because of the transportation there



**35-39 West 89th Street (1894-95,
Gilbert A. Schellenger), c. 1915**

ROWHOUSES

In addition to larger apartment buildings and tenements, rowhouses are a common building type on the Upper West Side. You can still find whole blocks of rowhouses here, many protected as part of historic districts. Often many of the rowhouses on one block were built in the same style by the same builder at the same time between the 1880s and 1900. There may be a style pattern, like every other roof will be pointed and every other roof will be flat.

Rowhouses were originally built for single families. Sometimes they are called “brownstones” when they have a thin layer, or veneer, of brownstone — a chocolate-colored sandstone — on the façade. Most of the brownstone on the Upper West Side came from a quarry in Connecticut. The builders used brownstone over the brick because it provides a softer surface and is easier to carve into or sculpt, allowing for very decorative façades.

VISUAL CLUES:

- Usually built in groups and share a wall
- Three to five stories, never tall enough to need a fire escape
- Large cornices often decorated with dentils (tooth-like projections) held up by brackets
- Highly ornamented façades
- Entrances can have columns and arches
- Stoops lead up to the front doors
- Bay windows