Landmarks Preservation Commission
October 26, 2010, Designation List 434
LP-2386

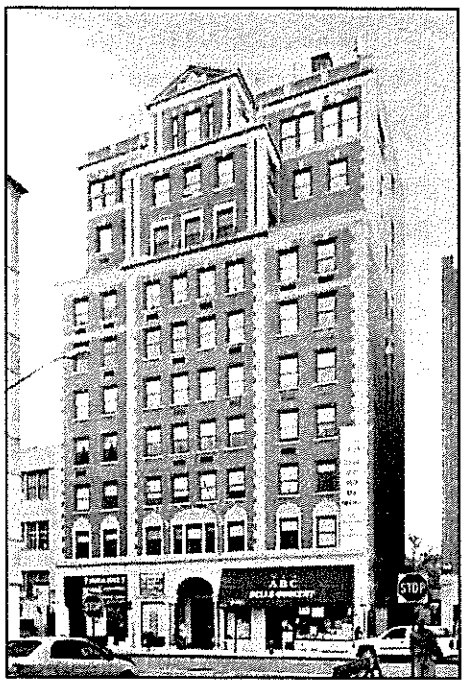
JAMAICA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUILDING, 89-31 161st Street, Borough of Queens. Built 1928-29; George W. Conable, of Conable, Smith & Rowley, architect.

Landmark Site: Borough of Queens, Tax Map Block 9760, Lot 27

On September 15, 2009, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 2). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provision of law. Three people spoke in favor of designation including representatives of the Central Queens Historical Association, New York Landmarks Conservancy, and Historic Districts Council. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. The Commission received letters of support from Queens Borough President Helen Marshall, State Senator Shirley L. Huntley, Councilmember James F. Gennaro, the Hillcrest Estates Civic Association, Four Borough Neighborhood Alliance, and Queens Preservation Council.

Summary

The Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building was constructed in 1928-29 near the heart of the Jamaica business district. Designed by architect George W. Conable, who had been responsible for the several prominent buildings in Jamaica, the building is a handsome example of the Georgian Revival style popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.



Founded in 1919 as the Jamaica Board of Trade to promote the area to businesses and residential developers, the Chamber of Commerce by 1926 had grown to a membership of nearly 500 when Secretary Max C. Bunyan suggested that the organization would benefit from having a building of its own, part of which could be rented out to support the work of the Chamber.

To reflect the prominence of the Chamber of Commerce within the burgeoning Jamaica business community, Conable designed a ten-story tall structure with a distinguished facade based on 18th-century American and British precedents. Above the terra-cotta base with its central entrance in the style of a triumphal arch, Conable emphasized the building's verticality through the division of the upper brick facade by cast-stone quoins into three sections, capping the wide center section with a prominent three-story pavilion that terminates in a pedimented temple. At the time of its dedication the building, which remained the Chamber's home until 1999, was described by the *Long Island Daily Press* as a "decided asset to the community."[1]

The remarkably intact Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building remains a significant example of the early 20th-century office buildings that were constructed in downtown Jamaica as the area turned into the financial center for Long Island.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The Development of Jamaica[2]

Historically an important crossroads of Long Island, the area of downtown Jamaica developed as a result of its central location and extensive transportation systems. Around 1836, the Long Island Rail Road, which had been incorporated in 1834, began running a trunk line from the foot of Atlantic Avenue to Jamaica and then eastward from Jamaica to eastern Long Island, making Jamaica a pivotal hub. This improved transportation encouraged non-agricultural business activity in the Jamaica area; industrial enterprises sprang up along the railroad, particularly after 1850 when the former toll road of the Brooklyn, Jamaica & Flatbush Turnpike Company was sold to a group of Jamaica businessmen who incorporated as the Jamaica & Brooklyn Plank Road Company. Following the Civil War, new modes of transportation continued to transform Jamaica by further facilitating commutation to New York City. The East New York & Jamaica Railroad Company established horse car lines along Fulton Street (renamed Jamaica Avenue in 1920) in 1866 replacing them 21 years later with electric trolleys.

The 19th century saw Jamaica evolve into a retreat for urban residents, who patronized its numerous inns and saloons on weekend excursions and built large summer homes. The permanent population of Jamaica also increased steadily throughout the second half of the 19th century, and brought with it the subdivision of farms into house lots and a proliferation of new development, as well as the growth of Jamaica's downtown. The pressure for housing increased, resulting in street regularization and somewhat denser residential development following the incorporation of Queens into the City of New York in 1898. The 1901 *Atlas of the Borough of Queens* shows two- and three-story brick and frame structures clustered along Fulton Street and freestanding frame houses and stables, on lots mostly ranging from 50 to 100 feet in width, in the surrounding streets including a substantial dwelling on the future site of the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building.

In 1898 Fulton Street, under the jurisdiction of the local government, was widened and repaved. Local business and political leaders seized the opportunity to praise the numerous advantages of Jamaica—a place with a traditional village character, yet poised to enter a new age—in an effort to encourage commerce, promote residential development, and raise property values.[3] The perceived positive impact of the impending consolidation was declared by one source in 1894: "The days of Greater New York can now be seen not very far ahead, when Jamaica will naturally form the most eastern point to which the consolidated elevated railroad can be expected to run ... very likely before the end of this [century]."[4]

Although it would be 1918 before the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company extended its elevated train service from Cypress Hills to 168th Street along Fulton Street, the decade before World War I saw several other significant transportation improvements. The Long Island Rail Road was electrified in 1905-08 followed by the opening of the railroad tunnels beneath the East River in 1910 enabling direct access between Pennsylvania Station and the towns of Long Island with a major hub in Jamaica. Surface transportation to Queens was further enhanced by the opening of the Queensboro Bridge in 1909. With this improved accessibility to Jamaica's downtown, the population of Jamaica quadrupled between 1900 and 1920 and by 1925 the lots on Jamaica Avenue between 160th and 168th Streets had the highest assessed valuation in Queens County.[5] During the 1920s and 1930s several major office and commercial structures including the J. Kurtz & Sons Store (1931, Allmendiger & Schlendorf), Suffolk Title and Guarantee Company Building (1929, Dennison & Hirons) (both designated New York City Landmarks) and

the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building had joined the Jamaica Savings Bank (1897-98, Hough & Duell, a designated New York City Landmark).

History of the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce

The Jamaica Chamber of Commerce or, as it was originally known, the Jamaica Board of Trade, was conceived at a meeting of 17 civic-minded businessmen and community leaders[6] and incorporated on May 23, 1919 for the purpose of promoting the development of Jamaica as a residential community and commercial center.[7] The Board's first home was in the Butler Building on the corner of Jamaica Avenue and Parsons Boulevard where various committees worked to improve streets and infrastructure as well as promote the advantages of Jamaica's central location with access to the city and Long Island communities to new businesses. Among their early successes were the construction of the new Jamaica High School (William H. Gompert, 1925-27 a designated New York City Landmark) and the securing of a new building for the Queens Borough Public Library on Parsons Boulevard.[8]

By the mid 1920s, the Board had outgrown its first home and moved farther out Jamaica Avenue to the Stuart Building between 163rd and 164th Streets. The growth of greater Jamaica at this time was substantial. New residential developments were being constructed and once residential streets around Jamaica Avenue were transformed as the business district expanded. By the late 1920s Jamaica had become a major financial center for Long Island as numerous banks, trust companies, and bond and mortgage companies opened offices there.[9]

The Board of Trade itself continued to grow, its membership composed of business and professional men and women had expanded to almost 500 by 1926. In July 1927, the name of the organization was changed to the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce to reflect the broader scope of the organization's interests. Within a year a committee was created to consider construction of the Chamber's own building, an idea that had been first suggested in 1926 by Secretary Max C. Bunyan as a means to improve the work of the organization, that:

> [A] building of its own, properly equipped, would be a big help towards making the Jamaica Board of Trade 100 percent efficient and...that such a building could be erected, a part of it being set aside for offices and other business purposes, and that it could be operated at a profit to the organization.[10]

Under the presidency of Major Oscar Erlandsen, a civil engineer, a building corporation, the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building, Inc., was formed to raise funds and oversee the project. To finance the design and construction of the building 5,000 shares of preferred stock with par value of $100 a share were offered for sale to the members with no one member being allowed to purchase sufficient numbers of shares to take a controlling interest. A large plot of land on the east side of 161st Street (formerly Herriman Avenue) was purchased in June 1928.[11]

Georgian Revival Style and the Design of the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce

In August 1928, plans were submitted by George W. Conable, a Jamaica resident and member of the Chamber, for a ten-story office building with commercial ground floor that would include seven stories of rentable office space and two stories reserved for the offices, meeting and dining rooms of the Chamber of Commerce. Ground was broken on August 27th and construction commenced in October.[12] The building was dedicated on May 20, 1929 and was praised by the *Long Island Daily Press* as "a decided asset to the community, and a building that can hold its own in an architectural beauty contest."[13]

Conable, who was known for his refined adaptation of historically-based designs, turned to 18th -century American and English precedents for his two buildings in the central Jamaica business district, the Georgian Revival style Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building and the earlier, Colonial Revival style Central Queens Branch of the Young Men's Christian Association (Y. M. C. A.). Popular in the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, these styles were at their peak in the conservative post-World War I era. Conable adapted the Georgian Revival style's symmetrical arrangement, contrasting materials and enriched ornament to emphasize the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building's height. Cast-stone quoins divide the mass of the upper facade through the seventh story; above it Conable set back the outside bays to focus on the building's distinctive three-story pavilion with its pedimented temple.

George W. Conable (1866-1933)[14]

Architect George Willard Conable was born in Cortland, New York on October 4, 1866 and graduated from the Cortland State Normal School (now SUNY Cortland) in 1886. Four years later he graduated from Cornell University with a bachelor's degree in architecture. He furthered his architectural training in the offices of C. P. H. Gilbert and Barney & Chapman. In 1905 he entered the office of Ernest Flagg where he was responsible for the preparation of the plans and working drawings of the Singer Building (1905-08, demolished).

In 1908, Conable designed Trinity Lutheran Church and parsonage at 164 West 100th Street in Manhattan, the same year he entered into partnership with Hobart B. Upjohn, a specialist in the design of churches.[15] From 1908 to 1914, the firm of Upjohn & Conable designed many churches of all denominations in New York and other states. Among the firm's commissions within New York City was Trinity Lutheran Church and Parish House (1913-14) in Staten Island, which is now included in the St. Paul's Avenue-Stapleton Heights Historic District.

Conable returned to independent general practice in 1914 specializing in churches, schools, and hospitals. Among his commissions were St. Paul's Lutheran Church in the Bronx, Trinity Lutheran Church in Schenectady, the bathing pavilions and other buildings at Oakland Beach, Rye, New York, Main Hall of Wagner College, Staten Island, the New Hyde Park Public School in Nassau County, and the Central High School in Cortland, New York. Conable was particularly active in Jamaica where he designed the Central Queens Branch of the Y. M. C. A. and Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building and served as consulting architect, in association with William E. Austin, on the design of the Queensboro Contagious Disease Hospital. His association with Austin began during his partnership with Hobart Upjohn and continued for several years. The two men collaborated on the Hallenbach-Hungerford Building in Manhattan and several contagious disease hospitals throughout the city. Formerly affiliated with the firm of Conable, Smith & Rowley, Assoc. Architects, at the time of his death in 1933, Conable was associated with Robert J. Schirmer and Julius W. Schmidt.

Subsequent History

Jamaica continued to grow through the 1930s and 1940s helped by the completion of the Grand Central Parkway and the extension of the IND subway to 168th Street. In the post-World War II era, Jamaica began to change and by 1980 the population had become predominately African-American and Hispanic. During the next decades immigrants from the Caribbean, South Asia, and China were also attracted to the neighborhood. Once the shopping hub for Queens and Long Island, Jamaica's commercial district, hampered by inadequate parking, lost customers to

the new shopping malls in Nassau and Queens. Revitalization of downtown Jamaica began in the 1980s with the completion of several government-financed projects such as the York College campus, the Social Security Administration office building, and the transit hub at Archer Avenue which replaced the demolished Jamaica Avenue el.[16]

The Jamaica Chamber of Commerce has continued to work for the betterment of greater Jamaica through programs such the creation of the Greater Jamaica Redevelopment Corporation and business improvement districts. In July 2010 it dedicated a new building on Rockaway Boulevard to house the Chamber offices as well as an incubator for up to eight start-up companies operated by minorities and women. The former Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building has remained in active use as an office building since the Chamber moved its offices in 1999.[17]

Description

The Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building, located on a prominent site at the head of 90th Avenue, is typical of the early 20th-century office building with its tripartite horizontal massing; however, Conable emphasized the building's verticality by dividing it into three sections, the slightly projecting center section beginning at the entrance and rising to the three-story pavilion above the seventh story.

The terra-cotta clad base features a central entrance flanked by two stores. Designed in the form of a triumphal arch, the entrance has a central arch with carved spandrels supported by granite columns in antis. "Jamaica Chamber of Commerce" is carved into the frieze of the cornice that runs across the facade above the first story.

From the second through the seventh stories, the facade of variegated brick, laid in Flemish bond, is defined by cast-stone quoins at the corners and to either side of the four-bay-wide center section. To create a transition from the commercial first story, Conable used a row of round-arched windows with full surrounds and blind fanlights flanking a segmental-arched triple window with similar surround and fanlight at the second story. At the seventh story, a simple molded cornice and windows with flared brick lintels and cast-stone keystones serve as a transition to the building's large, three-sided central pavilion.

The three-story pavilion has a two-story base with refined ornament that is topped by a pedimented temple with paired Doric pilasters, large scrolls at the corners and a large cartouche in the pediment. The side bays at the upper stories are deeply setback and minimally ornamented.

The rear of the building is sharply set back above the first, fourth, and seventh stories and is unadorned. On the roof, the building's chimney and bulkheads are well recessed in order not to intrude upon the design of the primary facade.

Main (West) Facade: The terra-cotta clad first story is composed of three bays, articulated by four pilasters decorated with rosettes in the capitals. The building's recessed entrance is approached through the central arch which opens onto a barrel-vaulted vestibule. The arch with keystone and carved spandrels springs from the cornice, here supported by Doric-style granite columns. The entrance vestibule is paved with terrazzo tile with a wide granite threshold. Paneled pilasters (one with a possibly historic doorbell) frame the tripartite doorway and two display windows with shallow bulkheads and molded cornice face each other across the vestibule. To either side of the entrance are large display windows, with shallow bulkheads, framed by Doric pilasters supporting a cornice above which are two large transom openings framed by paneled piers. Historic lighting fixtures are attached to the pilasters framing the entrance bay and another is suspended from the vaulted ceiling of the vestibule. The date 1928 is

carved into the pilaster to the right of the entrance bay. The northern store retains one of its historic recessed entrances with terrazzo flooring. The upper facade of the building is variegated brick set in Flemish bond. The windows at the second story rest on a cast-stone sill course and have full, cast-stone surrounds with keystones, impost blocks, and blind fanlights. The central segmental-arched triple window is flanked by two metal flagpoles with foliate bases and decorative bracing and two round-arched windows. Each of the side bays has two round-arched windows. The windows at the third through seventh stories have cast-stone sills. The windows at the seventh story have flared brick lintels with cast-stone keystones. Further articulating the seventh story are cast-stone band courses across the outer bays between the sixth and seventh stories. From the eighth to tenth stories the side bays are deeply recessed to offset the prominent three-story center pavilion. The cast-stone quoins at the building's corners extend through the ninth story. At the tenth story the corners are ornamented by cast-stone double pilasters. The center pavilion is ornamented by paired, two-story cast-stone pilasters with stylized capitals that support a cast-stone cornice above the ninth story. The small pedimented temple at the tenth story has paired Doric pilasters that support a cast-stone cornice. The brick-faced tympanum has a cast-stone cartouche with swags. At the tenth story, urn-shaped finials terminate the pilasters of the pavilion's base and large scrolls bracket the temple's base. The pavilion has three windows with full surrounds and iron balconies at the eighth story and flared brick lintels with cast-stone keystones and sills at the ninth story. The temple at the tenth story has a single window flanked by two narrow windows all with flared brick lintels with cast-stone keystones. There are single windows on the north and south sides of the pavilion with cast-stone sills, those on the ninth and tenth stories have flared brick lintels with cast-stone keystones. To either side of the pavilion, there are two windows at the eighth and ninth stories with cast-stone sills. Those at the ninth story have flared brick lintels with cast-stone keystones. At the tenth story there are two double windows with cast-stone sill course and one single window to each side of the pavilion. All have flared brick lintels with cast-stone keystones. Above the tenth story a brick parapet with cast-stone plaques rises above a cast-stone cornice that incorporates the cornice of the pavilion. Deeply set back on the roof are a brick chimney, a brick bulkhead with cast-stone coping, and a brick fire tower. The bulkhead has round-arched blind windows (two on the north and south and one on the east and west) which have cast-stone sills and brick lintels with cast-stone keystones and corbels. There is a small, multi-light window with cast-stone sill set into the blind window on the east. Alterations: The first story has been painted, the transoms replaced with solid panels, and both storefronts, which have been extended into the entrance bay, have been replaced. The southern storefront has roll-down security gates across the storefront including the window facing the vestibule. A fixed fabric awning with multiple attached signs extends into the entrance bay. In the extension, the front bulkhead is pierced with two vent plates and two boxes are attached to the bulkhead facing the vestibule. Two metal conduits are attached to the southernmost pilaster. At the northern store, the recessed vestibule floor has been repaired with cement and the door enframement replaced with brick. The metal-and-glass storefront has a recessed door, fixed fabric awning, and signage in all windows including that facing the vestibule. The main entrance has been replaced with a modern metal-and-glass door, sidelights and transom; the sidelights have been decorated with a stick-on design that simulates frosting. The tympanum above the door has been replaced with corrugated metal paneling and a fluorescent light fixture attached above the transom. The windows of the upper stories have been replaced with aluminum one-over-one sash and panning. Through-wall air conditioners have been randomly inserted in the upper facade. The balustrades, scrolled brackets, and finials at the

eighth story were removed prior to 1983. There are telecommunication equipment and antennas on the roof and bulkhead. A two-story tall fabric sign advertising office space for rent has been attached at the second and third stories.

South Facade: The facade is brick, offset by cast-stone quoins at the corner where it meets the main facade. The front section, which is laid in Flemish bond, has two closely-spaced bays of windows from the second through the eighth story, the eastern bay continuing to the tenth story. At the tenth story there is also a double window at the corner. There is a one-bay-wide return laid in common bond with single windows at the second through seventh stories and double windows at the eighth through tenth stories. The rear of the facade, which is laid in common bond, is set back above the first, fourth, and seventh stories at which points it is coped with clay tile. There are two window openings toward the rear of the first story; the second through fourth stories are six bays wide, the fifth through seventh are five bays and the eight through tenth stories are four bays. The windows in the first two bays are irregular in size and placement; all windows have cast-stone sills. Alterations: The first story, which abuts a landscaped public pathway, has been partially painted and three of the brick piers supporting the path's lighting are attached to the wall of the building. Decorative metal panels that are part of the path's 161st Street gate and fence are also attached to the wall. The two window openings toward the rear of the first story have been shuttered and covered with decorative grilles matching the ironwork of the pathway. Four small openings in the first story facade have been replaced with brick, a fifth retains part of a metal vent. On the roof of the first story is an air-conditioning compressor. The rear section of the facade has been painted at the eighth through tenth stories. An additional window has been cut at the ninth story in the front portion of the building. There are randomly placed through-wall air conditioners across the facade and two dish antennas, one with wires, attached to the facade. Like the primary facade, the windows have been replaced with aluminum sash and panning, those at the second story (except the front bays) are protected by metal mesh security grilles. There are six metal conduits attached to the return of the front portion of the building three of which run across the return and part of the rear portion of the building above the tenth story. A full-height metal chimney stack is attached to the rear section between the first and second bays. A metal conduit is attached to the facade at the second story. There are telecommunication antennas on the roof.

East (Rear) Facade: The six-bay wide facade is setback above the first, fourth, and seventh stories. The windows at the eighth story are irregularly spaced. The first story is coped with clay tile as are the setbacks above the fourth and seventh stories and the roof. Alterations: The facade has been painted from the second through the tenth stories. The windows have been replaced with aluminum sash and panning and those at the second story have metal mesh window grilles. Through-wall air conditioners have been randomly inserted into the facade. A metal chimney stack follows the setbacks from the second story to the roof. There are a vent and three air conditioning compressors on the roof of the first story. There are a wire with lights and metal conduit attached to the wall of the first story and a metal conduit with lights attached at the second story. There are telecommunications antennas on the roof one of which has a dish attached to it.

North Facade (partially visible): The facade is brick. The front portion, which is laid in Flemish bond, is offset by cast-stone quoins at the corner, the mass broken only by a single window at the seventh story and a double window at the tenth. The front of the building extends one story in height on the east to accommodate the fire tower. The return is one bay wide with single windows at the eighth through 11th stories and openings with metal railings at the ninth and tenth

stories. The rear portion of the building is set back above the first, fourth, and seventh stories and is six bays at the eighth and ninth stories and five bays at the tenth story. Alterations: The facade of the return and the second through tenth stories is painted. The windows have been replaced with one-over-one aluminum sash and panning. Through-wall air conditioners have been randomly inserted in the facade. A metal conduit is attached to the wall of the rear portion and telecommunication antennas attached to the wall of the fire tower, their cables attached to the return.

Site features: There are a diamond plate cellar hatch, a small hatch stamped "The Canton FDY & MCH Co.," and a standing siamese hydrant in front of the southernmost store and a standing pipe to the north of the entrance.

Researched and written by
Marianne S. Percival
Research Department

NOTES

[1] "Chamber Building Dedication Epochal Event," *Jamaica Jinjer* 10 (June 1929), 357-358.

[2] Information in this section was compiled from Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), *Former J. Kurtz & Sons Store Building Designation Report* (LP-1132) (New York: City of New York, 1981), prepared by Virginia Kurshan, 1; E. Belcher Hyde, *Atlas of the Borough of Queens* (Brooklyn: E. Belcher Hyde, 1901), vol. 1, pl. 10; Jon A. Peterson, ed., "A Research Guide to the History of Queens Borough and Its Neighborhoods" (typescript, Queens College Department of History, 1983); Frank Bergen Kelley, *Excursion Planned for the City History Club: Historic Queens* (New York: City History Club of New York, 1908), 5-6, 35; H. W. Munsell, *The History of Queens County, New York* (New York: H. W. Munsell & Co, 1882), 220-221; *Jamaica, Hempstead, Richmond Hill, Morris Park, and Woodhaven: Their Representative Men and Points of Interest* (New York: Mercantile Illustration Co., 1894), 17-21; Vincent F. Seyfried, *Jamaica Trolleys* (Long Island Trolley Histories, 1953), vol. 4, 1-5; and Theodore H. M. Prudon, ed., "Jamaica, Queens County, New York: Aspects of Its History" (typescript, Columbia University, Graduate Program for Restoration and Preservation of Historic Architecture, June 1975).

[3] Prudon, 39. See also the pamphlet *Souvenir Improvement Celebration, Jamaica, N.Y., April 20, 1898* ([Jamaica, NY: Bertram Blackwell, printer?], 1898).

[4] *Jamaica, Hempstead, Richmond Hill, Morris Park, and Woodhaven,* 18.

[5] Vincent F. Seyfried and William Asadorian, *Old Queens, N.Y. in Early Photographs* (New York: Dover, 1991), 26.

[6] The Jamaica Chamber of Commerce merged with the Queens Borough Chamber of Commerce from 1930-32. "Board of Trade Has Wonderful Growth," *Jamaica Jinjer* 7 (March 1926), 179; "Chamber Merger Overwhelmingly Popular," *Jamaica Jinjer* 11 (February 1930), 189; "Jamaica Chamber Formed," *New York Times (NYT),* February 3, 1932.

[7] The Chamber was concerned not only with central Jamaica but the adjacent outlying areas, described as being from Richmond Hill and Woodhaven on the west, Flushing on the north, Jamaica Bay on the south and the city line on the east. *Jamaica Jinjer* 10 (May, 1929), 297.

[8] *Jamaica Jinjer* 7 (March 1926), 182 and 10 (May 1929), 328. The central library was moved to a new building on Merrick Boulevard in 1966, and the former library converted into Family Court. Jeff Gottlieb, "Rededication of Queens Supreme Court House Highlights Its 60th Anniversary," (1998) http://www.nycourts.gov/library/queens/cthousehistory.shtml (July 16, 2010).

[9] *Jamaica Jinjer* 7 (March 1926), 179 and 10 (August 1928), 5.

[10] "Suggest Board of Trade Erect Building," *Jamaica Jinjer* 8 (December 1926), 101.

[11] The lot was described at the time as beginning 527.1 feet from the northeast corner of 161st Street and Jamaica Avenue and measuring 72 feet by 110.4 feet. The current description of the lot's distance (526.18 feet) and dimensions (72.11 feet by 110.5 feet) were changed in 1958, to conform to the United States Standard of Measurements. Queens County, Office of the Register, Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 3193, no. 58367, p. 407 and no. 58368, p. 409 (June 29, 1928); Liber 7045, p. 327 (April 4, 1958).

[12] *Jamaica Jinjer* 7 (March 1926), 179, 10 (May, 1929), 302, 328, 346, 350, 8 (February 1927), 158, and 10 (September 1928), 37; New York City Department of Buildings, Borough of Queens, New Building permit 7004-1928.

[13] *Jamaica Jinjer* 10 (June 1929), 357-358.

[14] This biographical section is based on the following resources: *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (New York: James T. White, 1918), vol. 16, p. 367, James Ward, *Architects in Practice New York City, 1900-1940* (Union, N. J.: J & D Associates, 1989), 15, 79; "Bryan Speaks Here 3 Times on Monday," *NYT,* May 16, 1925, 20; "George W. Conable, Is Dead," *NYT,* January 4, 1933, 17; "Brief Biographies of American Architects Who Died Between 1897 and 1947," transcribed by Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr. www.sah.org/index.php?src=gendocs&ref=BiographiesArchitects&category=resources (July 29, 2009) ; Wagner College, "Campus Facilities," www.wagner.edu/about_wagner/campus_facilities (July 2, 2010).

[15] Conable is credited with the design of Trinity Lutheran Church; however, it is unclear whether he was still practicing independently or whether he had already formed his partnership with Hobart Upjohn. Hobart B. Upjohn was the son of Richard M. Upjohn and grandson of Richard Upjohn, both of whom were renowned church architects.

[16] Vincent Seyfried, "Jamaica," *Encyclopedia of New York City* ed. by Kenneth T. Jackson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 611.

[17] In 1999 the Chamber moved to 90-25 161st Street. The new building on Rockaway Boulevard was dedicated in July 2010. Telephone conversation with Robert Richards, President, Jamaica Chamber of Commerce, July 28, 2010.

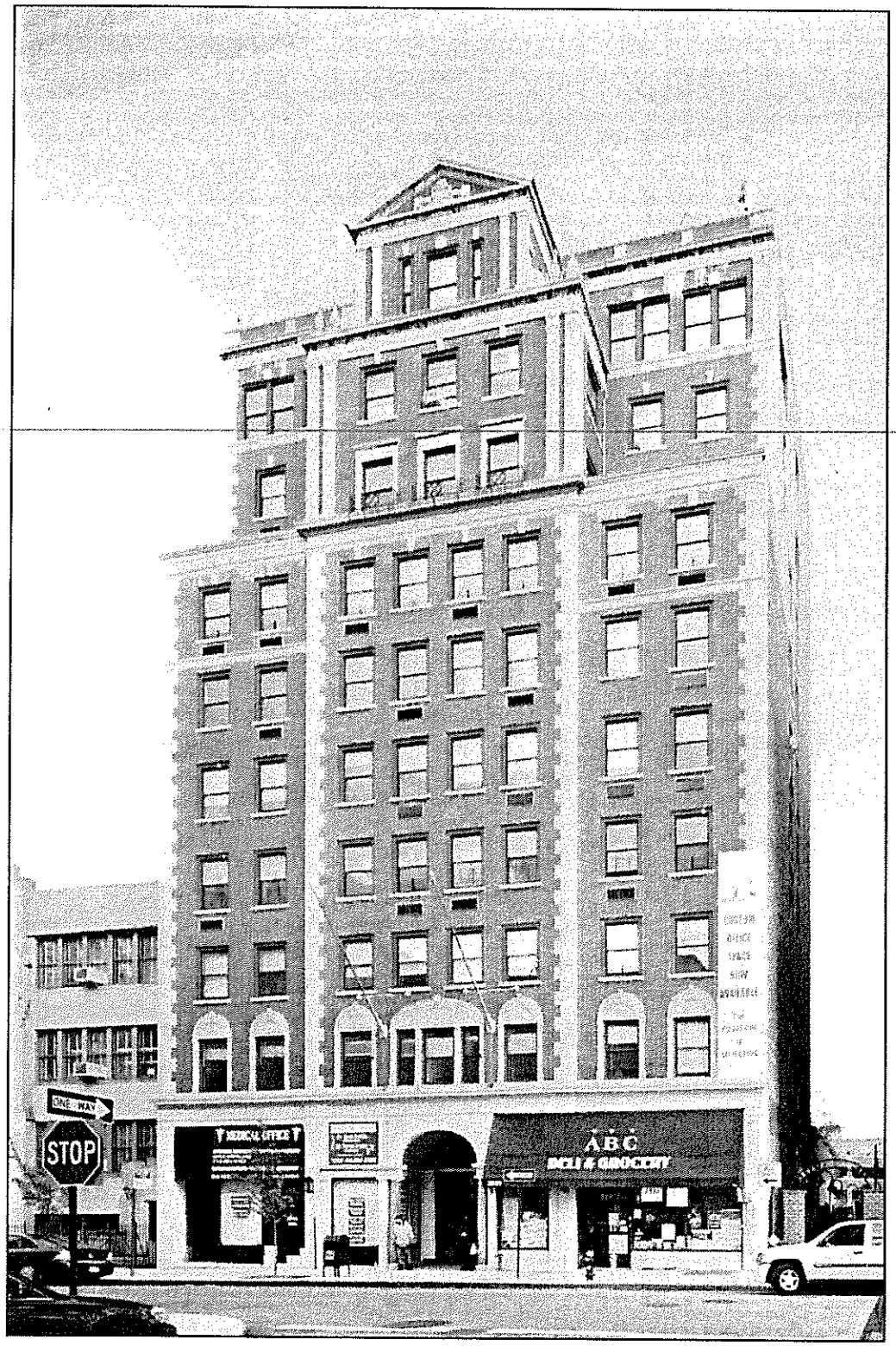
FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building has a special character, and special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building was built in 1928-29 and designed by the respected New York architect George W. Conable; that the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1919 as the Jamaica Board of Trade to promote the benefits of Jamaica to businesses and residential developers; that this ten-story office building was constructed to provide both office space and income to support the work of the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce; that to pay for its construction, a separate entity known as the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building, Inc. was incorporated and that the building was partially funded through the sale of shares in this company; that the Georgian Revival style is based on 18th-century American and British precedents such as symmetrical arrangement, contrasting materials, and classically inspired elements; that George W. Conable used the triumphal arch, quoins, and a three-story pavilion with pedimented temple to create the building's distinctive formal facade.

