Landmarks Preservation Commission
September 11, 2012, Designation List 459
LP - 2397

EDWARD RIDLEY & SONS DEPARTMENT STORE BUILDINGS
315-317 Grand Street (aka 66-68 Allen Street) and 319-321 Grand Street (aka 65 Orchard Street). Built 1886; Paul F. Schoen, architect; iron elements cast by Jackson Architectural Iron Company; Allen Street facade 1931-34; John N. Linn, architect

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 308, Lots 14 and 15

On June 23, 2009, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a hearing on the proposed designation of the former Ridley & Sons Department Store Buildings and the proposed designation of the related Landmark site (Item No. 15). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with provisions of law. Four people testified in support of designation, including a representative of Council Member Alan Gerson, the Bowery Alliance of Neighbors, and the Historic Districts Council. A second hearing was held on June 22, 2010 (Item No. 4) in order to consider whether to include Lot 16 as part of the Landmark Site. Two representatives of the owner of Lots 15 and 16 testified against designation and two people testified in support, including a representative of the Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society in America. A third hearing was held on September 11, 2012 (Item No. 1) in which a representative of the owner of Lot 15 expressed support for designation.

Summary

In the second half of 19th century, Edward Ridley & Sons was the largest department store on the Lower East Side. Founded by Edward Ridley in c. 1848, over the next three decades the business grew by converting buildings along Grand and Allen Streets – none of which survive. The adjoining properties at 315-317 Grand Street (aka 66-68 Allen Street) and 319-321 Grand Street (aka 65 Orchard Street) were commissioned by his sons, Edward A. Ridley and Arthur J. Ridley, in 1886. Designed by architect Paul F. Schoen, these Classical Revival-style structures were part of the store's most ambitious expansion to date. Five stories tall, this building campaign added considerable floor space and Ridley's was subsequently described in newspaper stories and advertisements as the largest retailer in New York City. By 1889, the store employed about 2,500 people – many who were women, neighborhood residents, and recent immigrants. On Orchard Street, Schoen used mostly brick and stone, while the more prominent Grand Street facade is cast iron, a material frequently associated with major mercantile buildings and retail stores. A late example of this type of construction, the iron bays incorporate such distinctive details as columns, keystones, pilasters and decorative relief panels. Of particular note is 319-321 Grand Street's rounded corner, where Grand and Orchard Streets meet. This prominent feature served as a major entrance and was intended to increase the store's visibility from trolley cars travelling west from the Grand Street-Williamsburg ferry. Despite the store's expansion, sales failed to meet expectations. During the 1890s many retailers were abandoning the area and in 1901 Ridley & Sons closed. Allen Street was widened in the early 1930s and the building that was currently located at the southeast corner of Grand Street was demolished, making 315-17 Grand Street into a corner building. At this time, a new west wall was erected with tan brickwork, designed in the prevailing Art Deco style by architect John N. Linn. Originally part of a vast retail emporium, these adjoining cast-iron buildings recall the era when Edward Ridley & Sons were among the Lower East Side's best-known and most successful merchants.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The Lower East Side

These two buildings, located on Grand, Allen and Orchard Streets in Manhattan, were built as an addition to the Edward Ridley & Sons Department Store. At the southwest corner of Orchard Street is 319-21 Grand Street and at the southeast corner of Allen Street is 315-17 Grand Street. Grand Street, which opened before 1766, was originally known as the "Road to Crown Point," later called Corlears Point or Corlears Hook.[1] Connecting the Bowery to the East River, it was extended west by order of the Common Council in 1819, creating one of Manhattan's earliest uninterrupted east-west links. This wider-than-average thoroughfare quickly became a major commercial corridor, with public food markets at Essex Street, as well as close to the East River, where steam ferries began to serve Williamsburgh in 1818.

Allen Street and Orchard Street run north-south, from Division Street to Houston Street. Prior to the American Revolution, most blocks east of the Bowery were part of a farm owned by Lt. Governor James DeLancey (1703-1760) and Anne Heathcote (dates unknown) that was previously known as "The Dominie's Farm."[2] Though Orchard Street was briefly called Fifth Street – because it was located five blocks east of the Bowery – the current name dates to 1806, recalling a grove of fruit trees tended by the DeLancey family.[3] Allen Street was known as Fourth Street until about 1797 and was renamed in 1817 for Captain William Henry Allen (1784-1813), who lost his life serving the U.S. Navy during the War of 1812.

During the 1840s, Irish immigrants, many fleeing the Great Famine of 1845, settled on the Lower East Side and the area was gradually transformed from a neighborhood of chiefly single-family homes to one of boarding houses, purpose-built tenements and commercial structures. In subsequent years, it attracted German immigrants, as well as great numbers of Polish and Russian Jews, particularly from the 1880s to the 1920s. Many Lower East Side residents were involved in the textile trade, working in shops or department stores, like Ridley's, and factories, which were frequently referred to as "sweatshops" due to the deplorable working conditions.

