

(Former) JAMAICA SAVINGS BANK, 161-02 Jamaica Avenue, Borough of Queens.
Built 1897-98; Hough & Duell, architects.

Landmark Site: Borough of Queens, Tax Map Block 10101, Lot 9.

On May 15, 2007, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the former Jamaica Savings Bank and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 1). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Seven people spoke in favor of designation, including Chairwoman Gloria Black of Queens Community Board 12, and representatives of the Central Queens Historical Association, the Queens Preservation Council, the Queens Historical Society, the Historic Districts Council, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, and the Jamaica Center Business Improvement District. A representative of Council Member Leroy G. Comrie, Jr. spoke in favor of designation, contingent upon the approval of the building's owner.¹

Summary

The former Jamaica Savings Bank was constructed in 1897-98 for the oldest and most prestigious banking institution in Jamaica. Designed by the noted firm of Hough & Duell, the building is a fine and particularly exuberant example of the classically inspired Beaux-Arts style strikingly executed in carved limestone and wrought iron, and is one of only a few buildings in the borough of Queens to embrace that architectural aesthetic. Prominently sited on Jamaica Avenue, the bank building is an urbane presence on the neighborhood's main commercial thoroughfare. Although the four-story structure is relatively small in scale, the imposing design of the facade conveys a monumentality which is appropriately suited to the distinguished image and reputation of the banking institution, while lending the building the formal elegance of a private club or townhouse. Incorporated in 1866 by a consortium of local citizens—including John A. King, former Governor of the State of New York—the Jamaica Savings Bank played an important role in the development of Jamaica, at that time a burgeoning commercial center. The success of the organization was marked by its exponential expansion in the late nineteenth century and its need for more commodious—and more conspicuous—quarters. The construction of this bank coincided with the 1898 incorporation of Queens County into the municipal jurisdiction of the City of New York and reflects the metropolitan spirit of the period. The facade of the building maintains its original Beaux-Arts design and survives today essentially intact as a reminder of an important era in Jamaica's history.



DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS²

The Development of Jamaica³

Historically an important crossroads of Long Island, the area of downtown Jamaica developed as a result of its central location and extensive transportation systems. Jamaica began as a rural settlement when the town was granted a patent from Governor Peter Stuyvesant in 1656. The English took over the town in 1664, changing its name from the Dutch “Rusdorp” to a variation on the name of the local Yemacah Indians, which meant “beaver.”⁴ Queens County (then incorporating present-day Nassau County) was chartered in 1683 as one of the ten counties in the colony of New York and official town patents were soon given to Jamaica, Newtown, and Flushing. Through the next century the community of Jamaica served as the county seat and became a trading post where farmers from outlying areas brought their produce. By the time the village of Jamaica was incorporated in 1814, it had become a center of trade on Long Island.

Jamaica Avenue, which evolved from an Indian trail, has been called the oldest continuously used road on Long Island. In 1703 the colonial legislature established a highway, known as the “King’s Highway,” which extended from the East River (later Fulton) Ferry through Brooklyn and Queens (along portions of the current route of Fulton Street and Jamaica Avenue) to eastern Long Island. Following the Revolution, the management of the old colonial roads fell into private hands, and beginning in 1809, the Brooklyn, Jamaica & Flatbush Turnpike Company established a toll road from the Brooklyn ferries to the present-day intersection of Jamaica Avenue (then also known as Fulton Street) and 168th Street. The Brooklyn & Jamaica Railroad Company, chartered in 1832, purchased the turnpike and completed a rail line along its route through Jamaica in 1836. Almost simultaneously, the Long Island Railroad, 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 turnpike 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 horsecar lines along Fulton Street in 1866; it is no coincidence that the company’s president was Aaron DeGrauw, who was also the first president of the Jamaica Savings Bank and as such had a vested interest in the economic growth and development of the community. The horsecar lines were replaced by electric trolleys in 1887.

The nineteenth 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 nineteenth 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. The rail lines on Fulton Street are identified on the atlas as the Brooklyn, Queens County & Suburban Railroad Company and the New York & North Shore Railway Company. The Long Island Railroad ran parallel to Fulton Street, one block south; the one-story frame station was located on the north side of Twombly Place between Church and Beaver Streets.