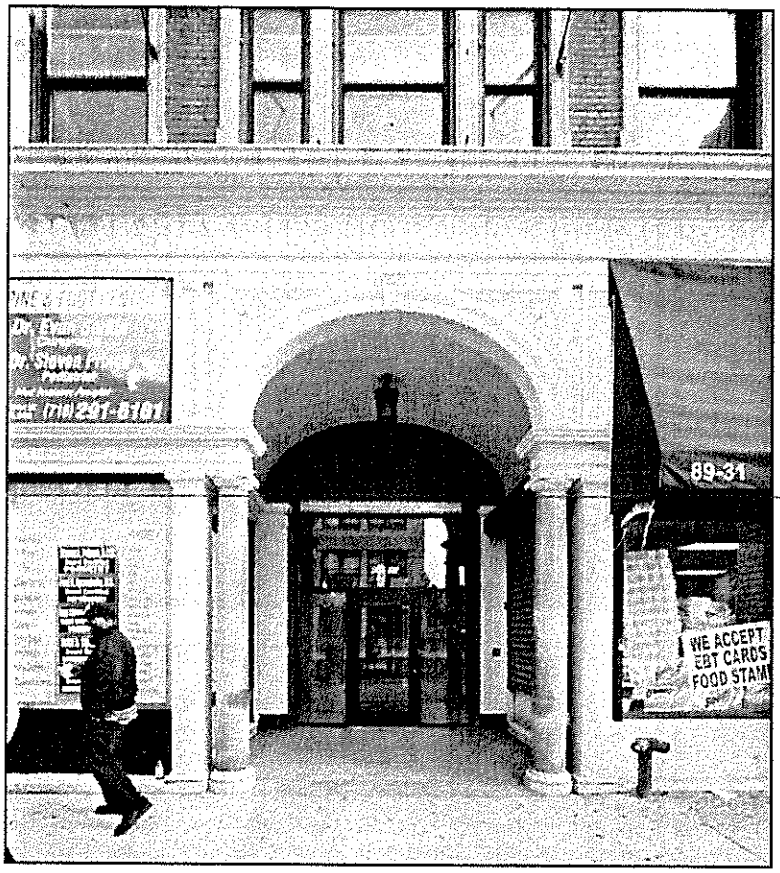
Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building, 89-31 161st Street, Borough of Queens and designates Borough of Queens Tax Map Block 9760, Lot 27 as its Landmark Site.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair
Pablo E. Vengoechea, Vice-Chair
Diana Chapin, Roberta Brandes Gratz,
Christopher Moore, Roberta Washington, Commissioners

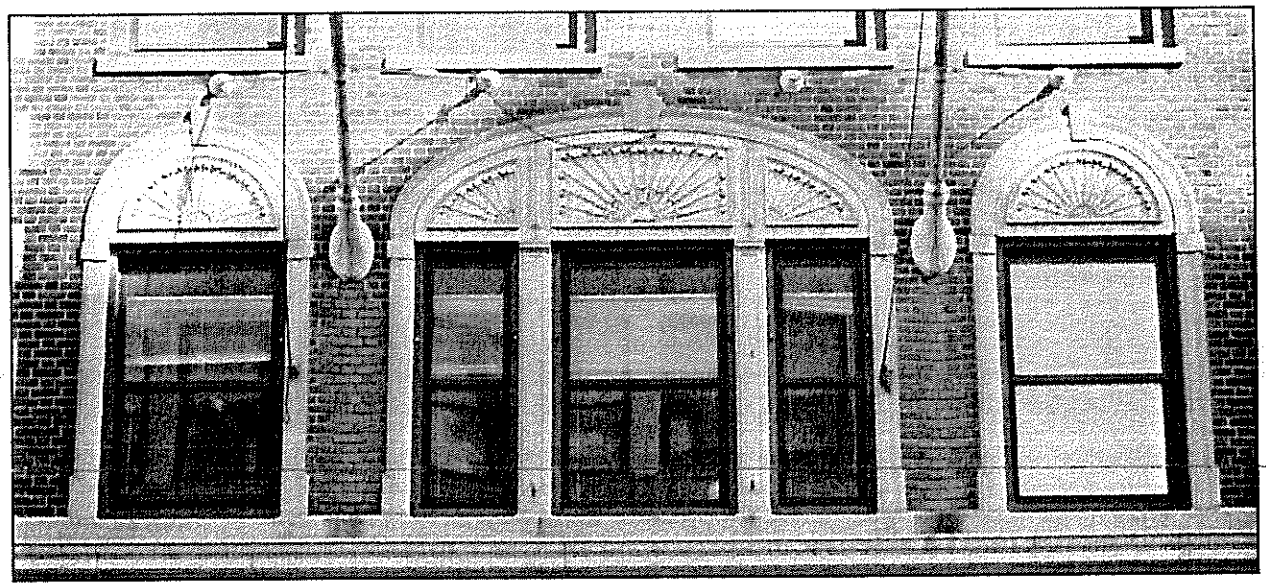


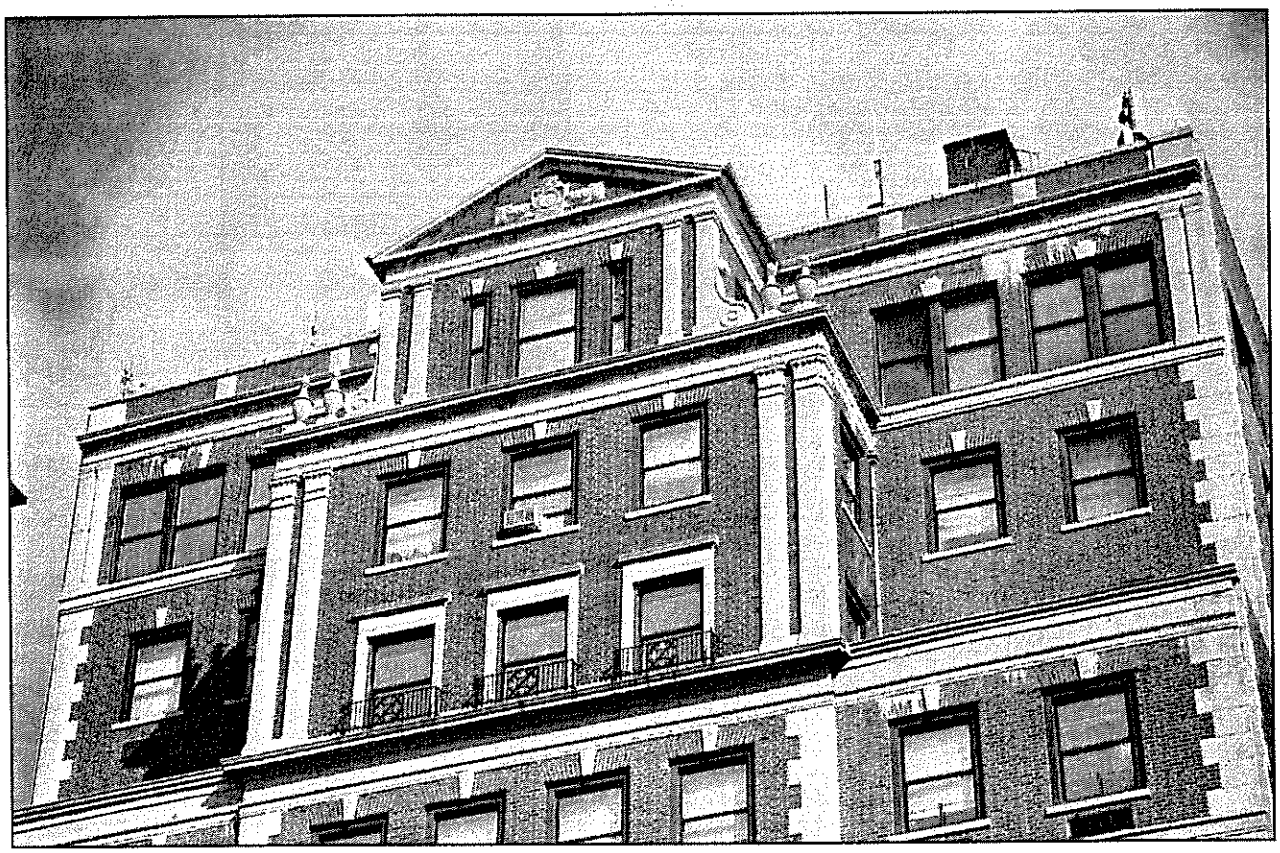
Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building
89-31 161st Street
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010

"Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building, May 15, 1936"
(Courtesy of the Queens Borough Public Library, Long Island Division, Frederick J. Weber Photographs)

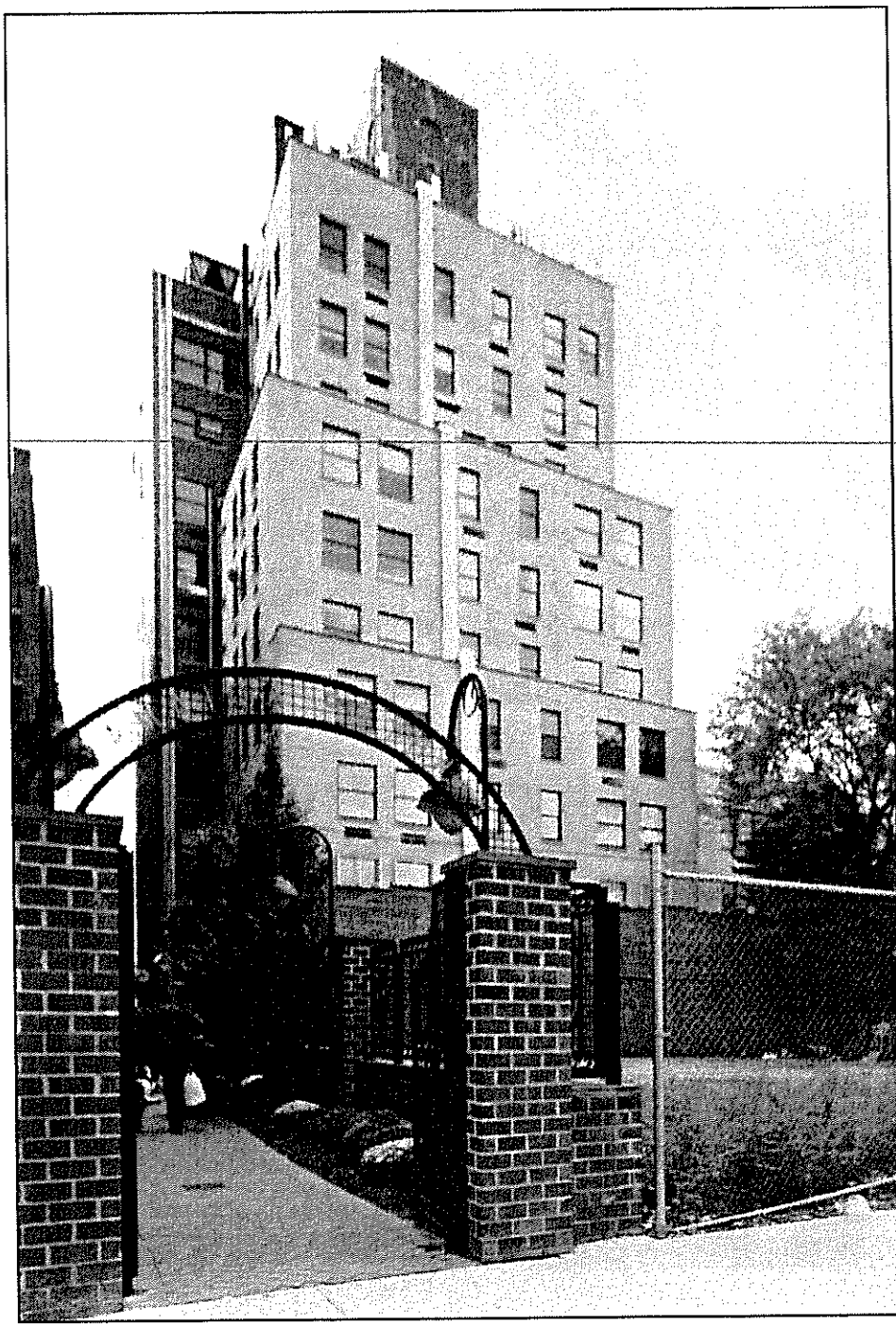


Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building, entrance details
Photos: Christopher D. Brazee and Marianne S. Percival, 2010

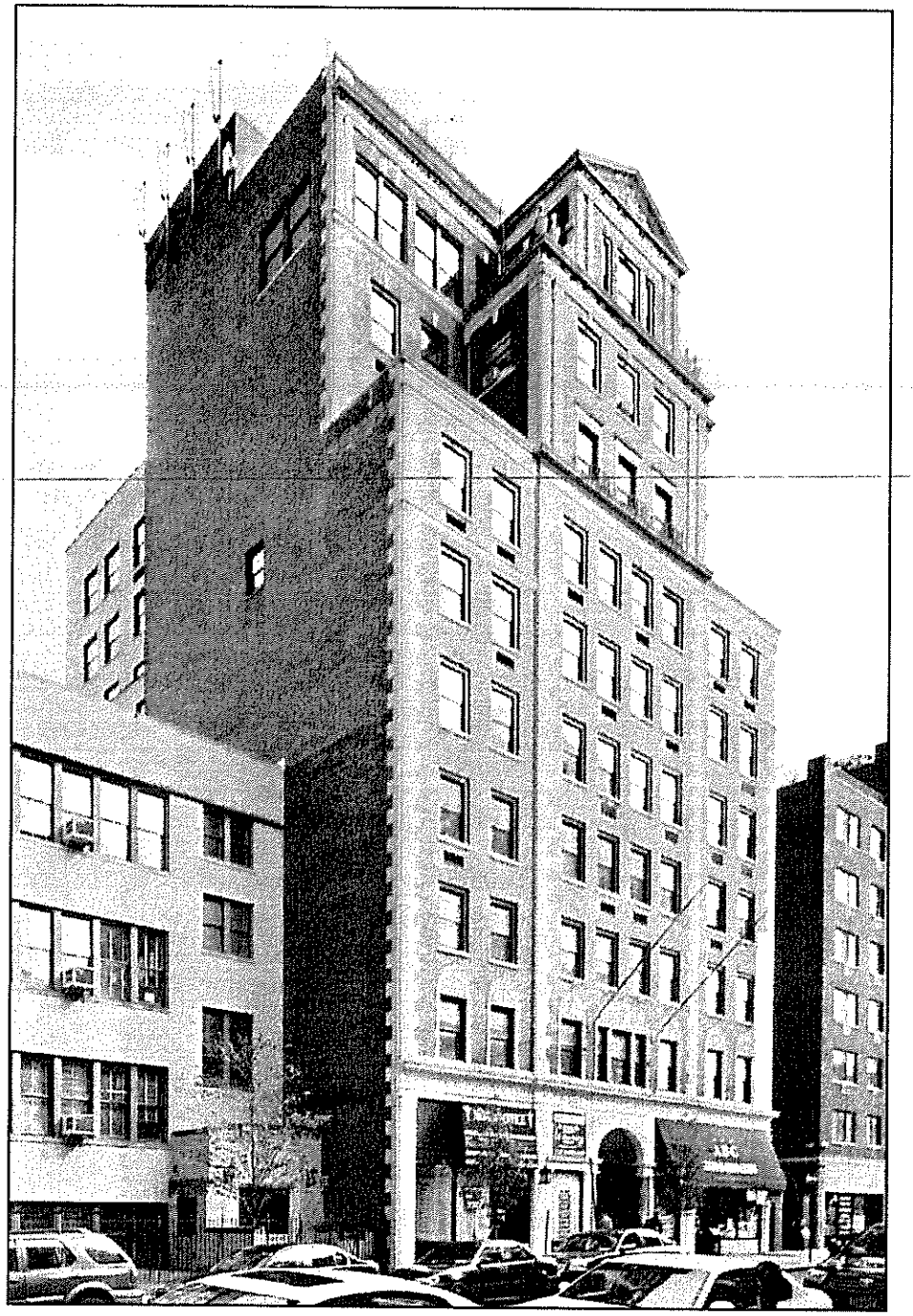




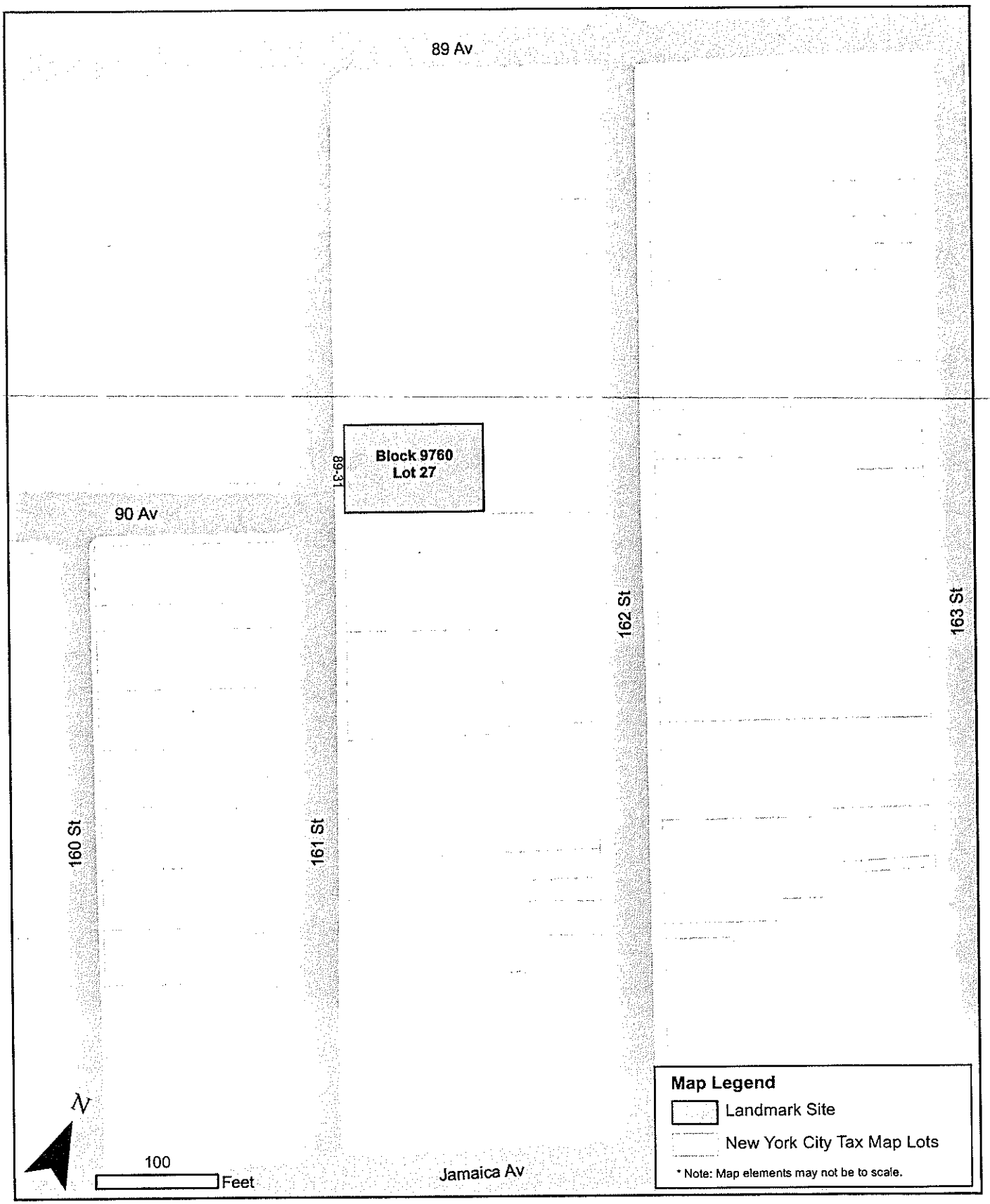
Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building
Window details and pavilion
Photos: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010



Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building
View from the south east
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010



Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building
View from the northwest
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010



JAMAICA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUILDING (LP-2386), 89-31 161st Street
Landmark Site: Borough of Queens, Tax Map Block 9760, Lot 27

Designated: October 26, 2010

Graphic Source: New York City Department of City Planning, MapPLUTO, Edition 09v1, 2009. Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, JM. Date: October 26, 2010.

Landmarks Preservation Commission
October 26, 2010, Designation List 434
LP-2393

Jamaica Savings Bank, 146-21 Jamaica Avenue (aka 146-19 to 146-21 Jamaica Avenue, 90-32 to 90-44 Sutphin Boulevard), Queens
Built 1939; Morrell Smith, architect

Landmark Site: Borough of Queens Tax Map Block 9676, Lot 37

On February 9, 2010, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Jamaica Savings Bank and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 1). The hearing was duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Four people spoke in favor of designation, including representatives of the Historic Districts Council, Queens Preservation Council, and Four Borough Neighborhood Preservation Alliance. The Commission also received letters in support of designation from Queens Borough President Helen Marshall, State Senator Shirley L. Huntley, and the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation. Two representatives of the owner spoke in opposition to designation.

Summary

The Jamaica Savings Bank was constructed in 1939 for the oldest and most prestigious banking institution in Jamaica, Queens. Designed by the noted architect Morrell Smith, the building is an excellent example of the Moderne style, with simple but well-designed details and dignified proportions. Incorporated in 1866, Jamaica Savings Bank was founded by a consortium of local citizens. The growth of the Jamaica Savings Bank paralleled the growth of the borough of Queens. The bank prospered, and established several branches to better serve customers. By 1939, the Jamaica Savings Bank had opened their main office in downtown Jamaica and another branch in Queens Village. This lot was purchased in 1934 in anticipation of the expansion of downtown Jamaica as a result of the erection of the general court house on Sutphin Boulevard, and the extension of the Eighth Avenue Subway line.

Architect Morrell Smith, celebrated for his designs of commercial bank buildings, designed this branch of the Jamaica Savings Bank in 1939. Set on a trapezoidal lot, the monumental one-story building faces the intersection with an angled façade and corner entrance. It is clad in Indiana limestone with a polished granite base. Tall rectangular windows create a vertical rhythm across the façades and a stylized Greek entablature provides a crown to the building. The slightly recessed windows have spandrel panels at the top ornamented with stars and geometric designs in low relief. An ornamental bronze doorway surmounted by an over-scaled eagle marks the entrance to the bank. The Moderne style bank displays an elegant handling of materials with abstracted classically-inspired ornament. In 1939, the Chamber of Commerce of the Borough of Queens awarded the bank first prize in an annual architectural award for a commercial building showing excellence in design and construction.

Smith utilized the most modern building design and construction methods of his time for the building, from the state-of-the-art air-conditioning system designed specifically for the structure, to the introduction of new sound absorption materials. The Jamaica Savings Bank still functions as a branch bank, and serves as a reminder of the growth and expansion of Jamaica during the twentieth century.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Development of Jamaica[1]

Jamaica, one of the oldest settlements within the boundaries of New York City, developed into the leading commercial and entertainment center of Queens County, and one of the most densely populated areas in the borough. The southern part of the area was inhabited by a Native American tribe called the Jameco, when the first Europeans arrived there in 1655. In 1656, Robert Jackson applied to Governor Stuyvesant for a patent and "purchased" ten acres of land from the native tribe,[2] and called the settlement Rusdorp.

Following the transfer of power from the Dutch to the English in 1664, Rusdrop was renamed Jamaica, after the original Native American inhabitants of the region. Queens County (incorporating present-day Queens and Nassau Counties) was chartered in 1683. The English established Jamaica as the governmental center of Queens County, with a court, county clerk's office, and parish church (Grace Episcopal Church; the present structure is a designated New York City Landmark). Outside the town center, Jamaica was largely an area of farm fields and grazing land for cattle.

A 1698 census of Queens County showed a total population of 3,366 whites and 199 blacks.[3] Although early records indicate the existence of slaves in Jamaica, throughout its history Jamaica also had a free black population. One of its most well-known African-American residents was Wilson Rantus who was born in Jamaica in 1807. He owned his own farm and invested in other residential properties in the town. Well-educated, he started a school for black children and became involved in the effort, along with other African-Americans such as Samuel V. Berry of Jamaica and Henry Amberman of Flushing, to achieve the right to vote for African-American citizens.[4]

New York State incorporated Jamaica as a village in 1814. Jamaica's central location in Queens County and the extensive transportation network that developed in the town during the 19th century resulted in the transformation of the community into the major commercial center for Queens County and much of eastern Long Island. It was the arrival of the railroads that began this transformation.[5] The roads and rail lines connecting Jamaica with other sections of Queens County, with Brooklyn to the west, eastern Long Island, and ferries to New York City had a tremendous impact. Jamaica's farmland was soon being subdivided into streets and building lots, and new homes were erected.

By the turn of the century, Jamaica's importance as a commercial area became evident in the impressive buildings beginning to appear on Jamaica Avenue, most notably the Beaux-Arts Jamaica Savings Bank, 161-02 Jamaica Avenue (Hough & Deuell, 1897-98, a designated New York City Landmark). After Jamaica was incorporated into the borough of Queens and became a part of New York City on January 1, 1898, additional transportation improvements brought increasing numbers of people.[6] As a result, the population of Jamaica quadrupled between 1900 and 1920.

It was during the 1920s, when the major mass transit links were in place, and during a period when private automobile ownership was growing at an extraordinary rate, that Jamaica experienced its major expansion as a commercial and entertainment center. By 1925, Jamaica Avenue between 160th Street and 168th Street had the highest assessed valuation in Queens County.[7]

During the 1920s and 1930s, many small-scale commercial buildings were erected in Jamaica, as well as several major office and commercial structures including the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building, 89-31 161st Street (George W. Conable, 1928-29); the Suffolk Title Guarantee Company Building, 90-04 161st Street (Dennison & Hirons, 1929, a designated New York City Landmark); and the J. Kurtz & Sons Store, 162-65 Jamaica Avenue (Allmendinger & Schlendorf, 1931, a designated New York City Landmark). This branch of Jamaica Savings Bank was built during this time. In addition, Jamaica developed into a significant entertainment center. By the mid-1930s, there were at least eight movie theaters on or just off Jamaica Avenue, and there were more than 60 restaurants, bars and clubs, ranging from small ethnic taverns to elegant restaurants.

Growth continued throughout the 20th century as more people purchased automobiles and new areas not reached by mass transit became accessible. An article in the *Long Island Daily Press* in 1956 called Jamaica "the fastest growing community in America."[8]

History of the Jamaica Savings Bank[9]

The Jamaica Savings Bank, the oldest and most prestigious banking institution in Jamaica, was incorporated on April 20, 1866, in the midst of the "wildcat" banking period following the Civil War. The bank was established in the basement of the County Clerk's Office and opened on July 14, 1866, with 15 customers depositing a total of $2,675.00. The County Clerk's Office (later the Register's Office) was located in a building that previously stood on the site of the present Register/Jamaica Arts Center building (a designated New York City Landmark).

The bank was founded by a group of distinguished local business leaders and prominent citizens. Among the 19 charter trustees was John Alsop King (1788-1867), who served as a U.S. Congressman and as Governor of New York State in 1857-58.[10] He was the eldest son of Rufus King, a Federalist statesman, abolitionist, minister to Great Britain, and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. The King Mansion (1733-55; additions, 1806, 1810, c.1830s, a designated New York City Landmark) still stands at 150th Street and Jamaica Avenue. John A. King was admitted to the bar shortly before being commissioned as a lieutenant of cavalry in the War of 1812. King launched his political career in 1819-21 when he sat in the State Assembly, and later in the State Senate (1823-25, 1832, 1838, and 1840). He was sent to the U.S. Congress as a Whig representative, served as a delegate to several Whig national conventions, and in 1856, was a delegate to the first Republican national convention. In the following year he began his term as Governor of New York State. King was stricken with paralysis and died in 1867, the year after the founding of the Jamaica Savings Bank.

Following distinguished service as a colonel in the Civil War, Aaron DeGrauw became the first president of the Jamaica Savings Bank, a post he maintained for 33 years until 1899.[11] Described as "an energetic capitalist destined to be the most prominent banker in Jamaica," DeGrauw was an entrepreneur in the transportation field, operating several turnpikes as well as the East New York & Jamaica Railroad Company.[12] A leader in civic affairs, DeGrauw also served as president of Jamaica village and on the commission in charge of the construction of the town hall, built in 1870, at the corner of Fulton Street and Flushing Avenue.

By 1874 the business of the Jamaica Savings Bank had grown significantly, with 630 accounts on the books and $177,465.00 in deposits. In that year the bank purchased for $12,000 a two-and-one-half story frame building which belonged to the County Clerk's Office and stood on the site of the present bank building at 161-02 Jamaica Avenue. As the bank grew, more spacious quarters were needed; it is also likely that consideration was given to enhancing the image and status of the institution with a new, handsomely-designed bank building which would foster confidence in the bank's depositors and exhibit its prosperity. The new 1897-98 bank building, (a designated New York City Landmark) a rare example of the Beaux-Arts style in Queens, conveyed the kind of monumentality that is often associated with private social clubs and civic institutions.

