

Landmarks Preservation Commission  
December 12, 1995, Designation List 269  
LP-1932

**AMERICAN EXPRESS COMPANY BUILDING**, 65 Broadway (aka 63-65 Broadway and 43-49 Trinity Place), Borough of Manhattan. Built 1916-17, James L. Aspinwall, of Renwick, Aspinwall & Tucker, architect.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 21, Lot 4.

On September 19, 1995, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the American Express Company Building and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 2). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Sixteen witnesses spoke in favor of designation, including Councilwoman Kathryn Freed and representatives of the Downtown Alliance, New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, Municipal Art Society, New York Landmarks Conservancy, Fine Arts Federation, and Landmarks Committee of Community Board 1. A representative of the owner attended the hearing but took no position regarding the proposed designation. No one spoke in opposition to designation. The Commission has received several letters and other statements in support of designation, including a letter from Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger.

### Summary

The 21-story (plus basement), neo-classical American Express Co. Building was constructed in 1916-17 to the design of James L. Aspinwall, of the firm of Renwick, Aspinwall & Tucker, the successor to the architectural practice of the eminent James Renwick. Part of the "Express Row" section of lower Broadway, this site had been the location of American Express' headquarters since 1874; by the time the company purchased the property in 1903, it was one of the largest financial institutions in New York City. This skyscraper, in which all of the firm's operations were to be consolidated, was initiated in 1914 under the firm's aggressive new president, George C. Taylor. The concrete-and-steel-framed building has an H-shaped plan with tall slender wings arranged around central light courts, a type of plan employed from the 1880s through the 1910s to provide offices with maximum light and air. Faced in white brick and terra cotta above a granite base, both facades employ the tripartite composition of base-shaft-capital then popular for the articulation of skyscrapers, with a colonnaded base and upper portion. The Broadway entrance features a double-story Corinthian colonnade with large arched windows. The building completed the continuous masonry wall of its blockfront and assisted in transforming Broadway into the "canyon" of neo-classical masonry office towers familiar to this day. One of the giants of American finance, the American Express Co. was formed in 1850 as an express business in the eastern United States. The transfer of funds became a large component of its operations, and American Express initiated its innovative Money Order in 1882 and the "Traveler's Cheque" in 1891. During its years in this building, American Express emerged dominant in foreign express and financial services, grew into one of the world's leading travel-related organizations, and launched its credit card in 1958. American Express moved its headquarters elsewhere in 1975, but retained travel services here. The building was also the headquarters over the years of other prominent firms, including investment bankers J.& W. Seligman & Co. (1940-74) and the American Bureau of Shipping, a maritime concern (1977-86).



## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

### American Express Company<sup>1</sup>

The American Express Company, one of the giants of American finance, was formed in 1850 through the merger of three of the leading American express firms -- Wells & Co.; Butterfield, Wasson & Co.; and Livingston, Fargo & Co. -- that competed particularly on the routes between New York City, Buffalo, and Albany. Express companies had been established to provide for the quick and safe transport of such mail, parcels, valuables, goods, etc., that the U.S. Post Office, which carried letters, and the railroads, which dealt in heavy freight, would not handle. Henry Wells (1805-1878), in the express business since 1841, was largely responsible for the development of American Express and served as its president for the first eighteen years.<sup>2</sup> In its early years American Express rapidly expanded its routes (via stagecoach, barge, boat and rail) and negotiated contracts with the railroads, particularly after the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869. To thwart competition in the Midwest in the 1850s, American Express launched an affiliate, the United States Express Co. In 1868 American Express further expanded its operations by its merger with the Merchants Union Express Co., a competitor organized by a group of New York merchants in 1867 to challenge high express rates.<sup>3</sup> The firm became a bonded carrier for imports from Europe to the United States in 1874. After Wells' retirement as president, he was succeeded by William Fargo from 1868 to 1881. James Congdell Fargo, his brother, led the company from 1881 to 1914.

