

**September 18, 2024**

**Landmarks Preservation Commission Testimony Before the New York City Council Subcommittee on Landmarks**

Good morning, Chair Hanks and Council Members. My name is Margaret Herman, Deputy Director of Research at the Landmarks Preservation Commission. Thank you for the opportunity to present our recent designation of the 1 Wall Street Banking Room Interior.

**1 Wall Street Banking Room Interior**

Completed in 1931, the banking room of 1 Wall Street was conceived by architect Ralph Walker and muralist Hildreth Meière as the impressive reception room and banking hall of the Irving Trust Company. This extraordinary, elaborately tiled space, known as the “Red Room” was the first of several interior collaborations between Meière and Walker. LPC’s designated interior landmarks are special spaces that must be “customarily open or accessible to the public”; the Commission has only designated 123 interior landmarks throughout its history.

At the public hearing on May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024, the building’s owner and Community Board 1 spoke in favor of the designation, as did representatives of the International Hildreth Meière Association, the Art Deco Society, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, and the Historic Districts Council. No one spoke in opposition to the designation.

1 Wall Street, a designated individual landmark, is located at the intersection of Broadway and Wall Street in the heart of Manhattan’s financial district.

The banking room occupies the north end of the first floor of the building. The landmark site is illustrated here, outlined in red.

The 1 Wall Street Building (originally Irving Trust Company Building, now known as The Bank of New York Building), was designated an individual landmark in 2001, and sensitively converted to residential and retail use in 2022. The stunning former Banking Hall interior is the building’s original reception space and remains incredibly intact.

Ralph Walker, the architect of 1 Wall Street, was a principal of Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker. Walker was one of New York’s most noteworthy designers of Art Deco high-rise buildings. Hildreth Meière was a highly talented and accomplished muralist proficient in a variety of mediums. Meière’s impressive body of work includes painted and mosaic murals in churches and synagogues throughout the country, as well as the rondels on the façade of Radio City Music Hall. After 1 Wall Street, Walker and Meière next collaborated on the AT&T Long Distance Building lobby and later on several buildings for other corporations.

Construction of 1 Wall Street began in 1929 and was completed in 1931. The decorative concept was developed by Walker, who engaged Meiere to work on the banking hall mural. Abstract designs were a

departure from Meiere's typically representative murals and mosaics. She collaborated with Perry Coke Smith to develop the color gradations and scale of the design.

The aim of the designers was to create a room that was "warm and inviting", contrasting with the cold marble of earlier banking halls. While there is a repeating motif throughout the room, its irregular shape means that each surface appears distinctive and unique. Each elevation was designated with an alphanumeric code, that was stamped on individual tiles to indicate their installation location.

The Irving Trust and Bank Company and its successor firms occupied the building and continued to use the banking room until 2014. As you can see in these photographs, the room has had several different configurations over time.

The banking room's undulating walls, and ceiling gleam with mosaic tile in warm colors that begin in red near the floor and fade upward to orange across the ceiling. These colored tiles are intertwined with gold patterns that create a striking verticality. The walls mimic the curved stone facades of the Art Deco skyscraper's exterior.

The current owners undertook a full restoration of the former banking hall. The space is now being converted to retail use by the French company Printemps and is expected to open to the public in 2025.

Representing the work of masters of their fields, the banking room of 1 Wall Street is a striking and rare example of an abstract mosaic interior by Meière and an elaborate stylistic departure from the typical stone-clad banking hall. Thank you.