In 1897 Fulton Street ceased to be operated as a private toll road and its jurisdiction reverted to the local government. The long-needed widening and repaving of the road, which had fallen into disrepair, was quickly undertaken, and in April of 1898, Jamaica hosted a celebration to honor the improvement of Fulton Street. The souvenir brochure from the celebration and other contemporary local publications reflect the metropolitan spirit of that period of municipal consolidation. 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.⁵ 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].”⁶

Although it would be 1918 before the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company finally replaced the existing surface lines on Fulton Street—soon to be known as Jamaica Avenue—with elevated trains, the decade prior to World War I saw several other significant transportation improvements: the electrification of the Long Island Railroad in 1905-08, the opening of the railroad tunnels beneath the East River in 1910, and the completion of the Queensborough Bridge in 1909. Indeed, with improved accessibility to Jamaica’s downtown, the population of Jamaica quadrupled between 1900 and 1920 and the area was subsumed into the metropolitan web of New York City. The extension of the Eighth Avenue subway to 169th Street in 1937 and the opening of the Triborough Bridge brought further urban development to the area.

History of the Jamaica Savings Bank⁷

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 fifteen 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), which is adjacent to the Jamaica Savings Bank.

The bank was founded by a group of distinguished local business leaders and prominent citizens. Among the 19 charter trustees was John A. King. John Alsop King (1788-1867) served as a U.S. Congressman and as Governor of New York State in 1857-58.⁸ He was the eldest son of Rufus King, a Federalist statesman, 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, several blocks west of the Jamaica Savings Bank. 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, 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 1899.⁹ 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.¹⁰ 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 that time, the institution “was still small enough to keep its deposits in an ordinary safe, housed in a small frame addition on the side of the building.... It was in plain view of the street and this was considered an extra measure of protection.”¹¹ It has been reported that the first-known occupant of the frame building was J.W. Cornwell’s bakery and feed store; subsequently, the building was used as D.T. Conger’s Oyster House, a shoe store, and a printing office before being purchased by the bank.¹²

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. A committee was formed to oversee the erection of the bank, composed of George L. Peck, John H. Sutphin, William A. Warnock, and William W. Gillen, all of whom shared close political and business ties.¹³ The committee selected the firm of Hough & Deuell to design the new bank headquarters. The cost of construction of the steel-framed limestone-fronted building was estimated to be \$60,000.¹⁴ The old frame building was moved to the rear of the site to accommodate the new structure. The bank opened for business in its new quarters in 1898, as Jamaica witnessed its incorporation into the newly consolidated city.

Banks and Architectural Imagery¹⁵

As industry, business, and commerce prospered after the Civil War, New York became the nation's financial capital. Apart from a few imposing buildings on Wall Street, however, commercial banks were for the most part located in converted dwellings, or in office buildings erected to generate revenue, but prior to the 1880s and 1890s rarely in quarters designed specifically for them. Savings banks, many of which catered to the small private investor, were, in contrast, generally not located in the Wall Street area where property values were high, but rather in the communities which they served; therefore, taking advantage of less expensive real estate, those organizations were able to build imposing bank buildings for their exclusive use.¹⁶ Around the turn of the century many savings banks, "suffering, as it were, from the possession of too much cash, and [being] somewhat self-conscious about it,"¹⁷ commissioned new buildings. Among them were prominent savings institutions in Manhattan, such as the Greenwich Savings Bank at West 16th Street and Sixth Avenue, designed by Robert W. Gibson (1892, demolished); the Bank for Savings at East 22nd Street and Fourth Avenue, designed by Cyrus L.W. Eidlitz (1892); the sumptuous Bowery Savings Bank, designed by McKim, Mead & White (1894, a designated New York City Landmark); and the New York Bank for Savings at West 14th Street and Eighth Avenue, designed by R.H. Robertson (1896-97, a designated New York City Landmark). Institutions in thriving neighborhoods outside of Manhattan also received imposing new bank structures or expanded existing buildings, such as two in Brooklyn: the Williamsburgh Savings Bank at 175 Broadway (designed by George B. Post in 1875 and altered in 1905 and 1945, a designated New York City Landmark) and the Greenpoint Savings Bank at 807 Manhattan Avenue (Helmle & Huberty, 1907, in the Greenpoint Historic District). The construction of the Jamaica Savings Bank in 1897-98 was part of this trend.

Banking leaders realized that their institutions could benefit from the symbolic impact of occupying their own bank buildings, a building type which derived from the classical tradition but also had a strong American architectural heritage. Even neighborhood banks, which often had small mid-block sites, were designed to be taken seriously as "pillars of the community" by the public which they served. In 1909, *Architectural Record* published a lengthy, illustrated survey entitled "Recent Bank Buildings in the United States," in which the author invoked the ancient Greek and Roman temples—which also served as banks—as ancestors to the modern type; the recent banks, however, had evolved due to "the marvelous growth of modern consumerism."¹⁸ The illustrations attest to the pervasiveness of the classical temple-fronted or domed bank design. This elegant building type not only projected an image of wealth and financial security, but also evoked the trustworthiness and responsibility expected from institutions which serve the public.¹⁹