The company's transport of currency and valuables had become its most profitable operation, and in the late nineteenth century, the transfer of funds became an increasingly large component of its business. The company is said to have invented the C.O.D. (cash on delivery) system.<sup>4</sup> The company's first major departure from its original express business roots occurred in 1882 when American Express inaugurated its Money Order system. Developed by employee Marcellus Fleming Berry to compete with the postal money order (dating from 1864), the money order, which provided a safe and reliable method to transfer funds, was an immediate and profitable success. Amidst the United States' emergence as an industrial and agricultural exporter nation, American Express in 1888 added a Foreign Freight division to ship goods from New York to Europe. Some of the most profound changes to the firm followed its invention of the "Traveler's Cheque" in 1891. President James Fargo instructed Marcellus Berry to design a

financial instrument that "would represent solid American dollars and would be easily converted into foreign currency any place in the World. Furthermore, it should be better than dollar bills, so that if lost or stolen the owner would get his money refunded."<sup>5</sup> A phenomenal success,<sup>6</sup> the American Express Traveler's Cheque would become the most widely accepted instrument of exchange in the world. In 1891 American Express formally initiated a European Department, and in 1895 opened an office in Paris (soon followed by offices in other European cities) under William Swift Dalliba, to promote the transport of freight from Europe to the United States. As these offices quickly became magnets for American tourists, American Express gradually increased its tourist-related services, and in 1915 the company officially established its Travel Department. American Express began a Foreign Remittance service in 1897 that allowed immigrants in the United States an easy method to send funds back to their families. Dalliba negotiated several important agreements after 1902 with European nations in which American Express acted as agent for the delivery of foreign postal packages in the United States.

However, two governmental actions in the early 1910s had a significant impact on the swelling profits of American Express: the Mann-Elkins Act of 1910 decreed that express companies were "common carriers" subject to the rates and regulations of the Interstate Commerce Commission, while the creation of the parcel post service in January 1913 provided direct competition.

### American Express Company Building<sup>7</sup>

In 1854 the American Express Co. purchased a lot on Vesey Street in New York City as the site for its stables. The company's first New York headquarters were in an impressive marble Italianate palazzo at 55-61 Hudson Street (1857-58, John Warren Ritch), which had a busy freight depot on the ground story with a spur line from the Hudson River Railroad.<sup>8</sup> A stable was constructed nearby at 4-8 Hubert Street (1866-67, Ritch & Griffiths).<sup>9</sup> The company prospered sufficiently that headquarters were moved in 1874 from the wholesale shipping district into rented offices in two five-story brownstone commercial buildings at 63 and 65 Broadway, that were owned by the Harmony family. (The company purchased the buildings and site in 1903). In 1890-91 the company constructed a new ten-story building by Edward H. Kendall on the site of its former headquarters on Hudson

Street.<sup>10</sup> By 1903 the company had assets of some \$28 million, second only to the National City Bank of New York among financial institutions in the city.

At the end of the Wells-Fargo reign in 1914, an aggressive new president, George Chadbourne Taylor (1868-1923), who had worked his way up through the company over the previous thirty years, decided to build a new headquarters. The old buildings, dubbed by the *New York Times* as "among the ancient landmarks"<sup>11</sup> of lower Broadway, were inadequate for such a rapidly expanding concern. In March 1914, Renwick, Aspinwall & Tucker filed for the construction of a 32-story concrete-and-steel-framed office tower in which all of the company's operations, then in four separate buildings, were to be consolidated. The building proposal of 1914 was abandoned, probably due to the war in Europe, but was resurrected two years later in a reduced form, at an estimated cost of \$1 million.

The 21-story (plus basement) neo-classical American Express Co. Building, with concrete-and-steel piers and reinforced concrete floor slabs above concrete caissons, was constructed by the Cauldwell-Wingate Co. On a lot 80 feet wide (slightly less on the rear) and 210 feet deep, the building has an H-shaped plan with tall slender wings arranged around central light courts. The facades, organized in the tripartite scheme of base-shaft-capital then popular for New York skyscrapers, are faced in white brick and terra cotta above a granite base. The Broadway facade has a three-story base featuring a double-story Corinthian colonnade with large arched windows ("a bank front effect"<sup>12</sup> according to the *Times*), that correspond to the main room inside containing counters for travel and financial services. A window grid on the Trinity Place facade also lights this room. The upper portion of each facade has a colonnade, the center part of which is a screen forming a bridge that connects the wings and is supported by an arch ornamented by a large eagle (the company's insignia).<sup>13</sup> The American Express Co. Building, located between the Adams Express Co. Building (61 Broadway, 1912-16, Francis H. Kimball) and the Empire Building (71 Broadway, 1896-98, Kimball & Thompson), was opened in April 1917, completing the continuous masonry wall of its blockfront, and assisted in transforming Broadway into the "canyon" of neo-classical masonry office towers familiar to this day. This portion of Broadway, between Exchange Alley and Rector Street, the location of Adams Express, American Express, and Wells, Fargo, had long been known as the "Express Row" section of lower Broadway.

