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Trust for Architectural Easements Announces Tour of Historic New York Apartment Building Courtyard

November 30, 2009, New York, NY – The Trust for Architectural Easements, one of the nation’s largest preservation easement holding organizations, is offering the public a unique opportunity to explore the rarely-seen courtyard of The Belnord, a palatial apartment building in the heart of Manhattan’s Upper West Side. Resembling a Medici palazzo of Renaissance Florence, The Belnord was completed in 1908 and touted as the largest apartment building in the world and one of the most luxurious places to live in New York City.

The Belnord is privately owned and access to its 22,000-square-foot courtyard is normally restricted. The Trust for Architectural Easements is organizing self-guided tours of the courtyard from December 1st through December 16th (2 p.m. to 5 p.m., weekdays only). Reservations are required. Please email rsvp@architecturaltrust.org to make a reservation.

To coax residents out of their old-fashioned brownstones in lower Manhattan, The Belnord was designed to be big, grand and impressive, 13 stories in height, and with all the latest amenities of 20th-century living. In response to the critique that apartment buildings generally had poor views – overlooking the rear facades of tenement buildings or alleyways, for example – architect H. Hobart Weeks designed The Belnord around a garden courtyard. Most of the bedrooms of The Belnord’s nearly 200 apartments look out on the courtyard. The courtyard served a functional purpose as well. At more than a half-acre, The Belnord’s courtyard was big enough to serve as the main building entrance. Carriages entered by way of barrel-vaulted passageways cut through the West 86th Street façade and circled around the courtyard to drop off or pick up residents or guests.

For more information about the tours, please email rsvp@architecturaltrust.org or visit the Trust’s website - www.architecturaltrust.org - and type “Belnord Tour” in the search field.

The Trust for Architectural Easements is one of the nation’s largest not-for-profit organizations dedicated to voluntary preservation through easement donations. The Trust protects more than 800 buildings across the United States. For more information about the Trust’s local preservation efforts, the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive Program and the donation process, contact the Trust at 888-831-2107 or visit www.architecturaltrust.org.

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