


Inside Look At Historic 108 Leonard Street's Renovation In Lower Manhattan



Historical image of 346 Broadway

BY: MICHAEL YOUNG 7:30 AM ON SEPTEMBER 17, 2018

Located in Lower Manhattan and bounded by Broadway, Leonard Street, Catherine Lane, and Lafayette Street, the conversion and restoration process at 108 Leonard Street, aka 346 Broadway, is an ongoing and intricate effort. Built on a thin, rectangular block with an Italian Renaissance revival architectural style, it was completed in 1894 by McKim Mead & White, the “starchitects” of the early 20th century in New York.

Once the home of New York Life Insurance, the structure will soon house over 150 unique residences spread across an array of restored landmarked interiors, and amenities spread from the street level to the rooftop. Elad Group is managing 108 Leonard while marketing and sales are being conducted by Douglas Elliman Development Marketing. Jeffrey Beers International is in charge of the interiors. 

YIMBY recently went on a tour and stumbled on a number of sights previously unseen. Starting from the ground floor, the main entrance is found along Leonard Street in the center of the complex. A private entrance for vehicles will descend underground to a wide motor reception area, surrounded by light colored bricks and arched windows under an array of barrel-vaulted ceilings.

A set of double doors in a recessed entry surrounded by thick stone bases and a defined arch with ornate spandrels and pairs of columns mark the outside of the double-height lobby. Two symmetrical, marble staircases are found on both sides while chevron wood flooring, refurbished chandeliers with new additional light fixtures on the marble newels, and crown moldings with bold Greek key patterns are part of the new identity for the main lobby.

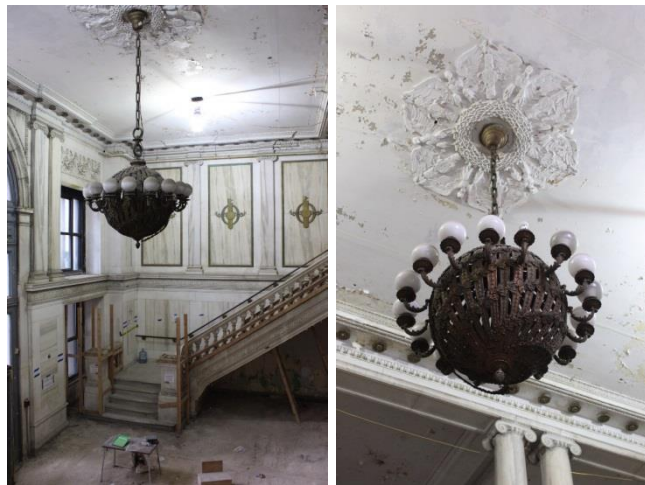
Walking to the east takes residents into the banking hall, soon to be a banquet space. It is a two-story room with a huge opened bank vault on the southern end, with large heavy doors with most of the gears still in great condition, showing no hint of dust or time. A small staircase goes to the second floor walkway, lodged in between the outer wall and interior Corinthian columns holding up the coffered ceiling, which are mostly untouched since renovations began.

Looking even closer at the ceiling, there are eight gold-painted light bulbs in each vertex of the octagonal-shaped coffered panels, once again surrounded by the Greek key pattern first seen in the main lobby along the sides of the staircases and even the inside of the bank vault doors. Most, if not all, of the original interior marble walls and columns were painted over at some point in the building's lifetime. The paint has been peeling off for many years, but will be permanently removed to showcase the underlying light and dark colored marble.

