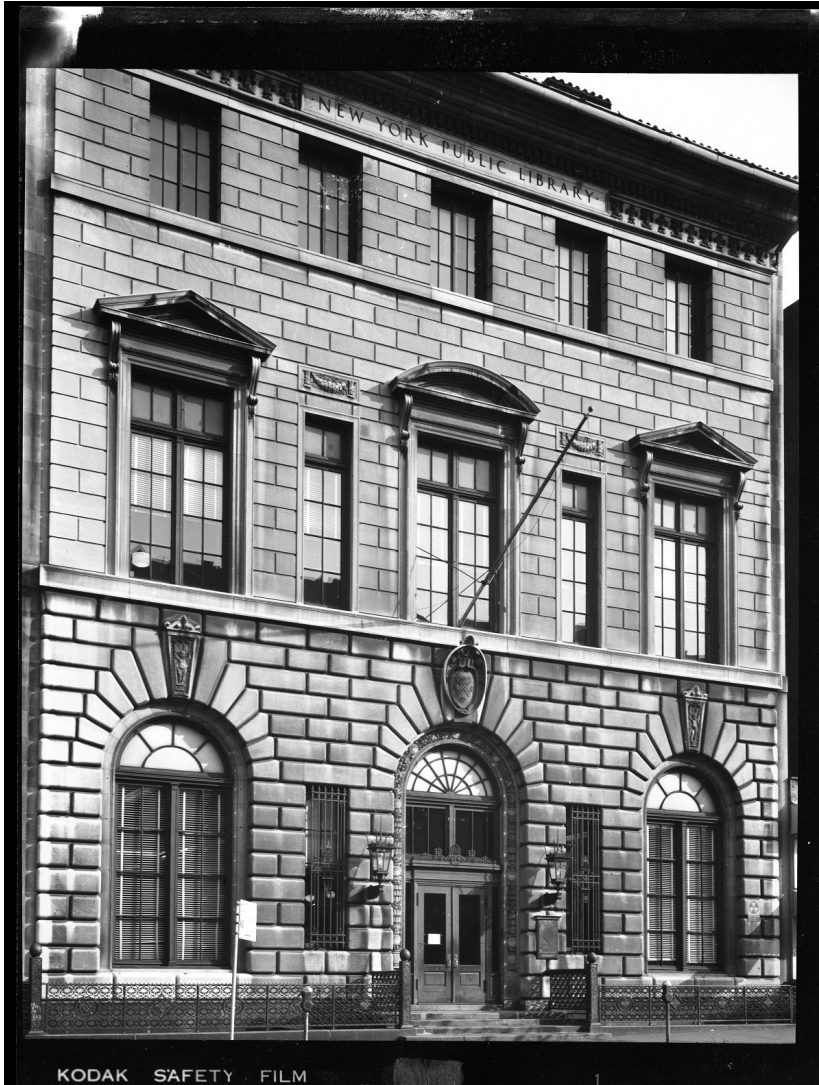


Hamilton Grange Branch of the New York Public Library

Individual Landmark

503-505 West 145th Street

Designation Date: March 31, 1970



Hamilton Grange Branch of the New York Public Library

Image courtesy of the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission

The Hamilton Grange Branch Library, built by McKim, Mead & White in 1905-1906, in the style of the Italian Renaissance, has the true character of a Florentine palazzo. This three-story stone building shows the sensitivity to proportion and relation of elements and scale, which is found in the best examples of the style. Order and unity pervade a composition, which in its major architectural elements is quite dynamic.

Characteristic of the style, the openings are the major elements. The openings are graded from the large, round arched door and windows of the first floor; to the rectangular, pedimented windows of the second story, to the smaller, evenly spaced windows of the third story. There are narrow windows between the larger ones, which also are aligned one above

the other, but they are graduated the opposite way, from smallest at the first story to widest at the third. These opposing gradations work together to set up the dominant up-and-down movement across the facade. Countering that movement is the fact that the heavier rustication at the first floor gives a solidity to the base and the fact that the second and third story windows are resting on band courses, which are emphatically horizontal.

The composition is unified by the all-over rustication and by the refined detail which is carried over the entire facade. The bronze lamps, the grit les on the small windows of the first story, the lace-patterned fence, are well balanced by the decorated panels above the small second story windows, and the frieze with fleur-de-lis ornaments.

The composition is symmetrically ordered. This is emphasized by the large escutcheon on the keystone above the central entrance, bearing the seal of the City of New York. It is further emphasized using an arched pediment over the central second floor window, instead of the triangular pediments which surmount the two windows at either side. The inscription, "New York Public Library," centered on the frieze completes the central emphasis at the cornice level.

This library was one of 65 branches built with funds contributed by Andrew Carnegie, as part of the program to develop a branch library circulating system. Built by one of New York's most prominent architectural firms, as many of these branches were, the Hamilton Grange Branch Library is a beautiful example of the grand style applied to a small building.

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