

SAN REMO APARTMENTS, 145-146 Central Park West, Manhattan. Built 1929-30; architect Emery Roth.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1127, Lot 29.

On September 11, 1984, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the San Remo Apartments and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 13). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Eleven witnesses spoke in favor of designation, and one letter was received in support of designation.

#### DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

##### Summary

Soaring over Central Park, the profile of the San Remo is among the most important components of the magnificent skyline of Central Park West. The first of the twin-towered buildings which give Central Park West its distinctive silhouette, and one of the New York's last grand apartment houses built in the pre-Depression era, it was designed by Emery Roth, then at the pinnacle of his career as a specialist in apartment house architecture. A residential skyscraper in classical garb, the San Remo epitomizes Roth's ability to combine the traditional with the modern, an urbane amalgam of luxury and convenience, decorum and drama.

##### Development of Central Park West

Central Park West, the northern continuation of Eighth Avenue bordering on the park, is today one of New York's finest residential streets, but in the mid-nineteenth century it was a rural and inhospitable outpost, notable for its rocky terrain, browsing goats and ramshackle shanties. With the creation of Central Park in the 1860s, followed by Riverside Park (begun 1876), as well as a series of transportation improvements such as the Ninth Avenue Elevated Railroad (1879), the Upper West Side in general experienced a period of intense real estate speculation. The 1880s were the first decade of major development, and set the pattern for the Upper West Side, where rowhouses line the side streets, and multiple dwellings, commercial and institutional structures are sited on the avenues.

Not surprisingly, those avenues closest to the parks, Central Park West and Riverside Drive, were immediately considered the most desirable. (Ninth Avenue, rechristened Columbus in 1890, Tenth Avenue, renamed Amsterdam in the same year, and Broadway--the Boulevard before 1899--were all, in varying degrees marred by cable car and elevated railway lines.)

The potential of the parkside avenues for development as prime locations led to an anticipatory increase in land values; prices rose to such extravagant heights that many speculative builders shied away from row house and tenement construction, from which they would realize relatively meager returns, while the very wealthy, who could afford to build mansions, for the most part remained on the more fashionable East Side. As a result, the development of Central Park West lagged behind the general development of the Upper West Side. It was not until the turn of the century that Central Park West's construction boom began and it emerged as a boulevard of elegant tall apartments punctuated by impressive institutional buildings--a kind of grand proscenium to the architectural variety show of the Upper West Side.

The stage had been set by two great monuments, the American Museum of Natural History between 77th and 81st Streets, (begun 1874, architects Vaux & Mould, and a designated New York City Landmark), and the Dakota, the pioneering luxury apartments at 72nd Street (1880-84, architect Henry Hardenbergh, and a designated New York City Landmark). Yet a survey of roughly a decade later revealed that more than half the block fronts along the park from 60th to 96th Streets remained vacant or contained only old, modest frame houses.<sup>1</sup> A few rather unprepossessing apartment hotels (at least, relative to the Dakota) were constructed in the early 1890s, among them the San Remo at 75th Street, designed in 1890 by architect Edward Angell.<sup>2</sup> It was described by Moses King in his Handbook as "an immense and imposing edifice, finely situated on the high ground of West 75th Street and facing on the lawns, woods and waters of Central Park. The rooms . . . are all in suites"<sup>3</sup>; and more recently as "a ten-story, high Victorian pile, a mixture of Gothic and Romanesque details . . . unremarkable from an architectural standpoint except for the steep pyramidal towers at its corners."<sup>4</sup>

Among the other apartment hotels on the avenue, were the Beresford at 81st Street, the Majestic (architect Alfred Zucker) just south of the Dakota, both erected in the early 1890s, and the El Dorado at 90th Street of 1901. These have all been replaced by their towered namesakes of the late 1920s and early '30s, but they had already been architecturally superceded by grand apartments houses of the early 1900s--such as the Prasada (1904) at 65th Street, the Langham (1905) at 73rd Street, the Kenilworth (1908) at 75th Street. This phase in Central Park West's development was interrupted by World War I, when construction ground to a halt. The second major phase of development began with the great prosperity of the '20s producing the Art Deco towered buildings, and Roth's Beresford and San Remo Apartments, which now define the skyline.

The 1920s provided a generation of aspiring immigrants with the opportunity to move up in the world, both economically and geographically. Many Jewish immigrants, refugees from Czarist pogroms, had achieved prosperity in New York by the late 1920s, and looked from the Lower East Side and the Boroughs to the Upper West Side as a cultural and architectural haven. By the mid-1930s more than half the residents of the Upper West Side from 72nd to 96th Streets were Jewish, and more than a third of these families was headed by a parent born in Europe.<sup>5</sup> Emery Roth was himself a Jewish immigrant of Horatio Algeresque stamina and optimism, a family man and Upper West Sider, although he arrived by a more circuitous route than most of his neighbors.

