

(A) SoHo Square (site of former Richmond Hill)

In 1760, a British major, Abraham Mortimer, who owned a 26-acre estate that encompassed parts of what is now SoHo, including the land around Spring Street and 6th Avenue, built a mansion and called it Richmond Hill.

In 1776, the colonists declared war with General George Washington in charge. Briefly that year, Washington took over Richmond Hill mansion to use as his headquarters. After the Revolutionary War, Mortimer and his fellow Brits were no longer welcome in America and the mansion became home to America's first Vice President John Adams and his wife, Abigail.

In 1791, the mansion was purchased by Aaron Burr, America's third vice-president. During the last year of his vice-presidency, 1804, Burr entered into a duel with his political foe, Alexander Hamilton, whom he fatally shot.

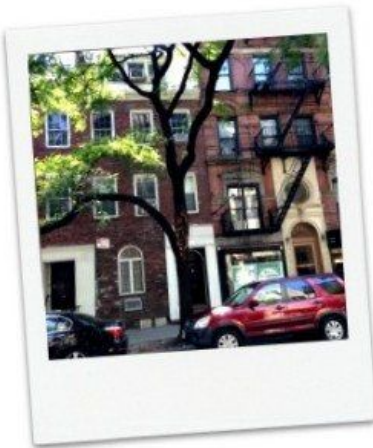
(B) Dominique Ansel Bakery at 189 Spring Street

This is the birthplace of the world-famous Cronut, a croissant-doughnut hybrid.

Created in in 2013, this unique pastry innovation is trademarked by its creator, Dominique Ansel and pastry fans around the world have made it the most virally talked about dessert item in history.

If you want to try one, you'll have to get there early, since they sell out fast! They are open from Mondays to Saturdays from 8 am to 7 pm and Sunday from 9 am to 7 pm.

(C) 188-190 Spring Street Federal Houses (1899)



These are two of the remaining row houses on Spring Street that date to the late 1800s.

Though much of these houses have been altered, they retain their original 19th-century features including the original gable roofs, the typical height of three and a half floors tall, and a small amount of Flemish bond brickwork typical of the era.

Although they are not landmarked buildings, they have managed to avoid the fate of so many un-landmark yet historic houses in New York City.

The same is not true of what was the formerly adjacent building. The Federal-era row house at 186 Spring Street was built in 1824 and passed through many owners.

In 2000, Beastie Boys' band member Adam Horowitz bought the house and then two years later sold it to a Canadian businessman Stephane Boivin. Boivin originally stated that he purchased the home for "personal use" but just two months later he announced his plan to demolish the nearly 200-year-old house and combine it with land at 182 Spring Street where he planned to build a seven-story apartment building.

The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation tried to save the townhouse from destruction by petitioning for landmark status. However, the Landmarks Preservation Commission said that the structure was ineligible for landmarking and it was torn down in 2012.

Since then the property has changed hands again and is now slated to be the site of a 12,500-square-foot retail building. Fortunately, the lovely gems at 188-190 Spring Street remain untouched.

(D) Vesuvio Playground corner of Thompson and Spring Streets

This well-kept and pleasant playground ground is notable not for any particular event, but for the history behind its name.

Formerly known simply as the Thompson Street Playground for the street it is on (which was named after a Revolutionary War General William Thompson), it was renamed in the late 1990s to honor the owner of the nearby popular Vesuvio Bakery, Anthony Dapolito.

He was very active on the Community Board and dedicated time to ensuring that the playground received funding to keep it in good condition and get upgrades when needed. His bakery, Vesuvio Bakery at nearby 160 Prince Street, opened in 1920 and Dapolitano delivered its freshly baked bread on his bicycle as a child.

In the 1980s, after the expensive boutiques and cafes took over Prince Street, the comforting smell of warm baked bread coming from Vesuvio gave Prince Street the feel of the old world. It also had one of the most iconic New York City storefronts.

Dapolitano passed away in 2003 and the much-loved Vesuvio is now the Birdbath Bakery (whose chocolate chip cookies happen to be very delicious!). The new owners understood the historical significance and charm of the original storefront and decided to keep the VESUVIO name painted in green on the glass windows. Their own name is small and stashed at the lower left corner of the left window.

