

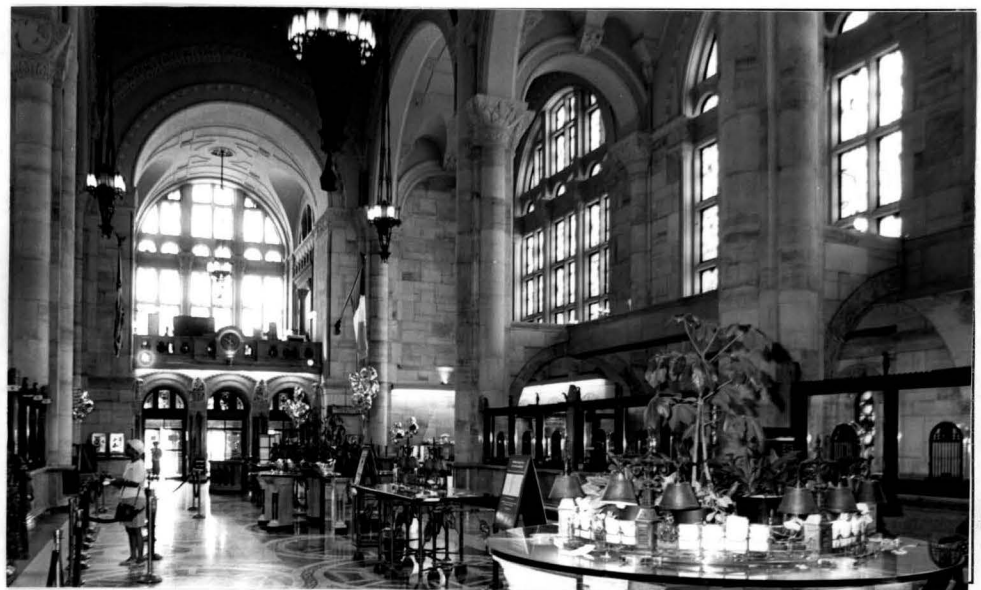
WILLIAMSBURGH SAVINGS BANK (Hanson Place), first floor interior, consisting of the Hanson Place entrance vestibule; the lobby; the stairway leading to the basement lobby; the stairway leading to the upper floors, and including the first landing; the stairway leading to the subway lobby; the passageway from the lobby to the banking room; the banking room; the mezzanine balcony above the entrance vestibule, lobby, and passageway; and the basement level interior, consisting of the basement lobby and the subway lobby; and the fixtures and interior components of these spaces, including but not limited to wall and ceiling surfaces, floor surfaces, the fireplace; tellers' counters, railings, balustrades, doors, security gates, clocks, chandeliers and lighting fixtures, flagpoles, decorative metalwork, ventilation grilles, windows and attached furnishings and decorative elements; 1 Hanson Place, aka 1-9 Hanson Place, 130-136 St. Felix Street and 325-351 Ashland Place, Brooklyn. Built 1927-29; Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, architects.

Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 2111, Lot 1.

On June 15, 1993, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as an Interior Landmark of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank, incorporating the above-listed spaces and features, and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 5). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. One witness spoke in favor of designation and no witnesses spoke in opposition to designation. A representative of the owner expressed reservations concerning the effects of the proposed designation and noted the bank's need to make alterations in response to changes in the banking industry. The hearing was continued on September 21, 1993 (Item No. 5) at which time the representative of the owner did not express opposition regarding designation, but noted ongoing discussions with the Commission.

Summary

The Williamsburgh Savings Bank building, constructed in 1927-29, is the premier example of the work of Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, Inc., and of its architectural partner Robert Helmer. The building is an early example of a branch bank intended to serve as large a community as possible by being located at a regional transportation node. The interior, a distinguished example of Romanesque Revival design, evokes in its form, layout, and decoration the almost



religious act of the savings bank depositor. Its steel portal-frame structure, clad with masonry, takes the form of a hall-church bearing sculptural personifications of industriousness and of thrift, and is characterized by the sumptuousness of its finishes including exotic marbles, Cosmati floor surfaces, golden mosaic vaults, and enamelled steel. In its layout, it is an example of a savings bank type developed in the early twentieth century, with multiple tellers' windows arranged around the banking room serving both men and women, and in which the growing importance of women depositors was acknowledged by the provision of a ladies' lounge. The space is enhanced with sculpture by Rene P. Chambellan and mosaics by Angelo Magnanti, including a mural expressing the bank's prominent role in the Borough of Brooklyn and its future. The interior, which has remained in continuous use, survives with its banking fixtures and fittings largely intact as a branch of the Republic National Bank.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Location

The Williamsburgh Savings Bank tower stands adjacent to Flatbush Avenue at the northeast corner of Hanson and Ashland Places (Fig. 1). This site is on the old road leading southeast out of the Town of Breuckelen, bifurcating as the Jamaica Road and the Flatbush Turnpike.¹ This intersection became a natural focus for development which, by the early twentieth century, was known as Times Plaza. The tracks of the Long Island Railroad were laid along Atlantic Avenue into Brooklyn with a terminus immediately north of Times Plaza on Hanson Place.²

Just as the church spires of Brooklyn identify and locate its various communities, so the domed skyscraping tower of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank, Brooklyn's tallest office building, relates to the entire borough. It is visible from throughout the borough and appears to mark its center.

Evolution of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank³

The Williamsburgh Savings Bank, chartered in 1851, first established operations in the basement of a church in the City of Williamsburgh, then constructed an Italianate style banking house (1853–54). Institutional and architectural maturity came with post Civil-war prosperity: the role of savings banks as leaders of the community was expressed by visually dominant buildings of a recognizable type, of which the new Williamsburgh Savings Bank building (George B. Post, 1870–75; a designated Landmark and Interior Landmark), 175 Broadway, Williamsburg, is an early and important example. This domed Classic Revival style building was popularly known as the Temple,⁴ an appellation that exemplifies the type, codified in the specifically classical temple-form bank building, which became a standard for savings banks that endured well into the twentieth century.

Early Twentieth-Century Developments in Savings Bank Design⁵

Two notable changes in savings bank practices occurred in the early twentieth century which transformed the planning of their interiors. Formerly there were only two tellers' windows, one for men and one for women; now there would be as many as the increasing number of depositors warranted, assigned alphabetically by depositor's name. The classic layout of late nineteenth-century savings banks included a peninsular tellers' area because savings banks, unlike commercial banks,

had to provide a large area for the long lines of their numerous depositors. The resulting U-shaped public space separated the depositors by gender and from the visually prominent bank vault. Non-gender-specific layouts included a central tellers' island—especially used for through-block savings bank buildings with an entrance at each end—and a grand central depositors' area with a peripheral U-shaped tellers' area. At the same time the introduction of plate glass allowed the creation of a more inviting space for the public than steel-mesh teller's cages. As the bank-vault came to be used for safe-deposit purposes, this facility came to be considered to be more appropriately located in the basement as a separate department.⁶ A concurrent development was the provision of "Ladies' Lounges" in response to the growing dominance of women in the management of household finances in general and domestic savings in particular.⁷

Finally, the classical architectural vocabulary, which creates a general image of dignity and security, was never completely abandoned during this period. But savings bank institutions wished to reinforce their identification with their neighborhoods by including painted or mosaic representations of the locale and its history; further, industry and thrift were exhorted by sculptural personification, symbolism, or inscribed mottoes; and a secure future, the presumed product of personal savings, was represented with modernistic visions.⁸

The New Building of 1927–29

In 1923 a New York State banking law allowed savings banks to have branch banks for the first time, and strategically the large savings banks saw the need to locate at regional transportation nodes in order to serve commuters.⁹

By the 1920s the Williamsburgh Savings Bank had become the fourth largest in the United States.¹⁰ The Broadway building was extended in 1924, and it was not until March 1926 that the Trustees filed with the Superintendent of Banks for permission to open a branch bank, proposed to be located in the residential Crown Heights section of Brooklyn.¹¹ But the Trustees soon envisioned a branch in a "section which [they] believe will become the pivot point of Brooklyn's business activity"¹²—and three months later decided to withdraw the previous application and file to establish a branch at the present location near Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues.¹³

In accordance with the 1923 State Banking Law all other savings banks in Kings County were notified of the proposed branch bank. At the October 25, 1926, public hearing held by the Superintendent of Banks “there was much opposition from the down-town Brooklyn Banks.” Meanwhile a temporary branch bank was established in the terminus of the Long Island Rail Road.¹⁴

By October 22, 1926, the Building Committee had selected Halsey McCormack & Helmer as its architect, and construction began next year. The foundation stone was laid April 9, 1928, by the bank’s president, John V. Jewel, in a ceremony at which Rev. S. Parkes Cadman, the honorary bank chaplain made the principal address, and the Borough President James J. Byrne complimented the bank on its courage in building 33 stories.¹⁵ On April 1, 1929, the bank opened to the public.

Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, Inc.
as Bank Designers

Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, Inc. was established on December 24, 1925, with the renaming of Thomas Bruce Boyd, Inc. When incorporated in 1920, the business of Thomas Bruce Boyd, Inc. included architecture, construction contracting, and real estate, but Boyd had established himself as a consultant specializing in the planning of banks.¹⁶ The company, with Hayward S. Halsey as president and George H. McCormack as secretary, had offices at 286 Fifth Avenue. The architectural practice of Robert Helmer had been listed at this address since 1915, and he joined the renamed company as the only registered architect.

Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, Inc. is best known for its banks. The neo-Romanesque Williamsburgh Savings Bank (1927–29) was Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, Inc.’s first large commission. The firm used this style for at least two other bank projects, the Ridgewood Savings Bank (1929) Ridgewood, Queens, NY, and the National Savings Bank (c.1931) Albany, NY. Of the eighteen bank projects documented in a 1932 photographic tableau of their work in the *Savings Bank Journal*, Classical temple-like banks dominate stylistically with twelve; they include the Dime Savings Bank (1931–32; a designated Landmark), Brooklyn; there are four Art Deco style projects including the Dollar Savings Bank (1932–52; a designated Landmark), The Bronx.¹⁷ The firm rode the 1926–31 construction boom, tapping the post-1923 demand for new branch savings banks. However, as the Depression set in

there was little new large-scale work until a 1938 commission for a tungsten refinery on Long Island. Among the few other Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, Inc. non-bank commissions is the Central Methodist Episcopal Church (1929–30) at 11–21 Hanson Place, immediately adjacent to the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building.¹⁸

Hayward Halsey’s specific expertise is not presently known; he resigned from the firm in 1932. George H. McCormack (1888–1954) was the firm’s great entrepreneur. On the basis of his first job as a fourteen-year old reading Con Edison electricity meters, and then selling General Electric light bulbs door-to-door, he parlayed his way from office boy at Thomas Bruce Boyd, Inc. to an associate specializing in electrical work, and ultimately became the firm’s President. He was not a designer, but the congenial businessman who brought in the jobs and who remained active in the firm until 1953. Robert Helmer resigned in 1935 to practice alone in Brooklyn. Adolph Lancken Muller (1898–) who had been with Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, Inc. since at least 1932 became its principal designer in 1937. In 1957 he became its president when, with Paul Dobbs, he purchased the firm. In 1964 the firm was sold to Mancini Duffy which maintains the corporation with an address at One World Trade Center.¹⁹

Design and Construction of the
Williamsburgh Savings Bank Interior¹

For its new branch, the Building Committee of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank considered buildings of various types, including a “bank building only, with no tower and no rentable floors,” finally opting for a commercial skyscraper.²⁰ In this they were in the tradition of certain late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century urban savings banks which exploited the commercial aspect of their location by providing, like commercial banks, rentable office space above their first floor banking rooms.²¹ The Committee’s decision was based on more than financial considerations, for they insisted on a gilded dome like that of the Broadway building atop the proposed tower.²²

¹ Significant features of this interior space are underscored as specified in the proposed Rules for Designated Bank Interiors (Public Hearing June 18, 1996). “Significant features” are defined in Section 9-02 of the Rules.

Location on the Site

The building occupies a corner lot, with frontages of almost 200 by 100 feet on Ashland and Hanson Places respectively. The three-bay aisled banking room some 112 feet long by 73 feet wide dominates the base of the building. The east-west axis is centered on the Ashland Place frontage, except for a small service entrance at the north end. In order to maximize daylighting of the interior by means of windows in the banking room's long east and west walls, the banking room's north-south axis is asymmetric to the Hanson Place frontage. Thus the banking room's west windows are on the street line, while a light well was left for the windows facing east over the adjacent church property. The exterior façades were developed symmetrically about these axes—though with an extra eastern bay on Hanson Place. In elevation the building is a symmetrically set-back tower culminating in a dome over the intersection of the axes established by the ground floor plan.²³ Because of the dominance of the banking room, the elevators, often at the core of contemporary skyscrapers, were placed at the southeast corner, very close to the terminal, across Hanson Place, of the Long Island Railroad to which they are connected by an underground passage.

Interior Form and Organization

The scale of the three-bay long, 63 feet high, basilica-like banking room was intended to evoke the appearance of a cathedral interior (Figs. 21—26 and 40). The spaces for the depositors and bank officials generally correspond to the nave and aisles of its “hall church”-type interior. The transversely barrel-vaulted aisles are screened-off for the tellers, except for the southern bays which are open to the “nave,” the main section of the banking floor. The southwestern bay—a location analogous to that of a font in a church—is the new accounts area made homey with a (non-operational) fireplace in its south wall (Fig. 28) and enclosed with a low wall (Fig. 24). A low wall also marks the officers' area in a barrel-vaulted, chancel-like, northern extension of the “nave.” (Fig. 41) A corresponding southern extension of the nave continues above the entrance lobby to a window in the Hanson Place façade as the ladies' lounge at the mezzanine level (frontispiece).

An entrance vestibule on Hanson Place opens into three bays of the entrance lobby (Figs. 5—6), which in turn open into a triple-arched passageway into the banking room. (Fig. 34) The lobby runs

the full length of the Hanson Street façade, in eleven shallow groin-vaulted oblong bays divided by segmental transverse arches. Five elevators open off the eastern five bays of the lobby, where there are also stairs down to the subway lobby and up to the ladies' lounge. In the western three bays of the entrance lobby—which originally were screened off—are the stairs down to the safe deposit area.²⁴

At the lower level the stairs open into a square, saucer-domed, basement lobby (Figs. 19—20). This serves a basement elevator lobby, the safe deposit vault itself, and other spaces, none of which is included among the designated spaces.

*Construction*²⁵

Many buildings of the commercial skyscraper type provided large, tall, and open ground floor commercial spaces—especially banking rooms—beneath offices which, because they were planned around service cores or as double-banked corridors, had a conflicting constructional layout. Developments in the portal-frame bracing of steel structures helped solve this problem, successfully reinforcing the banking floor.²⁶ The steel frame structural grid of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Interior is defined by the columns and axes of the ground floor banking room; the crowning feature of the building, the gold-domed clock-tower, corresponds to the central square bay of the banking room.

Construction photographs show the massive tripartite steel portal frames of the ground floor, corresponding to four stories of normal construction, with diagonal braces adding yet another story.²⁷ This is all masked inside and out by facings of stone and plasterwork, giving the effect of a load-bearing masonry structure. In addition, to heighten—as Helmer put it—“the illusion of the great building load carried by the columns and walls,” the nave piers are connected to the outer walls by low arches across the aisles (Fig. 21).

