

**AMENDMENT TO CITY AND SUBURBAN HOMES COMPANY, FIRST AVENUE ESTATE: 429 EAST 64<sup>TH</sup> STREET AND 430 EAST 65<sup>TH</sup> STREET, 429 East 64<sup>th</sup> Street and 430 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street, Borough of Manhattan . Built 1914-15, Philip H. Ohm, architect**

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1459, Lot 22

On April 24, 1990 the Landmarks Preservation Commission designated as a Landmark the City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate, 1168-1190 First Avenue, aka 401 East 64<sup>th</sup> Street, 1194-1200 First Avenue aka 402 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street, 403-409 East 64<sup>th</sup> Street, 411 East 64<sup>th</sup> Street, 417 East 64<sup>th</sup> Street, 419 East 64<sup>th</sup> Street, 421 East 64<sup>th</sup> Street, 423 East 64<sup>th</sup> Street, 429 East 64<sup>th</sup> Street, 404-408 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street, 410 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street, 412 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street, 414 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street, 416 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street, and 430 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street, and designated Manhattan Tax Map Block 1459, Lots 1, 10, 22, and 30, as its Landmark Site. On August 21, 1990, the Board of Estimate voted to modify the designation by removing 429 East 64<sup>th</sup> Street and 430 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street. On November 14, 2006, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing to amend the Landmark designation of City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate to by including the buildings at 429 East 64<sup>th</sup> Street and 430 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street and their related Landmark Site. (Item No. 4). On November 14, 2006 the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed amendment to the designation as a Landmark of the City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate to include 429 East 64<sup>th</sup> Street and 430 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 4). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Thirty-two people spoke in favor of designation including Councilmember Jessica Lappin, representatives of State Senator Liz Krueger, State Assemblymember Pete Grannis, Borough President Scott M. Stringer, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, Community Board 8, the Society for the Architecture of the City, the Historic Districts Council, the Municipal Art Society, the East 79<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood Association, Friends of First Avenue Estate, Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, and the East 60s Neighborhood Association. Two people, representatives of the owner and the Real Estate Board of New York Inc., testified in opposition to designation. The Commission also received 195 postcards, a petition with fifty-two signatures and several letters in support of the designation. The record was left open until November 17, 2006 and additional statements were submitted in support of the designation by Andrew S. Dolkart and the Friends of First Avenue Estate.



## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Built between 1898 and 1915, City and Suburban Homes Company's First Avenue Estate is the oldest extant urban project of the most successful of the privately financed, limited-dividend companies which attempted to address the housing problems of the nation's working poor at the turn of the twentieth century. On April 24, 1990, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designated the entire block including the two easternmost buildings at 429 East 64<sup>th</sup> Street and 430 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street. Designed by City and Suburban's architectural department, headed by Philip H. Ohm and constructed in 1914-15, these were the last light court tenements erected by City and Suburban. Their inclusion in the First Avenue Estate complex enhanced our understanding of the work of the company since the complex encompassed the earliest and latest examples of the light-court model tenements that characterized the company's urban development projects. On August 16, 1990 the Board of Estimate, in one of its final actions, voted to delete these two buildings from the designation.

The twin buildings at 429 East 64<sup>th</sup> Street and 430 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street are later interpretations of the light-court type featuring courtyard entrances and featured decorative details inspired by earlier Ware buildings on the block. Similarities in plan, size and scale between the various buildings on the block creates a strong sense of visual homogeneity. As constructed the similarities in the use of materials and decorative detailing between 429 East 64<sup>th</sup> Street, 430 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street and the other buildings on the block also contributed to that sense of continuity. The First Avenue Estate is one of only two full city block developments of light-court tenements in the country from this period. Thus, the First Avenue project can be seen as an important achievement in the social housing movement, bracketed in time between White's English-inspired low-density developments at Riverside and such post-World War I projects as the Coops.

### Description

The adjoining twin buildings at 429 East 64<sup>th</sup> Street and 430 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street, have central light-courts and share an enclosed side court. Like the other buildings in the complex they are six stories high. Each building has a frontage of approximately 100 feet on York Avenue and 100 feet on the side streets. Like the other buildings in the complex they are faced with light-colored brick, trimmed with stone, marble, and terra cotta. Projected bays, originally topped by shaped parapets, articulate the facades. The facades retain their original wrought iron escapes which also serve to reinforce the bay groupings and provide visual continuity with the other buildings in the complex. Both buildings retain their elaborate stone portals framed by immense brackets that carry overhanging cornices that serve as bases for decorative fire escape balconies. In the courtyard the first story and basement and the recessed areas above the entries are faced with the same tan brick as the street façades, the upper stories are faced with a darker colored brick which historically has been painted a light color to enhance the lighting in the court. The segmental arched entries are set off by a projected brick course and stone keystones. The entries retain their historic segmental arched wood and glass doors which have non-historic metal kick plates and push plates.

