

**GREENWICH SAVINGS BANK** (now Crossland Federal Savings Bank), first floor interior consisting of the Broadway entrance vestibule and foyer, the main banking hall including the tellers' cages, and the Sixth Avenue (Avenue of the Americas) entrance vestibule; second floor interior consisting of the upper portion of the main banking hall and the loggia spaces; and the fixtures and interior components of these spaces, including but not limited to, wall surfaces and attached decorative elements; ceiling surfaces including elliptical dome and light diffuser; floor surfaces including mosaic floors circumscribing tellers' cages; windows; doors; chandeliers and lighting fixtures; decorative ironwork; bronze grilles; columnar screens and attached furnishings; 1352-1362 Broadway, aka 985 Sixth Avenue, Borough of Manhattan. Built 1922-24; architects York & Sawyer.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 812, Lot 29.

On December 12, 1989, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as an Interior Landmark of the Greenwich Savings Bank, first floor interior consisting of the Broadway entrance vestibule and foyer, the main banking hall including the tellers' cages, and the Avenue of the Americas entrance vestibule; second floor interior consisting of the upper portion of the main banking hall and the loggia spaces; and the fixtures and interior components of these spaces, including but not limited to, wall surfaces and attached decorative elements; ceiling surfaces including elliptical dome and light diffuser; floor surfaces including mosaic floors circumscribing tellers' cages; windows; doors; chandeliers and lighting fixtures; decorative ironwork; bronze grilles; columnar screens and attached furnishings and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 31).<sup>1</sup> The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Two witnesses spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. One letter has been received supporting the designation. The owner of the underlying fee for the property -- exclusive of the improvements upon it -- has expressed opposition to the designation.

## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

### Summary

The Greenwich Savings Bank building, constructed in 1922-24 as the imposing new headquarters to mark this institution's progress from its modest Greenwich Village origins to a prominent midtown location, is one of the most refined examples in the impressive corpus of bank buildings from the firm of York & Sawyer. Both architects, initially employed by McKim, Mead & White, carried the senior firm's monumental classicism toward a more academic classical architecture. In keeping with the American tradition of bank building, Philip Sawyer displayed his knowledge of ancient Roman prototypes, and his appreciation for the organization which characterizes eighteenth- and nineteenth-century French design and planning, in the adaptation of the Greenwich Savings Bank's great,

elliptical banking room and its accessory spaces -- entrance vestibules, foyer, and upper loggias -- to the bank's irregular four-sided site. The interior of the Greenwich Savings Bank displays Sawyer's consummate skill in manipulating the classical architectural idiom to create a spatial allegory -- a veritable temple to thrift -- in limestone, sandstone and steel. The elements of allegory -- the evocation of ancient monuments, the encomiums inscribed on the walls, and the antique attributes of "Wisdom" and "Commerce" -- are expressed in a variety of rich materials found throughout the interior spaces. The banking room's continuous interior elevation -- the podium, the Corinthian order and rusticated wall surfaces -- reflects the components of the imposing exterior, now turned inward and adapted to the elliptical plan. There is a subtle correspondence of decorative forms and motifs throughout. The ancillary spaces and the vast banking room are fused by doorways on the lower level and loggias above. The daylight penetrating the bi-colored amber glass light-diffuser pervades the high cella of the banking room with a golden glow suggesting that the practice of thriftiness was a sacred litany. This bank interior is an outstanding example of the best of the academic classical architectural tradition.

#### Brief History of the Greenwich Savings Bank<sup>2</sup>

The growth of the Greenwich Savings Bank was linked inextricably to the expansion of the city of New York. In 1832 the population of Greenwich Village suddenly increased when a cholera epidemic sent many residents of the city at Manhattan's tip to the healthier climate of the Village. To prepare for what must have been seen as inevitable growth, the bank's founding trustees, a group of farsighted local businessmen, met in 1833 at the Northern Dispensary to found the Greenwich Savings Bank. Housed in the first floor of a row house at 10 Carmine Street, just off Sixth Avenue, the bank expanded into No. 12 a year later. At this time it was the only savings institution in Greenwich Village.<sup>3</sup> The state legislature authorized the bank to receive deposits and invest these in bonds or stocks issued by the United States Treasury or by the States of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Ohio, or New York. Following the fires that swept the city in 1835, Greenwich Village again found itself serving an expanded population. In 1836 the state legislature authorized the bank to make loans on unencumbered real estate in New York City. Exemplary management carried the bank through the national financial crises of 1837, 1857, 1873, 1893, and 1907.

In 1839 the trustees moved the bank around the corner to quarters at 11 Sixth Avenue, the avenue on which the Greenwich Savings Bank would do business for nearly a century and a half.

Keeping pace with the northward surge of the city's population up Manhattan Island, the bank's addresses rose steadily up Sixth Avenue. In 1846 the bank leased space on the northwest corner of 4th Street at 41 Sixth Avenue where it remained until 1853 when the trustees acquired two lots on the southwest corner of Sixth Avenue and Waverly Place. The new building opened in 1854. When the bank outgrew that site, the southeast corner of West 16th Street and Sixth Avenue, adjacent to Saint Francis Xavier Roman Catholic Church, was purchased in 1889-90, with the bank's fifth home opening in 1892. Now demolished, it was designed by Robert W. Gibson, well-known as an ecclesiastical architect.<sup>4</sup> With this commission the bank's trustees demonstrated that they understood the associational advantage implicit in a well-designed building in a good location. They repeated this practice thirty years later when they retained York & Sawyer to design a new building to be constructed at 985 Sixth Avenue, on the lot between Sixth and Broadway at 36th Street.

#### Banks and Architectural Imagery<sup>5</sup>

The freestanding bank building, although not a new building type, became more prevalent at the end of the last century when the savings bank industry made itself more accessible to the individual depositor. A convenient location was one way this accessibility was achieved; an impressive and distinguished building, incorporating a grand banking room, was another.

Gibson's building for the Greenwich Savings Bank at Sixth Avenue and 16th Street was one of these. Other examples include the Bank for Savings (1892) at 22nd Street and Fourth Avenue, designed by Cyrus L. W. Eidlitz; McKim, Mead & White's Bowery Savings Bank (1893-95, a designated New York City Landmark) at Grand Street and the Bowery; and R. H. Robertson's New York Bank for Savings (1896-97, a designated New York City Landmark) at Eighth Avenue and 14th Street. Throughout western civilization, historic associations with the civic pride that gave rise to the treasuries and temples built in ancient Greece have prompted architects to return to this classical prototype. The architects of ancient Rome introduced a spatial factor to the prototype, linking the idea of civic pride with their designs for large public structures, law courts and baths. This traditional source, in a multitude of variations, was the model for the new banking temples cited above; this model was strongly endorsed by York & Sawyer for the firm's subsequent bank building commissions, expressed with an academic refinement until then unseen in this country. The round plan, covered with a dome, was an ancient Roman innovation and a form often repeated subsequently. In this country it was employed by Jefferson, Bulfinch, Latrobe and Strickland. Town & Davis' Federal Hall (1834-1842) at 28 Wall Street is a good New York example. Philip Sawyer would have known the banking hall of Isaiah Rogers' Merchants' Exchange (1836-1842) at 55 Wall Street, the great dome of which McKim, Mead & White replaced with an upper addition for the National City Bank in 1907.

#### York & Sawyer<sup>6</sup>

Edward Palmer York (1863-1928) was born in Wellsville, New York, the son of a banker. Studying architecture at Cornell from 1887 to 1889, he then entered the office of McKim, Mead & White in 1890 where he became Stanford White's assistant and supervised the construction of the Governor Levi P. Morton house (1896-1898) at 681 Fifth Avenue (demolished). In 1898 he established his own practice in partnership with Philip Sawyer. Sawyer (1868-1949) was born in New London, Connecticut, but grew up in Washington, D.C. Sawyer first studied engineering and then architecture at Columbia University. In

1889 he worked as an engineer for the Fort Payne Coal and Iron Co., near Birmingham, Alabama, and the following year for the United States Geological Survey in the Sangre de Cristo mountain range of New Mexico and in Yellowstone. In 1891 he entered the office of McKim, Mead & White, only to leave a year later for the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris where he was in Odilon Redon's atelier.<sup>7</sup> His sketchbooks reflect not only his itinerary on the continent but his enthusiasm for recording the details and component profiles of the architectural monuments he visited, especially the examples of classical antiquity. He returned to the McKim, Mead & White office in 1894.

