

## *New York Row Houses: Anglo-Italianate, and Second Empire Facades*

The Anglo-Italianate style emerged in New York in the late 1840's simultaneously with the Italianate style, although it never achieved the same level of popularity. It was particularly suited to the monumental streetscape, an impressive row of houses or terraces in the English tradition of London and Bath, generally ranging in widths of 16 to 22 feet and consisting of a basement and four stories.

The basement and first story were faced with the familiar rusticated brownstone. The balance of the street front was smooth brownstone or dark red "pressed brick." Also known as "Philadelphia brick," where the technique originated, it was particularly popular on New York Anglo-Italianate row houses. The clay was ground into fine particles, put into pre-dampened molds, compacted into a solid brick through enormous pressure, and burned in a kiln. The result was a pressed brick with a smooth surface of a uniform dark color which was longer and narrower than the usual brick, approximately 8 1/2 by 4 1/2 by 2 1/2 inches thick. "The Triangle" (1859-1861), Nos. 23-35 on Stuyvesant Street and Nos. 112-128 on East 10th Street, between Second and Third Avenues, is an outstanding example of its use with brownstone trim. Second Avenue, site of the Triangle on Stuyvesant family lands, was second only to Fifth Avenue in Residential prestige during the 1830s, 40s, and 50s.

Also known as the English basement-style row house, it had a low two- or three- to six- step stoop at the front doorway with handsome railings and areaway fences, rather than the usual imposing ten- or twelve-foot stoop of the period. The doorway and single window at the side were round-headed and often enframed by a bold molding. The second-floor parlor windows dropped to the floor and often opened onto a cast-iron balcony which, together with the roofline cornice, helped to visually unify the row.

While Anglo-Italianate dwellings were built in Manhattan from Washington Square into the East and West 30s and 40s, most have been demolished. Among the best surviving examples of the monumental streetscape today are: Renwick Terrace of 1856, Nos. 20-38 West 10th Street; Nos. 19-23, 31, and 54-58 West 9th Street; Nos. 24-28 and 48-52 West 12th Street; and several handsome blocks in northwest Chelsea.

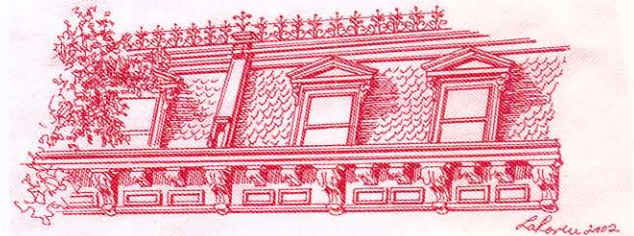
The Second Empire style, a variation on the Italianate and Anglo-Italianate styles, introduced the French mansard roof to America which, by the mid-1860s and 70s had become the national fashion on both public and private dwellings. Named for Francois Mansard, one of Louis XIV's royal architects, and inspired by the classicism of L'Ecole des Beaux Arts and mid-nineteenth century Parisian architecture created by Baron Haussmann for Emperor Louis Napoleon III, the mansard roof style epitomized elegance and sophistication.

On the New York row house, the Second Empire style usually



only involved the addition of a mansard roof above the cornice of an otherwise typical Italianate townhouse. Though distinctly un-Parisian, a number of distinctive local features on New York row houses remained in use throughout the period. The basement was usually the familiar boldly rusticated brownstone, while the rest of the façade was smooth brownstone, and occasionally pressed brick. The elevated parlor floor and high wide brownstone stoop, with a classically inspired balustrade railing, ascended to a front doorway with a heavy, rounded hood, supported by consoles or, on occasion, a freestanding doorway porch. Street-front windows had protruding lintels and sills or were fully enframed. The heavy cornice just below the roofline was supported by the usual consoles faced with acanthus leaves. Above, the steeply sloped mansard roof, pierced by two or three dormer windows, and decorated with a

scat-iron railing at the street front edge, known as "cresting," created fully lit attics or an additional floor with high ceilings. In effect, the mansard style offered a picturesque solution to the need for another floor without the visual impact of awkwardly narrow proportions. Since the heavy forms and elaborate ornamentation of the Italianate style were similar in spirit to French "beau arts" architecture, the Second Empire or mansard roof style was also known as the "Franco-Italianate" style.



During the 1860's mansard roofs were also added to many Federal and Greek Revival buildings in Greenwich Village to provide an additional floor. However, builders rarely updated other telltale features of these styles, such as Flemish-bond brick fronts, a dentiled cornice, or a plain Federal or Greek Revival doorway and lintels.

Some of the best extant examples exist in Murray Hill on the side streets between Madison and Third Avenues, although many of them have lost their stoops and façade ornamentation.

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