Currently façade work is ongoing pursuant to permits to enlarge the window openings, replace the windows, remove portions of parapets and install new coping above the roof and courtyard entries, and stucco the facades.

Report prepared by  
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## FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of these buildings, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that 429 East 64<sup>th</sup> Street and 430 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street have a special character and 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 their important qualities, 429 East 64<sup>th</sup> Street and 430 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street, constructed in 1914-15, were the last light court tenements erected by City and Suburban Homes Company and their addition to the First Avenue Estate complex enhances our understanding of the work of the company since it encompasses the earliest and latest surviving examples of the light-court model tenements that characterized the company's urban development projects; that the City and Suburban Homes Company First Avenue Estate, built between 1898 and 1915 is the oldest extant urban project of the largest and most successful of the privately financed limited-dividend companies which attempted to address the problems of the nation's working poor at the turn of the twentieth century; that the company's investors included many prominent New Yorkers; that the investors voluntarily agreed to limit their profits from the company in order to provide wage-earners with comfortable, safe, hygienic, well-maintained housing at market rates; that by paying a dividend, the company attempted to establish what its president E.R.L. Gould described as "a middle ground between pure philanthropy and pure business" to encourage others to invest in housing of an equally high caliber; that City and Suburban's success in building model tenements encouraged others to enter the field, notably industrialist Henry Phipps who established the Phipps Houses in 1905; that in the 1930s when the federal government began to seriously develop a national housing policy, City and Suburban's large-scale development projects, management techniques, and financial structure were studied as guides for the development of new programs; that from its inception City and Suburban Homes has been linked to the light-court tenement, a building type first proposed by architect Ernest Flagg in *Scribner's Magazine* in 1894 as an economically viable alternative to the dark, unventilated dumbbell tenements of the period; that in 1896, in preparation for the formation of City and Suburban, the Improved Housing Council, and offshoot of the prestigious Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, held a competition to solicit model designs for light-court tenements; that the winners of that competition were commissioned to design City and Suburban's first three projects; that the second prize winner, the distinguished New York architect James E. Ware, was asked to rework his plans for the buildings at 1168-1190 and 1194-1200 First Avenue and these survive as the oldest extant tenements erected by City and Suburban; that Ware, who was highly regarded for his luxury apartment buildings, won critical acclaim for the First Avenue buildings and was subsequently commissioned by City and Suburban to design eleven more buildings on the block; that here at the First Avenue Estate and in its other urban housing projects Ware and City and Suburban's other architects continued to test and improve the light-court building type using buildings of varying widths and experimenting with the placements of courts, stairs, halls and apartment configurations in order to maximize light and air and to offer greater amenities; that the twin buildings 429

East 64<sup>th</sup> Street and 430 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street, designed by Philip Ohm, are later interpretations of the light-court type featuring courtyard entrances; that Ohm, a specialist in the design of low-cost housing, took over as head of City and Suburban Homes Company's architectural department c. 1906 and was responsible for designing and constructing thirteen buildings for the company; that within a framework of a limited budget the buildings in the complex were designed in contemporary architectural styles; that in his design Ohm used elements inspired by earlier Ware buildings on the block; that the similarities in size and scale between the various buildings on the block creates a strong sense of visual homogeneity; that as constructed the similarities in the use of materials and decorative detailing between 429 East 64<sup>th</sup> Street, 430 East 6<sup>th</sup> Street and the other buildings on the block also contributed to that sense of continuity; that in its projects City and Suburban emphasized large-scale development likening itself to a chain store, able to offer quality goods at bargain prices because of large-scale organization; that when it was completed in 1915 the First Avenue Estate comprised 1059 apartments and was second in size only to City and Suburban's First Avenue Estate among the model tenement complexes in Manhattan; that City and Suburban's First Avenue Estate is one of the only two full city block developments of light-court model tenements in the country; and the First Avenue Estate can be seen as an important achievement in the social housing movement, bracketed in time between Alfred T. White's English-inspired low-density developments and such post-World War I projects as the Coops and Amalgamated Homes.

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 amends the designation of City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate, LP-1692, to include 429 East 64<sup>th</sup> Street and 430 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street, and amends the Landmark Site, Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1459, Lots 1, 10, 30 to include Lot 22.