The Second Avenue Railway, the city's fourth elevated transit line, began operating with three tracks on Allen Street in 1880. *The New York Times* later claimed that "the coming of the elevated railroad meant decadence . . . and the old frame houses became tenements."[4] In the mid-1920s, plans were developed to improve the area and widen Allen Street, which originally measured just 50 feet across. Numerous structures along the street's east side were demolished, resulting in the present configuration and a width of 138 feet. The first section, between Delancey and Houston Streets, was completed in January 1928 and the section adjoining the former Ridley buildings by 1932. Demolition of the elevated railway, which continued to operate along the west side of Allen Street for ten years, was completed in 1942.

Edward Ridley & Sons[5]

Edward Ridley was born in Newark, England, in 1816. Though educated as a lawyer, he became a shop owner and following a brief apprenticeship with a "highly respectable merchant" opened a dry goods store, which he subsequently closed on account of debt in 1843.[6] Ridley, his wife Elizabeth and children, immigrated to the United States in the mid-1840s, settling in Albany, New York, where for several years they operated a dry goods store, with a subsequent branch in nearby Saratoga.

Ridley relocated to New York City in 1848 or 1849, opening a small retail millinery and dry goods business in leased space at 311½ Grand Street (demolished), near the corner of Allen Street. Ridley later expanded into the adjoining structures at 311 Grand Street and 66 Allen

Street (both demolished). The latter building was occupied as Ridley's residence and was also used as the store's wholesale department. By the late 1850s, the business was valued at more than $50,000 and Ridley had acquired a large home in Gravesend, Long Island, now part of Brooklyn.

Early advertisements promised customers low prices and a wide inventory. Ridley's was described as a "Cheap Store" with "bargains in every department," offering velvets, dress trimmings, fancy buttons, fancy bonnets, various types of hats, hosiery, gloves and embroideries.[7] Edward Albert Ridley (1845-1933), Ridley's eldest son, joined the firm in 1869, followed by Arthur John Ridley (b. 1847) in 1874 and the business became known as Edward Ridley & Sons. In the mid-1860s, the store began to lease 309 Grand Street, followed by 62 and 64 Allen Street in 1871, and 58 and 60 Allen Street in 1874 (all demolished).

This type of growth, from a small shop in a modest structure selling a limited selection of dry goods to a vast emporium offering a wide variety of consumer products, was not unusual in New York City following the Civil War. Many retail stores experienced similar success, including Arnold, Constable & Co., James McCreery & Co., Lord & Taylor's, and Stern Brothers. While the majority of these merchants were on Broadway in Manhattan or Fulton Street in Brooklyn, Grand Street remained an important destination for shoppers and the expansion of the Ridley store was widely discussed. In 1874, the *New York Evening Telegram* called it:

> . . . the busiest place of all in that busy quarter. The three floors of the broad store, where the retail business is done, contain troops of nimble attendants, who are heavily tasked in the busier hours of the day to serve the great throngs of customers who are continually pouring in.[8]

Two years later, in 1876, *The New York Times* observed:

> What the inhabitants of the east side of the City would do without Ridley's, is something of a question. The immense store ... has become a sort of necessity to the people living anywhere within a couple of miles of it, the spectacle it presented on a Saturday night suggested the thought that half the City has come there to buy dry goods, toys, furs, furnishing goods, or some of the other numerous things with which this vast establishment is stored.[9]

Prior to construction of the 1886 buildings, the store occupied as many as twenty lots, facing onto Grand Street and Allen Streets. Based on illustrations dating to 1874 and 1880,[10] architect John B. Snook's four-story design (demolished) featured almost uninterrupted display windows along the first and second floors, as well as a steep mansard roof punctuated by projecting dormer windows and cresting. At the corner of Grand and Allen Streets stood a steeply-pitched mansard tower, featuring a flag pole and twin clocks. Adjoining the tower were two or three interconnected brick structures. While the middle structure was the same height as the building at the corner of Grand Street, the southernmost building on Allen Street was five stories tall and may have featured a second mansard tower. Inside the store, rows of Corinthian columns "with handsome capitals" divided the shopping floor into twenty-five sections. To reach the second floor, there was a wide double staircase and two passenger elevators. The fourth floor served as storage and the fifth floor in the Allen Street building was used as offices and storage. In April 1878, the *New-York Tribune* concluded that "the house has been recently repaired, departments have been enlarged and remodeled, and in many ways the whole establishment has been improved."[11] By 1880, Ridley & Sons employed an average of one thousand people and had $4 million in annual sales. It reportedly received "one thousand order letters" each day and ten

bookkeepers were kept "constantly at work." The store also maintained more than 50 delivery wagons.[12]

With a Second Avenue railway station at Grand Street, the store's in-house journal *Ridleys' Fashion Magazine: the Great Home Periodical of America* reported: "Rapid transit reaches the very doors, and here the merchant has placed a large round-faced clock, on what is called "Ridley's Station."[13] The tracks, more than two stories above the street, obscured much of the Allen Street facade as well as the store's corner tower.

