

HORN & HARDART AUTOMAT - CAFETERIA BUILDING, 2710-2714 Broadway (aka 228-234 West 104th Street), Manhattan. Built 1930, F[rederick]. P[utnam]. Platt & Brother [Charles Carsten Platt], architects; Atlantic Terra Cotta Co., terra cotta.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1875, Lot 46.

On June 27, 2006, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Horn & Hardart Automat-Cafeteria Building and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 1). A second public hearing was held on December 12, 2006 (Item No. 3). The latter hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Thirty speakers testified in favor of designation, including representatives of State Assemblyman Daniel O'Donnell, Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer, Councilmember Melissa Mark-Viverito, Councilmember Tony Avella, Manhattan Community Board 7, Municipal Art Society of New York, Historic Districts Council, Landmark West!, Art Deco Society of New York, Friends of Terra Cotta, West 102nd and 103rd Streets Block Association, West 104th Street Block Association, and Marianne Hardart (great-granddaughter of the company founder). The owner and three of the owner's representatives testified against designation. In addition, the Commission has received a number of communications supporting designation, including those of Congressman Charles B. Rangel, New York Landmarks Conservancy, Modern Architecture Working Group, and Sarah M. Henry (Deputy Director/Chief Curator, Museum of the City of New York).

Summary

The 3-story, limestone-clad Horn & Hardart Automat-Cafeteria Building at 2710-2714 Broadway (at West 104th Street), a distinctive small-scale commercial structure executed in the Art Deco style, is one of the best surviving examples of the popular chain restaurants that proliferated in the city during the first three decades of the 20th century. In 1927, the Horn & Hardart Co. became the leaseholder of this site. This building was constructed in 1930 to the design of F[rederick]. P[utnam]. Platt & Brother [Charles Carsten Platt], who executed numerous New York commissions for Horn & Hardart from about 1916 to 1932. By 1927, F.P. Platt & Bro. had developed a modern and functional design prototype for purpose-built Horn & Hardart automat-cafeteria buildings, with large windows, that assisted the restaurant chain in



achieving a consistent commercial image. The Horn & Hardart Co., established in 1911, was the New York subsidiary of the Horn & Hardart Baking Co. of Philadelphia, which had been incorporated in 1898 by Joseph V. Horn and Frank A. Hardart, lunchroom proprietors since 1888. In 1902, Horn & Hardart opened its first waiterless Philadelphia restaurant, or "automat," in which customers could retrieve food directly from windows after depositing nickels in European-made equipment. The first New York automat opened in 1912, with American machinery, at 1557 Broadway in Times Square. Known for uniformly good food at low cost, automats became wildly popular and one of the city's cherished democratic institutions, appealing to a wide clientele.

This automat-cafeteria building is made notable by its glazed polychrome Art Deco style terra-cotta ornament on the third story. Executed in hues of green, blue, tan, and gold luster by the Atlantic Terra Cotta Co., the terra cotta is located on sills, panels above the windows, stylized pilaster capitals, and the building's terminating band. The highly sophisticated panels feature stylized floral motifs and zigzag patterns; the modeler of these panels has not been identified, but the work is strikingly similar to that of preeminent architectural sculptor Rene P. Chambellan. Horn & Hardart remained a tenant on the ground story and mezzanine here until 1953, and the mezzanine level was remodeled as a full story in 1955. There have been a wide variety of commercial and organizational tenants over the years. While the current ground-floor storefront covers historic elements, visible above this are the upper portion of the original central segmental arched opening (with a fluted molded granite surround with a keystone) and the top of the bronze entrance portal and decorative bronze spandrel.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Horn & Hardart Co. and the Automat-Cafeteria in New York City¹

The Horn & Hardart Co., established in 1911, was the New York subsidiary of the Horn & Hardart Baking Co. of Philadelphia, Pa., which had been formed by Joseph V. Horn (c. 1861-1941) and Frank A. Hardart (c. 1850-1918). Horn, born in Philadelphia, was the son of the founder of the William H. Horn Surgical Co. Hardart's family emigrated from Bavaria to New Orleans in 1858, and he began to work at a lunch counter at the age of 13, learning the French-drip method of brewing coffee then unique to that city. Moving to Philadelphia in 1886, Hardart answered an advertisement for a restaurant partner placed by Horn. Horn and Hardart started out with a small luncheonette in 1888 at No. 39 South 13th Street (next to Wanamaker's Department Store), where they introduced freshly brewed coffee based on the New Orleans technique Hardart had learned. Due to their success based on the coffee, the partners opened several additional lunchrooms, and established a central commissary for efficient baking and cooking. Horn and Hardart signed a partnership agreement in 1895, and incorporated the Horn & Hardart Baking Co. in 1898.

Horn and Hardart were approached by a salesman of the German prototype for a "waiterless restaurant," or "automatic," that had been employed in Europe. An "automat" was later described as "essentially giant vending machines with dozens of hot and cold foods in slots behind glass doors. Depositing the right number of nickels ... allowed the patron to open the doors and take out his choice."² After Hardart visited one in operation in Berlin in 1900, the machinery was ordered from the Quisisana Co., but it took two years for the equipment to arrive in Philadelphia (the first order was lost in a shipwreck). Horn & Hardart opened their first Philadelphia automat in 1902, at No. 818 Chestnut Street. This novelty, a success with the public, was followed by additional Philadelphia automats with German equipment in 1905, 1907, and 1912.

