

TENTH STREET

TENTH STREET Between Eighth Avenue & Prospect Park West

This almost unaltered residential block presents an interesting variety and has its own distinctive character, derived from the overall aspect of many short rows with flush fronts, punctuated only here and there by rows or houses with two-story bays. High basements and L-shaped stoops characterize many of the houses. Some extraordinary yard railings on the south side of the street lend interest as does the wide variety of architectural detail. Certain of these houses retain their original paving blocks in the sidewalk, adding character to the street.

SOUTH SIDE (Nos. 642-708)

(The three residences and the corner apartment house on Eighth Avenue, to the west of No. 642, are all outside of the Historic District.)

No. 642. This distinctive two-story brownstone house, approached by an L-shaped stoop, was built by owner-builder Thomas Brown in 1895 and was designed by Manhattan architect Paul F. Higgs. It is a bold statement of the Romanesque Revival. With its full-height, three-sided bay, it displays a combination of stone textures: rough-faced verticals between the windows and smooth-faced horizontals above and below them. The doorway with its three-light transom has some interesting carved detail, and the three bands of billet molding at the roof cornice are unusual, but most expressive of the style. The L-shaped stoop of brownstone, with its smooth-faced perforated wing-walls, displays some handsome foliate ornament.

Nos. 644-652. These five houses were built in 1887-88 by owner-builder Thomas Brown. Brooklyn architect Charles Werner designed them. Here, varying design features are evident above the rather uniform first and second floors: No. 644 has a mansard roof with pedimented dormer windows; No. 646 has always had a full third story, quite similar to the floors below; No. 648 has a full third floor with arched windows and a stepped gable, seemingly of later date; Nos. 650-652 are twins, with dentiled cornices and dentiled triangular pediments set above the two right-hand windows, and with low rectangular windows cut in the fascia boards. The handsome cast iron railings display a wealth of foliate forms set in gothic arches, and this design continues east to No. 672.

Nos. 654-664 is a row of six brownstone houses, built by owner-builder William Brown, and designed by Brooklyn architect W. M. Coots in 1887. These two and one-half story houses are unified in design and are treated in an unusual manner at the top floor level. The rough-faced stonework of the basement and of the window lintels, contrasting with the smooth walls, is somewhat similar to that of the houses to the west. The cornice slab over the doorway, with simulated balcony above it, is supported on high grooved brackets. The unusual feature of this row is the most unconventional top half-story, where a mini-balustrade takes the place

of a cornice, while low attic windows piercing the fascia have striking sunburst panels between them. A higher window at the center is crowned by a dentiled pediment, the ends of which meet the top of the balustrade. The pediment is crowned by an acroteria motif. A full top story, with stepped parapet, was a later addition at No. 654.

Nos. 666-672. These four brownstone houses were also designed by Brooklyn architect W. M. Coots for owner-builder William Brown, but one year later, in 1888. They differ from his row to the west only in being three stories high and in having full top stories which are quite similar to the floors below. Their dignified rectangularity is enhanced principally by the foliate yard railings and by the bracketed roof cornices which are broken slightly forward on the left side to signalize the doorways below them. Basement entrances have been provided at Nos. 666 and 670.

No. 674, located almost at the center of the blockfront, is a three-story individual townhouse built in 1894 for John Thatcher and designed for him by the well-known Manhattan architect William B. Tubby. With its two-story, three-sided bay, it interrupts and contrasts with the flush-faced fronts of the rows on either side of it. A rather severe example of neo-French Renaissance architecture, it represents a great contrast to Tubby's rather picturesque Romanesque Revival work on Lincoln Place off Eighth Avenue. Limestone extends to the second story window-sill, and brick is used for the top two floors. The high, narrow windows of the two-story bay accent its verticality. The stone transom bars of the parlor floor windows and doorway, the paneled pilasters flanking the main entrance, and the second floor arched window keyed to the brickwork, are indicative of the style, although the roof cornice with its dentils and console brackets is more nearly classical in character. A high L-shaped stoop, with stone scrolls at the bottom, further enhances the individual character of this house.

Nos. 676-682. These four houses, built in 1888, are perfect examples of the neo-Grec style. They were designed by Brooklyn architect J.D. Reynolds and were built by owner-builders J. F. Ransom and P. S. Stevens. The heavy stone lintels with incised ornament over the main doorways, and the similar but smaller ones over the windows at first and second floors, are designed in pedimental form and all have the characteristic Greek "ears". Crowning these two and one-half story houses are bold cornices with low windows just beneath them between the deep, paired brackets. No. 676 has had the attic floor raised to create a full third story. The overall effect of the houses is complemented by their original wrought iron yard railings, with curvilinear and foliate forms.

Nos. 684-690. These four houses, built before 1890, form an effective group. The two center houses display high triangular pediments, while the eastern house, with pedimented dormer, has a subordinate character. The westernmost house, which has had a full-height top floor added, was presumably once similar to the easternmost creating a symmetrical group. These brownstones are Romanesque Revival in style, with rough-faced lintels and impost blocks at the first floors. They have corbel blocks supporting the window sills at the second floors. The original stained glass transoms over door and window remain at No. 686. High stoops with wrought iron railings approach the front doors in one straight run, and the handsome yard railings repeat the pointed arch pattern found in the western half of the blockfront.