The popular bank imagery developed, not only as a result of economic conditions, but also in response to the resurgence of the classically inspired style, in the 1890s. Influenced by the architectural principles of the French Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the popularity of the buildings in the Court of Honor of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago—dubbed the "Great White City"—American architects turned for inspiration to Greco-Roman antiquity as well as Renaissance and other classically derived architectural sources. The Beaux-Arts style provided a formal and monumental architecture that was particularly appropriate for the design of banks and public edifices such as libraries, museums, and government buildings. In making historical associations, American architects drew parallels between

their own culture, the American neo-Classical past, and the enlightened Greco Roman and Renaissance civilizations. This general movement in the arts and culture, sometimes referred to by scholars as the “American Renaissance,”²⁰ not only fostered a boom in public buildings, but also the City Beautiful Movement, promoting civic improvement and beautification for the public benefit. Indeed, the metropolitan spirit that accompanied the 1898 consolidation of New York City is demonstrated by the numerous public and private institutions which erected new, stately buildings and, in part, served as an impetus for the Jamaica Savings Bank to enhance its public image.

The Beaux-Arts Style and the Design of the Jamaica Savings Bank

One popular stylistic trend which informed American architecture at the turn of the century was the pervasive Beaux-Arts mode, also called “Modern French” or “Beaux-Arts Baroque” as identified by the authors of *New York 1900*.²¹ This aesthetic represents a recasting of the classical idiom to express contemporary taste and respond to the requirements of modern buildings. Borrowing such architectural elements from the Baroque period as bold massing and sculptural plasticity of the facade, and such prominent roof treatments as the mansard, the Beaux-Arts style was disseminated in this country by the generation of American architects who studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in the late nineteenth century and who were familiar with the recent architecture of Paris, notably, such famous monuments as Charles Garnier’s Paris Opera (1862-74), as well as many of that city’s residential buildings of the period.

The Beaux-Arts style of the Jamaica Savings Bank is a departure from the classical temple-fronted or domed type which had been the traditional formula in American bank architecture. Among the most conspicuous examples of the use of the Beaux-Arts style for a bank building was the National Park Bank, designed by Donn Barber in 1904, which once stood on the east side of Broadway between Ann and Fulton Streets.²² In this design the architect used robust ornamental forms and an unconventional facade composition in place of the classical orders, and crowned the building with an overscaled mansard. Like that of the National Park Bank, which was built several years later and at a prominent location in Manhattan’s commercial center, the design of the Jamaica Savings Bank is an ornate example of this architectural style; it is, however, of a scale appropriate to its small, mid-block site on a neighborhood main street. In addition, the building is significant as one of only a few buildings in the borough of Queens to embrace the Beaux-Arts style; its design rivals that of many such buildings constructed in Manhattan and in areas of Brooklyn during that period.²³ Above a rusticated base which reinforces the presence of the building on the street, the midsection of the bank’s facade is defined by relatively austere superimposed pilasters supporting an entablature with a segmentally arched pediment. This composition—which functions as a stylized temple front—provides unity and order to the facade. In contrast, the center bay of the facade is the exuberantly detailed focal point of the design, featuring particularly rich and fluid ornamental forms, reminiscent of French Baroque architecture, and handsome wrought-iron balconies. Notable among the facade’s decorative motifs is a carved stone beehive, a traditional symbol in the imagery of bank architecture, denoting industry, thrift, and prosperity. The imposing facade treatment conveys a monumentality which befits the distinguished image and reputation of the banking institution, while lending the building the formal elegance of a private club or townhouse. An urbane presence in Jamaica’s downtown, the building is a pleasing counterpart in the streetscape to the adjacent Register/Jamaica Arts Center building, erected at about the same time and designed in the Renaissance Revival style. The two buildings display similar rusticated stone bases and such complementary horizontal elements as stringcourses, modillioned cornices, and decorated parapets.

Hough & Deuell²⁴

The architectural firm of Hough & Deuell was chosen to design the new headquarters of the Jamaica Savings Bank. William C. Hough and Edgar Deuell, Jr., entered into partnership at about the same time they received the commission for the bank. Hough, a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and a member of its Brooklyn Chapter, is known for his institutional work in Brooklyn. He had been established as an architect in Manhattan at least since 1886, with offices at 115 Broadway and 18 Cortlandt Street before locating at 280 Broadway where in 1890 he established a partnership with

Halstead Parker Fowler (1859-1911). The firm of Fowler & Hough was active through 1897, during which time it was responsible for the design of the 23rd Regiment Armory at 1322 Bedford Avenue in Brooklyn (1891-95, a designated New York City Landmark), as well as several other projects in that borough, such as the Bushwick Avenue Congregational Church and Sunday school (1895) at 1170 Bushwick Avenue. Hough is also credited with the design of the French Renaissance-inspired Dudley Memorial Building at 110 Amity Street (1902, in the Cobble Hill Historic District) which was erected for student nurses at Long Island College Hospital. After a short partnership of two to three years, the firm of Hough & Deuell dissolved; Hough maintained an independent practice in Manhattan through 1934. Deuell, a member of the Brooklyn Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, had worked briefly in Brooklyn prior to his collaboration with Hough. In addition to the Jamaica Savings Bank, the firm of Hough & Deuell was responsible for the Brooklyn Homeopathic Hospital on Cumberland Street (demolished), designed in the Renaissance Revival style.

