

**The New York Landmarks Conservancy  
Lucy G. Moses Preservation Awards  
Submittal**



**Rod Rodgers and Duo Multicultural Arts Center  
62 East 4th Street  
New York, New York**

**Exterior Restoration**

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## An Unconventional East Village Landmark Restored

Home to both the Rod Rodgers Dance Company and the DUO Multicultural Arts Center (DMAC), 62 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street is a 5-story building which stands between Second Avenue and the Bowery.

The building has a striking facade which includes large French windows on the second and third floors, unusual classical detailing, and a circular iron fire escape stairway leading down from a loggia on the fourth floor, screened from the outside by perforated iron mesh. Behind this façade, 62 East 4<sup>th</sup> has had a long and colorful history, very appropriate to its location in the city's only Cultural District.

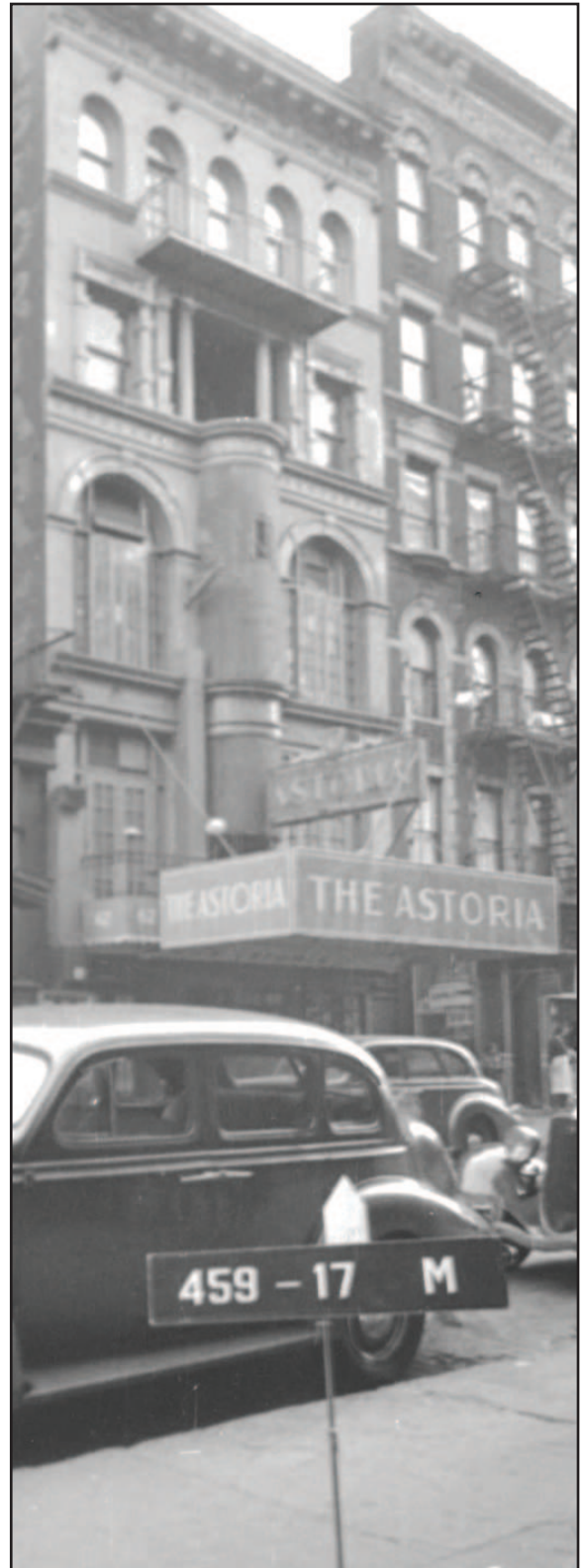
This unique building was built by Victor Eckstein, who ran a restaurant at 64 East Fourth Street and lived in a house at 62 East Fourth. In 1889, to replace his house, Eckstein had the architect Max Schroff design a combination structure with a restaurant on the basement and first floors, meeting rooms on the second and third floors, and living quarters for Eckstein on the fourth and fifth floors. The 1890 census shows Eckstein, his wife, Josephine, and their six children in occupancy.

Because of requirements at the Department of Buildings, Schroff had to provide a fire escape for the Ecksteins, so he designed a circular iron stairway leading down from a loggia on the fourth floor, screened from the outside by perforated basketweave iron mesh. The front fire escape was later succeeded by a larger conventional fire escape on the rear of the building.

In 1903 Eckstein sold the building, and by the 1910's it was described in building applications as Astoria Hall. The facility hosted meetings by John Philip Sousa as he established the first musicians union in New York City as well as early International Ladies Garment Workers Union organizational meetings. East 4th Street was at the center of social activism at the turn of the century, and this was an extremely vibrant block, filled with meeting halls and social clubs to service the immigrant community.