Nos. 692-696. These three brownstone houses are perfect examples of a transitional style. Neo-Classical in their smooth-faced stonework, they are nevertheless replete with Romanesque Revival carved ornament, done in a restrained manner and indicative of their date, 1888. They were built for Thomas Brown, the principal developer of this street, and were designed by the noted Brooklyn architectural firm of Parfitt Brothers. Three stories high, they form a fine terminal accent for this blockfront; their three-sided, two-story bays contrast with the flush-faced rows of houses to the west. The sheetmetal roof cornices, with their garlands and tassels, are neo-Classical in detail, while the yard railings, handrailings and newel posts at the stoops continue the pointed arch foliate pattern of the houses to the west.

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No. 698-708. This large four-story brick apartment house, with towers at the corners and an entrance on 10th Street, is described under No. 152 Prospect Park West.

NORTH SIDE (Nos. 631-693)

Nos. 631-641. The four low Romanesque Revival townhouses and the high adjoining neo-Classical corner house, although different in appearance, were all begun in 1894 by owner-builder Thomas Brown, the principal developer of this street. These houses were designed by architect Paul Higgs. No. 631-633, the three-story corner house on Eighth Avenue, has a smooth stone facade with a full-height, three-sided bay facing Tenth Street; an L-shaped stoop leads up to the front door. The Eighth Avenue side is of brick and has another full-height three-sided bay at the rear. The heavy roof cornice, carried on console brackets, extends along both of these sides. The only notable ornament is to be found in the carved blocks supporting a small horizontal cornice at the head of the parlor floor windows facing Tenth Street. The four Romanesque Revival houses adjoining No. 631-633 to the east are two and one-half stories high. They have arched openings at the first floors and, in alternate houses, also at the second floors. The low attic floors have small square windows set in the fascias of the roof cornices. For variety, Nos. 635 and 639 each have a pair of tiny arched windows in the fascia. Handsome ornamental panels, above dentiled string courses, separate the attic windows at Nos. 637 and 641.

Nos. 643-649 is a row of four late Romanesque Revival houses, built in the early 1890s. They are all approached by L-shaped stoops with solid masonry wing-walls and have an alternating ABAB design pattern. The "A" houses, Nos. 643 and 647, have square-headed windows at the top floors; the "B" houses have arched windows at the top floors and low arches above paired windows to the left of the first floor arched entrances; semi-engaged colonettes fill the wall spaces beneath the springs of the arches. All the houses have separate but similar cornices, with small closely spaced corbels. The principal ornament is to be found in panels under the first floor windows and in the checkerboard bandcourses beneath the windows of the upper floors.

Nos. 651-661. These six houses were built in 1890 by owner-builder Thomas Brown, with Brooklyn architect W.M. Coots as designer. They use the same cornices as the houses to the west, and, like them, are late Romanesque Revival in style. There is an underlying symmetry in this row of three-story brownstones, which, except for detail, follows a basically ABAABA pattern. The "A" houses have square-headed openings and smooth-faced walls. The "B" houses have arched parlor floor windows and also have arched doorways with deep keystones, which support corbeled shelves serving as extensions to the sills of the second floor windows. Above the spring of the first floor arched openings at the "B" houses, a system of narrow, rough-faced bandcourses alternates with the smooth stonework and lends considerable texture and interest to these openings. The houses are all approached by high L-shaped stoops with low wrought iron handrailings.

Nos. 663-667. These three brownstone houses were also built by owner-builder Thomas Brown, but in 1889. Very similar to the rows to the east, they are three stories high and introduce two-story three-sided bays which contrast with the flush-fronted rows to the west. They are transitional in style, displaying Romanesque Revival elements of design, such as checkerboard panels beneath the parlor floor windows, rough-faced voussoirs above them and iron crestings at the tops of the bays. Classical elements include the pediments over the doorways, which are linked visually with the fluted corbels at the sills of the windows above them, and the swags and dentils at the friezes of the roof cornices.

Nos. 669-681. These seven three-story houses are quite similar to Nos. 663-667, with the exception of certain minor details. They were also begun in 1889 and were constructed by owner-builder Thomas Brown, who retained the Manhattan architectural firm of Higgs & Rooke to design this row. Here, the two-story, three-sided bays are also crowned by iron crestings, but the doorways have rough-faced

stone voussoirs with keystones in lieu of low pediments.

No. 683 is an individual three-story brownstone townhouse built by owner-builder James McLaren in 1896. Like the rows to the west, it has a classical cornice with swags and a two-story, three-sided bay surmounted by iron cresting. The ornamented horizontal chamfers at the heads of the first and second floor windows are reminiscent of the rapidly fading Romanesque Revival, but the decorative entablature of the doorway, supported on columns, is classical. An interesting feature above this entablature is the small panel flanked by scrolls, which is surmounted by a cornice-slab serving as a sill for the window above. An L-shaped stoop with stone newel posts approaches this handsome doorway.

No. 685 is a vacant lot.

Nos. 687-693. This row of four three-story houses was built in 1888 by owner-builders Assip and Buckley and was designed by Brooklyn architect W.M. (). All four of these modified Romanesque Revival houses have two-story, three-sided bays, which terminate in metal cornices that extend across the width of each bay. Above this level, a picturesque roofline is created by mansard roofs, large dormer windows crowned by peaked roofs, and small single dormer windows above the doorways. The main entrances to these houses are flanked by delicate colonettes crowned by segmental arches above the doorways. The graceful curve of these arches is repeated above the central parlor floor windows of the bays, where arched decorative moldings create a rhythmic pattern. The original double doors, with small square panels in the lower half and stained glass transoms above, are still intact at three of the houses. Handsome L-shaped stoops, with striking lunettes in the center facing the street, lend character to these fine houses.

(The apartment house to the east of No. 693 is outside of the Historic District.)