

UPPER EAST SIDE HISTORIC DISTRICT EXTENSION
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

The proposed Upper East Side Historic District Extension encompasses 75 buildings located in two sections along Lexington Avenue between East 63rd and East 76th Streets. The proposed historic district extension shares a similar development history and contains buildings of comparable type and character to those of the immediately adjacent Upper East Side Historic District.

The first major period of development within the proposed historic district extension occurred during the 1870s when real estate investors commissioned rows of speculative houses in the area. Although the speculative bubble burst in the Panic of 1873, the opening of the Third Avenue El in 1878 and the Second Avenue El in 1880 helped renew development efforts in the area. The buildings of the 1870s and 1880s were typically designed in the popular Italianate and neo-Grec styles and were three or four stories in height with a raised parlor floor accessed by a tall stoop. Architects of these original rowhouses included Frederick S. Barus, Thom & Wilson, John G. Prague, and A.B. Ogden, many of whose work also appears within the previously designated Upper East Side Historic District. While many of the houses of this period were demolished to make room for the larger apartment houses of the 1910s and 1920s, several handsome rows, including the Neo-Grec style residences at 145 to 151 East 72nd Street, designed by Stillman & Laurant in 1881, and the Queen Anne style residences at 136 to 142 East 65th Street, designed by Barus in 1870 and also notable as the earliest structures erected in the proposed historic district extension, have remained largely intact.

The proposed historic district extension experienced a second significant period of development in the early 20th century, due in part to the planning and construction of the Lexington Avenue subway line, which commenced in 1911. Many of the rowhouses in the area were extensively altered at this time, and residents frequently commissioned well-known architects to modernize both the interiors and exteriors of their dwellings. Perhaps most prominent is the house at 866 Lexington Avenue, originally designed as part of a larger row in 1878 by Ogden, which was given a new facade in 1921 by architect Frederick Sterner. Other dwellings, especially those facing busy Lexington Avenue, received new commercial storefronts on the first and second floors during the 1910s and 1920s, including the row of Neo-Grec style houses at 1012 to 1022 Lexington Avenue, originally designed in 1880 by Thom & Wilson.

Starting in the early years of the 20th century, apartment house living was becoming fashionable for wealthy New Yorkers. The proposed historic district extension contains a number of fine examples of apartment houses designed in the Beaux Arts, neo-Gothic, and various Revival styles. The earliest such example within the proposed historic district extension is the Renaissance Revival style building at 993 Lexington Avenue, erected in 1913. Designed by Schwartz & Gross, this 15-story brick building featuring an elaborate limestone entrance on East 72nd Street originally replaced a row of four-story residences that had been erected during the area's first period of development. Most of the remaining apartment buildings within the proposed historic district extension were constructed in the 1920s and were designed by local architectural firms well-known for their work on apartment houses, including George F. Pelham, Cross & Cross, and Rouse & Goldstone. Prominent examples of apartment houses from the 1920s include the Colonial Revival style building at 1017 Lexington Avenue, designed in 1922 to the designs of Cross & Cross, and the Mediterranean Revival style building at 157 East 72nd Street featuring elaborate terra-cotta details, designed in 1923 by Rouse & Goldstone.

The buildings that comprise the proposed historic district extension are inextricably linked architecturally, historically, and visually, to the previously designated Upper East Side Historic District. The residential structures, both large and small, of the proposed historic district extension, in conjunction with later commercial accommodations made to the buildings lining Lexington Avenue, are representative of important trends in the development of the Upper East Side of Manhattan.