

Landmarks Preservation Commission  
March 18, 1986; Designation List 184  
LP-1460

FULLER BUILDING, 593-599 Madison Avenue (a/k/a 41 East 57th Street),  
Manhattan. Built 1928-29; architects, Walker & Gillette.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1293, Lot 26.

On September 13, 1983, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Fuller Building and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 17). The hearing was continued to November 15, 1983 (Item No. 3). Both hearings had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Three witnesses spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. The Commission has received several letters in favor of this designation.

#### DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The Fuller Building, designed by the prolific architectural firm of Walker & Gillette, and built in 1928-29 as the home office for one of the largest and most important construction firms in America, is a particularly fine example of the Art Deco skyscraper. One of the large group of tall office buildings constructed in midtown Manhattan during the late 1920s and early 1930s, the Fuller Building, at 57th Street and Madison Avenue, was one of the first located so far north in Manhattan. In a unique arrangement responding to the character of its neighborhood, the building's first six floors were designed to house high quality shops and art galleries which could accommodate multi-level shopping. The mixed use nature of the building is reflected in its design: the black granite cladding of the lower floors surrounds large display windows for retail sales, while above this the office floors are finished in light stone with smaller window openings. In a modernistic interpretation of classical forms, bold, geometric patterns at the setbacks and at the top of the building take the place of cornices and are complemented by a large sculpture over the front doors by the noted modern sculptor Elie Nadelman. Today the building continues its role as distinguished home to numerous art galleries and offices on Manhattan's exclusive East 57th Street.

#### The George A. Fuller Company

The George A. Fuller Company was founded in Chicago in 1882 by George Allon Fuller (1851-1900).<sup>1</sup> Fuller was trained as an architect at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and started his career as a draftsman in the office of Peabody & Stearns in Boston, becoming a partner by age 25. His early work included the design and the supervision of construction of the Union League Club in New York. Fuller quickly realized he was more interested in the construction phase of building and started

his own contracting firm. From 1880-1882 he was a partner in the firm of Clark & Fuller, building the Union Club and the Chicago Opera House in Chicago. Staying in that city he formed his own company in 1882, one of his first jobs being the Pontiac Building. The George A. Fuller Company built one of the first completely steel-framed skyscrapers, the Tacoma Building in 1887, also in Chicago. Fuller was instrumental in differentiating the contractor's role from that of the designer, and, breaking with common practice, provided only building services. Fuller's extensive knowledge of construction and his interest in the new technology being developed for high rise buildings gained his company a reputation as a premier skyscraper builder. He used electric hoists and new methods of steel fastening and he pioneered a team approach to tall building construction which was adapted throughout the country.

After Fuller's death in 1900, at the age of 49, his son-in-law Harry S. Black became head of the Fuller Company. With the company's operations now in New York, Black became a major force in the promotion and construction of tall office buildings in this city. Black established a real estate venture, the United States Realty and Improvement Company, to plan, finance and build in New York. The Fuller Construction Company was, for a time, a subsidiary of U.S. Realty, handling the construction work for the speculative building of its parent company.<sup>2</sup>

In the more than one hundred years since its founding, the Fuller Company has constructed thousands of buildings, in New York, throughout the country, and abroad. The company's work in New York includes the old Pennsylvania Station, the main U.S. Post Office, the Plaza Hotel, the United Nations Headquarters, Lever House and the Seagram Building. In Washington, D.C. Fuller built the National Cathedral, the United States Supreme Court Building and the Lincoln Memorial. Other buildings by the firm include an Otis Elevator factory in California, a laboratory in Pittsburgh, a Federal Reserve Bank in Chicago and a missile base in Kansas.

In 1902 Harry Black hired the nationally prominent Chicago architect Daniel Burnham to design an imposing headquarters building for the firm in New York. The Fuller Building which resulted is located at the intersection of Broadway and Fifth Avenue, at 23rd Street, on a triangular piece of land facing Madison Square.<sup>3</sup> The building received much publicity but the popular name -- the Flatiron -- soon eclipsed that of the building's owners. In 1928, the Fuller Company decided to build new headquarters uptown, both to acquire more space and to follow the business center which was moving north.