The growth in the business of the Jamaica Savings Bank following World War I paralleled that of Jamaica's downtown, which had become the foremost commercial center of Queens. In 1924, when Jamaica Savings Bank first enlarged its headquarters building, there were seven banks in Jamaica, and the local press referred to Jamaica Avenue as "Financial Row."[13] In 1923 the Jamaica Savings Bank commissioned local architect William H. Spaulding to design a rear addition to the headquarters building.[14] In 1932 architect Morrell Smith was hired to further enlarge the building, necessitating the demolition of the old frame structure that still stood at the rear of the site.[15]

Jamaica continued to prosper during the mid-20th century, as did the Jamaica Savings Bank, resulting in the bank purchasing a lot with an existing building for a new branch bank in 1934. The erection of the general court house on Sutphin Boulevard, and the extension of the Eighth Avenue Subway line, influenced the bank's decision to build a new branch on the northwest corner of Jamaica Avenue and Sutphin Boulevard.[16] In 1938 Jamaica Savings Bank President George S. Downing announced plans for the demolition of the existing building at Jamaica Avenue and Sutphin Boulevard, as "the building ceased to be adequate in serving its depositors, and a new more modernistic building became necessary."[17] The officers and trustees touted the new bank as "a distinct contribution to the civic

betterment of community." [18] When the Moderne style bank at 146-21 Jamaica Avenue and Sutphin Boulevard opened, Jamaica Savings Bank was the 47th largest savings institution in the United States. During the mid-twentieth century the Jamaica Savings Bank expanded several times, merging with the Queensboro Savings Bank in 1934, the Savings Bank of Central Queens in 1937, and the Rockaway Savings Bank in 1957.

Bank Design[19]

During the 19th century, bank design in this country incorporated both the construction of individual buildings and the conversion of private homes into bank offices, a popular practice after the Civil War. In the wake of an unsettled financial situation during the 1870s, bank officials saw the advantage of creating substantial freestanding edifices that would assert a presence in the community, and signal financial stability. This desire for a show of soundness and durability was particularly important to savings banks, which tended to be less centrally located and needed to appeal to individual investors.

In the first part of the 20th century, buildings with Classical elements such as columns, arches, and cornices communicated a sense of continuity and tradition during periods of pre-and post-World War economic instability. Through most of the 1920s, Classical designs with Greek and Roman precedents dominated the design of banks, whether built as freestanding institutions or as a base for a larger office structures. The use of monumental Classical designs frequently resulted in banks being the most significant buildings in a community. Not surprisingly, the design and construction of banks were frequent topics in the architectural press.[20] By the late 1920s, changes in banking practices and the need of the clientele "contributed to the gradual retreat from the austere monumentality of Roman and [Italian] Renaissance classicism to more vernacular idioms."[21]

The architectural firm of York & Sawyer, one of the most prolific bank designers of this period, helped break the traditional Classical style of banks in New York by using a variety of precedents such as the French Renaissance style in the 1924 extension to the Franklin Savings Bank on 42nd Street and Eighth Avenue (demolished), a Florentine Renaissance style palazzo for the Federal Reserve Bank at Liberty and Nassau Streets and Maiden Lane (1919-24, a designated New York City Landmark), and Byzantine and Romanesque styles for the Bowery Savings Bank on 42nd Street (1921-23 and 1931-33, a designated New York City Landmark and Interior Landmark). Once York & Sawyer used different stylistic treatments for bank buildings, other architects began to employ a variety of sources, including among others, Georgian and American Colonial. In addition the banking industry, as was true in other fields, needed to address the greater influence of women in the public realm and the move towards less formality in business. In the late 1920s, bank designers, and other architects were influenced by the modern designs initially displayed in Paris at the 1925 Exposition International des Arts Décoratifs. Architectural firms such as Dennison & Hirons, Starrett & Van Vleck and Morrell Smith became known for their simplified Art Deco or Moderne style bank designs and these styles were often used for branch banks in the outer boroughs.

Moderne Style [22]

The Moderne style can be understood as a variant of the Art Deco style of architecture, which reached the height of its popularity in this country at the end of the 1920s and into the early years of the 1930s. Art Deco, called an "avant-garde traditionalist"[23] approach to creating a contemporary idiom for buildings of the period, was based on accepted, standard forms and construction techniques, which were given a modern cast through the use of a characteristic ornament, and a variety of often luxurious materials, some new and some simply used in new ways. Design and ornamental ideas used in Art Deco were shaped by numerous influences including: the well-publicized designs of the Vienna Secessionists, the Wiener Werkstätte, German Expressionists, as well as American architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Sullivan, contemporary theatre set designs, and Mayan and other Native American forms. The name derives from the 1925 Exposition International des Arts Décoratifs in Paris where it was popularized. After 1925 this style began to be seen on all types of buildings in America, from stores to schools, railroad stations, municipal buildings, theatres, and especially skyscrapers. As the Depression set

in and the rich materials and fine craftsmanship necessary for Art Deco style buildings were no longer possible to obtain, buildings became more stripped down, more easily produced with modern technology and with less expense. Unlike Art Deco, Moderne is simple, unadorned, and horizontal. The Moderne style was a later more simplified version of this earlier type, with straight, simple lines, minimal applied ornament, and modern mass-produced materials. In the Moderne style stripped-down classical architectural elements such as pilasters, lintels, and cornices were fitted into this modern framework. Jamaica Savings Bank at 146-21 Jamaica Avenue is a fine example of this simplified style, with its straightforward details and dignified proportions.

Morrell Smith

Morrell Smith (1876-1947),[24] was born in Springfield, Queens, New York. He was fluid in a wide variety of architectural styles, and was particularly active in the borough of Queens. He opened his first office in Far Rockaway, Queens in 1896.[25] Starting in 1920, Smith developed an extensive relationship with the Bank of Manhattan, now Chase Manhattan Bank, by becoming the architect for their branch offices. Among these were: the Jamaica branch (1921) at 162nd Street and Jamaica Avenue; the Jackson Heights branch (1922) at 82nd Street and Roosevelt Avenue; the Bronx Executive offices and bank branch (1930) at 369 E. 149th Street at Third Avenue.[26] He received several awards for his designs of bank branch offices, among these were: the Queens Plaza building (1927) an 11-story office building in Long Island City at 27-29 41st Avenue, the tallest building in Queens when completed,[27] and a Bank of Manhattan Trust Company Far Rockaway branch (1930) at Central Avenue.[28]

In 1929 Smith established himself as an architect in Manhattan, with offices at 101 Park Avenue and later with offices at 475 Fifth Avenue until 1940. Also in 1929, Smith was selected by Mayor Walker as one of the technical experts to the advisory committee, to aide in drafting a new building code. Among Morrell Smith's finest known works was a neo-Tudor office building designed for the Queensboro Corporation (1929) on 82nd Street and 37th Avenue in the Jackson Heights Historic District. This building was designed as a part of a group of commercial structures that were an early planning attempt to integrate the commercial area of a neighborhood with its surrounding residential community. In early 1938 Smith was commissioned to design the new bank branch on Jamaica Avenue and Sutphin Boulevard, which received an award for design innovation.[29]

Design and Construction

In anticipation of the rapid growth of borough of Queens and particularly the neighborhood of Jamaica, land on Jamaica and Sutphin Boulevard was purchased in 1934 for a new branch office for the Jamaica Savings Bank.[30] The bank's executives commissioned Morrell Smith to design the new branch. His earlier designs for the addition to Jamaica Savings Bank's headquarters, and other successful branch banks, made him an obvious choice. Construction of the building attracted attention from the local and national press, due in part to its innovative design and modern amenities. In 1939, the Chamber of Commerce of the Borough of Queens awarded the bank "First Prize for Excellence of Design and Construction." The bank was one of seven recipients of an annual architectural award for commercial buildings showing excellence in design and construction.

Moderne in style, with uncomplicated details and dignified proportions, the building at Jamaica Avenue and Sutphin Boulevard utilized the most modern building design and construction methods of its time, from the state-of-the-art air conditioning system designed specifically for this building, which controlled temperature and humidity and removed dust and odors, to the introduction of new sound absorption materials.[31] All of these elements contributed to the unique design of this impressive bank building.

Subsequent History

Jamaica Savings Bank celebrated it 105th anniversary in 1971, with one billion dollars in assets.[32] In 1983, Jamaica Savings Bank converted to Federal Jamaica Savings bank. In 1990, the bank was converted from a privately owned mutual savings bank to a stock savings bank in which shares were

sold to the general public.[33] North Fork Bancorp acquired the eleven branches of the Jamaica Savings Bank in 1999.

Description

Jamaica Savings Bank is a monumental one-story building that faces the intersection of Jamaica Avenue and Sutphin Boulevard, with an angled façade and corner entrance. It is clad in Indiana limestone with a high base of polished granite. The building has a longer frontage along Sutphin Boulevard. The canted corner accentuates a vertical composition that begins with the entrance, and is followed by a multi-light window, whose lintel features an American eagle perched on the keystone that is flanked by Greek key carved in low-relief, and surmounted by the original flagpole. A non-historic concrete, combined ramp and step with non-historic metal railing, leads to the angled entrance. The entrance features a granite pediment that rests on fluted pilaster enframements, the pediment features carved scallop work and two raised, five-point stars at either side. Flanking, historic, ornamental cast-bronze paneled reveals, leads to a non-historic double-leaf metal-and-glass-door, with an historic bronze multi-light transom. The Jamaica Avenue facade contains two angled bays; each bay has a large, slightly recessed, multi-light window with a lintel that features, dancette molding and three five-point stars carved in low relief. This design feature is repeated on each window of the building. The first bay contains a small non-historic sign just above the granite base to the right of the entrance. A large removable non-historic sign runs the width of both angled bays, and rests above the windows. The Sutphin Boulevard facade contains seven bays. The first bay on the Sutphin Boulevard facade is slightly recessed and has been altered to lengthen the multi-light window. The facade also contains a small non-historic sign just above the granite base to the left of the entrance. The next five bays protrude slightly, each has a large multi-light window with the same ornamental design features of the windows on the Jamaica Avenue facade. The windows are crowned by a stone frieze engraved with the statement: FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF THRIFT. To the right of the frieze is a large removable non-historic sign that rests above the windows. The last bay is slightly recessed, it contains a non-historic metal door, next, a small multi-light window, followed by a metal louvered vent. Multiple low-relief bands and a stylized Greek fret work form an entablature and provide a crown to the entire building that is surmounted at angled corner facade, by the historic flagpole that rests on a projecting key-block base at the roof level.

Report prepared by
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NOTES

[1] The information in this section comes from numerous sources, including: Benjamin F. Thompson, *History of Long Island* (New York: E. French, 1839); Kenneth Jackson, Ed., "Jamaica," *The Encyclopedia of New York* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 610-611; LPC, *Suffolk Title and Guarantee Company Building Designation Report* (LP-2088) (New York: City of New York, 2001), prepared by Virginia Kurshan; LPC, *(Former) Jamaica Savings Bank Designation Report* (LP-2109) (New York: City of New York, 2008), prepared by Elisa Urbanelli, Marjorie Pearson, and Michael D. Caratzas; and Vincent F. Seyfried, *Jamaica Trolleys* (Long Island Trolley Histories, vol. 4, 1953), 1-5.

[2] The Native American "system of land tenure was that of occupancy for the needs of a group," and those sales that Europeans deemed outright transfers of property were, to Native Americans, closer to leases or joint tenancy

contracts in which they still had rights to the property. Reginald Pelham Bolton, *New York City in Indian Possession*, 2nd ed. (New York: Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, 1920; reprint 1975), 7, 14-15.

[3] Jeff Gottlieb, "History of Jamaica" (n. p.), in the clippings file of the Long Island Division, Queens Library.

[4] LPC, *Jamaica High School Designation Report* (LP-2316) (New York: City of New York, 2009), prepared by Virginia Kurshan.

[5] In the early 19th century, the King's Highway, which led from Brooklyn to Queens along the route of a Native America trail, had become a toll road, known as the Brooklyn, Jamaica & Flatbush Turnpike. In 1832, the Brooklyn and Jamaica Railroad Company was established. It purchased the turnpike and began construction of a rail line. Two years later, the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) was founded. It leased the Brooklyn and Jamaica's right of way, inaugurating service between Jamaica and a ferry at the foot of Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn in 1836; the line was extended eastward to Hicksville a year later. The opening of the initial LIRR line through Jamaica established the village as a transportation hub, but other developments increased Jamaica's importance. In 1850, Jamaica Avenue was converted into a plank road by the Jamaica & Brooklyn Plank Road Company, thus improving road transportation between the Fulton Ferry and Queens County. Horsecar lines began operation on the avenue in 1866 when the East New York & Jamaica Railroad Company inaugurated service; the horsecars were replaced by electric trolleys in the mid-1880s. In 1860, the LIRR began service from a ferry landing at Hunter's Point to Jamaica, and in 1869 a rival railroad company, the South Side Railroad, began service between Jamaica and Patchogue.

[6] These improvements included the widening and repaving of Jamaica Avenue (known as Fulton Street until about 1918) in 1898; the electrification of the LIRR in 1905-08; the opening of the Queensborough Bridge in 1909; the completion of the LIRR's tunnel beneath the East River in 1910 (the bridge and tunnel obviated the need for ferries, thus cutting community time to and from Long Island and Manhattan); and the completion of the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company's elevated railroad on Jamaica Avenue in 1918.

[7] The importance of Jamaica's geographic location and the development of the area as a transportation and commercial hub were recognized in the *WPA Guide to New York City*: "Jamaica, the community around Jamaica Avenue and Parsons Boulevard, is the geographic center of Queens. Most of the important Brooklyn and Queens highways that lead to Nassau County and eastern Long Island pass through Jamaica. It is the terminus of the BMT and Independent subways and the principal transfer station of the Long Island Railroad. Along the main thoroughfare, Jamaica Avenue there has evolved a comprehensive suburban shopping center." *WPA Guide to New York City* (New York: Random House, 1939; reprinted New York: Pantheon, 1982), 583.

[8] William A. Raidy, "Jamaica Marks 300th Birthday," *Long Island Daily Press*, March 11, 1956.

[9] Information in this section is partially based on LPC, *(Former) Jamaica Savings Bank Designation Report*; most of the information is compiled from articles found in the Jamaica History Vertical File, Queens Borough Public Library: "Jamaica Landmark to Give Way to Expansion of Bank," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle,* January 18, 1932; "Savings Bank 69 Years Old," *Long Island Daily Press,* October 28, 1935; "Bank Marks 70th Year of its Existence," *Long Island Daily Press*, July 14, 1936; "Savings Bank Celebrates its 75th Year," *Long Island Daily Press,* July 14, 1941; and "Jamaica Savings Bank Marks 75th Milestone," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle,* July 14, 1941. See also the souvenir booklet *Jamaica Old and New* (New York: Jamaica Savings Bank, 1924).

[10] For information on King, see Dumas Malone, Ed., *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960-61).

[11] For information on DeGrauw, see "Savings Bank Celebrates its 75th Year"; and Seyfried, 3.

[12] Seyfried, 3.

[13] "Jamaica National Bank Formally Opened," *Jamaica Jinjer* 4, no. 1 (August 1924), 5-7.

[14] The addition was 32 feet deep, which made the total depth of the building approximately 80 feet; the main-floor banking room was completely redesigned and two new vaults were constructed. Borough of Queens, Department of Buildings, ALT No. 1372-1923. The estimated cost of the project was given as $55,000. Work was completed in 1924.

[15] Borough of Queens, Department of Buildings, ALT No. 7668-1931. The cost of this project, completed in 1932, was estimated at $40,000. The brick-and-steel extension made the building's depth about 140 feet, and a small addition was also made in the alleyway at the east side of the building, toward the front of the site.

[16] According to a 1938 article, "Rapid Growth of Jamaica has Precipitated Action."

[17] "Jamaica Savings Bank to Build a New Home," *New York Times*, August 28, 1938; "Architects View of the Bank," *The Queens Review*, September 2, 1938; "Jamaica Savings Bank Will Have New Modernistic Building Soon," *Long Island Daily*, September 2, 1938, 8; "Jamaica Savings Bank Opens New Sutphin Blvd. Building," *Queensborough* (April 1939), 4.

[18] Ibid, 22.

[19] Information in this section is adapted from: Robert A. M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin and John Massengale, *New York 1900* (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), 177-183; Robert A. M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin and Thomas Mellins, *New York 1930* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987), 171-187.

[20] In June, 1923 (vol. 38) and again in June, 1948 (vol. 48), the *Architectural Forum* ran a series of articles on different issues around the design of banks, by architects specifically involved in this endeavor, such as Phillip Sawyer of York & Sawyer, Frederic Hirons of Dennison & Hirons, and Alfred Hopkins of Hopkins & Dentz.

[21] Stern, *New York 1930*, 173.

[22] Information in this section is adapted from: LPC, *Barclay-Vesey Building Designation Report* (LP-1745) (New York: City of New York, 1991), prepared by David Breiner; LPC, *Long Distance Building of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company Designation Report* (LP-1747) (New York: City of New York, 1991), prepared by David Breiner; LPC, *Western Union Building Designation Report* (LP: 1749) (New York: City of New York, 1991), prepared by Betsy Bradley; Rosemarie Haag Bletter and Cervin Robinson, *Skyscraper Style: Art Deco New York.*(New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 88; David Gebhard, *The National Trust Guide to Art Deco in America* (New York: Preservation Press, 1996); and LPC research files.

[23] Bletter and Robinson, 71.

[24] 1910 United States Census, Ward 5, Queens, New York, Roll T624-1068, Page 10B, Enumeration District 1250, Image 1058.

[25] "Building Notes," *The School Journal,* LV (July 1, 1897, to December 1, 1897), 733; in 1897 one of Morrell Smith's first commissions was an elementary school in Far Rockaway.

[26] "Bronx Bank Building," *New York Times*, February 9, 1930, RE2.

[27] "Queens Borough Buildings Get Architectural Awards," *New York Times*, January 29, 1928, 153.

[28] "Chamber Of Commerce Awards for Queens Buildings," *New York Times*, January 26, 1928, 154.

[29] "Symbol of Progress," *Queensborough Chamber of Commerce* (December 1939), 4, 29.

[30] Information in this section was compiled from New York City, Borough of Queens, Department of Buildings Plans, Permits, and Dockets (Block 9676, Lot 37).

[31] "Jamaica Savings Bank Opens New Sutphin Boulevard Building," *Queensborough Chamber of Commerce* (April 1939), 4.

[32] "Jamaica Savings Bank," *Long Island Press*, May 21, 1971, 47.

[33] "Jamaica Savings Bank: Concern Will Convert Itself to Stockholder Ownership," *Wall Street Journal*, May 22, 1990.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

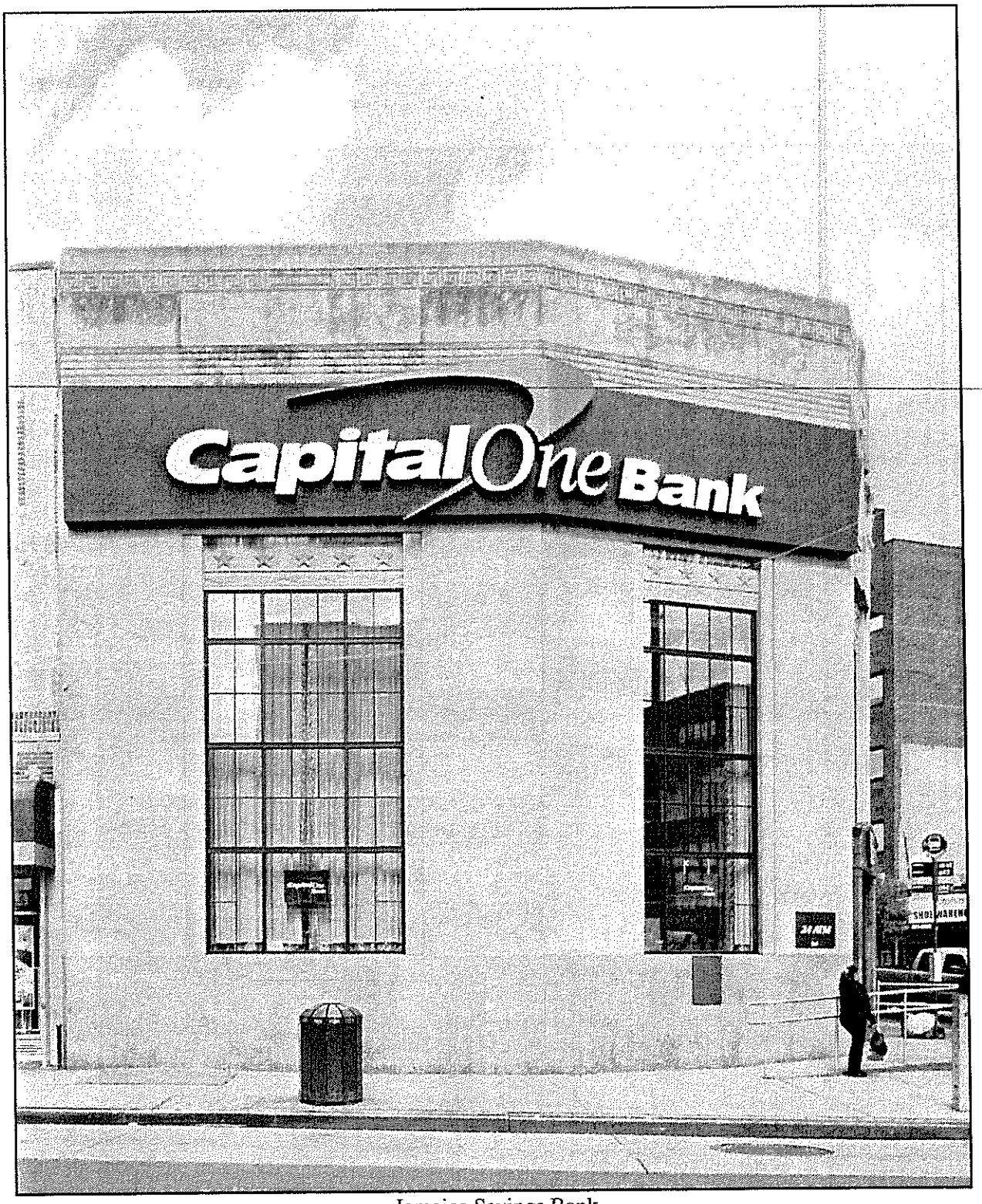
On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and the other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Jamaica Savings Bank has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Jamaica Savings Bank was constructed in 1939 for the oldest and most prestigious banking institution in Jamaica; that it was designed by the noted architect Morrell Smith; that the building is an excellent example of the Moderne style with simple but well-designed details and dignified proportions; that the Jamaica Savings Bank was incorporated in 1866 and was founded by a consortium of local citizens; that the growth of the Jamaica Savings Bank paralleled the growth of the Borough of Queens; that as the bank steadily prospered, business necessitated the establishment of several branches to better serve their customers; that by 1939, the Jamaica Savings Bank was thoroughly invested in the community of Jamaica, New York, with one large main office in downtown Jamaica and another branch in Queens Village; that this lot was purchased in 1934 in anticipation of the expansion of downtown Jamaica; that the erection of the general court house on Sutphin Boulevard, and the extension of the Eighth Avenue Subway line, all influenced the bank's decision to build a new branch on the northwest corner of Jamaica Avenue and Sutphin Boulevard; that Morrell Smith, celebrated for his designs of commercial bank buildings, designed this branch of the Jamaica Savings Bank in 1939; that set on a trapezoidal lot, the monumental one-story building faces the intersection with an angled façade and corner entrance; that it is clad in Indiana limestone with a polished granite base; that tall rectangular windows create a vertical rhythm across the façades and a stylized Greek entablature provides a crown to the building; that the slightly recessed windows have spandrel panels at the top ornamented with stars and geometric designs in low relief; that the Moderne style bank displays an elegant handling of materials, abstracted classically-inspired ornament; that an ornamental bronze doorway surmounted by an over-scaled eagle marks the entrance to the bank; that in 1939, the Chamber of Commerce of the Borough of Queens awarded the bank first prize in an annual architectural award for a commercial building showing excellence in design and construction; that Smith utilized the most modern building design and construction methods of its time for the building, from the state-of-the-art air conditioning system designed specifically for the structure to the introduction of new sound absorption materials; that the Jamaica Savings Bank, which still functions as a branch bank, remains an impressive presence on Jamaica Avenue and Sutphin Boulevard that recalls the growth and expansion of Jamaica during the twentieth century.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City Of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Jamaica Savings Bank, 146-21 Jamaica Avenue (aka 146-19 to 146-21 Jamaica Avenue, 90-32 to 90-44 Sutphin Boulevard), Queens, and designates Borough of Queens Tax Map Block 9676, Lot 37 as its Landmark Site.

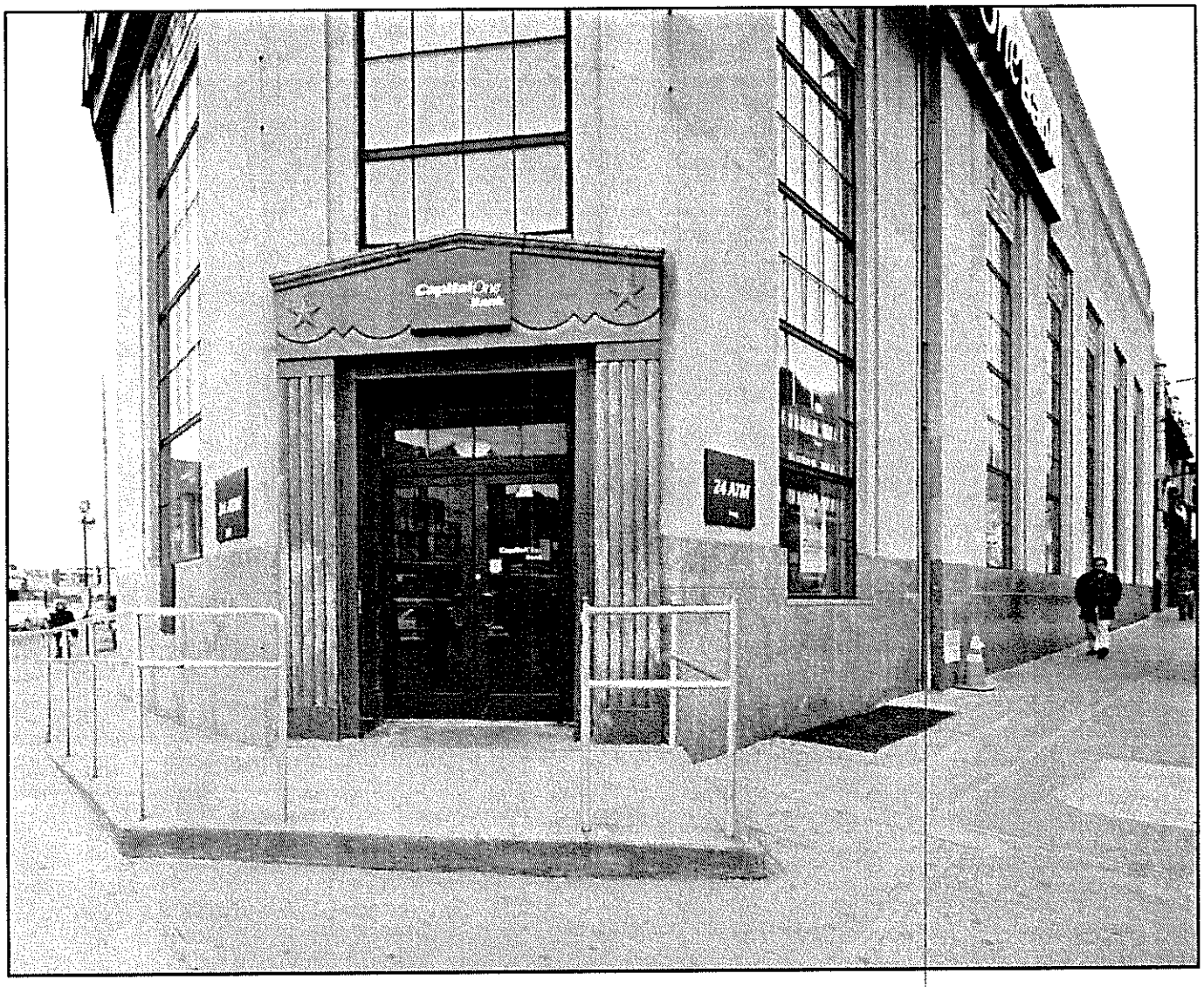
Robert B. Tierney, Chair
Pablo Vengoechea, Vice Chair
Diana Chapin, Roberta Brandes Gratz, Christopher Moore, Roberta Washington, Commissioners

Jamaica Savings Bank
146-21 Jamaica Avenue (aka 146-19 to 146-21 Jamaica Avenue, 90-32 to 90-44 Sutphin Boulevard), Queens
Jamaica Avenue and Sutphin Boulevard facades
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010

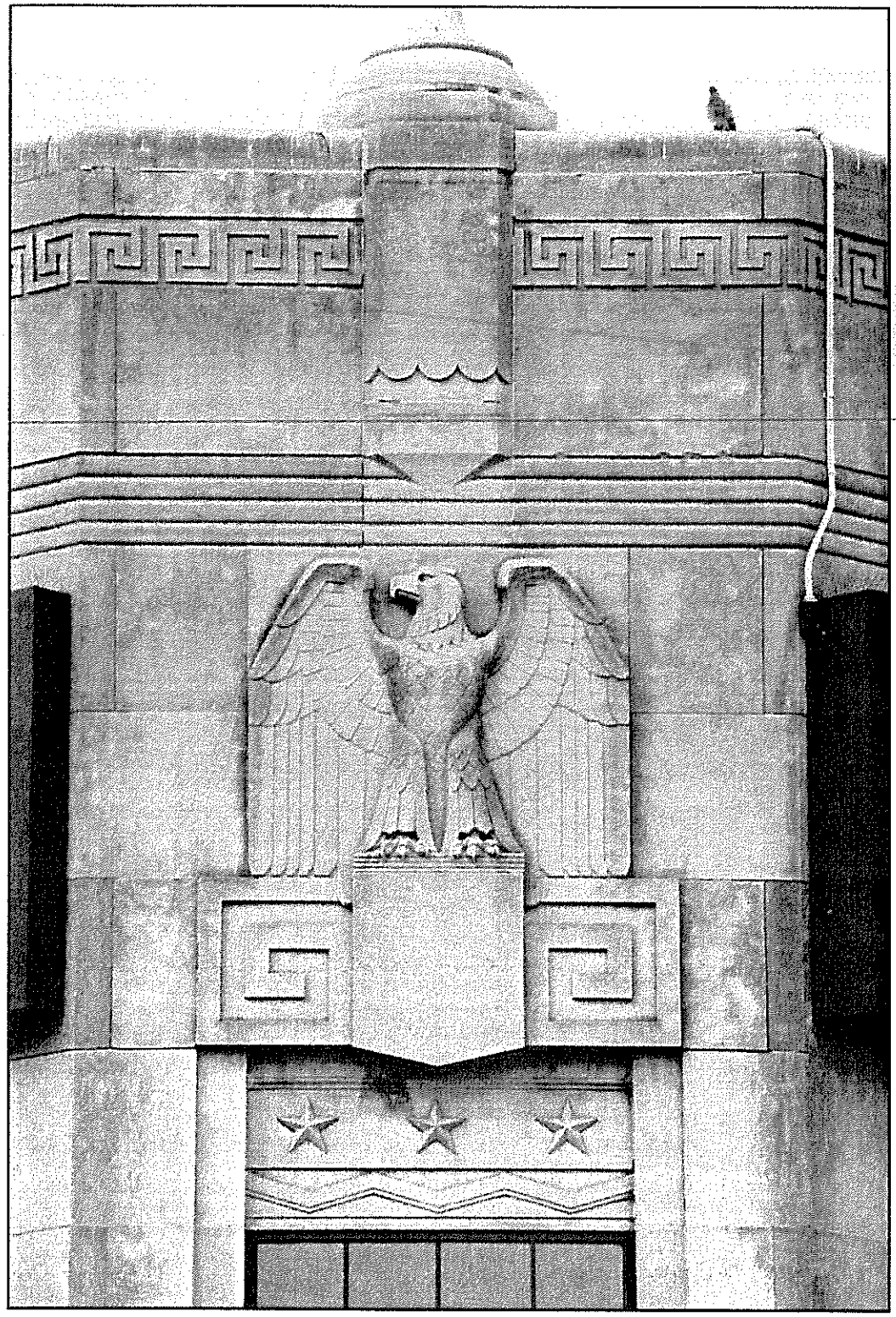


Jamaica Savings Bank
Jamaica Avenue facade
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010

