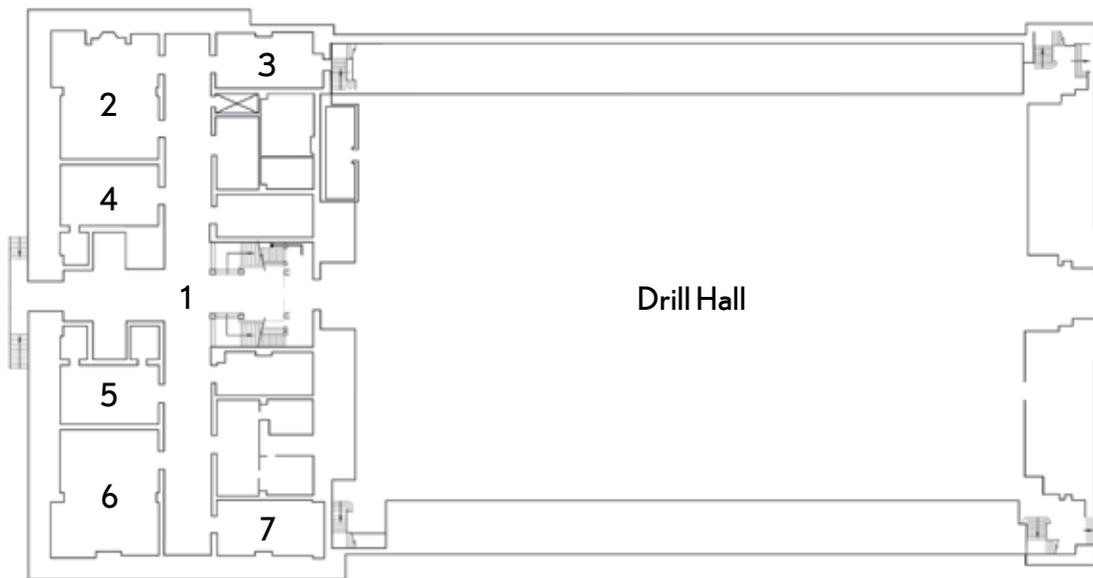


Park Avenue Armory Drill Hall and Interiors Guide

The Armory is one of America's finest landmarks, combining a rich social and military history with an extraordinary ensemble of 19th-century period rooms. The New York City Landmarks Commission has described the Park Avenue Armory's magnificent interiors, designed by masters of the American Aesthetic Movement, as **"the single most important collection of 19th-century interiors to survive intact in one building,"** while the expansive drill hall is considered an important monument in the history of American engineering. Completed in 1881, the Armory served as a military, cultural and social center for the Regiment as well as New York society of the Gilded Age.

The Wade Thompson Drill Hall, approximately 200 by 300 feet and one of the largest unobstructed interiors in New York City, is significant in the history of American engineering. It has the oldest extant "balloon shed" (a barrel vaulted roof supported on visible arch trusses or ribs) in America, and is considered one of the first buildings in the United States to incorporate this structural system. The room features eleven elliptical wrought iron arches, designed by consulting engineer Charles Macdonald (president of the Delaware Bridge Company, a subsidiary of the important iron-and-steel-producing Cooper, Hewitt & Co.). Over the last 130 years, the soaring hall has hosted a range of epic events including the inaugural May Music Festival in 1881 with an orchestra of 500 and a chorus of 1,200 conducted by Leopold Damrosch; a full Wagner program conducted by Theodore Thomas; a slew of fantastically themed balls (the Martian Ball, the Bovine Ball, the Commonwealth Society Ball attended by a young Queen Elizabeth II); the lying-in-state of Louis Armstrong; Merce Cunningham's "Events"; Luciano Pavarotti in a re-creation of Ancient Rome inside the hall designed by Valentino; and most recently, the extraordinary production of Zimmerman's opera *Die Soldaten*, where the audience moved on rails "through the music."



First Floor Reception Rooms

1. Hallways and Staircase: George C. Flint & Co. designed the entrance hall, the staircase and the corridors of the first and second floor in the Renaissance Revival style in 1880. The central corridor on the ground floor stretches 203 feet long from end to end and is 38 feet high. A massive wrought iron and oak split staircase with original bronze torchère by Mitchell, Vance & Co. at the base is in the center. Other chandeliers in the halls date from 1897 when the building was electrified.

