



The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

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LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION DESIGNATES TWO DEPARTMENT STORES IN DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN

“The A.I. Namm Department Store and the Offerman Building, (which many New Yorkers fondly remember as Martin’s) evoke Fulton Street’s past as Brooklyn mecca for shoppers,” said Robert B. Tierney. “We believe that these outstanding works of commercial architecture, will serve as the anchors for Fulton Street’s emerging renaissance and redevelopment. These designations will ensure that new generations will be able to enjoy and appreciate buildings loved by many previous generations of Brooklynites.”

Offerman Building (503-13 Fulton Street, Brooklyn)

An outstanding example of a commercial structure executed in the Romanesque Revival style, the Offerman Building was constructed in two phases, between 1890 and 1893. Located on an L-shaped lot, adjoining Fulton and Duffield Streets, it was commissioned by Henry Offerman to serve as the S. Wechsler and Brother Store. Designed by Peter J. Laurantzen, a Danish immigrant, the Offerman Building incorporates multi-story arcades, textured limestone, and decorative moldings.



Following the closing the Wechsler store in 1897, the building was leased to a succession of large retail tenants. Martin’s Department Store was the best-known and most successful, occupying the structure for more than fifty years, from 1924 to 1979. Fondly remembered by many residents of Brooklyn, the store specialized in men’s and women’s clothing, particularly bridal ware. Despite alterations to the lower floors on Fulton Street, the Offerman Building retains much of its original character and is one of the most impressive structures in downtown Brooklyn.

A.I. Namm & Son Department Store (450-458 Fulton Street, Brooklyn)

A.I. Namm & Son Department Store, the surviving portion of a larger department store that once covered nearly an entire city block, remains a significant architectural and commercial feature of downtown Brooklyn. Adolph I. Namm, a Polish immigrant, transferred his Manhattan upholstery and embroidery trimmings business to Brooklyn in 1885 and opened a store at this location in 1891. By the 1920s, Namm’s was one of the largest department stores in America.



This structure, Namm’s last architectural phase, was built in 1924-25 and 1928-29 to the design of architects Robert D. Kohn and Charles

Butler. The highly sophisticated, elegant modern design contrasts monumental sculptural masonry piers, vertical bay windows, and decorative bronze spandrel panels.