



The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

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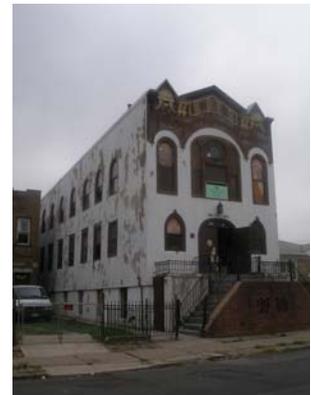
COMMISSION CROWNS QUEENS WITH TWO MORE LANDMARKS: JAMAICA SAVINGS BANK EARNS LANDMARK STATUS FOR A THIRD TIME SINCE 1974 AND CORONA'S CONGREGATION TIFEREETH ISRAEL WINS APPROVAL

*Bank Landmarked Again Following Owner Pledge to Support Designation
Synagogue Considered Borough's Oldest Remaining in Use as a House of Worship*

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission today voted unanimously to grant landmark status for a third time to the former headquarters of Jamaica Savings Bank, a 110-year-old Beaux-Arts style building whose prior designations were rescinded by the Board of Estimate in 1974, and by the City Council in 1992. The Commission also approved the designation of Congregation Tifereth Israel, a two-story wood-frame structure that was built in 1911 and is believed to be the oldest purpose-built synagogue in Queens. Both designations bring the total number of buildings with landmark status in Queens to 2,328, and affirm the Commission's ongoing commitment towards protecting the borough's distinct heritage.



“We are dedicated to protecting the architectural and historic heritage of Queens, and these two buildings, though different in style, represent two important chapters in the development of the borough,” said Commission Chairman Robert B. Tierney. “One is an exuberant symbol of the borough's economic growth at the turn of the 20th century, and the other is a modest reminder of a time shortly thereafter when Jewish communities first started to settle in the borough.”



Located mid-block at 161-02 Jamaica Avenue, the four-story, limestone-fronted Jamaica Savings Bank building was completed in 1898 and designed by the architecture firm Hough & Duell. Its construction coincided with the consolidation of the five boroughs into the City of New York, and reflected the metropolitan spirit of the period. The building's sumptuous façade, adorned with French Baroque ornament and wrought-iron balconies, features a carved stone beehive, a traditional image in bank architecture that denoted industry, thrift and prosperity. The building is currently owned by Conway Stores, a department store chain.

“I am very pleased that this outstanding building is finally going to be added to our City's remarkable collection of landmarks,” said Commissioner Tierney. “It's a great victory for the borough and the City, and it was well worth the wait. I commend the owners for their stewardship of this gem and for their

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understanding that preserving our City's heritage and moving it forward are by no means mutually exclusive."

"The Jamaica Savings Bank represents the prosperous past of Jamaica Avenue," said Conway co-owner Ricky Cohen. "We hope that the restoration and plans for future use of the building will help spur economic growth and rightfully restore the pride associated with this magnificent building."

"The landmark designation of the Jamaica Savings Bank signifies a new era for Jamaica Avenue," said Kenneth Olson, Chief Executive Office of POKO Partners, LLC, which is redeveloping the site with Conway. "Our goal is to be able to create a new thriving commercial destination within the landmark structure."

"I am extremely pleased by the efforts of the Landmarks Preservation Commission in working with the building owner, Conway Stores, and the local community to expedite this process," said Council Member Leroy Comrie. "It is my hope that this landmarking will be a small part of the economic and cultural renaissance of the Jamaica business community."

Jamaica Savings Bank opened in 1866 and was originally located in the basement of the former County Clerk's Office, which stood at the site of the current Register/Jamaica Arts Center building now adjacent to the bank. One of the bank's founders was former New York Governor and U.S. Congressman John Alsop King, the eldest son of federalist statesman Rufus King, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. In 1999, the bank's 11 branches were sold to North Fork Bancorp.

All designations approved by the Commission must be reviewed by the City Planning Commission and the New York City Council, which has the authority to affirm, deny, or modify landmark status for a building or historic district. Since the Commission was created in 1965, 20 individual designations have been turned back by the Board of Estimate or City Council, including the Jamaica Savings Bank. Of those, 8 were later redesignated and affirmed by those bodies.

About Congregation Tifereth Israel

Congregation Tifereth Israel is located at 109-18 54th Avenue between 108th and 111th streets, and is one of two synagogues remaining in the Corona section of Queens. Its original members were Eastern Europeans who had relocated to Corona from Manhattan's Lower East Side and from other parts of New York City. The synagogue was originally named Congregation Independent Chevra Tyfers Israel Anshei Corona, but informally known as the Home Street Synagogue for the original name of the street where it was located. One of the synagogue's earliest members was Estée Lauder (née Josephine Esther Mentzer), whose parents owned a hardware store two blocks away from the synagogue.

The congregation later constructed a mikveh on the same lot as the synagogue and opened a nearby yeshiva, which was used in the mid 1970s by a band called The Breakfast Club as a music studio, where the renowned singer and actress Madonna lived from 1979 to 1980. The synagogue's current congregants are mostly comprised of Bukharian Jews from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and other former republics of the Soviet Union.

Designed by Crescent L. Varrone, a little-known local architect, Congregation Tifereth Israel strongly resembles the synagogues that were shoehorned onto the narrow tenements lots of Manhattan's crowded Lower East Side in the early 20th and late 19th centuries. Now clad in stucco, the synagogue was originally sided with horizontal clapboard siding and incorporated Moorish, Gothic and Judaic design and decorative elements. It has pointed-arched windows, a tripartite upper-story window with a roundel

featuring a Star of David in colored stained glass and decorative ornament at its gabled parapet. The congregation is planning a restoration of the building.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission is 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 some 24,000 buildings, including 1,184 individual landmarks, 110 interior landmarks, nine scenic landmarks and 90 historic districts in all five boroughs.