The individual strengths of the future partners were complementary. Sawyer's recollection of their days at McKim, Mead & White was that York had a desk while he, himself, worked at a drafting table. York was occupied with overall management, organizing programs and winning good clients. He was also counselor and critic. Sawyer's greatest pleasure was "rounding out" a building on paper to its last details.<sup>8</sup> At the York & Sawyer firm, as at McKim, Mead & White after 1890, any one of the partners might be responsible for a commission. For example, the Bowery Savings Bank (1924) at 42nd Street and Park Avenue was York's commission (the designer was partner Lewis Ayres); the Greenwich Savings Bank (1924) was Sawyer's.<sup>9</sup> Between York's critical judgment and Sawyer's eye for details, a very high standard was maintained.

Four of the five partners<sup>10</sup> in the York & Sawyer firm had received their earliest professional training in the office of McKim, Mead & White where the spirit of the Italian Renaissance was adapted to the requirements of modern commercial and public buildings and the monumental tradition in American architecture was born.<sup>11</sup> Sawyer asserted that in the 1890s the McKim, Mead & White office had offered the best opportunity for experience, the most diverse criticism, the best ideas of planning, design and construction, and a setting of architectural professionalism.<sup>12</sup> York & Sawyer designed many hospital, collegiate and federal buildings, and won a number of ecclesiastic and residential commissions, but the firm is best known for its bank buildings. After a decade of practice a whole sequence of the work of the York & Sawyer firm

-- including several banks -- was discussed and illustrated in *The Architectural Review*.<sup>13</sup>

The Franklin Savings Bank, 42nd Street and Eighth Avenue (1901, demolished) appears to have been the firm's first bank commission. It went on to design other major banks in New York and elsewhere including the Provident Savings Bank, Baltimore (1902); the National Commercial Bank, Albany (1903); the American Security & Trust Company, Washington (1904); the Rochester Trust & Safe Deposit Company, Rochester, New York (1905); the Guaranty Trust Company, Broadway and Liberty (1912, demolished); the Federal Reserve Bank, 33 Liberty (1919-24); the Bowery Savings Bank, 110-116 East 42nd Street (1923); the Greenwich Savings Bank, 1352-1362 Broadway, (1922-24); and the Central Savings Bank, 2100-2108 Broadway (1926-28, a designated New York City Landmark). These bank buildings illustrate the evolution of York & Sawyer's work into an ever more distinguished representation of academic classicism during the first quarter of this century.

The value of the partners' network of acquaintances in the banking profession cannot be underestimated. Edward York, as Stanford White's representative, had worked closely with Governor Levi P. Morton on his Fifth Avenue mansion. Morton recommended York & Sawyer to the president of the Franklin Savings Bank for its new bank building, completed in 1901. York would have become acquainted with the officers of the Bowery Savings Bank when, again as White's assistant, he supervised the bank's building at Grand Street and the Bowery in 1893-95. When, thirty years later, the Bowery Savings Bank wanted a building designed for its new site on 42nd Street, York & Sawyer was chosen. From 1909 to 1913 Philip Sawyer was an architectural consultant to the United States Treasury Department. By 1911 he had supervised the rebuilding of the Treasury building in Washington as well as building sub-treasuries in other cities. In that same year Sawyer was sent abroad by the department with letters of introduction to the principal officers of the Bank of England, the Bank of Italy, and the Reichsbank in Berlin to study their methods of handling and storing money. There can be little doubt that this experience strengthened York & Sawyer's candidacy in the New York Federal Reserve Bank competition held in 1919. In 1902 Charles Sabin, then vice-president at the National

Commercial Bank in Albany, worked with York & Sawyer on this bank's new Albany headquarters. In 1912, as President of the Guaranty Trust, he retained York & Sawyer to design the bank's new building.

In 1921 the Greenwich Savings Bank trustees, eager to follow the commercial district's move up Sixth Avenue, bought the block-wide lot along West 36th Street between Sixth Avenue and Broadway.<sup>14</sup> It is likely that previous acquaintance, as well as a solid reputation as bank designers, brought York & Sawyer the commission for the Greenwich Savings Bank in 1922, although in this instance the connection may not have been solely a banking one. In 1909 York & Sawyer had been commissioned to design a new choir house on Fourth Avenue, north of 10th Street, for Grace Church -- it was finished in 1911. Eleven years later the firm designed the addition to the church's parish house. William Rhinelander Stewart, a Grace Church warden in 1909, was a trustee of the Greenwich Savings Bank and a member of the bank's new building committee in 1922-24. The rector of Grace Church, Walter Russell Bowie, D.D., may well have furnished all the encomiums to the merits of saving, which are inscribed throughout the bank's interior as well as on the exterior attic face, high above the bank's Broadway entrance.<sup>15</sup>

#### Design and Construction<sup>16</sup>

The site of the Greenwich Savings Bank (Plate 1), the block-wide lot along West 36th Street between Sixth Avenue and Broadway, was formerly occupied by a two-story structure known as the Sheridan Building. The lot is irregularly quadrilateral due to the diagonal axis of Broadway. Two blocks south -- at Herald Square -- Broadway's diagonal path intersects the city's grid pattern at Sixth Avenue and West 34th Street. A busy commercial district, the area reached its present density just after World War I as a center for publishing, the garment industry, retail department stores, transportation, and hotels. The two-story, Italian Renaissance Revival Herald Building (demolished), built in 1890-95 to the plans of McKim, Mead & White for James Gordon Bennett, Jr., occupied the triangular block immediately south of the Greenwich Savings Bank site, a factor which influenced the bank's design

(Plate 2). There is no entrance on West 36th Street because of the congestion caused by the Herald's delivery trucks. As a result there is one entrance on Broadway and another, at the insistence of the building committee, on Sixth Avenue. These entrances lead to the building's largest interior space, the banking room, which is elliptical in plan to best maximize the available space within this irregularly shaped lot.

The elliptical plan is characteristic of ancient amphitheatres; the Flavian amphitheatre -- the Colosseum -- is the prime Roman example. The room's high podium, Corinthian order, and rusticated wall surface evoke several classical prototypes: the round temple in Rome's Forum Boarium with its rusticated walls and peristyle and the similarly articulated Temple of Vesta. But here these prototypical elevations have become the basis for an interior space, covered by the coffered cove and simulated coffering of the light diffuser which imply an antique interior. The antique allusion is sustained through the subtle variations of corresponding decorative motives: the low-relief candelabra in both the wall tablets and the garland frieze above and the freestanding torches flanking the entrances; the paired dolphins in low-relief at the feet of the standards of both the tellers' screen and the formerly freestanding counters and the paired dolphins incorporated within the legs of the banking room benches.<sup>17</sup> The didactic tone of the inscriptions and the personifications of Minerva (wisdom) and Mercury (commerce) in the bright-bronze tellers' screen suggest that Sawyer's design was allegorical, allegory enhanced by the rich paving marbles -- travertine, deep green *verde antique*, yellow *kasota fleuri*, red, plum, green and white veined *serpentino di Fundres*, and Belgian black marbles -- and the re-orienting progression of spaces along the building's east-west axis with which he joined the street to the brilliant surprise of the high banking hall. The confident manner in which Sawyer integrated all of these elements is reminiscent of the work of the mid-eighteenth century *pensionnaires* of the French Academy in Rome, who returned to establish the architecture of the French Enlightenment and, subsequently, the principles on which the Ecole des Beaux-Arts was founded. Within the classical Roman architectural idiom, Sawyer created an austere original and imposing interior; more than an arena

for savings, his monumental, elliptical interior is the cella within the temple to thrift.

