

333 CENTRAL PARK WEST

Architectural A History

Courtesy of
Deanna E. Kory



333 Central Park West (the Turin) was designed by Albert Joseph Bodker and constructed from 1909-1910. While Bodker is not generally known as a designer of apartment buildings, he is also responsible for the design of 40 East 62nd Street, an 8-story midblock apartment building, completed at the same time as the Turin. Whereas the Turin is designed in a new-Renaissance style, the East 62nd Street property is in a Medieval style, with multipaned bay windows, ornate brickwork and terra cotta ornament. Bodker's forte was the single-family mansion, designed mostly on the Upper East Side. Many of these buildings have been torn down or significantly altered. However, a major example of his work is the former Robert A. Chesebrough (the founder of Chesebrough-Ponds) mansion at the southwest corner of Madison Avenue and East 71st Street. Madison Avenue was a residential street when the home was constructed in 1911.

When the Turin was built, most of the other buildings along Central Park West had been constructed in the 1880's and 1890's. Although there were some single-family brownstones, land along this thoroughfare was too expensive for single-family occupancy, and smaller apartment houses and residential apartment hotels proliferated. The property on which the Turin stands consisted of eight parcels. Nos. 334 and 335 Central Park West were respectively, the Mildred and the Florence apartment buildings--each 25-feet wide and 5-stories tall. The property lines of the four lots just south of those buildings (along Central Park West) went back at irregular angles rather than running perpendicular to Central Park West. These parcels were formerly part of what was known as the Apthorpe Lane--a small thoroughfare that ran off the old Bloomingdale Road (now called Broadway) and represented the northern boundary of Charles Ward Apthorpe's estate. Of course, neither Apthorpe Lane nor Bloomingdale Road ran with the current rectilinear street grid. This resulted in irregular property lines from the Bloomingdale Road all the way east to Central Park West. Although subsequent development of the area has obscured most of these "off grid" property lines, the irregular back of the large apartment house at 175 West 93rd Street (viewable from Amsterdam Avenue) is a vestige of Mr. Apthorpe's land holdings.

The Turin is massed in what appears to be four separate towers, affording all apartments at least two and as many as four exposures, with cross-ventilation in many rooms. This was a major design consideration in the days before air conditioning. The three courtyards that flow from this design are not unusual for buildings built at this time. However, whereas many 12-story buildings of the era boast front courtyards that are up to 70-feet deep, the courtyards at the Turin are much shallower, significantly increasing the amount of light penetrating to those rooms along and in the back of the courtyards.

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