Style and Decoration

Robert Helmer, the building's architect, stated that the style of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank building was “an unusual and beautiful variation of the Romanesque.”²⁸ Helmer wished the building to “be regarded as a cathedral dedicated to the furtherance of thrift and prosperity of the community it serves.” Such an ecclesiastical image is reinforced by the geometric marble floor modelled on medieval Italian Cosmati work (Figs. 22 and 42); and by the mosaic vault of the banking

room ceiling (Figs. 44 and 46), which shows the stars of the first and fifth magnitudes in relation to the lines of the astronomical meridian and the ecliptic, and gives the signs of the zodiac together with their mythological figures. This is the work of the painter Angelo Magnanti (d. 1969).²⁹

The didactic character of the carved and painted representations in medieval church architecture is interpreted here in the context of the mission of the savings bank, namely thrift built on a foundation of personal industriousness. A grocer, a carpenter, a machinist, a plumber, a coal merchant and electrician are shown at work on the entrance gates of the banking room (Fig. 13) and safe deposit vaults (Figs. 15, 19 and 20), while the labors of a carrier, a printer, an engineer, a textile worker, a builder, an importer, a lawyer, a chemist and a jeweler were personified on the elevator doors (Fig. 12). However, as befits the contemporary nature of these occupations, they were depicted in an idealistic modern-classical style. This proto-Art Deco figural sculpture is the work of the classically-trained Rene P. Chambellan (1893–1955).³⁰ The depositor enters the banking room beneath figures of commerce and industry set before the spandrels of the triple-arched entrance screen (Fig. 36); the capitals of the main columns above represent industry, transportation, education, finance, government and commerce; while one is fortified at the banking screen by animals representing strength, courage and fidelity (Fig. 27).

The four seasons, four arts (music, literature, painting and sculpture), and the four elements (earth, air, fire and water) were represented on the elevator doors; the months of the year are depicted by twelve appropriate floral decorations on the entrance gates to the banking room and safe deposit vaults;³¹ historical monies are shown on the tellers' screens; and the flight of time is portrayed by a winged hour glass on the entrance lobby directory board (Fig. 11).

Dominating the north end of the banking room is a glittering mosaic airship view of the Borough of Brooklyn (Figs. 22, 33 and 40), known as the “Gateway to Long Island,” recorded as made in Germany by “Wagner,” and installed by Ravenna Mosaics, Inc., of New York. The mosaic places the Williamsburgh Savings Bank at the center of Brooklyn and its history. The view is framed by the colonial and early national flags; Henry Hudson’s ship the *Half Moon* is shown sailing in from the Atlantic; the five original colonial settlements of the borough are identified; various landmarks like the East River bridges, the Statute

of Liberty and the domed Williamsburgh Savings Bank building on Broadway are shown, so too are the road and parks systems of Brooklyn all apparently radiating from a towering symbol of the future, the new Williamsburgh Savings Bank building—the axis of the “hub” of Brooklyn—which is bathed in the golden rays of the sun shown radiating down through the clouds.

Description of Materials, Fixtures and Finishes³²

The public spaces of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Interior are finished almost entirely with masonry and metalwork: other than four flagpoles, a pair at each end of the banking room (Figs. 22–24), there is almost no woodwork. Twenty-two different marbles are recorded as having been used on the building’s interior surfaces.³³ Masonry work also included terrazzo and cast stone. The ceilings are predominantly of glass mosaic and plaster. Metalwork includes various castings and wrought steel with applied bronze, brass, copper, silver and other metals, and with enamelled panels. All such surviving original surfaces are significant features of the interior.

Floors

Each section of the Hanson Place entrance lobby floor is outlined by a wide black marble edging to a cream and orange/brown banded marble border (Fig. 6). The inner band of this border is a small ribbon-like zig-zag of red and buff marble on a black background. The fields within these borders are plain in the outer, elevator and stair, sections. The field of the central section, between the entrance vestibule and the banking room (Fig. 5), is elaborated with a central black and white marble disk in a hexagonal star on a black background with brown annulus, all on the green marble square at the center of a rectangular knotted interlace which also delineates four brown marble pentagons. The design of the two “ribbons” in the middle of the two interlacing bands are based a red hexagon and a green lozenge.

The floor of the nave of the banking room has a unified treatment; again within a black marble border. The Cosmati design is developed within a grid of eleven by three bays (Fig. 22), laid out such that the fourth and eighth east-west bays are on the axes of the piers; these, and the second to tenth sections of the central north-south bay, are each outlined by a continuous band as a circle, forming, overall, a double cross shape. The ribbon at the middle of this band is composed of

alternating white and dark green discs charged with black and red squares respectively. The “spandrels” of the circles are black marble, while the circular fields have a central brown/red disc with green annulus on a sexpartite radial design of dark green and dark gray marble (Fig. 42). The quadrilateral panels between and around the circular panels are alternately rectangular grids of four by five ochre/pink marble squares in a green frame, and red/brown squares charged with a large yellow disc on a dark brown truncated cream marble square set diamondwise.

The basement lobby floor is of terrazzo (Fig. 19). It is set out on a tartan grid; the cream bands are edged with a black and white checker; the fields contain light gray and light brown lozenges.

Walls, Columns and Arches

The lower part of the walls of the banking room has a yellow marble dado capped by a simple molding, which continues as the front of the tellers’ counters and as the column pedestals. Also at the same height, and located in the southern circle of the Cosmati floor, is the circular information desk (Fig. 40). The exterior face of this desk is adorned with five sets of four columns: green, purple, black, and brown. There are two screens of similar articulation which delimit the new accounts area in the south bay of the west aisle (Fig. 24) and the officers’ area at the north end of the nave (Fig. 41). Two circular, glass-topped, check tables corresponding in diameter to the fifth and ninth circles of the Cosmati floor each stand on heavy masonry legs incorporating marble colonnettes (Fig. 38).

Above the marble dado level of the banking room the walls, columns, and arches are faced with cast stone. The three lower level semi-circular arched window openings in each bay of the outer walls of the aisles (Figs. 24, 31 and 32), have springers for their carved outer order arch with representations of lions and centaurs; the voussoirs (actually keystone cut to represent voussoirs) are carved with a squirrel, an owl, a swan, a rabbit, and with a bird, a woman, and a dog. Between these windows are reeded pilasters with simple capitals which extend as a string course beneath the main windows. At the same level the strainer arches (Fig. 31) between the piers and outer walls have birds carved on their springers; their keystones portray an eagle with a fish in its talons; mythological figures are shown on the voussoirs.

The fireplace at the south end of the west aisle has a lintel carved with a colonnade of five semi-

circular arched bays on columns (Figs. 28 and 30). In each bay is a figure, bearing, from the left, a sack, a key, a lamp and cornucopia, a bee hive, and a hammer and a cog. The arcade is flanked by dragons *rampant gardant*, with on the lintel’s returns lions *rampant gardant*. The lintel is borne by a pair of orange marble columns whose capitals are carved with griffins and a bird. The metal valance within the fireplace opening is segmental in plan and has a running scroll of flowers.

The giant order piers are composed in plan of four half columns on a square center; they have carved capitals from which spring the semi-circular arches of the nave and aisles. The carved keystones of the aisle arches are, with marble colonnettes in the spandrels, also springers for the aisle vaults (Figs. 21 —24). Similar colonnettes bear the outer carved order of the nave arches. The large semi-circular arched windows in the aisles each have two principal mullions, which are half round plain shafts set behind antefix-like bases, and which bear large figural capitals, including a pelican pecking its breast and a bucranium. These latter are flanked by the springers of the window arch which are carved with birds and lions. The windows themselves are divided by transoms into six tiers, the fourth being arcaded. The cast window glass supplied by Thos. Jones Decorative Glass Co., is tinted to reduce glare.

The entrance screen at the south end of the banking room has three semi-circular arches standing in part on marble columns (Fig. 34). These latter bear sculptural personifications of commerce and industry. Behind the balustrade atop this screen is the former ladies’ lounge with a large south window comparable to those of the aisles. In the east and west walls of the ladies’ lounge marble columns stand *in antis* on pedestals (Figs. 47—48). Their carved capitals (Figs. 49—50) include figural representations; the lintels that span between them bear miniature arcades of six bays and stand beneath larger, blind, semi-circular arches.

At the north end of the nave, beyond the officers’ area, and set in an opening analogous to that of the ladies’ lounge is the mosaic view of Brooklyn previously described. It is set immediately behind a balustrade (Fig. 41), mirroring that to the south, likewise above three ground level arches on marble columns.

The walls of the entrance lobby (Figs. 6, 9); of the stairs up to the ladies’ lounge, down to the subway lobby, and down to the basement vault (Fig. 16); of the subway lobby (Fig. 10); and of

the basement lobby (Figs. 19–20), are of comparable design, executed in marble.

Ceilings

The subway lobby has a flat plastered ceiling. The basement lobby is a plaster saucer vault (Fig. 19–20) whose height and curvature are such that, at certain points in it, footsteps and spoken sounds are disarmingly amplified by echo. Each bay of the entrance lobby has a glass mosaic-finished segmental-arched oblong domical saucer vault of gold stars in a blue sky (Figs. 5–9). The vaults of the banking room aisles, and over the officers' area at the north end of the nave, and of the Ladies' Lounge (Fig. 43) at the south end, are of cast stone articulated with raised bands and square escutcheons. The astrological glass mosaic of the segmental barrel vault of the nave is set on steel mesh suspended from the superstructure.

Metalwork³⁴

The outer pairs of the original metal entrance doors from the Hanson Place entrance vestibule to the entrance lobby survive: the central pair has been replaced by a revolving door. The metal spandrel panels above both the inner and outer faces of the inner pairs of doors and the inner face of the outer doors depict miniature arcades of seven bays (Fig. 3). The arches, which have a zig-zag motif, stand on short fluted columns. Within the central arch a domed structure is shown; the second and sixth have beehives; and all have floral displays. The east and west walls of this entrance vestibule are metal grilles with six tiers of flowers (Fig. 4).

Of the other original doors in the entrance lobby, only the three pairs of metal doors leading to the banking room survive (Fig. 13). These are each of three tiers with a figure in a central niche. The semi-circular lunettes above also have decorative metal security grilles (Fig. 7). The metal grille of the segmental-arched tympanum survives above where the doors to the stairs down to the safe deposit area have been removed (Fig. 8). It includes motifs similar to those on the surviving doors. Set at the center of the east end of the lobby is the tenants' directory (Fig. 11) inscribed THE WILLIAMSBURGH / SAVINGS BANK / BUILDING with four gilt figural finials surmounted by an analog clock set on a winged hour glass; to its north is a mail box with a strapwork face panel inscribed LETTER BOX / LETTERS / U.S. MAIL (Fig. 9).

Flanking the revolving door entrance to the subway lobby there are a metal security gate (Figs.

10, 16) with a flower at the center of each of its three tiers, and a fixed metal grille of three by eleven decorative panels.

In the basement lobby there are metal security gates and grilles of comparable design and quality to those on the upper level in each of the north, east and south walls (Figs. 15, 18, and 20).

There are six tellers' windows in each of the two northern bays of the banking room (Fig. 25). A central grille floats in a thick sheet of security glass set in a metal frame with zodiac and animal figures, crested top and eagle finials.

There are two, ten-legged, glass-topped, rectangular metal check tables in the banking room (Fig. 39). Set down their spines are decorative racks for forms with two pairs of fixed table lamps (Fig. 35). The struts between the legs include elongated double-sided hexagonal panels depicting figures with a money bag, an oval dish, a mallet, a book, a mirror, and a sail boat (Fig. 36). These two tables, whose shape does not correspond to the circles of the Cosmati floor (the third and seventh) on which they are set, are an early addition to the original layout (c.f. Fig. 21). The two circular, glass-topped, check tables have six pairs of fixed table lamps, racks for forms and glass ink well holders (Fig. 37).

There are various decorative circular ventilation grilles in the vaults, notably four in the basement lobby (Fig. 20), and one at the center of each of the barrel vaults over the ladies' lounge and officers' area (Fig. 43). Also metal rings are affixed in the spandrels of the nave arches (Fig. 44).

Ventilation grilles set in the dadoes of the outer walls of the aisles have an a-b-b-b-a rhythm: "a" has the same central motif as "b" but with a frame (Fig. 29). The central motif is a horizontal lozenge with a pair of adorsed griffins around a central plant.

The lighting fixtures were designed and executed by Messrs. Cox, Nostrand & Gunnison, of Brooklyn.³⁵ There are six chandeliers in the nave, (Figs. 45–46), the largest hangs in the center of the central bay; the four smaller at the sides of the northern and southern bays; the sixth over the ladies' lounge. They include glass cylinders and floral decoration. The basement lobby has a central sexpartite chandelier (Figs. 17 and 19); bound-globe fixtures hang in alternate bays of the entrance lobby (Figs. 5, 6, and 9).

There are also two metal-faced analog clocks in the banking room (Figs. 33–34), set in raised central recesses of the arcaded balustrades at the north and south ends of the banking room.

Subsequent Changes³⁶

With the exception of the ladies' lounge in the mezzanine, which has been used as a mail room since the 1960s (Fig. 47), the spaces of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Interior continue to be used largely as designed and laid out, with little alteration of their fixtures and finishes. The Hanson Place entrance lobby has been most altered. Here, a revolving door has been installed in the central opening through the entrance vestibule,³⁷ plain anodized aluminum elevator doors replace the figural originals; a kiosk has been removed and replaced with a new marble security desk (Fig. 6); the original tenants' directory exists but has been masked by a modern glazed equivalent (Fig. 9); an automatic teller machine now stands in place of the lower part of the grille screening-off the stair down to the basement lobby (Fig. 6); new brushed aluminum quadrant-section uplighters have been installed in the side walls of each bay (Figs. 3 and 6); and return-air grilles have been inserted in the two southeast bays.

In the banking room, lighting beams have been installed over the tellers' areas down the aisles (Figs. 23 and 40); these mask the keystones of the transverse arches. Spotlights mounted on these beams and at other locations are intended to light the mosaics and vaults; these vaults were painted a stone color in 1987 after they were blackened in a fire. Several internally illuminated signs have been installed in the banking room (Figs. 31, 34, and 40).

Apart from these few losses of historic fabric and minor alterations, the public interior spaces of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Interior, which is now the property of the Republic Bank for Savings, are remarkably intact, have been relatively well maintained, and survive in good condition.

Richard Brotherton
Landmarks Preservationist

NOTES

1. Henry R. Stiles, *The...History...of the County of Kings and the City of Brooklyn* (New York: W.W. Munsell & Co., 1884), 420. Prior to the 1839 street regulation by the City of Brooklyn's Commissioners the Flatbush Turnpike actually meandered across the site of the present bank building.

2. The Brooklyn and Jamaica Railroad (chartered 1832) opened in 1836, running in a tunnel and cutting east along Atlantic Avenue from South Ferry with a stop at the intersection with Flatbush Avenue. The 1839 street commissioners had proposed a large square park at this location, but, because it was considered an impediment to urban growth, the park was actually laid out as the present Fort Greene Park to the northeast. After 1855 a residential neighborhood rapidly developed north of Hanson Place. Much of this is included in an Historic District (designated 1978) named after the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn's premier cultural institution, which relocated in 1907 near this important urban node, then seen as the future commercial center. Reportedly this had been foreseen as early as 1858 when Mary Powers had a vision that the site—at 11-21 Hanson Place (northwest corner of St. Felix Street)—of the Hanson Place Methodist-Episcopal Church, would “one day...be the crossroads of a mighty city and so donated the money necessary for its construction.” Albert Fein, Lois Gilman & Donald Simon, “The Neighborhood of Fort Greene in the City of New York: a Historic Perspective,” *Historic Fort Greene* (1973), III, 7. See also Stiles 1884, 1037. The present Central Methodist Episcopal Church (1929-30) on that site was designed—with commercial space in its ground floor to exploit its location—by Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, Inc; so was the adjacent Williamsburgh Savings Bank (1927-29; a designated Landmark) at the northeast corner of Hanson and Ashland Places. Both buildings are in the Brooklyn Academy of Music Historic District.