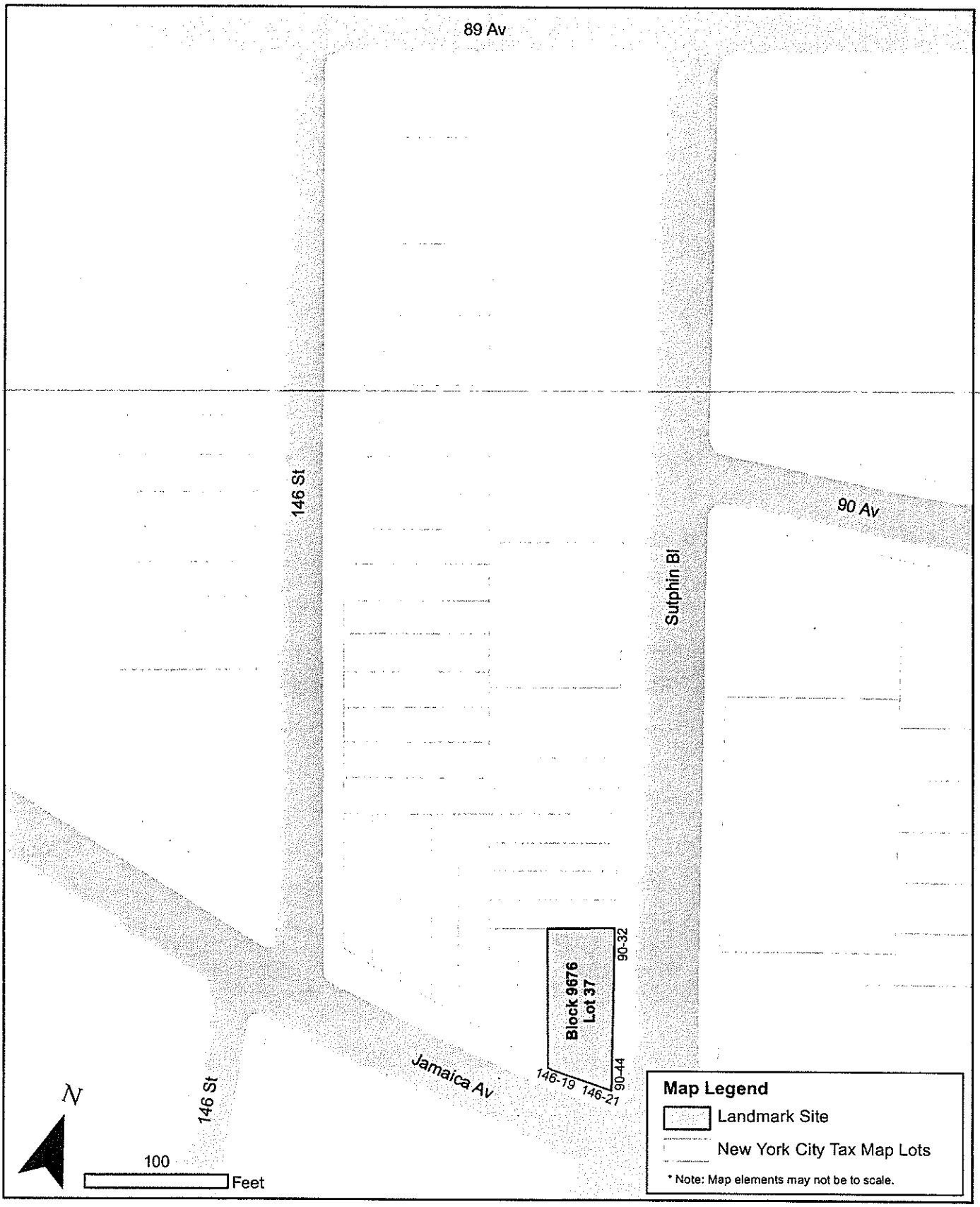
Jamaica Savings Bank
Sutphin Boulevard facade
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010



Jamaica Savings Bank
Detail
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010



Jamaica Savings Bank
Detail
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010



JAMAICA SAVINGS BANK (LP-2393), 146-21 Jamaica Avenue, (aka 146-19 to 146-21 Jamaica Avenue; 90-32 to 90-44 Sutphin Boulevard). Landmark Site: Borough of Queens, Tax Map Block 9676, Lot 37.

Designated: October 26, 2010

Graphic Source: New York City Department of City Planning, MapPLUTO, Edition 09v1, 2009. Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, JM. Date: October 26, 2010.

Landmarks Preservation Commission
October 26, 2010, Designation List 434
LP-2404

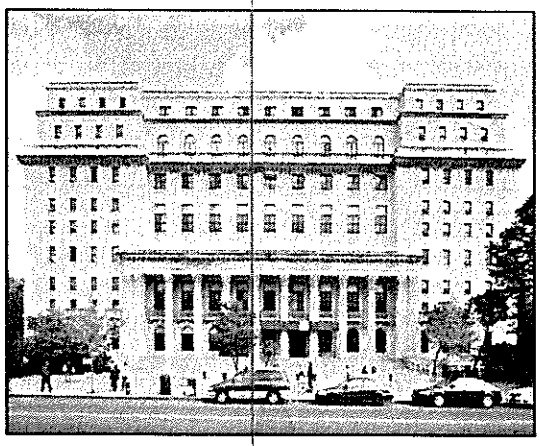
QUEENS GENERAL COURT HOUSE, 88-11 Sutphin Boulevard, (aka 88-01 to 88-33 Sutphin Boulevard, 147-02 to 147-28 88th Avenue, 147-01 89th Avenue, 88-02 to 88-34 148th Street), Queens. Built 1936-39, architects Alfred H. Eccles and William Welles Knowles

Landmark Site: Borough of Queens Tax Map Block 9691, Lot 1

On Feb 9, 2010, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Queens General Court House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 3). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of the law. A total of five witnesses spoke in favor of designation, including representatives of the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, the owner of the building; the Historic Districts Council; the Central Queens Historical Society; the Queensborough Preservation League; and the Four Borough Neighborhood Preservation Alliance. The Commission has received letters in support of the designation from Queens Borough President Helen Marshall, State Senator Shirley Huntley, and the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation. There were no speakers or letters in opposition to the designation.

Summary

The Queens General Court House is a grand, Modern Classic, Depression-era monument built between 1937 and 1939, with payment split between City funds and a Federal grant from the Public Works Administration. Mayor LaGuardia laid the cornerstone in 1937, and presided over the building's dedication in 1939. The new courthouse was considered a major public improvement, and convenience for the borough of Queens, consolidating various court facilities in downtown Jamaica. The building originally housed the offices of the Queens County Clerk, the City Court, the Supreme Court and the Surrogate's Court, and was meant to handle all the civil cases in Queens.



The Modern Classical style was selected for this building because it was thought to express the dignity and majesty of the law. An excellent example of the style, the E-shaped seven-story building is faced with Alabama limestone and is articulated with neo-Classical ornament. Following a long-standing tradition for courthouses, its most prominent feature is a two-and-one-half-story colonnaded portico fronted by a grand staircase. At the center of the portico the three arched entrances retain their original bronze coffered doors and are edged with bronze sculptural panels depicting famous lawgivers. Other notable features include the heavy bracketed cornices, balustraded balconies, stylized swagged relief panels, and shallow window surrounds.

Architects Alfred H. Eccles and William W. Knowles were Queens residents with architectural practices in Long Island City who had designed a number of prominent Queens buildings. In 1938, shortly before it opened, the building was awarded first prize in the public buildings classification in the Queens Chamber of Commerce's Best Buildings of the Year competition. The building's skillfully composed facades, handsome detailing, and the power of its monumental portico make it one of finest and most imposing public buildings in Queens.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The Development of Jamaica[1]

Historically an important crossroads of Long Island, the area of downtown Jamaica developed as a result of its central location and extensive transportation systems. Around 1836, the Long Island Rail Road, which had been incorporated in 1834, began running a trunk line from the foot of Atlantic Avenue to Jamaica and then eastward from Jamaica to eastern Long Island, making Jamaica a pivotal hub. This improved transportation encouraged non-agricultural business activity in the Jamaica area; industrial enterprises sprang up along the railroad, particularly after 1850 when the former toll road of the Brooklyn, Jamaica & Flatbush Turnpike Company was sold to a group of Jamaica businessmen who incorporated as the Jamaica & Brooklyn Plank Road Company. Following the Civil War, new modes of transportation continued to transform Jamaica by further facilitating commutation to New York City. The East New York & Jamaica Railroad Company established horse car lines along Fulton Street (renamed Jamaica Avenue in 1920) in 1866 replacing them 21 years later with electric trolleys.

The 19th century saw Jamaica evolve into a retreat for urban residents, who patronized its numerous inns and saloons on weekend excursions and built large summer homes. The permanent population of Jamaica also increased steadily throughout the second half of the 19th century, and brought with it the subdivision of farms into house lots and a proliferation of new development, as well as the growth of Jamaica's downtown. The pressure for housing increased, resulting in street regularization and somewhat denser residential development following the incorporation of Queens into the City of New York in 1898. The 1901 *Atlas of the Borough of Queens* shows two- and three-story brick and frame structures clustered along Fulton Street and freestanding frame houses and stables, on lots mostly ranging from 50 to 100 feet in width, in the surrounding streets.

In 1898 Fulton Street, under the jurisdiction of the local government, was widened and repaved. Local business and political leaders seized the opportunity to praise the numerous advantages of Jamaica—a place with a traditional village character, yet poised to enter a new age—in an effort to encourage commerce, promote residential development, and raise property values.[2] The perceived positive impact of the impending consolidation was declared by one source in 1894: "The days of Greater New York can now be seen not very far ahead, when Jamaica will naturally form the most eastern point to which the consolidated elevated railroad can be expected to run … very likely before the end of this [century]."[3]

Although it would be 1918 before the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company extended its elevated train service from Cypress Hills to 168th Street along Fulton Street, the decade before World War I saw several other significant transportation improvements. The Long Island Rail Road was electrified in 1905-08 followed by the opening of the railroad tunnels beneath the East River in 1910 enabling direct access between Pennsylvania Station and the towns of Long Island with a major hub in Jamaica. Surface transportation to Queens was further enhanced by the opening of the Queensborough Bridge in 1909. With this improved accessibility to Jamaica's downtown, the population of Jamaica quadrupled between 1900 and 1920 and by 1925 the lots on Jamaica Avenue between 160th and 168th Streets had the highest assessed valuation in Queens County.[4] During the 1920s and 30s several major office and commercial structures including the J. Kurtz & Sons Store (1931, Allmendiger & Schlendorf), the former Suffolk Title and Guarantee Company Building (1929, Dennison & Hirons) (both designated New York City

Landmarks) and the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building (1928-29, George W. Conable of Conable, Smith & Rowley) had joined the former Jamaica Savings Bank (1897-98, Hough & Duell, a designated New York City Landmark).

Queens Courthouses and the Construction of the Queens General Court House[5]

The county seat and court buildings were established in Jamaica by the British in 1666, moved by the Americans to Mineola in the 1780s following the Revolution, and then moved to Long Island City in 1870, where a new Second Empire style courthouse was constructed on Court Square (now New York State Supreme Court, Queens County, Long Island Branch, 1872-1876, George Hathorne, a designated New York City Landmark). This building was greatly enlarged (Peter M. Coco, 1904-08) following a fire in 1903 and two former town halls — Jamaica Town Hall at Jamaica Avenue and Parsons Boulevard (1870, demolished) and Flushing Town Hall on Northern Boulevard (1862, a designated New York City Landmark) were turned over to the court system following Consolidation. Queens's population, however, expanded rapidly in the early 20th century and by the end of World War I the demand for courtrooms had grown "beyond all belief."[6] According to the *Long Island Press,*

> Early in the 20's, even before Queens had launched the period of its greatest growth, there was agitation for a courthouse. Every community wanted the structure within its immediate confines. Long Island City could not see why the courthouse should not be built there. Elmhurst, claiming better transportation facilities, had a site or two to suggest. Jamaica, pointing to the fact that it was the heart of the borough from every viewpoint, urged that the courts be centralized there.[7]

By 1929, city officials had agreed to erect a new courthouse and several sites in Jamaica were under consideration. However, in February 1930 Queens Borough President George U. Harvey proposed a more ambitious scheme incorporating the new courthouse into a larger civic center to be located on the campus of the Parental School (now Queens College).[8] Most community leaders and the Bar Association of Queens were convinced that the civic center project was too costly and the location too far from public transportation to be feasible and the proposal met with a storm of protest.

In the meantime the congestion in the courts increased. In the early 1930s, the Magistrate's Court and Municipal Court were in the Town Hall in Jamaica, the Children's Court was on Union Hall Street, the Surrogate's Court on Fulton Street in Jamaica, the Court of Special Sessions shared quarters with the Queens Department of Sanitation, and the Special Term of the Supreme Court met in a rented room in the Chamber of Commerce Building in Jamaica that was often compared to a bowling alley.[9] Justices began giving press conferences voicing their frustration with their inadequate courtrooms.[10] In 1934 a Queens County grand jury handed up a presentment condemning the County Court's quarters in Long Island City as a "firetrap."[11] These complaints together with the constant lobbying of County Judge Charles S. Colden, president of the Queens Bar Association, convinced Mayor LaGuardia to move forward on the courthouse project.

As soon as the project seemed to be going forward, various communities once again began lobbying for the courthouse to be built in their neighborhoods. Mayor LaGuardia "realizing that the hopeless confusion would continue unless some order was established,"

appointed a judicial committee headed by Supreme Court Justice Burt Jay Humphrey to pick the site.[12] In May 1935 the committee recommended a 96,000 square foot plot owned by the Brooklyn Catholic Diocese, on Sutphin Boulevard between 88th and 89th Avenues. This was considered an ideal location because of "its proximity to the shopping center, to Jamaica Station of the Long Island Railroad and to the proposed station of the Queens Boulevard subway at Sutphin Boulevard and Hillside Avenues."[13] Moreover the full-block site had the advantage of being vacant, most recently having been used as an athletic field.

Mayor LaGuardia intended to fund the courthouse project through a combination of grants and guaranteed loans from the Public Works Administration and to use Works Project Administration labor. The PWA gave preliminary approval in July 1935, but in September rejected the project because it did not provide enough "man-hours of work" relative to the cost of land and materials. Over the next year LaGuardia lobbied forcefully in Washington for the project, which he labeled "Queens Project No. 1 and second in the city only to the proposed Criminal Court Building in Manhattan." After the City made some adjustments in the financing of the project, on July 19, 1936 it was announced that the PWA had awarded the City a grant of $2,175,930 towards the cost of construction for the Queens courthouse.[14] In late August the mayor convened a special meeting of the Board of Estimate to approve the plans and specifications for the courthouse the design of which had already been approved by the Art Commission. Part of the approval was for the contract for $157,218 for architectural services from Alfred H. Eccles and William W. Knowles of Long Island City who had drafted the preliminary sketches for the courthouse in 1935.[15] In May 1937 the general construction contract was awarded to John J. Kennedy & Co., Inc., of Manhattan. A cornerstone-laying ceremony took place in October 1937. In December 1938, the nearly completed courthouse building won first prize in the public buildings classification in the Queens Chamber of Commerce's Best Buildings of the Year competition.[16] The building opened March 1, 1939 with a dedication ceremony organized by the Queens County Bar Association at which Mayor LaGuardia was the principal speaker.[17] Before a crowd of about 4,000 LaGuardia touted the savings of $102,000 per year in rentals that would be realized by the concentration of all civil courts and offices in the new courthouse and enumerated a number of other civic improvements in Queens[18] Among these improvements were the Triborough Bridge (1936), the municipal Independent (Eighth Avenue) Subway (completed 1937), the Queens-Midtown Tunnel (completed 1939), the North Beach (now LaGuardia) Airport, Queens General Hospital (1931-35), and Flushing Meadow Parks, and a host of public schools, playgrounds, and parkways.[19] This new government-funded construction together with the work going forward on the World's Fair led LaGuardia to dub Queens "the most promising borough" and allowed the Queens Chamber of Commerce to proclaim Queens "the greatest center of building activity in the world."[20]

Alfred H. Eccles and William Wells Knowles

Alfred H. Eccles (1888-1961) was born in Astoria.[21] He trained as an architect and engineer and by 1910 was employed as a draftsman at an architectural terra cotta firm. Later he was an inspector for the Queens Department of Buildings.[22] Around 1919 he established an architectural practice in Queens. He had numerous commissions between the late 1920s and the early 1950s and seems to have specialized in the construction of industrial and commercial

buildings, for which his knowledge of civil engineering would have been an asset.[23] In addition to Queens General Court House, his notable commissions included the Chatwick Garden Apartments at 68-04 Burns Avenue in Forest Hills (1928-29), the synagogue and Hebrew school for Congregation Beth El in Astoria (1935), the Grosvenor Square Apartments in Forest Hills Gardens (as an associate architect), and an office building on Northern Boulevard at 127th Street in Flushing (1949), which won a medal for excellence in design from the Queens Chamber of Commerce. He was also responsible for two neo-Romanesque apartment buildings at 82-02 and 82-16 34thAvenue (1929-30; within the Jackson Heights Historic District) and "many fashionable homes in Old Westbury, Valley Stream, and Jackson Heights."[24] Although semi-retired in the late 1950s he continued to practice until his death.

Eccles was an expert on the building code and served as an advisor to the Department of Buildings and as Chair of the code committee of the Real Estate Board of Long Island. He was also active in the New York Society of Architects, where he sat on several committees and held various offices, including president (1941).[25]

William Welles Knowles (1871-1944) was born in Harlem.[26] He attended City College and earned a diploma in architectural drafting from the Metropolitan Museum Art School. He worked briefly as a draftsman in the offices of Richard M. Hunt. In 1893 he left for Europe where he traveled extensively and in 1895 enrolled in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, studying in the atelier of Henri Deglane. In 1896 Knowles returned to New York and opened an office in Manhattan. One of his first commissions was for the Harlem YWCA Building at 124th Street, near Lenox Avenue.[27] Around 1908 he became associated with the Madison Square Garden Corporation. He was responsible for exterior alterations to the original Madison Square Garden building and served as the chief designer for the National Automobile shows held in the hall between 1908 and 1911. Knowles and his wife Suzanne moved to Flushing around 1903. Although his office remained in Manhattan through 1919, his commissions were increasingly in Queens and Nassau Counties. Notable projects included a sprawling Colonial Revival mansion in Kissena Park for developer John W. Paris (c. 1910, demolished) and substations and office buildings for the New York & Queens Electric Light & Power Company (c. 1916-20). In the 1920s Knowles designed the Flushing Terminal Building (1928), and the Bank of the Manhattan Building, Flushing. Later works included the neo-Georgian Flushing Post Office (1932, in association with Dwight James Baum), an alternative proposal for the Queens Civic Center (1934, unbuilt), and buildings for Parsons Hospital, Flushing (1935-36).

Knowles became a member of the Society of Beaux Arts Architects in 1896. He contributed several design problems for the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design competitions and served on a number of juries at the school. He was very interested in issues of urban design and planning and, with architect Theobald Englehardt, was responsible for forming a committee at the Queensborough Chamber of Commerce charged with fostering good design on Queens Boulevard.[28] In addition to his membership in the Chamber of Commerce, where he rose to the position of vice-president, Knowles was active in several other local organizations.[29] In 1934 Mayor LaGuardia appointed Knowles as his special consultant on architectural matters in Queens, a position which Knowles continued to hold until his death in 1944.

Prior to their collaboration on the courthouse project Eccles and Knowles maintained independent practices.[30] In 1935 Eccles moved his office to 1 Bridge Plaza North, where Knowles had had his office since the mid-1920s. Published drawings and early newspaper

accounts identify Eccles as the architect of the courthouse and Knowles as associate architect. A commemorative tablet in the lobby gives equal credit to both architects as do later newspaper accounts and journals. Following the completion of the courthouse, Eccles kept his office at 1 Bridge Plaza North. It has not been determined whether the two architects shared office space or had separate offices in the same building (they had different phone numbers). It does not appear that they collaborated on any other projects.

The Design of the Queens General Court House

One of the most imposing buildings in Queens, the General Court House is an excellent example of the American Modern Classical design of the 1920s and 30s.[31] Architects working in this style sought to create a modern interpretation of classical architecture drawing on "the alphabet of forms that the world has known and loved for hundreds of years"[32] while meeting modern needs and using modern technology. In contrast to the earlier phase of the Classical Revival, which emphasized careful copying of historic sources, Modern Classicism took a much freer approach to historic models, abstracting and simplifying classical motifs and using them with great restraint. The style also placed great emphasis on abstract design, massing, and the arrangement of shapes and forms. Classical architecture was particularly prized for its "serenity and dignity" and magazine articles that appeared when this building opened indicated that the Modern Classic style was chosen because it was the "most appropriate to express the dignity and majesty of the law to be administered in this new court house."[33]

The image of a classically-inspired temple-fronted courthouse was a familiar one. Courthouses had first been built in this country in great numbers in the 1820s and 1830s, when the Greek Revival style was at its height.[34] These buildings, including surviving examples such as Robert Mills' U.S. Courthouse and Customs House, Wilmington, North Carolina (1823-24) and the Third Richmond County Courthouse, Staten Island, New York (1837, a designated New York City Landmark), featured free-standing columned porticos with pediments, creating a paradigm for the courthouse building type.[35] In the second half of the 19th century, when styles such as the Gothic Revival and the Richardsonian Romanesque predominated, new courthouses were built without porticos, but with the advent of the Classical Revival and Colonial Revival styles columned porticos and grand staircases became ubiquitous features of courthouse design. Both styles had associations that were thought to make them particularly suitable for courthouses — the Classical Revival evoked Greek democracy and Roman law and was prized for the sense of ceremony and dignity it imparted — the Colonial Revival style harked back to the early days of the Republic and was considered a natural springboard for the development of a truly American style. New York City possesses some outstanding late 19th and early 20th century Classical Revival courthouses including the Appellate Division Courthouse at 27 Madison Square (James Brown Lord, 1896-99, a designated New York City Landmark), the Richmond County Courthouse at 12-24 Richmond Terrace (Carrère & Hastings, 1913-1919, a designated New York City Landmark), the New York County Courthouse, now the New York State Supreme Court, at 60 Centre Street (Guy Lowell, 1913-27, a designated New York City Landmark), and the United States Courthouse at 1 Foley Square (Cass Gilbert, 1933-36, a designated New York City Landmark). The Colonial Revival style was popular for neighborhood courthouses in the 1920s and 1930s. Examples include the former Bronx

Municipal Courthouse (aka Bronx Traffic Court) 4000 Williamsbridge Road, (Max Hausle, 1926), and the former Ridgewood Court, 6902 64th Street (Thomas C. Rogers, 1929-31). In addition there were two other notable unexecuted neo-Colonial projects for Queens sites during the 1930s — a proposal for a general use courthouse on Sutphin Boulevard (presumably this site) of 1932 by Andrew Jackson Thomas closely based on Independence Hall and a proposal by William W. Knowles for a multi-building Queens Civic Center for a site on Queens Boulevard in Kew Gardens. Illustrated in the architectural journal *Pencil Points* in 1934, Knowles's project was described as being "in the spirit of our best early American architecture, similar to that adopted by the Treasury Department for the rebuilding of the 'Triangle' in Washington, D.C."[36]

Eccles and Knowles seem to have used Knowles' design for one of the ancillary buildings in the Civic Center complex as a starting point for the General Court House, incorporating the projected corner pavilions, tripartite story groupings, heavy bracketed cornices topped by balustrades, and setback attic capped by a hipped roof of the earlier project. The courthouse is a much larger building with a complex program incorporating 19 courtrooms, judges' chambers, jury rooms, a law library, the County Clerk's Office, the Surrogate's Office, and other functions. The architects addressed these programmatic needs by using an E-shaped plan that provided ample light to the rear courtrooms and space for a ceremonial staircase and elevator bank in the center rear wing. The seven story plus basement structure incorporated three double-height stories with mezzanines (at the second, fourth, and sixth stories) for the balconied Municipal and State Supreme Court courtrooms and the sixth-story law library, which extends along the Sutphin Avenue (western) façade and is expressed by a series of giant arches.

The courthouse was a skeleton-framed steel and concrete structure. It incorporated all of the then most up to date building technologies, including air conditioning for all of the court rooms. In the tradition of the Classical Revival style the courthouse facades are clad with white Alabama limestone above a base of granite. The "uniform cast of the limestone" was thought to be symbolic of "the impartiality of justice to be administered therein."[37] The building's most prominent architectural feature, the two-and-one-half-story colonnaded portico fronted by a grand staircase also comes out of the Classical Revival style and was expressive of the building's function as a courthouse. The portico, employing monumental fluted Corinthian columns, a full entablature, pilaster responds, arched openings at the first story and trabeated window openings with stone balustrades at the second story, generally relates to Federal period monuments such as the White House and Capitol Building but seems to be more closely modeled on 18th century French neo-Classical sources, such as Claude-Nicolas Ledoux's courtyard façade for the Hôtel d'Uzès (1769, demolished) and Château de Bènouville (1768). The multi-light windows (replaced) were steel and were articulated in patterns suggestive of 18th century fenestration. The facades are also enriched by swagged sculptural panels, a common motif in both French and American neo-Classical design, here handled in a very abstracted stylized manner. A simple cornice and parapet extend along the seventh-story setback while the façade terminates in a parapet articulated with a simple box cornice of copper and capped with a fascia molding of copper. The windows are profiled by shallow recesses and have slightly projected sills. The arched openings have very flat stylized keystones. This emphasis on flat, planar wall surfaces and simple, stylized classical motifs is typical of Modern Classicism as is skillful interplay of horizontal, vertical, and arched elements. This careful handling of proportions, handsome detailing, and the overwhelming power of the building's monumental staircase and colonnade

contribute to making the Queens General Court House one of the finest and most imposing public buildings in the borough.

Later History

The new courthouse was considered a major public improvement, and convenience, for the borough of Queens, consolidating various court facilities in downtown Jamaica. These included the Civil, Supreme, Small Claim's and the Surrogate's Court, the offices of the District Attorney, the County Clerk, and the Sheriff , and the naturalization, motor vehicle, and marriage bureaus.

In the post-World War period as the population of Queens, Nassau, and Suffolk counties mushroomed, the demands on the Tenth Judicial District of the New York Supreme Court in Jamaica, which served all three counties, greatly increased forcing the court to subdivide courtrooms and take over spaces that had been designed for other purposes. In 1960, the Central Jury Part I, the Small Claims Court, and the Municipal Court moved from this courthouse to rented space on Queens Boulevard and the Queens Bar Association vacated its first floor meeting rooms for a newly erected headquarters building.[38] Gradually the General Court House came to be known as the Supreme Court Building. In 1981 Administrative Judge Seymour Boyers gave an interview to the *Daily News* in which he stated that in his opinion, the Queens General Court House was "esthetically and architecturally a landmark not just of the borough and the city, but of the whole nation."[39] By 1984 heavy use and deferred maintenance due to the fiscal crisis had taken their toll on the building. An inspection revealed many problems with the roof and a severe crack on the upper penthouse wall that were causing leaks throughout the building.[40] In 1985 the Department of General Services upgraded the air conditioning and electrical systems, erected a new cooling tower on the roof, and strengthened the supports for the existing tower. In 1988 the elevators were modernized and a masonry structure was constructed at the rear of the building for a trash compactor. By 1989 the windows had been replaced and a tall wrought iron fence had been erected around the perimeter of the property.

DGS commissioned the architectural firm of Gran Sultan Associates, specialists in historic preservation, to begin an extensive restoration of the exterior of this building that commenced in 1996. The scope of work included spot restoration of the exterior masonry, masonry cleaning, replacement of the bird proofing on the portico, re-glazing of the skylights over the stairs, repairs of the elevator penthouses, roof, and flashing. In 1998 a sculptural ensemble by artists Ed McGowin and Claudia DeMonte comprised of a bronze sculpture representing "The Wheel of Justice" and a group of cylindrical concrete benches inscribed with the names of Queens towns was installed in the plaza in front of the courthouse. In 1999, under the auspices of the New York State Dormitory Authority with Henry Spring of WASA Architects in charge, work began on phase 2 of the project of the project, which included a full upgrade of the building systems, interior renovations and construction of new cooling towers and penthouses on the roof. In July 2002 a crane, being used in connection with the renovations, collapsed damaging a portion of the parapet and wall on the projecting two-story wing containing the ceremonial lobby staircase.[41] Due to litigation this damage was not repaired until 2009. Late in 2009 the portion of the perimeter fence in front of the entrance plaza was removed.