September 18, 2024

**New York City Council Subcommittee on Landmarks,  
Public Sitings, and Dispositions**

**1 Wall Street Banking Room Interior**  
1 Wall Street, Manhattan

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# 1 Wall Street Banking Room Interior

**Address:** 1 Wall Street

**Borough of Manhattan**

**Tax Map Block 23 Lot 7501 (previously lot 7)  
in part**

**Built:** 1931

**Architect:** Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker

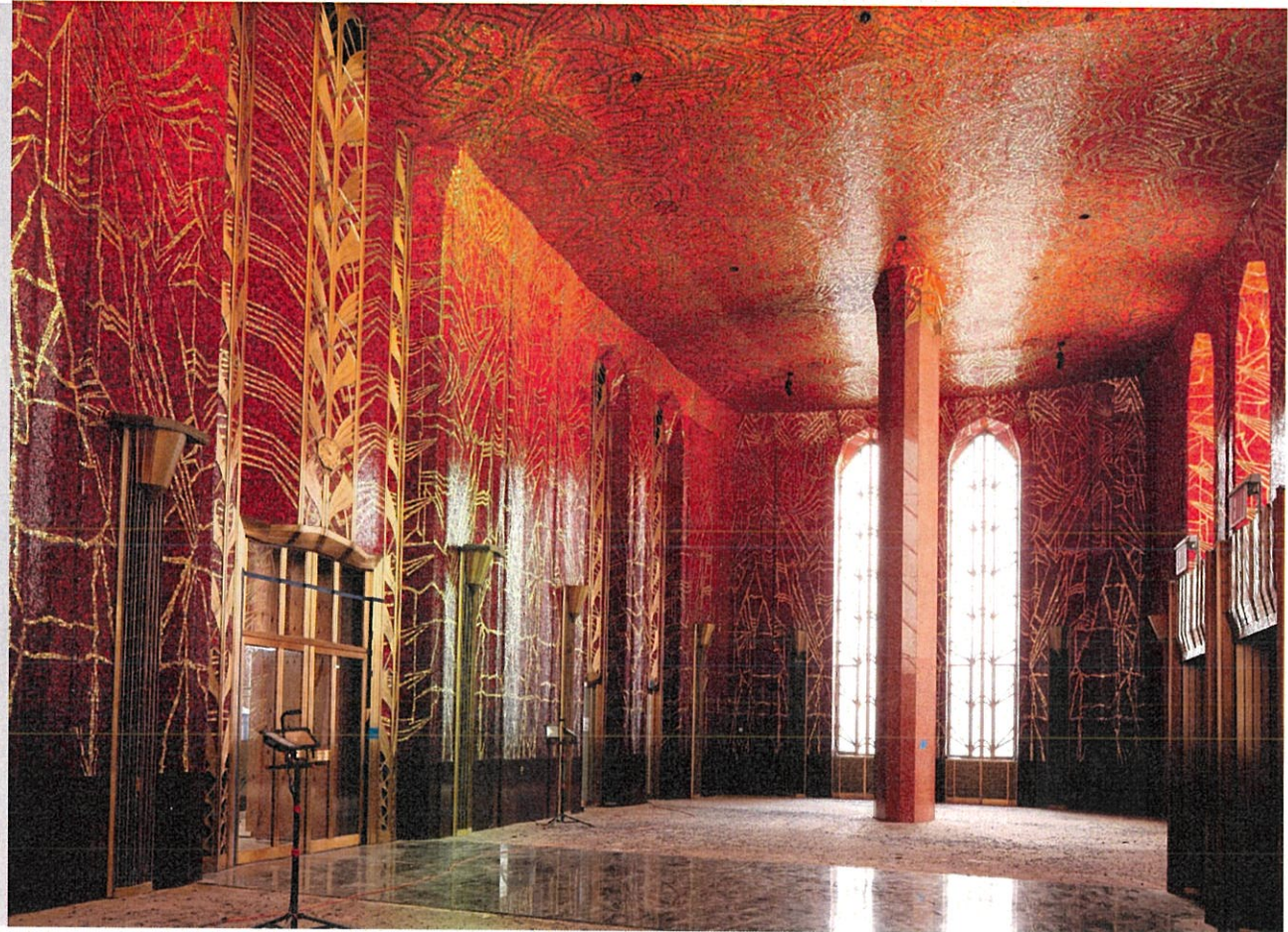
**Designers:** Perry Coke Smith and Hildreth Meière