Horn & Hardart decided to test the market in New York City, and opened their first New York automat in July 1912 at No. 1557 Broadway (built 1911-12), in Times Square between West 45th and 46th Streets. This was also the first automat with more sophisticated, patented American-made machinery, rather than German. Robert F. Byrnes, who became senior executive vice president of Horn & Hardart, reminisced in 1982 about the first New York automat: "A classy place. All that Carrara marble and miles of patterned white tile, and the shiny chrome and the spotless plate-glass Automat-machine windows. Pillars. Elegant lamps on the ceiling. You'd have to look hard to find a scrap of paper on the floor."³ A writer for *Smithsonian* further noted

*What catapulted the Automat to stardom ... was its 1912 opening on Manhattan's Times Square, the city's – and nation's – most glittering stage. For H&H, the site on Broadway at 46th Street was a dream location. The subway disgorged 200,000 people each day onto the streets of the Great White Way. Besides the after-theater crowd, the boardinghouses and cheap hotels that lined the side streets assured it a three-meal-a-day clientele of theater hands, clerks and blue-collar workers. Restless New Yorkers, their numbers swelled by almost a million immigrants in the preceding decade, stayed up late, moved fast and positively enjoyed buying from machines – the transit system already sported more than 4,000 vending machines of all types.*⁴

As stated in *Pageant* in 1950, "Automats have, from the very beginning, appealed to the public, and no other type of restaurant has so held the spotlight of popular interest."⁵ Aside from their mechanical fascination, their appeal was based on: reasonable pricing; variety of choices; the uniformity of good food served; a customer did not have to wait for or order from a waiter; no tipping requirement; knowledge of English was not necessary; and they were open seven days a week, and were clean, modern, stylish, and standardized. Of particular appeal to patrons in a hurry, automats became more popular in New York than in Philadelphia, and emerged as one of the city's cherished democratic institutions, catering equally to celebrities, working women, white-collar office workers, creative types, tourists, and homeless, unemployed, working-class, rich, and unmarried New Yorkers. Cafeterias and automats in New York replaced for many the previous, more limited option of meals served in boardinghouses, many of which had by then been converted into rooming houses without kitchens. George Chauncey, in his pioneering work *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940*, noted the special significance of cafeterias and automats in the burgeoning New York gay culture of the 20th century (as well as to other groups), as public gathering places and social centers: "Automats were among the safest refuges available to poorer gay men. They became even more secure during the Depression, when their rock-bottom prices and lack of supervision gave them a reputation as a sanctuary for social outcasts and the unemployed."⁶

Joseph Horn's philosophy of food service from the beginning was "There is no trick to selling a poor item cheaply. The real trick is to sell a *good* item cheaply."⁷ The firm sought to use the highest quality ingredients, and supplied food from one central commissary each in New York City and Philadelphia, which assisted in cutting

costs and allowed for quality control. Further economies were afforded by the operation with waiterless service and lack of linens. Of the two partners, Hardart was considered more conservative about the business and its expansion. After Hardart's death in 1918, Horn served as president of both firms (until his death) and concentrated on expansion. The *Encyclopedia of New York City* stated that

*Initially automats offered only buns, beans, fish cakes, and coffee (widely considered the best in the city). Each item cost five cents, was displayed in a compartment behind a glass door, and was bought by dropping a nickel into a slot. By the early 1930s the automats introduced a full range of lunch and dinner entrees. Soon a symbol of life in the city, automats reached the height of their popularity during the 1940s and 1950s...*⁸

In 1922, the combination automat-cafeteria was introduced, at which hot food was also served at steam tables, and the automat (by itself) was phased out. In 1924, Horn & Hardart launched retail shops that sold prepackaged automat food, under the slogan "Less Work for Mother."

By 1938, the Horn & Hardart Co. reported net income of \$1.72 million.⁹ Over the next two decades, Horn & Hardart Co./ Horn & Hardart Baking Co. together emerged as "the biggest enterprise in the restaurant industry"¹⁰ and one of the first American fast-food chains, in competition in New York with such restaurant/cafeteria businesses as Chock Full O'Nuts, Nedick's, Longchamps, Schrafft's, Childs, Stewart's, and Bickford's. Even during the Depression, Horn & Hardart never experienced a year of financial loss. By 1950, the company was serving half a million cups of coffee a day, and at its peak in the mid-1950s was serving over 800,000 patrons daily. In 1953, the New York City business grossed \$41.8 million, while the Philadelphia company grossed \$29.9 million.¹¹ The peak year for corporate earnings was 1958.

The downside of Horn & Hardart's method of operation was a kind of "benevolent despotism," according to a book by the founder's great-granddaughter, Marianne Hardart, with Lorraine B. Diehl.¹² The company offered relatively low wages (below union scale) and provided few paid holidays, only initiated the 40-hour workweek in 1947, and resisted several attempts at employee unionization, until the 1960s. In 1937, the newly-formed New York State Labor Relations Board received its first petition for an election, from a local of the Cafeteria Workers Union representing Horn & Hardart employees. The resulting election, contested by the union, resulted in a strike and picketing of Horn & Hardart restaurants that lasted from August to December 1937. In 1952, automat workers complained that they were underpaid in comparison to cafeteria workers. African-Americans employed by the firm worked mostly as chefs, and were not allowed to be seen serving food or placing it into the automat machines. Economic changes in the United States began to affect Horn & Hardart, which crossed a symbolic threshold when it finally raised the price of a cup of coffee to ten cents in 1950. During the 1960s and 70s, Horn & Hardart suffered from changing American tastes and habits, higher costs, and the competition from newer fastfood chains. In 1969, the Horn & Hardart Baking Co. of Philadelphia authorized the severing of ties with its New York company, later filing for reorganization in 1971 and bankruptcy in 1981. The Horn & Hardart Co. found that its most valuable asset was its real estate – many former automats were closed and converted into Burger King restaurants, while other buildings were sold and demolished. The last New York automat, at No. 200 East 42nd Street (Third Avenue), closed in 1991.

