



**NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION
COMMISSION**

Robert B. Tierney
Chairman

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, January 12, 2010
No. 10-01**

**NEW LANDMARKS NAMED IN THE BRONX, MANHATTAN, QUEENS
AND ON STATEN ISLAND**

*Presbyterian Church and Palazzo-Style Commercial Building in Manhattan; Theater Building
and Public School in Queens; Former Bank in the Bronx and Rare Staten Island House Now
Protected*

The Landmarks Preservation Commission today voted unanimously to designate six buildings in four boroughs as New York City landmarks, citing their architectural distinction and cultural and historic significance. The Commission also held a public hearing on a proposal to protect the sprawling Westbeth residential and studio complex in Greenwich Village and voted to formally consider landmark status for the Queens County Courthouse in Jamaica.

The new landmarks include **West Park Presbyterian Church** on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, the **311 Broadway Building** in Tribeca, the former **Ridgewood Theater** building in Ridgewood, Queens, **Public School 66, now the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School**, in Richmond Hill, Queens, the former **Dollar Savings Bank** headquarters in the Hub section of the Bronx and the **Mary and David Burgher House** in Stapleton, Staten Island.

“Each of the buildings we designated today as landmarks illustrates New York City’s explosive economic and population growth in the mid-19th century and first two decades of the 20th century,” said Commission Chairman Robert B. Tierney. “Moreover, all of them are remarkably intact and were designed in a wide range of distinctive architectural styles.”

Below are descriptions of the buildings:



West Park Presbyterian Church, 165 West 86th Street, at Amsterdam Avenue

In 1885, the 84th Street Presbyterian Church hired prominent New York architect Leopold Eidlitz to design a chapel on a portion of the lot at the corner of 86th and Amsterdam. The congregation was renamed Park Presbyterian in 1889, the same year it hired Henry Kilburn to construct a much larger sanctuary on the site. Kilburn refaced and incorporated the chapel into his new, Romanesque Revival church building. Kilburn was known for his designs of many churches, private residences, factories, stables and theaters in Manhattan.

West Park Presbyterian was formed in 1911 when Park Presbyterian merged with West Presbyterian, which was founded in 1829, and located at 31 West 42nd Street in Manhattan.

“West Park Presbyterian is considered to be one of the best examples of a Romanesque Revival style religious structure in New York City,” said Chairman Tierney. “Its deep red sandstone cladding, broad round-arch openings and soaring tower endow a prominent intersection of the Upper West Side with an unmistakable sense of place.”

The church is anchored by a soaring corner tower with a bell-shaped roof, and reflected a new interest in medieval Romanesque forms, such as heavy round arches, rock-faced stonework and massive towers.

311 Broadway Building, between Duane and Thomas streets



Located on the west side of Broadway, the five-story Italian Renaissance palazzo-style building was constructed in 1857 at a time when the area south of Worth Street was a major center of the wholesale textile trade in the United States. It was constructed as a speculative investment by two brothers, merchants John and Daniel Jackson Steward, a founding member of the American Museum of Natural History. Its architect is unknown.

The building’s early tenants included two importing firms and a scale manufacturer. It was bought in 1887 by William Waldorf Astor, a landowner, legislator and member of one of New York City’s wealthiest families. Prominent 20th century tenants include the L.C. Smith & Brothers Typewriter Company, David T. Abercrombie Company, a sporting goods outfitter and Hagstrom Company, Inc., the mapmaker. It bought the building from Astor’s estate in 1948.

The building is an example of a style of the palazzo architectural style, introduced in New York by Trench and Snook with their design for the A.T. Stewart Store, a cast iron and marble former department store on the east side of Broadway between Reade Chambers street that was constructed in 1845. Clad in stone, the 311 Broadway Building features a richly decorated stone façade, molded stone detail surrounding the windows, and projecting lintels and sills.

