

Empire Station Complex Civic and Land Use Improvement Project

(#1) Penn Station Service Building, 236-248 West 31st Street, S/NR-eligible, NYCL-eligible

Located at 236-248 West 31st Street across from MSG, the Penn Station Service Building was built in 1908, two years before the completion of the old Pennsylvania Station, which was located directly to the north. McKim, Mead, & White designed the structure to supply electricity to the engines going in and out of the station and compressed air for braking and signaling mechanisms. It also generated heat and light for the station. The five-story building is a simple Classical structure clad in the same granite of which the station had been constructed (see view 1 of **Figure 8-2**). The façade is divided into a large three-story section set on a plinth and capped with a projecting stone cornice, and an attic story with windows. Across the main portion of the façade, double-height Doric pilasters alternate with windows secured with iron grills. The attic story is surmounted by a stone cornice that is smaller and less elaborately molded than the one above the base. The building meets National Register Criterion C in the areas of architecture and engineering. LPC has determined that it also appears to be eligible for NYCL designation.

(#2) Fairmont Building, 239-241 West 30th Street, S/NR-eligible

In 1923, J.M. Heatherton erected the six-story Classical Revival building at 239-241 West 30th Street (now known as the Fairmont Building) as a memorial to his father, who founded the Plumber's Trade Journal. By 1927, the brick-and-stone building housed businesses involved in the fur trade. The façade is divided into three bays (see view 4 of **Figure 8-3**). The base is marked with a large, central showroom window with a flattened segmental arch and metal tracery, and by two entrances with bracketed pediments. Recessed panels with foliate carvings are set above the pediments. Above the base, the central bay consists of four stacked loggias. Composed of four half-columns supporting entablatures with windows set in the intercolumniation, each loggia has a different order, a unique frieze, and a unique treatment of the plinth supporting the columns. Above the second floor, the side bay windows, as well as the sixth floor central bay windows, have stone voussoirs. Archivolts with label stops and keystones crown the side bay windows on the second floor. The roof parapet is stone with a balustrade. The Fairmont Building is significant under Criterion A in the areas of commerce and industry and under Criterion C in the area of architecture.

(#3) St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church Complex, 207-215 West 30th Street, S/NR-eligible, NYCL-eligible

Napoleon LeBrun designed the St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church and Convent at 207-215 West 30th Street. Built in 1872, with the spire completed in 1890 by William Schickel, the sandstone church is Gothic in style. Set back from the street and raised above it on a base, the nave is marked by a central tower with a Gothic-arch porch (see view 5 of **Figure 8-4**). Recessed side aisles flank the tower. The tower is embellished with Gothic elements that include a spire, windows with trefoil tracery, a rose window, double-lancet windows with colonnette enframements, a round-arched blind arcade, double-lancet louvered belfry openings, gablets with rose windows, and columned pinnacles. The aisles are designed with Gothic-arched entrances and windows, quatrefoil tracery at the parapets, and buttresses at the outer ends. The convent is adjacent to the west. Although the ground floor has been altered by extending it out to the lot line with a modern brick addition, the convent retains much of its integrity. Also Gothic in style, the convent is a four-story brick-and-bluestone building (see view 6 of **Figure 8-4**). The second floor contains Gothic-arched windows and an entrance with stone trim. A slight projection in the wall surface creates a pavilion that marks the entrance and is crowned with a gable. The window openings on the second floor have stained glass lights in quatrefoil tracery. A small rose window is set in the entrance arch, which rests on stone colonnettes. The upper floor window openings are Tudor-arched and also have stained glass transoms. The slate roof contains two dormer windows with



Penn Station Service Building, 236-248 West 31st Street (#1, S/NR-eligible, NYCL-eligible); located on Development Site 2 **1**



Fairmont Building, 239-241 West 30th Street (#2, S/NR-eligible); located on Development Site 2 **2**