Description

The Modern Classic Queens General Court House occupies a full block site, which extends for 336.6 feet along Sutphin Boulevard and 148th Street and 285 feet along 88th and 89th Avenues. The main entrance faces Sutphin Boulevard. The building is set back 80 feet from the curbline and is approached by a paved forecourt flanked on the north and south by lawns surrounded by non-historic iron fences, which extend around the perimeter of the lot. The plaza in front of the building is paved with patterned concrete, an original feature of the design. (The concrete on the north side of the plaza is in poor condition.) At the center of the plaza a bronze sculpture representing "The Wheel of Justice" (1998) rests on a concrete base. Scattered about the plaza are cylindrical concrete benches inscribed with the names of Queens towns, which form part of the sculptural ensemble. Non-historic wrought iron benches are bolted to the sidewalk near the front of the plaza near the fences. Short concrete paths lead from the plaza to original metal flagpoles with sculpted bronze bases decorated with emblems of New York and Federal eagles. The yards flanking the sides of the building and rear yard are used as parking lots. Non-historic security booths have been installed near the northeast and southeast corners of the building. There are currently sidewalk bridges on the portico, at the northeast and southeast corners of the building, at the entry of the middle section of the eastern façade, and at the west end of the south facade.

The courthouse is E-shaped in plan and has seven full stories plus a basement, an attic, and a penthouse above the eastern portion of the center rear wing. There are mezzanines above the second, fourth, and sixth stories and setbacks at the sixth and seventh stories. The facades are clad with Indiana limestone above a granite base. The windows contain non-historic vinyl-coated aluminum sash, installed, c. 1998-2002.

The Sutphin Boulevard façade is arranged into a nine-bay wide center section flanked by four-bay-wide projected pavilions. Paired, often double-height, windows are used in the center bays, while smaller window openings are employed for the end pavilions. The main entrance is at the first story. It is approached by a broad staircase of eight steps. Stone-clad podia are set at either end of the stairs. Historic metal railings (the north railing is somewhat bent), dating from the late 1940s-early 1950s, frame the center section of the stairs leading to the main entry. There is a non-historic metal railing and chair lift at the south end of the stair and a free-standing control pole for the lift on the sidewalk between the lift and the south basement entry.

Basement: Each pavilion has four trabeated openings fronted by a sunken areaway and window well with stone side walls and concrete paving. Curving concrete paths at either side of the main staircase lead to original granite stairs providing access to the areaways. The southern stair has a historic metal pipe rail. Bays 1 and 2 (reading north to south) on the southern pavilion are entrances and retain their original wood-and-glass doors, which are protected by non-historic wire-mesh grilles. Bays 3 and 4 have non-historic replacement windows and are protected by historic iron grilles. There is a non-historic metal vent and electric switch box to the north of bay 1. A non-historic light fixture and a non-historic door buzzer box have been installed to the north of the entry in bay 2. A non-historic sprinkler head and Siamese hose connector have been installed on the wall to the south of bay 4.

On the northern pavilion, the entry is in bay 4 (reading north to south). It retains its original wood-and-glass door, which is protected by a non-historic wire-mesh grille. A non-

historic light fixture and a non-historic door buzzer box have been installed to the south of the entry. Just to the north of the doorway the masonry is pierced by a sawn-off metal pipe. Two non-historic perforated drain covers are located in the corner between the main stairs and the entry. Bays 1, 2, and 3 have non-historic replacement windows and are protected by iron grilles. A non-historic Siamese hose connector has been installed on the wall to the north of bay 1. The original cornerstone inscribed with the names of Mayor Fiorello H, LaGuardia and Borough President George U. Harvey and architects Alfred H. Eccles and William W. Knowles is set at the second course of masonry at the north end of the façade.

Porch: The most distinctive feature of the facade is the projecting two-and-one-half--story portico, which extends across the center section at the first and second stories. It has eight free-standing giant fluted Corinthian columns, flanked at either end by paired pilasters, and is capped by a full entablature, which is patched with stucco in several spots. Pilaster responds articulate the rear and side walls of the porch. The rear wall has arched openings at the first story and square-headed windows with stone balustraded balconies at the second story. At the first story the three center arches are entrances. They retain their original bronze metalwork including arched surrounds with decorative relief panels representing famous lawgivers and emblems of wisdom, outer doors with decorative coffering, transom bars decorated with scroll motifs, and transom grilles. During business hours, the outer doors fold back into pockets in the door jambs. The entrances retain their historic inner patinated metal-and-glass doors (a revolving door at the center, paired doors in the north and south entrances) topped by original six-light transoms. The arched-window openings contain non-historic paired one-over-one windows topped by arched transoms. The windows and transoms are protected by non-historic iron grilles. Non-historic light fixtures are set just below second floor balconies in all nine bays. At the second story the windows have non-historic paired one-over-one sash topped by single light transoms. (The original steel windows were eight-over-eight sashes, topped by an eight light transoms). Several non-historic metal boxes, presumably containing electrical equipment have been affixed to the south wall of the porch at the first story level. The porch floor is granite and is slightly raked towards the center. Currently non-historic pipe railings have been set into the pavement in front of the entries flanking the center door. A sidewalk bridge has been installed in front of the center bay and two bays to the south. The porch ceiling is coffered and probably originally had recessed lights. The porch ceiling, column capitals, and balconies are swathed in bird netting.

First Story End Pavilions: The end pavilions have tall trabeated window openings at the first story. Currently the windows have non-historic one-over-one window sashes topped by transoms. The windows are protected by non-historic iron grilles. A non-historic electrical conduit extends southward from bay 2 (reading north to south) to the center of northern pavilion providing power to a non-historic strobe light.

Upper Stories: Above the first story the windows are profiled by shallow recesses and have slightly projecting sills. On the pavilions, the windows between the second and fourth stories have recessed spandrel panels so that the windows are grouped into vertical files. The spandrels between the second and fourth stories and their mezzanines are decorated with swagged panels. All of the second-story windows have balustraded stone balconies. A band course extends across the façade beneath the fifth-story windows. Above the fifth story there is a heavy bracketed cornice that supports the balustraded parapet extending along the edge of the sixth-story setback. In the center bays the large arched openings are profiled by shallow recesses and

have simple flat keystones. The spandrel panels separating the trabeated sixth story window and mezzanine windows on the outer pavilions are decorated with swag panels. The sixth story is capped by a simple cornice and a low molded parapet which extends along the seventh-story setback. The seventh story windows are trabeated and are profiled by shallow recessed moldings. The seventh story terminates in a high parapet which is articulated with a copper box cornice and coped with a simple copper fascia molding.

Aside from the windows having been replaced and some patching and staining of the stonework, the upper stories remain largely intact.

The North Façade nine bays wide, arranged into a projecting seven-bay-wide center section and recessed one-bay wide corner bays. The articulation is very similar to that of the main façade. The window openings in the center bays are two-windows-wide; the end bays have single windows. As on the primary façade, all of the windows have been replaced by non-historic sash and panning.

Basement: The basement is faced with granite and has square-headed windows, which extend below grade and are protected by non-historic iron grilles. The end windows have semi-circular window wells with granite curbs. The middle windows are lit by a rectangular areaway, which is built into a concrete sidewalk that extends along the sides and rear of the building. The areaway has a granite curb and is covered by a non-historic iron grille. Non-historic Siamese hydrants have been installed on the basement wall at the west and east ends of the projecting center section, located just above historic spigots and hose rings. There are large stains on the stonework above the window in bay 4 (reading west to east) and to the west of bay 9.

Upper Stories: The upper story articulation is very similar to that of main façade. Here the window openings at the first story of the center section are square-headed and somewhat wider and shorter than the window openings in the end bays. At the second story a long balustraded balcony extends in front of the five middle windows while the windows in the two outer bays are set off by individual balconies. Aside from the windows having been replaced and some staining, especially on the second- and sixth-story balconies, the façade remains largely unchanged. Alterations include the installation of a non-historic light fixture just above the first story at the west corner of the façade and floodlights at the ends of the second-story balcony. All of the second-story balconies are covered with bird netting.

Rear (Eastern) Façade. At the rear, the building divides into north and south wings and a taller narrower center wing, which is linked to the northern and southern wings by recessed light courts. The eastern facades of the north and south wings are six bays wide and are articulated to match the end pavilions on the Sutphin Avenue façade. The center wing has a one-story plus basement projection and is articulated with simple moldings and pilaster strips and a tripartite arrangement of windows. In both courtyards, there are granite staircases leading to terraces which provide access to first story entrances on the side walls of the center wing. The staircase and terrace in the north court are original. The staircase and terrace in the south court were reconfigured when a masonry trash compactor enclosure was constructed on the north side of the court in 1988.

North Wing: At the basement level there is a non-historic Siamese hydrant at the north end of the wall located just above a historic spigot and hose ring. Beneath window bays 1 through 3 (reading north to south) the façade bumps out to form a masonry enclosure, constructed between 1999 and 2002, which is faced with granite and trimmed with a molded ogee molding that aligns

with the molding capping the original basement façade. Bays 4 and 5 have basement entries set slightly below ground level and accessed by a rectangular areaway with granite stairs and curbs and concrete sidewalls and pavement. The low stoop leading to the areaway retains its historic metal pipe rails. Both entrances have their historic wood-and-glass doors, which are now protected by non-historic iron grilles. There is a non-historic light fixture just to the south of the entry in bay 4. Bay 6 is a window bay, which extends slightly below grade level and is lit by a semi-circular window well with a historic granite curb. This window has non-historic replacement window sash and panning and is protected by a non-historic iron window grate. The windows on the upper stories have been replaced. At the first story there are non-historic iron grates on the windows in bays 1, 2, 4, and 5. Non-historic floodlights have been attached to the north end of the balustrade on the middle balcony and the south end of the southern balcony at the second story. All of the balconies are covered with netting.

North Court: The terraced north court is approached by an original granite stair at the base of the center wing. The lower level of the terrace is built over an underground fuel tank indicated by the four manhole covers. These are just north of the non-historic concrete path that leads to the stone staircase to upper level of the terrace. This staircase retains its-historic bronze handrail on its west side wall.

The easternmost basement window of the north court wall (south wall of the north wing) retains its historic curved light well with curved curb. The light well for the basement window in bay 2 (reading east to west) has been enlarged and is covered by a non-historic iron grate. The base of the windows in bays 3 and 4 are blocked from view by a masonry parapet leading to the terrace stairs. All four windows have non-historic replacement sash and panning and non-historic iron grilles. On the upper stories the windows have been replaced; all of the second story windows are protected by non-historic metal grilles. There is a non-historic light fixture set between window bays 2 and 3 just below the first story level that lights the terrace stairs.

All of the windows on the western (rear) elevation of the north courtyard have non-replacement sash and the windows at the basement and first story levels are protected by non-historic iron grilles.

The south wall of the courtyard (north wall of center wing), has one basement window that has replacement window sash and panning and is protected by a non-historic metal grille. A metal alarm box and electrical conduit have been attached to the east end of the basement. Next to wall and secured to it by wire is a vertical exhaust pipe which vents the fuel tank area below. At the first floor terrace level this entry retains a historic metal and glass door. The light fixture above the door is non-historic. The lowest window in the file of windows at the west end of the wall has been sealed, the upper windows all have non-historic replacement sash.

Center Wing: The ground immediately in front of the center wing was originally excavated to create a sunken area flanked on the north and south by granite retaining walls and low stair cases leading up to the terraced courtyards. The north retaining wall and stair remain in place but the south retaining wall and stair were removed and the ground level was re-graded when the south court compactor was installed.

The sidewalk in front of the center wing is approached by a concrete ramp from the parking lot installed around 2000. The basement entry retains its molded stone surround surmounted by an arched pediment. The paired wood doors are non-historic. There are three non-historic signs attached to wall immediately to the north of the entry. At the first story, the

large eight and four-light metal windows lighting the lobby appear to be historic, perhaps original. The parapet edging the lobby roof was damaged by a crane collapsing against it in 2002. The southernmost set of balusters and the lighter colored stone veneer immediately to the south were installed to repair the damage in 2009. On the upper stories all of the triple windows have non-historic replacement sash and panning. At the roofline most of the crowning cornice was removed c. 2000 to accommodate a non-historic metal louver.

South Court: In the south court the ground level was lowered and the staircases were rebuilt to accommodate the new trash compactor enclosure constructed c. 1988. This is set back a few feet from the façade of the middle wing and is approached by a non-historic concrete driveway. The compactor enclosure and the screening wall that extends from the enclosure to the north wall of the south wing are faced with granite matched to the facings on the original portions of the building. A pair of non-historic steel bollards flanks the entry to the compactor enclosure. The enclosure has paired iron gates. Just to the north of the entry is non-historic steel cabinet with louvered openings. On the south side of the court the sidewalk was rebuilt and widened c. 2000. A large non-historic metal shed has been installed on this sidewalk just in front of the northeast corner of the south wing. The sidewalk extends along the north wall of the south wing leading to the staircase. This non-historic staircase wraps around the compactor enclosure terminating in a terrace at the first story, which extends across the width of the courtyard but allows room at the rear of the court for an areaway to light the basement windows. While the staircase is recent the bronze railing is historic having been salvaged from the earlier stairs.

The north court wall (the southern elevation of the center wing) has a first story entrance, which retains its historic wood-and-glass door which is protected by a non-historic metal grille. The light fixture above the door is non-historic. The windows at the western end of the elevation have replacement sash and panning and the first story window has a non-historic security grille.

Most of the windows on the western (rear) elevation of the south courtyard have non-historic replacement sash and panning. All but the bottom south light at the second story level and the transoms at the fifth story have been replaced by non-historic metal louvers.

The south court wall (northern wall of the south wing) has non-historic metal louvers in place of windows at the basement level. The upper story windows are non-historic and the first story windows have non-historic metal security grilles. Non-historic light fixtures have been installed at the east of the façade just above the first story windows and between the bay 2 and bay 3 just below the first story windows.

South Wing: The sidewalk and areaway in front of the south wing was also partially rebuilt in the 1980s. At the basement level a number of holes have been cut in the granite near the north end of the façade for exhaust pipes and two meters. Bays 1 and 3 (reading north to south) retain their historic wood-and-glass doors, which are now protected by non-historic iron grilles. Non-historic light fixtures are located just south of both doors. The window opening in bay 2 currently contains non-historic metal louvers. At bays 4 through bay 6 the façade bumps out to form a masonry enclosure constructed between 1999 and 2002, which is faced with granite and trimmed with a molded ogee molding that align with the molding capping the original basement façade. The windows on the upper stories have been replaced. At the first story there are non-historic iron grates at all of the openings. There is a non-historic light fixtures at the south corner of the just above the first story windows. At the second story non-historic floodlights have been installed at the south end of the center balcony and on the northern balcony. All of the balconies

are covered with netting.

South Façade. The articulation of the south façade matches that of the north façade except that because of the sloping ground level the basement windows are entirely above ground. As on the primary façade, all of the windows have been replaced by non-historic sash and panning. Both the basement and first story windows are protected by non-historic iron grilles. Non-historic Siamese hydrants have been installed on the basement wall at the west and east ends of the projecting center section, located just above historic spigots and hose rings. There are floodlights at either end of the center second story balcony. All of the second-story balconies are covered with bird netting.

Roof. Most sections of the building are capped by hipped roofs, which are covered with standing-seam metal cladding (the original roof covering was copper clad with lead). On the long Sutphin Boulevard side of the building, the front slope of the roof levels off to form an asphalt-covered, pipe-railed, flat roof on which a large air-conditioning cooling tower and a number of other mechanical structures have been installed. There are also non-historic penthouses with louvered vents extending along the slopes of the roof facing 88th and 89th Street.

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NOTES

[1]This section is adapted from Landmarks Preservation Commission [hereafter LPC], *Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building Designation Report* (LP-2386) (New York: City of New York, 2010), prepared by Marianne Percival. Information in this section was compiled from LPC, *Former J. Kurtz & Sons Store Building Designation Report* (LP-1132) (New York: City of New York, 1981), prepared by Virginia Kushan, 1; E. Belcher Hyde, *Atlas of the Borough of Queens* (Brooklyn: E. Belcher Hyde, 1901), v. 1, pl. 10; Jon A. Peterson, ed., "A Research Guide to the History of Queens Borough and Its Neighborhoods" (typescript, Queens College Dept. of History, 1983); Frank Bergen Kelley, *Excursion Planned for the City History Club: Historic Queens* (New York: City History Club of New York, 1908), 5-6, 35; H. W. Munsell, *The History of Queens County, New York* (New York: H. W. Munsell & Co, 1882), 220-221; *Jamaica, Hempstead, Richmond Hill, Morris Park, and Woodhaven: Their Representative Men and Points of Interest* (New York: Mercantile Illustration Co., 1894), 17-21; Vincent F. Seyfried, *Jamaica Trolleys* (Long Island Trolley Histories, 1953), vol. 4, 1-5; and Theodore H. M. Prudon, ed., "Jamaica, Queens County, New York: Aspects of Its History" (typescript, Columbia University, Graduate Program for Restoration and Preservation of Historic Architecture, June 1975).

[2] Prudon, 39. See also the pamphlet *Souvenir Improvement Celebration, Jamaica, N.Y., April 20, 1898* (Jamaica, NY: Bertram Blackwell, printer, 1898).

[3] *Jamaica, Hempstead, Richmond Hill, Morris Park, and Woodhaven,* 18.

[4] Vincent F. Seyfried and William Asadorian, *Old Queens, N.Y. in Early Photographs* (New York: Dover, 1991), 26.

[5] This history of the early courthouses in Queens is based on Munsell, 49-55; Clayton Knowles, "Queens Starts 3rd Courthouse In 150 Years," *Long Island Sunday Press,* Oct. 16, 1936; Jon A. Peterson, "Queens," *Encyclopedia of*

New York City, Kenneth Jackson, ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press; New York: The New-York Historical Society, 1995); Jeff Gottlieb, "Origins of the New York State Supreme Court Building, Jamaica, Queens," Dec. 28, 1998, unpublished typescript in the "Jamaica Courthouses" Clippings File, Queensborough Public Library, Archive.

[6] Knowles, "Queens Starts 3rd Courthouse."

[7] Ibid.

[8] "Harvey Proposes $8,000,000 Centre," *New York Times,* Feb. 8,1930, 7; Soon after Harvey made his proposal a planning group with ties to Mayor Walker proposed an alternative site for the Civic Center in Maspeth that had formerly been owned by gangster Arnold Rothstein. Harvey subsequently countered with a proposal for a courthouse in Jamaica independent of the civic center. For these proposals see "New City Airport Advised for Queens, *New York Times,* Feb. 22, 1930, 28; "Fights Civic Centre on Rothstein Land," *New York Times,* Feb. 24, 1930, 21; "Charges Juggling on Queens Centre," *New York Times,* Apr. 2, 1930, 38; "Harvey's Pledge to Jamaica," *Long Island Daily Press,* Mar. 24, 1931; "Project Awaits Return of Mayor Walker from Vacation," *Long Island Daily Press,* Mar. 24, 1931; "As Jamaica $2,000,000 Court House Will Look," *Brooklyn Daily Times,* Mar. 1, 1932; "Harvey Under Fire Over Civic Centre," *New York Times,* Mar. 10, 1934, 14.

[9] "Special Term Designed to Give Dispatch to Supreme Court Litigation," unidentified clipping in the "Jamaica Courthouses" Clippings File, Queensborough Public Library. See also "Public Offices Here Widely Scattered, *Long Island Daily Press,* Sept. 9, 1934.

[10] "Court Quarters Assailed," *New York Times*, June 30, 1933, 18.

[11] "Grand Jury Calls Court A Firetrap," *New York Times*, Feb. 28, 1934, 15.

[12] Knowles, "Queens Starts 3rd Courthouse."

[13] "Construction Expected to Start July 1," *Long Island Daily Press,* May 15, 1935.

[14] An additional $1,625,000 was to be financed through the sale of bonds and the remaining costs through tax revenues.

[15] By mid-September 1936, the specifications were ready and plans were filed with the Queens Department of Buildings. Groundbreaking ceremonies took place in mid-October.

[16] "Photographs and Descriptions of Winning Buildings, 1938 Building Awards, Chamber of Commerce of the Borough of Queens," *Queensborough*, 24 (Dec. 1938), 26; "'Best Buildings' of the Year in Queens as Chosen by Chamber of Commerce," *New York Times,* Dec. 11, 1938, 225. Work briefly halted on the courthouse in October 1938, when Borough President Harvey's brother-in-law James A. Lunn, Superintendent of the Queens Bureau of Public Buildings and Offices, was terminated by the Civil Service Commission after he failed the oral exam for special construction supervisor. Lunn had been responsible for drawing up the specifications for the building and was the Borough President's personal representative on the project, signing off on all bills from contractors. After Lunn was fired, Harvey notified the building contractors that he would not authorize any payments for work. Mayor La Guardia then transferred responsibility for the construction to the Department of Public Works. Harvey retaliated in an interview to the *New York Times* accusing La Guardia of seeking personal glory by transferring the construction out of the Borough President's jurisdiction. See "Harvey Suspends Work on Building," *New York Times,* Oct. 15, 1928, 22; "Harvey Sees Politics in Court Job Change, *New York Times*, Oct. 21, 1938, 13.

[17] "Queens General Court House to Open Wednesday March First," *Queensborough* 25 (Feb. 1939), 17; "Mayor Twits Foes During Dedication," *New York Times,* Mar. 2, 1939, 23; "Dedicate $5,000,000 Queens General Court; LaGuardia Officiates, *Long Island Daily Press,* Mar. 2, 1939; "New General Courthouse in Queens Opens," *Daily News*, Mar. 2, 1939.

[18] The building initially housed the Supreme Court (four trial parts and Special Term), the County Clerk's Office, motor vehicle offices, the Public Administrator's office, the Surrogate's Court, the Supreme Court grand jury, and offices for the Bar Association. All of the criminal courts were centralized at the courthouse in Long Island City.

[19] "$600,000,000 Worth of Public Improvements in Five Years, *Queensborough*, 25 (Dec. 1937), 5; Federal Writers Publications (NY), *New York City Guide* (New York: Random House, 1940), 560-561; Building Improves in Queens Borough," *New York Times,* Jul 15, 1934. Like the courthouse, many of these projects were funded with Federal money. On the partnership between Mayor LaGuardia and President Franklin D. Roosevelt that resulted in New York City's receiving 17% of the public works budget for the nation see, Gregory F. Gilmartin, *Shaping the City* (New York: Clarkson Potter, 1995), 284.

[20] LaGuardia quote from "Mayor Twits Foes During Dedication;" Chamber of Commerce, $600,000,000 Worth of Public Improvements," 5.

[21] Sources for this biography of Alfred H. Eccles include Knowles, "Queens Starts 3rd Courthouse;" U.S. Census, Queens, New York, 1900, Ward 1, ED 624, 1; Queens, 1910, ED 1167, 20B; Queens,1920, AD 1, ED 41, 9B; Queens, 1930 ED 41-46, 17B; Office of the Surrogate, Queens County, Administrations file 6792-1961; Queens New York Directories, 1908-12; New York City Telephone Directories, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, 1925-1942; "Alfred H. Eccles, Architect and Engineer Has Moved," *Architecture* 58(1928); "Queens Buildings Cited for Design," *New York Times,* Dec. 3, 1951, 48; "The Three-Family House," *New York Times*, Dec. 28, 1930, RE3; "New Synagogue for Beth-El, *Queensborough*, 21, n. 4 (Apr. 1935), 71.``

[22] In 1909 Eccles married Lucy Reidy, whose father, Michael J. Reidy, was a Queens builder and later the Assistant Superintendent of Buildings for Queens and a county inspector and was very active in Democratic party politics in Queens. During the first years of their marriage the Eccles lived with the Reidys. See "Michael J. Reidy," *New York Times*, Sept. 13, 1940, 22; "Mrs. Michael J. Reidy," *New York Times*, July 6, 1937, 19; US Census, 1910.

[23] Eccles was extremely prolific and announcements of his work were frequently published in the newspapers. A partial list of citations include: "Alterations," *Real Estate Record & Guide*, May 1912, 1073; "Home Buying and Auctions Feature Suburban Market," *New York Times*, Sep. 2, 1928, 124; "Forest Hills Progress," *New York Times,* Sept. 2, 1928, 140; "Motor Car Makers Lease," *New York Times*, Apr. 12, 1930; 38;"Grosvenor Square Apartments," *New York Times,* Apr. 26, 1931, RE2, "Adds to Brewing Plant," *New York Times*, Feb. 25, 1933, 29; "$750,000 Apartment Planned in Astoria," *New York Times*, Dec. 20, 1939, 47; "Housing Plans Are Filed," Mar. 25, 1945, 38; "To Inspect Veterans' Homes," *New York Times,* Mar. 24, 1948, 2; "Building Plans Filed," *New York Times*, Aug. 11, 1929, N21;Aug. 9, 1931, 32; Dec. 27, 1933, 37; Jan. 26, 1934, 35; Mar 14, 1934, 36; Mar 25, 1934, 40; Mar. 2, 1935, 29; Apr. 13, 1935, 29; Apr. 17, 1936, 40; Mar. 29, 1940, 42; Aug. 8, 1940, 35; Oct. 9, 1940, 46; Nov. 20, 1940, 42; Nov. 15, 1941, C30; Nov. 24, 1942, 39; Feb. 8, 1946, 38; Feb. 12, 1946, 38; Oct. 19, 1946, 34; Aug. 14, 1948; Aug. 29, 1949, Jun. 7, 1949; Jan. 30 1951, July 27, 1953, 29;

[24] Knowles, "Queens Starts 3rd Courthouse."

[25] "Bush to Help Draft New Building Code," *New York Times*, Nov. 29, 1929, 21;"The Three-Family House," *New York Times*, Dec. 28, 1930, RE3; "Suggest Changes to Dwelling Law, "*New York Times*, Jan. 18,1931, 153; "Architects Install Officers," *New York Times*, Dec. 16,1931,36; "Jallade Heads Architects," *New York Times*, Nov. 26, 1933, RE1;"Censures Teaching of Architecture," *New York Times*, Jan. 20, 1935, RE3; "Rules are Given in Queens Contest," *New York Times*, Sept. 9, 1951, R11; "Society of Architects," *American Art Annual* 35 (1941), 339.

[26] This biography of William Welles Knowles is drawn from "William W. Knowles, *New York Times*, Jan. 20, 1944, 19; "W.W. Knowles, Architect, 72, Dies in Queens," *New York Tribune,* Jan 20, 1944; "Who's Who in the Chamber, *Queensborough,* Nov. 1934, 270, 277; "Mr. Knowles Visits France With Fellow Architects," *Queensborough,* July 1931, 354;"Who's Who on the Jury," *Bulletin of the Beaux Arts Institute of Design* 16 (Jun. 1940), 4; "William W. Knowles," *New York Sun,* Jan. 20, 1944; Knowles, "Queens Starts 3rd Courthouse;" James Ward, *Architects in Practice New York City, 1900-1940* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1989); U.S. Census, Manhattan, New York, 1900, ED 562, 9B; Queens, 1910, ED 1286, 10B; Flushing, Queens,1920, Third Ward, ED 222, 9B; Queens, 1930, ED 41-1089, 10A; Columbia University, Avery Architectural Library, "New York Architectural Terra Cotta Company Archive Data Base," s.v. "Knowles, Wm. W."

[27] Young Women's Christian Association Building, 124th Street, New York City," *Architectural Record* 6 (June 1897), 577.

[28] "Queensborough's Highway of Tomorrow," *Queensborough* 27 (Apr. 1941), 7-9.

[29] Knowles served as Chairman of the Board of the Flushing Finance Corporation, was a director of the Walbert Realty Corporation and was a member of the Queensboro Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the Queensborough Rotary Association, the American Legion, and the Bayside Yacht Club.

[30] Queens New York Directories, 1908-12; New York City Telephone Directories, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, 1925-1942.

[31] For Modern Classicism see Robert A.M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin, and Thomas Mellins, *New York 1930* (New York: Rizzolli, 1987), 20-27; Richard Guy Wilson, "Modern Classicism and Washington, D.C." in Craig Zabel and Susan Scott Munshower, eds. *American Public Architecture: European Roots and Native Expressions* (University Park, PA: Papers in Art History from Pennsylvania State University, 1989); Elizabeth Grossman, T*he Civic Architecture of Paul Cret* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), 82-90, 140-154; Richard Guy Wilson, Introduction, to the Da Capo Edition, C.W. Short and Stanley Brown, *Public Buildings: Architecture Under the Public Works Administration, 1933-39* (1939: rpt. New York: Da Capo Press, 1986), i-x; Elizabeth Grossman, "Paul Cret and the Federal Reserve Board Building, *Revue Francaise d'etudes Amèricaines* 102 (Dec. 2004), 6-19.

[32] Talbot Hamlin quoted in Stern et al, 23.

[33]"Photographs and Descriptions of Winning Buildings," 26.

[34] This discussion of courthouse design is based on Nikolaus Pevsner, *A History of Building Types* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976), 53-56; Mary B. Dierickx, ,*The Architecture of Public Justice: Historic Courthouses of the City of New York* (New York: City of New York, 1993); Julia and Albert M. Rosenblatt, *Historic Courthouses of the State of New York* (Nashville: Turner Publishing, 2006); Robert A.M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin and John Montague Massengale, *New York 1900* (New York: Rizzolli, 1983), 67-70; Stern et al., *New York 1930,* 93-102.

[35] Numerous examples followed, including the Greek Revival style Brooklyn City Hall, which originally contained a courtroom (now Brooklyn Borough Hall (Gamiel King, 1846-51, a designated New York City Landmark) and the Italianate style New York County Courthouse (aka Tweed Courthouse, John Kellum, 1861, a designated New York City Landmark). Both of these buildings had pedimented porticos, grand staircases and cupolas.

[36] "Proposed Development: Kew Gardens Site, for Queens Civic Center — William W. Knowles, Architect," *Pencil Points,* 15 (Oct. 1934), 494-95.

[37] Herbert C. Frey, "Our Court House," in "Queens General Court House Dedication" (booklet), Mar. 1, 1939, 15.

[38] "Apartment House Takes in 3 Courts," *New York Times*, Mar. 31, 1960, 33; "Queens Bar Group Dedicates Building, *New York Times*, Feb. 7, 1960, 21. In the 1960s, the court system was reorganized and Queens County became a separate judicial jurisdiction from Suffolk and Nassau Counties. See "Court Reorganization Plan Filed For Second Approval in Albany," *New York Times,* Nov. 18, 1960, 13.