Subsequent History²⁵

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. Indeed, in 1924 when Jamaica Savings Bank first enlarged its building, there were seven banks in Jamaica, and the local press referred to Jamaica Avenue as "Financial Row."²⁶ All of these institutions had recently either built new structures or expanded existing facilities. In addition to the Jamaica Savings Bank, the community boasted a branch of the Bank of the Manhattan Company on the corner of Jamaica Avenue and Union Hall Street, two doors east of the Jamaica Savings Bank; the Title Guarantee & Trust Co. to the west of the Jamaica Savings Bank on the same blockfront; the Jamaica National Bank across the street at the corner of Herriman Avenue; and branches of the Corn Exchange Bank, the American Trust Company, and the First National Bank. In 1927 the National Title Guaranty Company erected a ten-story building adjacent to the Jamaica Savings Bank at 160-16 Jamaica Avenue (the Jamaica Savings Bank acquired that property in 1941).

In 1923 the Jamaica Savings Bank commissioned local architect William H. Spaulding to design a rear addition to the building, 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.²⁷ In 1932 architect Morrell Smith was hired to further enlarge the building, necessitating the demolition of the old frame structure which still stood at the rear of the site. 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.²⁸

In 1934, the Jamaica Savings Bank merged with the Queensboro Savings Bank and the offices of the latter bank at 90-55 Sutphin Boulevard were made a branch of the Jamaica Savings Bank. In 1964, as the institution continued to grow, it moved across the street to a new, modern headquarters at the northeast corner of 161st Street (designed by LaPierre, Litchfield & Associates). In 1999, the eleven branches of the Jamaica Savings Bank were sold to North Fork Bancorp.²⁹ Although the former Jamaica Savings Bank building has been enlarged at the rear, the facade maintains its original Beaux-Arts design and survives today essentially intact.

Description

Main (North) Facade

The four-story former Jamaica Savings Bank building, approximately 30 feet wide and constructed of brick with a steel frame, has an imposing, symmetrical, four-story limestone main façade separated into three bays. The high first floor of the building is rusticated; a granite basement sill runs the full width of the façade and projects at the main entrance to serve as an entrance step. A cornerstone at the eastern end of the façade is incised with the dates "1866-1897." There are two basement openings, each crowned by scrolled ornament with foliate decoration. The western basement opening is filled with a wood panel, and the eastern basement opening contains a metal louver within a wood frame; both

openings contain historic, metal grilles with ornate, scrollwork tracery. A painted wood panel adjoins the main entrance surround to its west.

The main entrance consists of a pair of historic paneled and glazed double doors set within a historic enframing featuring a paneled reveal, fluted engaged columns crowned by Corinthian capitals, and a pair of sidelights with paneled reveals and recessed lower panels. The columns support a frieze with a central panel reading "161-02." Above this frieze is a segmental pediment ornamented with egg-and-tongue and acanthus-leaf moldings, and filled with ornament consisting of a central scallop flanked by foliate decoration. A five-paned transom with a group of three central panes separated from the two, narrower, outer panes by baluster-like mullions fills the upper portion of the main-entrance opening, above the segmental pediment. The main-entrance opening sits within an eared, molded surround with a projecting molded cornice that also acts as a sill for the window opening above. A panel within the surround, above the main-entrance doors, historically read "JAMAICA SAVINGS BANK" but is now covered with stucco. Two historic metal light fixtures, their edges decorated by egg-and-dart moldings, flank the main entrance; these fixtures are covered with peeling paint and are missing their historic globes. The basement and lower first-floor portions of the façade are painted white; a non-historic sign reading "PROTECTED BY ADT SYSTEM ELECTRIC PROTECTION SERVICES" is attached to the main-entrance reveal west of the enframing.

