

The Dime Savings Bank of Williamsburgh

209 Havemeyer Street, Brooklyn
Tax Map Block 2447 Lot 36

Built: 1906-1908; addition 1923-1925

Architect: Helmle and Huberty

Style: Neo-Classical

Proposed Action: Propose for Calendaring October 24, 2017



The Dime Savings Bank of Williamsburgh, LPC Photo (2017)

The Dime Savings Bank of Williamsburgh is a neo-Classical building constructed between 1906 and 1908 during a period of significant growth in Williamsburgh that occurred after the completion of the Williamsburgh Bridge in 1903. Designed by the prominent Brooklyn architecture firm of Helmle and Huberty, the building is a significant example of an early-20th century neighborhood savings bank that used a grand classical design to invoke a sense of security, prosperity and civic pride for a largely immigrant and low-income community.

Industry flourished along the East River waterfront in Williamsburgh during the mid-19th century and commercial and financial institutions emerged to serve the growing immigrant population. Incorporated in 1864, The Dime Savings Bank of Williamsburgh promoted the benefits of prudent investments, particularly among low-income residents. The bank expanded rapidly and outgrew several temporary locations before constructing its first headquarters on the corner of Wythe Avenue and Broadway in 1873. In 1903, the construction of the Williamsburgh Bridge caused a rapid increase in Williamsburgh's population and shifted the financial center of the Eastern District (which included Williamsburgh, Greenpoint, and Bushwick) from Broadway to the bridge approach, known as Williamsburgh Bridge Plaza. The Dime Savings Bank of Williamsburgh acquired two corner lots facing the plaza in 1906 and the neo-Classical building was completed in 1908. The bank continued to grow and in 1923 the trustees purchased two lots at the rear of the property to enlarge the building. Completed in 1925, the addition nearly doubled the size of the building.

Helmle & Huberty (formerly the firm of Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell) were distinguished architects known for designing banks, park buildings, and churches in Brooklyn. Their work exemplified the classicism, order, and grandeur of the City Beautiful Movement. After The Dime Savings Bank of Williamsburgh opened in 1908, *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* boasted that the “completed structure readily commends itself as one of the most attractive financial institution buildings in the city.” The monumental Indiana limestone building is set on a granite foundation and is defined by a temple-front with four fluted Corinthian columns that support a pediment with modillions and dentils, incised signage, and a clock. The building retains a high level of integrity and remains an important example of the elegant, classically-inspired designs that were popular for local banks in the late-19th and early-20th centuries. The bank has long been a local architectural icon within the neighborhood; in 1939 *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* described it as a “landmark as well as a standard bearer of a staunch community.”