2. Veterans Room: This and the Library next door are the only fully extant interiors by Louis C. Tiffany, Associated Artists in the world. They were designed in 1880 by Associated Artists, a cooperative firm of artists led by Tiffany working with Samuel Colman, Lockwood de Forest and Candace Wheeler with consulting architect Stanford White and artists George Yewell and Francis D. Millet. The Veterans Room has been described as “Greek, Moresque, and Celtic with a dash of the Egyptian, the Persian and the Japanese.”

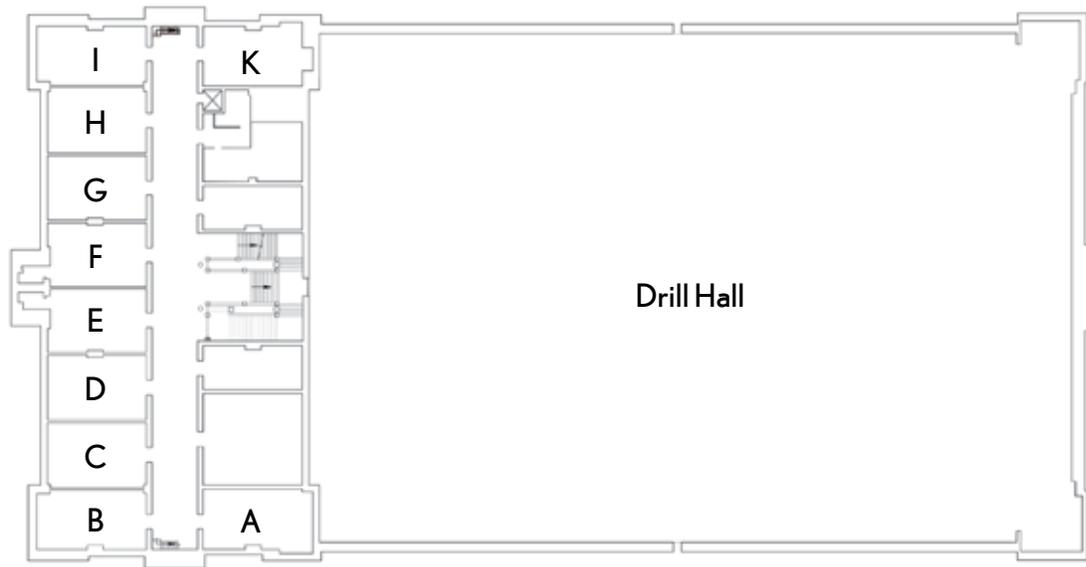
3. Field and Staff Room: Designed by Pottier & Stymus in the Renaissance Revival style. The room’s original floral and geometric stencilwork at the wainscoting and frieze has recently been revealed.

4. Library (now known as the Silver Room): The second room at the Armory designed by Louis C. Tiffany, Associated Artists with Stanford White. This room is largely thought to be White’s design except for the windows and lighting fixtures by Tiffany. It features a magnificent basketweave barrel vault originally painted salmon color with silvered discs.

5. Mary Divver Room (originally a ladies reception room): One of three rooms by Herter Brothers on the first floor, but the only one in which they did not design the woodwork (which was completed by Alexander Roux and Co.). The hearth is surrounded by Minton art tiles depicting Arthurian legends after Tennyson. The original Herter Brothers stencilwork was overpainted in the 20th century. The room was dedicated to Mary Divver, an orphan adopted by the Regiment in the 1850s.

6. Board of Officers Room: This is one of the few surviving Herter Brothers interiors in the country, but one of five in the Armory. Herter Brothers was a top cabinet-making and interior design firm in the Gilded Age and designed the Fifth Avenue mansion of William H. Vanderbilt (now demolished). This room still retains the original painted ceiling and magnificent mahogany woodwork although the walls were overpainted in a 1932 restoration. Water infiltration in the early 1990s has caused significant damage but the plaster has recently been stabilized.

7. Colonel’s Reception Room: Originally designed by Herter Brothers, this room was substantially redecorated in the 1930s and 40s, including extensive additions to the original French black walnut wainscoting and overpainting the original Pompeiian red walls and light blue ceiling. The room was further altered to accommodate two important portraits, one of George Washington by Rembrandt Peale and another of Colonel Lafayette presented by the French government.