(E) Ben's Pizza corner of Thompson and Spring Streets

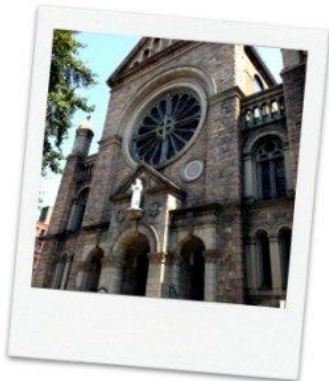


Opened in 1977, Ben's appeared in several scenes in the movie *Men in Black 2* starring Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones as well as in an episode of *Sex in the City*.

In 2003 *Men in Black 3* began filming in SoHo, but the 26 trucks and trailers that occupied the narrow streets were not welcomed by the neighborhood.

The presence of Smith's trailer, (a double-decker 1,150 square-foot luxury trailer housing everything from a movie room to a bar) pushed locals over the edge, especially since Smith was also renting an apartment just a few blocks away. The Mayor's Office of Film who issues filming permits ordered that the trailer be relocated to a private lot.

(F) Shrine Church of St. Anthony of Padua 155 Sullivan Street



This church is situated within what is currently slated to become the South Village Historic District, which includes streets in both SoHo and Greenwich Village and whose history includes the stories of thousands of Italian immigrants who settled in the area in the late 1800's and early 1900's.

The parish of St. Anthony of Padua is the second Italian parish founded in the United States and the oldest in New York. As continually waves of Italian immigrants kept coming, the parish decided in 1881 that it needed a larger house of worship than the former and much smaller location a few buildings down the block.

On January 31, 1882, the property went up for sale and the parish seized the moment. That day a terrible snowstorm hit New York. In what some refer to as the “Miracle of St. Anthony’s” only one person made it through the snow to the bidding -- Father DeAngelis, the pastor of St. Anthony’s.

The parish was the sole bidder and they bought the property at a price they could manage. Construction began in 1885 on the church and when it was completed in 1885, it was the first parish church built by Italian immigrants in the United States.

(G) Louis K. Meisel Gallery 141 Prince Street

This highly esteemed art gallery is known for its collection of original pin-up art.

But it’s best known as the art gallery in which the character Charlotte worked on the popular TV show *Sex in the City*.



For die-hard SATC fans, check out our posts [Sex and the City self-guided tour](#) and [Visit Carrie Bradshaw's apartment](#).

(H) The Earth Room 141 Wooster Street

Created by American artist Walter De Maria in 1977, this 3,600-square-foot gallery space contains a 22-inch-deep layer of dirt, weighing approximately 280,000 pounds.

The gallery is open to the public for free and though you cannot touch the display or walk on it, it will provide you with a peaceful, natural sanctuary from the hustle and bustle of the street below. [Learn more here.](#)

(I) Anthony Arnoux House (1825) 139 Greene Street



In 1825, a two-story brick house was built for Anthony Arnoux, a tailor and apparel merchant.

By 1850, Arnoux and his family moved out due to the neighborhood's decline into a noisy commercial and entertainment district. After the Arnoux family left, the house was occupied by several businesses including a hat seller and a fur store.

In 1968 an art dealer bought the house and in turn sold it to a private investor who planned to restore the now almost 150-year-old house. But the cost and alteration restrictions of landmark buildings have slowed down the renovations, basically now at a total standstill.

(J) Etan Patz family home 113 Prince Street

In 1979, Etan Patz, who was six years old, vanished while walking from his home to the school bus stop in SoHo. His case has never been solved and his disappearance is a missing-child case that has haunted New York City for decades and also led to significant change in the way Americans view the safety of their children.

His disappearance attracted national attention and Etan's picture was one of the first to appear on a milk carton in a campaign to help find missing children.

In 2012, after 33 years since Etan's disappearance, there was a breakthrough in the case and in May 2015, a suspect was put on trial in Manhattan Supreme Court. The jury was unable to reach a unanimous verdict and the judge declared a mistrial in Etan Patz's case.

In 2017, after a new trial, Pedro Gonzalez was found guilty of kidnapping and murder and was sentenced to 25 years to life in prison.

Thus, this case that haunted New Yorkers for decades was brought to a close but Etan's tragedy forever changed for the better the way America's law enforcement handled cases of missing children. The date of his disappearance, May 25th, is now National Missing Children's Day.