**Style:** Art Deco

**Item Calendared:** December 19, 2023

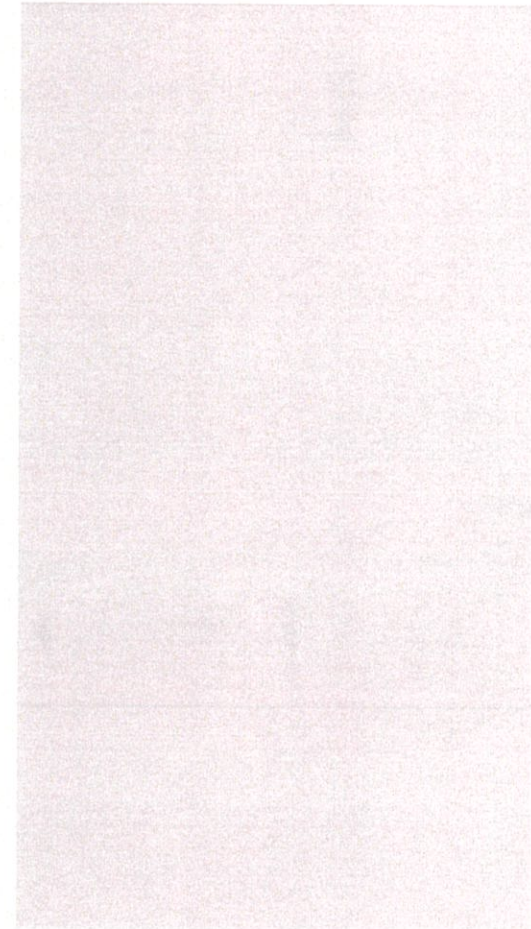
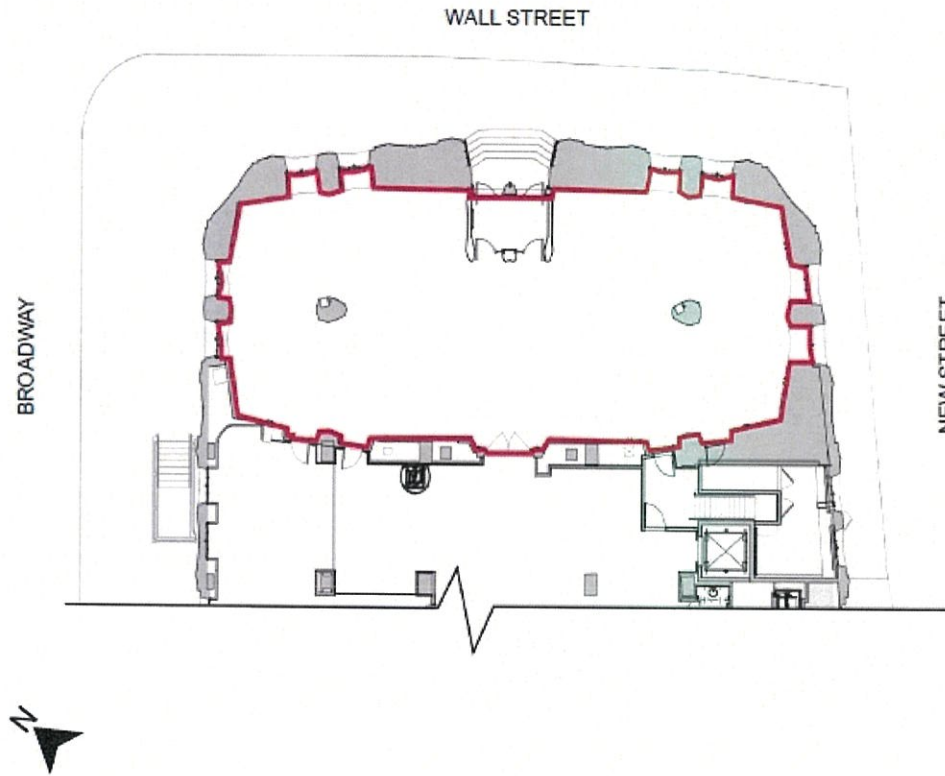
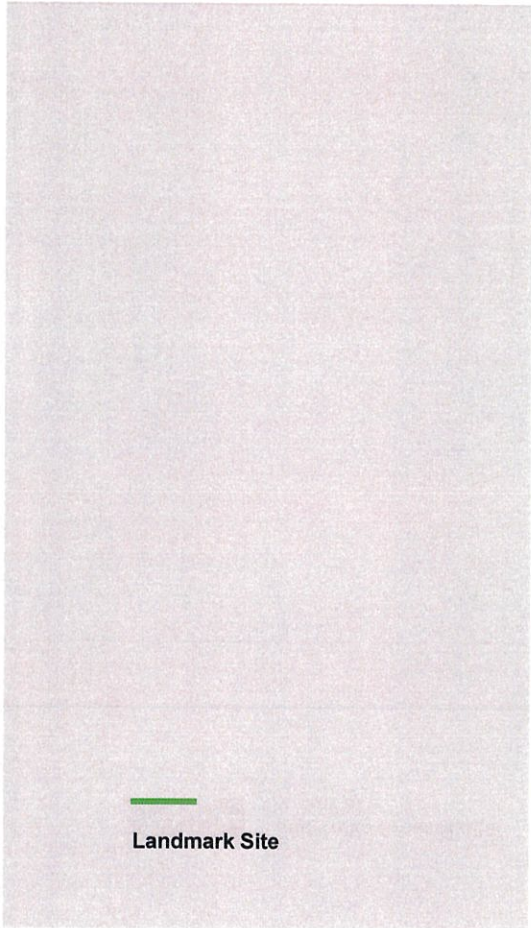
**Public Hearing:** May 14, 2024