Horn & Hardart Automat-Cafeteria Buildings and F.P. Platt & Brother, Architects¹³

For its first New York automat at No. 1557 Broadway (1911-12, extant with facade covered) in Times Square, Horn & Hardart employed Philadelphia restaurant architects [F. Russell] Stuckert & [Maurice] Sloan, whose design featured a facade of ornamental glass and terra cotta supplied by the Conkling-Armstrong Terra Cotta Co. of Philadelphia. Stuckert & Sloan also designed other early Horn & Hardart facilities in New York, including the bakery/commissary building at No. 600 West 50th Street (1913-14; eventually expanded onto the entire block, now demolished); a store/café at No. 250 West 42nd Street (1913-14; demolished); and an automat/office building at 968 Sixth Avenue (1915, extant with alterations). As the company expanded, many of its facilities were located in leased ground-floor stores and basements. Horn & Hardart's 1933 annual report listed 43 automat-cafeterias in Manhattan, as well as 27 retail shops in Manhattan, the Bronx, and Long Island. In 1954, there were 45 restaurants, 44 retail shops, and three day-old shops in New York City (compared with 36, 40, and 3 in Philadelphia).

From about 1916 to 1932, the firm of F.P. Platt & Brother executed numerous commissions in New York City for the Horn & Hardart Co., which included new buildings for bakeries, retail stores, offices, and automat-cafeterias, as well as for restaurant facilities in existing structures and restaurant enlargements. Frederick Putnam Platt (c. 1878-1955), born in New York City, established a New York architectural practice by 1908. He formed F.P. Platt & Bro. around 1919, with Charles Carsten Platt (1880-1967), a graduate of Cornell University (1901). Frederick P. Platt, and then F.P. Platt & Bro., specialized in building alterations, maintaining a department for that

work. *American Architect* in 1932 featured an interview with F.P. Platt titled “What Modernizing 400 Buildings Has Taught Us.” F.P. Platt was also the co-author of an article on “Restaurants” in the *Architectural Record* in 1930, which included detailed requirements and planning and design principles for various types of facilities.¹⁴ The Platts received commissions from a number of large firms and institutions, serving as consulting architects for the New York Athletic Club; Consolidated Edison Co., for office buildings and power plants; Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., for the redesign of luxury apartments; Westinghouse Electric Co., for a lighting institute; New York University, for the conversion of buildings around Washington Square for the school’s use; New York State, for the conversion of the North Brother Island Hospital into student housing; New York Cocoa Exchange, quarters in the Beaver Building, Pearl and Beaver Streets (1937); Plaza Hotel, for alterations (mid-1940s); and Pace College (1951), for the conversion of the former New York Times Building, 41 Park Row. In addition, the firm designed a 9-story apartment building at 147-151 West 74th Street (1922); a 16-story office building at 76 West 46th Street (1927); and co-designed the Marcy Houses, Brooklyn, one of the borough’s largest public housing projects.¹⁵

Charles Platt became highly active in New York civic and architectural affairs, serving as president of the Municipal Art Society (1945-48), publicly advocating a position contrary to the prevailing view of wholesale “slum” clearance; a director of the Architectural League of New York; vice-president of the New York State Association of Architects, and co-chairman of its committee on public works; secretary and director of the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects; member of the Mayor’s Panel of City Architects, for public housing and public works; chairman of the Mayor’s Committee on Property Improvement; co-chairman of the zoning committee, as well as serving as a governor, of the Real Estate Board of New York; and member of the New York Building Congress and Citizens’ Housing Council.

The earliest known Horn & Hardart commission by F.P. Platt was in 1916, for a restaurant space located at Broadway and Houston Street. F.P. Platt & Bro. designed a new 6-story office building (1920-22, extant), which included a 3-level automat-cafeteria, at No. 68 Trinity Place/107 Greenwich Street; and expanded the Horn & Hardart commissary building in 1929. By 1927, F.P. Platt & Bro. had developed a modern and functional design prototype for 3-story, purpose-built Horn & Hardart automat-cafeteria buildings that assisted the company in achieving a consistent commercial image. This prototype featured stone cladding, a wide segmental arch embracing a show window and entrances on the ground story and multi-pane windows on the mezzanine level, and rectangular office windows on the second (top) story, with the structure capped by a band with simple rondels. The use of large windows allowed the patrons on two levels inside the restaurant to look out onto the street, as it also offered passers-by a view into the restaurant. This design was implemented at several locations: No. 165 East 86th Street (1927, extant with altered base); No. 764 Eighth Avenue/264 West 47th Street (1928, extant with altered base and rooftop); and No. 975 Eighth Avenue (1928; demolished). In 1929, F.P. Platt & Bro. completed a number of distinctive Horn & Hardart designs that were fully in the Art Deco style. No. 122 Pearl Street (1929-30; demolished) featured dark glazed tile and glass block cladding. No. 1165 Sixth Avenue/105 West 45th Street (1929; demolished) featured 2-story segmental openings surmounted by an upper office story with rectangular windows, which were flanked by pilasters with stylized terra-cotta capitals and capped by terra-cotta panels. Of No. 1165 Sixth Avenue, George Sheppard Chappell, the architecture critic “T-Square” for *The New Yorker*, in 1929 remarked