(K) 109 Prince Street (1882)

This five-story corner building is both a New York City designated landmark building and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It was designed by a young and talented architect named Jarvis Morgan Slade. Sadly, he died at the age of 30 before his building was completed.

Surrounded by taller cast-iron buildings 109 Prince has a unique look with its three facades.



On the Green Street side, on the first column, you can see a plaque with the name of the foundry that cast the iron: Architectural Iron Works, Cheyney, and Hewlett. It is now a Ralph Lauren store.

(L) SoHo Center for Visual Arts & Trompe L'Oeil mural (1889) 112 Prince Street

As with other many other buildings in SoHo, artists began to move into the abandoned cast iron factories during the early 1970s. By 1975, the upper floors had become work/live lofts for artists, including Maya Lin, the noted sculptor of the Vietnam memorial in Washington, D.C.



What is special about this building is its facade along Greene Street. Keeping with the cast-iron style of the building's front façade, artist Richard Haas painted a giant *trompe l'oeil* (French for "trick the eye") mural that gives the illusion of a cast iron façade although it is merely a plain brick wall.

(M) SoHo Building & Floating Subway Map 110 Greene Street



This building is actually two older buildings erected by the same owner, Charles "Broadway" Rouse, a noted New York City merchant. First came 125 Mercer (1908) and later the building at 110 Greene (1920). Years later these two buildings were joined to and became known as the SoHo Building.

In 1986, Françoise Schein, a Belgian artist, created *Subway Map Floating on a New York Sidewalk*, an

87-foot long work consisting of concrete rods embedded in the sidewalk. The map is more or less an accurate schematic of the subway as it was in 1986, but the Uptown end is pointing Downtown and vice versa.

(N) Apple Store 103 Prince Street.

Housed inside an old two-floor post office, the Apple Store is a great place to hang out and relax. You can recharge your phone, use their free Wi-Fi on one of their dozens of laptops placed throughout the store, check out a free training session or musical performances by some top artists.

Bathrooms and water fountains are on the first floor.

(O) "Ghost" Building 102 Prince Street

This is where Demi Moore, Patrick Swayze, and Whoopi Goldberg filmed the 1990 movie *Ghost*.

As of April 2015, the three bedroom/three and a half bathroom loft is up for sale with an asking price of \$10.5 million. That's 30 times what Demi Moore earned for her performance in the film.

Think of it this way: the apartment cost is \$2,370 per square foot. Moore was paid \$350,000. She earned the value of just one of the apartment's bedrooms.



(P) Fanelli Café 94 Prince Street

The ownership of the land on which Fanelli stands can be traced back to 1644 when was part of farmland belonging to Nicholas Bayard (referred to above in the History section). By 1797 Prince Street was laid out as was Greene Street and Mercer Streets.

The Bayard family sold the land in 1845. From 1847 until 1920, the building at 94 Prince Street changed owners often, but whatever business was housed in the building, alcohol, and food were always served there - even during Prohibition which made the making and selling of alcohol illegal from 1920-1933.

When in 1920 the Fanelli family purchased the business at 94 Prince, it was a saloon called the Prince Café. They changed the name to Fanelli's Café and during Prohibition, it was a 'speakeasy' (an illegal bar).

The Fanelli Cafe is a stop on our [self-guided historic bars of NYC tour](#).

(Q) The Little Singer Building (1904) 561-3 Broadway

This 12-story Beaux Arts style building was designed by renowned architect Ernest Flagg, whose buildings can be found all over New York City.



The building was the first headquarters of the Singer Sewing Machine Manufacturing Company and thus called The Singer Building.

As the company grew, Flagg was commissioned to build a significantly larger headquarters in the financial district. That 41-story building became known as The Singer Building and from 1908-1909 was the tallest building in the world. It

was demolished in 1986 and considered one of the great lost buildings of New York City.

Its smaller sibling in SoHo was referred to as the “little” Singer Building. The Little Singer displays Flagg’s innovative design as he combined various materials such as large glass window panes, terracotta panels, wrought-iron balconies and cast-iron ornamentation that give the building its intricate and distinctive look.

The building is now residential and commercial co-op space.

(R) First Tiffany & Company Store (1854) 550 Broadway

In 1837, Charles Tiffany and his partner John Young opened a store across from City Hall that sold “fancy goods” such as costume jewelry. Ten years later the business had become so successful that it began to sell real jewelry, silverware, watches, clocks and much more.