Second Floor Rooms

Company A by George C. Flint & Co.: This room is fitted out in mahogany imported from Cuba and originally featured a pale blue ceiling and green walls. The current ceiling probably dates from 1897 when the building was electrified.

Company B by Albert Wagner, architect: Co. B features original mahogany woodwork but the ceiling was substantially altered in 1906 including copper leaf ceiling panels and Tiffany Studios lighting fixtures.

Company C by Herter Brothers: This remarkably intact room features the original painted ceiling panels and woodwork along with magnificent mace-shaped lighting fixtures installed in 1897.

Company D by Pottier & Stymus: Co. D features intricate carving on the mahogany lockers. In 1897, burlap with plaster ornament was installed over the original terra-cotta and blue stencils on the walls. Recent exposures beneath the layers have discovered the original decoration largely intact.

Company E by Pottier & Stymus: This room was radically altered in the 1890s by the complete replacement of the ceiling with a Tudor-style strapwork design and new wallpaper. However, the oak woodwork and the mantelpiece are largely unchanged.

Company F (original decorator unknown): This Renaissance Revival-style room features oak woodwork, an original ceiling and original plaques with the names of members who died in the Civil War.

Company G by Pottier & Stymus: This is the only company room at the Armory that retains original Mitchell Vance & Co. polished steel gas lights. The original wall stencils and ceiling decoration have been covered but still exist under the 1894 redecoration.

Company H by Herter Brothers: This room features an original ceiling, though the original Japanesque wallpaper has been replaced. New light fixtures and wrought-iron grill work over the door and windows were installed at the turn of the century.

Company I by Pottier & Stymus: The 1880 room is largely gone today except for the cabinetry and clock. The Company members redecorated as early as 1890 in the then-popular Art Nouveau style, replacing the ceiling, the wall surfaces, the mantle, and installing an elaborate new balcony railing and torchère.

Company K by Sidney Stratton: This is a rare surviving Queen Anne interior of 1880 by Company-member Sidney Stratton, a partner in McKim, Mead & White. Except for a later mantelpiece and chandeliers of the 1920s, the room is largely intact. The original wall decoration has been uncovered, revealing the early metallic stencils. The names of Company K members, including Harrimans, Livingstons, Schermerhorns and other prominent New York families, are inscribed on the oak and mahogany locker doors.



History of the Interiors

The Armory was built by the National Guard's prestigious Seventh Regiment, the first militia to respond to President Lincoln's call for volunteers in 1861. Members of the "Seventh" included Van Rensselaers, Roosevelts, Stewarts, Livingstons, and Harrimans, many of whom hired the decorators from the Armory for their own elaborate city mansions and country palaces of the Gilded Age. Thus, the Reception Rooms on the first floor and the Company Rooms on the second floor were designed by the most prominent designers and artists of the day including Louis Comfort Tiffany, Stanford White, Herter Brothers, Pottier & Stymus, and others. The Armory's 55,000 SF drill hall, reminiscent of the original Grand Central Terminal and the great train stations of Europe, remains one of the largest unobstructed spaces of its kind in New York. The administration building and drill hall, along with the majestic entrance, hallways and grand staircase, were designed by Regiment veteran and architect Charles W. Clinton, later a partner of Clinton & Russell, architects of the Apthorp Apartments and other early New York City apartment buildings.

The Armory currently suffers from half a century of poor maintenance, insensitive alterations, a lack of modern amenities and obsolete electrical and plumbing systems dating back to the 1930s. Since the Park Avenue Armory took over in December 2006, we have performed extensive cleaning, completed initial restoration projects such as the main entry doors and bronze gates, and implemented initial infrastructure projects like the drill hall air conditioning. Basic infrastructure work will continue as the architects work on the plans for the overall renovation and restoration of the Armory.

MISSION OF THE ARMORY

Park Avenue Armory is an arts institution dedicated to work that benefits from the freedom of the building's vast drill hall and its constellation of magnificent period rooms. Filling a crucial niche in the cultural landscape of New York City, the Armory catalyzes productions best realized in a non-traditional setting. Park Avenue Armory partners with the City's leading cultural institutions on unconventional projects that introduce New Yorkers to the Armory as an alternative art space of scale.

PRESS INFORMATION

For more information, contact
Resnicow Schroeder Associates:
Maggie Berget: (212) 671-5157
mberget@resnicowschroeder.com
Julia Kirchhausen: (212) 671-5161
jkirchhausen@resnicowschroeder.com