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Historic New York Ceilings Restored To Old New York Grandeur

By Heather Senison

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The lobby in 100 Barclay, decorated with 12 hand-painted murals with gold-leaf accents, is a designated interior landmark. WILLIAMS NEW YORK

Condo conversions are turning New York City's most treasured architectural gems into unique places for its residents to live.

Among the recent examples are a 1908 Beaux-Arts school on the Upper West Side and a three-story, 1899 firehouse in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, both transformed into luxury apartments.

In several restoration projects, the grandeur starts at the building entrances, evident from a glance up at their lobby ceilings. From gold leaf accents to celestial configurations, the canopies in some of the city's oldest buildings offer glimpses into the detail and craftsmanship of the past. Here are some of the Big Apple's most ornate ceilings currently receiving special attention:

The Belnord

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The Belnord, at 225 W. 86th St.DBOX

“Since 1908, The Belnord has been a prime example of elegant living on the Upper West Side, with numerous architectural elements that we are working to restore and reinforce to last another century,” said Thorsten Kiefer of HFZ Capital Group, the developer behind its renovation.



The ceiling over the building's gated, arched entrance is painted with neoclassical frescoes. OPEN HOUSE NEW YORK

Though just 12 stories tall, The Belnord, at 225 W. 86th St., is one of New York’s only apartment buildings that takes up a full city block. Among its most unique elements, along with an expansive 22,000-square-foot private courtyard, are the neoclassical frescoes painted on the ceiling over its arched and gated entrance.

“It’s a striking and important manifestation of what a resident or visitor can expect from the rest of the building,” Kiefer said of the ceiling, adding that his firm is “painstakingly restoring” the designs to their original glory.

One Hundred Barclay

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100 Barclay St .TY COLE

Constructed in 1927 as the headquarters for the New York Telephone company, One Hundred Barclay is one of the city's most prized structures leftover from the art deco era, being one of the first skyscrapers designed by architect Ralph Walker.

Another full-block structure, the top 22 floors of the 33-story building were recently co-developed into condos by Magnum Real Estate Group and the CIM Group.

Down on the ground floor, its landmarked lobby is decorated with bronze medallions set into a travertine stone floor with black geometric detailing. The vaulted ceiling, meanwhile, is adorned with 12 hand-painted murals, complete with gold-leaf accents, that honor the history of communication. They feature smoke signals, carrier pigeons and the early telephone.

One Wall Street



The 50-story skyscraper is being converted into condos with retail space beneath them .DBOX FOR MACKLOWE PROPERTIES

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At the bottom of Manhattan lies One Wall Street, another one of Walker's prized art deco creations.

The building was constructed in 1929 to house the Irving Trust Company and later served as the headquarters for the Bank Of New York.

The conversion of the skyscraper at the corner of Wall Street and Broadway into 55 stories of condos and retail was one of the biggest in Manhattan history, with Macklowe Properties reportedly paying more than \$1.6 billion to acquire it.



The glass tile ceiling in One Wall Street was designed in 1931 by muralist Hildreth Meière. DBOX FOR MACKLOWE PROPERTIES

The historic building features a dwarfing two-story lobby, which formerly served as the Banking Room. It was designed in 1931 by muralist Hildreth Meière, who covered its walls and ceiling in an oxblood, orange and gold glass tile mosaic.

Woolworth Building



The iconic structure was built in 1913. WILLIAMS NEW YORK

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Few buildings are more iconic of New York's lavish early twentieth-century era than the Woolworth Building, designed in 1913 by architect Cass Gilbert as a commission from retail magnate F. W. Woolworth.

Currently, the 58-story structure's top 30 floors are being redesigned into condos by French architect Thierry W. Despont. Down on the ground floor, its lobby is getting a makeover too.



The ceiling from F. W. Woolworth's 40th-floor office is being moved to its condo entrance lobby.
WILLIAMS NEW YORK

The original coffered ceiling that once hovered over Woolworth's personal office on the 40th floor is being restored and relocated to compliment the building's ornate, cruciform interior at the 2 Park Place entrance, which will be private for its condo residents.

"In creating The Woolworth Tower Residences, our team of artisans and designers paid homage to Frank Woolworth in a variety of ways by restoring many of the iconic Woolworth Building's original details," noted Alex Saltzman, a partner with the project's developer, Alchemy Properties. The firm brought in restoration professionals from Canada, who carefully cleaned each coffer with a cocktail of baby shampoo and seaweed, while reinforcing their backings with Kevlar, he added.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/heathersenison/2019/03/08/historic-new-york-ceilings-restored-to-old-new-york-grandeur/#760a8de57466>