

Samuel Gompers Industrial High School

(now Mott Haven Community, Health Education & Research Occupations, and New Visions Charter High Schools)

**455 Southern Boulevard (aka 462 Wales Avenue), The Bronx
Tax Map Block 2576, Lot 26**

Built: 1931-33

Architect: William H. Gompert, with modifications by Walter C. Martin

Style: Medieval Revival, with Art Deco details

Proposed Action: Propose for calendaring, September 20, 2022



Samuel Gompers Industrial High School, LPC, 2021

Located in the Mott Haven section of the South Bronx, between East 145th and East 147th Streets, Samuel Gompers Industrial High School is an impressive and well-maintained Medieval Revival style structure with handsome Art Deco details. Visible from the elevated Bruckner Expressway, the facades are clad with various shades of light and dark brown brick, trimmed with limestone. Both six-story towers have round-arched windows flanked by terracotta reliefs, as well as inscriptions from Marcus Aurelius (Love the Trade Which Thou Hast Learned) and Benjamin Franklin (He Who Hath a Trade Hath an Estate). Reminiscent of the portals to medieval European cathedrals, the stacked panels depict modern and enduring forms of skilled labor, from drafting and woodwork to autos and aviation. Additional reliefs, executed in bronze, embellish the entrances that face Southern Boulevard and Wales Avenue. There are heroic images of workers and industry, as well as portraits of Samuel Gompers, the first and longest serving president of the American Federation of Labor.

Samuel Gompers Industrial High School was planned and designed by William H. Gompert, chief architect and Superintendent of Buildings for the Board of Education from 1923 to 1928. Under Gompert's successor, Walter C. Martin, the original design was modified in 1930, abandoning red brick for brown, while adding Art Deco-style reliefs and flourishes.

Constructed in 1931-1933, Samuel Gompers Industrial High School was described as the first vocational high school in New York City to provide a "comprehensive view of industry." In particular, the curriculum focused on the "underlying principles" of electricity, which *The Brooklyn Eagle* called "a model of its kind." As built, it contained auto, milling, and forge shops, as well as classrooms devoted to electric light and power, and auto transmission. Samuel Gompers Industrial High School first admitted female students in the early 1980s. It closed in 2012 and has been converted to an educational campus containing three secondary schools: Mott Haven Community High School, Health Education and Research Occupations High School (H.E.R.O.), and New Visions Charter High School for the Humanities II.