## The Architect<sup>6</sup>

Emery Roth was born in 1871 in the town of Galzecs, Hungary, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. When he was thirteen the family's fortunes took a turn for the worse, and it was decided that young Emery, alone, would immigrate to America. Passing through Ellis Island, he continued on to Chicago where his success story began.

When still a teenager living a hand to mouth existence in Bloomington, Illinois, Roth determined to become an architect. He worked for both a local builder and a local architect. In 1889, having won a national-government sponsored contest, the Maize Competition--for which he drew a living room utilizing the corn plant as a decorative motif--Roth took his \$100 prize money and set out for Kansas City. Apparently he could not find architectural employment there, but while he was still in Bloomington, had applied to join the office of Burnham & Root. Offered the job by mail, Roth moved on to Chicago and worked under Charles Atwood (who had succeeded John W. Root after his death in 1891.) Roth helped to prepare drawings for the celebrated Palace of Fine Arts. While at the fair, he met Richard Morris Hunt, the recognized dean of American architects, who offered to hire him if he ever came to New York. After the fair, with true to form optimism, Roth made his way to New York, where Hunt's casual offer was honored. Assigned to draft interior perspectives for The Breakers, the Newport mansion of Cornelius Vanderbilt, Roth came in contact with Ogden Codman, a noted architect, interior designer and socialite. In 1895 Roth went to work for Codman, where his decorative and planning abilities were sharpened.

By 1898 Roth believed himself ready for private practice. Two young architects, Theodore G. Stein and E. Yancy Cohen, after involved negotiations, sold Roth their architectural practice for \$1000. As part of the agreement, Roth was entitled to represent himself as a partner in Stein, Cohen & Roth in order to capitalize on the good will of the existing firm. In fact, Roth was on his own.

Roth's first major commission was the Hotel Belleclaire of 1901-03 on upper Broadway, a designated New York City Landmark. While it was under construction Roth was approached by Leo and Alexander Bing, Manhattan real estate developers. The Bing brothers admired the Belleclaire and commissioned Roth to design a group of five-story apartment buildings in Washington Heights. This alliance inaugurated a lifelong association.

In the following years, Roth had several commissions, among them Bancroft Hall of 1910--a student housing facility for Columbia University, and a series of religious structures, including the Congregation Ahavith Achem of 1908 in Brooklyn and the First Reformed Hungarian Church of 1916 on East 69th Street in Manhattan.

The year 1918 was a traumatic one for Roth. He lost his vision in one eye, the result of glaucoma, and nearly died in the great influenza epidemic. But the prosperity of the 1920s was to carry him into a period of great achievement. After the hiatus in construction caused by the First World War, building was again undertaken. In New York City, a 1921 ordinance exempting new residential construction from real estate taxes

for the next decade, opened the door to a building boom. The Bing brothers commissioned a series of apartment buildings and hotels from Roth, many of which Ruttenbaum aptly terms "fine background buildings,"<sup>7</sup> while two other developers, Samuel Minskoff and Harris H. Uris commissioned Roth to design a number of handsome medium height apartment houses which the architect dubbed "skyscrapers."<sup>8</sup> In 1926 Roth in association with Thomas Hastings, the surviving partner of the eminent firm of Carrere & Hastings, designed the Ritz Tower at Park Avenue and 57th Street, a 41-story apartment hotel in a neo-Renaissance style, its extreme height making it "a symbol of a new way to live for wealthy New Yorkers."<sup>9</sup> After the Ritz Tower, Roth went on to design a host of luxury residential skyscrapers, among them the Oliver Cromwell Hotel on West 72nd Street (1928), the Beresford Apartments on Central Park West, and as a consultant to Margon & Holder, the Art Deco style Eldorado Apartments also on Central Park West (1929-31, and a designated New York City Landmark). From the mid-1920s on, the signature of a major Roth apartment house was its tower(s). Initially designed to conceal water tanks, they evolved in the Beresford with its three towers into a major element of the design. In the San Remo, among Roth's finest works, the towers are carried even further, becoming an integral component of this residential skyscraper. This fusing of the functional with the aesthetic was equally characteristic of his apartment plans. Roth's sons credit their father with the creation of the foyer plan, and if not the originator he was certainly a refiner of this type. Roth's best apartments seem effortlessly interlocked, wasteful corridor space reduced to a minimum, with spacious, well-lit rooms in their stead.