Flanking the main entrance are two pairs of window openings, each consisting of one square-headed opening filled with a historic one-over-one, double-hung wood window, below an ocular opening filled with a single-pane, round, wood-framed sash. A continuous, projecting, molded sill separates the square-headed openings from the basement portion of the façade. A molded, projecting lintel above each square-headed window opening doubles as a sill for the oculus above. Filling the spandrel below each oculus is elaborate carved ornament, consisting of garlands of fruit, some of it spilling over the sill to the eared surround of the square-headed opening below. Each oculus is flanked by fluted brackets supporting a projecting, half-round cornice crowned by an acanthus-leaf keystone. The segmental-arch-headed, central first-floor window opening, located above the main entrance, is filled with a pair of historic, single-pane, wood casement windows. The opening is flanked by classically inspired, carved ornament, including wreaths and cornucopias spilling garlands of fruit over the projecting, molded sill that doubles as a cornice for the main-entrance surround. The opening is flanked by fluted brackets that support a projecting, molded eyebrow cornice crowned by a central cartouche. All of the first-floor window openings contain historic metal grilles with elaborate scrollwork tracery. A continuous, projecting molding extends the width of the façade at the level of the upper first-floor window heads.

The first floor is separated from the second and third floors by a deep, molded cornice decorated with an egg-and-dart molding. At the central portion of the façade, the cornice, supported by two large, scrolled and fluted brackets with guttae and decorated with garlands of fruit, steps out from the façade to create a second-floor balcony, which retains its historic and elegant iron railing featuring ornate scrollwork. The second and third floors, forming the midsection of the building, are defined by smooth, Ionic pilasters that frame each bay. A flagpole attached to the second-floor balcony railing projects over Jamaica Avenue. At the central bay, the second-floor opening features a projecting, molded sill, and is filled with a pair of historic one-over-one, double-hung wood windows separated by a flat wood mullion and crowned by a historic, single-pane wood transom, which has a curved top rail that follows the upper line of the window opening. This opening is flanked by rusticated stone pilasters. The richly carved, half-round tympanum above the curved lintel of this opening is filled with carved foliate ornament and a central beehive that is symbolic of the original function of the building. At the central bay of the third story, a scrolled cartouche and undulating brackets support a curvilinear balcony, which retains its historic iron railing decorated with ornate scrollwork. The balcony fronts a segmental-arch-headed window opening within a molded, eared surround containing a historic one-over-one, double-hung wood window with a curved top rail.

The outer second-floor openings contain historic one-over-one double-hung wood windows with single-pane wood transoms. They are set within eared surrounds and are crowned by projecting, molded lintels supported by scrolled brackets. The outer third-floor openings contain historic one-over-one,

double-hung wood sashes, and are set within molded, eared surrounds with scallop shells. The third story is crowned by a wide entablature featuring a central segmental pediment, which is filled with foliate carving, and a large, scaly, shell-like ornament. The fourth story features a false balustrade below the window openings. The three fourth-floor openings are square-headed and feature simple molded surrounds, and all three, including the central, tripartite window, retain their historic, one-over-one, double-hung wood sashes. The fourth floor is crowned by a denticulated band and deep, modillioned cornice, which is surmounted by a high stone parapet decorated with a central winged cartouche flanked by drooping fruit garlands and topped by a scallop-shell motif. A flagpole rises above the parapet at the center of the façade.

The site includes a narrow alleyway to the east, fronted by an ornate iron fence at the building line, that is blocked by a recessed brick extension added in 1932. (An extension was made to the rear of the building at the same time.) The north façade of the extension is faced with tan brick and has a square-headed opening with a stone sill that contains a historic, one-over-one, double-hung wood window. The extension is crowned by stone or cast-stone coping.

East and Rear (South) Façades

The northernmost portion of the east façade is faced with limestone, which wraps around from the main façade. Some of the main façade's decorative features, including the cornices above the first, third, and fourth stories, similarly wrap around and continue for a short stretch along the northernmost portion of the east façade.

The first floor, and easternmost two bays of the second, third, and fourth floors, are faced with tan brick in stretcher bond. North of the extension are one square-headed basement opening, which has a stone lintel and is filled with a wood panel; one square-headed first-floor opening, which has a projecting stone sill and flush stone lintel, and is filled with a historic one-over-one, double-hung wood window behind a metal grille; and one round-headed opening with a gauged soldier-brick surround, which contains a historic, single-pane wood sash behind a historic, ornate metal grille. All of the second-, third-, and fourth-floor openings in the two northernmost bays have projecting stone sills. The two northernmost second- and fourth-floor openings have flush stone lintels; each of the two northernmost third-floor openings is crowned by a segmental, triple-rowlock arch. The northernmost second-floor opening contains a historic one-over-one, double-hung wood window and single-pane wood transom; the northernmost fourth-floor opening contains a historic one-over-one, double-hung wood window; and the second-northernmost openings at the second and fourth floors are filled with wood panels. The two northernmost third-floor windows contain historic one-over-one, double-hung wood windows, the top rails of their top sashes curved to follow the upper line of their segmentally arched openings.

