

West 54th – West 56th Street Survey

General Overview

Address: 36 West 56th Street

Block: 1271 **Lot:** 58

Basic History of Building:

36 West 56th Street was designed by Bruce Price and constructed between 1881-82 on one of the few open lots left on the block. Drawings of a similar building appeared in *American Architect and Building News* in 1879, and it is possible that the client of No. 36 saw these illustrations and subsequently commissioned Price.¹ Montgomery Schuyler in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* singled out 36 West 56th Street as one of the few successful applications of the Queen Anne style in New York domestic architecture.²

It is interesting to note that No. 36 was built to nearly the entire depth of the lot (96 feet), whereas the earlier Neo-Grec rowhouses built a decade earlier were usually around 60 feet deep. Price therefore had to solve the problem of bringing enough air and light into the interior of his structure, and his solution perhaps presages the similar massing mandated in the 1901 Tenement House Act.³

A subsequent addition completely altered the ground floor for commercial use. But the façade retains much of Price's detail, including molded bricks with round bosses, transoms with small square window panes, an iron terrace railing, and a pedimented cornice.

¹ *American Architect and Building News*, (March 4, 1879), v. 6 n. 201, 156.

² Montgomery Schuyler, "Recent Building in New York," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, (Harper & Bros.: New York, September 1883) v. 67 n. 400, 564-566.

³ Richard Plunz, *A History of Housing in New York City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

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Field Survey Form

Address: 36 West 56th Street

Block: 1271 **Lot:** 58

Stories: 5

Primary Façade Material: Brick

Secondary Materials: Terra Cotta

Roof: Tin

Present Use: Retail (1st Floor); Residential (Upper Floors)

Style: Queen Anne

Other Information:



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Research Survey Form

Address: 36 West 56th Street

Block: 1271 **Lot:** 58 **NB No:** 1125-81 **Date:** 1881-1882

Number of Buildings: 1

Use: Retail (1st Floor); Residential (Upper Floors)

Size of Lot: 25 X 100.5

Size of Building: 25 X 92 **Stories:** 5 **Height:** 70

Façade Materials: Brick; Terra Cotta

Estimated Cost: \$40,000

Architect/Address: Bruce Price

Owner/Address: Washington Lee

Completion Date: 1881-1882

Other Information (including storefront alts, changing uses, etc.):

Harper's New Monthly, Sept. 1883, No. 67, pg. 564 has rendering of new building; DOB website doesn't list NB number, found in docket book index

For New Façade

Alt No: **Date:**

Use:

Architect/Address:

Owner/Address:

Sources

Address: 36 West 56th Street

Block: 1271 **Lot:** 58

Source (Original Building): Docket Book

Full Text:

1 bldg; S.S. 56th St, 500 West of 5th Ave

Owner: Washington Lee

Ar't: Bruce Price

\$40,000

Lot: 25x100; Building: 25x92x70 high; 5 sty Brick & Stone; Tin Roof; Gal. Iron Cornice