The Greenwich Savings Bank is generously top-lit, and for all of the building's historicism, the banking room's light diffuser is a twentieth-century invention. Toplight for banking rooms was already standard practice and it appears to have been a solution preferred by York & Sawyer whenever it was feasible. Stanford White implemented it for the banking room of the Bowery Savings Bank (1893-95) at Grand and Bowery, and Gibson used a sequence of three skylights over the banking room of the Greenwich Savings Bank (1892) at Sixth Avenue and 16th Street. Both buildings would have been familiar to York & Sawyer. The banking room's cove ceiling of molded plaster and the broad, glazed light-diffuser are suspended from steel beams. But Sawyer's knowledge and judicious use of historic motifs make this hung ceiling and light diffuser perfectly consistent with the architecture below.

#### The Building's Structure and Plan<sup>18</sup>

Belying its academic classical design, the Greenwich Savings Bank building is of fireproof, steel-frame construction. Photographs taken of the building under construction, and on view in the banking room, show the steel columns at the building's corners as well as those forming the central ellipse of the banking room. The banking room is faced with both Indiana limestone and Ohio sandstone. This elliptical and continuous screen conceals the fact that between these interior and the exterior walls the building contains six stories and a basement -- office floors housing banking functions. Access to the banking room from Broadway is through a vestibule and an octagonal foyer. Broadway's diagonal path necessitated a re-orientation to the building's true east-west axis and it is in the plan of the Broadway vestibule that Sawyer compensated for the change (Plates 2 & 3). Access to the banking room from Sixth Avenue is through a vestibule. Only these ingresses to the banking room -- the vestibule and foyer on the Broadway side and the vestibule on the Sixth Avenue side, the banking room (with the exception of the interior of the central, oval teller's area), and the loggias are subject to this interior designation.

## Description

*The Broadway Vestibule.* From Broadway the building is entered through a small, irregularly octagonal vestibule (Plate 2). While the wall embrasures and radiator recesses and their grilles are of the same dimensions, the chamfered sides of this irregular octagon are not. The floor is of travertine marble with a polished Belgian black marble border. Within this is a second border of alternating black and white tesserae against a bold double row of black tesserae. An irregular lozenge (29" x 31") in the center of the floor contains the image of a trumpeting triton made of black tesserae laid in green and white veined marble and enframed with a double border of alternating black and white tesserae.<sup>19</sup> The door sills are bordered with the polished Belgian black marble and outlined with a double row of alternating black and white tesserae. The walls, above a polished Belgian black marble socle, are limestone. Double radiator grilles of wrought bronze are centered in the walls to the left and to the right as one enters. The Broadway doorway consists of two doors -- each is a single pane of glass in a bright-bronze frame, articulated with guilloche molding. Five, long parallel panes fill the transom above the doors. Access to the foyer beyond is through a revolving door. The design of the shallow coffers in the plaster ceiling (Plate 3) contributes some geometric organization to this unsymmetrical space and, in partnership with the asymmetrical floor medallion, re-orient the visitor to the building's major east-west axis.

*The Foyer.* The foyer is octagonal in plan (Plate 2), though the four sides on the principal axes -- those containing the doorways -- are wider than the alternating solid sides. The floor is travertine with an inlaid pattern of tesserae and a central medallion depicting a ship of brass under full sail on a sea of deep green *verde antique* marble cut in wave-like fragments. A revolving door of bronze and glass with a transom of five vertical panes of glass above it fills the entrance from the vestibule; but heavy, ornamental bronze grilles slide from within the walls across the other three doorways. Like the vestibule, the foyer's walls, above the polished black Belgian marble socle, are limestone but sandstone has been used as well to add warmth of tone. The plaster ceiling is not flat but gently

cants upward; the pattern of its eight coffered facets, rising to a central square containing a rosette, is the reverse of both vestibule ceilings. A hexagonal bronze lantern depends from the rosette's center (Plate 4). The four narrower walls perform a commemorative function; above the radiator grilles each wall carries a carved inscription in Roman capitals infilled with gold and lit by projecting brass electrical light fixtures.

*The Sixth Avenue Vestibule.* In this vestibule (Plate 2), on the building's major east-west axis, all opposite sides are parallel and all components have equal dimensions whether on the floor, the walls, or the ceiling. This vestibule has all of the same features the Broadway vestibule does: the same floor materials and patterns; walls of limestone; the same wall embrasures and radiator grilles -- only here these are taller; the same doorway and transom configuration; a plaster ceiling of shallow, geometric coffers (Plate 5) with even the same electrical light fixture and shade.

*The Banking Room.* The spacious, elliptical banking room (Plates 2 & 6) is articulated in much the same manner as the building's exterior with a footed podium, and above, on a continuous plinth, the major Corinthian order with channeled walls -- in effect the exterior of the building turned inward. The banking room floor consists of the broad perimeter pavement laid in a pattern of wide and narrow segments radiating from the foot of the oval counter. A variety of imported colored marbles were used in sharp contrast to create the repetitive borders and decorative infill in a manner evocative of antique pavement. The teller's counter (Plate 7) is of black and gold veined marble upon a base of polished Belgian black comparable to the room's socle. Bronze ventilator grilles (Plate 7) are set into the foot of the counter at regular intervals. The bright-bronze tellers' screen (Plate 7) atop the counter is supported by paired standards articulated as herms -- representations of Mercury (commerce) and Minerva (wisdom), set at regular intervals. In the outer walls doorways pierce the limestone and sandstone of the rusticated podium. The paneled doors are bronze. The Corinthian columns and their *antae* screen the loggias above the two major entrances on the room's longest, east-west axis. While the columns and *antae* are limestone, their

capitals are cast stone. A balustrade of bronze 'x's spans the spaces between columns and *antae*. Five blind windows, placed at regular intervals along the top of the fret, punctuate the sweeping arcs of channeled wall between loggias. Two broad rectangular tablets of limestone (Plate 8), one above each of the center blind windows, contain bronze clock faces and inscriptions -- encomiums to the benefits of thrift.<sup>20</sup> The frieze of swags and candelabra is of cast stone. The entablature frieze carries another inscription advocating thrift and is uninterrupted for the full circuit of the ellipse.<sup>21</sup> The banking room's ceiling -- a gentle, coffered cove of plaster on a steel frame and a flat, bi-colored, glazed light-diffuser -- is articulated as a shallow dome.

*Attached Furnishings.* Hanging from the center of the light-diffuser is a magnificent, tripartite, many bracketed bright-bronze chandelier. Eight bright-bronze wall sconces (plate 7), attached to the podium's rusticated surface, illuminate the lower region of the banking room. The Broadway and Sixth Avenue entrances to the banking room are flanked by four bright-bronze torcheres, each standing over eight feet high. There are six short and five long benches in the banking room. Their bright-bronze legs are cast in a design incorporating dolphins, rinceaux and palmettes. Four elbow-height wall-desks, carried on brackets of bright-bronze, are placed at regular intervals around the banking room's perimeter. The writing surface is a single sheet of bevelled glass.

Four formerly freestanding counters have been adapted as four wall-desks. Their reeded bright-bronze legs support counter tops of three-quarter inch bevelled glass.<sup>22</sup>

### Subsequent History

Greenwich Savings Bank remained in the building until 1980, to be succeeded by Metropolitan Savings Bank, Crossland Savings Bank, and most recently, Crossland Federal Savings Bank. Despite these institutional changes, change to the physical fabric has been minimal. An early change appears to be the revolving door installed in the doorway between the Broadway vestibule and Foyer. The original metal work of the tellers' screen remains intact but over time modifications have been made to expedite customer service. The channeled wall surface of the banking room has been painted beige, although certain rusticated blocks were selected for darker tints -- putty color and a range of light to dark umbers. The contrast grows less pronounced towards the entablature where the paint color is lighter. The effect is intensified by the powerful spot lights inserted in the light diffuser's rim.