Ridley died unexpectedly in July 1883. In previous years, he had begun to prepare for the store's next phase of expansion, buying or leasing parcels along Orchard Street in 1880 and 1881, as well as at the east end of Grand Street in 1883. These adjoining lots form the site where 315-17 and 319-21 Grand Street would be erected. Ridley would finalize the purchase of the various parcels in 1893.[14]

Design and Construction

In late February 1886, Edward and Arthur Ridley filed papers with the New York City Building Department to erect a new structure (NB 237-86) at 315-321 Grand Street designed by architect Paul F. Schoen.[15] The permit reported that the site measured 112 by 70 feet[16] and the estimated cost of the 68-foot-tall brick, iron and timber structure was $75,000. Builder William Shears began construction in late April 1886 and, according to DOB records, work was completed in less than a year, by December 3, 1886.[17] In October 1886, the *Evening Telegram* devoted an entire page to the store's history and expansion, including an illustration of the "New Grand Street Building." The author observed:

> The establishment that had grown up by such constant and miscellaneous additions of a wing on this side, a building, perhaps two or three buildings, on that, was neither as well arranged nor as convenient as if designed and built for its purpose from the start . . . Work in the basement and sub-cellar began in March . . . the new building occupies 125 feet on Grand St. and has a depth of 70 feet on Orchard st., is incorporated on two sides with the older portion of the establishment. . .[18]

The Ridley store had grown in three distinct phases. The earliest sections were located in simple brick or frame structures, originally planned for residential or commercial use. The prolific architect John B. Snook transformed the store's identity in the early 1870s by modifying existing buildings or adding new structures that displayed features associated with the French Second Empire style, including a mansard roof, dormer windows, decorative cresting, and Corinthian columns.[19] This Parisian mode was especially popular with contemporary merchants. When rival dry goods merchant Lord & Taylor (James H. Giles, 1869-70, a designated New York City Landmark) established an uptown branch at Broadway and 20th Street in 1870, it featured a similar rectangular mansard pavilion, as did the block-long Arnold, Constable & Co. store at Fifth Avenue and 19th Street (Griffith Thomas, 1876-77, part of the Ladies' Mile Historic District).[20]

Paul F. Schoen was responsible for designing the store's 1886 expansion, which consisted of a five-story cast-iron facade along Grand Street and a short brick section extending south on Orchard Street. Though Manhattan's first large department store at 280 Broadway, built by A. T. Stewart (begun 1845-46, a designated New York City Landmark), was faced with white marble, most subsequent retail stores used cast-iron components that were painted to resemble stone. Among the earliest examples was the Haughwout Store (John Gaynor, 1857, a designated New York City Landmark) at the northeast corner of Broadway and Broome Street. Modeled on

the Sansovino Library in Venice, the Haughwout elevations display Corinthian columns and large arched windows. Following the Civil War, many New York City architects adopted this material – it was relatively inexpensive, could be quickly manufactured and assembled, and was designed to reflect popular taste.

For the Ridley store, Jackson's Architectural Iron Company supplied the various components:

> Its front is of the modern iron and glass order of architecture that came in with the Centennial Exposition [1876] and has been employed so largely since for building where indispensible requirements are abundant space and . . . light in every nook and corner. It was built by the Jackson Architectural Iron Company and it is one of the finest pieces of work that that firm, which never does poor work, has made itself responsible for.[21]

Established in 1840, this Manhattan foundry pioneered the development of cast iron as a building material. Known under various names, including the Jackson Iron Works, J.L. Jackson & Bro., Jackson, Burnet & Co., and Jackson's Architectural Iron Works, it cast metal architectural features for buildings throughout the United States. Jackson's supplied structural and ornamental iron, brass and bronze work for such prominent New York City merchants as Bloomingdale Brothers (c. 1886), Frederick Loeser (c. 1887), Smith, Gray & Co. (1870, designated New York City Landmark), and Charles "Broadway" Rouss (1889, part of SoHo Cast-Iron District).[22] At the time that the Ridley store was built, the firm's office was at 315 East 28th Street, between 1st and 2nd Avenues, and the prominent architect William Harvey Birkmire (1860-1924) headed the company's construction department.

The style of the iron fronts that Schoen designed is best described as Classical Revival; there is a substantial projecting metal cornice, arched and rectangular windows, and a combination of thin columns and wide pilasters, some with raised reliefs that suggest the influence of the neo-Grec style. The facade that extends along Orchard Street is brick and has large, evenly-spaced, rectangular windows crowned by continuous, projecting stone lintels, as well as a bracketed cornice. This approach to design was particularly popular in the 1870s and 1880s. Possible influences include the work of architect Richard Morris Hunt, the first American to attend the prestigious Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, as well as various "Modern Renaissance" style structures erected for the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, such as "Memorial Hall," designed by H.J. Schwartzmann.[23] While Hunt's monumental Lenox Library (1870-77, demolished) was executed in a variant of the neo-Grec style, in New York City most surviving examples are private residences, particularly row houses in Brooklyn. Inspired by Greek and Roman sources, contemporary critics characterized this sober style as a kind of rationalized classicism.