#### Walker & Gillette

The Fuller Company commissioned the architectural firm of Walker & Gillette to design its new building. A. Stewart Walker (1876-1952) attended Harvard Architectural School, graduating in 1898.<sup>4</sup> Leon Gillette's (1878?-1945) first architectural experience was in the Minneapolis office of Bertrand & Keith in 1895-97. He then attended the University of Pennsylvania, receiving a Certificate of Architecture in 1899. During the next two years in New York Gillette worked in the offices of Howells & Stokes, Schickel & Ditmars, and Babb, Cook & Willard. From

1901 to 1903 he attended the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. Returning to New York, he worked for the firm of Warren & Wetmore before forming the partnership with Walker in 1906.<sup>5</sup>

The buildings designed by Walker & Gillette show a great variety in types as well as styles and their commissions can be found throughout the United States and abroad<sup>6</sup>. Before World War I most of their work was residential, including a huge estate in Pittsfield, Massachusetts in a classical design, a Mission Revival style house in Tuxedo Park and a Tudor Revival style house on Long Island. Their New York City work included a neo-Georgian house at 52 E. 69th Street, a neo-Federal house at 690 Park Avenue and a Tudor Revival house at 134 E. 70th Street.<sup>7</sup> Their small neo-Georgian style apartment house at 144 E. 40th Street won the Gold Medal from the Architectural League of New York in 1910.

Aside from housing, Walker & Gillette designed the Colonial Revival style Greenwich Country Club and the Tudor Revival style stores in Tuxedo Park, as well as the Church of St. Georges-by-the-River in Seabright, New Jersey. Individually or collectively they are also credited with the designs for Grasslands Hospital in East View, New York; the public buildings and homes in Venice, Florida; and the Playland Amusement Park in Rye, New York. Walker & Gillette designed many bank buildings, including a series for the First National City Bank. One of these is on Canal Street in New York, with others in Havana, Paris, Buenos Aires, Panama and Puerto Rico. Other banks in New York include the Union Trust Company and the Art Deco style Emigrant Savings Bank on Cortlandt Street.

#### New York in the 1920s

The financial boom and expanding population of New York in the 1920s created a need for more space, for housing as well as for business, and the ensuing new construction transformed Manhattan. Between 1925 and 1933 one hundred thirty eight new office buildings were constructed in Manhattan, an average of 15.3 a year<sup>8</sup>. The transportation hub of Grand Central Station fostered new growth and development and numerous buildings such as Tudor City (1929), the Chanin Building (1927-29), the Chrysler Building (1929) and the Daily News (1929-30) rose in that area of the city. This section of midtown Manhattan had an increase of 37.3% of rentable space during these eight years.

Business and population centers were moving north from lower Manhattan into other areas of the city as well. The blocks around the Plaza Hotel at Fifth Avenue and 59th Street saw an increase of 17.5% in new business space during these same years. The upsurge of commercial activity in this section and all through the East 50's was encouraged by the extension of the Eighth Avenue Subway lines across 53rd Street to Queens. In 1928, when the G.A.F. Realty Company (the real estate arm of the George A. Fuller Company) bought the lot on the northeast corner of Madison Avenue and 57th Street the area was largely residential and the site was occupied by the stately, stone-faced Central Presbyterian Church<sup>9</sup>. Within a short time however, this neighborhood had become the most fashionable shopping district in New York<sup>10</sup>.

## The Art Deco Style

Many of the new buildings going up in midtown Manhattan in the 1920s were designed in the Art Deco style which seemed to echo the excitement and modernity of the "Jazz Age"<sup>11</sup>. This style was derived from many sources, the most well-known being the 1925 Paris exhibition from which the style takes its name -- the "Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes." This show featured decorative and industrial arts primarily from Europe (with the notable exception of Germany). The decorative forms, the rich materials and fine craftsmanship of the exhibitions, as well as the simplicity of line and the geometric forms of the architecture seen at the show, were picked up and applied to building designs in the United States.

Another major influence on the development of this style was Eiel Saarinen's second-place-winning submission to the 1922 Chicago Tribune Competition. Its simplicity of design, original ornament and lack of cornices had a tremendous influence on buildings which were to follow.

The New York Building Code of 1916, which placed limits on building heights close to the lot line and required set backs at various levels to allow light and air to reach down to the street, also affected the form of new buildings. After interpretive drawings relating to these laws were published in a 1922-23 journal article by the influential renderer Hugh Ferriss, architects began to express greater concern for the volume and shape of their buildings<sup>12</sup>.