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### NOTES

1. On November 15, 1983, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Greenwich Savings Bank INTERIOR and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 32). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. A total of three witnesses spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. Letters and statements have been received supporting the designation.
2. This section compiled from: James H. Collins, *Ninety Years of the Greenwich Savings Bank* (New York: Greenwich Savings Bank, 1923); *History of the Greenwich Savings Bank* (New York: Greenwich Savings Bank, 1896); Joseph Husband, *One Hundred Years of the Greenwich Savings Bank* (New York: Greenwich Savings Bank, 1933).

3. Unlike commercial banks, savings banks have no stockholders. Originally the president, vice-president and thirty trustees, rendering a neighborly service, received no pay. Salaries were paid only to the accountant, the clerk and the porter. The Greenwich Savings Bank was the third savings bank founded in this country to be governed by unpaid trustees. The first was the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society, established in 1816.
4. St. Michael's Church on Amsterdam Avenue at 99th Street is his design as is the Episcopal Cathedral in Albany, in the competition for which he was selected over H. H. Richardson among others.
5. For a comprehensive discussion of banks and architectural imagery, the reader can refer to L.P.C., *Manufacturers Hanover Trust Building Designation Report* (LP-1633), prepared by Elisa Urbanelli (New York: City of New York, 1988).
6. This section compiled from: Philip Sawyer Collection, Archives and Drawings, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York; "Edward Palmer York (1865-1928)," *Pencil Points* 10 (1929), 128-129; Leland Roth, *McKim, Mead & White* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983); Philip Sawyer, *Edward Palmer York*, preface by Royal Cortissoz (Stonington, CT., 1951); Philip Sawyer Obituary, *Architectural Record* 106, no.1 (July, 1949), 22, 164, 166; William Rhinelander Stewart, *Grace Church and Old New York* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1924); "The Greenwich Savings Bank - York & Sawyer, Architects," *Architecture* 50, no. 2 (Aug., 1924), 272-273, plates CXIII-CXVIII; "The Greenwich Savings Bank," *Architecture & Building* 56, no. 8 (Aug., 1924), 75-76; "The Federal Reserve Bank in New York," *American Architect* 116, no. 2289 (Nov. 5, 1919), 569-580; *American Architect-Architectural Review* 125 (June 4, 1924), n.p.; "The Recent Work of York & Sawyer," *The Architectural Review* 16, no. 8 (1909), 97-116; Muriel York, "Personal Reminiscences by His Friend and Partner, Philip Sawyer," *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* 16 (Nov., 1951), 195-200 and (Dec., 1951), 275-279.
7. Many of the foreigners attending the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, regardless of discipline -- be they students of painting, sculpture or architecture -- were assigned to Odilon Redon's atelier. (Sawyer remembered him as Odile Redon.)
8. Sawyer, 23. Sawyer recalled that, for York, architectural drawings were a means to an end, and that York seldom made any himself. For Sawyer a career in architecture had been a compromise; had he been able to afford it, he would have spent his life drawing, etching, and painting.
9. Though credit for several of the firm's commissions overlaps in the partners' obituaries, these two attributions cannot be disputed. "Edward Palmer York (1865-1928)," 128-129. Philip Sawyer Obituary, 22.
10. Two other draftsmen, Lindley Murray Franklin (1875-1960) and Lewis Ayres (1874-1947) were hired away from McKim, Mead & White about 1901 and were made partners in 1910. A fifth partner, Frederick Staples Benedict (1861-1936), who had worked at Babb, Cook & Willard, was in charge of personnel and office management.
11. Roth, 84ff.
12. Sawyer, 19.
13. "The Recent Work of York & Sawyer," 97-116.
14. New York County. Office of the Register. Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 3222, p.498.



15. The inscription on the Broadway attic as given in "The Greenwich Savings Bank: York & Sawyer, Architects," 273, is incorrect. The correct one, indicated here, is visible in *American Architect-Architectural Review*. The terse and oracular style here matches the inscribed encomiums within, for one of which [in the Foyer] there is an author cited, W. Russell Bowie, D.D. (1882-1969) who was rector of Grace Church from 1923 until 1939.
16. Information in this section is compiled, in part, from: *A Technical Guide to the Rational Use of Marble* (The Italian Marble Industry, n.p., n.d.); *Book of Vermont Marble* (n.p., 1920); Allan Braham, *The Architecture of the French Enlightenment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); Royal Cortissoz, "Commercial Buildings," *Scribner's Magazine* 76, no. 4 (Oct., 1924), 454-456; Hans Naef, *Ingres in Rome* (Washington, D.C.: International Exhibitions Foundation, 1971); Ernest Nash, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, 2 vols. (London: Thames & Hudson, 1968).
17. These repetitive decorative variations are numerous: the cresting above the vestibule doorways and the above the tellers' screen in the banking room; the alternating patterns within the sliding grilles in the foyer and the ventilators in the vestibules, foyer, and in the foot of the tellers' counter; the guilloche border repeated on the ceilings of the vestibules, foyer, on the banking room cove and on the door stiles; the several variations of the alternate black and white tesserae in the pavement of the vestibules, foyer, and banking room; the sequence of six mythic marine images of black tesserae set in the banking room pavement, allegories associated with Greenwich Village's early commercial dependence upon the sea, repeats itself three times around the banking room.
18. The New Building permit, NB 350-1922, was issued in 1922.
19. This youth, repeated in the floor of the Sixth Avenue vestibule, is but one of a larger program of mythic images laid in the banking room pavement, allegories to evoke Greenwich Village's early seafaring days.
20. The north wall inscription, in classical Roman letters incised on both sides of the clock face reads: "IT IS WHAT WE SAVE RATHER THAN WHAT WE EARN THAT INSURES A COMPETENCE IN THE FUTURE. HAVING LITTLE YOU CANNOT RISK LOSS. HAVING MUCH YOU SHOULD THE MORE CAREFULLY PROTECT IT." The incipit flanking the clock on the south wall reads: "WASTE NEITHER TIME NOR MONEY BUT USE THEM BOTH FOR YOUR OWN AND YOUR NEIGHBOUR'S GOOD. THERE IS NO GAIN SO SURE AS THAT WHICH RESULTS FROM ECONOMIZING WHAT YOU HAVE." Most likely the author of these inscriptions was Walter Russell Bowie, D.D.
21. The entablature inscription reads: "THE HABIT OF SAVING IS ITSELF AN EDUCATION. IT FOSTERS EVERY VIRTUE. TEACHES SELF-DENIAL. CULTIVATES THE SENSE OF ORDER. TRAINS TO FORETHOUGHT AND SO BROADENS THE MIND."
22. In addition to the fixed furniture, there are four bright-bronze double desks or writing tables, of conventional height which have their top surfaces divided by a low rack designed to hold pens, deposit and withdrawal forms. Seven, square-seated, stools of bright-bronze accompany these desks.

## FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and the other features of this Interior, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Greenwich Savings Bank, first floor interior consisting of the Broadway entrance vestibule and foyer, the main banking hall including the tellers' cages, and the Sixth Avenue (Avenue of the Americas) entrance vestibule; second floor interior consisting of the upper portion of the main banking hall and the loggia spaces; and the fixtures and interior components of these spaces, including but not limited to, wall surfaces and attached decorative elements; ceiling surfaces including elliptical dome and light diffuser; floor surfaces including mosaic floors circumscribing tellers' cages; windows; doors; chandeliers and lighting fixtures; decorative iron work; bronze grilles; columnar screens and attached furnishings, has a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City, and the Interior or parts thereof are thirty years old or more, and that the Interior is one which is open and accessible to the public, and to which the public is customarily invited.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Greenwich Savings Bank, constructed in 1922-24, as an imposing new headquarters marking this institution's progress from its modest Greenwich Village origins to this more prominent midtown location, is one of the most refined examples in the impressive corpus of bank buildings from the firm of York & Sawyer; that both architects, initially employed by McKim, Mead & White, carried the senior firm's monumental classicism into a more academic classical architecture; that Philip Sawyer displayed his knowledge of ancient Roman prototypes, and his appreciation for the organization which characterizes eighteenth- and nineteenth-century French planning, in the adaptation of the Greenwich Savings Bank's great, elliptical banking room and its accessory spaces -- entrance vestibules, foyer, and upper loggias -- to the bank's irregular four-sided site; that the Greenwich Savings Bank's interior displays Sawyer's consummate skill in manipulating the classical architectural idiom to create a spatial allegory -- a veritable temple to thrift -- in limestone, sandstone, and steel; that the elements of allegory -- the evocation of ancient monuments, the encomiums inscribed on the walls, and the antique attributes of "Wisdom" and "Commerce" -- are expressed in a variety of rich materials found throughout the interior spaces; that the banking room's continuous interior elevation -- the podium, the Corinthian order and rusticated wall surfaces -- reflects the components of the imposing exterior turned inward and adapted to the elliptical plan; that there is a subtle correspondence of decorative motifs within the interior that sustains the antique association; that the progression of interior spaces along a west-east axis, a scheme that re-oriens and surprises, is in the best tradition of Beaux-Arts planning; that the ancillary spaces and the vast banking room are fused by doorways on the lower level and loggias above; that the domical illusion of its surrounding cove and the central light-diffuser creates a ceiling appropriate both to the academic classical style and contemporary technology; that the daylight penetrating the bi-colored amber glass light-diffuser pervades

the banking room with a golden glow intended by the architect to sustain the allegory that the practice of thrift was a sacred litany; and that this bank interior is an example of the best of the academic classical architectural tradition.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 (formerly Section 534 of Chapter 21) 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 Greenwich Savings Bank (now Crossland Federal Savings Bank), first floor interior consisting of the Broadway entrance vestibule and foyer, the main banking hall including the tellers' cages, and the Sixth Avenue (Avenue of the Americas) entrance vestibule; second floor interior consisting of the upper portion of the main banking hall and the loggia spaces; and the fixtures and interior components of these spaces, including but not limited to, wall surfaces and attached decorative elements; ceiling surfaces including elliptical dome and light diffuser; floor surfaces including mosaic floors circumscribing tellers' cages; windows; doors; chandeliers and lighting fixtures; decorative iron work; bronze grilles; columnar screens and attached furnishings, 1352-1356 Broadway and 985 Sixth Avenue (Avenue of the Americas), Borough of Manhattan, and designates Tax Map Block 812, Lot 29, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.

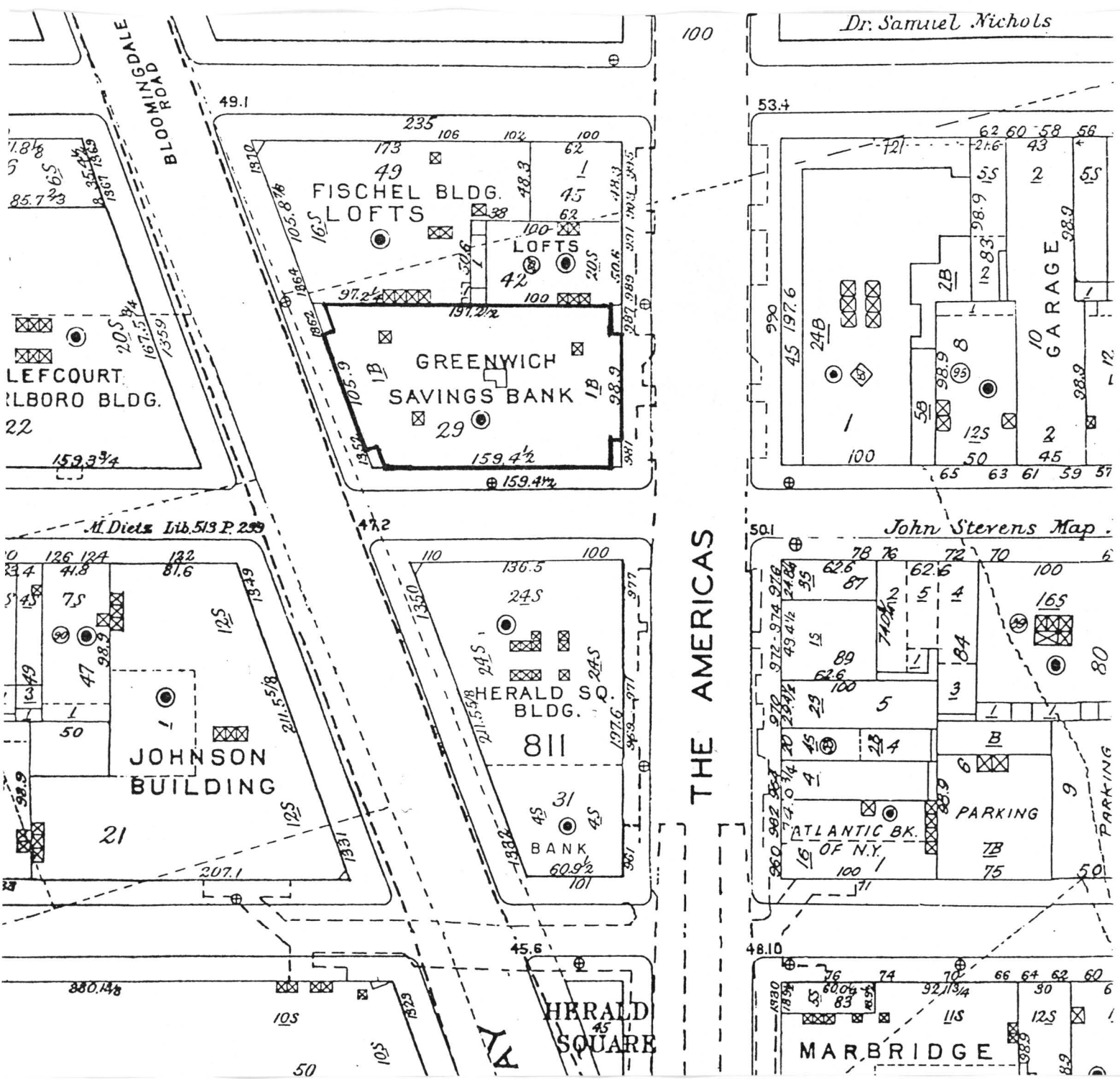


Plate 1. *Manhattan Landbook*. (New York: Redi/Sanborn, 1990-91), plate 60 (detail).