*Among smaller structures one of the most interesting is the new Horn & Hardart Building. It opens on Forty-fifth Street, but the Sixth Avenue elevation is the principal one. The modern style has been used with real distinction. By means of long windows, through which one sees the edge and railing of the balcony, or mezzanine floor, the architects, F.P. Platt & Brother, have logically expressed the interior arrangements. The polished granite of the exterior walls, ornamented with ingenious metal work, gives the building a handsome and unusual finish. This little building is a refreshing example of thoughtful, logical, and convincing architecture.*¹⁶

The Horn & Hardart Automat-Cafeteria Building at No. 2710-2714 Broadway (1930) employed the same upper-story terra-cotta motifs. The last known new Horn & Hardart building commission in Manhattan by the Platts was No. 170 West 72nd Street (1931), now located in the Upper West Side/ Central Park West Historic District, with a design that merged aspects of the Art Deco and Moderne styles.

Horn & Hardart selected New York architect Louis A. Abramson, also a restaurant specialist, for two of its buildings: No. 611 West 181st Street (1930-31; facade covered), the design largely following the Platts’ concept for No. 2710-2714 Broadway; and the fanciful No. 155 West 33rd Street (1930-31; facade covered). In the 1930s, Horn & Hardart turned to Philadelphia architect Ralph B. Bencker, who further standardized the company’s image through his designs and updating of some 40 outlets in the Moderne style. Two Bencker-designed automat-cafeteria buildings for Horn & Hardart were No. 202 West 23rd Street (1937-38; demolished), and No. 104 West 57th Street (1938; demolished).

The Horn & Hardart Automat-Cafeteria Building at Broadway and West 104th Street ¹⁷

Four lots at the southeast corner of Broadway and West 104th Street were assembled in 1885, 1901, and 1904 by George W. Walker. The combined property, built up with four structures, was leased to D[avid]. A. Schulte, Inc. (Schulte Real Estate Co./ Schulte Cigar Co.) in 1920. In December 1926, this property was sub-leased to the Broadway & 104th Street Realty Co., under Samuel Gershowitz, who, according to the *New York Times*, “apparently made a business of opening eating places and selling them,” and had gangster-related connections.¹⁸ The Horn & Hardart Co. became the lessee a year later for \$50,000. The *New York Times* in December 1927 announced that the firm would “upon the expiration of existing leases, erect a new building to house in part a branch automat cafeteria.”¹⁹ George W. Walker’s will, probated in March 1930, left this property jointly to his sons, George L. Walker (who served as a chief engineer of buildings and sanitary inspection for New York City) and Samuel B. Walker, and his daughter, Katherine V. Walker Born.

F.P. Platt & Bro. filed plans in April 1930 for a 2-story plus mezzanine automat-cafeteria and office building, measuring approximately 71 by 69 feet and expected to cost \$105,000. Construction began at the end of May and was completed in just five months, in October 1930. T.J. Murphy Co. was the contractor. The Art Deco style design, executed chiefly in limestone, featured on the main Broadway facade: a polished granite veneer base, with decorative metal grilles; a central 1-1/2-story segmental arched opening (with a fluted molded granite surround with a keystone) having an entrance portal (with ornamental bronze enframement) flanked by show windows on the ground story, a decorative bronze spandrel, and multi-pane windows with vertical mullions on the mezzanine level; a storefront at the north end of the ground story, and a storefront window and upstairs entrance at the south end, all flanked by fluted moldings; on the mezzanine level, a rectangular steel casement window (flanked by fluted moldings) above each storefront; and five multi-pane windows with terra-cotta sills on the second story, flanked by pilasters with stylized terra-cotta capitals, and capped by terra-cotta panels; and a terra-cotta band terminating the facade. The West 104th Street facade was similar, except that the ground story had central and western storefront windows and an eastern end entrance; and the mezzanine level had three central sets of paired rectangular windows.

The building is made notable by the glazed polychrome Art Deco style terra-cotta ornament on the third story. The terra-cotta panels, with their highly sophisticated stylized floral motifs and zigzag patterns, are identical to those employed on F.P. Platt & Bro.’s earlier Horn & Hardart Automat-Cafeteria Building at No. 1165 Sixth Avenue/ 105 West 45th Street (1929), which have been documented as manufactured by the Atlantic Terra Cotta Co.²⁰ The modeler of these panels has not been identified, but the work is strikingly similar to that of preeminent architectural sculptor Rene P. Chambellan.²¹ American terra cotta expert Susan Tunick has written that the building is “ornamented with green, blue, and tan glazed terra cotta and is highlighted with gold lustered glaze,”²² and that “gold metallic luster is an overglaze which is applied to the already glaze-fired pieces, which are then refired at a very low temperature.”²³ She has identified only two other known surviving buildings in New York which employed gold lustered glaze: No. 261 Fifth Avenue (1928-29, Buchman & Kahn)²⁴ and the Foltis-Fischer Building (1929-30, Erhard Djourup), 411-413 Park Avenue South.