### The New York Skyscraper

During the nineteenth century, commercial buildings in New York City developed from four-story structures modeled on Italian Renaissance *palazzi* to much taller skyscrapers. Made possible by technological advances, tall buildings challenged designers to fashion an appropriate architectural expression. Between 1870 and 1890, nine- and ten-story buildings transformed the streetscapes of lower Manhattan between Bowling Green and City Hall. During the building boom following the Civil War, New York's tallest buildings — the six-story Equitable Life Assurance Co. Building (1868-70, Gilman & Kendall and George B. Post) at Broadway and Cedar Street, the ten-story Western Union Building (1872-75, George B. Post) at Broadway and Liberty Street, and the nine-story Tribune Building (1873-75, Richard M. Hunt) on Park Row, all now demolished — incorporated passenger elevators, cage construction, and fireproof building materials within building envelopes articulated according to traditional *palazzo* compositions, with mansarded and towered roof profiles. Beginning in the later 1870s tall buildings were characterized by flat roofs and a free, varied grouping of stories, often in the form of multi-storied arcades, within the facades. Ever taller skyscrapers were permitted by the increasing use and refinement of the metal skeleton frame. In 1888-89 New York architect Bradford Lee Gilbert used steel skeleton framing for the first seven stories of the eleven-story Tower Building at 50 Broadway (demolished). Beginning around 1890, architects began producing skyscraper designs that adhered to the tripartite base-shaft-capital arrangement associated with the classical column, a scheme that became commonly employed in New York. The technology of steel framing, often used in conjunction with caisson foundations, advanced further during the 1890s, pioneered by engineers and by architects Francis H. Kimball and Bruce Price. Reinforced concrete came into usage for the structures of large buildings in New York by the 1910s, but appears to have been employed in a hybrid form, along with steel, in some instances such as in the American Express Co. Building.

The H-shaped plan of the American Express Co. Building, with its central light courts facing the streets, is an example of a then-popular solution to providing office towers with maximum light and air. Earlier tall buildings often had interior light courts, and such arrangements as a rectangular-O-shaped plan or a C-shaped plan with the light court placed to the side of the adjacent property. Architectural historian Winston Weisman<sup>14</sup> credits architect George B. Post as one of the first to introduce and popularize major light courts that faced the street, in

the Post Building (1880-81, 16-18 Exchange Pl., demolished) and Mills Building (1881-83, 59 Exchange Pl./11-21 Broad St., demolished), both of which had C-shaped plans. A lot that went through-the-block allowed for light courts on both streets, hence the H-shaped plan. One of the most significant examples of this building plan type was the mammoth Equitable Building (1913-15, Ernest R. Graham, 120 Broadway), a structure long associated with the passage of New York's zoning resolution in 1916. After that time, the skyscraper tower with setbacks became the predominant form.

#### The Architects<sup>15</sup>

The successor to the architectural practice of the eminent James Renwick, the firm of Renwick, Aspinwall & Tucker was formed in 1905 by William Whetton Renwick (1864-1933), James Lawrence Aspinwall (1854-1936), and Fitz Henry Faye Tucker (dates undetermined). Aspinwall was born in New York City, probably studied under French architect/engineer L. Colian, entered the office of James Renwick (a cousin of his wife) as a draftsman in 1875, and became a partner in 1883 in the firm of Renwick, Aspinwall & Russell. William Renwick, a nephew of James, was born in Lenox, Mass., graduated from the Stevens Institute of Technology in 1885 after studying mechanical engineering, entered the office of his uncle, and was admitted as a junior partner in 1890; the firm became Renwick, Aspinwall & Renwick in 1892 (after the senior Renwick's death in 1895, it became Renwick, Aspinwall & Owen, with Aspinwall as senior partner). In independent practice William Renwick specialized in ecclesiastical architecture and decoration. Little is known of Tucker, who was established as an architect in New York by 1904; the following year he joined with Renwick and Aspinwall in an association that lasted until 1925 (after which the firm continued as Renwick, Aspinwall & Guard). Among the commissions the firm received, executed in Gothic and neo-classical styles, were the Grace Church Neighborhood House (1906-07, 98 Fourth Avenue),<sup>16</sup> Provident Loan Society Buildings (1908-09, 61 East 25th St. and 734 7th Ave.), Seaview Hospital, Sanitarium additions (1917), Staten Island,<sup>17</sup> Pictorial Review Co. Building (1919, 7th Ave. and West 59th St., demolished c. 1927), Dollar Savings Bank (1919, Willis Ave. and East 147th St., Bronx), and Lawyers' Mortgage Co. Building (1921-22, 56 Nassau St., demolished). Aspinwall is credited with the design of the American Express Co. Building.<sup>18</sup>