A vent pipe extends vertically from the second floor to above the roofline between the second- and third-northernmost bays. The portion of the façade south of the second-northernmost bay is of red brick, and the openings on this portion of the façade have projecting stone sills and flush stone lintels. While many of these openings retain their historic one-over-one, double-hung wood windows, others are filled with wood panels.

The rear of the building, which is partially visible from Archer Avenue, is of red brick. The second- and third-floor window openings have stone lintels and sills, and the façade also has a metal fire escape.

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NOTES

¹ On October 8, 1974, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the former Jamaica Savings Bank and the proposed designation of its Landmark Site (Item No. 7, LP-0874). The hearing was duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. One witness spoke in favor of designation; a representative of the owner spoke in opposition to designation. The designation was approved by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on November 12, 1974, and was subsequently denied by the Board of Estimate. On July 10, 1990, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the former Jamaica Savings Bank and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 17, LP-1800). The hearing was continued to September 11, 1990 (Item No. 3) at the request of a representative of the owner. Both hearings were duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. At the second hearing, two representatives of the owner spoke in opposition to designation; a total of five witnesses at both hearings spoke in favor of designation. The Commission also received about 15 letters expressing support for designation, including one letter from Queens Borough President Claire Shulman, and three letters in opposition to designation, in addition to submissions from the owner's representatives. The designation was approved by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on May 5, 1992, and was subsequently denied by the City Council.

² This report is a revised version of LPC, *(Former) Jamaica Savings Bank Designation Report* (LP-1800) (New York: City of New York, 1992), prepared by Elisa Urbanelli and Marjorie Pearson. The revisions, including an updated description, were completed by Michael D. Caratzas of Research Department Staff in February of 2008.

³ 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 Kurshan, 1; E. Belcher Hyde, *Atlas of the Borough of Queens* (Brooklyn: E. Belcher Hyde, 1901), vol. 1, p1. 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, vol. 4, 1953), 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).

⁴ There are conflicting accounts of the origin of the name "Jamaica." Seyfried, for example, claims that the name derives from that of the Indian village of "Chemeken." Another source links the name to the Canarsie Indian name for beaver, 'jemecos."

⁵ Prudon, 39. See also the souvenir pamphlet put out by the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce to accompany the improvement celebration, April 20, 1898 (Queens Borough Public Library, Jamaica History Vertical File).

⁶ *Jamaica, Hempstead, Richmond Hill, Morris Park, and Woodhaven*, 18.

⁷ Information in this section is partially based on LPC, *Jamaica Savings Bank (former building) Designation Report* (LP-0874) (New York: City of New York, 1974), prepared by James T. Dillon and Diane Moores; 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).

⁸ For information on King, see Dumas Malone, Ed., *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960-61).

⁹ For information on DeGrauw, see "Savings Bank Celebrates its 75th Year"; Seyfried, 3; and Munsell, 221.

¹⁰ Seyfried, 3.

¹¹ *Jamaica Old and New*, 8. This booklet includes a photograph of the frame building.

¹² “Jamaica Landmark to Give Way to Expansion of Bank.”

¹³ “Social Opportunities of Jamaica Residents,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (Nov. 26, 1918). Druggist George Lyman Peck operated a pharmacy on Jamaica Avenue in a building that once stood just to the west of the bank. In addition to his association with Jamaica Savings Bank, Peck held directorships of the Electric Railroad Company and the Jamaica Gas Company. John H. Sutphin was a Democratic leader in Queens County and served as County Clerk for 30 years beginning in 1867. He was president of Jamaica Savings Bank from 1899 to 1907 when he died. His involvement in banking extended to the presidency of the Bank of Jamaica, organized in 1889. William A. Warnock was born in Flushing; an orphan, he was adopted and raised by Aaron DeGrauw, the bank’s first president. His extensive civil service during the 1870s and 1880s was performed in the County Clerk’s office, the sheriff’s office, and the Surrogate’s Office. He was elected to the Board of Trustees of the Jamaica Savings Bank, serving as secretary in 1892 and president from 1907 to 1917. William W. Gillen was admitted to the bar in 1879 and gained a reputation as “the best lawyer in the county.” Beginning in 1885, he served as the chief clerk in the Surrogate’s Office. A trustee of Jamaica Savings Bank and its president from 1917 to 1920, Gillen was also a stockholder and director of the Bank of Jamaica. See *Portrait and Biographical Record of Queens County (Long Island), New York* (New York and Chicago: Chapman Publishing Co., 1896), for information on Peck (393); Warnock (514); and Gillen (421). For information on Sutphin, see *Long Island Democrat* (Feb. 23, 1907), 2.

¹⁴ “Social Opportunities of Jamaica Residents.”

¹⁵ Portions of this section are adapted from LPC, *Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company Building Designation Report* (LP-1633) (New York: City of New York, 1988), prepared by Elisa Urbanelli.