**Designated:** June 25, 2024





**1 Wall Street Banking Room Interior**  
Designated June 25, 2024





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1 Wall Street, LPC



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1 Wall Street interior, International  
Hildreth Meière Association

**1 Wall Street Banking Room Interior**  
Designated June 25, 2024



Ralph Walker, Wikipedia



Hildreth Meière, International  
Hildreth Meière Association



AT&T Long Distance Building (1932),  
International Hildreth Meière Association





**Scaled cartoon for 1 Wall Street,**  
International Hildreth Meière Association



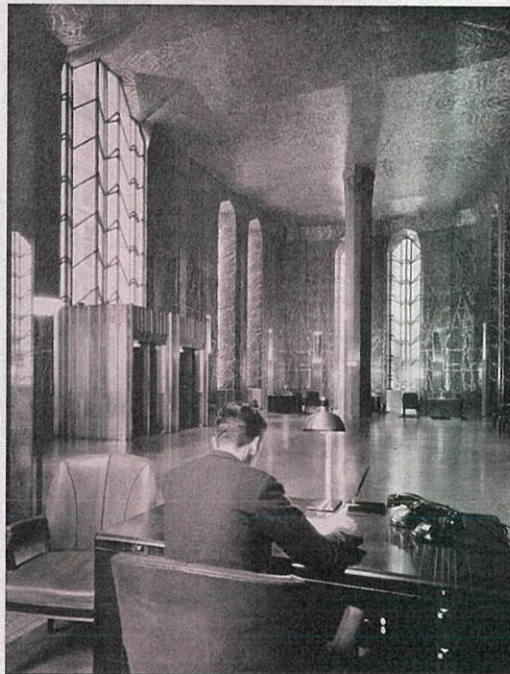
**Sample wall panel at factory,**  
International Hildreth Meière Association