3. Published information includes: Edgerton G. North, *The First Hundred Years 1851-1951, An account of the founding and growth of The Williamsburgh Savings Bank, together with a brief history of the communities served by this Bank through its first hundred years* (Brooklyn, NY: the bank, [1951]). Also see Gale Harris, *Williamsburgh Savings Bank, 175 Broadway, Brooklyn, Interior* (New York: The City of New York, *Designation Report LP-1910*, 1996).

4. *King's Views of Brooklyn*, 1904, plate 21[a].

5. Several contemporary professional architectural journals focused on the issue of bank design, notably the March 1921 issue of *Architecture*, 13, # 2513, and the June 1923 issue of *Architectural Forum*, 38, # 6. For a review of New York City bank buildings during this period see Robert A.M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin & Thomas Mellins, *New York 1930, Architecture and Urbanism between the Two World Wars* (New York: Rizzoli International, 1987), 170-187: “Banks”. For the earlier type of savings bank characterized internally by a symmetrical arrangement with a prominent, axially-placed freestanding bank vault in a large centralized space organized with a peninsular layout of the tellers' area designed to accommodate male and female depositors see “The Transformation of Savings Bank Design in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century,” in Richard Brotherton, *Bowery Savings Bank Interior* (New York: City of New York, *Designation Report LP-1911*, 1994), 2-3.

6. R.W. Gibson, "The Architecture of Modern Bank Buildings," *The Engineering Magazine* 10 (March 1896), 1064–1074, is largely concerned with the relationship of tellers' counters to bank type and lot shape, especially with regard to providing the tellers with the best natural lighting. Among New York City savings banks the removal of gender segregation appears to have occurred around 1908, after the Green Point Savings Bank (Helmle & Huberty, 1907-08; in the Greenpoint Historic District) which had separate entrances, and before the Emigrant Industrial Savings Bank (Raymond F. Almirall, 1909-1912; a designated Landmark and Interior Landmark) which has a U-shaped tellers' area and a plethora of tellers' windows. For tellers' screens see Charles A. Holmes, "The Design of Bank Screens and Furniture," *Architectural Forum* 38 (June 1923), 283–286. For vaults see Frederick S. Helmes, "The design and construction of modern bank vaults," *Architectural Review* 12 (1905), 35–38; and Anon, "Modern bank vault construction," *Pacific Coast Architect* 9 (1915), 135–136. Through-block savings bank buildings in New York City with tellers' islands—each designed with a stair and coin lift down to the basement within the island—include three designed by York & Sawyer: the *Greenwich Savings Bank* (1922–24), and the *Central Savings Bank* (1926–28), both designated Landmarks and Interior Landmarks, and the *Bowery Savings Bank* (1923).

7. In "The Planning of Banks", *Architectural Forum* 38 (June 1923), 270, Philip Sawyer discussed the new facilities designed to accommodate the increasing numbers of female patrons: "Her room or division of the bank is often designed particularly to please her and is furnished with attractive writing desks rather than with standing check desks.... It is often connected with a room where she can rest or read or meet with friends for luncheon.... Commodious toilets, in connection with this space, and a maid make the thing complete and add much to the bank's popularity." The Ladies' Lounge appears to have first been introduced in commercial banks, for example the 1892 Sherman Bank on the ground floor of the MacIntyre Building, 884 Broadway, in the Ladies' Mile Historic District had "entirely separate quarters for lady patrons," c.f. *King's Handbook of New York City*, 2nd. edition (Boston MA: Moses King, 1893), 748–749. In keeping with this trend a "Ladies' Room" was installed 1908–1909 on the Bank Floor of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank building on Broadway, *Records, W[illiamsburgh] S[avings] B[ank]* 3 (December 7, 1908), 82. These manuscript records of the bank were consulted through the generous cooperation of Republic Bank for Savings Assistant Vice President, Patricia O'Melia.

8. See for example the murals painted by Angelo Magnanti in the *Dollar Savings Bank* (Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, 1932-33 & 1937-38), 2516-2530 Grand Concourse, The Bronx [Charles Savage, *Designation Report LP-1890*, 1994, pl. 7], which depict Jonas Bronck's eponymous land purchase, settlers at the first community house, the first bridge to Manhattan, and local stone construction. Thrift-symbolism in the nineteenth-century savings bank architecture of New York City is represented by little more than a single squirrel-with-nut keystone on the *King's County Savings Bank* (King & Wilcox, 1868; a designated Landmark), 135 Broadway, Brooklyn. Early representations of industry are given in the stained glass skylights of the *Emigrant Industrial Savings Bank* (Raymond F. Almirall, 1909-12; a designated Landmark), 51 Chambers Street, with allegorical figures of mining, engineering, chemistry, manufacturing, banking, agriculture and transportation. The *East River Savings Bank* (Walker & Gillette, 1927), 743 Amsterdam Avenue, has been described as a "classical temple inscribed with exhortations to the thrifty," by White & Willensky, *The AIA Guide to the Architecture of New York City*, 2nd. ed., 196. The dirigible, established as a symbol of the future by Harry M. Pettit's drawing "King's Dream of New York," *King's Views of New York* (New York: Moses King, 1908) 1, features prominently in the skyscraping skyline of a mural painted by D. Putnam Brinley in the 1929 building of the *Brooklyn Savings Bank* (demolished) depicting "Brooklyn Past Present and Future", illustrated in *Architectural League of New York, Year Book 1930* (New York: Kalkhoff, 1930 [unpaginated]), and, bathed in searchlights, in the bronze plaque prominently displayed at the entrance to the Dime Savings Bank (Halsey McCormack & Helmer, 1931-32), 9 DeKalb Avenue, Brooklyn, and illustrated as David Breiner, *Dime Savings Bank Interior* (New York: The City of New York, *Designation Report LP-1907*, 1994), fig. 10.

9. It was The Bowery Savings Bank, then the largest in the United States, which pioneered such thinking by erecting its monumental new branch opposite Grand Central Station in 1923.

10. Between 1919 and 1927 deposits doubled to \$200 million. The question of its having a branch bank was first raised in 1923 with the appointment of a committee to examine the issue, *Records, WSB* 3 (April 2, 1923), 294.

11. *Records, WSB* 3 (March 1, 1926), 332, "Resolved: That the Bank file an application with the Supt. of Banks for permission to open a Branch Bank to be located in the vicinity of St. Johns Pl. and Utica Ave." The Broadway building had been extended twice: in 1906 for \$355,513.16, which work included interior alterations and the installation of an elevator in the main building; and after 1923 when another 108 feet of Broadway frontage was purchased for \$99,700 [North, 51 & 58].

12. Robert Helmer, "A Masterpiece of Architecture," *Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building, Architectural—Historical De Luxe—Record* (Brooklyn NY: John B. Reynolds, 1929 [unpaginated])

13. *Minutes, WSB* (June 7, 1926), 334-335; and (November 1, 1926), 339, for the informal application, filed July 15, 1926, and the formal version of October 15, 1926.

14. *Minutes, WSB* (November 1, 1926), 339: the hearing was held at the Superintendent of Bank's office at 51 Chambers Street, in Manhattan. "The opposition" were granted one week to file briefs. Bill Tyrell of the Documents Unit at the New York State Banking Department, Albany, reports (telephone conversation October 17, 1994) that no records survive of the opposition briefs, only the final resolution of Commissioner Frank H. Warder that—in accordance with the requirements of the law—he was "satisfied that the public convenience and advantage would be served and that [the new branch] would be expedient and desirable;" the approval was "granted on condition that the [temporary] branch adjacent to the northeast corner of Flatbush

and Atlantic Avenues be discontinued.”

15. *The Chat*, April 14, 1928, 134/136, under the headline “New Williamsburgh Bank Important Step in Realty Progress.”.

16. Boyd contributed to the interior design of, for example, the *J.P. Morgan & Co. Building*, 23 Wall Street (Trowbridge & Livingston, 1913; a designated Landmark), the *Chase National Bank* in the *Adams Express Company Building*, 61 Broadway (Kimball & Roosa, 1912-16, bank interior demolished), and the *Guaranty Trust Company Building*, 134-146 Broadway (York & Sawyer, 1915, demolished): John J. Klaber, “Some Recent Bank Plans, The Work of Thomas Bruce Boyd,” *Architectural Record* 37 (1915), 97-115, with plans, photographs and descriptions.

17. *Savings Bank Journal* 13, No. 4 (June 1932), 51, full page advertisement: “Representative Bank Buildings Designed by Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, Inc., Robert Helmer, R.A.” also published in *Savings Bank Association of New York State Association News Bulletin* Convention Issue, September 1932. Classically styled building projects include those for the *King’s County Savings Bank* (c.1932) Brooklyn, the *Dime Savings Bank* (c.1932) Bensonhurst branch, the *Brevoort Savings Bank* (1931) Brooklyn, the *Citizens Bank* (c.1932) White Plains NY, the *Greenburgh Savings Bank* (c.1932) Dobbs Ferry, the *South Shore Trust Co.* (c.1932) Rockville Center, the *National City Bank* (c.1932) Troy, the *First National Bank* (c.1932) Binghamtown NY, the *Port Chester Savings Bank* (c.1932) Port Chester, the *West Side Savings Bank* (c.1932) Manhattan, and the *Flatbush Savings Bank* (c.1932). The other Art Deco bank buildings are the *Dime Savings Bank* (1931-32) Flatbush branch, the *Peoples Bank & Trust Co.* (1932) Passaic NJ, and the *East New York Savings Bank* (1931-32) Brownsville Brooklyn. Later banks include, in a Neo-Colonial/Georgian style, the *Savings Bank of Richmond Hill*, Queens (*SBJ* 16, No. 7, Sept. 1935), the *Staten Island Savings Bank*, St George Branch (*SBJ* 17, No. 12, Feb. 1937). In 1953-55 Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, Inc. were responsible for the premiated conversion of and nine story addition to the three story United States Assay Office, 30 Wall Street (York & Sawyer, 1919-21) for the *Seamen’s Bank for Savings*.

18. “Central Methodist Episcopal Church, Brooklyn, N.Y.,” *Architecture and Building* 63 (June 1931), 120-121. See also Robert A.M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin & Thomas Mellins, *New York 1930, Architecture and Urbanism between the Two World Wars* (New York: Rizzoli International, 1987), 167 & 544; and James Rubin “Looking at Fort Greene’s Notable Church Architecture,” *Brooklyn Phoenix*, April 3, 1989. The bank continues to provide the church with heat in lieu of having a chimney attached.

19. See McCormack obituary, *New York Times* (July 23, 1954), 17; New York Society of Architects, *1937 Year Book*, 279, where Helmer’s address is given as 1180 Fulton Street, he is last heard of in 1965 as a consultant to the Planning Bureau of the City of Rochester, New York, where he had made an ingenious proposal for urban housing redevelopment, Robert Helmer, *Humane Urban Renewal and Elimination of Slums* (New York, Washington, Hollywood: Vantage Press, 1969). For Adolf Muller see Charles Savage, *Dollar Savings Bank Building* (New York: Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Designation Report LP-1889*, 1994), 4. The firm continued to advertise in the *Savings Bank Journal* until 1963 with a drawing of “Some Famous Banking Landmarks by Halsey, McCormack and Helmer.” An archive, primarily photographic, of Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, Inc’s bank work exists in the office of Mancini Duffy, where the available documentation of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank was consulted by the present author through the generous cooperation of Mr. Frank Keating, the firm’s Director of Administration. Copies of certain documents concerning the history and work of Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, Inc. are included in *Personal Memoirs of Elizabeth McCormack Aron and George H. McCormack, Jr. M.D. of the McCormack Family* (an illustrated typescript prepared with additional research by Oral Historian Mary C. O’Connell, 1993), which was consulted through the generous cooperation of Elizabeth McCormack.

20. *Minutes*, *WSB* (November 25, 1927), 355-356.

21. Extant example of this urban savings bank type are the *Manhattan Savings Institution* (1890), 644 Broadway, the *Emigrant Industrial Savings Bank*, 51 Chambers Street, (Raymond F. Almirall, 1909-12; a designated Landmark and Interior Landmark), and the *Seamen’s Bank for Savings*, 72-76 Wall Street (Benjamin Wistar Morris, 1926). For the history of the form of New York City commercial banks in the mid-nineteenth century see Lois Severini, *The Architecture of Finance: Early Wall Street*, (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983), 58-76.

22. “Dome was required by Bank over our dead protests,” pencil note in Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, Inc. copy of *Architectural—Historical DeLuxe—Record Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building* where Halsey notes, the “gilded dome termination serves to perpetuate in the new building the outstanding feature of the old structure and in effect makes the golden dome a symbol of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank.” It was evidently intended to continue and capitalize on the established associational power of G.B. Post’s domed Broadway building. The dome was such a leitmotif for the Williamsburgh Savings Bank that a token dome was proposed for the 1950s Bensonhurst Branch at 86th Street and 23rd Avenue (North 1951, 63).

23. A presentation perspective view from the south drawn by the well-known renderer Theodore de Postels was published, as construction commenced, *American Architect* 133 (#2545, May 20, 1928), 688. This drawing points to a strong conceptual dependence on the prototypical Chicago Tribune Tower 1922 competition design of Eliel Saarinen. This is evident not just in their similar massing with shouldered set-backs and soaring character emphasized by recessed spandrels, but especially in Saarinen’s use of semi-circular arches to cap-off vertical lines of windows, and most notably by the large semi-circular arched ground floor apparently for a hall-like interior space.

24. Conventionally, these descended within the banking hall, but here they open only off the building’s public entrance lobby.

25. The general contractor was William Kennedy Construction Co. of Brooklyn.

26. Notable examples include Raymond Hood's 1923–24 American Radiator Building (a designated Landmark), 40 West 40th Street. The banking room of the Bowery Savings Bank (York & Sawyer, 1923) on 42nd Street is so vast that the upper level offices were placed beside rather than atop it. Philip Sawyer, "The Planning of Banks," *Architectural Forum* 38 (June 1923), 263–272, specifically cites the importance of developments in steel construction comparing the old conception, which he calls the "sectional bookcase approach" as at the St. Paul Building, 222 Broadway (demolished) and the American Telephone and Telegraph Building (William Welles Bosworth, 1917), 195 Broadway, with the "modern tendency"—evidently portal frame construction—seen in the Bush Tower (Helmle & Corbett, 1916–18; a designated Landmark) and with its "apotheosis" in the Woolworth Building (Cass Gilbert, 1910–13; a designated Landmark and Interior Landmark), 233 Broadway. A peculiarity of the dominance of the ground floor of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank building by the huge banking room and the desire to maintain symmetrical exterior setbacks is that one has to change elevators half way up the tower.

27. This steelwork is reminiscent of medieval timberframe construction, especially its North American manifestation in the Dutch barn: John Fitchen, *The New World Dutch Barn A Study of Its Characteristics, Its Structural System, and Its Probable Erectional Procedures* (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 1968), 26ff. The anchorbeams of these barns are the theoretical if not actual antecedents of steel portal frames.

28. Julius Baum's *Romanesque Architecture in France* had, for example, been published in New York in 1910 (B. Westermann Co., Inc., 2nd. ed., 1928), and may have been among the sources used. Indeed among the hall church interiors illustrated by Baum, plates 23–28—from Saint Savin-sur-Gartemps (Vienne) to Preuilley (Indre-et-Loire)—, the specific articulation of nave piers consisting of half colonnettes attached to a square core, identical to that used in the Williamsburgh Savings Bank, predominates. A precedent for the low strainer arches across the aisles even exists in Saint-Hilaire-le-Grand, Poitiers (Vienne). The carving of the foliage in the column capitals and cornice bands have an archaeological quality also suggesting reliance on authentic medieval prototypes; compare with Baum's plates 198–219.