Commissioners:

Robert B. Tierney, Chair

Pablo Vengochea, Vice Chair

Stephen Byrns, Joan Gerner, Roberta Brandes Gratz,

Christopher Moore, Thomas Pike, Jan Pokorny, Elizabeth Ryan



Amendment to City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate  
429 East 64<sup>th</sup> Street, Borough of Manhattan  
Photo: Kathryn Horak



Amendment to City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate  
429 E. 64<sup>th</sup> Street from the southeast showing the E. 64<sup>th</sup> Street and York Avenue facades



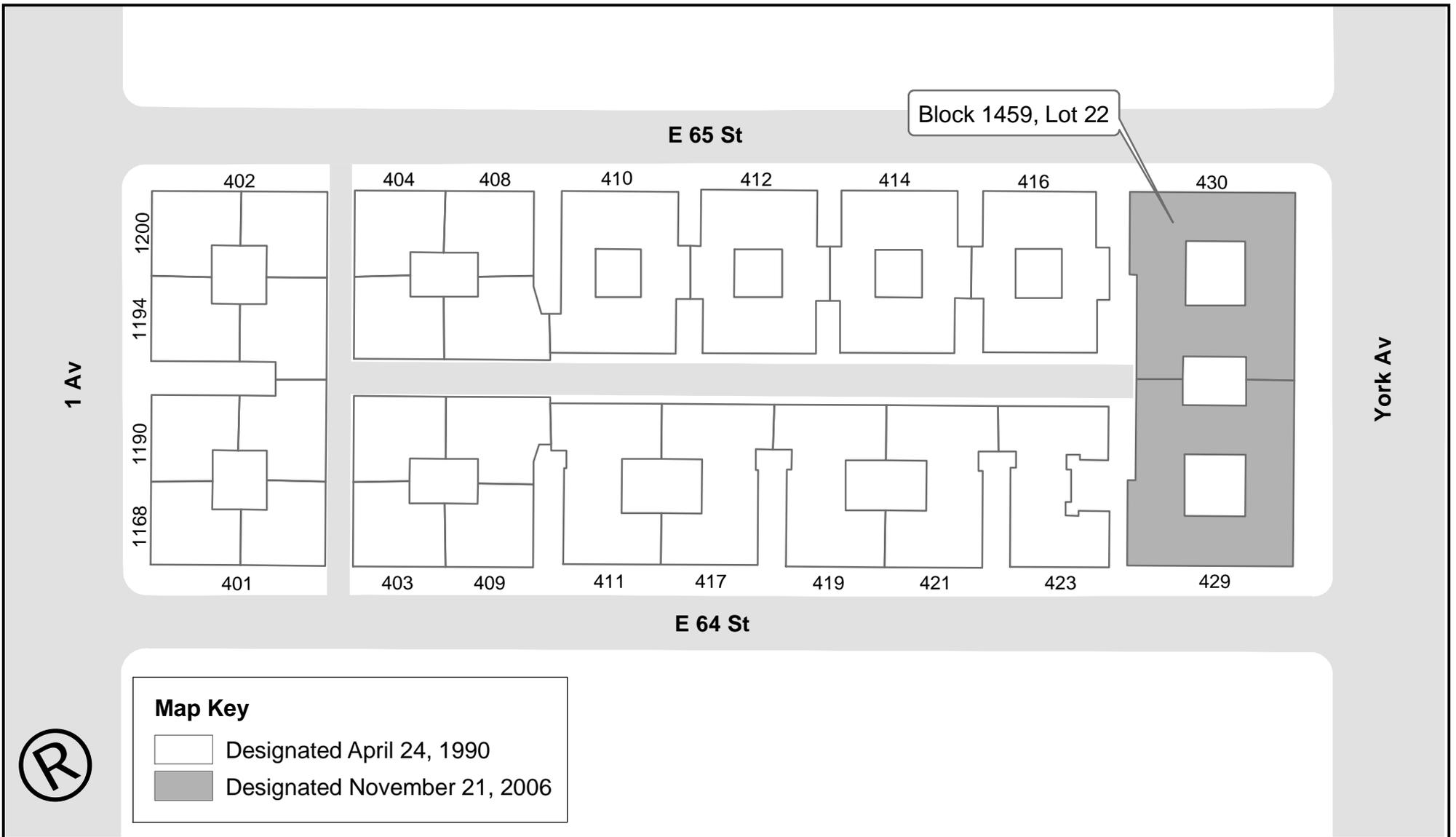
Amendment to City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate  
429 E. 64<sup>th</sup> Street and 430 E. 65<sup>th</sup> Street from the northeast showing their York Avenue facades  
Photos: Kathryn Horak



Amendment to City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate  
430 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street  
Photo: Kathryn Horak



Amendment to City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate  
430 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street, courtyard  
Photo: Kathryn Horak



City & Suburban Homes Company: First Avenue Estate (LP-1692), 1168-1190 First Avenue aka 401 East 64th Street, 1194-1200 First Avenue aka 402 East 65th Street, 403-409 East 64th Street, 411 East 64th Street, 417 East 64th Street, 419 East 64th Street, 421 East 64th Street, 423 East 64th Street, 404-408 East 65th Street, 410 East 65th Street, 412 East 65th Street, 414 East 65th Street, 416 East 65th Street. Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1459, Lots 1, 10 and 30.

Landmark Site Amended to Include (LP-1692A),  
429 East 64th Street and 430 East 65th Street, Manhattan, Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1459, Lot 22.

Graphic Source: New York City Department of City Planning, MapPLUTO, Edition 03C, December 2003.