

211E48 STREET



211 East 48th Street, New York, NY

Designed as his residence and office by the Swiss-born architect William Lescaze, the 1934 townhouse at 211 East 48th Street in Manhattan is generally regarded as the first modernist house in New York City. Lescaze had previously brought the International Style to Philadelphia on a monumental scale in his well-known collaboration with George Howe on the PSFS Building in 1929-1932, considered the first functionalist skyscraper in the United States. In New York City, he was hired by the Kaufmans to design 777 Third Avenue.

In the *Guide to New York City Landmarks*, the Lescaze residence and office is described as having “a complex, rationally designed street front with precisely balanced solids and voids. The stuccoed façade is pierced by casement ribbon windows and expanses of glass block; this is the first use of glass block in New York City.” Lescaze translated his approach to the façade throughout the entire space of the building by discreetly countering the interior’s stark planarity with sensually curved volumes, and by illuminating his ground floor office space with glass block skylights set in the concrete slab of the backyard garden platform.

Sage Realty Management recognized the historical importance of this building. They conceived a plan to completely restore and repair the entire structure, inside and out. In the courtyard, solid glass block skylights have been replaced with structural glass of the same size and spacing. The interior of the building has been completely overhauled and modernized. A glass-enclosed, hydraulic passenger lift was installed to connect all of the main living levels. A new kitchen system by Boffi, the renowned contemporary Italian company known for their innovation and excellence, has been installed.

The street façade has been painstakingly renovated as close to its original condition as possible. The stucco finish was patched and repainted to approximately Lescaze’s original specification. After months of research, a five-inch by five-inch glass block was found that matches the original block employed by Lescaze. These handmade blocks maintain the overall compositional balance that Lescaze intended. The precise exterior renovation work was approved by the City of New York Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Today 211 East 48th Street is a fully modern landmarked commercial building. It is conveniently located near world-class hotels, shops and restaurants.