29. "Art and History at Dollar," *Dollar Notes* 19, # 7 (August 1979), 1. For his next work with Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, the murals in the Dollar Savings Bank, 2516–2530 Grand Concourse, The Bronx, see Charles Savage, *Dollar Savings Bank Interior* (New York: City of New York, *Designation Report LP-1890*, 1994), 5 and plate 7.

30. *Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building, Architectural—Historical De Luxe—Record*, (Brooklyn NY: John B. Reynolds, 1929 [unpaginated]). Except for the exterior granite, limestone and terra cotta "models" being recorded as made by Maxfield H. Keck, Chambellan is the only contributor named as a sculptor; his address is given as 317 East 39th Street. For Chambellan's life and work see Janet Adams, *Rockefeller Center* (New York: The City of New York, *Designation Report LP-1446*, 1985), 253; and *The New York Times*, Obituary, November 30, 1955, 33; for photographs of his work at the Chanin Building which was done in collaboration with Jaques Delamarre, see Diana Agrest, ed. *A Romance with the City: Irwin S. Chanin* (New York: The Cooper Union Press, 1982), 58–64. Specific Art Deco stylistic features which make a discrete appearance in the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Interior include the fountain motif atop each marble orthostat of the tellers' screens, the cresting and the wings of the eagles atop the screens themselves.

31. Fir (January), Pussy Willow (February), Crocus (March), Apple Blossom (April), Strawberry (May), Cherry (June), Daisy (July), Wheat (August), Corn (September), Grapes (October), Nuts (November) and Holly (December).

32. See Williamsburgh Savings Bank, *Interesting Details About Your Bank Building* (New York: the bank, n.d.)

33. Pink Tennessee, Forest Green, Campan Griotte, Rosato D'Or, Silver Gray Jaspe, Cardiff Green, St. Dennis, Red Altico, Campan Melange, Burgundy Red, Rouge Antique, Champville, Montinelli, Rouge de Rance, Roman Breche, Grande Antique, Marion Gray, Languedoc, Jeanne D'Arc Jaspe, Jeanne D'Arc, Hauteville and Red Levanto. A marble and stone supplier was William Bradley & Son of Long Island City, marble was also supplied by the McLaury Corporation, of New York; the mosaic and terrazzo floor of the basement lobby was executed by De Paoli Co., Inc. of New York; the plain and ornamental plastering and imitation stonework was by Duffy Brothers, Inc., of New York.

34. A pencil note in the Halsey, McCormack & Helmer copy of *Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building, Architectural—Historical De Luxe—Record* (Brooklyn NY: John B. Reynolds, 1929 [unpaginated]) beside the advertisement of Oscar B. Bach Craftsman in Metal, of New York City, records: "Ornamental W.I. and Bz work except in Safe Deposit Dept. which was by Wm. H. Jackson."

35. The central "electrolier" of the nave was considered distinguished enough to merit a photographic reproduction in Architectural League of New York, *Year Book 1930* (New York: Kalkhoff, 1930 [unpaginated]).

36. Much of the following information was provided by Mr. Thomas Fitzgerald, the building's manager for the last thirty years.

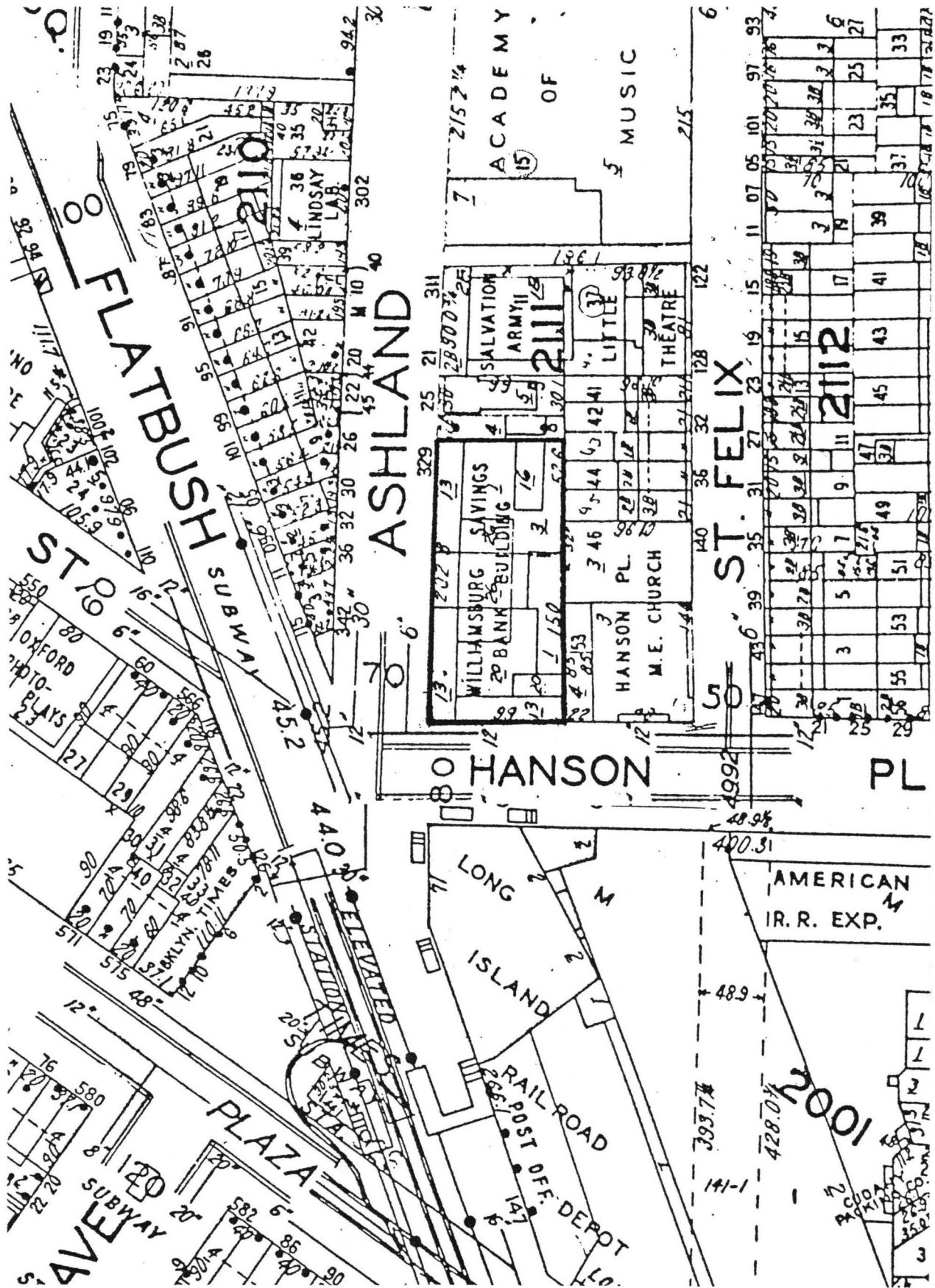
37. An advertisement in Architectural League of New York, *Year Book 1929*, (New York: Kalkhoff 1929), 287, records that a revolving door was provided by *Revolving Doors, Inc.*, of New York City. This may be the door between the subway and the subway lobby.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

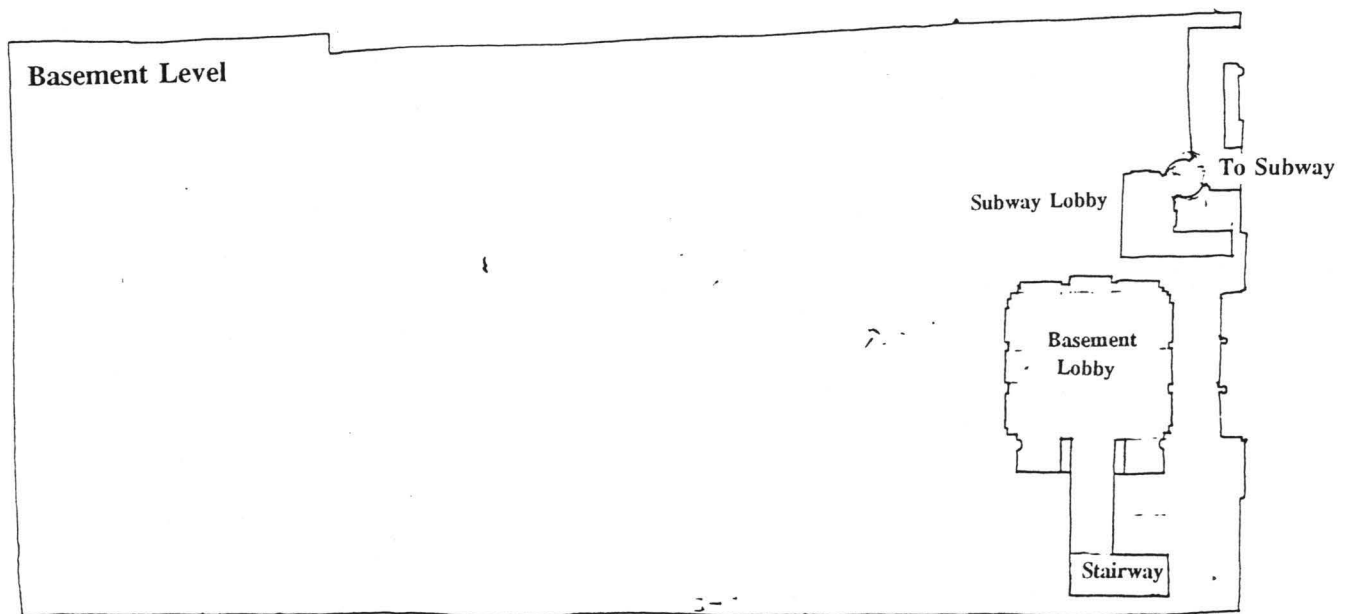
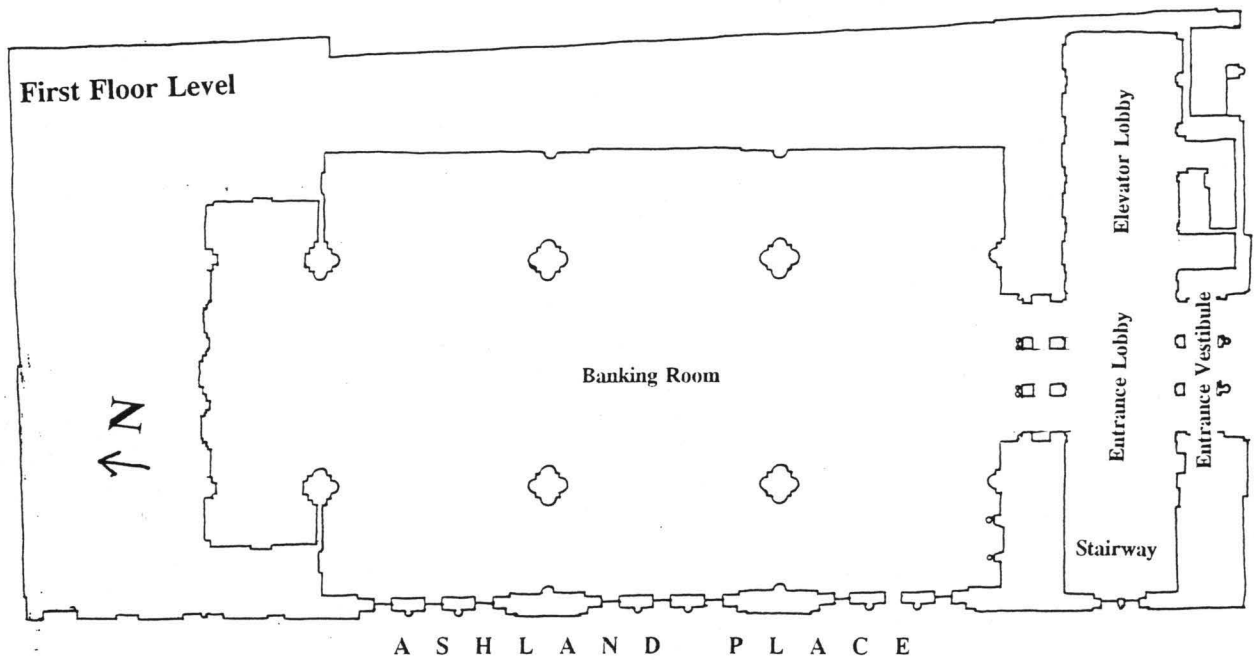
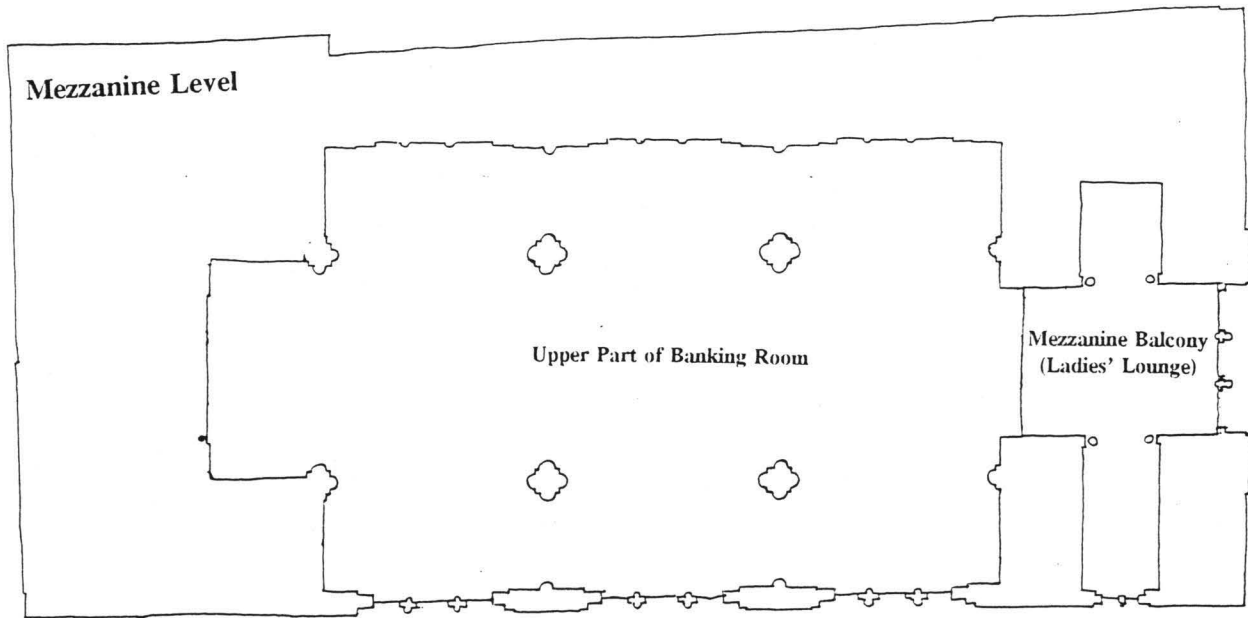
On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this interior the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Williamsburgh Savings Bank First Floor and Basement Level Interior has a special character, and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City; and that the interior is one which is customarily open and accessible to the public and to which the public is customarily invited.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Williamsburgh Savings Bank building, constructed in 1927–29, is the premier example of the work of Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, Inc., and of its architectural partner Robert Helmer; that the building is an early example of a branch bank intended to serve as large a community as possible by being located at a regional transportation node; that the interior is a distinguished example of Romanesque Revival design which evokes in its form, layout, and decoration the almost religious act of the savings bank depositor; that its steel portal-frame structure, clad with masonry, takes the form of a hall-church bearing sculptural personifications of industriousness and of thrift, and is characterized by the sumptuousness of its finishes including exotic marbles, Cosmati floor surfaces, golden mosaic vaults, and enamelled steel; that, in its layout, it is an example of a savings bank type developed in the early twentieth century, with multiple tellers' windows arranged around the banking room serving both men and women, and in which the growing importance of women depositors was acknowledged by the provision of a ladies' lounge; that the space is enhanced with sculpture by Rene P. Chambellan and mosaics by Angelo Magnanti, including a mural expressing the bank's prominent role in the Borough of Brooklyn and its future; and that the interior, which has remained in continuous use, survives with its banking fixtures and fittings largely intact as a branch of the Republic National Bank.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions 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 designates as an Interior Landmark the Williamsburgh Savings Bank first floor interior, consisting of the Hanson Place entrance vestibule; the lobby; the stairway leading to the basement lobby; the stairway leading to the upper floors, and including the first landing; the stairway leading to the subway lobby; the passageway from the lobby to the banking room; the banking room; the mezzanine balcony above the entrance vestibule, lobby, and passageway; and the basement level interior, consisting of the basement lobby and the subway lobby; and the fixtures and interior components of these spaces, including but not limited to wall and ceiling surfaces, floor surfaces, the fireplace; tellers' counters, railings, balustrades, doors, security gates, clocks, chandeliers and lighting fixtures, flagpoles, decorative metalwork, ventilation grilles, windows and attached furnishings and decorative elements; 1 Hanson Place, aka 1–9 Hanson Place, 130–136 St. Felix Street and 325–351 Ashland Place, Brooklyn, and designates Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 2111, Lot 1, as its Landmark Site.