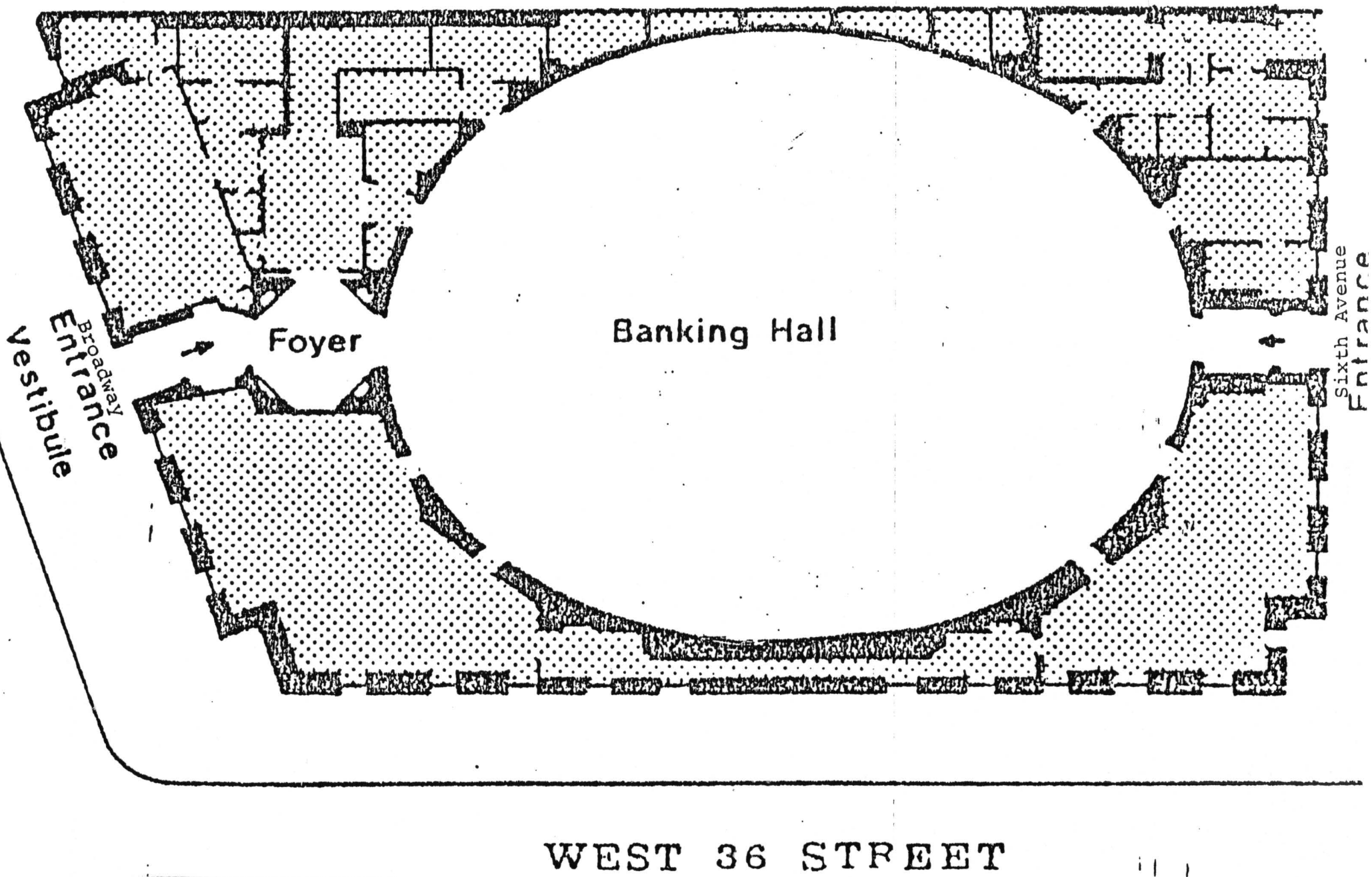


Plate 2. Plan of the Greenwich Savings Bank. Broadway is the diagonal on the left and Sixth Avenue is on the right.

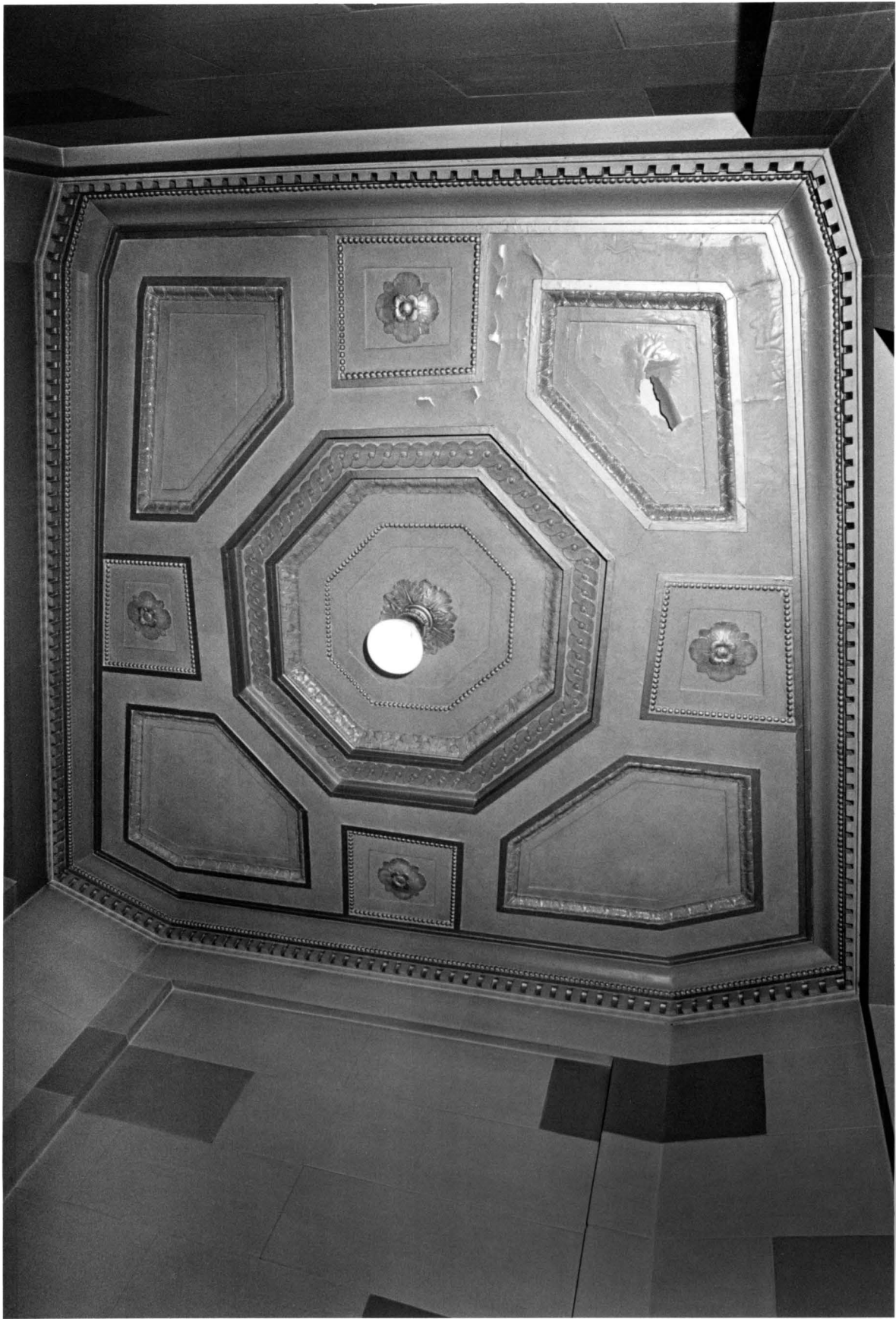


Plate 3. Broadway vestibule, ceiling.

(Forster)

