

HISTORY OF THE NEW YORK LIFE BUILDING

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ingliz tili fani o'qituvchisi
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Annotation: On the same piece of land that once housed the grand first and second Madison Square Gardens, on Madison Avenue between 26th and 27th streets, rose the New York Life Building. Famed architect Cass Gilbert an early proponent of skyscrapers, was awarded the commission to design the building.

Keywords: New York, Cass Gilbert, Madison Square Gardens, William K. Vanderbilt, New York City.

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The New York Life Insurance Building sits on nearly two acres and has an exterior comprised of 440,000 cubic feet of Indiana limestone – the largest order of exterior stone, and more than twice the amount ever utilized in a single American building, in 1928. Gilbert exclusively used solid bronze to frame the building's 2,180 windows; he also used bronze on many interior decorations as well as on the building's large ornate doors. The building's recognizable pyramidal roof, originally plated in gold leaf, eventually eroded and was replaced with gold colored tile. Historian Miriam Berman

shares the results, “a roof that catches and reflects the sunlight by day and by night is one of the more easily recognized shapes on the city’s illuminated skyline.”

Towering over Madison Square Park, the New York Life Insurance Building is an important piece of the neighborhood’s historic architecture. Additionally New York Life, who are still headquartered in the building, has been an important partner of the Madison Square Park Conservancy since our very beginnings, and a leader in the revitalization of the neighborhood.

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History of Madison Square Garden

Once known as the Madison Square Depot, Madison Square Garden’s legacy began adjacent to Madison Square Park, located at the northeast corner of 26th Street and Madison Avenue. The first (1876-1889) and second (1890-1925) Madison Square Gardens hosted a crazy quilt of diverse activities: there were dog shows, cattle displays, political conventions, circuses, theater, opera, balls, religious revivals, and boxing matches. The first Madison Square Garden, owned by William K. Vanderbilt, was constantly abuzz with sporting events, as well as P. T. Barnum’s circus, which was brought to Madison Square Garden each year and is credited as keeping the financially inefficient building afloat. Unfortunately, the roofless and structurally unsound building was unable to host enough events to bring in necessary funds, leading to the building’s sale in 1887 and demolition in 1889.

The second Madison Square Garden, erected at the same location, had to be built in one year so as not to miss more than one season of shows. Working on a 24/7 schedule, one source reported that “at least one thousand men were at work at any given time” on the site (Berman, 73). Upon completion in 1890, the new Madison Square

Garden was once again New York City's epicenter of culture and large-scale events. The expenses of operating Madison Square Garden again grew too steep, resulting in the Garden being sold in 1908 with The New York Life Insurance Company securing a mortgage for the building. Remaining open for several more years, the Garden closed on May 25, 1925. The third Madison Square Garden opened that same year at 49th Street and Eighth Avenue. The Garden on Madison Square Park was demolished in 1926, and over the course of the next two years, the New York Life Insurance Building was built – and still stands today, as the beautifully gothic building adorned with a golden roof that can still be seen from Madison Square Park.

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