In the 1930's, the ballroom where these meetings were held was converted into a theater which continues in operation. A stage and proscenium were added, the murals from the original construction remained. It was used by many Yiddish theater companies of the time, and later housed a television studio where many early TV shows were filmed.

In 1969, Andy Warhol rented the 150-seat Fortune Theater (as it was called then) at 62 East Fourth Street, and re-christend it "Andy Warhol's Theater: Boys to Adore Galore." In the early seventies, it hosted productions featuring three legendary Warhol



*Tax Photo of 62 E. 4th St. dated 1948*

Superstars: Jackie Curtis, Holly Woodlawn and Candy Darling. In the midst of one of these productions, Francis Ford Coppola rented the theater and shot the famous operetta scene from *Godfather 2*.

The building is now owned by the city and managed by the Fourth Arts Block (FAB), which was honored with the 2011 Village Award by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation. The Rod Rodgers Dance Company Studios leases the basement and first floor for rehearsal spaces and classes, and performs elsewhere. The Duo Theater, a Latino group specializing in musicals, has the second and third floors.

Prior to the exterior renovation completed in 2011, the dance company completed a \$495,000 project rebuilding their two floors. However the exterior remained severely delapidated, with peeling paint, rotting and boarded up windows, and a missing cornice.

The recently unveiled façade restoration of 62 East Fourth Street was financed by New York City and involved the recreation of the cornice and the balcony railings, replacement and restoration of the windows, and analysis of paint in order to match the historic color. The roof was also replaced and in the process deteriorated wood beams were discovered; they were either replaced or reinforced. Text accompanying the photos on subsequent pages details some of the highlights of the renovation project.

Now this once shabby façade is once again a point of pride for the block and its tenants, and 62 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street has emerged with a fresh face as it continues its role as a vital contributor to the cultural life for which the East Village remains known around the world.

*Sources: New York Times; Duo Theater website; The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation website; Gothamist website*

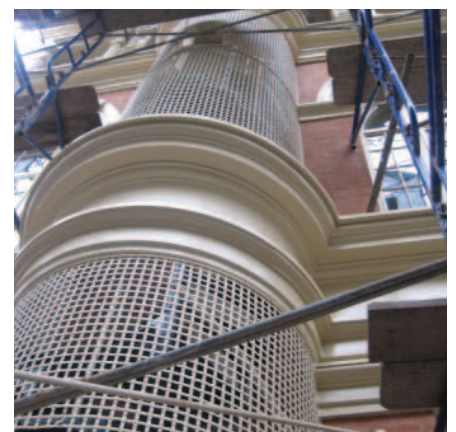




## Front Spiral Staircase and Rear Fire Escape

It was discovered that the steel supporting the circular iron fire escape stairway on the front facade of the building was extremely deteriorated. The entire stairway was shored up to allow for replacement of the steel. Restoration of the staircase also involved cast iron and steel repairs to cracked and missing sections, though nearly all of the original fabrication was retained. The deteriorated rear fire escape was replaced with a new steel stair. Paint analysis guided the final coating of the staircase and lattice cage, which were meticulously scraped of all existing rust.

*Top, left and right; bottom, left: Spiral stair and lattice cage before restoration. Bottom, center and right: Spiral stair and lattice cage after restoration.*



## Sheet Metal Restoration and Cornice Recreation

The cornice missing from the top of the building was re-designed using a tax photo from 1948 (which appears on the first page of narrative above). All ornamental steel bandcores were repaired or replaced when not salvageable. Color matching was done for all the paint used on the restored and replaced sheet metal work. The ornamental detailing on the stamped metal lintel above the columns on the fourth floor loggia was removed, cleaned and reinstalled on a new sheet-metal backup.

*Top, left: Ornamental sheet metal before restoration. Top, right: Ornamental sheet metal, after restoration. Bottom, left: Lintel above 4th floor columns, before restoration. Bottom, center: Lintel above 4th floor columns, after restoration. Bottom, right: New cornice installed.*





## Masonry

The project involved stripping multiple layers of paint and coating from the brick walls. Deteriorated arches were rebuilt, defective masonry was replaced and abandoned elements were removed. Marquee boards were built into the masonry on the ground floor. Mockups were done as part of the process of re-finishing the brick masonry to achieve the best possible brick and mortar match.

*Top, left; bottom, right and left: Brick wall before restoration. Top, right: After restoration.*





## Windows

The French windows on the second floor are kalamein windows, comprising a core of wood covered with an exterior layer of metal for weather protection – this was also an early form of fire-proofing. For these windows sheet metal was repaired, and some glass was either reset or replaced. The remainder of the front facade windows were replaced with aluminum, the side and rear facade windows were originally steel or wood and were replaced with steel windows. The third floor windows had been removed and boarded over. Their design was recreated from photos and evidence on site.

*Top, left: Windows before restoration. Bottom, left: Fifth-floor arched windows during restoration. Top and bottom, right: New windows installed.*