Most of the architects who were working in this new Art Deco style were, like Walker & Gillette, traditionally trained, at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. The list included William Van Alen, Raymond Hood, Ely Jacques Kahn, and T. Markoe Robertson of Sloan & Robertson. The influence of Beaux Arts training in the quick blocking out of buildings can be discerned in the massing of these tall buildings. The classical tradition of treating public spaces as amenities for everyone is responsible for the large number of grand, fully ornamented lobbies in New York's Art Deco towers<sup>13</sup>.

## The Fuller Building

The Fuller Company and their architects had several goals in mind for their new headquarters. A distinctively designed building would have advertising value for the company. The company's desire for such a building led to the use of the modernistic style, with a black, granite-faced base and light limestone-faced tower, the bold geometric patterns at the crown and the powerful sculpture by a noted modern artist at the entrance. And apparently to avoid a repetition of the name problems associated with their previous structure, the words "The Fuller Building" were prominently and permanently displayed over both entrances.

As a result of the need for commercial space in this part of the city, the Fuller Building was designed to accommodate retail stores on its first six floors. The large display windows indicated the purpose of the lower section of the building. An unusual feature of the building made it

possible for a retail tenant to lease space in up to six floors, directly above the store, and install a private elevator for access to each so-called "vertical shop"<sup>14</sup>. The sixth through fifteenth floors were intended to serve as an art and trade center for dealers in art objects and interior decorators, with the tower above to be used for offices. The architects claimed that the Fuller Building was the "first high-class, multi-purpose skyscraper to be erected in the city"<sup>15</sup>.

The style of the Fuller Building reflects contemporary architectural ideas. Rather than being encrusted with elaborate ornamentation, the building's shape and materials provide its main visual effect. In accordance with the zoning law, the Fuller Building fills its lot on the lower levels, rises through numerous setbacks beginning at the 11th floor, and culminates in a slender tower from the 21st to the 40th floors. The contrast of the black granite base with the light stone facing above gives visual distinction to the building while also indicating the two different purposes for which it was designed. This contrast of color and materials occurs in other parts of the building as well. The inlaid black designs at the tops of each setback act as cornices, to terminate each section, while the dark crown at the top of the tower serves as an emphatic cap to the whole building. Like many mid-1920s office buildings, the Fuller thus reflects a modernistic approach to traditional classical vocabulary.

Applied ornament on the Fuller Building is limited to specific areas such as the metal spandrels of the first six floors, and over the two entrances. The motifs used were common to the period, often found on decorative objects as well as on buildings. The wave patterns and inverted ziggurats, incised on the bronze spandrel panels on floors 2-5, are typical. Zig-zag lines, sometimes softened to waves, were considered suggestive of the speed and movement of the "Jazz Age." The ziggurats represented not only the forms of the buildings going up around the city, but were also inspired by the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922. Designs and symbols from other early civilizations, particularly Pre-Columbian, also gained favor among architects of this period. The bold, geometric patterns at the top of the tower and setbacks have been linked to Aztec sources<sup>16</sup>.

Another major design element of the Fuller Building is the tension created by the horizontal and vertical emphasis of its different sections. While the numerous setbacks create the overall form or shape, there is also a textural variation in the way the stones are laid. Vertical emphasis is created by continuous piers which run throughout the full height of each setback section. The large, central sections which run from the 7th to the 16th floor, on the south and west facades, have a horizontal effect created by continuous, slightly projecting sill and lintel courses. Between the 17th and 20th floors, a narrow, two-bay-wide section protrudes in the center of each of the three main facades, with a strong vertical effect created by continuous piers and recessed windows. Above this the verticality of the tower is accentuated by three continuous, slightly protruding piers centered on each facade. Continuous sill and lintel courses extend at each level from this central element and wrap around the corners, providing a contrasting horizontal line.