At the corner of Orchard Street, Schoen inserted a curved, three-bay pavilion, that may have been originally crowned by a squat dome, and possibly, a flagpole. Domes occasionally decorated 19th century commercial structures, such as the Domestic Sewing Machine Company Building (1872-73, demolished) at Broadway and 14th Street, and the O'Neill-Adams Company store (c. 1887, part of the Ladies' Mile Historic District) on Sixth Avenue. This feature, identified by the *Evening Telegram* as a "round tower," was said to contain a "water tank of 11,000 gallon capacity."[24] No historic photograph of the 1886 addition has been found but an 1886 illustration indicates that the center section of the dome, like Snook's earlier tower, may have incorporated a clock, set within a pedimented frame.

Paul F. Schoen, Architect

Born in Prussia around 1832, Paul F. Schoen became a United States citizen in 1867 and was active as an architect until 1887. Little is known about Schoen's training, though he may have begun his career in Massachusetts with architect Paul Schulze (1827-1897), working on the construction of Boylston Hall (1857-58) at Harvard College. Schulze was active in Boston from 1849 to 1858, when he relocated to New York City. Schulze & Schoen designed at least two banks in Manhattan, as well as two extant commercial structures: a four-story store and loft building at 174 Duane Street (part of the Tribeca West Historic District) and 201 East 57th Street (1874), at Third Avenue. Both projects incorporate neo-Grec style details. They also submitted proposals for the New York State Capitol, the Iowa State Capitol, the New York Life Insurance Company Headquarters, and the United States Post office, which was built at the south end of City Hall Park. Their unexecuted 1867 scheme for the post office was awarded third prize. In the mid-1870s, Schulze moved to Washington, D.C. and Schoen continued to practice in Manhattan, with an office at 744 Broadway. The 1884 publication *New York's Great Industries* reported that Schoen:

> . . . has acquired the very highest of reputations for the beauty and reliability of his plans and designs . . . [he] is a painstaking architect, employing competent assistants and skilled labor, and can be relied to combine elegance and beauty with economy of space, the utmost and every convenience in all his plans.[25]

He designed commercial structures and bathing facilities, including a bath house at 16-18 Lafayette Place. The latter project was documented in the *Sanitary Engineer* in October 1883. He also built a storage building for the Third Avenue Railroad (1884-86), as well as five-story brick store (1886, all demolished). Schoen died in 1887 and, like Edward Ridley and Edward A. Ridley, is buried in Brooklyn's Green-wood Cemetery.

Subsequent History

With the completion of Schoen's 1886 addition, Ridley's became one of Manhattan's largest department stores. This was the last addition and the store extended approximately 200 feet along Grand Street.[26] On Allen Street, it reportedly stretched 180 feet, and along Orchard Street, about 150 feet. An 1886 advertisement boasted:

> Ridley's NEW BUILDING
> Gives them more selling space than any other house in the country, hence makes their establishment
> THE LARGEST RETAIL HOUSE
> With the Largest Stock and the Lowest Prices.
> This we say unhesitatingly.[27]

The expanded structure contained "fifty-two different branches of trade, each distinct and carried on in a store of its own, presided over by its own foreman."[28] During this period, Ridley & Sons employed approximately 2,500 people. According to the *Hartford Courant*, the business reached its "zenith" in 1887, with more than $6 million in annual sales and $1 million in stocked merchandise.[29] Several years later, in 1889, Ridley advertisements claimed that there were "115 different departments" and that the "building and business [was] a feature of New York and should be seen."[30] *Appleton's Dictionary of Greater New York and Its Vicinity* reported:

> Between the Bowery and the East River are retail stores for the sale of almost every kind of article that the masses will buy. The best known of these is

> Ridley's, one of the largest stores in the world, where one may buy anything from a paper of pins to a set of furniture.[31]

Ridley's also acquired the Allen Street Presbyterian Church in 1887, where a five-story brick stable (now a garage) with terra-cotta details was erected opposite the store on the west side of Allen Street.[32] This building displays similar details to the 1886 addition and is likely to have been designed by the same architect.