Roth's last great work was the Normandy Apartments on Riverside Drive of 1938-39 (a designated New York City Landmark), by which time his sons had joined the firm. The majority of his later buildings in concession to the Depression had smaller apartments and fewer amenities, while still maintaining high standards.<sup>10</sup> Roth died in 1947, and his sons continued the firm, which has been prosperous and prolific.

### The San Remo

In an advertisement of May 18, 1930, in the New York Times the San Remo was heralded as:

The Aristocrat of Central Park West  
Apartments Designed for You  
Built by the builders of the Beresford

Every detail of these sumptuous apartments has been carefully planned to make living in them the last word in luxury. Only private homes have ceilings as lofty as these and rooms as spacious. Every chamber has its own colored tile bathroom and is well-supplied with deep closets. Many have dressing rooms too. The long galleries and living rooms with fireplaces offer splendid decorative possibilities. The kitchens have been fitted with the most modern appliances. Up in the towers are apartments such as New York has never before seen with windows on all four sides and views of Central Park, the Hudson, and Westchester. Other specially designed

apartments have slate terraces overlooking the park.

Six to sixteen rooms, simplex and duplex apartments  
H.R.H. Construction Company <sup>11</sup>

Contemporary writers essentially concurred with this euphoric description, and were impressed by the height of the building, the twin-towered silhouette, good plans and luxurious detailing. The New Yorker magazine (a publication which in 1930 seems, at least to modern eyes, to all but ignore the 1929 Crash) featured two articles on the San Remo, one by "Penthouse" [Marcia Clarke Davenport]. Davenport is impressed by the views, the size of the terraces and rooms, and "the remarkable sun and light everywhere." Perhaps a hint of the Depression can be detected in her interest in costs--"This is not one of the houses you use to illustrate that rents are lower on the West Side."<sup>12</sup> An eighteen-room duplex was offered at \$21,000 per year.

The second New Yorker contributor, "T-Square" [George S. Chappell] considers the San Remo in more strictly architectural terms and as a design by Roth "whose name must be inextricably associated with the development of this section" of Manhattan.

...the Italian baroque [is] skillfully adapted to modern conditions. Cornices are reduced to a minimum, becoming simply bandcourses, but such detail as is used is classic in derivation. The twin towers with their circular colonnades of Corinthian columns, crowned by bronze lanterns, are fine in silhouette.... The proportions are well-studied and the warm light brick used above the limestone substructure give a delightful effect.<sup>13</sup>

Chappell also praises the watertank coverings and the innovative window design with upper and lower movable transoms.<sup>14</sup>

Despite its popular success, the San Remo fell prey to the pervasive economic mayhem of the 1930s. A full year after it had officially opened, nearly a third of its apartments remained vacant, and the Bank of the United States which held its \$5 million mortgage had collapsed, its officers charged with recklessly "gambling" on the San Remo.<sup>15</sup> In an effort to attract tenants rents were reduced, and some of the larger apartments were subdivided. But after a succession of owners and bankruptcies, in 1940 the San Remo was sold along with the Beresford, which was experiencing similar financial woes, for a mere \$25,000 over existing mortgages.<sup>16</sup>

In its near sixty-year history, the San Remo has had numerous well-known and famous tenants, among them David Nemerov and his wife, owners of Russeks Stores, and parents of Howard Nemerov, poet and critic, and Diane Arbus, photographer, Eddie Cantor, the singer and comedian, and more recently, singer Barry Manilow, and actors Dustin Hoffman, Diane Keaton, Tony Randall and Mary Tyler Moore.

## Architectural Sources and Style

The San Remo is a skyscraper which, in the conservative early twentieth-century tradition, applies an historical style to a contemporary form. Roth, who had a lifelong predilection for classicizing styles (although he used others), here turned to the Late Italian Renaissance for inspiration. Broken pediments, both curved and triangular, cartouches, and boldly scaled pilasters and columns with composite capitals, and overlapping architectural elements--all hallmarks of the Late Italian Renaissance--are the components of the San Remo's detailing. Ruttenbaum has noted similarities in the crowning temples of the San Remo with the ancient Greek choragic monument of Lysicrates, which Roth had studied in his youth at the Chicago exposition.<sup>17</sup> Certainly, there are parallels, especially in the proportions, but perhaps equally important are such Late Renaissance structures as Bramante's celebrated Tempietto in Rome, or--in terms of placement as much as form--Michelangelo's lantern atop St. Peter's dome. Much closer to home are such general prototypes as McKim, Mead & White's Municipal Building of 1909-13, a skyscraper topped by a temple and designed in a neo-classical style.

