

Exploring Downtown



India House

1 Hanover Square; Architect unknown, 1853

British Memorial Garden in Hanover Square

India House

The handsome brownstone building facing Hanover Square, built in 1853, originally housed the Hanover Bank—making this one of the very few bank buildings surviving from pre-Civil War New York. Like many banks, it was inspired by Italian Renaissance palaces—often built themselves for powerful Renaissance Italian banking families. The building's varied history includes service as New York's Cotton Exchange and the offices of W.R. Grace and Company. Since 1914, it has been home to India House, a private club founded by shipping executive James A. Farrell and newspaperman Willard Straight. The club's early members—businessmen engaged in foreign trade—chose the name "India House" to suggest the romance of exotic ports.



Museum of the City of New York, The J. Clarence Davies Collection

Above: India House

Hanover Square

Hanover Square's history as a public space dates back to the first years of the Dutch settlement. Named later for the British monarchy—the Hanoverians being the family of King George the Third, as well as the ancestors of the current Queen Elizabeth and Prince Charles—Hanover Square is one of the very few such royal place names in New York not dropped after the Revolution.

British Memorial Garden:

Hanover Square has been transformed into the British Memorial Garden, a gift from the British community and its American friends to the people of New York City. The garden, designed by British landscape architects Julian and Isabel Bannerman, overflows with symbols, materials and plantings typical of the United Kingdom—from Scottish stone and Welsh slate, to City of London bollards, to an outline map of British counties. Yew trees trimmed into abstract patterns offer a contemporary take on the traditional British topiary. The garden honors the memory of the 67 British victims of the World Center attacks, while also offering a place for the British community to gather for special events.

British artist Anish Kapoor's black granite sculpture Unity - symbolizing the unity between the United States and the United Kingdom - includes a polished, light-reflecting inner chamber suggesting an eternal flame.



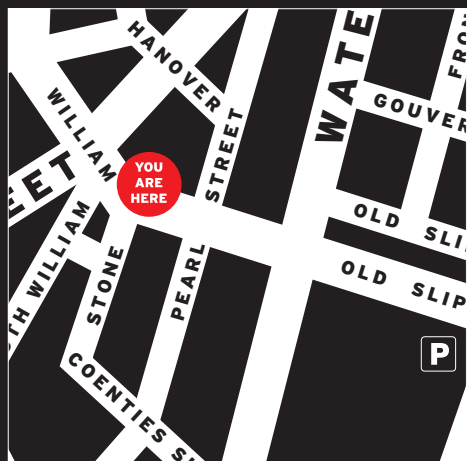
Photographs by Cutty McGill, courtesy of the British Memorial Garden Trust, Inc.

The British Memorial Garden is under the royal patronage of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, who, with his wife, Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cornwall, visited the Garden on November 1, 2005, and laid the center stone for the garden's pavement. Carved into the stone is the heraldic emblem of three feathers with the motto, "Ich Dien" ("I serve") - a symbol of the Prince of Wales since the 14th century.

From left to right: Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cornwall, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, and British Memorial Garden president Camilla G. Hellman.



Also in the Neighborhood



For more information, refer to the large map on the other side of this panel.

Cotton Exchange

The grand, double-height Ionic colonnade at the top of No. 3 Hanover Square (Donn Barber, 1923), at the corner of William Street, marks the location of the fifty-five-foot-high trading floor once used by the Cotton Exchange.

Seligman Bank

One block north, at the intersection of William, South William and Stone streets, No. 1 William Street (Francis H. Kimball, 1907) originally housed the private investment banking firm of J. & W. Seligman & Co. Banca Commerciale Italiana built an extension designed as a modern version of the original (Gino Valle, 1986).



The mission of the Alliance for Downtown New York is to be the principal organization that provides Lower Manhattan's historic financial district with a premier physical and economic environment, advocates for businesses and property owners and promotes the area as a world-class destination for companies, workers, residents and visitors. The Downtown Alliance manages the Downtown-Lower Manhattan Business Improvement District (BID), serving an area roughly from City Hall to the Battery, from the East River to West Street.

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For more information about Downtown, please visit our information kiosks located at City Hall Park, World Financial Center, PATH station and the Staten Island Ferry Terminal. And stop at our Heritage Site Markers situated throughout the neighborhood.

Also, don't miss our FREE Wall Street Walking Tour! This 90-minute guided walking tour weaves together the history, events, architecture and people of Downtown. The tour meets every Thursday and Saturday at noon at the front steps of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, One Bowling Green. For more information, please call (212) 606-4064.