



## WADE THOMPSON DRILL HALL

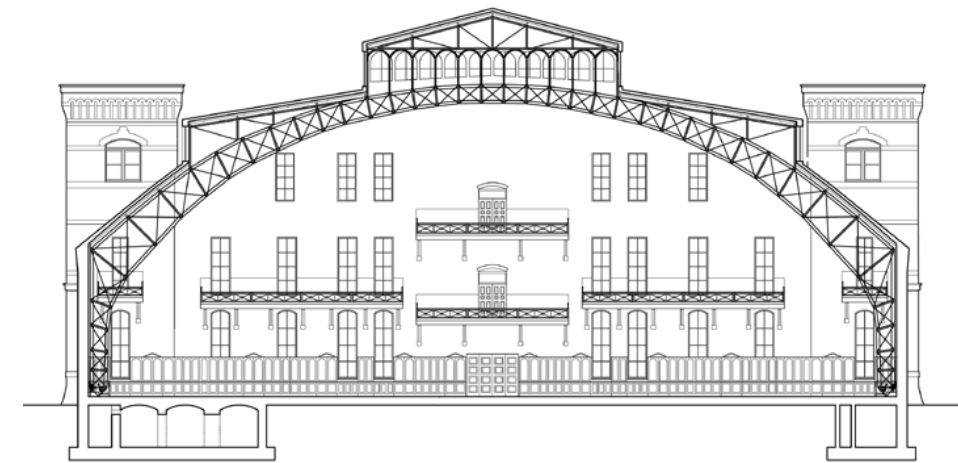
Reminiscent of the original Grand Central Depot and the great train stations of Europe, the Wade Thompson Drill Hall comprises 55,000 square feet of open, un-columned space, making it one of the largest unobstructed spaces of its kind in New York. Its 80-foot-high barrel vaulted roof or “balloon shed” is the oldest of this scale in America, featuring eleven elliptical wrought iron arches designed by Charles Macdonald. Before the Armory’s current phase as a cultural institution, the soaring drill hall was home to many major events, including: the 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 in 1882; fantastically themed balls of the 1920s and 1930s; and the Commonwealth Society Ball attended by a young Queen Elizabeth II.

## HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

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 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.

In 2007, Park Avenue Armory began a comprehensive renovation and restoration of this historic building, which had been named one of the “100 Most Endangered Historic Sites in the World” by the World Monuments Fund in 2000. As envisioned by architects Herzog & de Meuron, the multi-year project will advance the transformation of the Armory to house a new type of cultural institution dedicated to the creation and presentation of visual and performing art that cannot be realized within the limitations of traditional performance halls and white-wall museums.

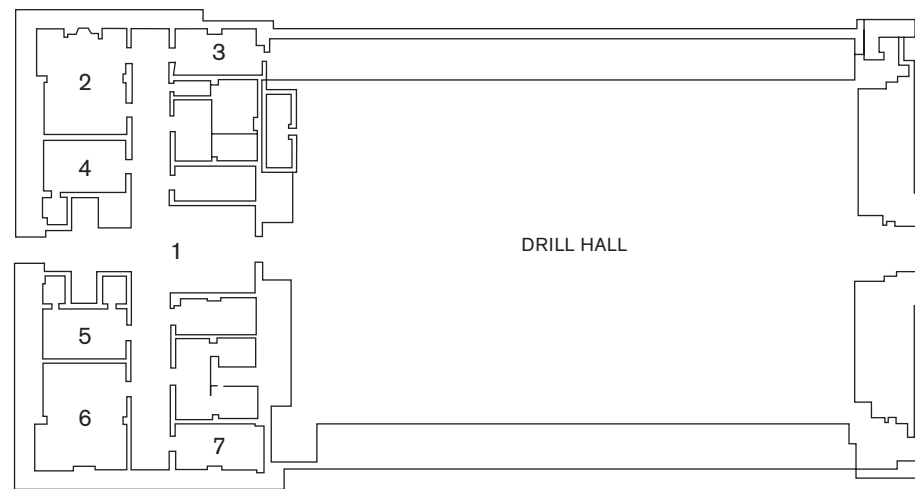
## DRILL HALL AND INTERIORS GUIDE



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.