Truly tall skyscrapers, rather than the "skyscratchers" of Roth's terminology, up until the 1920s had been almost exclusively erected as commercial structures. Roth's first very tall apartment building, the 41-story Ritz Tower of 1926, had been erected as an apartment hotel, for which less stringent building code requirements applied than for apartment houses. The Ritz Tower was exactly what the name implied--one preliminary scheme even called for a lantern clearly derived from the tower of the Florentine Palazzo Vecchio.<sup>18</sup> In residential terms, this was a new building type. one which reached a fuller expression in the San Remo.

In early 1929, a new Multiple Dwelling Act was passed, allowing apartment houses of large ground area greater height and the use of towers.<sup>19</sup> The San Remo, the first of the vast twin-towered West Side apartments, was designed in response to these new stipulations. An innovative design, based on Roth's experience with single-towered structures, it was quickly emulated: yet the sheer size and height of the San Remo apparently struck others as fundamentally "modern." The Century Apartments and the Majestic Apartments are exercises in the contemporary Art Deco style.<sup>20</sup> Even the Normandy, Roth's own last great building combines elements of the Style Moderne with neo-Italian Renaissance motifs. Yet, as the architectural critic, Paul Goldberger (himself a resident of the San Remo) has remarked, "Roth's greatest gift was his ability to adapt Renaissance and classical details to modern building forms."<sup>21</sup>

## Description

The San Remo Apartments occupy the Central Park West blockfront from 74th to 75th Streets. A residential skyscraper, the main block of the building is 17 stories in height, with terraced setbacks from the 14th to 17th stories. Two symmetrical towers, each ten stories in height surmounted by elaborate suprastructures culminating in circular temples with lanterns give the building its dramatic profile. The building is

executed in light brick. The first three stories are in rusticated limestone, lightly vermiculated at the first two stories, with smooth lower relief at the third. The facade is 26 bays wide, with two main entryways. The southern elevation is 19 bays wide, and the northern is 16. (The southern elevation is 180 feet in length, the northern, 150.) Each has a single main entrance. (There are four office entrances on the Central Park West facade, two on the south elevation, and three on the north. The towers are five bays wide on the facade and side elevations. The rear, western elevation, which owing to its height above the side street rowhouses, is largely visible is executed in the same light brick, and is ranged around a T-shaped courtyard. The towers have terraced rear extensions. A large chimney abuts the north tower.

The facade and side elevations are articulated above the three-story base by shallow brick pilasters and slight projections signalized as pavilions by the Renaissance detailing at the upper stories. The facade of the main block of the building has a basic vertical arrangement of bays as: 1-1-1-6-1-6-1-6-1-1-1. At the terrace levels the central six bays and outermost three bays function as true pavilions between the setbacks. The towers have massive, pier-like enframements at the corners. Cornices are effectively and sparingly used to accentuate the upper stories of the main block of the building, the upper stories of the towers, and the suprastructures.

Architectural detailing, executed in stone, terra cotta and metal, is Late Italian Renaissance in character, and highlights entrances and window configurations at the upper stories. Balustrades, pilasters, engaged columns, broken pediments, both circular and triangular, garlands, urns, cartouches, scrolls, consoles and roundels are employed. The detail is executed in limestone up to the fourth story and in terra cotta above. The terraces have either terra-cotta balustrades or metal railings. The lantern is of copper. (All such detailing is described below.)

### Detailing

#### **Fenestration:**

The windows are uniformly treated on the designed elevations, with metal casements featuring movable transoms above and below the principal windows. The upper transom swings out, the lower transom (or hopper) swings in. The central large windows open outward in the conventional manner. The windows have six panes (2 over 2 over 2). This innovative design was intended to facilitate the regulation of temperature and air circulation. There are some variations in width which reflect interior spaces (living rooms, bedrooms etc.) but the basic configuration remains the same, except in the second-story windows above the Central Park West entrances, and at the uppermost stories of the facade central pavilion, which are tripartite with nine panes of glass (3 over 3 over 3). On the rear elevation the windows are more varied in their treatment, with single double, triple and double leaf casement windows, some of which do not have the lower transom. A few windows have been altered, most notably on the rear tower elevations. (see text above and footnote 14).

**Main Entrances:**

Facade [Central Park West] (two, symmetrically located at the 6-7th bays and 20-21st bays).

A broken triangular pediment surmounts the double doors , executed in bronze and glass with paneled, solid bronze transoms. The doors are each divided into three parts, with square panels ornamented by bronze medallions and bordering acanthus leaves, set in a rectilinear bronze grillework. Metal and glass lanterns flank the doorway. A double-height limestone enframing surrounds the doorway and second-story tripartite window, and is composed of flanking pilasters with composite capitals , with reliefs depicting classical urns above, and supporting a dentiled curved, broken pediment. At the center of the pediment is a large scrolled cartouche draped by a garland which is looped over a rosette at each side. The doorways have sheltering canopies on bronze supports.