1. Location Plan. The landmark site, block 2111, lot 1, now includes 325-327 Ashland Place, and 130-136 St. Felix Street



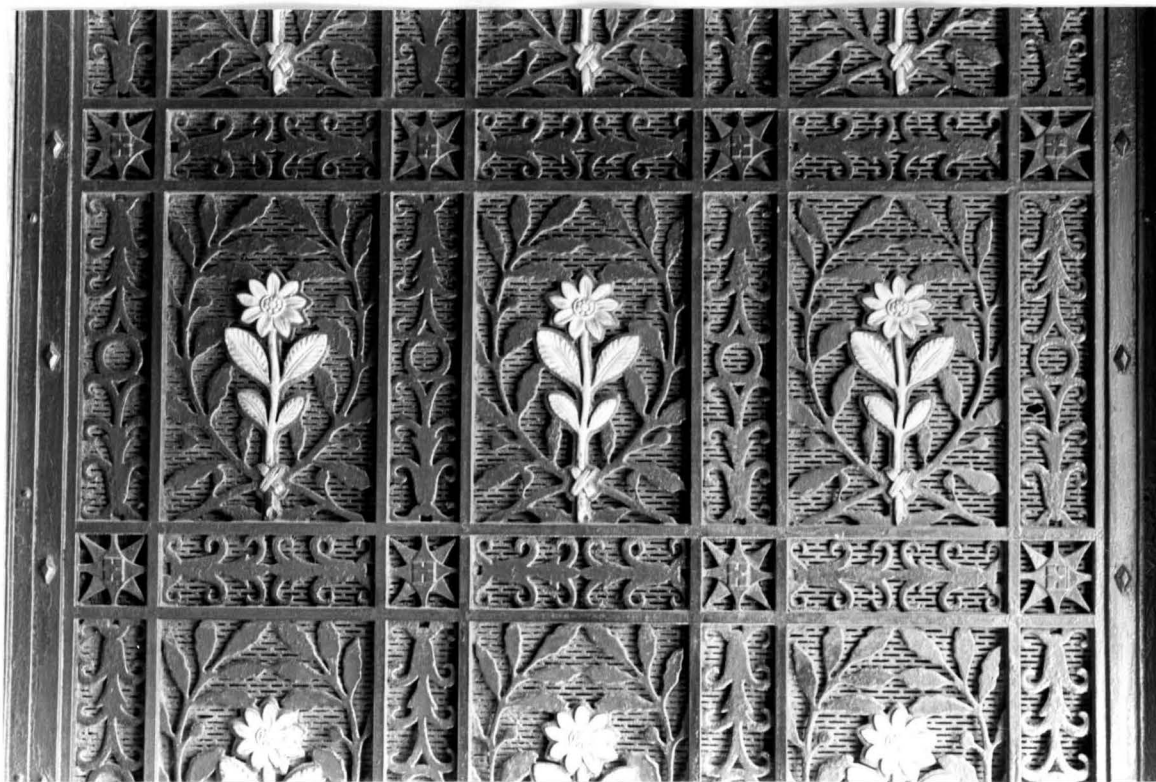
2. Sketch Plans showing designated spaces

Richard Brotherton



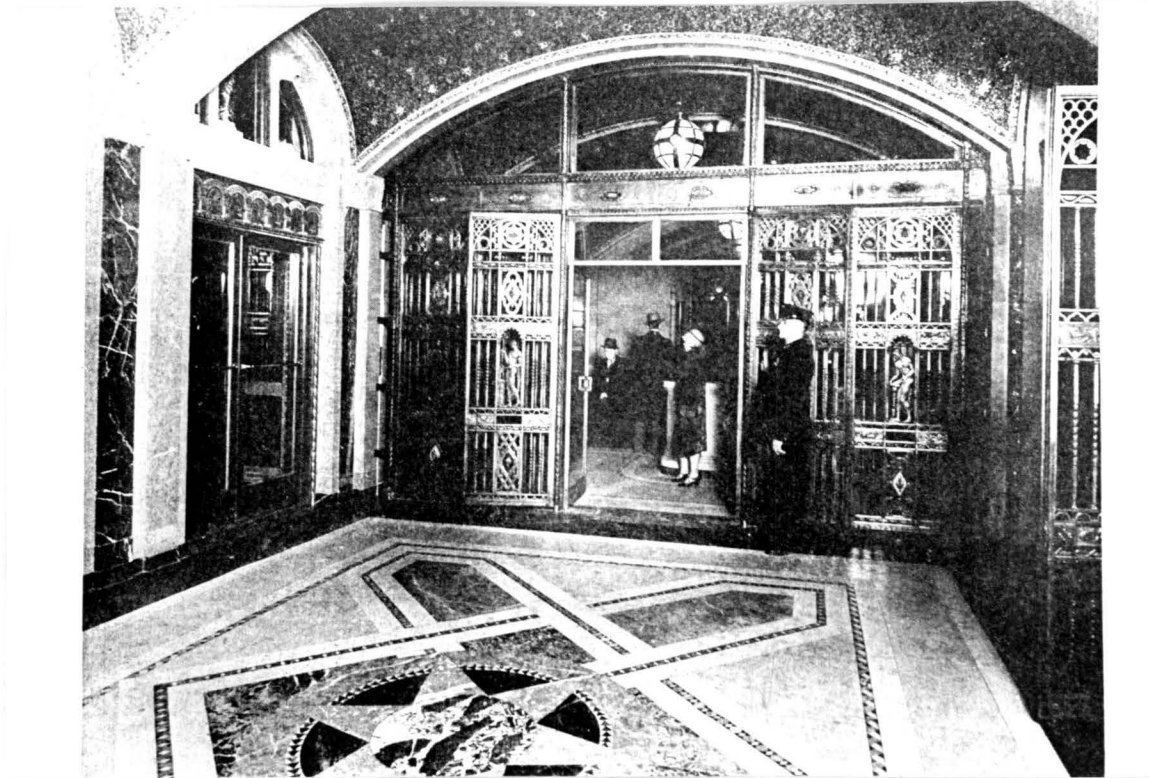
3. Entrance vestibule, spandrel panels above doors, 1996

Richard Brotherton



4. Entrance vestibule, grille in north wall, 1996

Richard Brotherton



5. Entrance lobby, looking east showing doors to stairway down to safety deposit area, 1929

Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building Architectural Historical DeLuxe Record



6. Entrance lobby, looking east showing security desk, 1996

Richard Brotherton



7. Entrance lobby, north side, detail at entrance to banking room, 1996

Richard Brotherton



8. Entrance lobby, detail of screen to stairway, 1996

Richard Brotherton



9. Entrance lobby, northeast corner, 1996

Richard Brotherton



10. Subway lobby, east and south walls, 1996

Richard Brotherton



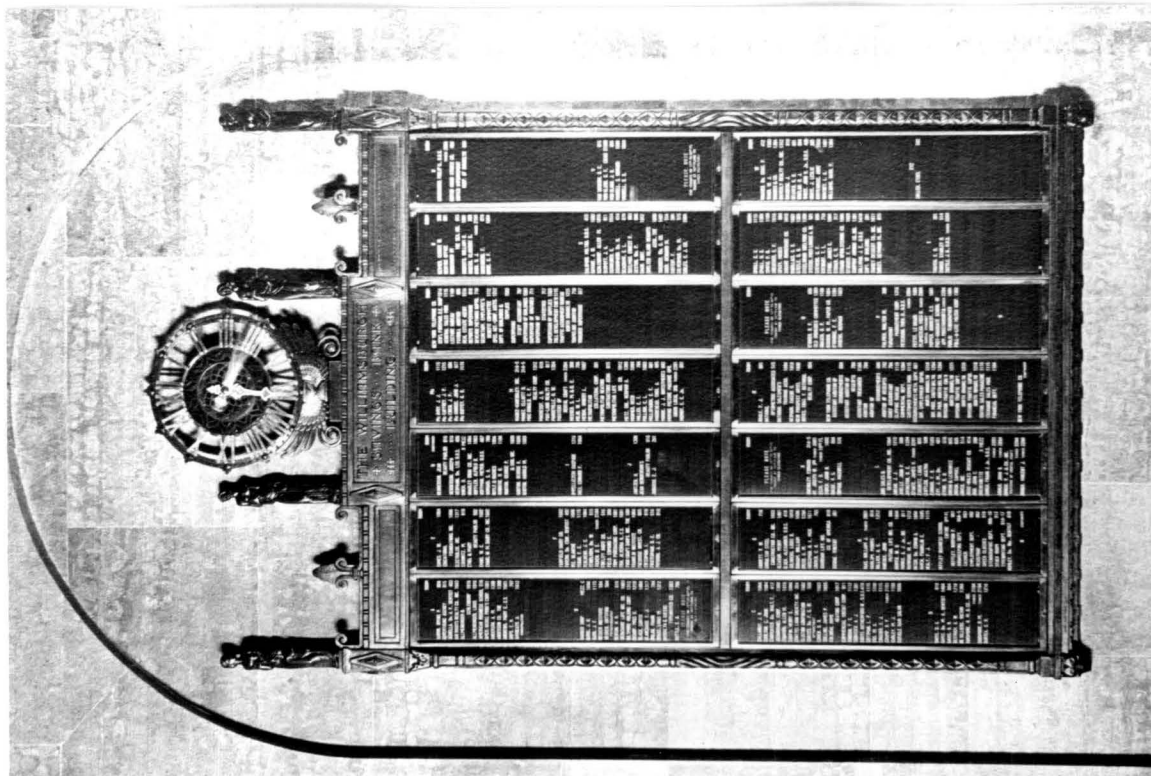
49. Mezzanine, northeast capital, 1996

Richard Brotherton



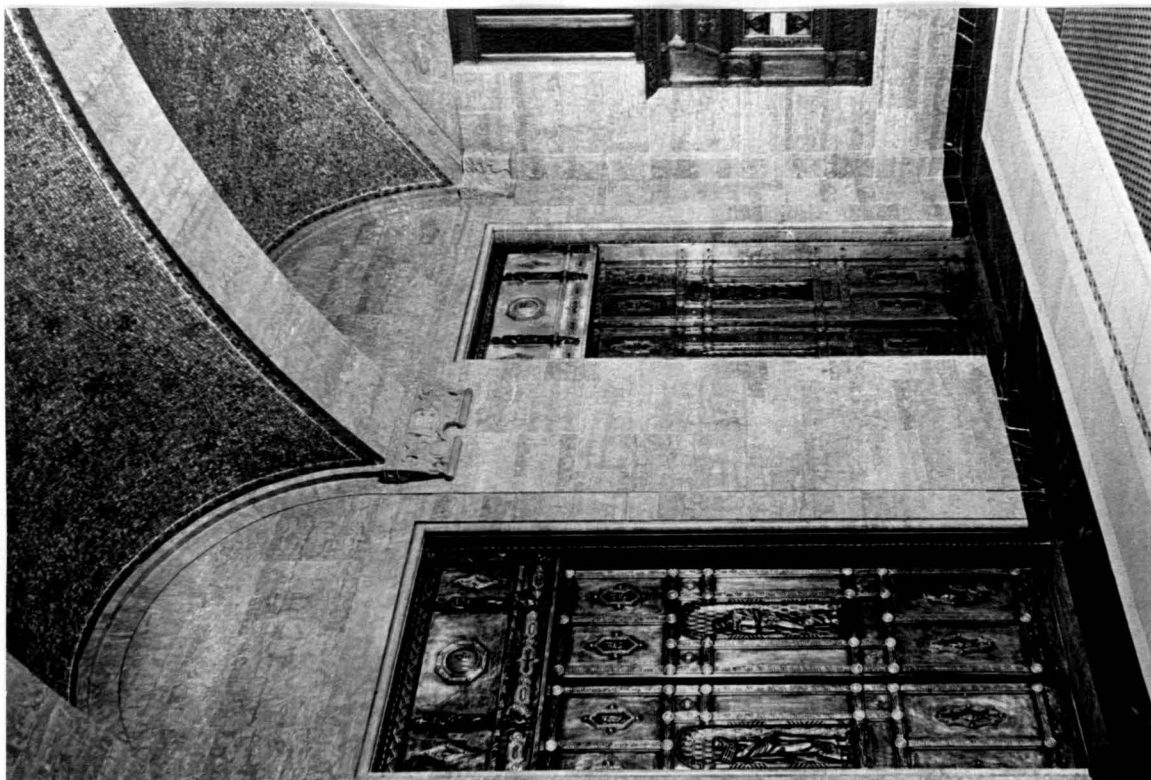
50. Mezzanine, southeast capital, 1996

Richard Brotherton



11. Entrance lobby, tenants directory, 1929

Courtesy, Mancini Duffy



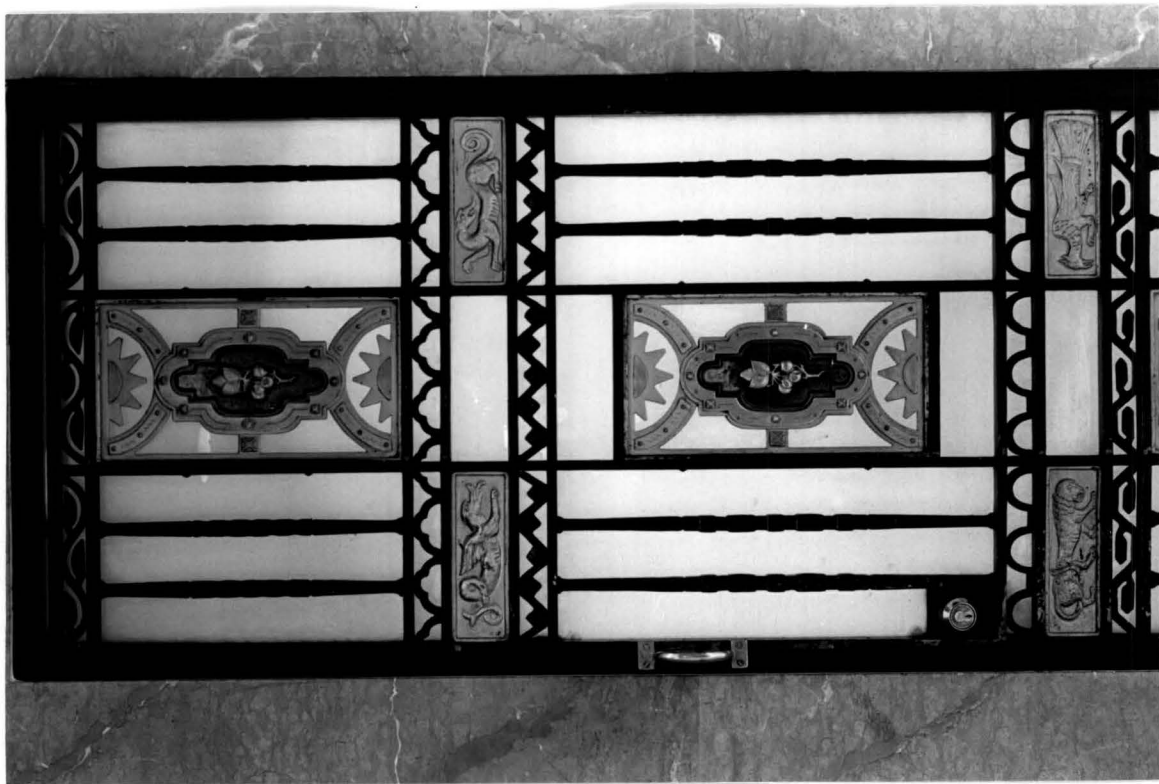
12. Entrance lobby, northeast corner showing original elevator doors, 1929