In the 1890s, however, sales began to steadily decline. Along Allen Street, sections of the store would be subleased – at a substantial loss – to outside tenants.[33] William A. Moore, the store's long-time superintendent, recalled:

> We began to curtail our space in 1898 by cutting out some small buildings. Our trade had begun to fall off considerably. The character of the residents in the neighborhood changed and our trade gradually died off.[34]

Since the 1880s, many of Ridley's Grand Street rivals had closed, or relocated to the thriving shopping districts along Fifth and Sixth Avenues in midtown Manhattan. Though Ridley & Sons acknowledged in advertisements as early as 1885 that "it may not be quite as accessible as houses located in other sections" it promised to repay their customers with better prices.[35] Nevertheless, by 1900 the store was expected to move north, and, in May 1900, advertised in the *Brooklyn Eagle* that "our new location will surprise and please you."[36] Such plans, however, did not take place and in March 1901 the store's delivery fleet was sold, including 107 horses, 40 "top business wagons," and 35 "double trucks."[37] Storewide sales were held throughout the rest of the year, followed by a series of auctions, lasting three weeks during November 1901, resulting in the dispersal of $300,000 in goods as far as Buffalo, New York, where the stock was sold "at a fraction of first cost."[38] *The Hartford Courant* reported that Ridley's had been:

> Once the mecca of fashion … whose establishment for half a century has been a landmark in Grand Street . . . and its block of buildings, through newly erected dividing walls, is to become the homes of various businesses on a less pretentious scale.[39]

To prepare the buildings at 313-321 Grand Street for new tenants, Ridley & Sons hired architect Franklin Baylis. These alterations, costing an estimated $40,000, were completed in May 1902.[40] In August 1902, H. Goldman and P. Maltzman signed a 42-year lease on 309-311½ Grand Street and 62-68 Allen Street. Two years later, in January 1904, these buildings were destroyed by fire.[41] Tenants had included a wholesale grocer, jeweler, candy company, and paper box company. The lessee then hired the architects Bernstein & Bernstein to erect a new six-story building on the site in 1905. In subsequent years, the refurbished structure at 313 Grand Street was occupied by, among others, the Socialist Party of the Eighth Assembly District, and 319 Grand Street housed the American Palace Hall, where an "Anarchists' Ball" was held on Christmas eve in 1909.[42]

The widening of Allen Street in 1928-32 transformed 315-17 Grand Street into a corner building with two distinct facades, one composed of the remaining cast-iron elements from 1886 and the other faced with tan brick. On Grand Street, the west bay was somewhat truncated, narrowing the windows and leaving about 2/3 of the round arch on the fifth floor. Reconstruction of the Allen Street elevation commenced in September 1932 and was completed by February 1934 (ALT 2030-31 and 2246-31). Embellished with simple Art Deco style details, the architect of the west wall was probably John N. Linn and the architectural engineer was Max Siegel.

When the Edward Ridley & Sons Department Store shuts its doors in 1901, the Ridley brothers parted ways. Arthur Ridley[43] is said to have established a brokerage firm and Edward A. Ridley took control of the family's substantial real estate holdings, operating out of the sub-cellar in the store's former stable, across the street, at 63 Allen Street. He and his recently-hired secretary, Leo Weinstein, were found murdered in this sound-proof "cave-like space" in May 1933. Ridley owned or co-owned at least twenty parcels on the Lower East Side and in the Bronx, including part of the store's former building at 319-321 Grand Street, 57-63 Orchard Street, and 59-63 Allen Street. Revenge was described as the likely motive and he was called an "87-year-old eccentric" and "a Scrooge-Like Millionaire who was noted for his ungenerosity as a landlord."[44] His estate was valued at nearly $3 million.

These two structures currently contain various small businesses, with retail stores facing Grand Street, Allen Street, and Orchard Street. Merchants sell dry goods, clothing and furniture, as well as restaurant supplies and wholesale seafood. The upper stories are reached from entrances on Allen and Orchard Streets.

Description

The former Edward Ridley & Sons Department Store Buildings have three street elevations, facing Grand Street, Allen Street, and Orchard Street. The cast-iron facade (Nos. 315-317 and 319-321) on Grand Street dates to 1886. On Orchard Street (no. 65), the cast-iron components, the bricks and stone elements date to 1886. The tan brick facade on Allen Street (Nos. 66-68) dates to 1931-34.

Historic:

Grand Street: cast-iron components and decorative reliefs; 5th story, arched windows, cornice.

Orchard Street: north end, cast-iron components and decorative reliefs; brick facade, stone lintel, star tie rods, north end of cornice continues on Grand Street, south cornice.

Allen Street: four bays, tan brick, simple brick reliefs, 3rd and 4th story windows, entrance at south end.

Alterations:

Grand Street: Nos. 315-17, brown paint, fire escape, first-story storefronts and awning; 2nd floor, signage, louver at center; roof, metal boxes; west edge, vertical signage; 5th story, partial arched window; Nos. 319-321, pink paint (c. 1990s), first and second-story storefronts and awnings.

Orchard Street: pink paint (c. 1990s); first-story storefronts, doors at south end; fire escapes, doors with single vertical pane adjoining fire escapes; 2nd story window off fire escape, metal louvers; some single pane windows; south part of roof, silver metal bulkhead.

Allen Street: first-story, awning, windows sealed with brick; 2nd and 5th story, window mullions.

For detailed documentation, consult LPC research files.