North [75 St.] and south [74th St.] elevations (one, located in the 13th bay, north side, and in the 11th bay, south side).

Both have deep reveals and limestone enframements with a surmounting console table on console-like supports with a central scrolled cartouche. The single bronze and glass doors follow the same design as those on the facade and have transoms with an octagonal panel with central medallion and acanthus leaves. Lanterns flank the doorways.

**Office Entrances:**

Facade [Central Park West] (four, symmetrically located at the 3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th bays).

These have limestone enframements and surmounting entablatures with scrolled ornamental keystones. The single doors are of bronze with a glazed upper panel and transom.

North elevation [75th St.] (three, at the 4th, 8th, and 15th bays).

These are detailed like those on the facade.

South elevation [74th St.] (two, at the 6th and 14th bays).

Set within deep reveals and enframed by the rusticated walls, each has a bronze door with a glazed upper panel and transom.

**Service Entrances:**

North [75th St.] and south [74th St.] elevations, (two, located at the rear of each elevation).

A rusticated wall which follows the design of the building walls and extends to the second story contains an arched doorway with a large keystone and is surmounted by a paneled overdoor. A decorative metal gate with a panel reading "Service" fills the archway. At the south elevation, a metal railing atop a brick wall extends westward along the property line.



**Third Story Window Enframements:**

Facade [Central Park West], north [75th St.] and south [74th St.] elevations, (four, each set at the second bay from the Central Park West corners).

The windows have limestone relief enframements with side elements in the shape of a console in profile, and rosettes.

**Fourth Story Window Enframements:**

Facade [Central Park West] (two, symmetrically placed, 5-8th bays and 19-22nd bays).

A balustraded balcony set upon four large ornamented console brackets extends for four bays. The central two bays have a limestone enframement and are separated by a smooth limestone panel. Flanking pilasters support an entablature upon which a triangular broken pediment is superimposed. At the center is a scrolled escutcheon with a garland and ornamental tablet.

Facade [Central Park West], north [75th St.] and south [74th St.] elevations, (four, each set at the second bay from the Central Park West corners).

Each has an entablature with a superimposed triangular pediment, both dentilled, and a central ornamented keystone flanked by plain stones. Pilasters and enframements surround the windows which also have a balustrade executed in high relief.

**Fourth Story Cartouche:**

Facade [Central Park West] (one, between the 13th and 14th bays).

A large scrolled cartouche, placed at the center of the facade, it has the completion date of the building 19--30 placed to each side.

**Eleventh-Twelfth Story Window Enframements:**

Facade [Central Park West] (two, symmetrically located at the 5-8th and 19-22nd bays).

A balustrade on four console brackets, which visually echoes the fourth-story treatment below, extends across four bays. A double-height, two-bay wide central section is recessed, with flanking brick pilasters, in which the capitals are seemingly "overlapped" by the outer wall surface. Two embossed rosettes appear in the panel which is enframed by bandcourses between the 11th and 12th stories. Two additional embossed rosettes appear in the outer bays. A scrolled cartouche with garlands draped over rosettes, similar to those of the facade main entrances, surmount the composition.

### **Thirteenth to Fifteenth Story Window Enframements:**

Facade [Central Park West], north [75th St.] and south [74th St.] elevations, (four, each set at the second bay from the Central Park West corners).

Placed similarly to the window enframing of the fourth story, these three-story compositions also serve to accentuate and anchor the Central Park West corners of the building. In each, ornamented console brackets at the 13th story level support a balustered balcony one bay wide. At the 13th story and balcony level, are bandcourses which continue along the walls, articulating the designed elevations. The 14th-story windows are surmounted by curved broken pediments and ornamented at the center by escutcheons. Garlands and floral motifs appear below the pediments, upon the window frames. The 15th-story windows are surmounted by a scrolled escutcheon. Double height brick pilasters with rosettes flank the windows and support a broken triangular pediment. Cartouches appear at the center. The band courses of the pilasters and broken pediments also continue along the wall surfaces and here help to define the three-bay wide corner pavilions. These pavilions are further defined by flanking brick pilasters with rosettes.

### **Thirteenth to Seventeenth Story Window Enframements:**

Facade [Central Park West] (one, at the 12-13th bays).

