

Historic Building Styles

Have you ever looked at old photographs and noticed how differently people were dressed than today? Similar to how clothing and fashion styles have popularity that come and go for a certain time period, so does the popularity for certain building designs. When buildings share many of the same common characteristics in appearance, details, decoration or the materials that are used, we say they share the same building style.

To help you figure out when a particular building was likely designed and built, this brochure contains a simple guide to each of the major historic styles that can be found in Tribeca. For each style, look at the checklist and photographs to identify typical traits. If the building you are examining shows many or all of these characteristics, it likely falls under that style.

Typically, the popularity of a particular style or design element lasted over a period of time, often more than 20 years. Although correctly figuring out the style a building belongs to may not lead you to an exact date of construction, it can help narrow down a time period, in which it was likely built.

Federal (1790-1835)

- *simple, without much decoration
- *two to three story brick façade
- *sloped roof with dormer windows
- *simple sills, lintels and cornices
- *splayed lintels
- *window or pediment above door



20 Harrison St.



2 White St.

Italianate (1840-1870)

- *very decorative
- *heavy, imposing, projecting cornice
- *façade material frequently marble
- *above windows, an ornate lintel, decoration or pediment (either rounded, pointed or both)
- *sometimes windows create patterns at alternate floors or windows
- *Corinthian columns
- *first floor was often cast iron, while upper floors were brick or stone
- *some facades entirely cast iron, often attempting to resemble stone



319 Broadway



Cary Building

Second Empire (1860-75)

- *Mansard roof, with steep sides
- *ornate cornice, possibly with pediment
- *window shape has flat arch
- *simple columns
- *pilasters/square quoins at sides



17 White St.



385 Broadway



385 Broadway (detail)

Neo-Grec (1865-1885)

- *window lintels that turn and wrap down around the window
- *incised details in metal or stone
- *thin ionic columns



190 Duane St.



190 Duane St. (detail)



15 Harrison (detail)

Gothic (1820-1860)

- *pointed arches
- *foliated ornament
- *"spiky" details
- *multicolored heavy stone trim
- *slender towers
- *gargoyles



62 Thomas St.

Beaux Arts (1880-1920)

- *heavy stone base
- *elaborate and decorative
- *balustrades
- *statues and swags
- *wrought iron balconies
- *full statues on façade



346 Broadway



346 Broadway (detail)



9 Murray St. (detail)

Romanesque (1870-1930)

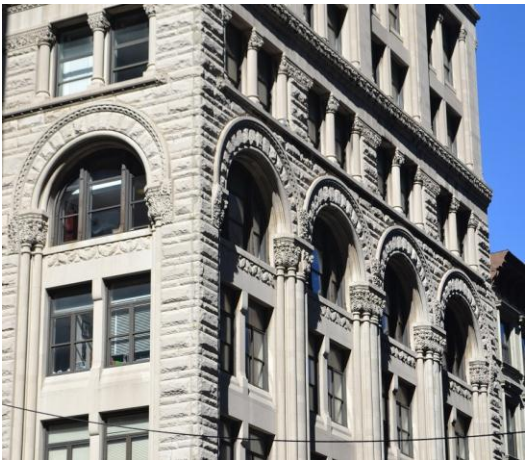
- *heaviness
- *rusticated stone blocks
- *deep windows and doorways
- *round arches for doors/windows (often massive)
- *brick and stone combo facades
- *polychromatic materials
- *intricate brick corbelling



1-9 Varick St.



165 Duane (detail)



305 Broadway

Art Deco (1920-1935)

- *vertical details (to emphasize height of skyscrapers)
- *futuristic, new form of art
- *intricate brickwork, (often with geometric patterns)
- *spandrel panels
- *limestone carvings (flat with sharp and pointed details)
- *stepped setbacks
- *geometric and symmetric forms
- *sharp angles



60 Hudson (detail)



Post Office (detail)



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8 Thomas St.



Woolworth Building (detail)