¹⁶ A.C. David, “Private Residences for Banking Firms,” *Architectural Record* 14, no.1 (July 1903), 13-14. See also Robert A.M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin, and John Massengale, *New York 1900* (New York: Rizzoli, 1983), 177.

¹⁷ David, 18.

¹⁸ “Recent Bank Buildings of the United States,” *Architectural Record* 25, no.1 (January 1909), 1-3.

¹⁹ Stern, et al, 181-183.

²⁰ Richard Guy Wilson, “The Great Civilization,” in *The American Renaissance, 1876-1917* (New York: The Brooklyn Museum, 1979), 11-16.

²¹ Stern, et. al, 21.

²² *Ibid.*, 180-181, photograph.

²³ One notable example of a Beaux-Arts building in Queens is the New York State Supreme Court, Queens County, Long Island City Branch (a designated New York City Landmark), which was built in 1872-76 (George Hathorne, architect) and rebuilt in 1904-08 at which time the monumental structure was given a new Renaissance-inspired design by Peter M. Coco. The rarity of the Beaux-Arts style in Queens is attested to by submissions to the Landmarks Preservation Commission at the time of the 1992 public hearing; see, for example, Letter from Elise M. Quasebarth, Executive Director of the Metropolitan Historic Structures Association, July 2, 1990, and Letter from Henry F. Ludder, Queens Borough Historian, July 9, 1990, Landmarks Preservation Commission files. In Kroessler and Rappaport, *Historic Preservation in Queens*, 56, the Jamaica Savings Bank is characterized as “the only Beaux-Arts French commercial structure in Queens.”

²⁴ The information in this section is based on Dennis Steadman Francis, *Architects in Practice in New York City, 1840-1900* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1979); James Ward, *Architects in Practice in New York City, 1900-1940* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1989); and LPC, *23rd Regiment Armory Designation Report* (LP-1950) (New York: City of New York, 1977), prepared by Nancy Goeschel.

²⁵ Information in this section was compiled from New York City, Borough of Queens, Department of Buildings Plans, Permits, and Dockets (Block 10101, Lot 9); “Savings Bank 69 Years Old”; *Insurance Maps of the Borough of Queens* (New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1925-1978), vol. 6, p1. 23; and Christopher Gray, “Beaux-Arts Building in Limbo,” *New York Times* (November 3, 1991), R6.

²⁶ “Jamaica National Bank Formally Opened,” *Jamaica Jinjer* 4, no. 1 (August 1924), 5-7.

²⁷ Borough of Queens, Department of Buildings, ALT 1372-1923. The estimated cost of the project was given as \$55,000. Work was completed in 1924.

²⁸ ALT 7668-1931. The cost of this project, completed in 1932, was estimated at \$40,000. Morrell Smith was also the architect of the Moderne-style branch of the Jamaica Savings Bank at Jamaica Avenue and Sutphin Boulevard, built in 1939.

²⁹ LPC, *Jamaica Savings Bank, Elmhurst Branch Designation Report* (LP-2173) (New York: City of New York, 2005), prepared by Matthew A. Postal, 6.

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 (Former) Jamaica Savings Bank 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 (Former) Jamaica Savings Bank was constructed in 1897-98 for the oldest and most prestigious banking institution in Jamaica; that it was designed by the noted firm of Hough & Deuell; that it is a fine and particularly exuberant example of the classically inspired Beaux-Arts style which became popular in the United States following the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, and is one of only a few buildings in the borough of Queens to embrace that architectural aesthetic; that its striking facade displays especially rich and fluid ornamental forms reminiscent of French Baroque architecture, skillfully executed in carved limestone and wrought iron; that notable among the facade's decorative motifs is a carved stone beehive, a traditional symbol in the imagery of bank architecture, denoting industry, thrift, and prosperity; that the building, prominently sited on Jamaica Avenue, is an urbane presence on the neighborhood's main commercial thoroughfare; that although the four-story structure is relatively small in scale, the imposing design of the facade conveys a monumentality which is appropriately suited to the distinguished image and reputation of the banking institution, while lending the building the formal elegance of a private club or townhouse; that the Jamaica Savings Bank, incorporated in 1866 by a consortium of local citizens including John A. King, former Governor of the State of New York, played an important role in the development of Jamaica; and that the facade of the building maintains its original Beaux-Arts design and survives today essentially intact as a reminder of an important era in Jamaica's history.