This composition, which signalizes the central six-bay wide pavilion, reiterates many of the elements of the four corner compositions just described, although it is two bays wide, rather than one. Ornamented consoles at the 13th story support the 14th story balustered balcony. Instead of two windows there are single tripartite windows. The 14th and 15th story windows are detailed like those at the corners, but here the broken pediment enframing the carouche is curved rather than triangular. The composition continues to the 16th and 17th stories, which are also flanked by brick pilasters. The tripartite window at the 16th story is richly enframed with a central garlanded tablet, and a broken triangular pediment. At the 17th story is a central garlanded cartouche. The central pavilion has terminating brick pilasters with embossed rosettes like those of the corner pavilions.

### **Twenty-third Story Window Enframements:**

Facade [Central Park West], north [75th St.] and south [74th St.] elevations, (four, set in the central bays).

These window, set mid way on the designed elevations of the towers, function as medallions on the relatively unadorned tower shafts. The windows have elaborate enframements with ornamental keystones and curved, broken pediments.

**Twenty-sixth - Twenty-seventh Story Window Enframements:**

Facade [Central Park West], north [75th St.] and south [74th St.] elevations, (four, set in the 2-4th bays).

Set between bandcourses and balustrade and pediment level, which continue on the wall surfaces of the towers, are these three boldly scaled three-bay wide compositions. The central bay has a projecting balustrade and above, double-height engaged columns on brackets, with foliate capitals. These columns enframe the two windows and support a curved broken pediment. At the center of the pediment is a large cartouche. The side bays have balustrades and above, double-height pilasters on podia, with foliate capitals. These pilasters flank the two windows and support triangular broken pediments.

**Suprastructure Window Enframements:**

Facade [Central Park West], north [75th St.] and south [74th St.] elevations and the two inner faces of the towers (six, set at the second story of the suprastructure and in the penthouses).

These double-height compositions each include a framed window with flanking brick pilasters with embossed rosettes at capital-level. Above the window is a broken triangular pediment and a central escutcheon. Six small penthouses with semi-circular roofs have their facades placed above the pediments. The windows of these are curved at top and bottom and elaborately enframed and have metal grilles. They are each flanked by console brackets which support the curved pediment of the penthouse.

**Temples:**

North and south towers, (two, located at the top of the building).

Above the suprastructure each tower is surmounted by a circular temple of brick and terra cotta, set upon a base articulated by boldly scaled console brackets on eight buttressing pedestals. Large urns, draped with garlands, crown each pedestal and the intervening walls are ornamented with scrolled cartouches beneath balustrades. The temples, set on simple brick podia, are encircled by colonnades of smooth columns with foliate capitals. These support plain dentilled friezes beneath balustrades. Above on each tower is a circular base with copestones, which supports the crowing element--a fenestrated and electrified copper lantern, above elongated foliate scrolled consoles. (The temples and lanterns have recently been restored.)

Report prepared by  
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## Notes

1. Real Estate Record and Builders Guide, 51 (February 11, 1893), Supplement, 20.
2. Angell also designed the Hotel Endicott (1889) on Columbus Avenue and West 81st Street and was active in the Greenwich Village Historic District.
3. King's Handbook of New York City (Boston: Moses King, 1893), p. 236.
4. Steven Ruttenbaum, Mansions in the Clouds: The Skyscraper Palazzi of Emery Roth (New York: Balsam Press, Inc., 1986), p. 133.
5. James Trager, West of Fifth, The Rise and Fall of Manhattan's West Side (New York: Atheneum, 1987), p. 5. It is interesting to note that Marjorie Morganstern, the heroine of Herman Wouk's classic novel Marjorie Morningstar (New York: Doubleday, 1955) is the daughter of a Jewish immigrant father who had come to America from Eastern Europe at age 15, struggled on the Lower East Side, moved to the Bronx, and then onward to the 17th floor of the Eldorado, another of Roth's grand Central Park West buildings. The romantic teen-aged Marjorie "loved everything about the Eldorado, even the name 'Eldorado' was perfectly suited to an apartment building on Central Park West. It had a fine foreign sound to it." (p. 4) Presumably the "San Remo" would have pleased her equally well.
6. Much of this discussion is based on Steven Ruttenbaum's 1987 monograph, cited above.
7. Ruttenbaum, p. 80. Among Roth's commissions from Bing & Bing: 39 Fifth Avenue (1922); 310 West End Avenue (1925); Hotel Dorset, 30 West 54th Street (1926-27); Hotel Drake, 440 Park Avenue (1926-27); Hotel Alden, Central Park West at 82nd Street (1926-27); and the Southgate Apartments, 400-434 East 52nd Street (begun 1928). For others, see Ruttenbaum.
8. Ruttenbaum, p. 95. For Roth's commissions from Minskoff & Uris see Ruttenbaum, Chapter 5.
9. Ruttenbaum, p. 95.
10. For later commissions, see Ruttenbaum, Chapters 8-9.
11. Advertisement, New York Times, May 18, 1930, Sect. 13 [Real Estate], [n.p.].
12. Penthouse, "New Apartments," The New Yorker, November 22, 1930, pp. 61-62.
13. T-Square, "The Skyline," The New Yorker, October 4, 1930, pp. 60-62.