[39] Stephen McFarland, "Court Building is Supreme," *Daily News*, Dec. 6, 1981. However, Boyers lamented that a courthouse that had been designed to serve five justices was housing 24 Supreme Court parts. (A part consists of a courtroom, judge and other personnel needed to conduct a trial.) Moreover, the courthouse, which had been intended to serve exclusively for civil cases, was being used for more criminal trials than any other courthouse in the borough and criminal cases brought increased maintenance problems.

[40]The information on this inspection report and the subsequent alterations to the courthouse are taken from New York City Department of Buildings, Queens, microfiche records for block 9691, lot 1.

[41]"Crane Topples and Building is Evacuated," *New York Times,* Jul. 16, 2002, B6; Akiko Matsuda and Herbert Lowe, "Crane Topples onto Courthouse," *Newsday*, Jul. 16, 2002; "Toppled Crane Gets Lift at Last," *Newsday*, Jul. 17, 2002.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Queens General Court House has a special character and special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

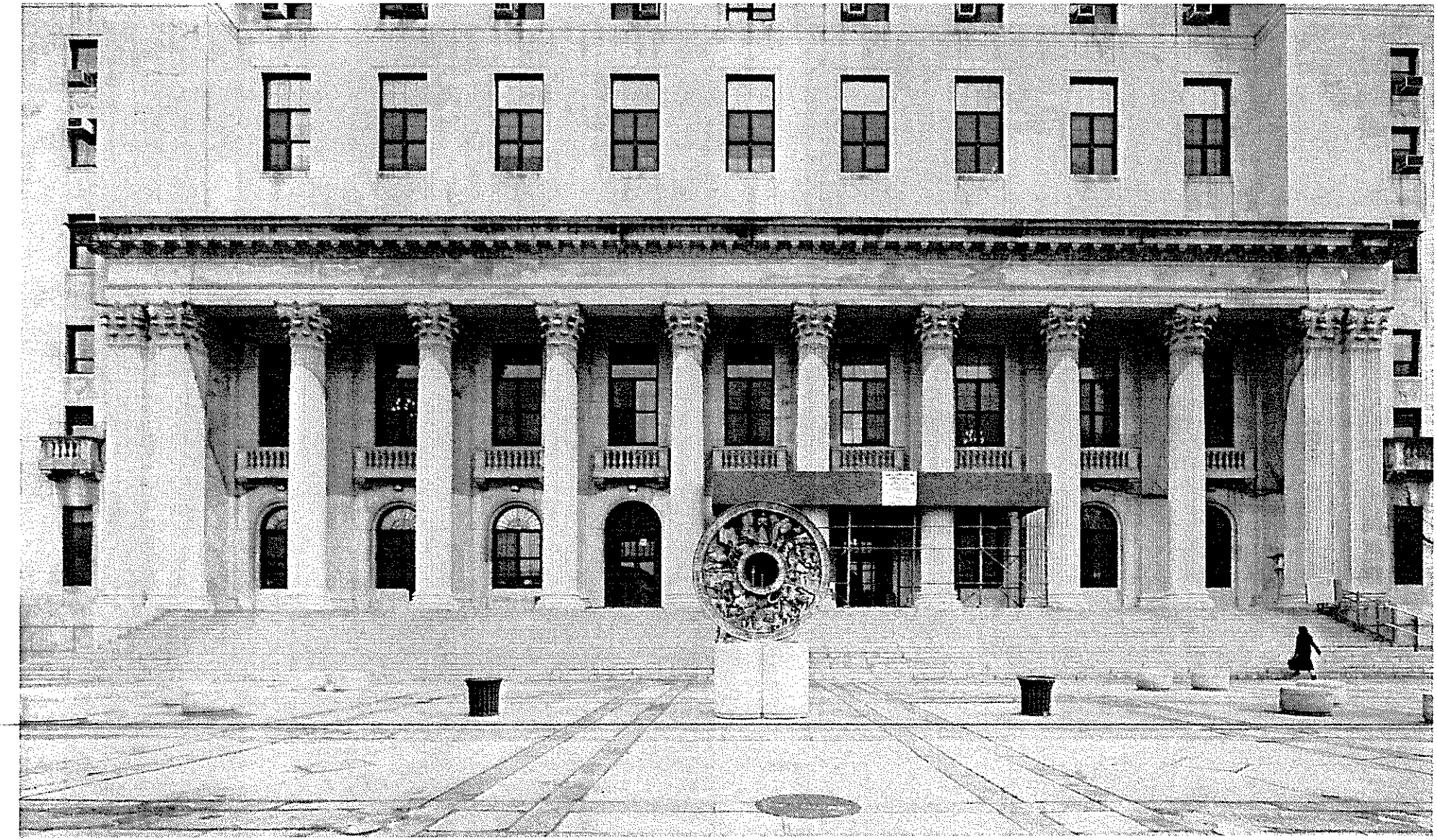
The Commission further finds that, among their important qualities, that the Queens General Court House is a grand, Modern Classic, Depression-era monument built between 1937 and 1939, with payment split between City funds and a Federal grant from the Public Works Administration; that the new courthouse was considered a major public improvement, and convenience for the borough of Queens, consolidating the offices of the Queens County Clerk, the City Court, the Supreme Court and the Surrogate's Court in downtown Jamaica, and was meant to handle all the civil cases in Queens; that the Modern Classical style was selected for this building because it was thought to express the dignity and majesty of the law; that the E-shaped seven-story building, faced with Alabama limestone and articulated with neo-Classical ornament, is an excellent example of the style; that following a long-standing tradition for courthouses the building's most prominent feature is a two-and-one-half-story colonnaded portico fronted by a grand staircase; that the three arched entrances at the center of the portico retain their original bronze coffered doors and are edged with bronze sculptural panels depicting famous lawgivers; that other notable features of the design include the heavy bracketed cornices, balustraded balconies, stylized swagged relief panels, and shallow window surrounds; that architects Alfred H. Eccles and William W. Knowles were Queens residents with architectural practices in Long Island City who had designed a number of prominent Queens buildings; that in 1938, shortly before it opened, the building was awarded first prize in the public buildings classification in the Queens Chamber of Commerce's Best Buildings of the Year competition; that the General Court House's skillfully composed facades, handsome detailing, and the power of its monumental portico make it one of the finest and most imposing public buildings in Queens.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Queens General Court House, 88-11 Sutphin Boulevard (aka 88-01 to 88-33 Sutphin Boulevard, 147-02 to 147-28 88th Avenue, 147-01 89th Avenue, 88-02 to 88-34 148th Street), Borough of Queens and designates Borough of Queens Tax Map Block 9691, Lot 1, as their Landmark Site.

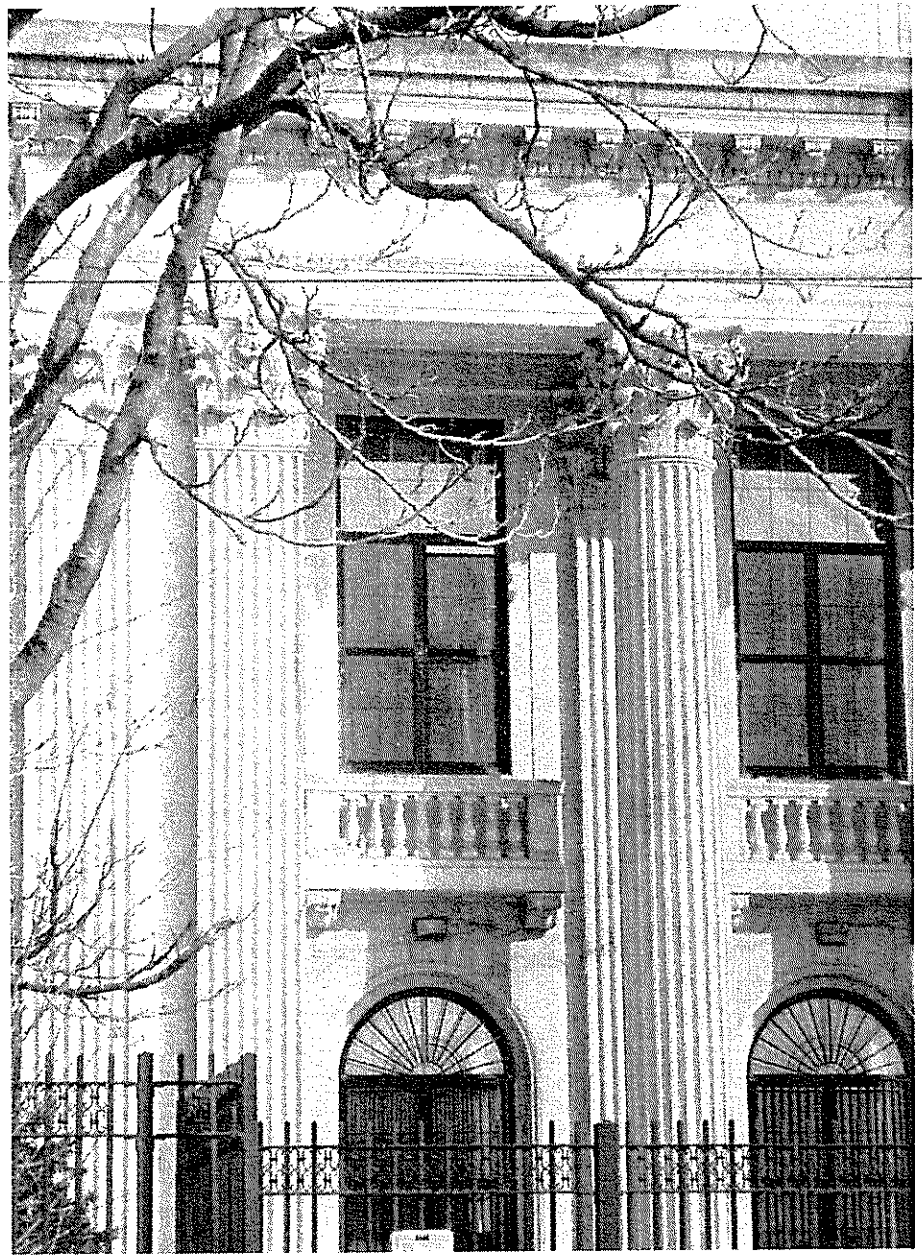
Robert B. Tierney, Chair
Pablo Vengoechea, Vice-Chair;
Diana Chapin, Roberta Brandes Gratz,
Christopher Moore, Roberta Washington, Commissioners

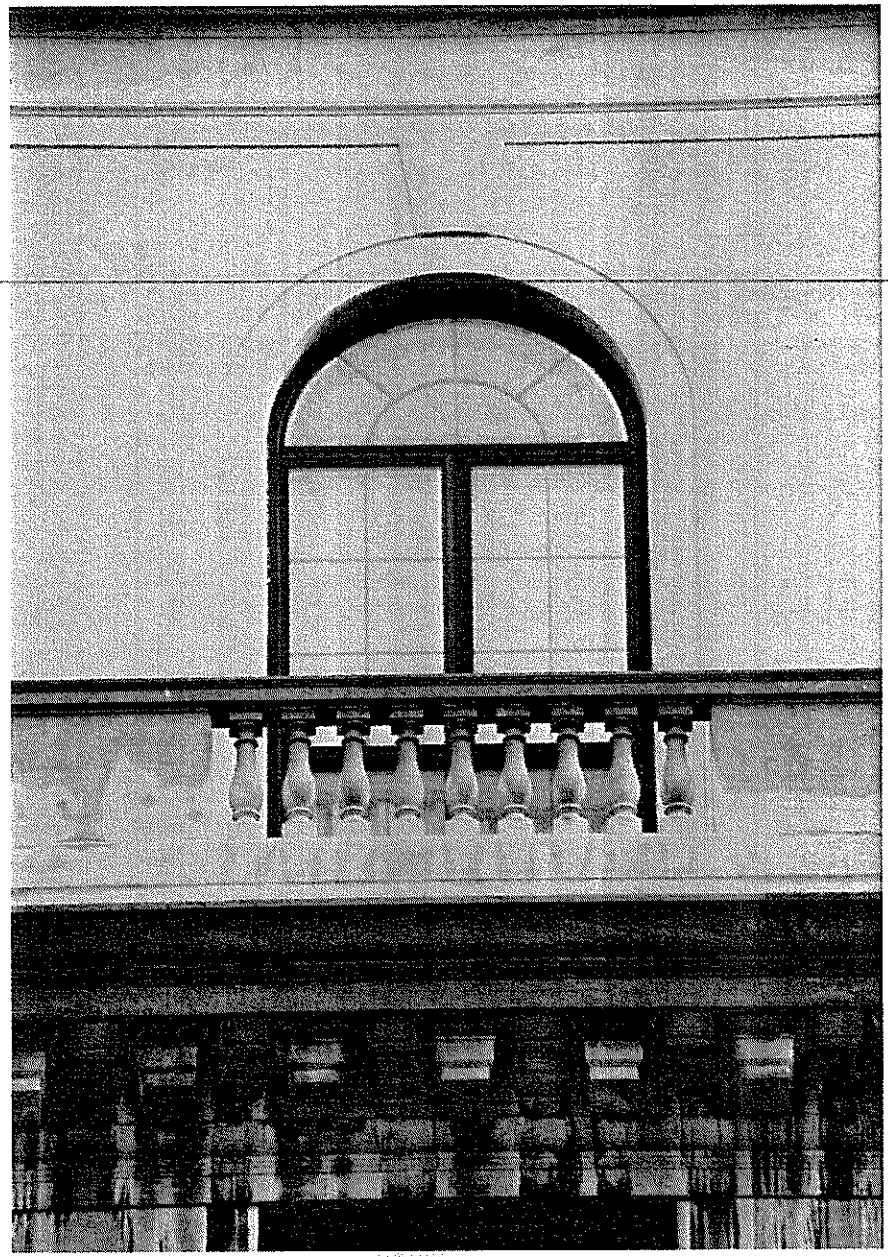
Queens General Court House
88-11 Sutphin Boulevard
(aka 88-01 to 88-33 Sutphin Boulevard, 147-02 to147-28 88th Avenue, 147-01 89th Avenue, 88-02 to 88-34 148th Street)
Landmark Site: Borough of Queens Tax Map Block 9691, Lot 1
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, October 2010

Queens General Court House
View from the northwest
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, October 2010

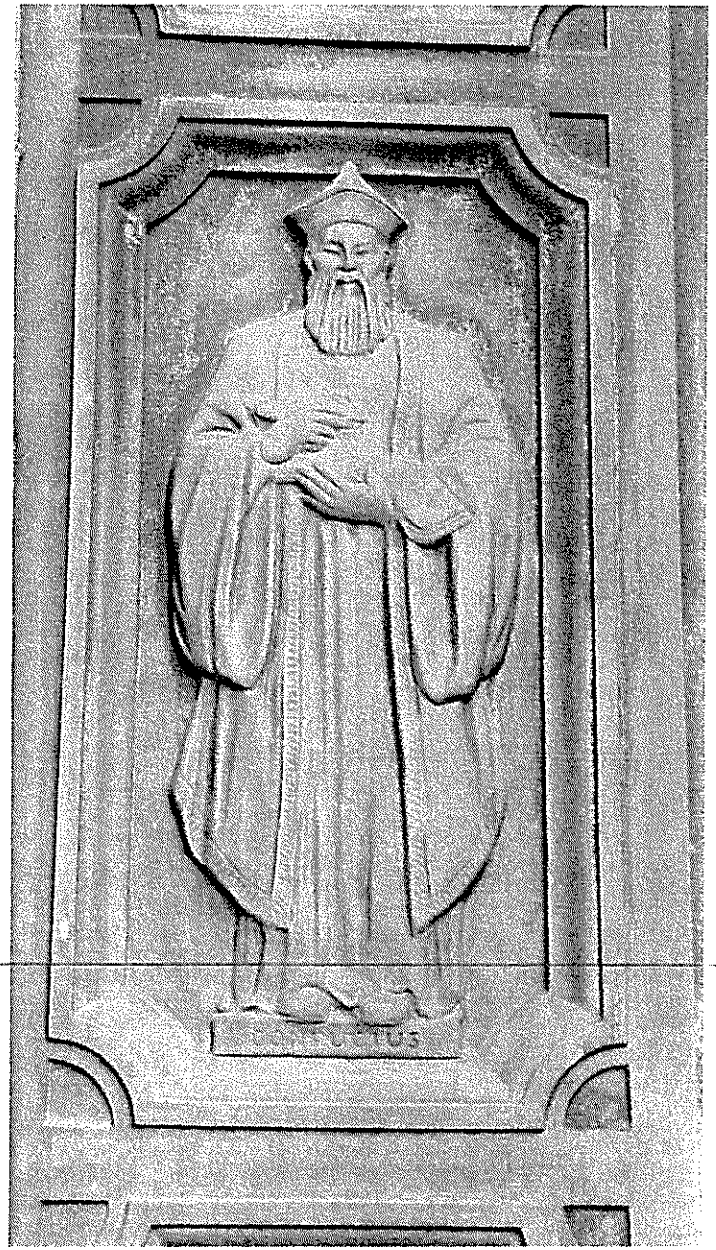


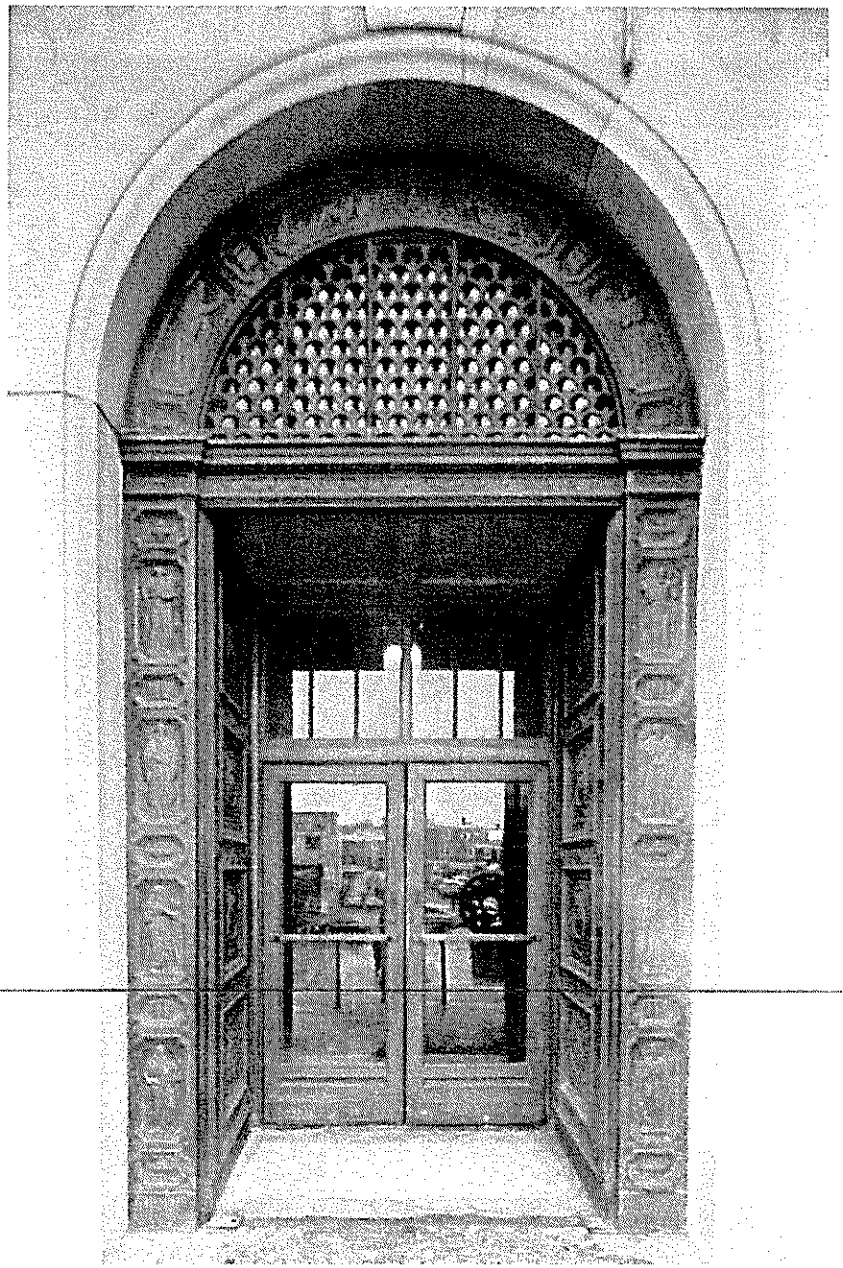
Queens General Court House
Colonnade and grand staircase, Sutphin Avenue facade
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, February 2010





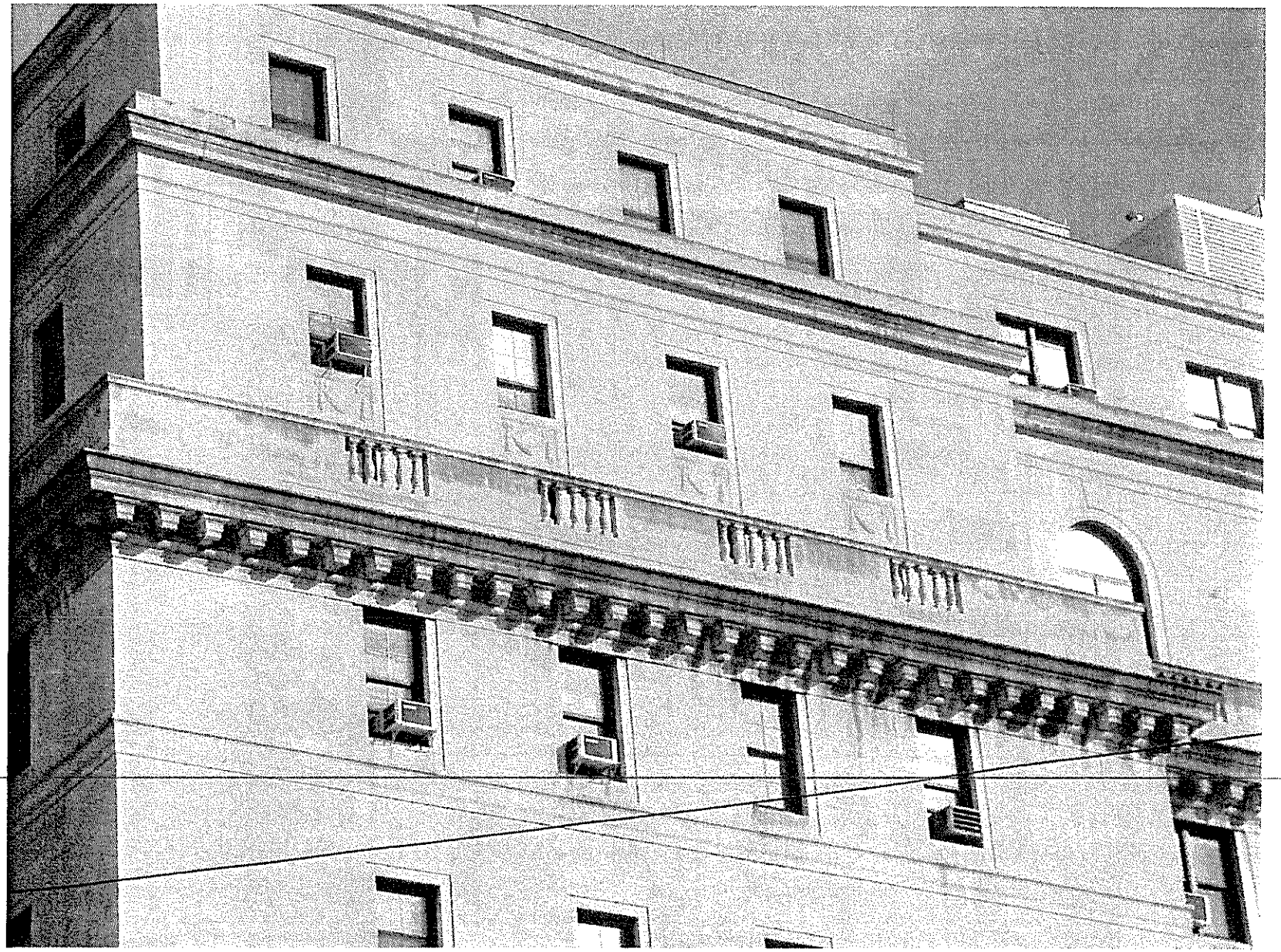
Queens General Court House
Details of Colonnade and sixth-story window
Photos: left, Christopher D. Brazee, January 2007; right Christopher D. Brazee, October 2010



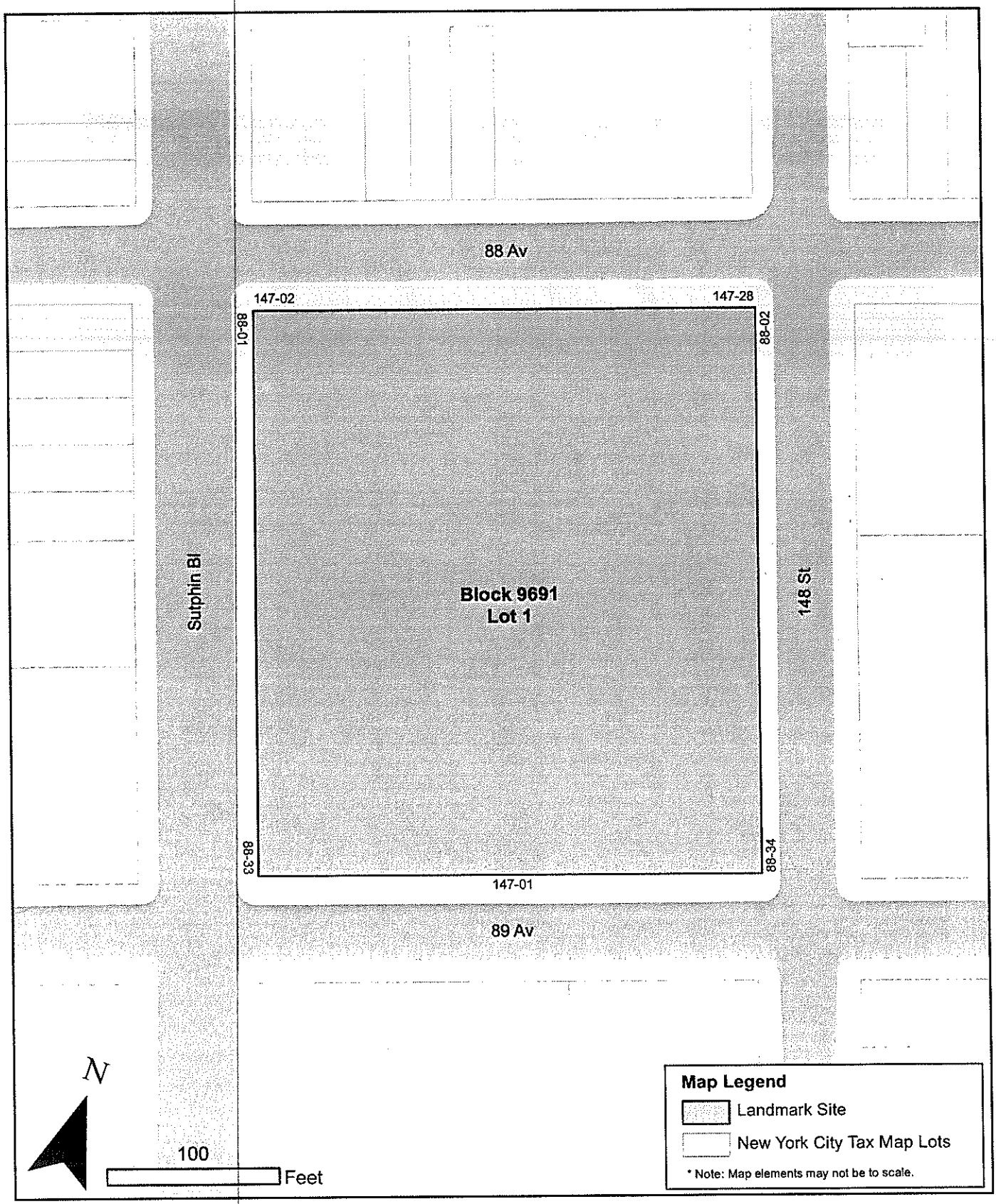


Queens General Court House
Details of north entrance and *Confucius* relief panel
Photos: left, Gale Harris, July 2010 ; right, Christopher D. Brazee, October 2010

Queens General Court House
Eastern (rear) façade from 148th Street
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, February 2010



Queens General Court House
Detail of the upper stories, Sutphin Avenue facade
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, January 2007



QUEENS GENERAL COURT HOUSE (LP-2404), 88-11 Sutphin Boulevard (aka 88-01 to 88-33 Sutphin Boulevard; 147-02 to 147-28 88th Avenue; 147-01 89th Avenue; 88-02 to 88-34 148th Street
Landmark Site: Borough of Queens, Tax Map Block 9691, Lot 1

Designated: October 26, 2010

Graphic Source: New York City Department of City Planning, MapPLUTO, Edition 09v1, 2009. Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, JM. Date: October 26, 2010.

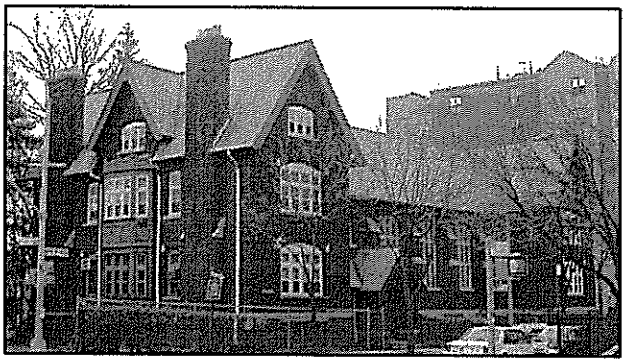
Landmarks Preservation Commission
October 26, 2010, Designation List 434
LP- 2394

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH MEMORIAL HALL, 155-24 90TH Avenue, Queens
Built, 1912; architects, Upjohn and Conable

Landmark Site: Borough of Queens Tax Map Block 9754, Lot 7

On February 9, 2010, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 2). The hearing was duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. There were four speakers in favor of designation, including representatives of the Historic Districts Council, Four Borough Neighborhood Preservation Alliance and Queens Preservation Council. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. The Commission received three letters in support of designation from State Senator Shirley L. Hunter, Queens Borough President Helen M. Marshall and the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation and one email in support of the designation from a representative of the Rego-Park Preservation Council.