As business thrived, Tiffany & Young, as the store was called, moved further north at to 271 Broadway. Meanwhile, Charles Tiffany pursued a number of side ventures and investments and in 1853 he bought out his partner and the company became known as Tiffany & Co.



The company moved again to the much larger 550 Broadway and continued to grow into a company of grand stature amongst the wealthy.

When the building at 550 Broadway was erected in 1854, a nine-foot statue of Atlas holding a big clock was placed over the entrance. Atlas has

followed the store when it moved again to Union Square and eventually settling at its current location at Fifth Avenue and 57th Street.

Tip: If you are planning on purchasing a hop-on-hop-off ticket, all the major companies have stops here at Broadway and Spring St. Be sure to read our [comparison post on New York City bus companies](#).

(S) Bishop's Crook Lamppost in front of 515 Broadway

Look up at the street light (or lamppost) in front of the H&M store and you will notice its ornate style, known as a “Bishop’s Crook”.

In 1900, New York City began replacing its gas lights with electric light and by 1934 there were 76 different styles placed throughout the city.

Over time, older and more aesthetically pleasing lampposts were replaced by modern, bland designs which were both stylistically appropriate to the era, energy efficient and produced more effective lighting for the city’s streets.

After New York began designating certain neighborhoods as ‘historic districts’, the modern lampposts were replaced with reproductions of the original style of lamppost that was typical of that neighborhood.

SoHo has many reproductions adding to the charm of the district. This lamppost you are looking at is an original, installed around 1936, and is a protected landmark.

(T) King of Greene Street (1873) 72-76 Greene Street



Originally a warehouse belonging to the dry goods dealer Gardner Colby Company, this impressive structure is considered to be the finest example of French Renaissance design in SoHo and earned the nickname "King of Greene Street."

It was designed by Isaac F. Duckworth, a master of cast iron architecture with several striking buildings in SoHo and also nearby in neighboring TriBeCa, another historic district. What makes the King remarkable is its ornate, three-dimensional façade.

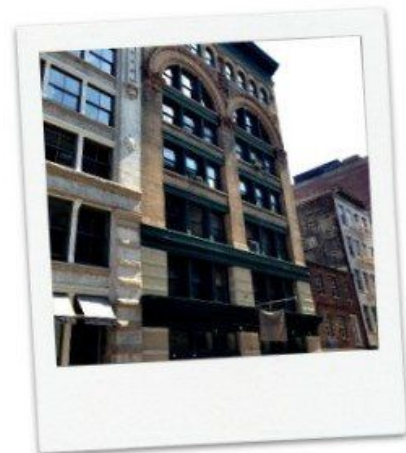
You can see the other half of this “royal family”, the **Queen of Greene Street (1873)** at 28-30 Greene Street, yet another masterpiece by Duckworth.

(U) 80 Wooster Street (1895)

Some say that the beginnings of the 20th-century ‘rags to riches’ story of SoHo began in 1967. And it happened here at 80 Wooster Street.

The seven-story Renaissance-style building designed by Gilbert Schellenger was erected in 1895 and was used as a warehouse and light industry. From 1931 to 1967, it was occupied by the Miller Paper Company.

It was around this time that artists began occupying lofts in SoHo, and artist George Maciunas bought the building and founded the Fluxus Group with Yoko Ono and other artists.



Maciunas had envisioned a SoHo filled with artists who would participate in the communal (or cooperative) purchase of buildings, with entire floors costing \$8,000 each.

The building came to be called the Fluxhouse Cooperative II, where artists owned the building together. The communal spirit of the Fluxhouse eventually dissipated and like so many buildings in SoHo, the building eventually became private co-op apartments.

In 2013, the cost to buy a two-bedroom in the formerly communal living space was just over \$2 million dollars. That's a 25,000% increase in just 46 years!

(V) Gunther Building (1871) 469-465 Broome Street



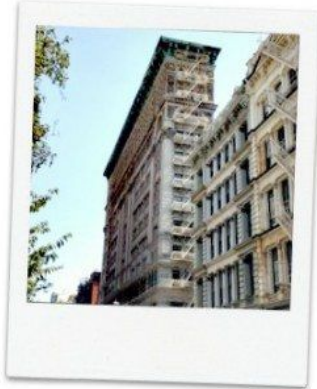
This stunning six-story white cast iron building was designed by Griffith Thomas and was a warehouse for the fur dealer William H. Gunther.