### 57th Street Entrance Sculpture

The large stone sculpture over the main entrance on 57th Street was created by the noted modern artist Elie Nadelman. Nadelman worked in bronze, wood and plaster as well as stone, and influenced the work of Picasso and other modern artists. He was well known and respected in Europe before he came to the United States in 1914. After his first major American exhibition in 1917 he established himself in this country, receiving commissions for, among other things, a number of individual portraits. It was while working on a portrait of the small son of A. Stewart Walker that he and the architect became friends. Nadelman enjoyed popular and financial success in America for many years. With the stock market crash in 1929 Nadelman retreated into a self-imposed obscurity, removing himself from the art world. Finally, through Walker, Nadelman received two large-scale architectural commissions: this sculpture for the Fuller Building and another -- a reclining Aquarius -- for the Bank of Manhattan on Wall Street. Architectural sculpture was unusual for Nadelman and it was also rare at this time for a New York building to have a major sculptural group. The large, volumetric figures seen in the Fuller piece pre-figured Nadelman's late work<sup>17</sup>.

### Description

The 41-story tall Fuller Building has a main entrance on 57th Street and another entrance on Madison Avenue. Its first six stories, designed to house art galleries and shops, are set apart from the rest of the building by a facing of black Swedish granite. Above, the building is clad in light limestone with geometric patterns of black slate. Fifteen stories with various setbacks rise above the lowest section while a nineteen story tower finishes the scheme.

On the 57th Street facade the black granite section is eight bays wide. The main entrance is located in the fourth bay from the west and rises through four stories. At the first level, the main entrance is recessed from the street front and consists of four doors of glass framed with polished brass. A wide bronze lintel which runs across all the doors is decorated with four large bronze diamonds filled with three-dimensional star designs. These diamonds are linked by horizontal molding. The area above the doors is filled with glass which is subdivided by bronze mullions into four large sections with three narrow ones between them. A small, bronze, stepped panel is inset at the center of this glass overdoor. In front of these doors is a large light fixture of white glass and brass topped by an elongated eagle. A smaller, rectangular white glass light fixture is attached to the wall on each side of the doorway. In front of this recessed area, a narrow strip of white plastic, which is not original to the building, hangs down below the second floor line.

In the area above the doors a large, two-story opening contains small, squared windows framed by black metal mullions. The deep reveals to each side of these windows are adorned with thin black vertical lines topped by narrow triangles. Above this is a large lintel at the fourth floor. Here the name "Fuller Building" is boldly set in limestone letters against black granite, and is crowned by a limestone sculpture by Elie Nadelman. The sculpture depicts two huge nude figures of construction workers with a

collection of skyscrapers forming a city skyline rising behind them. Between the two figures is a large, hexagonally-framed clock. Piers of limestone inset with vertical lines of black granite rise on each side of the entrance opening, stopping just below the lintel where each is topped by a group of intersecting black and white triangles.

To each side of the entrance on the ground floor are shop fronts, which have been refaced. The next four floors above are unified by continuous black granite piers with limestone reveals which rise up and over the top of the fifth floor windows. The spandrels of these floors are slightly recessed and faced with dark bronze panels. The panels are adorned with incised designs of a continuous wave pattern broken by inverted ziggurats. A limestone frieze in a modified Greek key motif is inset into the black stone between the fifth and sixth floors, while four large flagpoles also emerge at an angle at this level. The granite continues around and above the sixth floor with light limestone reveals around the windows and groups of horizontal lines incised into the piers between the windows. Throughout these six floors each bay contains a large central display window, surrounded on three sides by smaller, square panes of glass.

Above the sixth floor there is a dramatic shift from base to shaft. The light stone cladding is accented by black stone highlights and a complicated series of setbacks begins, which leads to the slender tower emerging at the 21st floor. On the 7th through 16th floors five wide bays, each containing four windows, are centered above the main entrance. A slightly projecting sill and lintel line is carried across this entire section giving it a horizontal emphasis. To each side, set back slightly from the main plane of the building, is a narrow section with single windows and continuous vertical piers. These side sections are set back at the 11th, 13th and 15th floors; each setback is capped by geometric patterns of tan and black stone, set flush with the facade.

An additional section containing two narrow bays is located on the eastern side of this facade. This portion has setbacks at the 10th, 13th and 15th floors and has little decorative treatment at the top. It blends with the setbacks at the 16th and 17th floors, but rises no further.

Above the 15th floor, setbacks occur at the 16th, 17th, 19th, 20th and 21st floors. The center section with its wide bays of windows continues with three bays at the 16th story. Above this all windows are set in single bays. A narrow section, two bays wide, projects from the center of the facade on the 17th to the 20th floors. This section has a vertical emphasis with continuous vertical piers and recessed spandrels. A geometric design in black stone is inlaid above the lintels of the 20th floor and black slabs finish the piers. The rest of the facade at these stories continues the horizontal patterns of the lower floors with continuous sill and lintel courses.