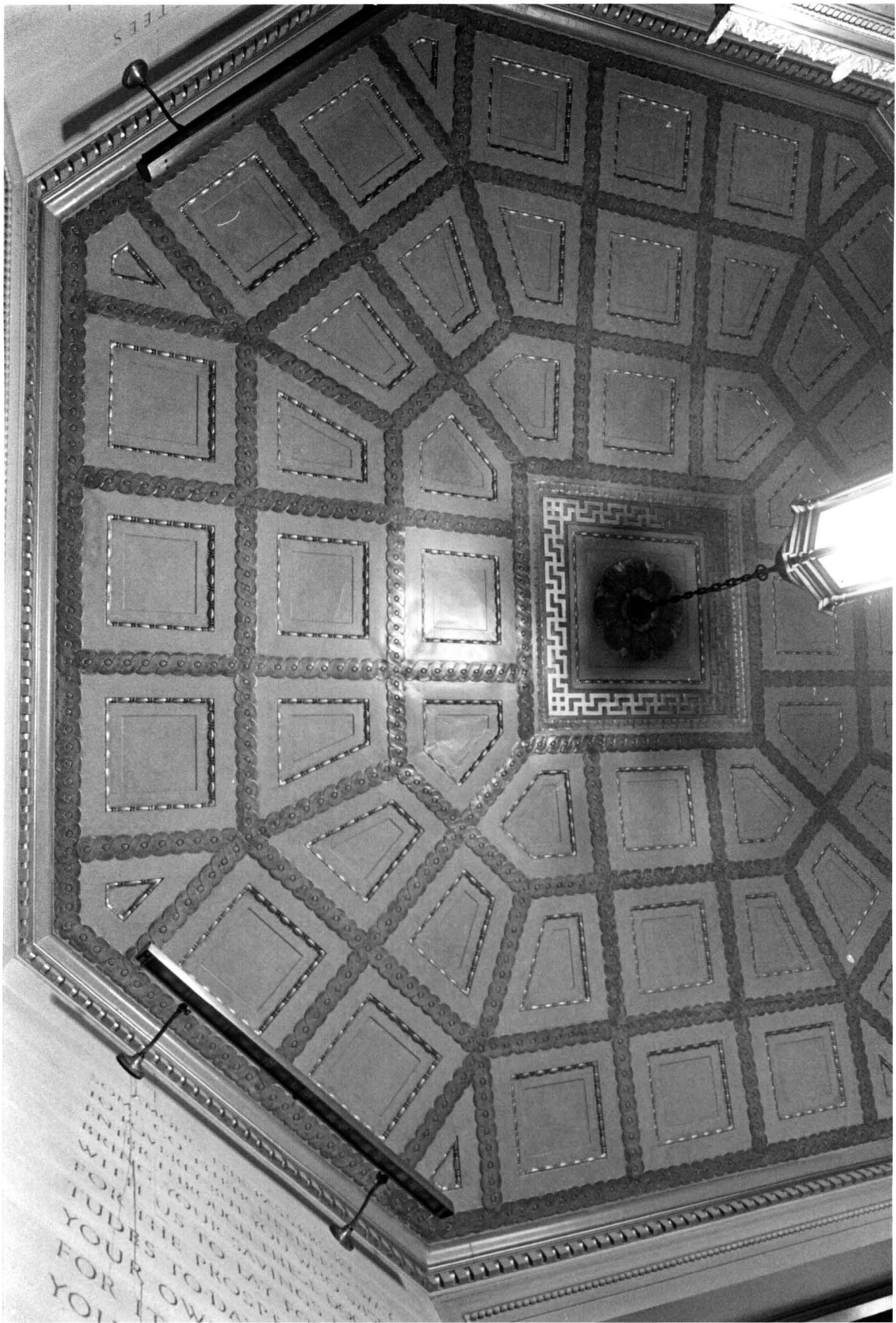


Plate 4. Foyer, ceiling.

(Forster)



Plate 5. Sixth Avenue vestibule, ceiling.

(Forster)



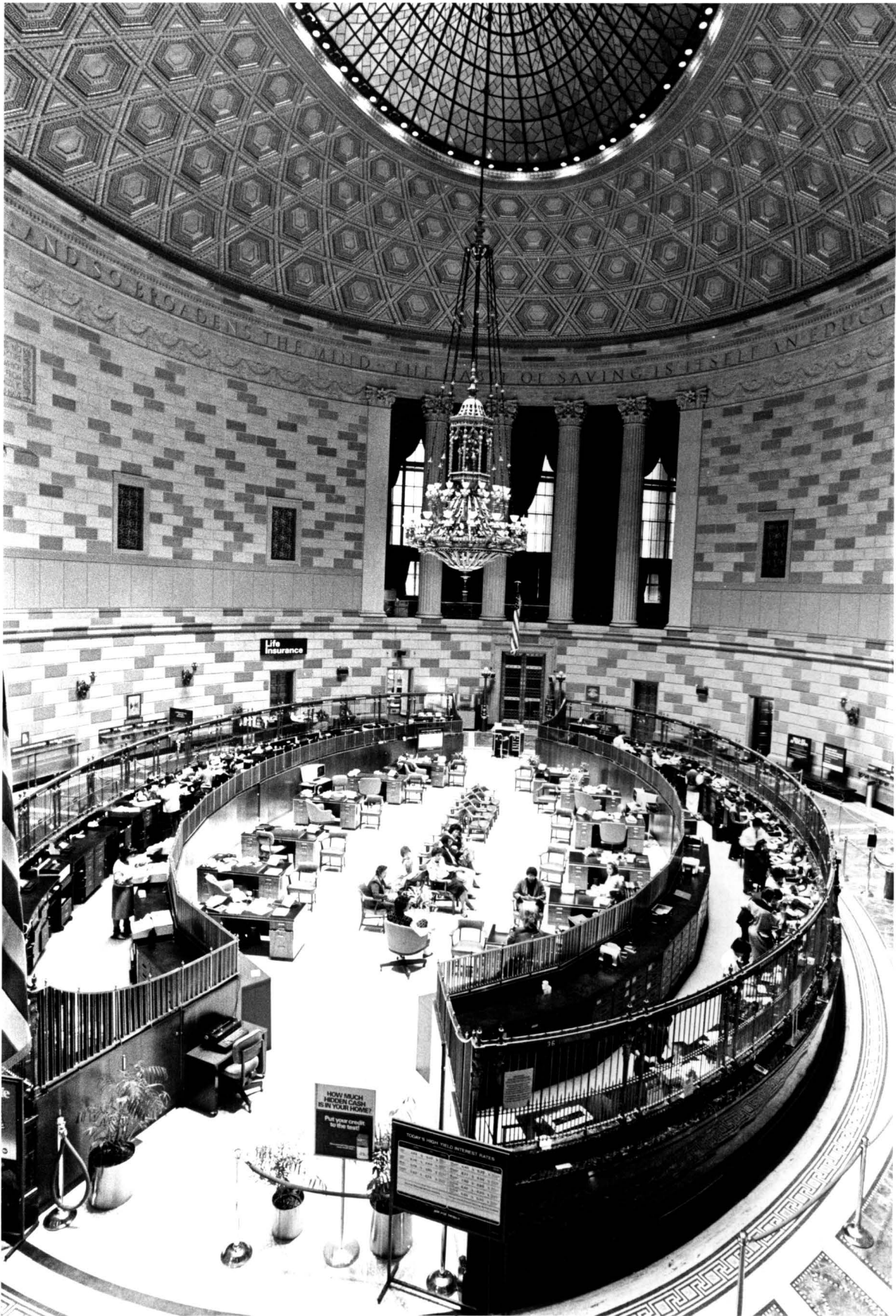


Plate 6.

Banking room.

(Forster)



Plate 7. Banking Room, public aisle.

(Forster)



Plate 8. Banking Room: clock and inscription, north wall.

(Forster)

## ATTACHMENT TO LP-1767

Landmarks Preservation Commission  
March 3, 1992; Designation List 243  
LP-1767A

**GREENWICH SAVINGS BANK** (now Republic National Bank), first floor interior, consisting of the Broadway entrance vestibule and foyer, the main banking hall including the teller's cages, and the Sixth Avenue (Avenue of the Americas) entrance vestibule; second floor interior, consisting of the upper portion of the main banking hall and the loggia spaces; and the fixtures and interior components of these spaces, including but not limited to, wall surfaces and attached decorative elements; ceiling surfaces including elliptical dome and light diffuser; floor surfaces including mosaic floors circumscribing teller's cages; windows; doors; chandeliers and lighting fixtures; decorative iron work; bronze grilles; columnar screens and attached furnishings, 1352-1362 Broadway, (aka 985 Sixth Avenue), Manhattan.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 812, Lot 29.

*Designated a New York City Interior Landmark as the Greenwich Savings Bank (now Crossland Federal Savings Bank) on March 3, 1992.*

On May 14, 1996, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed amendment of the Interior Landmark designation of the Greenwich Savings Bank (now Republic National Bank) interior to incorporate the underscoring of the significant features identified in the Description section of the designation report as specified in the Rules for Alterations to Designated Bank Interiors (Item No. 3). The hearing was advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Two witnesses testified in favor of the amendment. Three representatives of various banks stated that they had no objections to the proposed amendment. There were no speakers in opposition to the amendment.