#### Later History: American Express Co.<sup>19</sup>

The American Express Co. Building was

completed just prior to momentous changes in the American express business. In 1918 the United States government, after taking direct control of the railroads as a wartime efficiency measure (thus ending the contracts between the railroads and express firms), terminated the commercial domestic express business in July by the creation of the government-controlled American Railway Express Co. American Railway Express merged the assets of the leading express companies (American Express, Adams Express, Wells, Fargo and Southern) into one gigantic concern. Although American Express turned over its express business equipment and facilities to that entity, it emerged with control of some forty percent (nearly \$12 million) of its stock, and was one of the only express companies to survive the consolidation. George C. Taylor, president of American Express, became the first president of American Railway Express as well, serving until his death in 1923. In 1919 American Express Co., Inc., was formed as a wholly-owned subsidiary to handle the foreign business of American Express. At the same time, American Express acquired the traveler's check, financial, and foreign divisions of the Adams Express and Wells, Fargo companies, and in 1920 acquired the Cuban and Mexican express subsidiaries of Wells, Fargo; in 1925 Wells, Fargo & Co. became a subsidiary of American Express. Its former competitor Adams Express became an "investment trust," while Southern ceased to exist, leaving American Express to dominate the industry.

Under presidents Frederick P. Small (1923-44) and Ralph T. Reed (1944-60) American Express continued to diversify its activities in related financial concerns, with continuation of its foreign freight business, but increasing concentration and expansion of its financial and travel services.<sup>20</sup> During World War II, American Express was significantly affected as travel and foreign shipping fell off, but maintained profits due to the popularity of traveler's checks and money orders. The company added an Air Transport Division in 1946. By 1951 American Express emerged even stronger than it had been before the war and was called "the largest international freight forwarding and customs brokerage network in the world."<sup>21</sup> Travel services, as Americans expanded their travels in the United States and abroad, led to the growth of American Express as one of the world's largest such organizations, and the company has been credited as a major factor in spurring American travel overseas. In 1958 American Express launched a credit card, inspired by the concept that had originated in 1950 with Diners Club. Ill-prepared initially for this aspect of business, or for its ready acceptance, the

company lost \$14 million by 1962 on its credit cards. After internal reorganization and promotion, however, the cards became highly profitable in the 1970s, and the American Express credit card today is virtually considered an "icon" of American life. Beginning in the 1960s as part of a diversification strategy, American Express embarked upon a series of expansions that further transformed American Express into a "corporate giant."<sup>22</sup> Headquarters were moved in 1975 to a new building at American Express Plaza (Water Street and Coenties Slip), and then to 3 World Financial Center in 1985; American Express still retains travel services at No. 65 Broadway.

#### Later History: Other Firms<sup>23</sup>

The American Express Co. Building had other prominent long-term tenants over the years, including American Railway Express Co., Moody's Investors Service/*Moody's Magazine*, and National Investors Corp. From 1940 to 1974, the uppermost three floors were occupied by the executive offices of J. & W. Seligman & Co., a prestigious investment banking firm founded in 1864 by Joseph Seligman and his brothers, who established one of the preeminent German-Jewish families in the United States and became known as the "American Rothschilds."<sup>24</sup> The building was transferred in 1977 to ABS Properties, Inc., an entity of the American Bureau of Shipping, which maintained its headquarters here for nearly a decade. The Bureau, established in 1898, was the successor to the American Shipmasters' Association (1860-98) as the classification society that sets maritime safety standards and inspects vessels to rate their seaworthiness. ABS emerged as an international classification society comparable to Lloyd's after World War II. An increase in the volume of its business was partly responsible for ABS moving its headquarters to New Jersey in 1986. Following a default on the mortgage in 1994, Aetna Life Insurance Co. became the owner of the building. It is currently owned by J.J. Kenny Co., Inc., a subsidiary of McGraw-Hill.

