LORD & TAYLOR BUILDING
424-434 FIFTH AVENUE

This Italian Renaissance Revival style department store was built in 1913-1914 to the designs of the noted architectural firm Starrett & Van Vleck. Lord & Taylor was one of the last of the large, elegant dry-goods stores to locate on Fifth Avenue above 34th Street before the First World War, joining such fashionable stores as B.Altman & Co., Tiffany & Co. and Gorham (all designated New York City Landmarks) in making this section of Fifth Avenue a fashionable shopping district. The building is notable architecturally for its restrained but monumental character on this section of Fifth Avenue and its introduction of a new, more commercial, style of store design. The building, together with the W. & J. Sloane store (demolished), was among the first stores to dispense with ground floor colonnades and adopt a more commercial appearance. The building features a strongly projecting copper cornice, a two-story colonnade at the top of the building and a distinctive chamfered corner. *Architecture* magazine called the building "a gift and benefit" to the public.

Lord & Taylor was known for promoting modern design. For its significant exhibition "Exposition of Modern French Decorative Art" in 1928, Dorothy Shaver, then a director of fashion and decoration, hired Ely Jacques Kahn to design the show. In 1945, Ms. Shaver whose association with Lord & Taylor dated back to 1921, was appointed president, the first women to hold that position in a major department store.

Starrett & Van Vleck specialized in public buildings and schools but also designed some of New York City's most significant department stores including Saks Fifth Avenue (1922-1924, a designated New York City Landmark), the 1930 addition to Bloomingdale's, the Abraham and Strauss store (now Macy's) on Fulton Street in Brooklyn and the former Abercrombie and Fitch store on 45th Street and Madison Avenue (exterior demolished). The Lord & Taylor commission appears to be the firm's earliest important department store design.