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 (Former) Jamaica Savings Bank, 161-02 Jamaica Avenue, Borough of Queens, and designates Queens Tax Map Block 10101, Lot 9 as its Landmark Site.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair
Stephen F. Byrns, Diana Chapin, Christopher Moore,
Margery Perlmutter, Elizabeth Ryan, Roberta Washington, Commissioners



(Former) Jamaica Savings Bank, main façade
Photo: Carl Forster, 2007



(Former) Jamaica Savings Bank, main entrance
Photo: Carl Forster, 2007



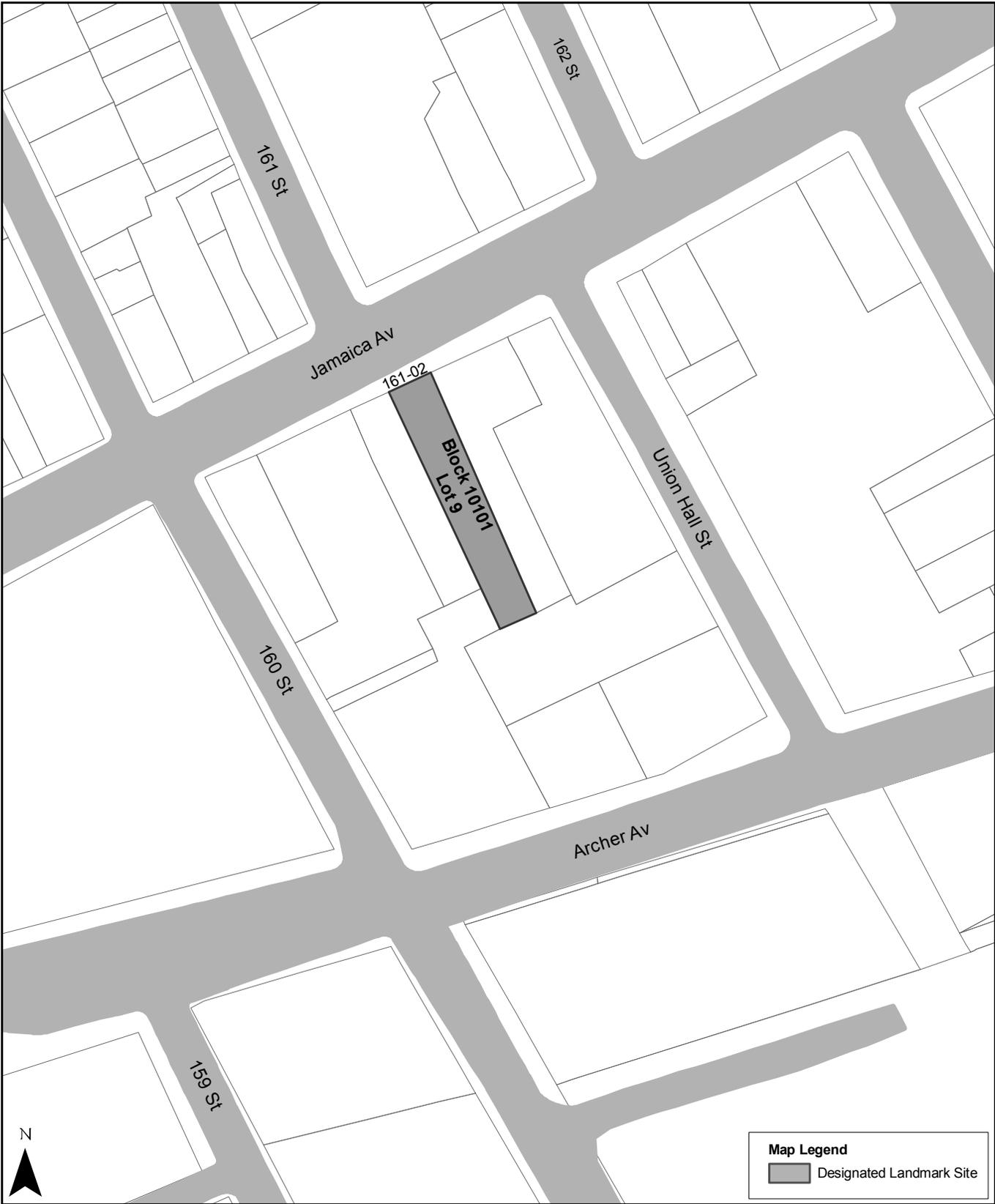
(Former) Jamaica Savings Bank, main façade detail
Photo: Michael Caratzas, 2007



(Former) Jamaica Savings Bank, main façade detail
Photo: Michael Caratzas, 2007



(Former) Jamaica Savings Bank, main façade parapet detail
Photo: Michael Caratzas, 2007



0.02 Miles

(FORMER) JAMAICA SAVINGS BANK (LP-2109), 161-02 Jamaica Avenue.
Landmark Site: Borough of Queens Tax Map Block 10101, Lot 9.

Designated: February 12, 2008

Graphic Source: New York City Department of City Planning, MapPLUTO, Edition 06C, 2006.
Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, JM.