The tower is six bays wide on 57th Street. The two central bays are accentuated by wide projecting piers at either side; the two window bays themselves are separated by a slender pier. The spandrels between the piers are slightly recessed. There are two bays on either side of this central section and they have continuous sill and lintel courses which wrap around the corners to join those on the other sides of the tower.

The decorative emphasis of black stone starts again near the top of the tower. Between the 36th and the 39th floors the central piers are enhanced by horizontal bands of various widths, inlaid in the stone. The spandrels of this central section are decorated with black vertical lines at the 36th and 37th floor level. At the 38th floor, a balcony two bays wide projects from the central area. Above this, at the 39th floor, a large, black and white sunburst motif surrounds a circular window and fills the two central bays. Setbacks capped by wide black bands occur at the 38th and 40th levels. Above the 40th floor the roofline contains several more setbacks to accommodate the mechanical equipment of the building. Large friezes of black and white triangles and zigzags occur on the 40th floor and on the smaller areas above this. At this point the background color is black with the designs occurring in lighter stone.

The Madison Avenue facade is similar to that on 57th Street. The dark base is four bays wide with the entrance in the northernmost bay. The entrance consists of a plain glass door framed in brass with the words "Fuller Building" carved in limestone above it. Next to the doorway is a service elevator, with a door of polished brass, adorned with plain hexagonal panels. The store fronts on this facade have also been modernized. The lowest six stories on Madison Avenue are faced with black granite and have the same arrangement and decorative treatment as those on 57th Street.

Above this base, setbacks occur only at the southern corner, blending with those of the 57th Street facade. The two bays closest to the 57th Street corner are recessed slightly from the main plane of the building with continuous vertical piers. Setbacks in this section occur at the 11th, 13th, and 15th stories, after which these bays are eliminated. The northern side of this facade rises without setbacks from the 7th to the 15th stories. The main section of these floors has the same horizontal treatment as is found on the 57th Street facade, with wide window bays and continuous sill and lintel courses. At the 16th floor, this horizontal section is only three bays wide with recessed areas to each side. From the 17th to the 19th floors, a narrow section emerges from the center of the facade, treated just like the one on 57th Street. Above this however, two more levels of setbacks (at the 20th and the 21st floors) emerge from this section. Each of these levels is capped by wide stone bands. A shallow section, two bays wide is also located to each side of this central area on these floors. Above the setbacks, the tower on the Madison Avenue facade is identical to that on 57th Street.

The eastern, mid-block facade is faced in two-tone brick for the first 17 stories. The first four floors abut the building to the east and are not visible. Although the floors above this are visible, only the tower of this elevation was treated as a main facade. The windows of the central section are unadorned and the facing consists of horizontal and vertical bands of yellow brick set against a darker brick background. Above the 17th floor, the tower facade is faced in limestone. The setbacks, projections and dark stone ornament of the tower are identical to those on the Madison Avenue facade.



The northern facade of this building is not visible for the first five floors. Above this it is faced with two tone brick with few windows to interrupt it until the tower starts at the 21st floor. Limestone facing begins in an irregular pattern between the 17th and the 21st floors. Setbacks on the lower section accord with those on its adjoining sides. The tower is similar, but not identical to the other facades. Three projecting vertical piers are centered on this facade of the tower and rise through its height. However, the areas between the piers are faced with brick and have no windows. To each side of these piers are two bays with continuous sills and lintels. At the top of the tower there is no balcony as on the other facades. Instead, at the 39th and 40th floors the areas between the piers are inset with dark, geometric patterns. A sunburst motif similar to those on the other sides is located above this but there is no window at the center.

### Conclusion

The Fuller building is an outstanding Art Deco skyscraper which exemplifies the exuberance of design and commerce in New York in the 1920s. Built during a period when Manhattan's midtown area was being transformed by numerous tall office towers, the Fuller Building's bold, black and white color scheme and decorative patterns were originally, and remain, a strong statement of its presence in this busy, commercial area of Manhattan. The wide base with its complex setbacks rising to a tall tower was typical of this period of skyscraper building. Designed by a well-respected architectural firm and built for one of the most important construction companies in America, the Fuller Building is a particularly fine representative of a significant period of building history in New York.

