

EXTRA! EXTRA!

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Hidden GEM

To enter the enchanted world of what used to be known as the Temple Court Building, at 5 Beekman Street, is to be transported into a Gilded-Age scene of an Edith Wharton novel. It is not surprising that author Jack Finney used the building's atrium for inspiration to recreate New York in the 1880s for his time-travel novel *Time and Again*. The building's secret is that it has been empty for more than 10 years now.

Nestled between what used to be Newspaper Row and Theatre Alley, 5 Beekman Street is a rare gem whose façade promises an interior that has preserved the elegance and aura of a time long ago. Victorian wrought-iron railings, intricate woodwork and dragons ensconced onto the ceiling conjure a past era.

Designed by architects Silliam and Fransworth in Renaissance Revival, Queen Anne and Neo-Grecian styles, 5 Beekman was commissioned in 1881 by Eugene Kelly, an Irish-American banker, to be his home. To glance up from the lobby at the nine winding floors surrounded by rays of sunlight bursting in from the skylight, can be likened to happening upon a 19th-century palace.

In 1998, the building was given landmark status. Although currently closed to the public, for the moment it is still a door to the grandeur of the city's Victorian elite, where one can envision Lady Astor descending the ornate staircase.

—BETTINA WEINER

Weiner is a freelance writer.