### Description of the Interior of the Greenwich Savings Bank\*

The Banking Room. The spacious, elliptical banking room (Plates 2 & 6) is articulated in much the same manner as the building's exterior with a footed podium, and above, on a continuous plinth, the major Corinthian order with channeled walls -- in effect the exterior of the building turned inward. The banking room floor consists of the broad perimeter pavement laid in a pattern of wide and narrow segments radiating from the foot of the oval counter. A variety of imported colored marbles were used in sharp contrast to create the repetitive borders and decorative infill in a manner evocative of antique pavement. The teller's counter (Plate 7) is of black and gold veined marble upon a base of polished Belgian black marble comparable to the room's socle. Bronze ventilator grilles (Plate 7) are set into

\*This description has been excerpted and slight modified from the original designation report for LP-1890. The plate numbers are those in the original report. Significant features in this interior space are underscored as specified in the Rules for Alterations to Designated Bank Interiors. "Significant features" are defined in Section 9-02 of the Rules.

## ATTACHMENT TO LP-1767

the foot of the counter at regular intervals. The bright-bronze tellers' screen (Plate 7) atop the counter is supported by paired standards articulated as herms -- representations of Mercury (commerce) and Minerva (wisdom), set at regular intervals. In the outer walls, doorways pierce the limestone and sandstone of the rusticated podium. The paneled doors are bronze. The Corinthian columns and their antae screen the loggias above the two major entrances on the room's longest, east-west axis. While the columns and antae are limestone, their capitals are cast stone. A balustrade of bronze 'x's spans the spaces between columns and antae. Five blind windows, placed at regular intervals along the top of the fret, punctuate the sweeping arcs of channeled wall between loggias. Two broad rectangular tablets of limestone (Plate 8), one above each of the center blind windows, contain bronze clock faces and inscriptions -- encomiums to the benefits of thrift.<sup>1</sup> The frieze of swags and candelabra is of cast stone. The entablature frieze carries another inscription advocating thrift and is uninterrupted for the full circuit of the ellipse.<sup>2</sup> The banking room's ceiling -- a gentle, coffered cove of plaster on a steel frame and a flat, bi-colored, glazed light-diffuser -- is articulated as a shallow dome.

*Attached Furnishings in the Banking Room.* Hanging from the center of the light-diffuser is a magnificent, tripartite, many bracketed bright-bronze chandelier. Eight bright-bronze wall sconces (Plate 7), attached to the podium's rusticated surface, illuminate the lower region of the banking room. The Broadway and Sixth Avenue entrances to the banking room are flanked by four bright-bronze torcheres, each standing over eight feet high. There are six short and five long benches in the banking room. Their bright-bronze legs are cast in a design incorporating dolphins, rinceaux and palmettes. Four elbow-height wall-desks, carried on brackets of bright-bronze, are placed at regular intervals around the banking room's perimeter. The writing surface is a single sheet of bevelled glass. Four formerly freestanding counters have been adapted as four wall-desks. Their reeded bright-bronze legs support counter tops of three-quarter inch bevelled glass.<sup>3</sup>

*The Broadway Vestibule.* From Broadway the building is entered through a small, irregularly octagonal vestibule (Plate 2). While the wall embrasures and radiator recesses and their grilles are of the same dimensions, the chamfered sides of this irregular octagon are not. The floor is of travertine marble with a polished Belgian black marble border. Within this is a second border of alternating black and white tesserae against a bold double row of black tesserae. An irregular lozenge (29"x 31") in the center of the floor contains the image of a trumpeting triton made of black tesserae laid in green and white veined marble and enframed with a double border of alternating black and white tesserae.<sup>4</sup> The door sills are bordered with the polished Belgian black marble and outlined with a double row of alternating black and white tesserae. The walls, above a polished Belgian black marble socle, are limestone. Double radiator grilles of wrought bronze are centered in the walls to the left and to the right as one enters. The Broadway doorway consists of two doors -- each is a single pane of glass in a bright-bronze frame, articulated with guilloche molding. Five, long parallel panes fill the transom above the doors. Access to the foyer beyond is through a revolving door. The design of the shallow coffers in the plaster ceiling (Plate 3) contributes some geometric organization to this unsymmetrical space and, in partnership with the asymmetrical floor medallion, re-orientes the visitor to the building's major east-west axis.

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*The Foyer.* The foyer is octagonal in plan (Plate 2), though the four sides on the principal axes -- those containing the doorways -- are wider than the alternating solid sides. The floor is travertine with an inlaid pattern of tesserae and a central medallion depicting a ship of brass under full sail on a sea of deep green verde antique marble cut in wave-like fragments. A revolving door of bronze and glass with a transom of five vertical panes of glass above it fills the entrance from the vestibule; but heavy, ornamental bronze grilles slide from within the walls across the other three doorways. Like the vestibule, the foyer's walls, above the polished black Belgian marble socle, are limestone but sandstone has been used as well to add warmth of tone. The plaster ceiling is not flat but gently cants upward; the pattern of its eight coffered facets, rising to a central square containing a rosette, is the reverse of both vestibule ceilings. A hexagonal bronze lantern depends from the rosette's center (Plate 4). The four narrower walls perform a commemorative function; above the radiator grilles each wall carries a carved inscription in Roman capitals infilled with gold and lit by projecting brass electrical light fixtures.

*The Sixth Avenue Vestibule.* In this vestibule (Plate 2), on the building's major east-west axis, all opposite sides are parallel and all components have equal dimensions whether on the floor, the walls, or the ceiling. This vestibule has all of the same features the Broadway vestibule does: the same floor materials and patterns; walls of limestone; the same wall embrasures and radiator grilles -- only here these are taller; the same doorway and transom configuration; a plaster ceiling of shallow, geometric coffers (Plate 5) with even the same electrical light fixture and shade.

Despite institutional changes, change to the physical fabric has been minimal. An early change appears to be the revolving door installed in the doorway between the Broadway vestibule and the Foyer. The original metal work of the tellers' screen remains intact but over time modifications have been made to expedite customer service. The channeled wall surface of the banking room has been painted in shades of beige, putty, and umber. Spot lights have been inserted into the rim of the light diffuser.

### NOTES

1. The north wall inscription, in classical Roman letters incised on both sides of the clock face reads: "IT IS WHAT WE SAVE RATHER THAN WHAT WE EARN THAT INSURES A COMPETENCE IN THE FUTURE. HAVING LITTLE YOU CANNOT RISK LOSS. HAVING MUCH YOU SHOULD THE MORE CAREFULLY PROTECT IT." The inscription flanking the clock on the south wall reads: "WASTE NEITHER TIME NOR MONEY BUT USE THEM BOTH FOR YOUR OWN AND YOUR NEIGHBOUR'S GOOD. THERE IS NO GAIN SO SURE AS THAT WHICH RESULTS FROM ECONOMIZING WHAT YOU HAVE." Most likely the author of these inscriptions was Walter Russell Bowie, D.D.
2. The entablature inscription reads: "THE HABIT OF SAVING IS ITSELF AN EDUCATION. IT FOSTERS EVERY VIRTUE. TEACHES SELF-DENIAL. CULTIVATES THE SENSE OF ORDER. TRAINS TO FORETHOUGHT AND SO BROADENS THE MIND."

## **ATTACHMENT TO LP-1767**

3. In addition to the fixed furniture, there are four bright-bronze double desks or writing tables, of conventional height which have their top surfaces divided by a low rack designed to hold pens, deposit and withdrawal forms. Seven, square-seated, stools of bright-bronze accompany these desks.
4. This youth, repeated in the floor of the Sixth Avenue vestibule, is but one of a larger program of mythic images laid in the banking room pavement, allegories to evoke Greenwich Village's early seafaring days.

## ATTACHMENT TO LP-1767

### FINDINGS AND AMENDED DESIGNATION

The Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Interior of the Greenwich Savings Bank (now Republic National Bank) has significant features as identified in the Description section of the designation report (LP-1767) as designated by the Commission on March 3, 1992.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provision 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 amends its designation report to incorporate underscoring of the significant features in the Interior identified in the Description section of the designation report as specified in the Rules for Alterations to Designated Bank Interiors.