

INTERIOR DESIGN

The Archive

Recipient of the 1990 Municipal Art Society Preservation Award

**PRESERVATION/
RENOVATION**



The Archive

Judith Stockman's multi-faceted renovation of a landmark building in Manhattan's West Village

PHOTOGRAPHY: LANGDON CLAY

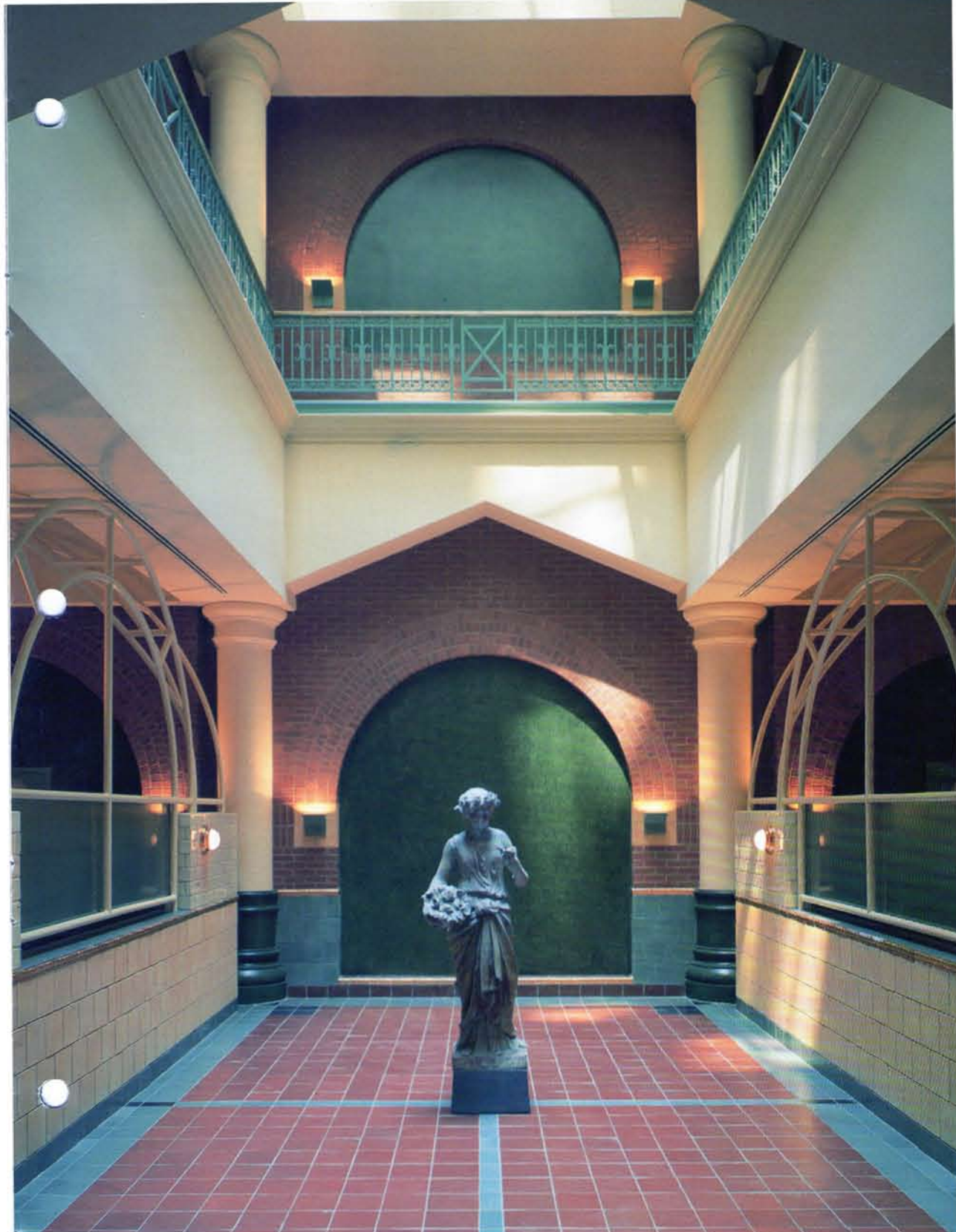
Constructed in 1892 as the U.S. Appraisers Warehouse, the brick and granite building with distinguished masonry arches at 666 Greenwich Street is an official New York City landmark and part of the National Register of Historic Buildings. When the building, designed by architect W.J. Edbrooke, was no longer needed as part of the Customs Service, it was used as a repository for federal documents. Thus, its name was changed to the Archive Building, the designation made official with conferral of its landmark status. To continue summation of its history, the building was used by the U.S. Postal Service during the 1930s and then had

a long period of vacancy. That ended with a long-term lease obtained by its current developers. Rockrose Ar-

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Above: Entry to The Archive is designed after an entry used during the building's post office incarnation. Old sconces come from a public school building. The plaque is a citation from the Municipal Arts Society.

Opposite: Stockman brought architecture into the double-height volume in the guise of two facing "mail houses" in an area recalling an interior courtyard. The 1890s cast zinc statue depicts one of the four seasons. The balcony, with railing reproduced from an original stair rail, has no lobby access.



chives and The Teitelbaum Group secured a 99-year lease from the property's owner, a subsidiary of the New York State Urban Development Corporation. The developers' intent—to transform the derelict site into a setting for shops and eleven floors of rental residential units. To turn intent to reality, the client consortium turned to the design firm of Judith Stockman Associates.

In a sense, Stockman's commission held two distinct phases, albeit phases that were worked on simultaneously. There was the exterior aspect, which entailed developing and implementing a cohesive vocabulary for storefronts, signage and entrance canopies, all under the jurisdiction of the Landmarks Preservation Commission. And, there was design of the 4,900-sq.-ft. lobby, which already had been created as a skylight-capped, double-height space with two banks of elevators by the base building architect Avinash K. Malhotra. For the interiors, Stockman faced no Landmarks-imposed restrictions. In fact, she not only had a virtual free hand in determining needs and solutions, but also it was she who

was to devise an appropriate comprehensive budget.

Confronted with an empty shell for the lobby proper—reached by a long corridor stretching from street entry to double-door ingress—Stockman's initial assessments proved valid. Instead of filling this large space with furniture, which would have been inappropriate to the room's function, she immediately opted "to put architecture within." Her approach, which, she says, could have been based either on making the expected references to

Opposite: The concierge desk is positioned at the lobby's entry for control purposes. Topped with blue stone, the terra cotta element comes from a famed New York estate. The characteristic masonry arch marks the entrance to the mail house area.

Below: View of the elevation facing the mail houses. The arches were taken from the architecture's characteristic detailing and are backed by a "rag painted" plaster wall. Hand-made oak benches have cushions covered with a textile designed by Josef Hoffmann. The terra cotta end plaque, originally from a building in Harlem, is an homage to industry.