The Atlantic Terra Cotta Co., one of the earliest New York manufacturers of architectural terra cotta, was organized in 1897 in Tottenville, Staten Island, by DeForest Grant, who became president, and several former employees of the Perth Amboy [N.J.] Terra Cotta Co. (founded 1879). The Atlantic Terra Cotta Co. was reorganized in 1907, when it was consolidated with Perth Amboy and the Excelsior Terra Cotta Co. (established 1894) in Rocky Hill, N.J. The Standard Terra Cotta Works (1890) in Perth Amboy, and Atlanta [Ga.] Terra Cotta Co. (1895) were acquired by the new corporation shortly thereafter. The Atlantic Terra Cotta Co., which became the world’s largest manufacturer of architectural terra cotta, supplied a wide variety of products, from white glazed terra cotta to polychrome decorative work. Among the notable New York projects for which the Atlantic Terra Cotta Co. supplied the terra cotta were: Broadway-Chambers Building (1899-1900, Cass Gilbert); Flatiron Building (1901-03, D.H. Burnham & Co.); West Street Building (1905-07, Gilbert); Masonic Temple (1908-09, Lord & Hewlett, with Pell & Corbett), Brooklyn; Woolworth Building (1910-13, Gilbert); Rodin Studios (1916-17, Gilbert); 130 West 30th Street Building (1927-28, Gilbert); Chanin Building (1927-29, Irwin S. Chanin, with Sloan & Robertson); and Fuller Building (1928-29, Walker & Gillette).²⁵

The Horn & Hardart Automat-Cafeteria Building at Broadway and West 104th Street, conveniently located near a Broadway line subway station, served the dense residential population of the northern portion of the Upper West Side, with its wide range of income levels. (The southern section of the Upper West Side was served by the facility at No. 170 West 72nd Street). No. 2710-2714 Broadway was, according to the company’s 1932 Annual Report, the third northernmost Horn & Hardart restaurant in Manhattan, the other locations being No. 611 West 181st Street and No. 121 East 170th Street. Located within a short distance of the 104th Street automat were large apartment buildings, such as the Master Building, 310 Riverside Drive, and Manhasset Apartments, 2806-2828 Broadway; residential hotels having apartments without kitchens, such as the Regent Hotel, Broadway and 104th

Street, and the Hotel Marsailles, 2689-2693 Broadway; and numerous rowhouses. Also nearby were the U.S. Post Office, 217 West 104th Street; the New York Free Circulating Library, 206 West 100th Street; and several movie theaters, including the Midtown, 2624 Broadway, the Essex, 2706 Broadway, and the Olympia, 2772 Broadway. The Horn & Hardart Co. remained a tenant on the ground story and mezzanine of No. 2710-2714 Broadway until 1953. The northern corner storefront of the structure was occupied by a cigar store operated by the recently-merged huge chain, [David A.] Schulte Retail Stores Corp./ United Cigar Stores Co., until at least 1951. The second (top) story was first rented for use as a “midget golf” course (1930-32); then to the B. & C. Billiard Academy (Claus H. Boschen, president) (1932- c. 1935), and Dixie Recreation, billiards and ping-pong (c. 1940-42). In 1942, an interior stairway to the mezzanine was removed and the southern window on Broadway was altered.²⁶ The Prudential Life Insurance Co. leased the entire second (top) story as a branch office from 1945 to 1957.

Later History²⁷

In October 1946, the *New York Times* mentioned that “the Malester Restaurant chain has obtained a twenty-one-year lease at an aggregate rental of more than \$500,000 on the entire building now occupied by Horn & Hardart at the southeast corner of Broadway and 104th Street.”²⁸ Albert Graham, a real estate operator, purchased the leasehold, then listed at an aggregate rental of \$350,000, from Isaac Malester in June 1951.²⁹ In November 1954, the *Times* carried an advertisement for No. 2710-2714 Broadway, for the lease of “70 Ft. Front on Bway./Entire Ground Floor/Store Mezzanine & Basement. Approx. 13,000 Sq. Ft.”³⁰ The Horn & Hardart Co.’s lease was officially cancelled in December 1954. The property remained under the ownership of the Walker family until 1955, when it was transferred to the Broadway-104th Corp., an entity of real estate operator Stanley Stohl. Architects Wechsler & Schimenti performed an estimated \$10,000 alteration on the building in 1955, which included removing the Horn & Hardart counters and the stairs to the mezzanine, closing the mezzanine opening, and installing a full floor on that level, now the second story. The second and third stories were converted for office use.