Researched and written by
Matthew A. Postal
Research Department

NOTES

[1] The area known as Corlears Hook projects into the East River and faces the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

[2] One of James Delancey's slaves, named Othello, was hung following the slave uprising of 1741. Following Delancey's death, the eldest son, Captain James DeLancey (1732-1800), inherited the property. During the American Revolution, the family remained loyal to the British crown and fled to England. The property was confiscated by New York State, divided into lots, and sold in 1784. See *511 Grand Street and 513 Grand Street Designation Report* (LP 2269 and 2270) (City of New York, 2007), written by Marianne Percival.

[3] See http://oldstreets.com/search.asp.

[4] "New Allen Street Welcomes the Sun," *New York Times*, January 5, 1928, 8.

[5] This section is based on various sources, including "Mr. Edward Ridley" in *Ridleys' Fashion Magazine* (Winter 1880), 39-40, collection of the New-York Historical Society; "Obituary: Edward Ridley," *Brooklyn Eagle*, August 1, 1883, 2; "Death of Edward Ridley," *New York Tribune*, August 1, 1883, 5.

[6] While some sources claim these debts were settled honorably, others report that Ridley's creditors were not paid until 1879.

[7] Advertisement, *New-York Daily Tribune*, September 29, 1862, 6.

[8] *New York Evening Telegram*, December 12, 1874, 4.

[9] "Ridleys," *New York Times*, December 11, 1876, 3.

[10] These images appear in issues of *Ridleys' Fashion Magazine*, as well as in Joyce Mendelsohn, *The Lower East Side Remembered and Revisited* (New York: The Lower East Side Press, 2001), 97.

[11] *New-York Tribune*, April 4, 1878, 2. An earlier advertisement announced that "to facilitate and bring to a close the alterations and extensions on their premises, which have been in progress some time, the entrance to their store" on Grand Street would be moved to Allen Street. See *New-York Tribune*, March 4, 1878.

[12] "Mr. Edward Ridley," 39-40.

[13] *Ridleys' Fashion Magazine: The Great Home Periodical of America* (1880), viewed at the New-York Historical Society. It is not clear whether this clock was installed in the elevated station or if this sentence refers to the clocks on the building's corner tower. Ibid., 40.

[14] Conveyance indexes, New York County Office of the Register: Lot 14 (Lieber 1649, p. 133); Lot 15 (Lieber 16, p. 120); Lot 15 ½ (Lieber 1713, p. 295); Lot 16 (Lieber 1600, p. 476; Lieber 13, p. 147), Lot 17 (Lieber 1601, p. 473); Lot 18 (Lieber 1158, p. 375).

[15] The structure at 59-63 Orchard Street is not part of this designation. In February 1880, a fire spread through a "row of old structures" at 313½, 315, 317, 317½ and 319 Grand Street. Tenants included a candy store, a dry goods store, and a hosiery dealer. See *New York Times*, February 2, 1880, 5.

[16] The brick wall at 65-67 Orchard Street and 59-63 Orchard Street may have been built in two phases. Though the materials and details are identical, the 1886 permit describes 321 Grand Street as being 70 feet long. Likewise, the cornice is interrupted by a gap and may have been installed after the building was subdivided in 1901 or a serious fire in 1905.

[17] As early as 1864, William Shears was described as "the well-known, energetic and favorite builder." See *New York Times*, April 5, 1864, 3.

[18] "Ridley's New Grand Street Building," *The Evening Telegram*, October 20, 1886, 6.

[19] Edward Ridley's house in Gravesend was also designed in the Second Empire style. See A. P. Stockwell, "A History of the Town of Gravesend, N.Y. and of Coney Island" from *The Illustrated History of Kings County* (1884), 57, viewed at Googlebooks.com, 2011.

[20] A view from the elevated railway, c. 1930, shows that after Ridley sold the building a slightly taller structure, without a tower, was erected at the corner of Allen Street. This building had four bays on Grand Street and six bays along Allen Street.

[21] "Ridley's New Grand Street Building."

[22] Advertisement, reprinted in L. Von Rosenberg, *The Washington Bridge* (1889), viewed online at Googlebooks, 2011.

[23] In Manhattan, Schwartzman designed the New York Mercantile Exchange at 628-630 Broadway (part of the NoHo Historic District) in 1882-83. It has a cast-iron front with floral details.

[24] "Ridley's New Grand Street Building."

[25] Richard Edwards, *New York's Great Industries* (1884), 113, viewed online at Googlebooks, 2011.

[26] This figure is based on an 1891 map. According to the *New York Tribune*, the store had a Grand Street frontage of 212 feet, with a "depth on both the latter of 180 feet." See *New-York Tribune*, November 30, 1886, 8.

[27] Advertisement, *Mt. Kisco NY Recorder*, November 26, 1886, viewed at www.fultonhistory.com.

[28] "Deserved Popularity of a Great Store," *New-York Tribune*, November 30, 1886, 8.

[29] "Ridley's Is No More," *The Hartford Courant*, November 22, 1901, 14.

[30] *Programme of this Centennial Celebration of George Washington as President of the United States in New York* (1889), not paginated.