Summary



Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall is part of one of the most historic church complexes in New York City. Grace Episcopal Church was founded in 1702 and the present English Gothic Revival style church building, designed by Dudley Field, was built in 1861-62 and enlarged in 1901-02 by Cady, Berg & See. Surrounding the church is a graveyard in which are buried members of many families important to the history of the city, including Rufus King. (The church and graveyard were designated a New York City Landmark in 1967). Northeast of the church building, behind the graveyard, is the Memorial Hall, constructed in 1912 to meet the needs of the growing congregation for a meeting place and social center. The Memorial Hall included a gymnasium, an auditorium, meeting rooms and offices. These facilities were needed as the role of the church expanded from solely providing religious services to include educational and social services. On the 250th anniversary of the founding of the church, the Memorial Hall was being used by 21 different organizations. Designed by the prominent architectural firm of Upjohn and Conable in Tudor Gothic Revival style to complement the church building, the brick building's symmetrical massing and flanking wings add a picturesque element to the church complex.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Development of Jamaica[1]

Jamaica, one of the oldest settlements within the boundaries of New York City, developed into the leading commercial and entertainment center of Queens County. The southern part of the area was inhabited by a Native American tribe called Jameco (or Jemaco) when the first Europeans arrived there in 1655. In 1656, Robert Jackson applied to Governor Stuyvesant for a patent and "purchased" ten acres of land from the native tribe[2] and called the settlement Rusdorp.

Following the transfer of power from the Dutch to the English in 1664, Rusdorp was renamed Jamaica, after the original Indian inhabitants of the region. Queens County (incorporating present-day Queens and Nassau Counties) was chartered in 1683. The English established Jamaica as the governmental center of Queens County, with a court, county clerk's office, and parish church (Grace Episcopal Church; the present structure is a designated New York City Landmark). Outside the town center, Jamaica was largely an area of farm fields and grazing land for cattle. A 1698 Census of Queens County showed a total population of 3,355 whites and 199 blacks. Although early records indicate the existence of slaves in Jamaica, throughout its history Jamaica also had a free black population. One of its most well-known African-American residents was Wilson Rantus who was born in Jamaica in 1807. Well-educated, he started a school for black children and became involved in the effort, along with African-Americans Samuel V. Berry of Jamaica and Henry Amberman of Flushing to achieve the right to vote for African-Americans.[3]

New York State incorporated Jamaica as a village in 1814. Jamaica's central location in Queens County and the extensive transportation network that developed in the town during the 19th century resulted in the transformation of the community into the major commercial center for Queens County and much of eastern Long Island. It was the arrival of the railroads that began this transformation.[4] The roads and rail lines connecting Jamaica with other sections of Queens County, with Brooklyn to the west, eastern Long Island, and ferries to New York City had a tremendous impact. Jamaica's farmland was soon being subdivided into streets and building lots, and new homes were erected.

By the turn of the century, Jamaica's importance as a commercial area became evident in the impressive buildings beginning to appear on Jamaica Avenue, most notably the Beaux-Arts style Jamaica Savings Bank, 161-02 Jamaica Avenue (Hough & Deuell, 1897-98, a designated New York City Landmark). After Jamaica was incorporated into the borough of Queens and became a part of New York City on January 1, 1898, additional transportation improvements brought increasing numbers of people.[5] As a result, the population of Jamaica quadrupled between 1900 and 1920. Grace Episcopal Church built its Memorial Hall during this time.

It was during the 1920s, when the major mass transit links were in place, and during a period when private automobile ownership was growing at an extraordinary rate, that Jamaica experienced its major expansion as a commercial and entertainment center. By 1925, Jamaica Avenue between 160th Street and 168th Street had the highest assessed valuation in Queens County.[6]

During the 1920s and early 1930s, many small-scale commercial buildings were erected in Jamaica, as well as several major office and commercial structures, including the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building, 89-31 161st Street (George W. Conable, 1928-29, a designated New York City Landmark); the Suffolk Title Guarantee Company Building, 90-04 161st Street (Dennison & Hirons, 1929, a designated New York City Landmark); and the J. Kurtz & Sons Store, 162-25 Jamaica Avenue (Allmendinger & Schlendorf, 1931, a designated New York City Landmark). In addition, Jamaica developed into a significant entertainment center. By the mid-1930s, there were at least eight movie theaters on or just off of Jamaica Avenue, and there were over 60 restaurants, bars and clubs, ranging from small ethnic taverns to elegant restaurants.

History of Grace Episcopal Church[7]

Grace Church dates its founding from 1702 when a missionary minister was sent out by the English organization, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, in response to a request from a group of Jamaica residents. It is one of the country's earliest Anglican (now Episcopal) parishes, the oldest parish on Long Island and, in New York State, second in age only to Trinity Church in Manhattan. In 1699 a stone church was built in Jamaica pursuant to the Assembly Church Building Act and was supported by compulsory payment, but by the time an Anglican missionary minister arrived a Presbyterian congregation occupied the church building. A dispute ensued between the "established" Anglican congregation and the "dissenting" Presbyterian congregation over the use of the church building and parsonage.[8] At the time the congregation built its first church building in 1734 they had been meeting for several years in the county courthouse. In 1733 "Martha Heathcote of City of New York, widow of Colonel Caleb Heathcote" (and other heirs) deeded half an acre of land to "Rev. Mr. Thomas Colgan, present rector"[9] for the purpose of erecting a church.[10] Caleb Heathcote[11] was made a member of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts in 1704[12] and was mayor of New York City from 1711 to 1714. A frame church building was completed in 1734 and named Grace Church. In 1822, the first church building was demolished and replaced by larger frame church building. The church land was enlarged by gifts and purchases throughout the 19th century.[13] On the morning of New Years Day in 1861, the second church building was destroyed by a fire that was believed to have originated in the flues of the furnace. The present English Gothic Revival style sandstone church building is the third on the site and was constructed 1861-62 to the designs of architect Dudley Field, and enlarged in 1901-02 by the architectural firm of Cady, Berg & See.

Farmers in Jamaica relied on enslaved African-Americans as agricultural laborers until the first decades of the 19th century, and several members of Grace Episcopal Church owned slaves. The register of the Reverend John Poyer[14] records the baptism of African-American slaves as early as May 1714.[15] There were also free African-Americans living in Jamaica in the early 18th century; one of the church's communicants in 1723-27 is noted to be "Judith, the negress."[16] The Reverend Poyer baptized a free African-American woman and her three daughters in September 1731.[17] Onderdonk, in his history of the church, notes that four new pews were put in the belfry for black worshippers in about 1803.[18] A "Sunday school for colored children" was established as a week-day school as early as 1837 with a student body of 25 boys and 35 girls.[19]

The Reverend Samuel Seabury, Jr.[20] succeeded the Reverend Colgan and was rector of Grace Church from 1757 to 1766. Seabury was a loyalist during the American Revolution and in 1783 was consecrated in Scotland as the first bishop of the Episcopalian Church in America.

A large part of the church property is occupied by a burial ground. Some of the tombstones date from the 18th century. Burials represent many families important to the history of the city, including Van Rensselaer, Gracie, Delafield and Van Cortland. Rufus King, whose home is preserved in nearby Kings Park (a designated New York City Landmark), is buried in Grace Church Graveyard. He and members of his family in two succeeding generations were parishioners and active supporters of Grace Church. Rufus King[21] was elected by New York State in 1789 to the first United States Senate. In 1796 he became minister to England by appointment of President Washington. His sons, Charles King, president of Columbia College (now Columbia University) from 1849 to 1864, and John Alsop King, governor of New York from 1857 to 1859, are also buried in the graveyard. A Sunday School was established in 1840 and in 1856 a Sunday School building was built on Parsons Boulevard on land deeded by John Alsop King. In 1873, after his death, his executors and heirs deeded additional land that included part of the graveyard. The Sunday School building was used until the Memorial Hall was built.

Grace Church established six mission churches in Queens between 1874 and 1926.[22] In 1902, the Diocese of Long Island erected "St. Stephen's Chapel for the colored" on the corner of Grand and North First Streets (now 168th Street and 90th Avenue) in Jamaica. The efforts to build St. Stephen's were aided by the vestry of Grace Church. It was under the care of the Reverend H. S. McDuffy, "superintendent of colored missions" in the diocese.[23]

Memorial Hall

The congregation of Grace Episcopal Church grew as the population of Jamaica grew, and the need for a parish house became apparent. Several attempts were made to build a parish house before the present structure was constructed. The Reverend Dr. Horatio Oliver Ladd, rector of Grace Church, wrote an article entitled "The Uses of a Parish House" in the church's newsletter, *Grace Church Chimes,* in October 1899. He notes that the church is no longer simply an organization of religious services but its sphere now includes local missionaries, Sunday school instruction, guilds to clothe and feed the needy, industrial schools, youth activities, exercise, recreation and mental and moral instruction. He states that a parish house would include a large assembly room, gymnasium, guild rooms, library, reading room, rector's room and reception room, and kitchen. Prominent Brooklyn architect Albert Parfitt was engaged to draw plans for a parish house. The building cost was estimated to be $25,000 and the vestry voted against the proposal because of the cost.[24]

In 1903-04 a renewed effort was made to build a memorial parish house with rooms named for deceased friends and citizens, and memorial tablets in the front hall with the names of donors. Although some funds were collected, the Reverend Ladd resigned as rector and the vestry refused to authorize the use of parish funds or credit for the purpose of building a parish house.[25] Efforts continued to build a parish house and Parfitt's floor plans were printed in the *Grace Church Chimes* in February 1905 and

February 1906. It was noted that the location of the parish hall was to be decided by the vestry.[26]

In 1911 under the rectorship of the Reverend Rockland Tyng Homans another attempt was made to construct a memorial parish house. A small booklet was published stating that the proposed Memorial House was "intended to stand for the present and future generations, expressing the lives and characters of those who in the past were connected with the town of Jamaica." Proposed floor plans that were drawn by architect Harry E. Oborne[27] were included and the cost was estimated to be $40,000.[28] In the following year, the Reverend Homans was successful in getting a parish hall designed by Upjohn and Conable built.

Architects Upjohn and Conable[29]

Hobart B. Upjohn (1876-1949), son of Richard M. Upjohn and grandson of Richard Upjohn, attended Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute and the Stevens Institute of Technology.[30] After graduating from Stevens with a degree in mechanical engineering in 1899 he worked as engineer. In 1905 while working in the architectural office of Eidlitz & McKenzie, he received a letter addressed to his father (who had died in 1903) from the All Souls' Universalist Church in Watertown, New York asking for a design for a new church. Upjohn designed a Gothic Revival style church, went to Watertown with his plans and received the commission. He left the engineering profession to become an architect at this time and opened an office. He is best known for his many designs of distinguished residences, churches and college buildings. These include the All Souls' Unitarian Church at Lexington Avenue and 80th Street and buildings on the North Carolina State University campus. The first churches he designed were in the Gothic Revival style but later in his career he also designed churches in the Colonial Revival style. He was president of the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and the author of many textbooks and monographs on architecture.

George W. Conable (1866-1933) graduated from the Cortland State Normal School and Cornell University. Prior to establishing his own practice, he worked in the offices of C. P. H. Gilbert, Barney & Chapman and Ernest Flagg.[31] While working for Flagg, he was in charge of the plans and working drawings for the Singer Building.[32] He is particularly well known his designs of churches and hospitals, including Trinity Lutheran of Long Island City, St. Paul's Lutheran in the Bronx, and Kingston Avenue Hospital in Brooklyn. Among the other notable structures designed by Conable is the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building in Queens.

Upjohn and Conable were partners from about 1908 to 1914 and maintained an office in Manhattan. One of their best known works is the bathing pavilions and other related buildings at Oakland Beach, Rye Park, Rye, New York.

Memorial Hall Design and Construction

The Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall was built in 1912. It was designed by the architectural firm of Upjohn and Conable[33] in the Tudor Gothic Revival style to complement the design of the existing church building, and was built at the far end of the graveyard in the northeast corner of the block at 90th Avenue and Parsons Boulevard.[34] The hall provided a meeting place and social center for the congregation, including a

gymnasium, an auditorium, meeting rooms and offices.[35] The estimated cost of construction was $35,500.[36]

The Memorial Hall was designed with architectural features from two variants of the Medieval Revival style: the Tudor and Gothic Revivals. Both styles were popular during the early 20th century but the Gothic Revival style was employed mostly in religious and educational buildings, while the Tudor Revival style was most often used for residential buildings. Architects during this period frequently employed an eclectic mix of different historical styles. During the middle of the 19th century, Alexander Jackson Davis and Andrew Jackson Downing promoted Gothic Revival style residential buildings. The Memorial Hall, although an institutional building, has many characteristics of residential buildings built in the Gothic and Tudor Revival styles, especially at the flanking wings with its intersecting gables. Hobart Upjohn used the Tudor Revival style several other times for parish houses associated with churches built in the English Gothic Revival style, including the West Side Presbyterian Church (1925-27) in Englewood, New Jersey, and Christ Church (1927-30) in Fitchburg, Mass.[37]

Some of the features of the Memorial Hall that are found in both Gothic and Tudor Revival styles buildings include steeply pitched gable roofs with intersecting gables and bargeboard, and bay window with crenulated parapet. Tudor Revival style features of the Memorial Hall include Tudor-arched window and door openings, grouped leaded-glass and casement windows, some with transoms, paneled wood doors, materials with different colors and textures (red brick, limestone, wood and mock half-timbering), and large brick chimneys with decorative brickwork and multiple chimney pots. The label moldings above the windows are characteristic of the Gothic Revival style (although they are usually only hood moldings and do not form continuous bands in Gothic Revival style buildings), as are the buttresses and entrance portico with its characteristic pendant and quatrefoils. The symmetry of the facades of the Memorial Hall is not typically characteristic of the picturesque Gothic or Tudor Revival styles; but symmetrical facades are often found on Gothic Revival style buildings. The interior layout of the building may have influenced the symmetry, with the center portion of building containing the large auditorium/ gymnasium and the flanking wings containing the smaller meeting spaces and offices; although a 1924 article by Upjohn about Sunday school buildings and parish houses showed asymmetrical floor plans.[38]

Subsequent History

In 1952, on the 250th anniversary of the founding of Grace Episcopal Church, the Memorial Hall was being used by 21 different organizations.[39] The church remains an active congregation whose demographics have changed as the surrounding neighborhood has changed. The Reverend Joseph H. Titus, upon his retirement after 33 years as rector of Grace Church in 1963, noted that when he came to Grace Church in 1930 there were only two or three black families but at the time of his retirement almost 500 of the 650 families in the congregation were black. He noted that they were primarily Anglicans from the West Indies.[40] The Memorial Hall still functions as a parish hall for Grace Episcopal Church. The building is largely intact except for the replacement of some of the window sash, which were arch-headed and square-headed multi-pane leaded-glass casement sash, with transoms at the first and second stories.

Description

The Grace Church Memorial Hall is a two story and basement building with gable roofs and has two flanking wings at the north and south facades containing two and one-half stories and basement and intersecting gable roofs. The building is constructed of red brick laid in common bond and has slate gable roofs with bargeboard and brackets. There is a continuous stone course around the building between the basement and first story. The windows (except at the basement, the bay at the east facade, and the west facade) are recessed with brick surrounds. All the arch-headed windows and doors have Tudor arches.

North Facade (90th Avenue): The center portion of the facade has a side facing gable with wings at either end that have front facing intersecting gables. The basement has multi-pane wood casement windows at the east wing, wood casement windows at the center portion, and frosted, wire-glass wood casement windows at the west wing, all with stone lintels and stills. The east wing and center portion basement windows have non-historic metal security grilles. There is an entrance portico at the western end of the center portion. The portico is set on a brick-and-stone base and is constructed of wood with brick infill and has a slate gable roof. It has a Tudor-arch-headed entry with a pendant and carved quatrefoils. The roof has bargeboard and is topped by a wooden cross. The entrance has arch-headed wood-paneled double-leaf doors with leaded-glass windows with mock half-timbering above the door. A stoop with three bluestone steps (second step also has non-historic red clay tile) and metal railings lead up to the entrance portico. The steps are painted gray and yellow. Above the door within the portico is a modern light fixture. Behind the portico is a pitched slate roof. Above the portico is an arch-headed window opening with a brick header surround, continuous stone band in the shape of label moldings above, a stone sill and four leaded-glass windows. The center portion of the facade has four two-story windows that are similar to the window above the portico but each one has three leaded-glass windows and all are covered with non-historic acrylic glass.[41] The windows are separated by stepped brick buttresses that have stone coping. The flanking intersecting wings have arch-headed window openings at the first, second and attic stories with brick header lintels (with stone imposts at the first and second stories), stone sills and replacement metal window sash. There is a multi-pane wood casement window with stone lintel and sill at the basement and an arch-headed window opening with double-hung metal sash, brick header lintel and stone sill at the second story of the return wall of the projecting west wing. There are five metal leaders. At the easternmost end of the facade there is a stone cornerstone with the inscription "Memorial House Grace Parish" at the basement and a plaque with the inscription "Grace Church Memorial House" above.

South Facade (rear facade): This facade is similar to the 90th Avenue facade except that there is no entrance portico and the second story windows in the wings do not have stone imposts. The entrance is located in the lower half of the westernmost two-story window opening in the center recessed portion of the facade and consists of double-leaf wood doors with small windows and a metal landing and stairs with metal railings. The pickets in the railings form Tudor arches. The basement windows are multi-pane wood casement in the western wing (the two westernmost windows appear to have replacement sash), single-pane wood casement with metal grilles in the center portion, and multi-pane wood casement with metal grilles in the eastern wing. The windows in the projecting wings

above the basement have metal replacement sash. The four two-story stained-glass windows in the center portion of the facade are covered with non-historic acrylic glass.[42] There is a metal vent/alarm at the eastern end of the center portion of the facade, a white electrical box, light fixture and exposed conduit at the first story windows in the western projecting wing, metal grilles at the first story windows in the eastern wing, wires attached across the facade in the center portion and eastern wing above the basement windows, and two metal leaders.

East Facade (Parsons Boulevard): There is an intersecting gable at the center with an angular bay window at the basement, first and second stories. The bay has four multi-pane windows at the basement with stone lintels that form a continuous band and stone sills and two single and a triple window at the first and second stories. The second and third stories of the bay are constructed of wood with panels between the two stories. The bay has a crenulated wood parapet. Above the bay window in the intersecting gable is a triple window in an arch-headed opening with brick header lintel and stone sill. There are windows with stone lintels and sills flanking the bay at the basement and arch-headed window openings with brick header lintels (with stone impost at the first story) and stone sills at the first and second stories. On either side of these windows are large brick chimneys that are capped by three chimney pots. The chimneys had stone coping between the first and second stories and decorative brickwork in the shaft. All the windows have metal replacement sash except the southernmost basement window, which is a multi-pane wood casement. The facade has a metal alarm box below the northern-most second story window in the bay, four metal leaders and metal window grilles at the basement and first story.

West Facade: The northern portion of the facade is recessed with a Tudor-arched entrance door and one concrete step. The door has a stone lintel that forms a continuous band across the facade. There is a metal door and three square-headed multi-pane wood windows, all in arch-headed openings with brick header lintels, at the basement. The southern portion of the facade has a double front-facing gable roof and asymmetrical placement of arch-headed window openings with brick header lintels and stone sills except for a square-headed window opening with stone lintel and sill at the first story below the stone course. All of the windows have replacement metal sash except the square-headed window opening, which has a twelve-pane wood casement window and the other first story window, which has square-headed multi-pane wood casement sash in an arch-headed opening. There are two small window openings in the gables with vents. The facade has two metal leaders, a metal fire escape from the southernmost attic window, and exposed conduit with light fixtures above the second story windows. There is a brick chimney and an antenna at the southernmost end of the facade.

Site Features: There is a chain link fence at the north (90th Avenue) facade with a metal gate at the westernmost end and a historic wrought iron fence at the east (Parsons Boulevard) facade that continues around the cemetery. There are two metal fences (about three feet deep) perpendicular to the facade on either side of the entrance and a chain link fence perpendicular to the building at the west facade between the two southernmost bays. The south (rear) facade of the Memorial Hall is adjacent to the church cemetery and the west facade is adjacent to a parking lot of the neighboring building. There is landscaping at the front and eastern facades and a concrete areaway with one slab of bluestone and a concrete well at the west facade.

Report prepared by
Cynthia Danza
Research Department

NOTES

[1] The section is taken almost in its entirety from Landmarks Preservation Commission, *La Casina Designation Report* (LP-1940) prepared by Andrew S. Dolkart (New York: City of New York, 1996).

[2] The Native American "system of land tenure was that of occupancy for the needs of a group" and those sales that the Europeans deemed to be outright transfers of property were to the Native Americans closer to leases or joint tenancy contracts where they still had rights to the property. Reginald Pelham Bolton, *New York City in Indian Possession*, 2nd ed. (New York: Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, 1920, reprint 1975), 7, 14-15.

[3] LPC, *Jamaica High School Designation Report* (LP-2316) prepared by Virginia Kurshan (New York: City of New York, 2009), 2.

[4] In the early 19th century, the King's Highway, which led from Brooklyn to Queens along the route of an Indian trail, had become a toll road, known as the Brooklyn, Jamaica & Flatbush Turnpike. In 1832, the Brooklyn and Jamaica Railroad Company was established. It purchased the turnpike and began construction of a rail line. Two years later the Long Island Railroad (LIRR) was founded. It leased the Brooklyn and Jamaica's right of way, inaugurating service between Jamaica and a ferry at the foot of Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn in 1836; the line was extended eastward to Hicksville a year later. The opening of the initial LIRR line through Jamaica established the village as a transportation hub, but other developments increased Jamaica's importance. In 1850, Jamaica Avenue was converted into a plank road by the Jamaica & Brooklyn Plank Road Company, thus improving road transportation between the Fulton Ferry and Queens County. Horsecar lines began operation on the avenue in 1866 when the East New York & Jamaica Railroad Company inaugurated service; the horsecars were replaced by electric trolleys in the mid-1880s. In 1860, the LIRR began service from a ferry landing at Hunter's Point to Jamaica, and in 1869 a rival railroad company, the South Side Railroad, began service between Jamaica and Patchogue.

[5] These improvements included the widening and repaving of Jamaica Avenue (known as Fulton Street until about 1918) in 1898; the electrification of the LIRR in 1905-08; the opening of the Queensborough Bridge in 1909; the completion of the LIRR's tunnel beneath the East River in 1910 (the bridge and tunnel obviated the need for ferries, thus cutting community time to and from Long Island and Manhattan); and the completion of the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company's elevated railroad on Jamaica Avenue in 1918.

[6] The importance of Jamaica's geographic location and the development of the area as a transportation and commercial hub were recognized in the *WPA Guide to New York City*: "Jamaica, the community around Jamaica Avenue and Parsons Boulevard, is the geographic center of Queens. Most of the important Brooklyn and Queens highways that lead to Nassau County and eastern Long Island pass through Jamaica. It is the terminus of the BMT and Independent subways and the principal transfer station of the Long Island Railroad. Along the main thoroughfare, Jamaica Avenue, there has evolved a comprehensive suburban shopping center." *The WPA Guide to New York City* (New York: Random House, 1939; reprinted New York: Pantheon, 1982), 583.

[7] This section is adapted from LPC, *Grace Episcopal Church and Graveyard Designation Report* (LP-0487) (New York: City of New York, 1967) with additional information from Henry Onderdonk, Jr., *Antiquities of the Parish Church, Jamaica, (including Newtown and Flushing,) Illustrated from Letters of*

the Missionaries, and other Authentic Documents, with a Continuation of the History of Grace Church, to the Present Time (Jamaica: Charles Welling, 1880); Horatio Oliver Ladd, *The Origin and History of Grace Church, Jamaica, New York* (New York: Shakespeare Press, 1914) and *Grace Protestant Episcopal Church 1702-1952* (Jamaica, New York: The Grace Church Anniversary Committee, 1952). The early rectors of Grace Church also served the Anglican churches in Flushing and Newtown.

[8] The disputes did not end with the building of first Grace Church in 1734. The Anglican Church was the "established" church and all members of the community had to make a compulsory payment to support it, even though the majority of the inhabitants of Jamaica were not members of the Anglican Church. This enabled non-Anglicans ("dissenters") to control the vestry of Grace Church until at least 1761.

[9] Thomas Colgan owned an African-American slave at the time of his death in 1755; in his will left "my negro woman 'Dinah'" to his wife. New York County Surrogate's Court, Abstract of Wills on File in Surrogate's Office, City of New York, vol. V (1754-1760), 110 (liber 20, page 21). His house and 66 acre estate was purchased by Rufus King in 1805 from the estate of Colgan's daughter. LPC, *King Mansion Designation Report* (LP-0923) (New York: City of New York, 1976).

[10] The other heirs were James DeLancey of New York and his wife Anne (former Anne Heathcote, daughter) and Martha Heathcote Junior (daughter). The one-half acre deeded was part of approximately 17 acres that Caleb Heathcote had bought from Thomas Whitehead, deceased. Colgan paid 5 shillings for the land according to the deed. The original deed is in the possession of the church and a photocopy is contained in the L. K. Parsons Collection of Miscellaneous Church Documents in the Long Island Collection of the Queens Library. James DeLancey was governor of New York State (acting 1753-1755, and 1757-1760). James DeLancey owned enslaved African-Americans; one named Othello was hung as a conspirator following the slave uprising of 1741. Jill Lepore, *New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery, and Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), 171-176.

[11] Caleb and Martha Heathcote had enslaved African-American persons in their household. The register of the Reverend John Poyer notes the baptism of "Hester & Diana Negroes of Caleb & Martha Heathcote 9ber (sic) 2, 1718 at Jamaica." Ladd, 273.

[12] Dixon Ryan Fox, *Caleb Heathcote: Gentleman Colonist* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926; reprint, New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1971), 214 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

[13] Queens County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances. Deed from Maltby Gelson and his wife Mary dated May 1, 1834, recorded April 30, 1834 at Liber FF, page 232 (purchase price is noted to be $5,500); deed from John A. King and his wife Mary dated September 1, 1851, recorded September 12, 1851 at Liber 92, page 145; deed from Gasper Phraner and his wife Ruth dated April 7, 1855, recorded April 9, 1855 at Liber 129, page 285; deed from Brockholst L. Carroll dated September 18, 1857, recorded December 27, 1859 at Liber 174, page 301; and deed from John A. King and Richard King as executors under the will of John A. King deceased dated December 12, 1873 and recorded April 28, 1874 at Liber 436, page 420. This last deed includes plots in the graveyard.

[14] John Poyer had servants and enslaved African-Americans in his household. Onderdonk, 36-37.

[15] "James & Sarah, Negroes of Samuel Clowes May 23, 1714 at Jamaica." Ladd, 270.

[16] Onderdonk, 36.

[17] "Lucretia Martise a free Negro-Woman & her Daughters Helena, Rachel & Sarah 9ber (sic) 11, 1731 at Jamaica." Ladd, 279.

[18] Onderdonk, 95.

[19] Ladd, 154-55.

[20] The 1790 U.S. Census lists a Samuel Seabury Jr. living in Lebanon, Conn.; there were no enslaved persons in his household.

[21] The 1810 U.S. Census lists two free non-white persons and one enslaved person in the household headed by Rufus King in Jamaica. The 1820 U.S. Census does not list any non-white persons or enslaved persons

in his household, although it is noted in Onderdonk's history of the church that on December 16, 1821 he manumitted a slave Margaret, 20 years old, whom he had purchased from John Hewlett of Flushing. Onderdonk, 111.

[22] *Grace Protestant Episcopal Church 1702-1952*, 27.

[23] Ladd, 240.

[24] Ladd, 220.

[25] Ladd, 246.

[26] The *Grace Church Chimes* has additional references to the proposed parish house. In April 1905, it was noted that the land was lying idle and unproductive and there was no doubt need for a parish house; in November 1905, all the new parish houses built or to be built by other congregations were noted, donations were requested and mention was made that a considerable sum was already pledged; and in February 1906 it was noted that the vestry had voted to build a new building for the Sunday school and guilds as soon as they have the money, it asked that the subscriptions promised be paid.

[27] Oborne is listed as a communicant of the church as of December 1, 1909. Ladd, 397.

[28] *The Memorial House of Grace Church Parish, Jamaica, New York: Together with a Brief Historical Sketch and Description of the Proposed Development* (Jamaica, New York: The Marion Press, 1911).

[29] This section is adapted from the LPC, *St. Paul's Avenue-Stapleton Heights Historic District Designation Report* (LP-2147) essay prepared by Gale Harris, building entries prepared by Donald G. Presa and architects' appendix prepared by Jennifer Farley (New York: City of New York, 2004), 110-112, 154-155.

[30] Additional biographical and architectural information about Hobart Upjohn is from Everard M. Upjohn, "Hobart B. Upjohn: An Informal Account as I Remember Him, 1972," TMs, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York City.

[31] "George W. Conable," American Architects' Biographies, Society of Architectural Historians (sah.org).

[32] "George Willard Conable," *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (New York: James T. White & Company, 1915), 16:367.

[33] New York City Department of Buildings, Borough of Queens, NB 1960-1912. The Reverend Rockland Homans and architect Hobart Upjohn were second cousins; their maternal grandfathers, Stephen Higginson Tyng and James Higginson Tyng, respectively, were brothers. Francis Higginson Atkins, *Joseph Atkins, the Story of a Family* (Las Vegas: Dudley Atkins, 1891), 108, 144.

[34] In the early 20th century a massive renaming of street took place in Queens with most street names changed to numbers because of the implementation of a unified house numbering plan, Fulton Street because Jamaica Avenue, Flushing Avenue became Parsons Boulevard and Grove Street became 90th Avenue (now also known as Rufus King Boulevard).

[35] *Grace Protestant Episcopal Church 1702-1952*, 21.

[36] NB 1960-1912.

[37] Everard Upjohn, 30-31. He states that his father chose the Tudor Revival style "quite often for that problem," when he was designing a parish hall and the existing church was designed in the English Gothic Revival style. In the appendix to his manuscript he notes when he believes buildings were designed by someone in the firm other than Hobart Upjohn. The entry for the Grace Church Memorial Hall does not indicate that someone other than Upjohn designed this building, although the NB application was signed on behalf of the firm by George Conable.