#### Description

The 21-story (plus basement) neo-classical American Express Co. Building, faced in white brick and terra cotta above a granite base, has an H-shaped plan with tall slender wings arranged around central light courts. Both facades are organized in a tripartite base-shaft-capital scheme. Windows originally had one-over-one double-hung wood sash (replacements have aluminum frames, some with louvers or transom panels).

**Base: Broadway** The three-story granite base (with

a polished watertable) features a double-story Corinthian colonnade with large arched multi-pane windows (with the original bronze framing with colonnettes and entablature; the southernmost window has an historic bowed show window, with a recent sign panel above) and a transitional third story with rectangular windows. The entablature of the base originally had the inscription "American Express Company" (it now reads "J.J. Kenny Co., Inc."). The original entrance had four doors, with a pediment over the central pair (the pediment was removed, a sign band was installed, and the doors were replaced [BN3611-1967]; the sign band was reduced and the doors were replaced with two revolving doors and a central glass door [BN3383-1984]). (These doors lead to the lobby, which is not subject to this designation.) Two exterior stairways, with decorative bronze railings, led to the basement level (the southern stairway was removed and both railings were reset [BN3164-1980]). The center three openings of the third floor originally had bronze grilles (these were removed in 1920-22 [Alt. 3326-1920] when the area behind, formerly containing a skylight in the court, was roofed over and an office space created). This area was originally surmounted by a cartouche flanked by scrolls that held a flagpole (the cartouche was replaced by a large eagle c. 1977, and there are now three flagpoles atop the building's base).

**Base: Trinity Place** The granite basement level (now painted) consists of three wide bays: the southern two are loading bays (with replacement rolldown shutters); and the northern bay is subdivided, with an entrance at the north corner (the three original doors with transoms were replaced with the current doors and transom) and a smaller loading bay (originally with a rolldown shutter, now with metal infill and a metal door). The basement is surmounted by a two-story grid of windows, divided vertically by white brick pilasters (and, originally, horizontally above the first story by brick spandrel panels, which have been removed); the windows and framing have been replaced. The pilaster capitals and cornice are terra cotta. Above the basement entrance on the first story, two doors that provided access to/from the elevated railroad were removed.

**Midsection** The midsection (15 stories on Broadway and 16 stories on Trinity Place) is clad in white brick. The wings are framed vertically by continuous pilasters.

**Upper Section** The three-story upper portion of each facade, clad in terra cotta with minimal neo-classical ornament, has a two-story colonnade, the center part of which is a screen forming a bridge

that connects the wings and is supported by a coffered arch ornamented by a large eagle. Each facade is surmounted by a balustrade parapet.

Report prepared by  
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## NOTES

