



## The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

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### **FORMER EAST VILLAGE MILK BONE DOG BISCUIT FACTORY, BANK BUILDING NAMED NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS**

*Designations Stem From LPC-Driven Effort to Preserve the Manhattan Neighborhood's Architecturally,  
Historically and Culturally Significant Structures*

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) today voted unanimously to grant landmark status to the Wheatsworth Bakery and Public National Bank buildings, two important symbols of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century immigrant experience in the neighborhood that was once considered part of the Lower East Side. The Commission's votes bring to six the number of landmarks it's designated in the East Village so far this year. LPC staff recommended all six after conducting a survey of 130 buildings between East Houston and 14<sup>th</sup> streets, the Bowery/4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the East River during the summer of 2006.



“The Wheatsworth factory and the Public National Bank helped a new wave of immigrants build better lives for themselves in New York City and get a toehold on the American dream,” said Commission Chairman Robert B. Tierney. “Amid a neighborhood of tenements, these dignified, modern buildings commanded a significant civic presence.”

Located at 444 East 10<sup>th</sup> St. between avenues C and D, the Art Deco/Viennese Secessionist-style Wheatsworth bakery was completed in 1928. The factory was constructed by Wheatsworth, Inc., a cracker and flour manufacturer that invented the Milk Bone dog biscuit. The National Biscuit Company (Nabisco), now a division of Kraft Foods, Inc., acquired Wheatsworth in 1931, and continues to make Wheatsworth Crackers, but sold the rights to Milk-Bone in 2006.

The seven-story brick building was designed by J. Edwin Hopkins, an industrial bakery designer who was the son of a baker and raised in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. The factory features a granite base, terra cotta pilasters etched with bundles of wheat stalks and several bands of multi-colored terra cotta

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friezes, which are typical of the Art Deco style. Meanwhile, the façade's projecting vertical piers and abstract sculptural forms are characteristic of the Viennese Secessionist style.

Although the factory's main product was the bone-shaped dog treat, it also made Wheatsworth crackers and flour. The bakery shut down in 1957, and the building had several different owners through the remainder of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including the City of New York and Columbia University. It is now a public storage warehouse.



Built in 1923, the Public National Bank of New York Building at 106 Avenue C, at 7<sup>th</sup> Street, bears the influence of noted Viennese architect Josef Hoffmann. It was designed by Eugene Schoen, a New York City-born architect who met Hoffmann and studied his work during two separate trips to Europe. Hoffmann was a professor and one of the founders of the Vienna Secession, an influential group of painters, sculptors and architects who shunned artistic conservatism. Schoen, who was at the forefront of the modern architecture movement in New York City, worked as an architect from 1904 to 1925, when he largely became an interior designer.



Schoen designed the Avenue C branch, as well as several others for Public National Bank of New York, which had 30 branches in Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Bronx and \$135 million in deposits by 1928. Public National, which closed branch in 1954, was acquired by the Bankers Trust Co. of New York a year later. The building originally was two stories, and had a polished grey granite base with an angled corner bay where the entrance was placed. Above the entrance is a Viennese-inspired, terra cotta wreath of fruit which originally held a clock, an eagle and decorative urns. It also has fluted pilasters without capitals, and a broad, highly stylized molded cornice, which are references to Hoffmann's work.

An intermediate floor was later added between the original first and second stories, and the building converted into a nursing home in 1954 and apartments in the 1980s.

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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 1,206 individual landmarks, 110 interior landmarks, 10 scenic landmarks and 92 historic districts in all five boroughs.