[38] Hobart B. Upjohn, "Some Thoughts on Modern Sunday-School Buildings and Parish Houses," *Architecture* (May 1924), 153-55.

[39] *Grace Protestant Episcopal Church 1702-1952*, 28-29.

[40] "33-Year Ministry in Queens Ends: Rector Notes Grace Church Changed with Times," *New York Times*, November 3, 1963, 62.

[41] It appears that the leaded-glass sash may have been removed at the lower eastern corner of the second easternmost window and the lower western corner of the second westernmost window on the 90th Avenue (front) facade.

[42] It appears that the leaded-glass sash may have been removed at the lower eastern corner of the westernmost window, the lower western corner of the second westernmost window, the lower eastern corner of the second easternmost window and the lower eastern and western corners of the easternmost window on the south (rear) facade.

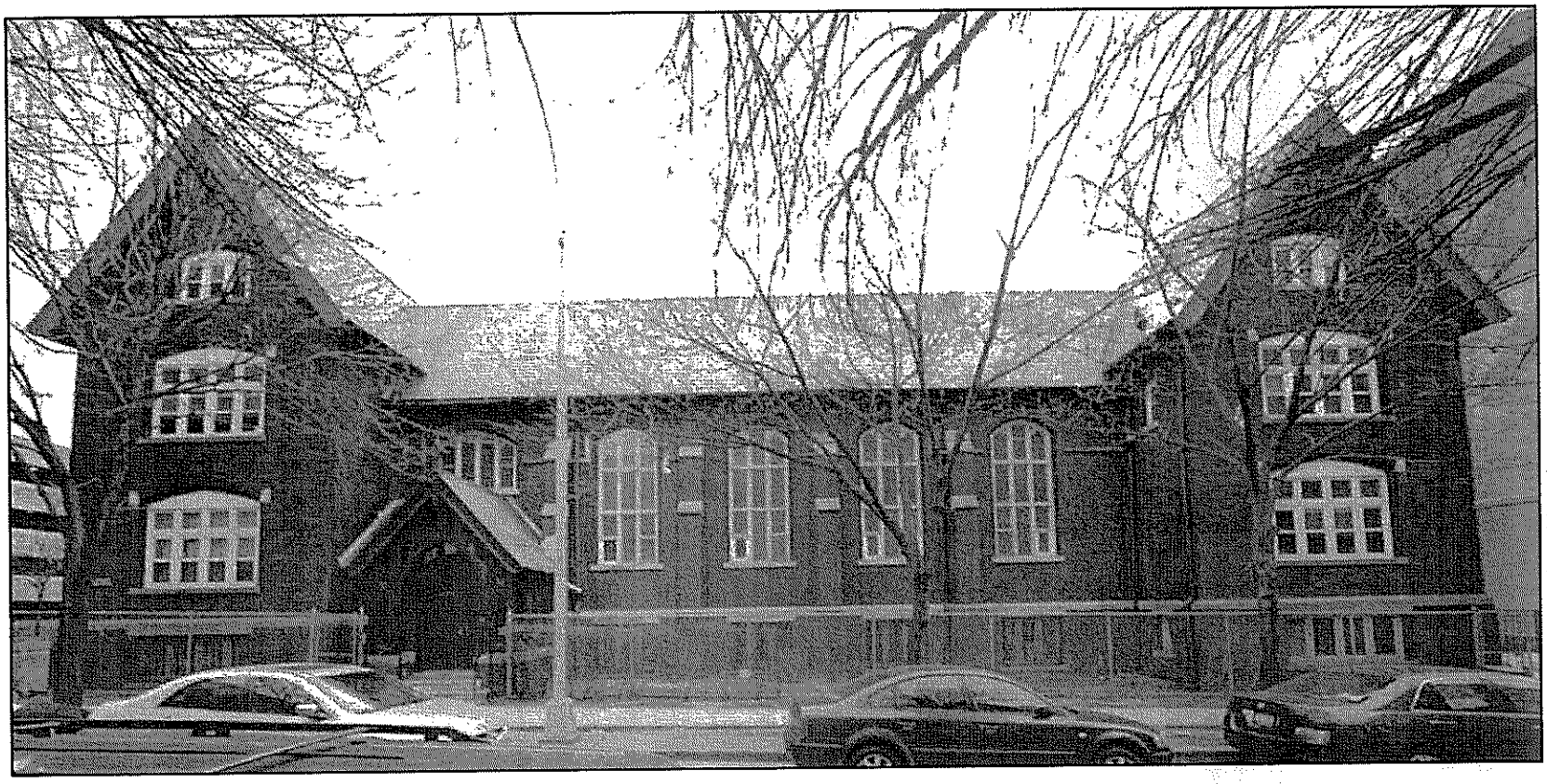
FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and culture characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall is part of one of the most historic church complexes in New York City; that Grace Episcopal Church was founded in 1702 and the present English Gothic Revival style church building, designed by Dudley Field, was built in 1861-62 and enlarged in 1901-02 by Cady, Berg & See; that surrounding the church is a graveyard in which are buried members of many families important to the history of the city, including Rufus King; that the church and graveyard were designated a New York City Landmark in 1967; that northeast of the church building, behind the graveyard, is the Memorial Hall, constructed in 1912 to meet the needs of the growing congregation for a meeting place and social center; that the Memorial Hall included a gymnasium, an auditorium, meeting rooms and offices; that these facilities were needed as the role of the church expanded from solely providing religious services to include educational and social services; that on the 250th anniversary of the founding of the church, the Memorial Hall was being used by 21 different organizations; that the Memorial Hall was designed by the prominent architectural firm of Upjohn and Conable in Tudor Gothic Revival style to complement the church building; and that the brick building's symmetrical massing and flanking wings add a picturesque element to the church complex.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall, 155-24 90th Avenue, Borough of Queens, and designated Queens Tax Map Block 9754, Lot 7, as its Landmark Site.

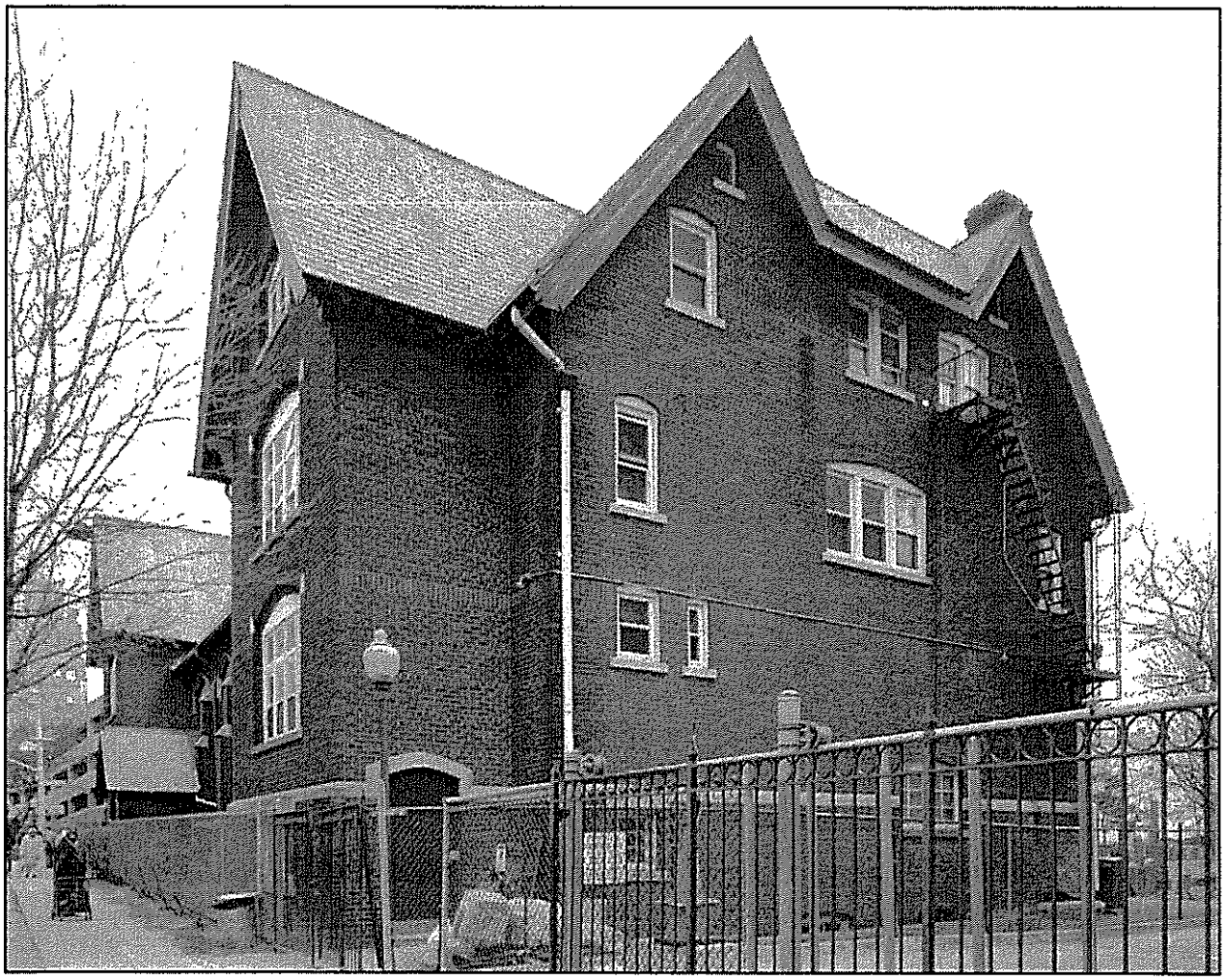
Robert B. Tierney, Chair
Pablo E. Vengoechea, Vice-Chair
Diana Chapin, Roberta Brandes Gratz,
Christopher Moore, Roberta Washington, Commissioners



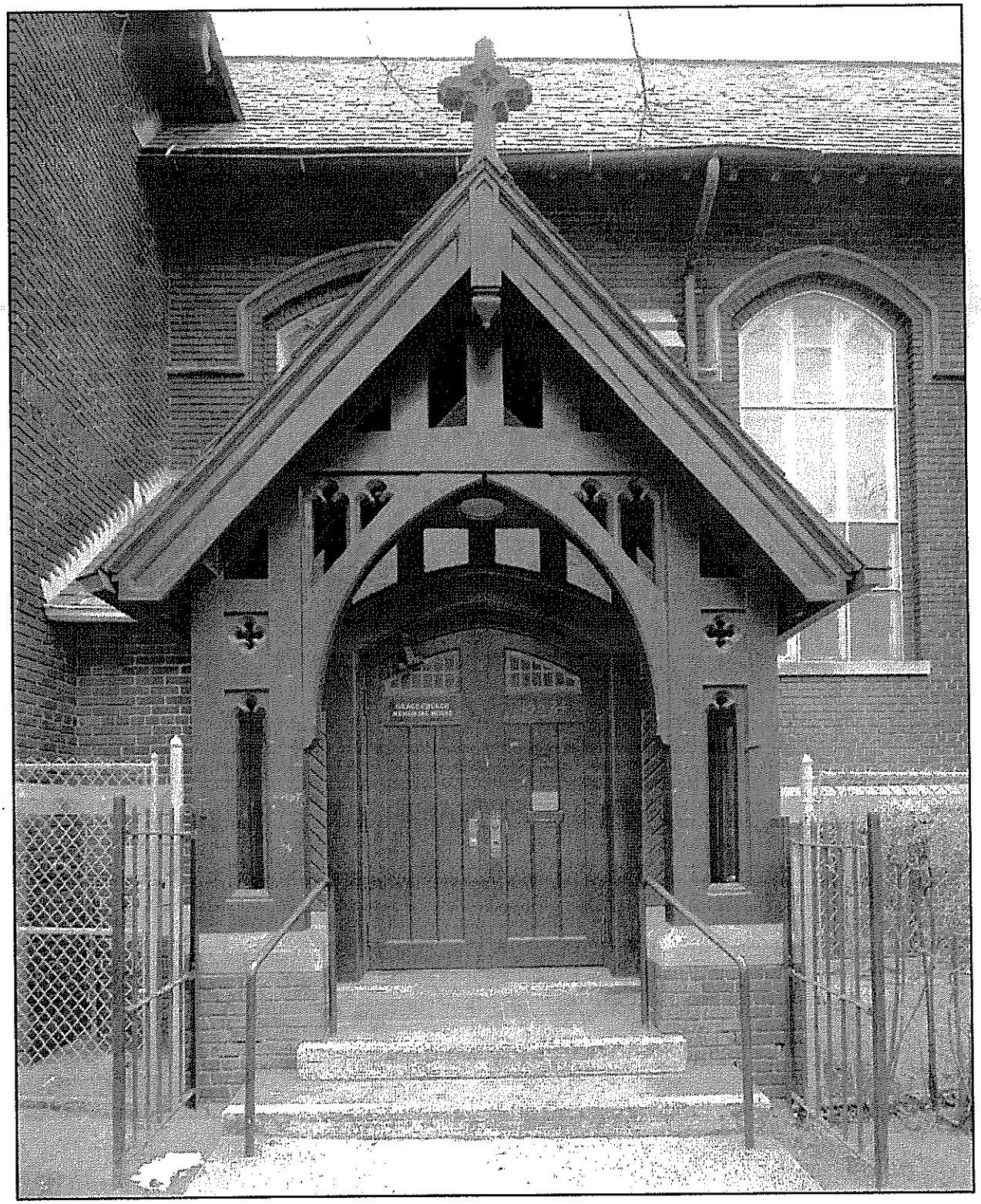
Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall
155-24 90th Avenue, Queens
Block 9754, Lot 7
North Facade
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010

Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall
South (rear) Facade
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010

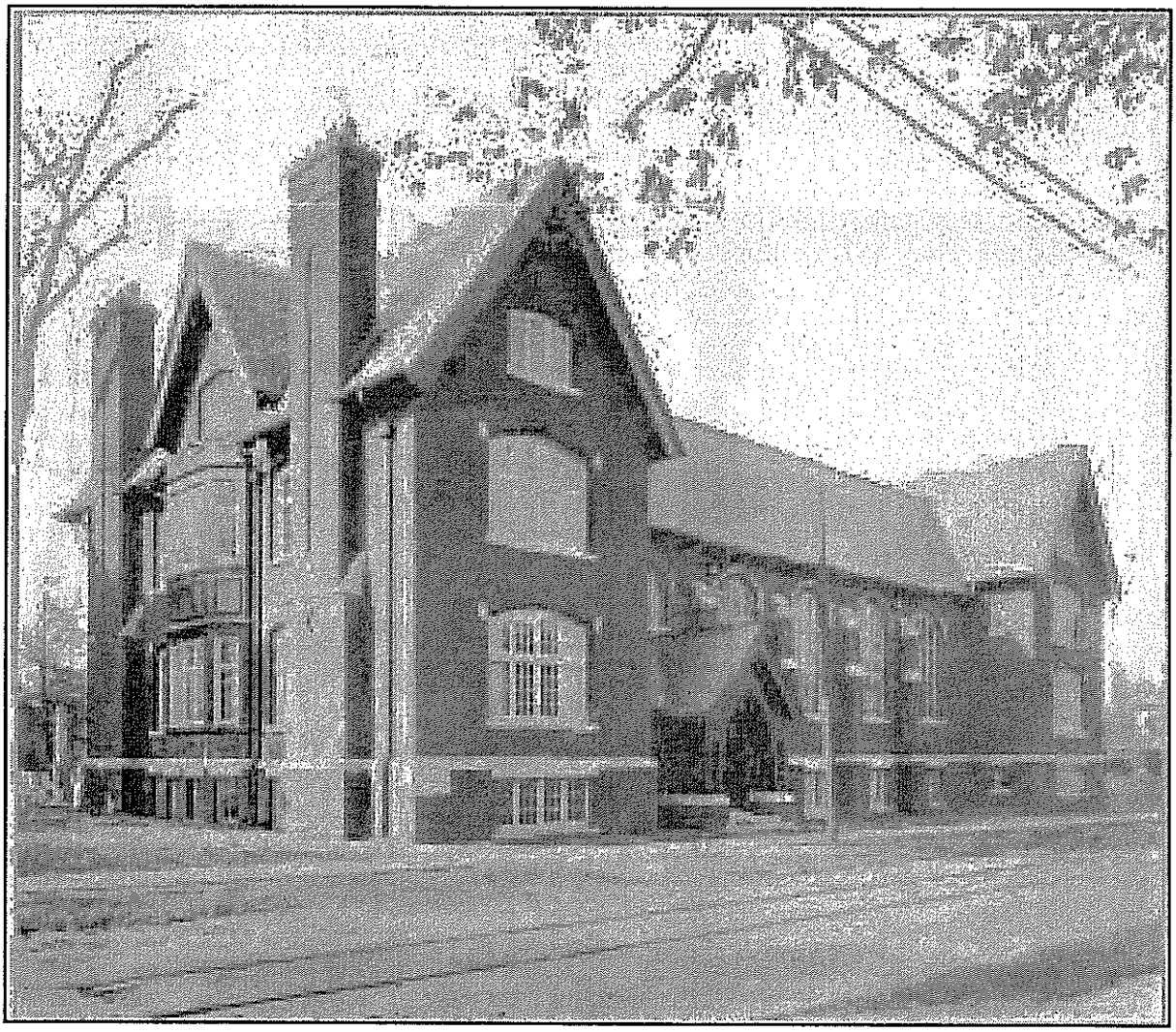
Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall
East Facade
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010



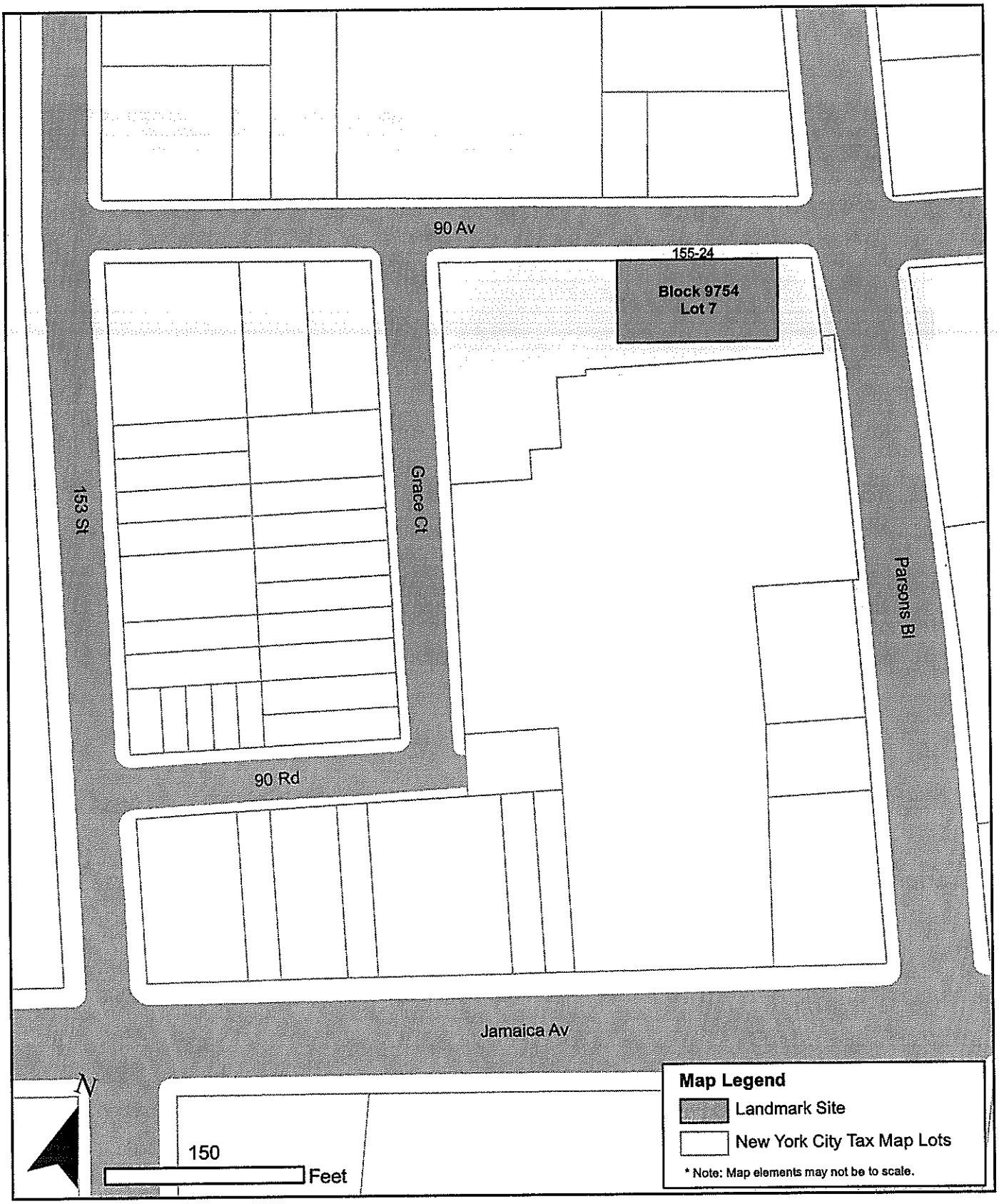
Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall
West Facade
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010



Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall
Entrance Door Detail, North Facade
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010



Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall, 1913
Source: Horatio Oliver Ladd, *The Origin and History of Grace Church, Jamaica, New York* (New York: Shakespeare Press, 1914)



GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH MEMORIAL HALL (LP-2394), 155-24 90th Avenue
Landmark Site: Borough of Queens, Tax Map Block 9754, Lot 7

Designated: October 26, 2010

Graphic Source: New York City Department of City Planning, MapPLUTO, Edition 09v1, 2009. Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, JM. Date: October 26, 2010.

TESTIMONY OF THE LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING AND MARITIME USES ON THE DESIGNATION OF THE QUEENS GENERAL COURTHOUSE.

January 11, 2011

Good morning Council Members. My name is Jenny Fernández, Director of Intergovernmental and Community Relations for the Landmarks Preservation Commission. I am here today to testify on the Commission's designation of the Queens General Courthouse.

On Feb 9, 2010, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Queens General Courthouse. A total of five witnesses spoke in favor of designation, including representatives of the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, the owner of the building; the Historic Districts Council; the Central Queens Historical Society; the Queensborough Preservation League; and the Four Borough Neighborhood Preservation Alliance. The Commission has received letters in support of the designation from Queens Borough President Helen Marshall, State Senator Shirley Huntley, and the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation. There were no speakers or letters in opposition to the designation. On October 26, 2010 the Commission voted to designate the building a New York City individual landmark.

The Queens General Court House is a grand, Modern Classic, Depression-era monument built between 1937 and 1939, with payment split between City funds and a Federal grant from the Public Works Administration. Mayor LaGuardia laid the cornerstone in 1937, and presided over the building's dedication in 1939. The new courthouse was considered a major public improvement, and convenience for the borough of Queens, consolidating various court facilities in downtown Jamaica. The building originally housed the offices of the Queens County Clerk, the City Court, the Supreme Court and the Surrogate's Court, and was meant to handle all the civil cases in Queens. The building's skillfully composed facades, handsome detailing, and the power of its monumental portico make it one of finest and most imposing public buildings in Queens.

The Commission urges you to affirm this designation.

TESTIMONY OF THE LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING AND MARITIME USES ON THE DESIGNATION OF THE RIDGEWOOD SOUTH HISTORIC DISTRICT IN QUEENS.

January 11, 2011

Good morning Council Members. My name is Jenny Fernández, Director of Intergovernmental and Community Relations for the Landmarks Preservation Commission. I am here today to testify on the Commission's designation of the Ridgewood South Historic District in Queens.

On September 15, 2009 the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Ridgewood South Historic District. Five people spoke in favor of designation, including representatives of State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, the Ridgewood Local Development Corporation/Myrtle Avenue Business Improvement District, the Ridgewood Property Owners and Civic Association, the Historic Districts Council, and the New York Landmarks Conservancy. Also, a letter of support was received from Queens Borough President Helen M. Marshall. On October 26, 2010 the Commission voted to designate Ridgewood South a New York City historic district.

The Ridgewood South Historic District is significant as a large, intact grouping of fully developed model tenements that reflect the development of Ridgewood in the early 20th century. A contiguous district in both typology and style, it is composed of over 210 buildings, primarily three-story brick tenements, and the St. Matthias Roman Catholic Church Complex. The tenements were constructed between 1911 and 1912 by the G.X. Mathews Company and were designed by architect Louis Allmendinger. Known as "Mathews Model Flats," these "new law" tenements had larger rooms and more adequate sanitary facilities than their 19th-century predecessors. Built in long rows of repeated designs that create a sense of place, the facades retain a high degree of integrity and are distinguished by their buff and amber-colored brick facades, cast-stone details, ornate pressed metal cornices, and stoop and areaway ironwork. As testament to their improved design, the "Mathews Model Flats" were exhibited by the New York City Tenement House Department at the Panama-Pacific Fair in San Francisco in 1915 and became standards for later tenement house construction.

The Commission urges you to affirm this designation.

TESTIMONY OF THE LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING AND MARITIME USES ON THE DESIGNATION OF THE JAMAICA SAVINGS BANK IN QUEENS.

January 11, 2011

Good morning Council Members. My name is Jenny Fernández, Director of Intergovernmental and Community Relations for the Landmarks Preservation Commission. I am here today to testify on the Commission's designation of the Jamaica Savings Bank in Queens.

On February 9, 2010, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the (former) Jamaica Savings Bank. Four people spoke in favor of designation, including representatives of the Historic Districts Council, Queens Preservation Council, and Four Borough Neighborhood Preservation Alliance. The Commission also received letters in support of designation from Queens Borough President Helen Marshall, State Senator Shirley L. Huntley, and the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation. Two representatives of the owner spoke in opposition to designation. On October 26, 2010 the Commission voted to designate the building a New York City individual landmark.

The Jamaica Savings Bank was constructed in 1939 for the oldest and most prestigious banking institution in Jamaica, Queens. Designed by the noted architect Morrell Smith, the building is an excellent example of the Moderne style, with simple but well designed details and dignified proportions. Incorporated in 1866, Jamaica Savings Bank was founded by a consortium of local citizens. The growth of the Jamaica Savings Bank paralleled the growth of the borough of Queens. The bank prospered, and established several branches to better serve customers. Architect Morrell Smith, celebrated for his designs of commercial bank buildings, designed this branch of the Jamaica Savings Bank in 1939. Set on a trapezoidal lot, the monumental one-story building faces the intersection with an angled façade and corner entrance. Smith utilized the most modern building design and construction methods of his time for the building. The Jamaica Savings Bank still functions as a branch bank, and serves as a reminder of the growth and expansion of Jamaica during the twentieth century.

The Commission urges you to affirm this designation.

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THE COUNCIL OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

DIANA REYNA
COUNCIL MEMBER, 34TH DISTRICT
BROOKLYN, QUEENS

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

SUBCOMMITTEE
ZONING AND FRANCHISES

Testimony before the New York City Council Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Siting and Maritime Uses

Ridgewood South Historic District

January 11, 2010

Good morning,

My name is Diana Reyna and I am the New York City Council Member representing the 34th district of Williamsburg and Bushwick, Brooklyn and Ridgewood, Queens.

I want to thank Chairperson Lander, as well as the other Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Siting, and Maritime members for holding this important public hearing regarding the designation of the Ridgewood South Historic District.

Today's hearing comes with the strong support in favor of designation, from State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Queens Borough President Helen M. Marshall, the Ridgewood Local Development Corporation/Myrtle Avenue Business Improvement District, the Ridgewood Property Owners and Civic Association, the Historic Districts Council, and the New York Landmarks Conservancy.

Much like today, in the late 19th century Ridgewood was subjected to an eastward expansion of a growing New York City. Located next to Brooklyn's Eastern District, Ridgewood became an ideal location for German-Americans to relocate, away from the over-crowding and more recent immigrants inhabiting Bushwick and Williamsburg, as well as Manhattan's Lower East Side. Ridgewood created a sustainable model of affordability for families with modest incomes by controlling costs and improving living quarters.

The buildings in the proposed Ridgewood South Historic District are mostly intact; however some alterations are needed. The district includes a cohesive collection of urban architecture; the tenements have retained an extremely high level of architectural integrity and represent an important part of the development of housing in New York City. The proposed district also includes The St. Matthias Roman Catholic Church complex, which is comprised of a cathedral, rectory, school and convent, faces Catalpa Avenue at the eastern edge of the district. Constructed of pale yellow or amber brick, these four buildings are architecturally congruous with the rest of the district and are significant in the telling of Ridgewood's history and development.

The Ridgewood South Historic District has a rich history, distinct and congruous architecture, as well as other compelling features that the Landmarks Preservation Commission believes establishes a noticeable section of the city. Ridgewood South has a diverse and valuable aesthetic that must be protected for future generations.

As the Council Member for the 34th District, I strongly support this designation of the Ridgewood South Historic District.

Thank you.

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THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 281 Res. No. _____

☑ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/1/11

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jenny Fernandez

Address: 1 Centre Street, NY NY 1007.

I represent: LPC

Address: S/A/A.

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 283 Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/11/11

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jenny Fernandez

Address: 1 Centre Street, NY NY 10007

I represent: LPC

Address: S/A/A

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 282 Res. No. _____

☑ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/11/11

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jenny Fernandez

Address: 1 Centre Street NY NY 10007

I represent: LPC

Address: S/A/A

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 283 Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/11/11

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jenny Fernandez

Address: 1 Centre Street NY NY 10007

I represent: LPC

Address: SP + LA

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 284 Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/11/11

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Name: Jenny Fernandez

Address: 1 Centre Street NY NY 10007

I represent: LPC

Address: SP + LA

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 284 Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/11/11

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Name: Andrea Goldwyn

Address: 1 Whitehall St.

I represent: N.Y. Landmarks Conservancy

Address: _____

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 284 Res. No. _____

☑ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/12/11

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Simeon Bankoff

Address: 232 East 11 Street

I represent: Historic Districts Council

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☑ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Amelia Fuller

Address: 138-38 78th Ave

I represent: GRACE CHURCH

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

LU284

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☑ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Father Darryl FJames

Address: 155-24 90th Ave

I represent: Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall

Address: 155-24 90th, Jamaica, NY 11432

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THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 785

☑ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/12/11

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Simeon Bankoff

Address: 232 11th Street

I represent: Historic Districts Council

Address: _____

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