Courtesy, Mancini Duffy



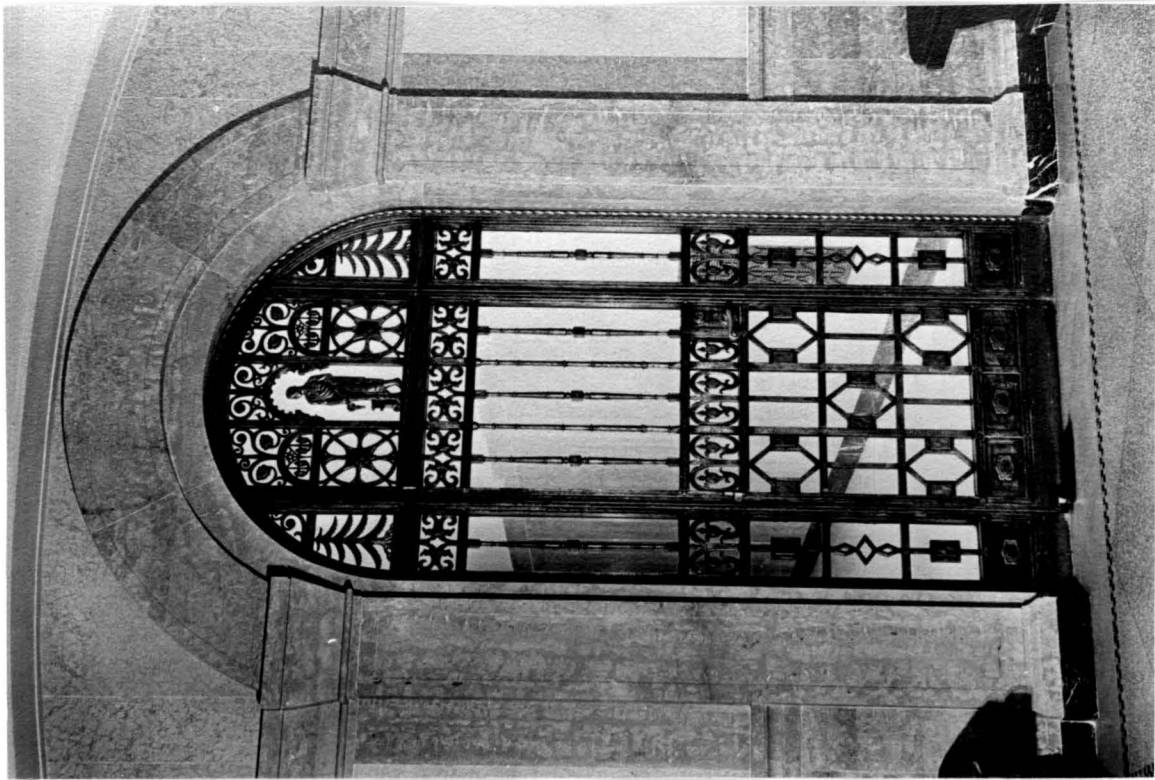
13. Entrance lobby, doors to banking room, 1996

Richard Brotherton



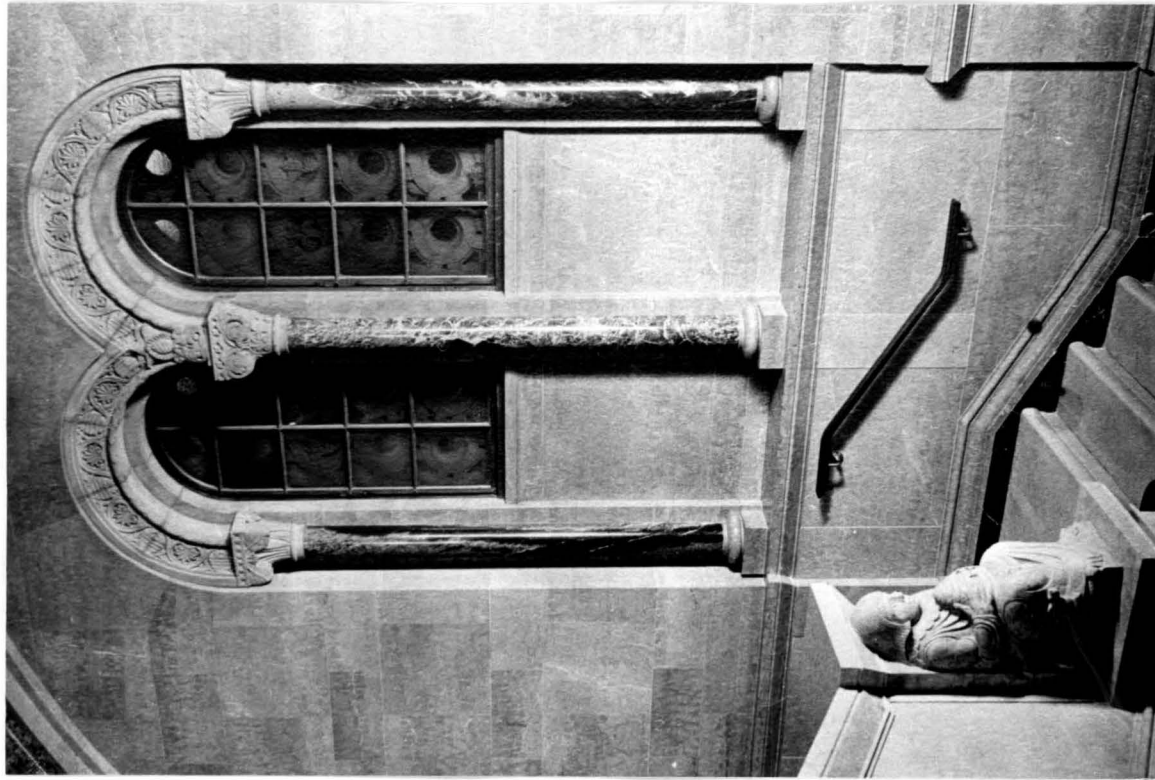
14. Subway lobby, detail of door in east wall, 1996

Richard Brotherton



15. Basement lobby, door in east wall, 1929

Courtesy, Mancini Duffy



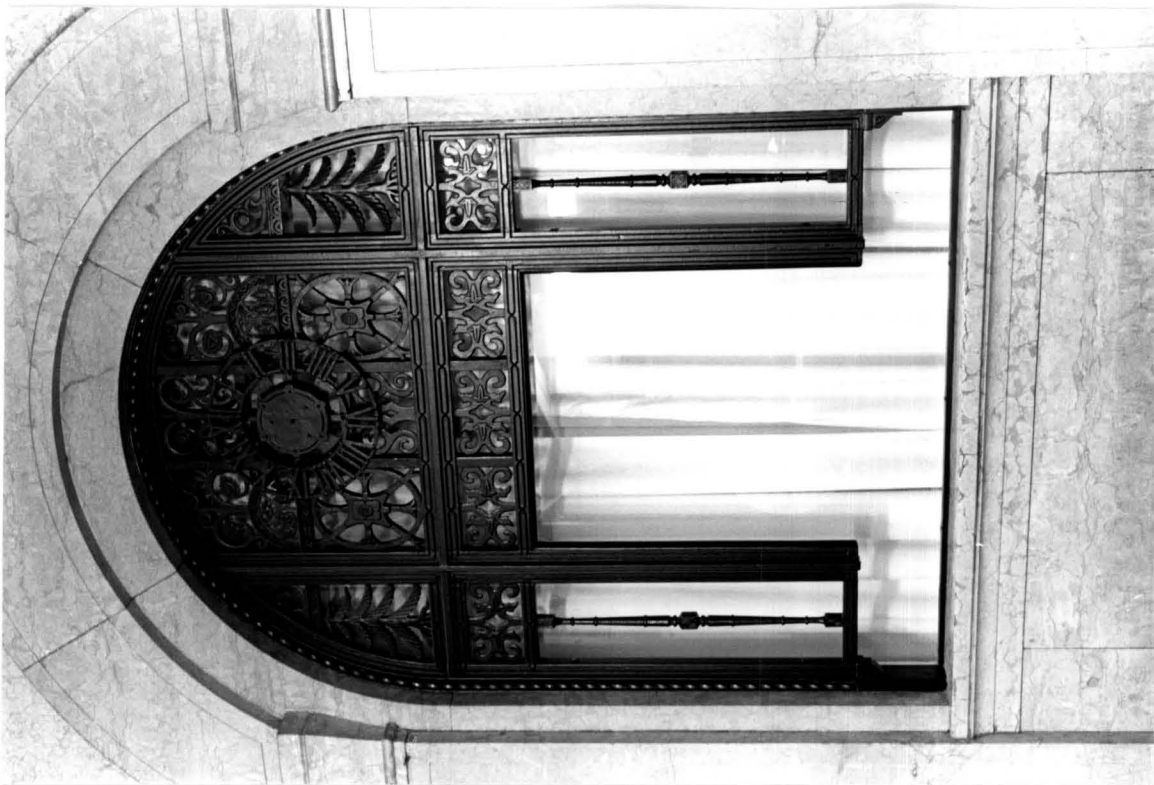
16. Stairway down to basement lobby, west wall, 1929

Courtesy, Mancini Duffy



17. Basement lobby, chandelier and ceiling rose, 1996

Richard Brotherton



18. Basement lobby, service window in south wall with clock, 1996

Richard Brotherton



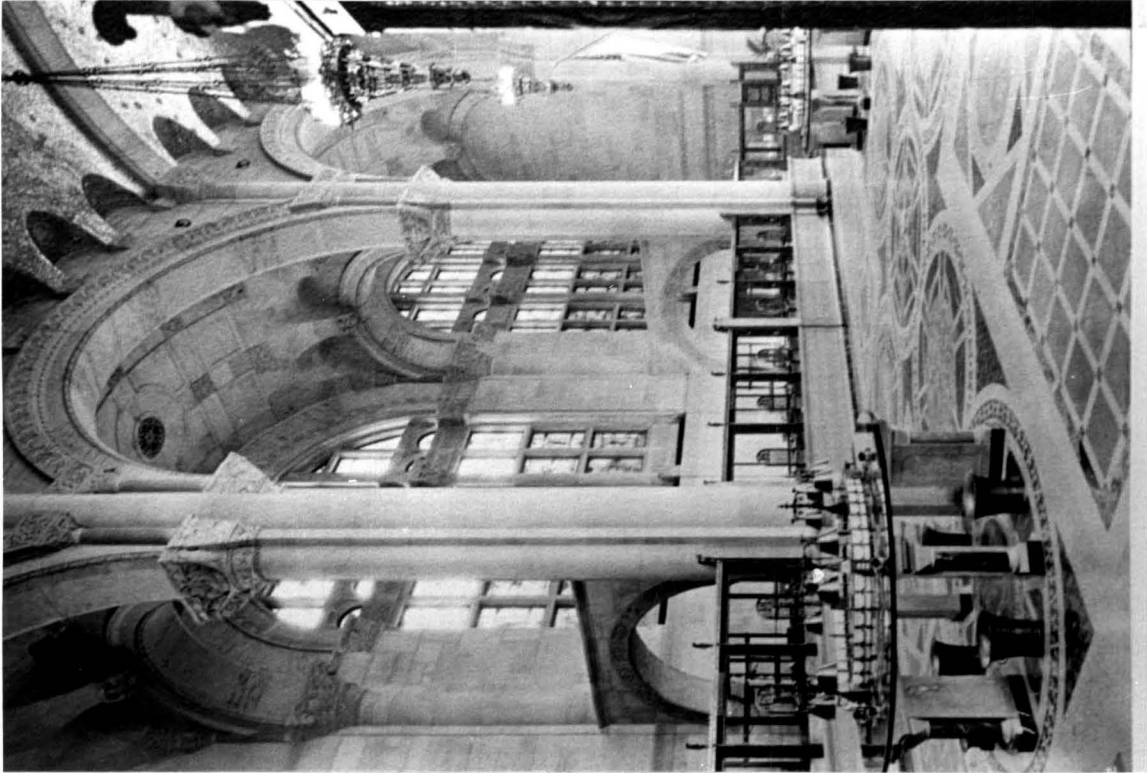
19. Basement lobby and stairway looking northwest showing entrance to safe deposit area, 1929

Courtesy, Mancini Duffy



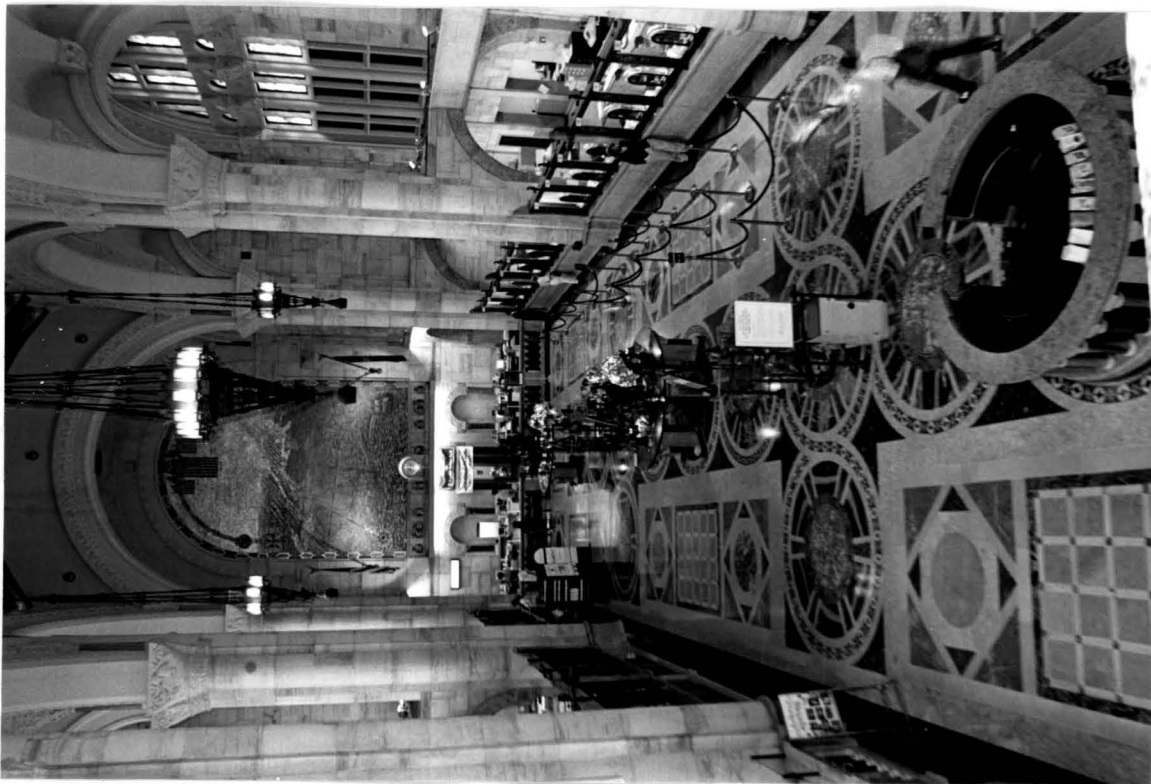
20. Basement lobby, north wall with entrance to safe deposit area, 1996

