

Aguilar Branch of the New York Public Library

Individual Landmark

172 East 110th Street

Designation Date: June 25, 1996



*Aguilar Branch of the New York Public Library, February 1, 1991
Image courtesy of the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission*

The Aguilar Branch of the New York Public Library was initially built for the Aguilar Free Library Society, which was founded in 1886 as an independent library to provide circulating books for immigrant Jews. The society was named after Grace Aguilar (1816-1847), a popular British novelist and essayist of Sephardic Jewish descent, and this building serves as a reminder of the legacy of private philanthropic support of the city's libraries during the late 19th century.

The first Aguilar Free Library was built on this site in 1898-1899. In 1903, the library consolidated with the New York Public Library, and a year later, with funds from Andrew Carnegie, the building was extended at the rear, a third story was added, and the existing facade was enlarged and redesigned.

Both the first building and the extant Classical Revival structure were designed by the firm of Herts & Tallant, which is best known for its theater designs. The Aguilar Free Library is an impressive example of the firm's non-theater work. Part of the New York Public Library system for nearly 90 years, this branch, which was renovated in 1993-1996, and reopened in May 1996, continues to bear Grace Aguilar's name.

[Read the full NYC LPC designation report here.](#)