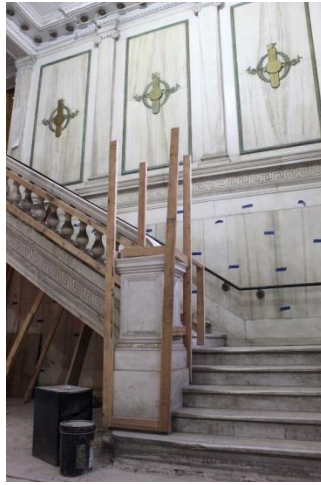
Moving higher up in the building shows how the window patterns begin to change from rectangular panels to large arched windows towards the upper floors, each providing a unique visual experience. We also got to see the fire staircases in the center of the building, left untouched, which retain the old and highly detailed balusters. The stairs themselves easily spread the width of three people across, uncommonly wide for their time period. During the final descent down the exterior elevator, a closer look at the facade reveals that each floor has a different set and pattern of stone and ornamentation. This is seen in the pediments, keystones with different faces, cornices, and columns surrounding the windows and corners that can hardly be seen from street level.

When complete, there will be 20,000 square feet of amenities including a 24/7 concierge service, a gymnasium with an underground 75-foot swimming pool with steam room, sauna and hot tub, a storage and media room, a theater, a wine cellar with a private dining room surrounded by dark wood paneling, children's playroom designed with wooden touches on the walls and ceilings combined and a soft color palette, and an outdoor rooftop space with cabanas, dining spaces with landscaping and garden spaces.

Completion of the entire project is expected sometime in the latter half of 2019.



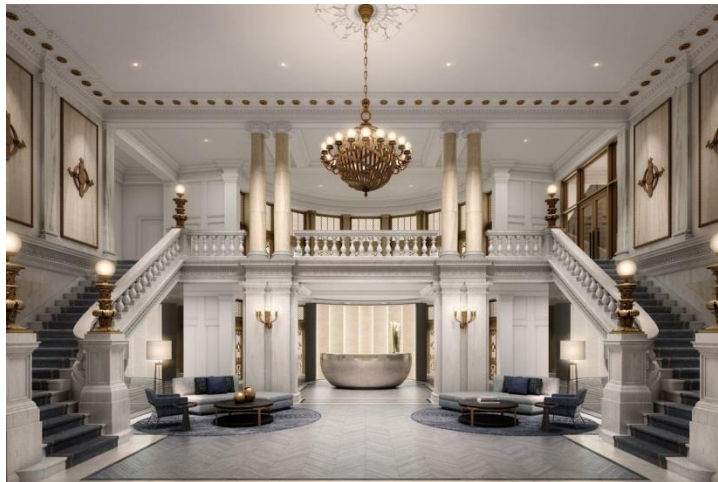
The chandelier and staircase in the main lobby along Leonard Street. The main lobby chandelier which will be kept and restored.



One of the two staircases in the main lobby.



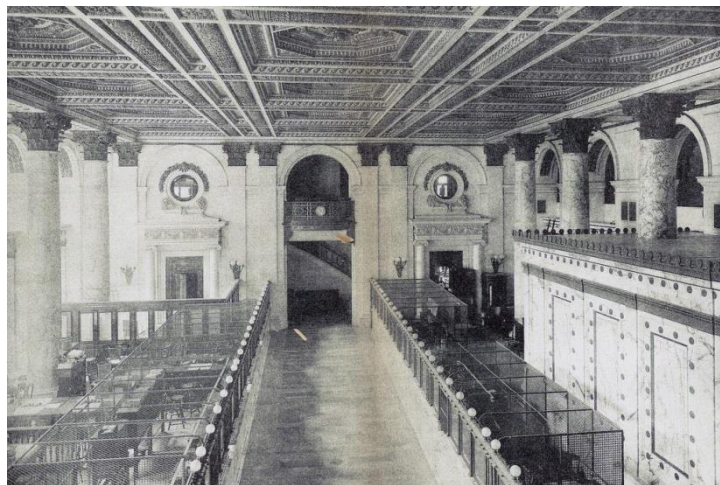
A closer look at the Greek key pattern and marble throughout the main lobby.