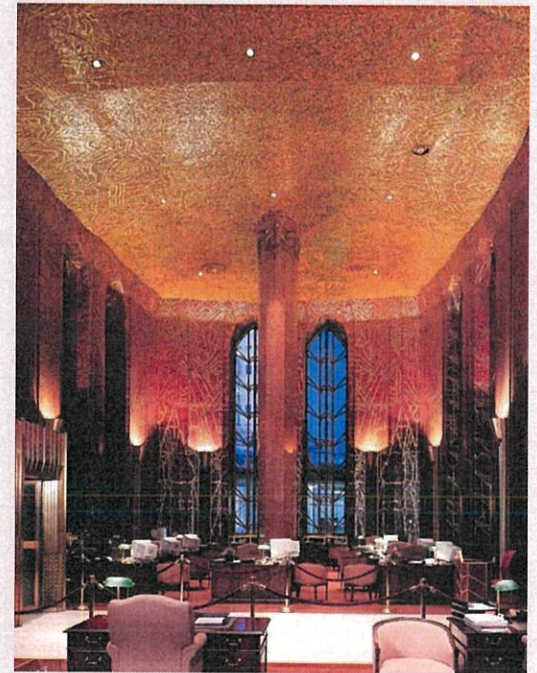
**Coded tile installed at 1 Wall Street interior, LPC**



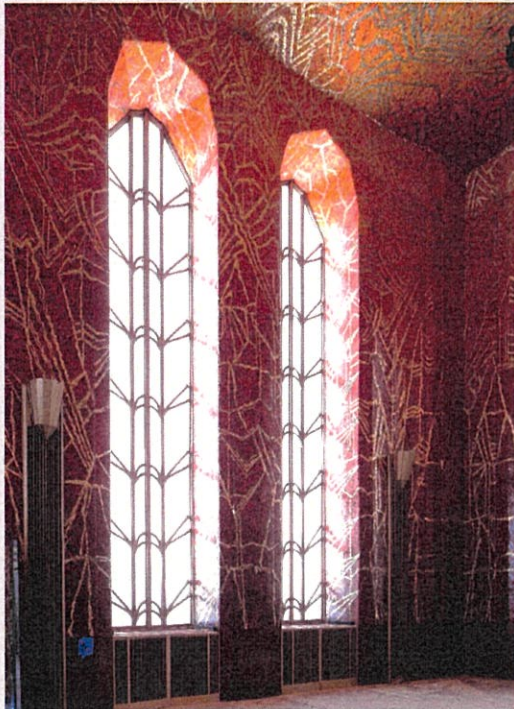
**1 Wall Street interior (1932),**  
Canadian Centre for Architecture