Richard Brotherton



21. Banking room, looking southwest, 1929

Courtesy, Mancini Duffy



22. Banking room, looking north from mezzanine, 1996

Richard Brotherton



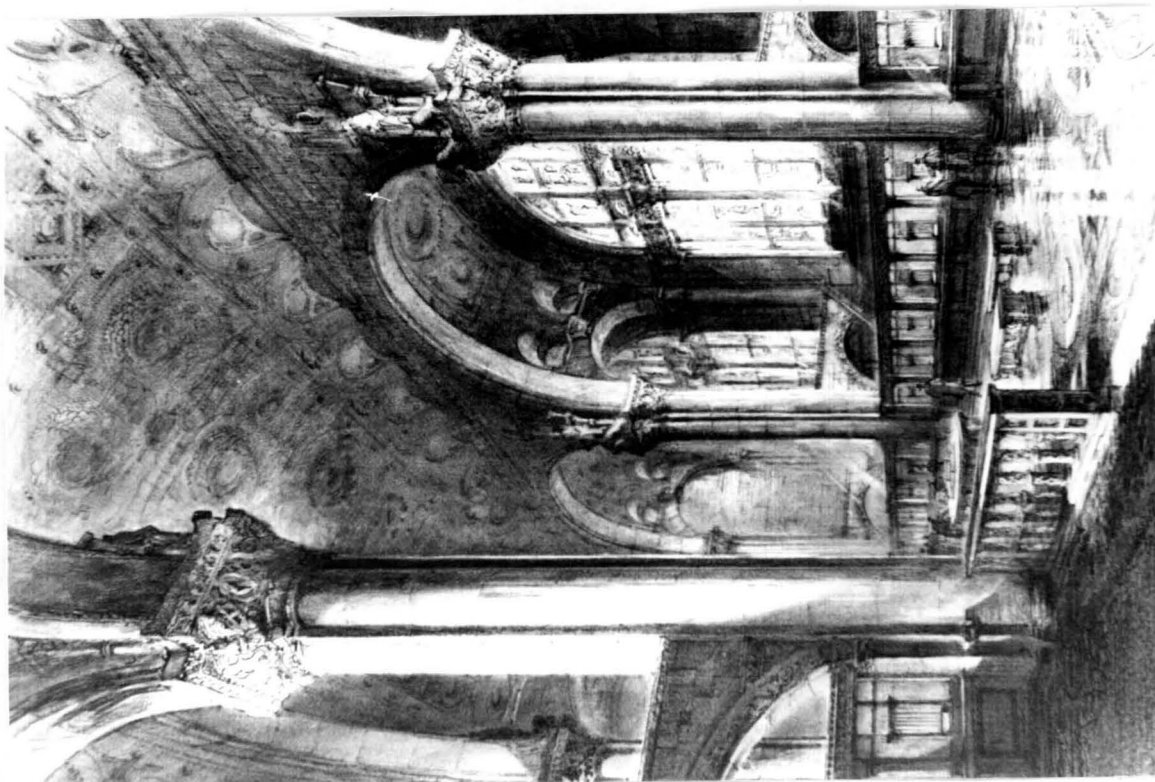
23. Banking room, south bay looking east, 1996