In 1956, the New York Public Library temporarily had its Bloomingdale Branch children’s room in this building. Over the last five decades, the structure has housed a wide variety of commercial and community uses. The ground story has contained Elmar Food Corp./ Food-O-Rama/ Sloan’s/ Gristede’s supermarket (c. 1962-95), Aranf Coffee Shop (c. 1965), Mamma Mia pizzeria (c. 1972-83), and Rite Aid drugstore (1995 to present). In 1966, the property was purchased by Barbell Properties Corp., controlled by Al and Norma Teitler, who operated the Food-O-Rama supermarket here. The upstairs stories have accommodated the Mr. Universe Health Studio (1957-68); Central Furniture (c. 1962-66); Ames Business School (1968- c. 1975), the successor to the Therese Aub Secretarial School, for stenography, accounting, secretarial and executive training, switchboard, and typewriting; Mid-West Side Community Corp.- Springboard (c. 1979); Latin Exchange (c. 1983-); Outer Space Gallery (c. 1985); American Folk Theater offices (c. 1985); accounting and law offices (c. 1991-); and El Taller Latino Americano (Latin American Workshop) (c. 1996-present), a nonprofit arts and education center founded in 1979 to bridge cultural connections between Latin and North Americans, through its Spanish classes, translation and cultural consulting programs, visual arts, music, and dance presentations and workshops, recording studio, and Casa Puebla gallery. Neighborhood resident/community activist Michael Gotkin persuaded Rite Aid c. 1995 to cover, rather than destroy, original ground-story ornamental elements with the installation of its new storefront.

Description

The 3-story Art Deco style building is clad chiefly in limestone. **Broadway Facade:** The **Ground Story** originally featured a polished granite veneer base, with decorative metal grilles; a central 1-1/2-story segmental arched opening having an entrance portal (with ornamental bronze enframing) flanked by show windows, and a decorative bronze spandrel; and a storefront at the north end, and a storefront window and upstairs entrance at the south end, all flanked by fluted moldings. The current non-historic ground-floor storefront covers historic elements, except for the south end entrance (partly painted, with a non-historic door and signage). **Second Story:** The upper portion of the central segmental arched opening (with a fluted molded granite surround with a keystone) is intact, with the top of the bronze entrance portal and decorative bronze spandrel, surmounted by metal multi-pane windows with vertical mullions. A rectangular steel casement window (flanked by fluted moldings) is placed at each end. A sign has been placed above the central opening, and banner poles are placed to the south of that opening. **Third Story:** Five multi-pane windows with terra-cotta sills are flanked by pilasters with stylized terra-cotta capitals and capped by terra-cotta panels with stylized floral motifs and zigzag patterns. A terra-cotta band terminates the facade. The glazed terra cotta, by the Atlantic Terra Cotta Co., is executed in hues of green, blue, tan, and gold luster. Banner poles are placed at the south end. The **West 104th Street Facade** is similar, except that the ground story originally had central and western storefront windows flanked by fluted moldings (now

altered by the continuation of the Broadway facade storefront and by the filling in of the central window, next to which is an entrance), an entrance between the windows, and an eastern end entrance (most of the ground story has been painted); and the mezzanine level has three central sets of paired rectangular windows (without moldings). A sign has been placed above the ground story. **Roof:** Located on the roof is the metal armature for a rooftop sign.

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Research Department

NOTES

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2. "When a Nickel..."
3. Robert F. Byrnes, "Thanksgiving Dinner at the Automat, '37: Good Eats, Cheap," *NYT*, Nov. 25, 1982, A1.
4. Cohen, 54.
5. "The Nickel's Last Stand," *Pageant* (Aug. 1950), 85.
6. Chauncey, 165.
7. Cited in Cohen, 52.
8. "automats," *Encyclopedia of New York City* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Pr., 1995), 67.
9. "1,721,663 is Earned by Horn & Hardart," *NYT*, Apr. 5, 1939, 47.
10. Alexander, 23.