1. Peter Z. Grossman, *American Express: The Unofficial History of the People Who Built the Great Financial Empire* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1987); Alden Hatch, *American Express: A Century of Service* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1950); Jon Friedman and John Meehan, *House of Cards: Inside the Troubled Empire of American Express* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1992); Ralph T. Reed, "American Express" *Its Origin and Growth* (New York: New comen Society in North America, 1952); Dumas Malone, ed., "Henry Wells," *Dictionary of American Biography* 10 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), 639-640; LPC, *Tribeca North Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1714) (New York: City of New York, 1992), 79-81; Paula Kepos, ed., *International Directory of Company Histories* 10 (Washington: St. James Press, 1995), 59-64.
2. Wells was also associated with William G. Fargo in organizing Wells, Fargo & Co. in 1852 to profit from the burgeoning commerce in California and to compete with the Adams Express Co. American Express, Adams Express, and Wells, Fargo forged cooperative arrangements in which their operations were divided in the eastern and western United States.
3. The company operated under the name American Merchants Union Express Co. until 1873, after which it continued as the American Express Co.
4. Hatch, 41.
5. Reed, 19.
6. Sales were \$6 million by 1900, \$13 million in 1905, and \$32 million in 1913.
7. New York City, Dept. of Buildings, Manhattan, Plans, Permits and Dockets (NB 97-1914); New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances; Grossman; Hatch; "Big Broadway Building for American Express Company," *NYT*, May 21, 1916, III, 2; George C. Taylor obit., *NYT*, Nov. 19, 1923, 15.
8. *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* reported in 1858 that seventeen million pounds of freight had been received and shipped at this site. Cited in Hatch, 41.
9. Additions were made in 1898-99 by Edward H. Kendall and 1902 by Charles W. Romeyn.
10. 55-61 Hudson St. and 4-8 Hubert St. are located in the Tribeca West and Tribeca North Historic Districts.
11. *NYT*, May 21, 1916.
12. ibid.
13. ibid.
14. See Weisman, "The Commercial Architecture of George B. Post," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 31 (Oct. 1972), 186-187.
15. Aspinwall obit., *NYT*, May 16, 1936, II, 9; Selma Rattner, "James L. Aspinwall," *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects* 1 (New York: Macmillan Co., 1982), 109-110; LPC, *Tribeca West Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1713) (New York: City of New York, 1991); LPC, architects files.
16. This building is a designated New York City Landmark.
17. This building is part of the N.Y.C. Farm Colony-Seaview Hospital Historic District.
18. Rattner; Aspinwall obit.
19. Grossman; Hatch; Reed; Friedman and Meehan; Kepos; Taylor obit.
20. In 1929 Chase Securities Corp., a subsidiary of Chase National Bank, purchased a controlling interest in American Express, but the Securities Act of 1934 forced the bank (merged with Equitable Trust Co. in 1930) to divest this investment; Chase Securities was reorganized as the Amerex Holding Corp.
21. Reed, 17.
22. In 1968 American Express purchased the Fireman's Fund Insurance Co., one of the nation's foremost property and casualty insurance firms.
23. N.Y. County; Rene de la Pedraja, *A Historical Dictionary of the U.S. Merchant Marine and Shipping Industry* (London: Greenwood Press, 1994); American Bureau of Shipping, *International Directory of Offices* (1974-84); *Manhattan Address Directory* (1929-1986).

24. The firm had constructed its own building at 1 William Street (1906-07, Francis H. Kimball and Julian C. Levi), but sold it in 1919 and moved to 54 Wall Street, where it was located prior to the American Express Co. Building.

## FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the American Express Company Building has a special character and a 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 its important qualities, the American Express Co. Building was constructed in 1916-17 to the neo-classical design of James L. Aspinwall, of the firm of Renwick, Aspinwall & Tucker, the successor to the architectural practice of the eminent James Renwick; that it was built as the new headquarters of the American Express Co., on a site that had been the company's headquarters since 1874; that the concrete-and-steel-framed building was designed with an H-shaped plan with tall slender wings arranged around central light courts, a type of plan employed from the 1880s through the 1910s to provide offices with maximum light and air; that both facades, clad in white brick and terra cotta above a granite base, are articulated in the tripartite composition of base-shaft-capital then popular for skyscrapers; that among its notable architectural features are a double-story Corinthian colonnade base with large arched windows on the Broadway facade, and a colonnaded upper portion; that the American Express Co., one of the giants of American finance, was formed in 1850 as an express business in the eastern United States, became increasingly involved in the transfer of funds, and is credited with several major innovations, including the initiation of its Money Order in 1882 and the "Traveler's Cheque" in 1891; that by the time it purchased this property in 1903, the American Express Co. was one of the largest financial institutions in New York City; that the company emerged during its years in this building as an international concern dominant in foreign express and financial services, grew into one of the world's leading travel-related organizations, and launched its credit card in 1958; that the building was the headquarters of other prominent firms, including the prestigious investment banking firm of J. & W. Seligman & Co. (1940-74) and the American Bureau of Shipping (1977-86), a leading maritime concern; and that the American Express Co. Building, part of the "Express Row" section of lower Broadway, assisted in transforming Broadway into the "canyon" of neo-classical masonry office towers familiar to this day.

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 designates as a Landmark the American Express Company Building, 65 Broadway (aka 63-65 Broadway and 43-49 Trinity Place), Borough of Manhattan, and designates Manhattan Tax Map Block 21, Lot 4, as its Landmark Site.



American Express Company Building, 65. Broadway, Manhattan  
Photo: Carl Forster





American Express Company Building, Broadway entrance colonnade  
Photo: Carl Forster



American Express Company Building, Trinity Place facade  
Photo: Carl Forster



American Express Company Building, Trinity Place facade base  
Photo: Carl Forster



American Express Company Building, upper colonnade  
Photo: Carl Forster





American Express Company Building  
Source: Sanborn, *Manhattan Land Book* (1994-95), pl. 1