Part American palace, part industrial shed, Park Avenue Armory is dedicated to supporting unconventional works in the visual and performing arts that need non-traditional spaces for their full realization, enabling artists to create and audiences to consume epic and adventurous presentations that can not be mounted elsewhere in New York City. In 2006, the Armory opened its doors to visionary artists, directors, and impresarios who have provided extraordinary experiences in a range of art forms which led to *The New York Times* proclaiming that “Park Avenue Armory...has arrived as the most important new cultural institution in New York City.”

# 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. They were completed in 1880. The central corridor on the ground floor stretches 203 feet long from end to end and is 22 feet high. A massive wrought iron and oak split staircase with original bronze torchères 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 executed 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.

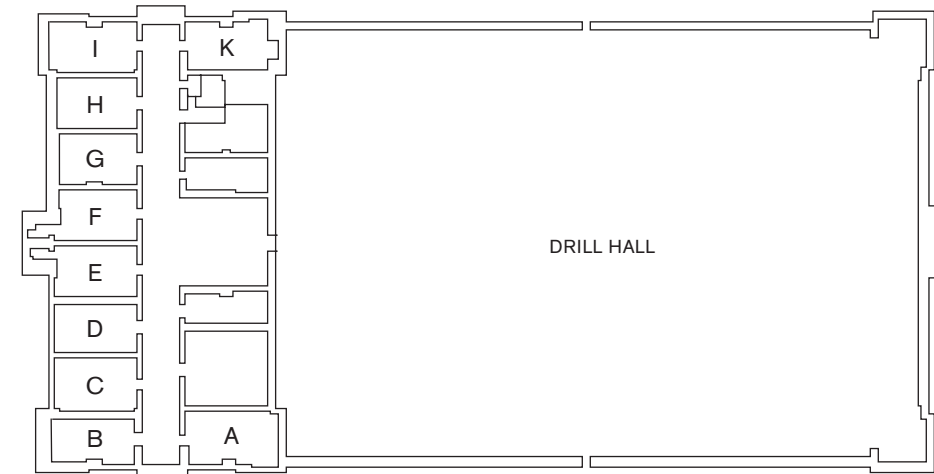
**4. LIBRARY:** The second room at the Armory designed by Louis C. Tiffany, Associated Artists with Stanford White. This room is largely thought to be White’s design except for the windows and lighting fixtures by Tiffany. It features a magnificent basketweave barrel vault originally painted salmon color 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 mid-19th century and designed the Fifth Avenue mansion of William H. Vanderbilt (now demolished). This room still retains the original painted surfaces and magnificent mahogany woodwork. Poor alterations in the 1930s and water infiltration in the early 1990s caused significant damage but the room was magnificently restored in 2013 and is now mainly used for recitals.

**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 Marquis de 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:** This room features elaborately carved mahogany woodwork surmounted by walls with terra cotta stencils over a copper field. The ceiling is a trompe l’oeil representation of a balustrade ringing a sky view with handpainted flowering vines. The room was restored in 2010 in accordance with designs by Herzog & de Meuron, removing layers of paint, plaster and varnish covering these surfaces.

**COMPANY E BY POTTIER & STYMUS:** This room was radically altered in the 1890s by the addition of a gold-painted Tudor-style strapwork ceiling and new wallpaper. The 2010 restoration of this room, in accordance with designs by Herzog & de Meuron, was able to reestablish the original design intent despite a significant amount of loss and damage. Now, the oak’s warm hues glow below the exposed red and copper walls.

**COMPANY F (ORIGINAL DECORATOR UNKNOWN):** This Renaissance Revival-style room features oak wood-work, an original ceiling and original plaques with the names of members who died in the Civil War and World War I.

**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.