11. Alexander, 23.
12. Diehl & Hardart, 80.
13. LPC, architects files; James Ward, *Architects in Practice, New York City 1900-1940* (N.Y.: Comm. for the Pres. of Archl. Recs., 1989), 61; F. Platt, U.S. Census, New York State (1910); "The Automat Restaurant," *Architecture & Building* (Aug. 1912), 347-348; "Mid-Broadway Restaurant Lease," *NYT*, Apr. 5, 1916, 21; "What Modernizing 400 Buildings Has Taught Us," *American Architect* (Jan. 1932), 46-49, 70, 72; "Heads Art Society," *NYT*, Aug. 28, 1945, 38; F. Platt obit., *NYT*, Mar. 28, 1955, 27; C. Platt obit., *NYT*, Dec. 7, 1967, 52; "Ralph B. Bencker" and "Stuckert & Sloan," www.philadelphiabuildings.org website; New York Public Library (NYPL), Robert F. Byrnes Collection of Automat Memorabilia, and Digital Gallery; Cervin Robinson and Rosemarie H. Bletter, *Skyscraper Style: Art Deco New York* (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Pr., 1975), 84-88 and pls. 69 and 110; "New Automat Building," *NYT*, Aug. 8, 1920, 90; "Improve Trinity Place," *NYT*, Dec. 11, 1921, 125; Horn & Hardart advertisement, *NYT*, Sept. 5, 1922, 6; "Columbus Circle Lease," *NYT*, Dec. 22, 30; "Automat Owners Get East 86th St. Building," *NYT*, Jan. 27, 1927, 32; "Lease on Eighth Avenue," *NYT*, Dec. 22, 1927, 42; "To Build Bakery Addition," *NYT*, July 25, 1929, 49; "Review of the Day in Realty," *NYT*, July 15, 1930, 45; "7th Av. And 23rd St. Corner Leased for New Restaurant....," *NYT*, Apr. 27, 1937, 41; Horn & Hardart, *Annual Reports* (1932-54) and advertisements, *NYT*, Nov. 17, 1932, 11, Nov. 27, 1947, 44, Dec. 21, 1949, 38, and Nov. 25, 1953, 20; "Horn & Hardart Buys an Old Astor Parcel," *NYT*, Apr. 12, 1954, 41;
14. Frederick P. Platt and Robert L. Davison, "Restaurants," *Architectural Record* (Sept. 1930), 247-269.
15. The Beaver and New York Times Buildings and the Plaza Hotel (and Interior) are designated New York City Landmarks. No. 147-151 West 74th Street is located within the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District.
16. George Sheppard Chappell ("T-Square"), "The Sky Line... The Modern Automat," *The New Yorker*, Dec. 21, 1929, 81.
17. New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances; NYC, Dept. of Buildings, Manhattan, Plans, Permits and Dockets (NB 73-1930); *Manhattan Address Directories* (1935-1950); NYPL, Byrnes Collection; "Lexington Av. Site Sold to Investor," *NYT*, Dec. 10, 1926, 46; "Schulte and United in \$120,000,000 Deal," *NYT*, Dec. 30, 1926, 9; "To Build on Broadway," *NYT*, Dec. 9, 1927, 46; "Business Leases," *NYT*, Aug. 30, 1929, 43; "Wills for Probate [George W. Walker]," *NYT*, Mar. 20, 1930, 38; "Manhattan Plans Filed," *NYT*, Apr. 4, 1930, 51; "Manhattan: Stores, Offices and Lofts," *Real Estate Record & Builders Guide*, Apr. 12, 1930; "Business Leases," *NYT*, Sept. 27, 1930, 35; "East Side Holdings in Active Trading," *NYT*, Dec. 16, 1930, 49; "Businesses Leases," *NYT*, Oct. 8, 1932, 32; "2 Die in Restaurant in a Poison Mystery," *NYT*, July 27, 1933, 36; "250 Near as Man is Slain at Lunch," *NYT*, Sept. 5, 1936, 3; "Automat Slasher Held," *NYT*, Sept. 6, 1936, 6; "Manhattan Mortgages," *NYT*, Aug. 2, 1937, 31; "Latest Recorded Lease," *NYT*, Feb. 1, 1938, 37; "Manhattan Transfers," *NYT*, May 1, 1940, 47; "Branch Office for Prudential," *NYT*, Mar. 29, 1945, 38; George L. Walker obit., *NYT*, Jan. 28, 1952, 17.
18. "50,000 Shakedown of S. Klein Failed," *NYT*, Feb. 11, 1937, 1, 24.
19. "To Build on Broadway."
20. NYPL, Byrnes Collection, photograph and Atlantic Terra Cotta Co. sticker, box 22, folder 14.
21. Chambellan (1893-1955) became a noted architectural sculptor and model-maker whose sculpture, bas-reliefs, and panels were executed in a number of materials, including bronze, stone, and terra cotta. Born in Union City, New Jersey, he was educated at New York University (1912-14), the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design (1914-17), and the Ecole Julian (1918-19) in Paris and was a student of the sculptor Solon Borglum. He participated in the design and execution of the ornamental schemes of many important buildings of the 1920s and 30s in New York City and elsewhere, including: with Jacques Delamarre, the Chanin Building (1927-29, Sloan & Robertson), 122 East 42nd Street; Beaux-Arts Institute of Design (1928, Frederic C. Hiron), 304 East 44th Street; State Bank & Trust Co. Building (1927-28, Dennison & Hiron), 681-685 Eighth Avenue; Panhellenic Tower (1927-28, John Mead Howells), 3 Mitchell Place; Suffolk Title & Guarantee Co. Building (1929, Dennison & Hiron), 90-04 161st Street, Queens; and Home Savings Bank (c. 1929), Albany, N.Y. Of

the New York City buildings listed, only the State Bank & Trust Co. Building is not a designated New York City Landmark. Chambellan obit., *NYT*, Nov. 30, 1955, 33; LPC, Chambellan files; Stern, et. al.; New York Public Library, Artists files; "Rene Paul Chambellan," *Who Was Who in America 3* (Chicago: A.N. Marquis Co., 1963), 147.

22. Susan Tunick, Friends of Terra Cotta, letter to LPC, June 25, 2006.
23. Susan Tunick, *Terra Cotta: Don't Take it For Granite: 3 Walks in New York City Neighborhoods* (N.Y.: Friends of Terra Cotta Pr., 1995), 32-33.
24. This building is located within the Madison Square North Historic District.
25. The Masonic Temple is located within the Ft. Greene Historic District; the other buildings are designated New York City Landmarks.
26. NYPL, Byrnes Collection, photographs (Apr. 1942), box 24, folder 2.
27. NY County; NYC, Dept. of Buildings (Alt. 1046-1955); *Manhattan Address Directories* (1955-1979); "Investor Widens a West Side Site," *NYT*, Feb. 14, 1955, 34; "Operator Buys Uptown Corner," *NYT*, Apr. 14, 1955, 51; "Manhattan Transfers," *NYT*, May 2, 1955, 33; "Building Plans Filed," *NYT*, June 25, 1955, 26; "Library to Play Caruso Recordings," *NYT*, July 29, 1956, 30; "Space is Leased in New Building," *NYT*, Dec. 30, 1957, 40; "Community's Wrath May Block Privately Run Methadone Clinic," *NYT*, Mar. 25, 1973, 23; "An Educational Debt," *NYT*, Aug. 16, 1983, B16; "Audience Critiques," *NYT*, Mar. 4, 1985, C17; "Puerto Ricans Get Freedom, Culturally," *NYT*, Mar. 26, 1996, B1; "Exuberant Rural Rhythms of Black Brazilian Culture," *NYT*, Aug. 2, 1996, C25; "Pop and Jazz Guide," *NYT*, Mar. 17, 2000, E29; www.tallerlatino.org website.
28. "Houses Purchased on the East Side; Broadway Lease," *NYT*, Oct. 13, 1946, 3.
29. "Leasehold Sold on West 104th St.," *NYT*, June 16, 1951, 25.
30. "2712 Broadway" advertisement, *NYT*, Nov. 21, 1954, R6.