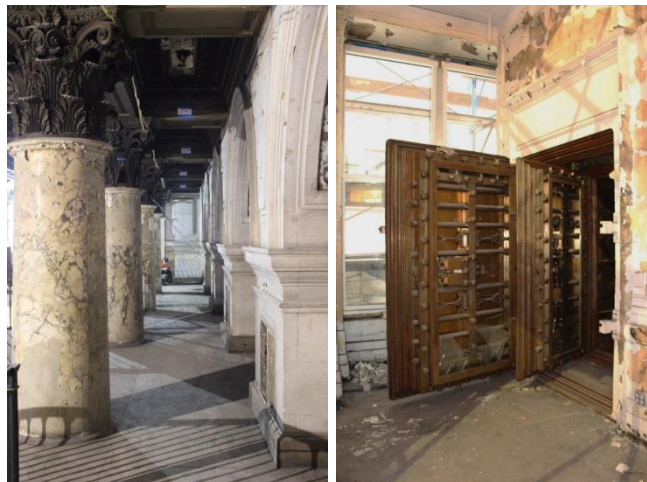
The main lobby when completed. Rendering by DBOX



Standing on the second floor walkway that actually goes above the bank vault ceiling in the foreground.



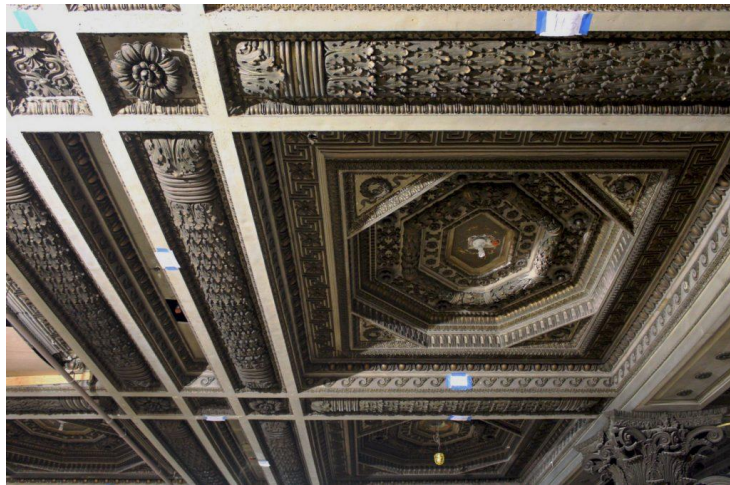
The banking hall in 1903 looking east before the addition of the second floor walkway. Photo from the New York Office for Metropolitan History



Looking down the row of columns from the second floor. The eastern side of the bank vault, which is actually comprised of two doors to get to the inside.



A close-up of the coffered ceiling details and Corinthian columns.



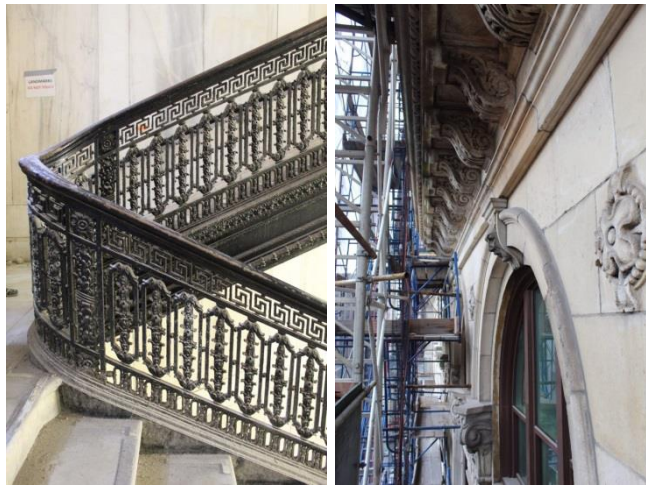
Another shot of the ceiling.



Rendering of the stairs in the renovated banking hall at 346 Broadway



The original brick work surrounding the arch windows on the upper floors of the building.



The dark metal balusters, with the Greek key pattern once again, and marble stairs covered in dust. The entire staircase, including the marble walls, is landmarked (see the sign on the wall).