“This building recalls not only mid-19th century New York City, but also early 16th century Rome and Florence,” said Chairman Tierney. “It’s one of the few remaining palazzo-style buildings on Broadway in Lower Manhattan.”

The building is now occupied by a restaurant and discount store on the ground floor and apartments on the upper stories.

Ridgewood Theater, 55-27 Myrtle Avenue, Queens

The theater, constructed in 1916 and designed by the prominent theater architect Thomas Lamb in the Classical Revival style, continuously showed movies for more than 90 years. Located on a busy commercial strip in the Ridgewood section of Queens, it was one of the longest-running movie theaters in the country when it closed in March 2008.

Lamb immigrated to New York City in 1883 from Scotland, and became one of the world’s most prolific theater architects. He designed more than 300 in the United States, including a number of



Broadway theaters and movie palaces in New York City.

The Ridgewood Theater, which originally seated 2,500 people, was built along Ridgewood's main thoroughfare at a time of rapid growth in the neighborhood. It was constructed by Levy Brothers Real Estate, but was operated by various groups over the years, including William Fox, one of the major forces in the movie industry at the time, and the predecessor to 20th Century Fox film corporation. Fox added sound to the theater in 1927, and the next year showed the first 100 percent talking feature, "Lights of New York." It eventually became part of the United Artists chain in the 1980s and was converted to a multiplex theater.

The two stories above the marquee are faced with the original terra-cotta tiles, many of which are arranged in geometric patterns. The side pilasters feature linked diamond shapes, and are capped by a large shield decorated with shells and garlands. The name of the theater, carved into the top of the façade, is set off by a band with a wave design.

"This regal building, with its intricate white facade, is a stand out along a bustling commercial strip that's lined mostly with simple brick buildings," said Chairman Tierney. "The ornate exterior provided a fitting gateway to the treasures waiting inside, creating nearly 100 years of memories for countless moviegoers."

Public School 66, 85-11 102nd Street, at 85th Road, Queens



The red-brick, three-story school, which was constructed in 1899 with eight classrooms for pupils in the first through sixth grades, and expanded seven years later, was built at a time when much of Richmond Hill was still farmland.

It was one of three identical schools that were constructed in anticipation of an influx of residents to the area stemming from transportation improvements, the subdivision of farmland into lots for residential development and the consolidation of Queens with New York City.

Designed in the Victorian Eclectic style, the building is distinguished by a six-story projecting tower that originally contained a bell used to call children to school from neighboring farms and properties, gabled dormers, and elaborate, large entablatures featuring floral ornament. Its design is attributed to Harry S. Chambers, the school buildings superintendent and architect for the Town of Jamaica.

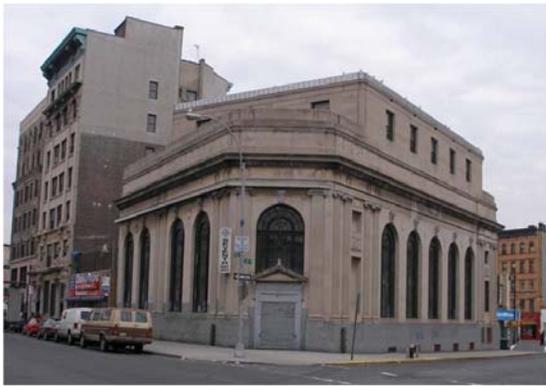
The opening of the school was delayed until 1902 because of a citywide funding shortage. Spurred by a growth in population, a second, three-story building was added to the east side of the original school structure in 1906, and accommodated more classrooms and space for a kindergarten and an auditorium. It was designed by C.B.J. Snyder, superintendent of school buildings for the New York City Board of Education from 1890 to 1923. He is credited with the design of more than 140 elementary schools, 10 junior high schools, 20 high schools and many alterations and additions.

His brick-faced addition, designed in a similar style to that of the original school, includes 2 ½-story gabled wings with steeply pitched slate roofs.