**1 Wall Street interior, Ralph**  
Walker Archives



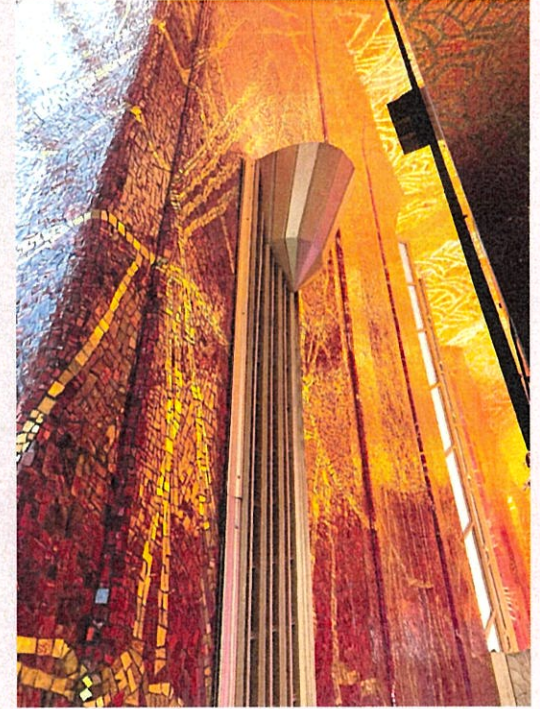
**1 Wall Street interior, JSTOR**



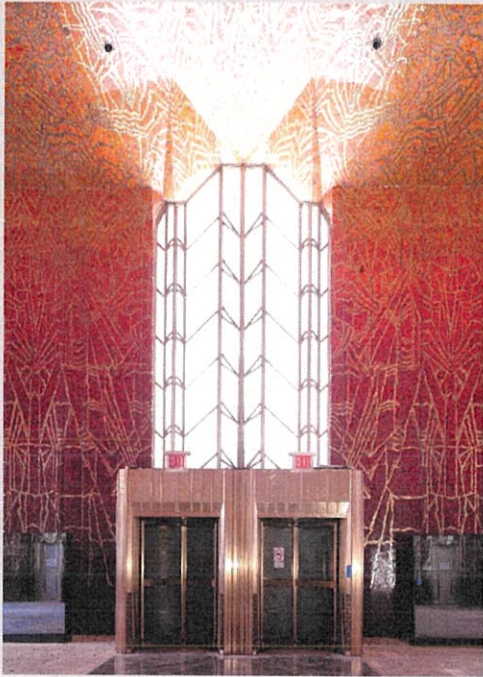
1 Wall Street interior, LPC



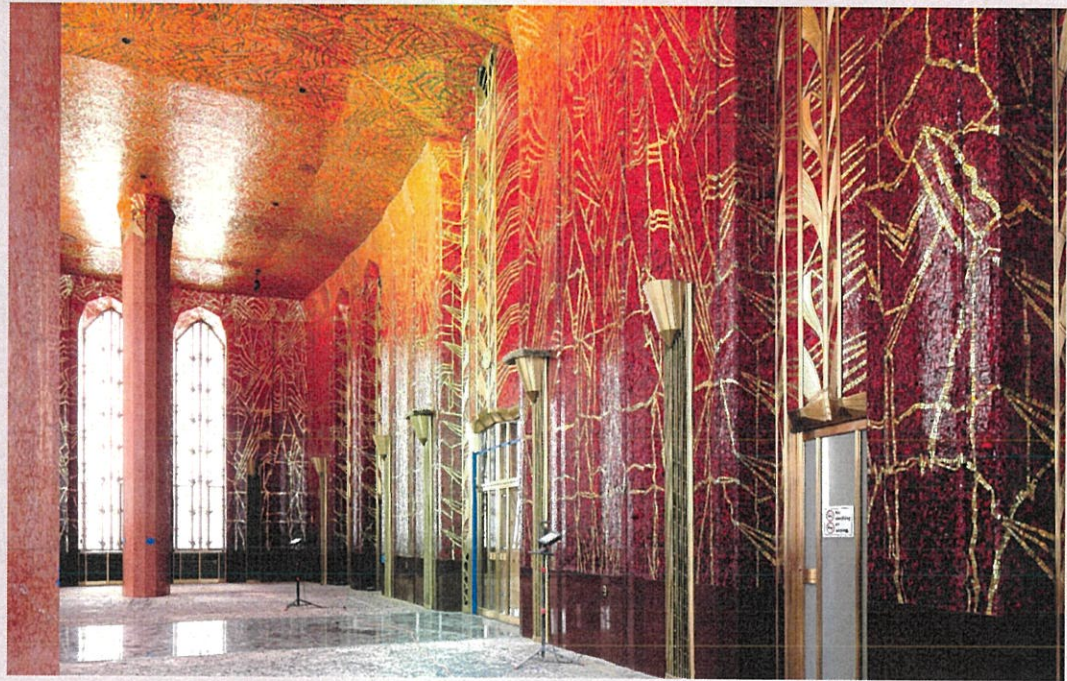
1 Wall Street interior, LPC



1 Wall Street interior, LPC



1 Wall Street interior, LPC



1 Wall Street interior, LPC

# 1 Wall Street Banking Room Interior



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

048

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor     in opposition

Date: 9/18/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: STEVEN THOMPSON

Address: 1 CENTRE

I represent: LPC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

048

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor     in opposition

Date: 9/18/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Margaret Herman

Address: 1 Centre St

I represent: Landmarks Preservation Comm.

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