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 Horn & Hardart Automat-Cafeteria Building has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the 3-story, limestone-clad Horn & Hardart Automat-Cafeteria Building, a distinctive small-scale commercial structure executed in the Art Deco style, is one of the best surviving examples of the popular chain restaurants that proliferated in the city during the first three decades of the 20th century; that after the Horn & Hardart Co. became the leaseholder of this site in 1927, this building was constructed in 1930 to the design of F[rederick]. P[utnam]. Platt & Brother [Charles Carsten Platt], who executed numerous New York commissions for Horn & Hardart from about 1916 to 1932, including developing by 1927 a modern and functional design prototype for purpose-built Horn & Hardart automat-cafeteria buildings, with large windows, that assisted the restaurant chain in achieving a consistent commercial image; that the Horn & Hardart Co., established in 1911, was the New York subsidiary of the Horn & Hardart Baking Co. of Philadelphia, Pa., which had been incorporated in 1898 by Joseph V. Horn and Frank A. Hardart, lunchroom proprietors since 1888, who in 1902 opened their first waiterless Philadelphia restaurant, or “automat,” in which customers could retrieve food directly from windows after depositing nickels in European-made equipment; that after the first New York automat opened in 1912, with American machinery, at No. 1557 Broadway in Times Square, automats became known for uniformly good food at low cost, and were wildly popular and one of the city’s cherished democratic institutions, appealing to a wide clientele; that this Horn & Hardart Automat-Cafeteria Building is made notable by its glazed polychrome Art Deco style terra-cotta ornament on the third story, executed in hues of green, blue, tan, and gold luster by the Atlantic Terra Cotta Co., and located on sills, panels above the windows, stylized pilaster capitals, and the building’s terminating band.; that the highly sophisticated terra-cotta panels feature stylized floral motifs and zigzag patterns, and though the modeler has not been identified, the work is strikingly similar to that of preeminent architectural sculptor Rene P. Chambellan; that Horn & Hardart remained a tenant on the ground story and mezzanine here until 1953, after which the mezzanine level was remodeled as a full story in 1955, and there have been a wide variety of commercial and organizational tenants over the years; and that while the current ground-floor storefront covers historic elements, visible above this are historic elements, including the upper portion of the original central segmental arched opening (with a fluted molded granite surround with a keystone) and the top of the bronze entrance portal and decorative bronze spandrel.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Horn & Hardart Automat-Cafeteria Building, 2710-2714 Broadway (aka 228-234 West 104th Street), Borough of Manhattan, and designates Manhattan Tax Map Block 1875, Lot 46, as its Landmark Site.

Commissioners:

Robert B. Tierney, Chair; Pablo E. Vengoechea, Vice-Chair
Steven F. Byrns, Joan Gerner, Roberta Brandes Gratz,
Margery Perlmutter, Thomas F. Pike, Jan Hird Pokorny



Horn & Hardart Automat-Cafeteria Building

Photo: Carl Forster, LPC



Horn & Hardart Automat-Cafeteria Building, under construction (1930)

Photo Credit: Robert F. Byrnes Collection of Automat Memorabilia,
New York Public Library



Horn & Hardart Automat-Cafeteria Building, under construction (1930)

Photo Credit: Robert F. Byrnes Collection of Automat Memorabilia,
New York Public Library



Horn & Hardart Automat-Cafeteria Building (1942)

Photo Credit: Robert F. Byrnes Collection of Automat Memorabilia,
New York Public Library



Horn & Hardart Automat-Cafeteria Building (c. 1980)

Photo: LPC



Horn & Hardart Automat-Cafeteria Building, West 104th Street façade (c. 1980)

Photo: LPC



Horn & Hardart Automat-Cafeteria Building

Photo: Carl Forster, LPC



Horn & Hardart Automat-Cafeteria Building, upper stories

Photo: Carl Forster, LPC



Horn & Hardart Automat-Cafeteria Building, third story detail

Photo: Carl Forster, LPC



Horn & Hardart Automat-Cafeteria Building, third-story terra-cotta panel

Photo: Carl Forster, LPC



Horn & Hardart Automat-Cafeteria Building, third-story terra-cotta pilaster capital

Photo: Carl Forster, LPC



Horn & Hardart Automat-Cafeteria Building, West 104th Street facade

Photo: Carl Forster, LPC



Horn & Hardart Automat-Cafeteria Building (LP-2192),
2710-2714 Broadway (aka 228-234 West 104th Street).
Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1875, Lot 46.

Designated: January 30, 2007