

# Fashion Tower

**135 West 36<sup>th</sup> Street, Manhattan**  
**Tax Map Block 812, Lot 19**

**Built:** 1924-25

**Architect:** Emery Roth

**Style:** Medieval/Renaissance Revival

**Proposed Action:** Proposed for Calendaring April 22, 2025



**Fashion Tower**, courtesy of Walkerzanger.com

Fashion Tower is a 20-story commercial building in Manhattan's Garment District at 135 West 36th Street, midblock between Broadway and Seventh Avenue. The developer, Mo-Ro Realty, headed by cotton dealer Morris Rosenstein, acquired the shallow site in 1924 from the Church of the Holy Innocents, which stands directly north, on West 37th Street. Designed by the prominent architect Emery Roth, ribbed piers rise from a multi-story sandstone base capped by a continuous arcade to setbacks at the 17th, 18th, and 19th floors. Construction was mostly complete by the end of December 1925. The building stands out in the neighborhood for its distinctive decorative scheme associated with its location in the Garment Center.

The eye-catching lower floors blend medieval, Renaissance, and Art Deco motifs that express the building's connection to the garment industry. Colorful blue peacocks, feathery symbols of fashion and vanity, crown the arched lobby and freight entrances, while the floors above display the building's name flanked by winged angels that hold cutting shears and brushes, seated women clutching mirrors and spools of yarn, as well as rosettes draped with ribbon. The use of such symbols was rare in the Garment District and the new building was fully leased to apparel firms.

Emery Roth was one of New York City's most prolific early 20th century architects. Born in what was Austria-Hungary, he emigrated to the United States in 1884 and worked in a range of fashionable architectural styles from Secessionist to Art Deco. He was responsible for some of Manhattan's best-known residential buildings, including such New York City landmarks as the Ritz Tower, the Beresford Apartments, and San Remo Apartments. His son, Julian, joined the firm in 1921 and was involved in building Fashion Tower. Gunvald Aus, who worked on the Woolworth and New York Life Insurance headquarters, served as engineer, creating an open flexible floor plan without posts or columns.

In the mid-1950s, the exterior of the first floor was significantly altered. These changes were reversed as part of a facade restoration by GRT Architects in 2015, recreating the original arched lobby entrance and its brilliantly colored peacock relief panels. Fashion Tower remains one of the most impressive buildings in the Garment District and is especially notable for its unique decoration that evokes its historic use.