It is especially sophisticated compared to some of its neighboring buildings. You can see the Gunther name emblazoned in an arch over the corner entrance.

The building currently houses an art gallery and artists' studios.

(W) The Silk Exchange Building (1895) 487 Broadway corner of Broome Street

In 1894, wealthy developer John T. Williams financed, designed and even served as his own contractor on this long and narrow limestone 12-story building. This sliver of a building, with its intricate terra cotta ornamentation on the upper floors, came to be known as the ‘slice of wedding cake’ building.



Three entrances—on Broadway, Broome and Mercer provided convenient access to tenants and clients alike and upon completion, the building quickly filled with tenants, many of them in the silk industry. The high number of silk merchants resulted in the building earning the name The Silk Exchange Building.

Over time the Silk industry moved out of the neighborhood and companies like Roebuck Manufacturing and the Newman Clock Company rented space in the building. In 1985, the building was converted into 25 residential units.

(X) Haughwout Building (1857) corner of Broadway and Broome Street

This early cast iron era building was designed by architect John Gaynor and housed the Haughwout (pronounced “how-wot”) Emporium, a world famous manufacturer and seller of fine china, exquisite porcelain, chandeliers and more.



President Lincoln's wife, Mary Todd Lincoln purchased custom-made plates and flatware for the White House from this location.

The building also has a place in the history of innovation as it was the first building in the world to feature a hydraulic passenger elevator designed and installed by Elijah Armstrong Otis. Many structures around the world have elevators that were installed by the Otis Elevator Company including the Eiffel Tower, the Empire State Building, and the first World Trade Center towers. Next time you are in an elevator look at the threshold, you may just see the name OTIS.

(Y) Heath Ledger's former home 421 Broome Street



In 2008, actor Heath Ledger, star of many movies (most notably *Brokeback Mountain* and *The Dark Knight*) was found dead in a fourth-floor apartment in this building. Ledger, who was just 28 years old, died of an accidental prescription drug overdose.

Within a few hours of the news of his death became public, media, mourners, and fans gathered outside the building leaving flowers.

The attractive building was designed by Griffith Thomas who also designed the Gunther Building above.

While Ledger was living in the building he rented his apartment for \$23,000 a month. In 2010, the entire building was sold for \$15 million in a foreclosure auction and converted into condominiums each occupying an entire floor ranging in price from \$3.9 million for a simple apartment to \$20

million for the triplex penthouse. Ledger's former apartment is worth \$5 million.

(Z) Former Police Headquarters (1909) 240 Centre Street

When the former Police Headquarters was built in 1909, the neighborhood was a bustling Little Italy filled with poor immigrants and crowded tenement buildings, many of which still line the streets surrounding the formidable huge Beaux-Arts building.



The design was meant to both to give the police officers a sense of authority while intimidating the local petty criminals and mafia mobsters of Little Italy.

Ironically, according to popular folklore, during Prohibition, some police officers built a tunnel under Centre Street to nearby O'Neill's Tavern for an illegal drink!

In 1973, the New York Police Department relocated its headquarters to 1 Police Plaza in Lower Manhattan where it remains today.

The building was unoccupied for ten years during which a series of proposals were considered: a hotel, cultural center, museum, etc. Finally, in 1983, the city accepted the proposal of a real estate developer to turn the building into luxury condominiums. At the time, SoHo prices were sky-rocketing as it was one of the most desirable neighborhoods to live in.

The new apartments feature high ceilings and one of them even has a vaulted ceiling living room in what was once a basketball court for the officers' recreational use.

It was converted into luxury co-op apartments in 1988. Supermodels Cindy Crawford, Christy Turlington, and Linda Evangelista all bought lofts here. Tennis star Steffi Graf and actress Winona Ryder are also said to have lived here.

Although technically beyond the boundaries of SoHo, the building was close enough to enjoy the hipness and trendiness of SoHo. In the 1990s, The New York Times began to refer to the area as NoLita (North of Little Italy).

O'Neill's is also a stop on our [self-guided Sex and the City Tour](#).

This concludes your tour. We suggest that you grab a bite at one of the restaurants or food stops in and around SoHo. We also offer a Chinatown Food Tour