“The school is a remarkable survivor from a time when Richmond Hill was transitioning from a farming community into a residential neighborhood,” said Chairman Tierney. “It remains one of the most distinctive school structures in Queens.”

It was renamed the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School in 2003 in honor of her passion for literacy and historic preservation, and continues to serve as a grammar school.

Council Member Elizabeth Crowley (D-Queens), whose district includes the school, said, “This school has been a staple of Richmond Hill for over a century. It is important for future generations to understand their history, and landmarking this innovative and striking structure will do just that.”



Dollar Savings Bank Building, 2792 Third Avenue, at 147th Street, the Bronx

The former bank building is located on a trapezoidal lot bounded by 147th Street to the south, Willis Avenue to the east and Third Avenue to the west. It was constructed in 1919 and designed in the Classical Revival style by the architecture firm of Renwick, Aspinwall and Tucker. The firm succeeded the practice established by James Renwick Jr., the architect of St. Patrick’s Cathedral, Grace Episcopal

Church and the Smithsonian Institution Building in Washington, D.C.

Dollar Savings Bank was founded in 1887 by John Haffen, the son of a German immigrant who founded a successful brewery. His brother, Louis, was the first borough president of the Bronx, and served in that role from 1897 until 1909, when he was removed from office by Governor Charles Evans Hughes for alleged misconduct.

The bank, which opened in 1890, was the first thrift institution in the Bronx. It moved its headquarters to 2792 Third Avenue to accommodate an increase in accounts. The monumental building, clad in limestone, has three facades that front 147th Street and Willis and Third avenues, each of which features enormous round-arched windows. The canted main entrance is framed by laurel-decorated pilasters and crowned by a central bracketed pediment. A frieze engraved with the bank’s name wraps around the top of the building.

“This striking building for decades housed an institution that was instrumental in the development of the Bronx at the beginning of the 20th century,” said Chairman Tierney. “It was designed in a style of architecture that evoked the stability and strength of an important financial institution.”

The bank moved its headquarters from the site in 1950 to another building at the intersection of the Grand Concourse and Fordham Road. The building was sold to the Northeastern Conference Corporation of Seventh Day Adventists in 1974 and is now used as a church.

Mary and David Burgher House, 63 William Street, Staten Island

The vernacular Greek Revival-style house, located at 63 William Street, was built around 1844 in the Stapleton section of Staten



Island, one of the borough's earliest suburban developments because of its ports, and proximity to the ferry to Manhattan and good roads.

It was built by David Burgher, a fisherman who was involved in civic affairs, served as a deputy sheriff and was a member of the town council. The 3 ½ -story, clapboard sided, wood-frame structure is distinguished by a striking two-story portico set below an overhanging flared eave. The flared projecting spring, or bell-cast eave, is a feature that was widely used on Staten Island, but not commonly found on Greek Revival houses elsewhere in the country.

Flared eaves, which first appeared on Staten Island in the 17th century, are often associated with Dutch Colonial architecture. But they were considered so important to Staten Island buildings that they were retained when older architectural styles were supplanted by later styles, including Greek Revival.

“This elegant house represents a building type that was once common on Staten Island, and is a reminder of the importance of maritime commerce for Staten Island's economy in the 1840s and 1850s, and the role Island-based mariners, sea captains, harbor pilots ferry operators and shipping merchants played in the development of New York City,” Chairman Tierney said.

David Burgher lived in the house until 1848. It was sold the following year to an English immigrant who was a sea captain, and later owned by a paper industry tycoon. It remains privately owned.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission is the mayoral agency responsible for protecting and preserving New York City's architecturally, historically and culturally significant buildings and sites. Since its creation in 1965, LPC has granted landmark status to more than 25,000 buildings, including 1,256 individual landmarks, 110 interior landmarks, 10 scenic landmarks and 100 historic districts in all five boroughs. Under the City's landmarks law, considered one of the most powerful in the nation, the Commission must be comprised of at least three architects, a historian, a Realtor, a planner or landscape architect, as well as a representative of each borough.

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