

## Hamilton Heights–Sugar Hill Northwest Historic District

Historic District

West 151st–155th Streets between St. Nicholas Place and Amsterdam Avenue

Designation Date: June 18, 2002



*828, 830 and 832 St. Nicholas Avenue (aka 31, 33 and 35 St. Nicholas Place). New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Northwest Historic District Designation Report. Photo by Carl Forster.*

The Hamilton Heights–Sugar Hill Northwest Historic District is located at the northwestern corner of the northern Manhattan area that, in the early 20th century, came to be known as Sugar Hill. This is at the southern portion of the area known from the late 1840s through the early 20th century as Washington Heights. The Historic District includes approximately 97 buildings and extends from the southwest corner of Convent Avenue and West 151st Street and the west side of St. Nicholas Avenue just south of West 151st Street, and north to the southwest corner of St. Nicholas Avenue and West 155th Street. Buildings in the historic district face Convent Avenue, St. Nicholas Avenue, St. Nicholas Place, and West 152nd, West 153rd, West 154th, and West 155th Streets.

The area of the Historic District remained largely rural until the last two decades of the 19th century. Beginning in 1881, speculative builders started erecting handsome residential structures in the historic district, most of which were single-family row houses. Between 1881 and 1898, 62 extant row houses were erected. These row houses were designed in several popular late 19th century styles, including Neo-Grec, Queen Anne, Neo-Renaissance, and

Beaux-Arts. They are faced with various materials, notably brick, brownstone, and limestone, and are trimmed with finely crafted terra cotta, cast iron, wrought iron, stained glass, and wood.

The row houses are the work of several local architects who specialized in residential design. Besides the row houses, there is one freestanding mansion in the district, dating from 1887. A few middle-class apartment buildings were also erected during the late 19th century, but most of the district's multiple dwellings date from the early 20th century. In total, there are 33 apartment houses in the district. These apartment houses are either five or six stories tall, and almost all have brick facades with limestone bases and terra cotta trim. Most were designed by architects who specialized in apartment housework. In addition, the district contains a store with residence above, and a masonic lodge, the only institutional building within the boundaries.

Since its initial development, the Historic District has been home to a wide variety of New Yorkers, both native and foreign-born, of varied ethnicity and races, and from various economic levels. By the 1930s, the area became known as "Sugar Hill," a neighborhood that attracted many of the city's most prestigious African American residents. Today, the Hamilton Heights-Sugar Hill Northwest Historic District remains an architecturally distinguished and culturally significant neighborhood.

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