14. Chappell's admiration for the windows (which are also highlighted in a trade advertisement of the building, (Architecture and Building, Oct. 1930, p.283) is noted by Ruttenbaum, p. 140. See also p.68. Ruttenbaum credits Roth with the invention of the window type, one intended "to provide tenants with a maximum degree of comfort. The windows with the two movable transom sections above and below the principal openings are an ingenious design, allowing air circulation and regulation. Interestingly, the 1929 Roth drawings at Avery Library (R-77, nos.17-19) do not include the lower transom or "hopper" and resemble the fenestration of Roth's earlier Beresford Apartments. Roth must certainly have considered this design alteration a significant improvement, especially before the advent of air-conditioning. See also Ruttenbaum, p. 134, for a rendering of the building, in which the lower transoms do not appear.
15. "Charges Gambling to Bank Officials," New York Times, May 14, 1931, p. 8.
16. Ruttenbaum, pp. 140-143.
17. Ibid., pp. 133-134.
18. Ibid., p. 111.
19. Ibid., p. 133; and "Governor Roosevelt Signs Multiple Dwellings Law," Real Estate Record and Builders Guide, 123 (April 27, 1929), 7-8.
20. The Eldorado, which Roth designed in collaboration with Margon & Holder, is also Art Deco in style, but Ruttenbaum, p.143-4, states that the style is the work of the other firm and that Roth advocated a neo-classical design.
21. Paul Goldberger, "Emery Roth Dominated the Age of Apartment Buildings," New York Times, February 16, 1978.

## 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 San Remo Apartments 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 San Remo with its soaring twin-towered profile is one of the most significant elements in the Central Park West skyline; that it is one of the finest apartment buildings designed by Emery Roth, a noted New York architect who specialized in apartment house design, and whose work played a key role in the creation of Central Park West -- one of New York's grandest residential avenues; that it is one of Manhattans's last great luxury apartment houses built in the pre-Depression era; that it was the first twin-towered residential skyscraper in New York; and that it fuses a modern building type with traditional detailing in the Late Italian Renaissance style in an urbane and highly successful amalgam.

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 San Remo Apartments, 145-146 Central Park West, Borough of Manhattan, and designates Tax Map Block 1127, Lot 29, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.

