

1 Wall Street Banking Room Interior

1 Wall Street, Manhattan
Tax Map Block 23 Lot 7 in part

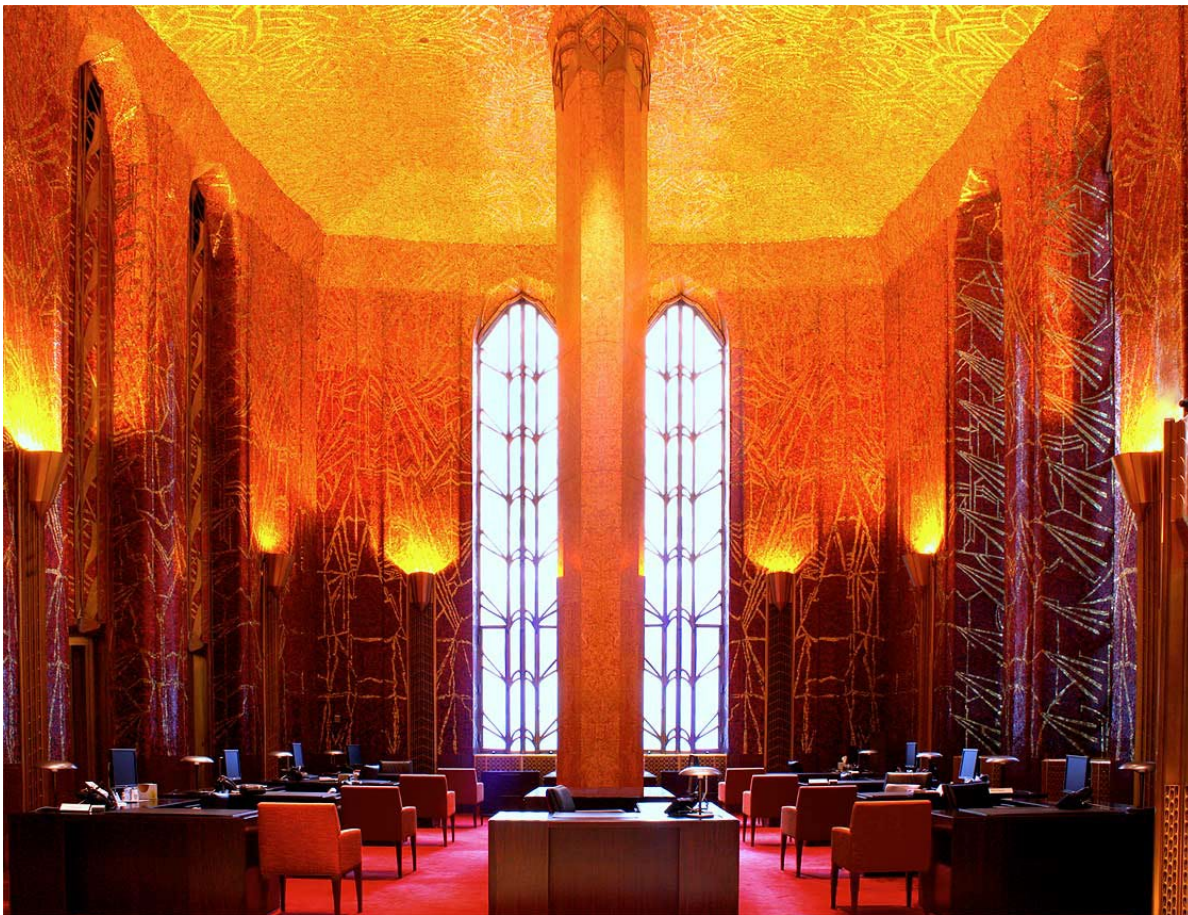
Built: 1931

Architect: Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker

Designers: Ralph Walker, Perry Coke Smith, and Hildreth Meière

Style: Art Deco

Proposed Action: Proposed for Calendaring December 19, 2023



Banking Room Interior, International Hildreth Meière Association

Located at the intersection of Broadway and Wall Street in the heart of Manhattan's financial district, the Banking Room of 1 Wall Street (colloquially known as the Red Room) was conceived by architect Ralph Walker and muralist Hildreth Meière as an impressive reception room and banking hall for the Irving Trust and Bank Company. This extraordinary, elaborately tiled space, completed in 1931, was the first of several interior collaborations between Meière and Walker and the only abstract mosaic mural by Meière, whose designs typically included allegorical figures executed in an Art Deco manner. The room's undulating walls, ceiling, and columns gleam with intricate mosaic tile in warm colors that begin in oxblood red near the floor and fade upward to orange across the ceiling, intertwined with web-like patterns of gold tiles that create a striking verticality. The walls mimic the curved stone facades of the Art Deco skyscraper's exterior. The 1 Wall Street Building was designated an individual New York City landmark in 2001.

Ralph Walker (1889-1973), the architect of 1 Wall Street, was a principal of the firm Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker. Walker was one of New York's most noteworthy designers of Art Deco high-rise buildings. He would go on to become the de-facto architect for the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T). Perry Coke Smith (1899-1973) was the design assistant to Walker on the project, including oversight of the Banking Room's interior design. They engaged Hildreth Meière (1892-1961), a highly talented muralist proficient in a variety of mediums. Meière's works include painted and mosaic murals in churches and synagogues throughout the United States, as well as the rondels on the façade of Radio City Music Hall. Following their work on 1 Wall Street, Walker and Meière next collaborated on the AT&T Long Distance Building lobby and thereafter on several subsequent buildings for corporate interests.

The Irving Trust and Bank Company and its successor firms occupied 1 Wall Street until 2014. The current owners subsequently undertook a full restoration of the banking room, utilizing a newly discovered trove of surplus original tiles. While temporarily used as the sales office for the condominiums now occupying the upper stories of the building, the former banking room will be converted to retail space.

Representing the work of masters of their fields, the banking room of 1 Wall Street is a striking and rare example of an abstract mosaic interior by Meière and an elaborate stylistic departure from the typical stone-clad banking hall.