[31] *Appleton's Dictionary of Greater New York and Its Vicinity* (New York, 1902), 111-12, viewed at Googlebooks.com.

[32] See George F. Sargent, *Gathering Jewels, or The Secret of a Beautiful Life* (1887), 77, viewed online at Googlebooks, 2011.

[33] "Trade Influence on Land Values," *New York Times*, October 18, 1914. According to this writer, Ridley leased a corner plot (probably at Orchard Street) in 1885 for $11,000 a year but later was only able to sublet the property for $4,500 a year.

[34] "Ridley's Is No More," *The Hartford Courant*, November 22, 1901, 14. Ridley & Sons did not own the buildings at the corner of Grand and Allen Streets. In 1894, the site was put up for auction and was described as "subject to lease, at annual rent of $14,824.50, taxes, repairs, &c., to E. Ridley & Sons." See *New York Times*, April 15, 1894, 11.

[35] *The Evening Telegram*, November 13, 1885, 5.

[36] Advertisement in *Brooklyn Eagle*, May 15, 1900, 8. In 1904, Ridley & Sons was described as being a "wholesale millinery and straw goods" firm located at 714 Broadway, Manhattan. See *Millinery Trade Review* (Spring/Summer 1904), Vol. 29, 23, viewed online at Googlebooks. The Ridley & Sons Corporation was voluntarily dissolved in September 1904. See *New York Times*, September 24, 1904, 11.

[37] "Auction Sale!" *Brooklyn Eagle*, March 22, 1901. This no-reserve auction took place at Moore's Stable.

[38] See advertisements in *The Evening Telegram*, November 5, 1901, 9; *Buffalo Morning Express*, December 1, 1901.

[39] "Ridley's Is No More."

[40] "In the Real Estate Field," *New York Times*, September 4, 1901, 10.

[41] "Old Ridley Store Burned," *New York Times*, January 5, 1904. In April 1905, the adjoining building at 59-63 Orchard Street was also seriously damaged by fire. At this time, 600 girls were working in factories on the upper stories but none were reported as injured. The value of the damage to the buildings and stock was estimated at $300,000. See "Chief Wieland Dies After East Side Fire," *New York Times*, April 1905, 1.

[42] "The Anarchists to Have a Ball," *New York Times*, December 12, 1909, 16.

[43] In 1893, an attempt was made at Bayshore, Long Island, to assassinate Arthur J. Ridley. See "Attempt Kill Mr. Ridley," *New York Times*, September 1, 1893, 1.

[44] "E.A. Ridley,88, Slain With Aide in Cellar," *New York Times*, May 11, 1933, 1; "Revenge Seen in the Slaying of Old Ridley," *Binghamton Press*, May 11, 1933.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Edward Ridley & Sons Department Store Buildings have a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, history, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that the Edward Ridley & Sons Department Store Buildings were once part of the largest department store on Manhattan's Lower East Side; that the store was founded by Edward Ridley in 1848; that over the next three decades the business grew by converting mostly residential buildings along the south side of Grand Street and the east side of Allen Street; that the adjoining properties at 315-317 Grand Street and 319-321 Grand Street represented the store's largest expansion to date; that they were commissioned by the founder's sons, Edward A. Ridley and Arthur J. Ridley, in 1886; that these Classical Revival-style structures were designed by the architect Paul F. Schoen; that this campaign greatly increased the amount of retail floor space and the store was described in newspapers as the largest retailer in New York City; that by 1889 Ridley employed about 2,500 persons, many who were immigrant women and neighborhood residents; that the painted five-story elevations along Grand Street are cast iron, a material frequently associated with mercantile structures and retail stores; that the rounded corner at Orchard Street served as a major entrance and was intended to enhance visibility from trolley cars travelling west from the Williamsburg ferry; that sales failed to meet expectations and the Ridley store closed in 1901; that in the early 1930s Allen Street was widened and the structure that was currently located at the southeast corner of Grand Street was demolished, making 315-317 Grand Street into a corner building; that a new west facade was erected in 1931-34; that it was designed by John N. Linn and incorporates simple Art Deco style details; and that these adjoining cast-iron buildings recall the era when Edward Ridley & Sons was among Manhattan's best known and most successful retailers.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 (formerly Section 534 of Chapter 21) 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 Edward Ridley & Sons Department Store Buildings, 315-317 Grand Street (aka 66-68 Allen Street) and 319-321 Grand Street (aka 65 Orchard Street), and designates Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 308, Lots 14 and 15, as its Landmark Site.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair
Pablo Vengoechea, Vice Chair
Frederick Bland, Diana Chapin, Michael Devonshire,
Joan Gerner, Michael Goldblum, Commissioners

