



**NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION  
COMMISSION**

Robert B. Tierney  
Chairman

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**SEARS ROEBUCK STORE IN FLATBUSH AND A FORMER EAST VILLAGE HORSE  
AUCTION HOUSE BUILDING DESIGNATED AS LANDMARKS**

*Proposals to Protect the American Stock Exchange Building, the Bowery Mission, and an 800-  
Building Historic District in Bedford Stuyvesant and Five Other Sites Advance*



The Landmarks Preservation Commission today unanimously approved landmark status for the Sears Roebuck & Co. Department Store in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn and a former horse auction house in the East Village in Manhattan, citing their architectural distinction and roles in the economic and cultural development of New York City.

“Both of these buildings represented businesses that served as significant engines of the City’s economy,” said Commission Chairman Robert B. Tierney. “One was built in the middle of the Great Depression, and the other dates to a time when the City was an important auction center.”

The Commission also voted to hold public hearings on proposals to designate the c. 1931, Art Deco style **American Stock Exchange**, formerly known as the New York Curb Exchange, at 74-78 Trinity Place in Manhattan and the c. 1876, Neo-Grec style **Bowery Mission**, at 227 Bowery as individual landmarks and the **Bedford Historic District**, consisting of 800 highly intact 19<sup>th</sup>-century apartment and row houses in the Bedford Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn. Dates for the hearings were not immediately scheduled.

Additionally, the Commission held public hearings on proposals to give landmark status to the **Brinkerhoff Cemetery** in Fresh Meadows, Queens; the **Bowery Bank of New York** building at 124-126 Bowery in Chinatown and three New York City firehouses: the c.1903, Classical Revival-style **Engine Company 41** at 330 E. 150<sup>th</sup> St. in the Bronx; the c.1905 Classical Revival-style **Engine Company 83, Hook and Ladder Company 29** at 618-620 East 138<sup>th</sup> St. in the Bronx and the c.1925, neo-Tudor style **Engine Company 305** at 111-02 to 111-04 Queens Boulevard in Forest Hills, Queens.

Descriptions of newly designated landmarks follow below:

**Sears Roebuck & Co. Department Store**, 2227-2323 Beverly Road, Brooklyn

The Sears Roebuck Department store was completed in 1932 and designed in the Art Deco style by the Chicago architecture firm of Nimmons, Carr & Wright, with Alton L. Craft, a New York City architect. The firm designed warehouses and stores for the retailer in 65 cities and 28 states, but the Flatbush branch is its only known work in New York City. Craft’s commissions included the conversion of a factory building into classrooms for the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn and a municipal parking garage on 53<sup>rd</sup> Street and Eighth Avenue in Manhattan.



The three-story building is located on a trapezoidal lot at the southeast corner of Bedford Avenue and Beverly Road, and has a conspicuous 10-story corner tower that displays the store's name in large capital letters on all four sides. It's faced mostly with limestone, with vertical cast-stone bands flanking the windows that read as alternating dark and light vertical stripes, and abstractly patterned spandrels beneath each pane.

Sears was founded in Chicago in the early 1890s as a mail-order retailer catering to rural America. It began to open free-standing stores around 1925

and grew to more than 600 sites by 1941. The Flatbush store debuted at the height of the Great Depression in 1932, at first providing 300 jobs. The opening ceremony, held November 5, included an address by Eleanor Roosevelt, who at the time was the first lady of New York State. It was her last public appearance before her husband, Franklin D. Roosevelt, was elected president of the United States. She is said to have made the store's first purchase, a pair of baby's booties.

Sears built an auditorium inside the store in 1936 that could accommodate 650 people, and added a 43,000-square-foot wing in 1940, as well as more than 100 employees.

"The building is as impressive for its architectural style, scale and massing as for the impact it must have had on Brooklyn and the city's economy when it first opened," said Chairman Tierney, who noted that the store was nominated for designation by a member of LPC's staff.

Sears merged with Kmart, another national retailer, in 2005 and is part of the Sears Holding Corporation.

### **Van Tassell & Kearney Auction Mart, 126-128 East 13<sup>th</sup> St., between Third and Fourth avenues**



Completed in 1904 for the auctioneering firm of Van Tassell & Kearney, the Beaux-Arts style building was used for the sale of polo ponies, thoroughbreds, coach horses, hunt horses, show horses and carriages until the 1920s.

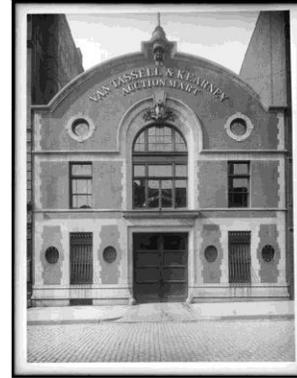
New York City became a significant auction center after the Civil War, and had several firms that specialized in horse auctions. Van Tassell & Kearney was established in 1873, and organized general, as well as horse sales. Prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, few auction marts were housed in buildings of architectural distinction.

The auction mart was designed by Jardine, Kent & Jardine, the successor to the prominent firm of D. & J. Jardine, which was responsible for a variety of noteworthy commercial structures, including the Wilbraham, an apartment hotel at Fifth Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Street, and a cast-iron building at 319 Broadway, both New York City landmarks.

The red-brick building has a pink granite base and terminates in a rounded cornice crowned by a prominent cartouche and keystone. It features a center arched window framed by limestone quoins at the second story and flanked by two bull's eye windows at the third story. Four oval bull's eye windows at the ground floor are surrounded by brick voussoirs.

“This elegant building was constructed expressly for a highly specialized purpose and recalls a period when New York City was a leading auction center and horse sales were not uncommon,” said Chairman Tierney.

The city’s horse trade began to decline around 1910, when New York State enacted a three-year ban on horse racing and automobiles began to gain popularity. Van Tassell & Kearney held its last horse auction at the 13<sup>th</sup> Street building in 1916, selling nine horses, and continued to sell carriages at the site for another two years. The firm moved into automobile sales, and remained active until 1925. (Photo at right, c. 1904: Museum of the City of New York)



The building was used for several years by a candy manufacturer and later leased to a vocational school where women were trained to work in the defense industry during World War II.

Frank Stella, the noted painter, sculptor and printmaker, bought the building in 1978 and used it as his studio until 2005. The building is currently occupied by the Peridance Capezio Dance Center.

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The Landmarks Preservation Commission is the mayoral agency responsible for protecting and preserving New York City’s architecturally, historically and culturally significant buildings and sites. Since its creation in 1965, LPC has granted landmark status to more than 29,000 buildings and sites, including 1,307 individual landmarks, 114 interior landmarks, 10 scenic landmarks, 107 historic districts and 17 historic district extensions in all five boroughs. Under the City’s landmarks law, considered among the most powerful in the nation, the Commission must be comprised of at least three architects, a historian, a realtor, a planner or landscape architect, as well as a representative of each borough.

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