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Photo: Carl Forster

Architect: Emery Roth

San Remo Apartments  
300 Central Park West  
1929-1930



Photo: Carl Forster

San Remo Apartments

Rear Elevation



Photo: Carl Forster

San Remo Apartments

Facade: South entrance and fourth-story windows



Photo: Carl Forster

San Remo Apartments

North elevation: Main entrance



Photo: Carl Forster

San Remo Apartments  
North elevation: Office entrance



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Photo: Carl Forster

San Remo Apartments

South elevation: Office door



Photo: Carl Forster

San Remo Apartments

South elevation: Service entrance



Photo: Carl Forster

San Remo Apartments  
Facade: 4th story window



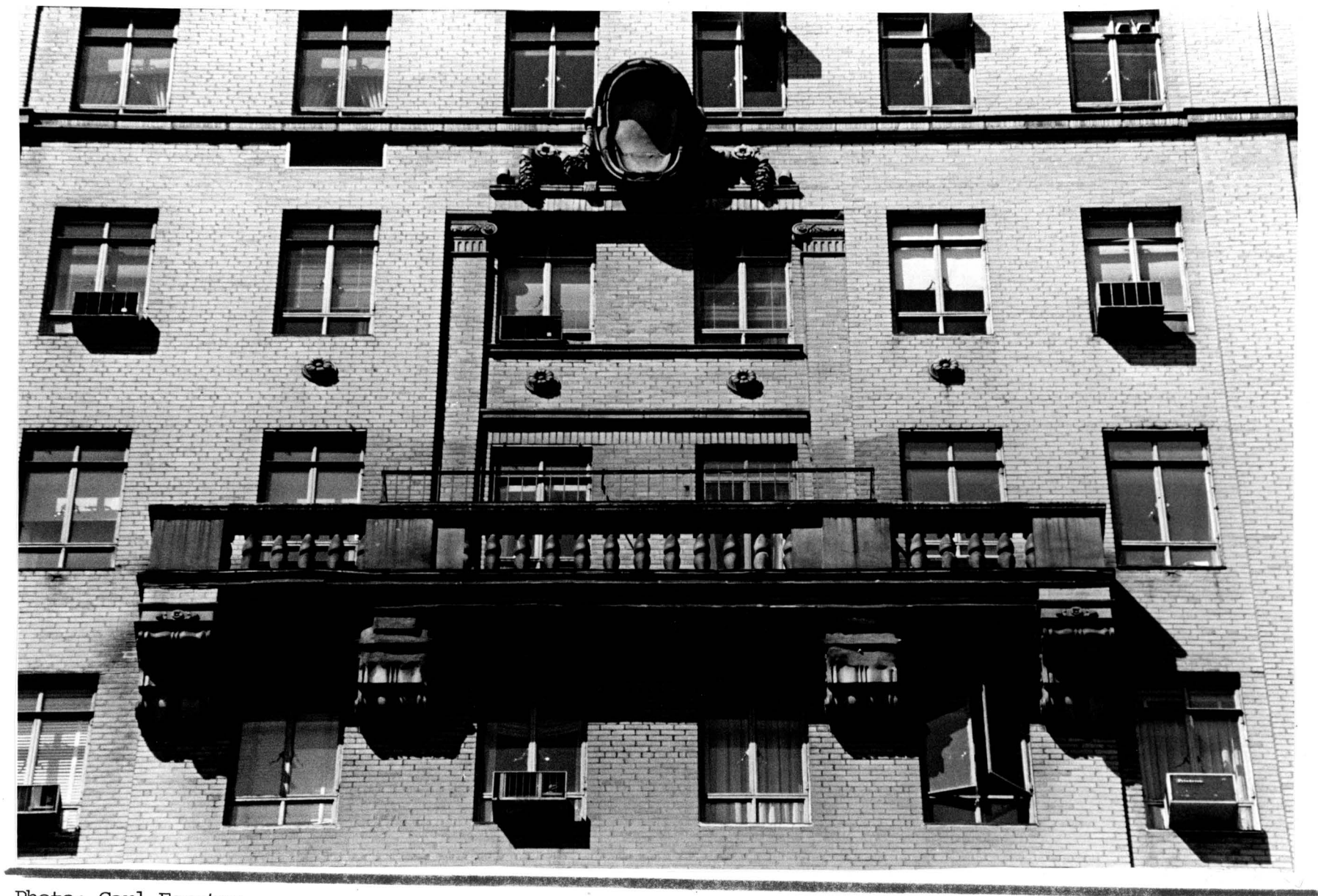


Photo: Carl Forster

San Remo Apartments

Facade: 11th and 12th story windows



Photo: Carl Forster

San Remo Apartments

Facade: 12th to 17th stories, central pavilion



Photo: John Bayley

San Remo Apartments  
Towers

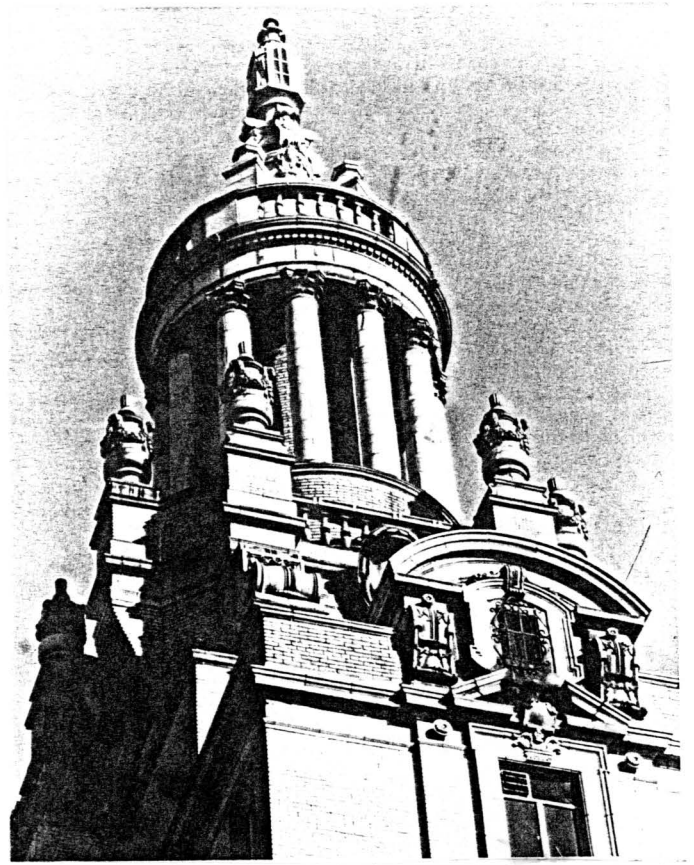


Photo: Steven Ruttenbaum

San Remo Apartments  
Temple and lantern