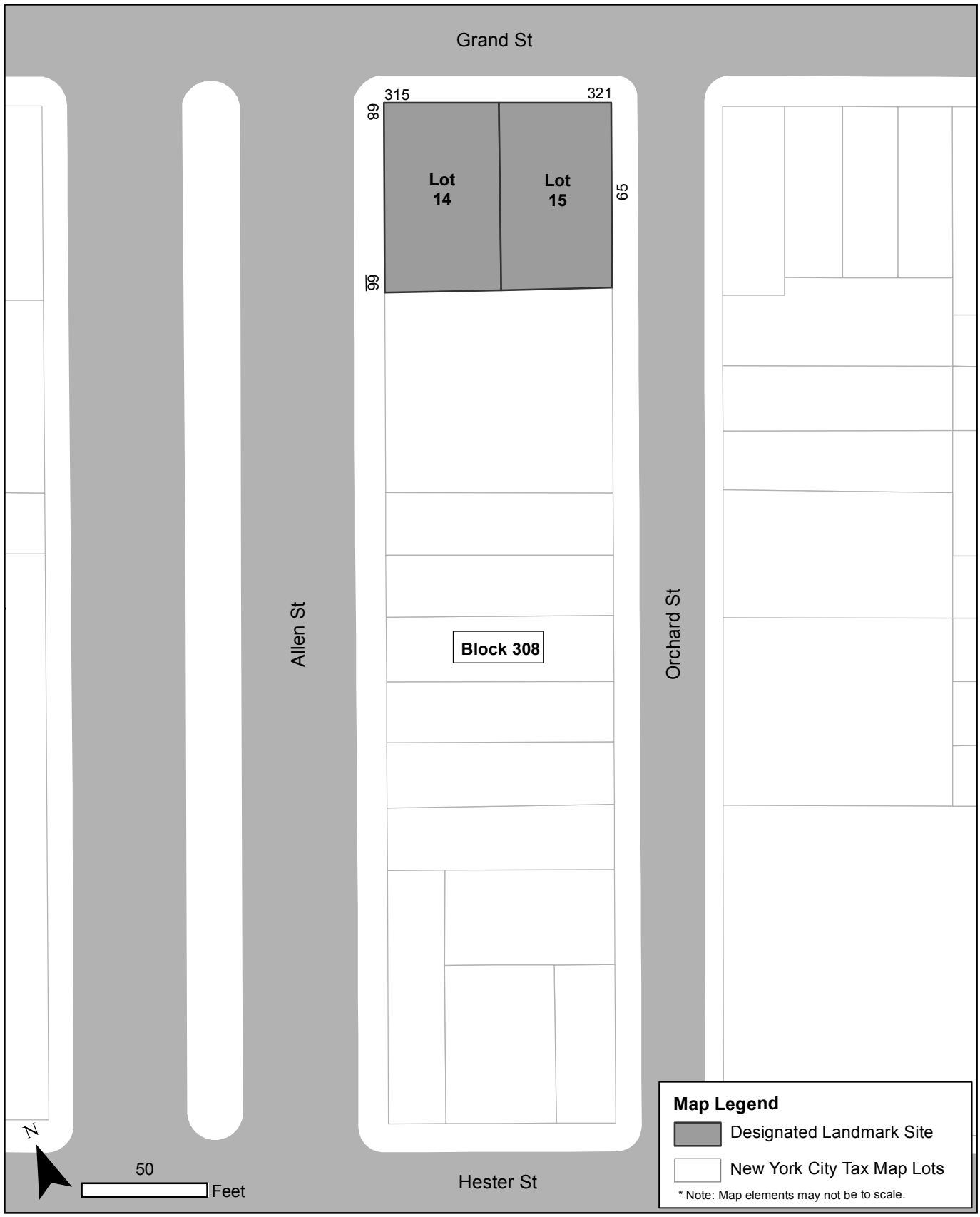
Edward Ridley & Sons Department Store Buildings
315-317 Grand Street (aka 66-68 Allen Street)
319-321 Grand Street (aka 65 Orchard Street), Manhattan
Southwest corner of Grand Street and Orchard Street
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2012

Rendering of Edward Ridley & Sons Department Store, c. 1886
Right: 309-311½ Grand Street (1870s, demolished)
Left to right: 319-321 Grand Street (Orchard Street and Grand Street facades)
315-317 Grand Street (east bay demolished)
The Evening Telegram-New York, October 20, 1886, p. 6

Edward Ridley & Sons Department Store Buildings
319-21 Grand Street (aka 65 Orchard Street), southwest corner of Grand Street
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2012

Edward Ridley & Sons Department Store Buildings
315-317 Grand Street, southeast corner of Allen Street
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2012

Edward Ridley & Sons Department Store Buildings
315-317 Grand Street, southeast corner of Allen Street (top)
315-317 Grand Street, view from Allen Street (bottom)
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2012



EDWARD RIDLEY & SONS DEPARTMENT STORE BUILDINGS (LP-2397), 315-317 Grand Street
(aka 66-68 Allen Street) and 319-321 Grand Street (aka 65 Orchard Street)
Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map Block 308, Lots 14 & 15

Designated: September 11, 2012

Graphic Source: New York City Department of City Planning, MapPLUTO, Edition 09v1, 2009. Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, JM. Date: September 11, 2012