### Notes

1. Information about George Fuller and the Fuller Company was compiled from L. Porter Moore, "100 Years Downtown," in D.A.C. Journal, (May, 1951), pp.23-31; J.A. Schweinfurth, "Great Builders I Have Known," in American Architect, 140 (November, 1931), pp.48-49; David B. Carlson, "Building's No. 1 Contractor," in Architectural Forum, 114 (April, 1961), pp.112-113; and from scrapbooks in the collection of the George A. Fuller Company.
2. Earle Shultz and Walter Simmons, Offices in the Sky, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1959), pp.59-60.
3. A designated New York City Landmark; it is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places.
4. A. Stewart Walker, obituary, New York Times, (June 11, 1952), p.29, c.4.
5. Leon Gillette, obituary, New York Times, (May 4, 1945), p.20, c.2.

6. Alwyn T. Covell, "Variety in Architectural Practice," in Architectural Record, 35 (April, 1914), pp. 277-355. Landmarks Preservation Commission, Upper East Side Historic District Report (LP-1051), (New York: City of New York, 1981), pp.1364-1365.
7. All of these buildings are located within the Upper East Side Historic District. The building at 690 Park Avenue is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places (1980).
8. The Real Estate Board of New York, Inc. Research Department. Office Building Construction, Manhattan, 1901-1953. Supplement No. 5, 1957, n.p.
9. New York County Register's Office, Liber Deeds. Liber 3668, p.296.
10. "Six Floors of Shops...and a separate elevator for each," in The American Architect, 136 (December, 1929), p.74.
11. Information on Art Deco was compiled from numerous sources, including: Laura Cerwinske, Tropical Deco (New York: Rizzoli, 1981); Ada Louise Huxtable, The Tall Building Artistically Reconsidered: The Search for a Skyscraper Style (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982); Arnold Lehman, "New York Skyscrapers: The Jazz Modern Neo-American Beauficialitarian Style," in Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin (April, 1971), pp.363-370; Cervin Robinson and Rosemarie Haag Bletter, Skyscraper Style: Art Deco New York (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975); Elayne Varian, American Art Deco Architecture (New York: Finch College Museum of Art, 1975); Don Vlack, Art Deco Architecture in New York, 1920-1940 (New York: Harper & Row, 1974); and Marcus Whiffen and Frederick Koepper, American Architecture, Vol. 2: 1860-1976 (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1981).
12. Paul Goldberger, The Skyscraper (New York: Knopf, 1981) p.58.
13. Robinson and Bletter, p.5.
14. "Six floors of Shops..." New York City Buildings Department records, Elevator Permit E.107-1931, show that an elevator was installed at No. 51 East 57th Street in 1931. It was to run between the basement and the fourth floors with no stops at the 2nd and 3rd floors. According to the present building manager, the elevator shaft is still there and the elevator now links only the basement and the first floor.
15. New York Times (December 2, 1928), Sec.XIII, p.1, c.3.
16. Goldberger, p.70.
17. Lincoln Kirstein, The Sculpture of Elie Nadelman (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1948).

## FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

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 Fuller Building has a special character, 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 Fuller Building is an outstanding example of the Art Deco skyscrapers which transformed the image of midtown Manhattan during the 1920s; that it was built for the pioneering George A. Fuller Company, one of America's largest and most important construction companies, to house their main offices and to be a center for art and antiques dealers; that it was designed by the prominent architectural firm of Walker & Gillette, who adapted their Beaux Arts training to the design of a building in a contemporary style; that their design, using bold colors, strong geometric forms and diverse materials, gives the building a beautiful and highly dramatic presence in midtown Manhattan; that the design reflects the unusual mixed use nature of the building; and that the front of the building is adorned with a major sculpture by the prominent artist Elie Nadelman.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 21, Section 534, of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 8-A of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Fuller Building, 593-599 Madison Avenue (a/k/a 41 East 57th Street), Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 1293, Lot 26, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.

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593-599 Madison Avenue  
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Architects:  
Walker & Gillette

Manhattan  
Built 1928-29

Photo credit:  
Carl Forster  
LPC



THE FULLER BUILDING

57th Street Entrance



THE FULLER BUILDING

Detail, 57th Street Entrance





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Madison Avenue Entrance



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Detail of Setbacks



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Tower Detail