Richard Brotherton

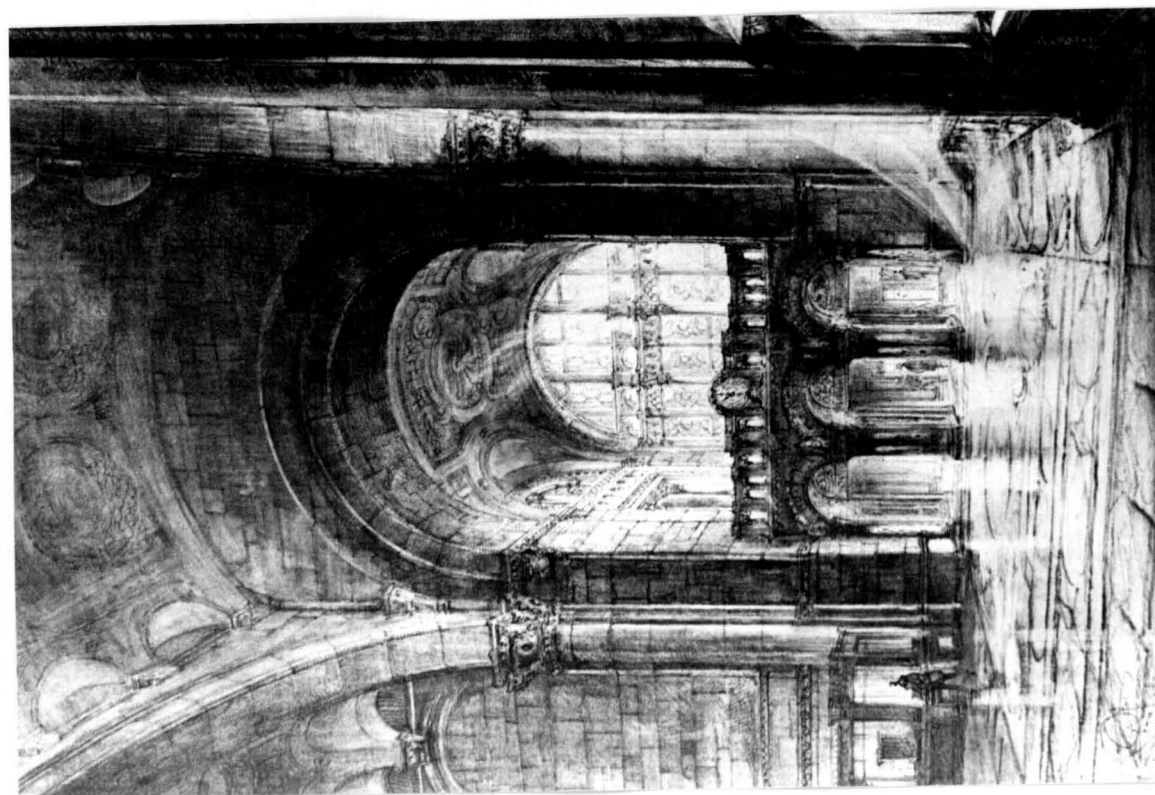


24. Banking room, south bay looking west, 1996

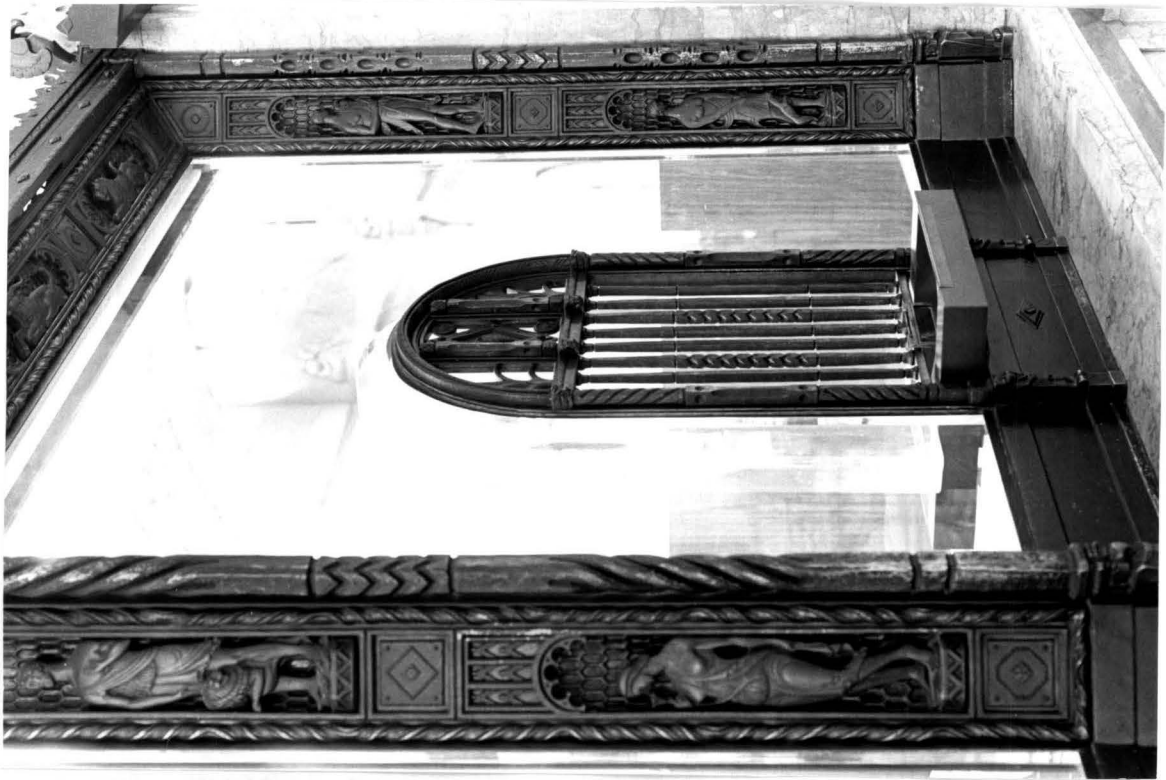
Richard Brotherton



25. Banking room, perspective view to northeast, Theodore de Postels, 1928

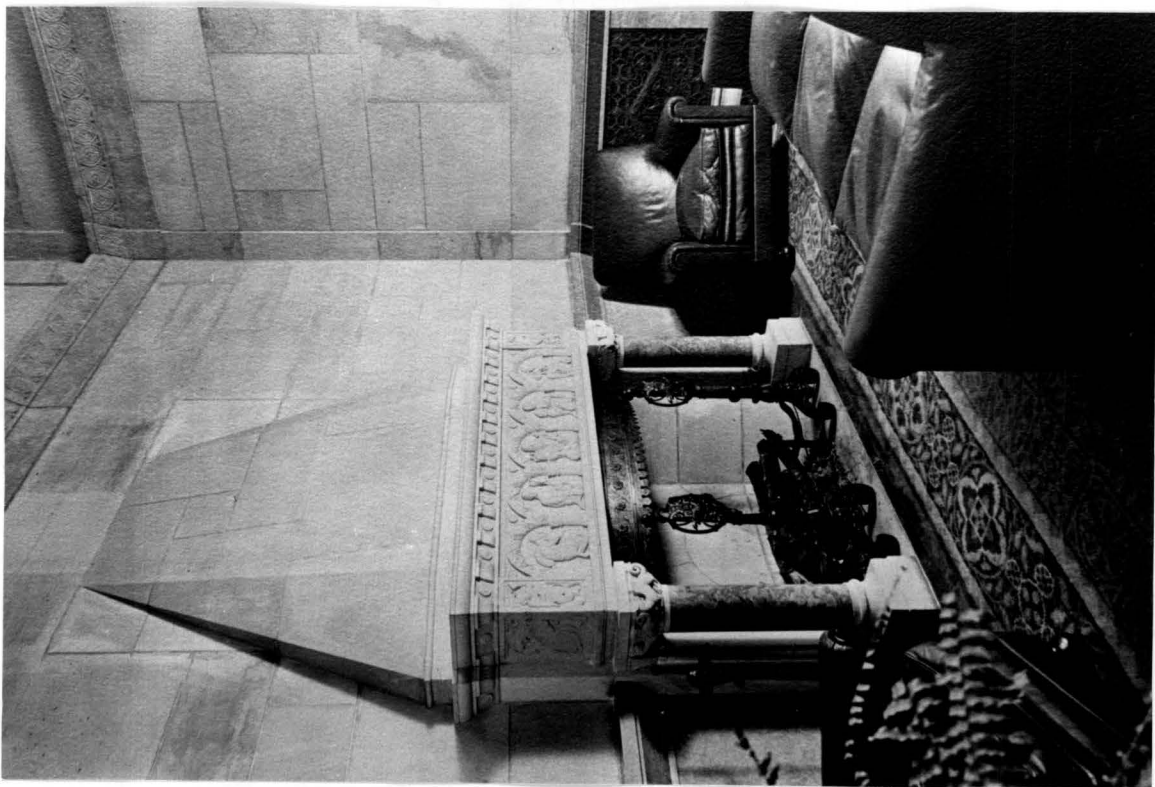


26. Banking Room, perspective view south, Theodore de Postels, 1928



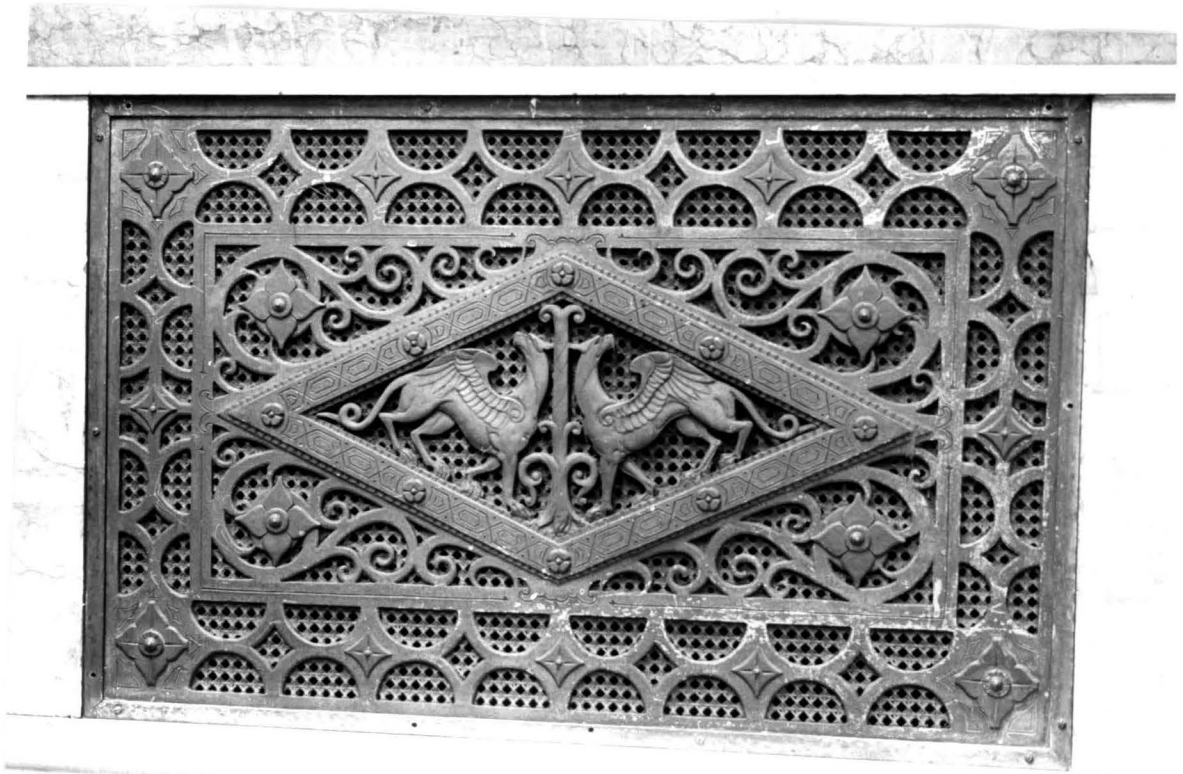
27. Banking room, tellers' screen, 1996

Richard Brotherton



28. Banking room, fireplace in new accounts area, 1929

Richard Brotherton



29. Banking room, ventilation grille with border, 1996

Richard Brotherton



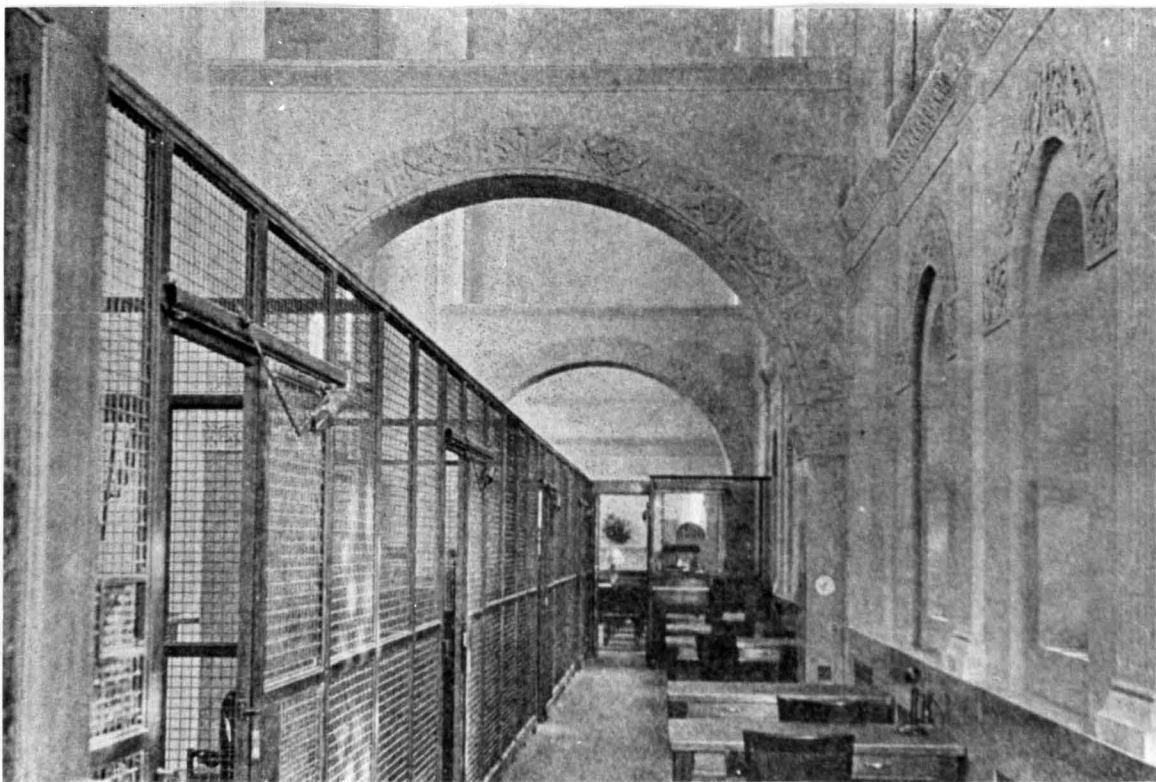
30. Banking room, detail of fireplace in new accounts area, 1996

Richard Brotherton



31. Banking room, south bay west aisle (new accounts area) looking north, 1996

Richard Brotherton



32. Banking room, west aisle looking south showing tellers cages subsequently removed, 1929

Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building Architectural Historical DeLuxe Record



33. Banking room, detail of mosaic on north wall, 1996

Richard Brotherton



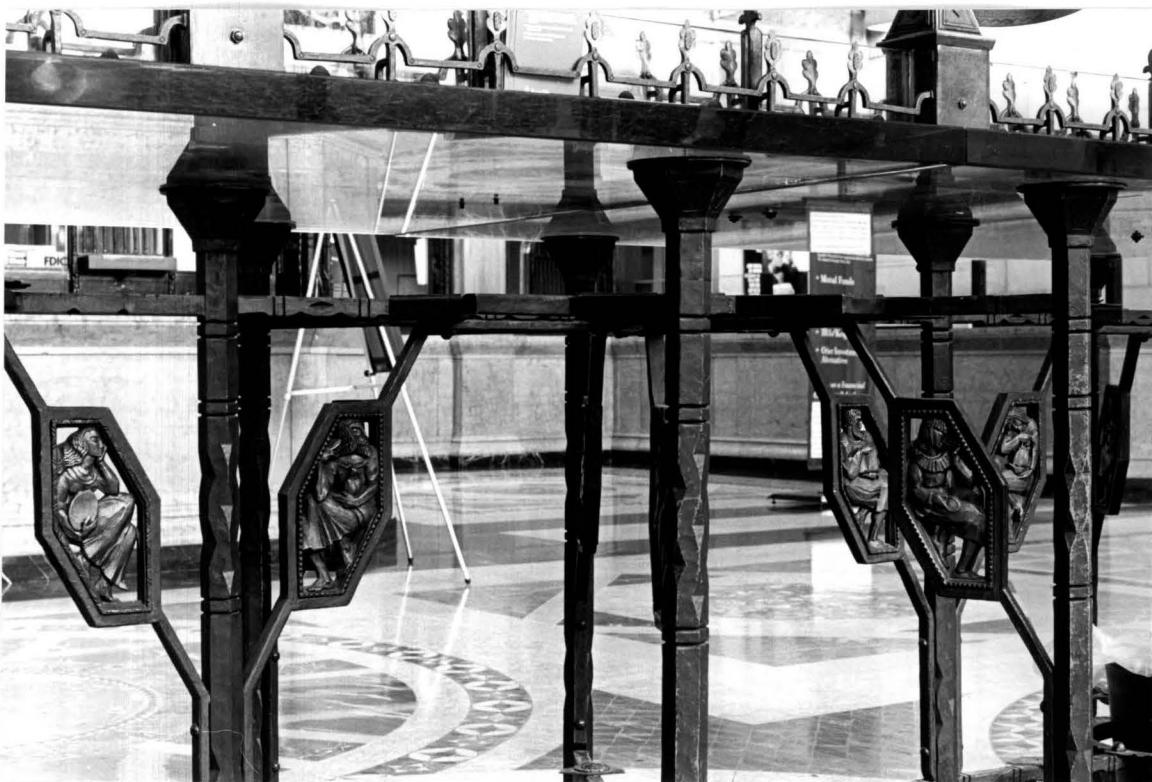
34. Banking room, triple-arched south entrance, 1996

Richard Brotherton



35. Banking room, check table lamp, 1996

Richard Brotherton



36. Banking room, check table, detail of legs and struts, 1996

Richard Brotherton



37. Banking room, circular check table, detail of lamps and form-holders, 1996

Richard Brotherton



38. Banking room, circular check table, 1996

Richard Brotherton



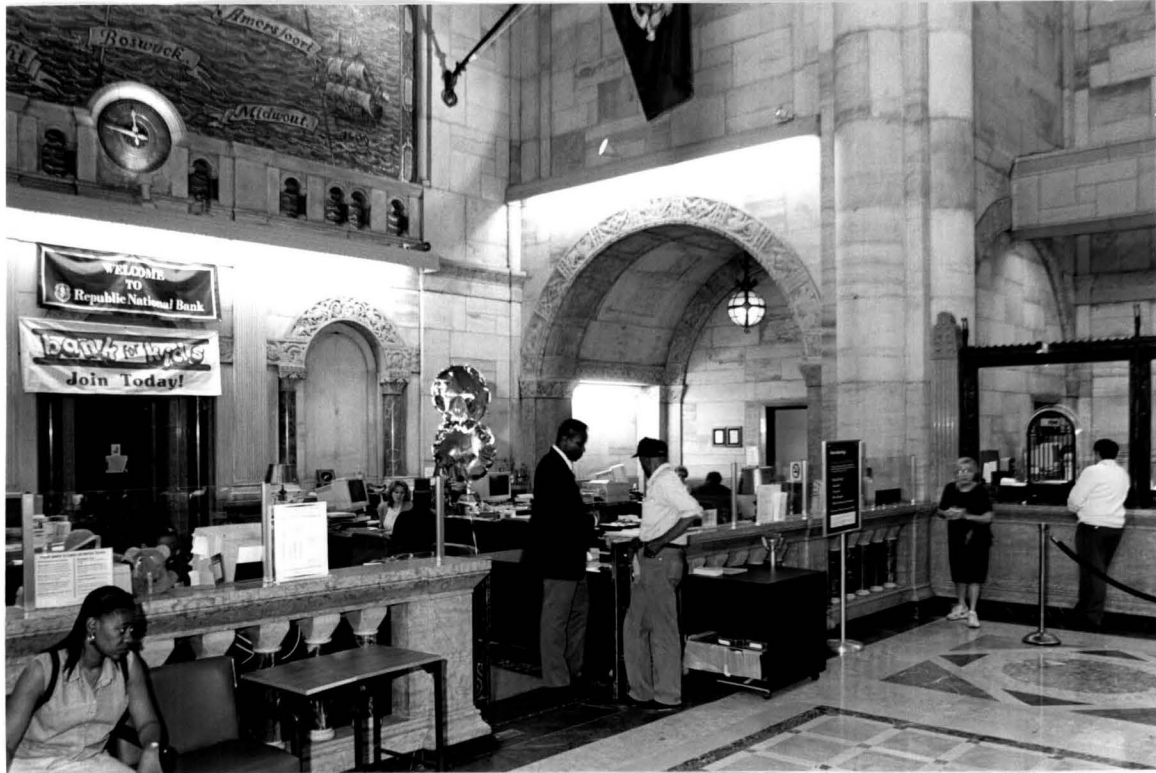
39. Banking room, rectangular check table, 1996

Richard Brotherton



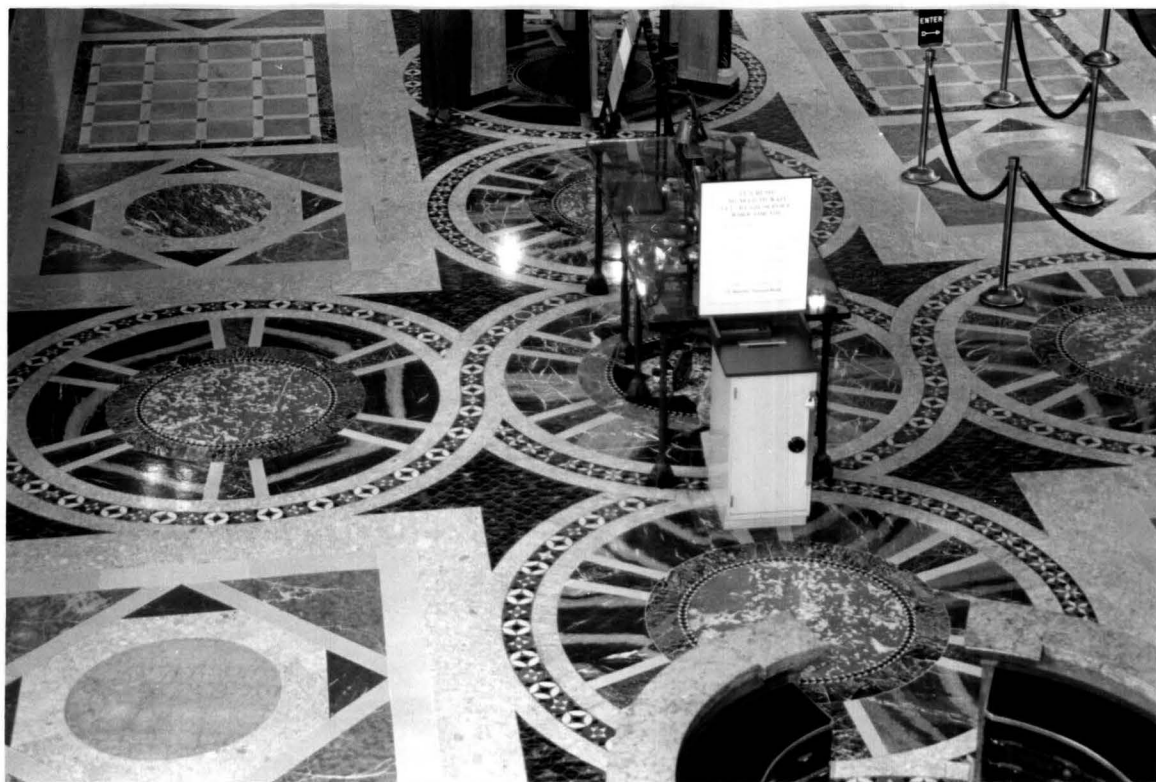
40. Banking room, looking northwest, 1996

Richard Brotherton



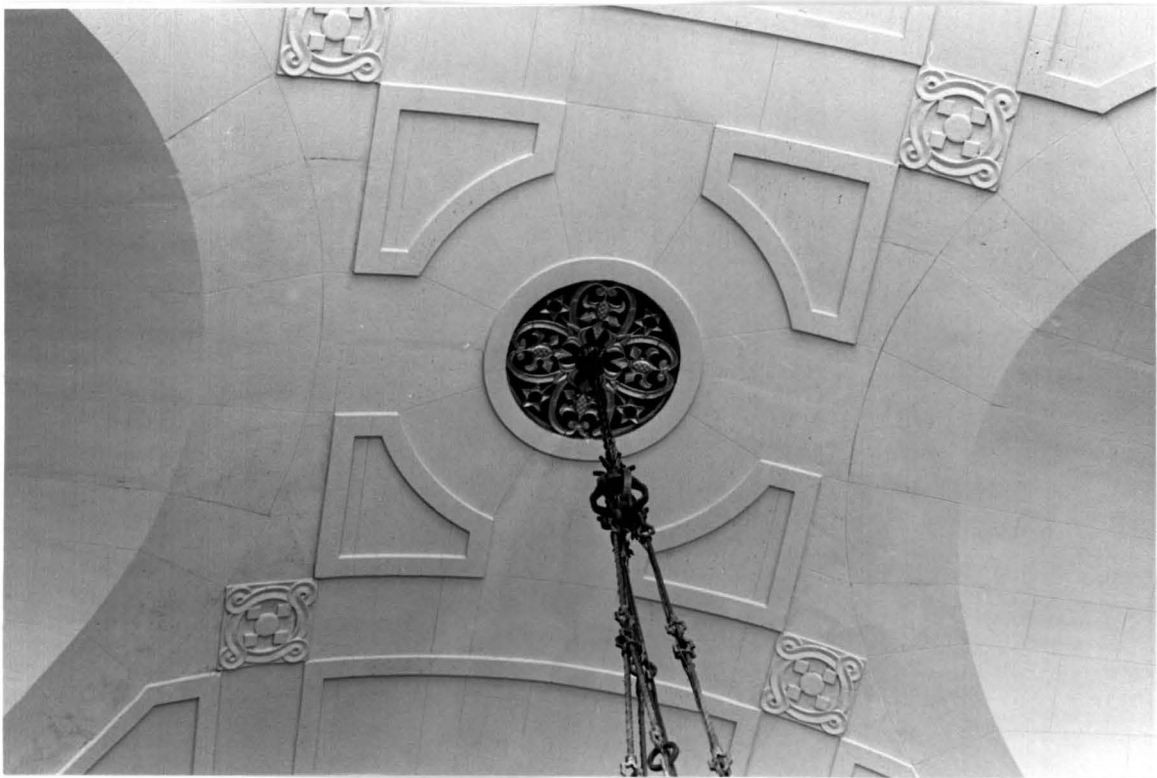
41. Banking room, officers' area at north, 1996

Richard Brotherton



42. Banking room, Cosmati floor, 1996

Richard Brotherton



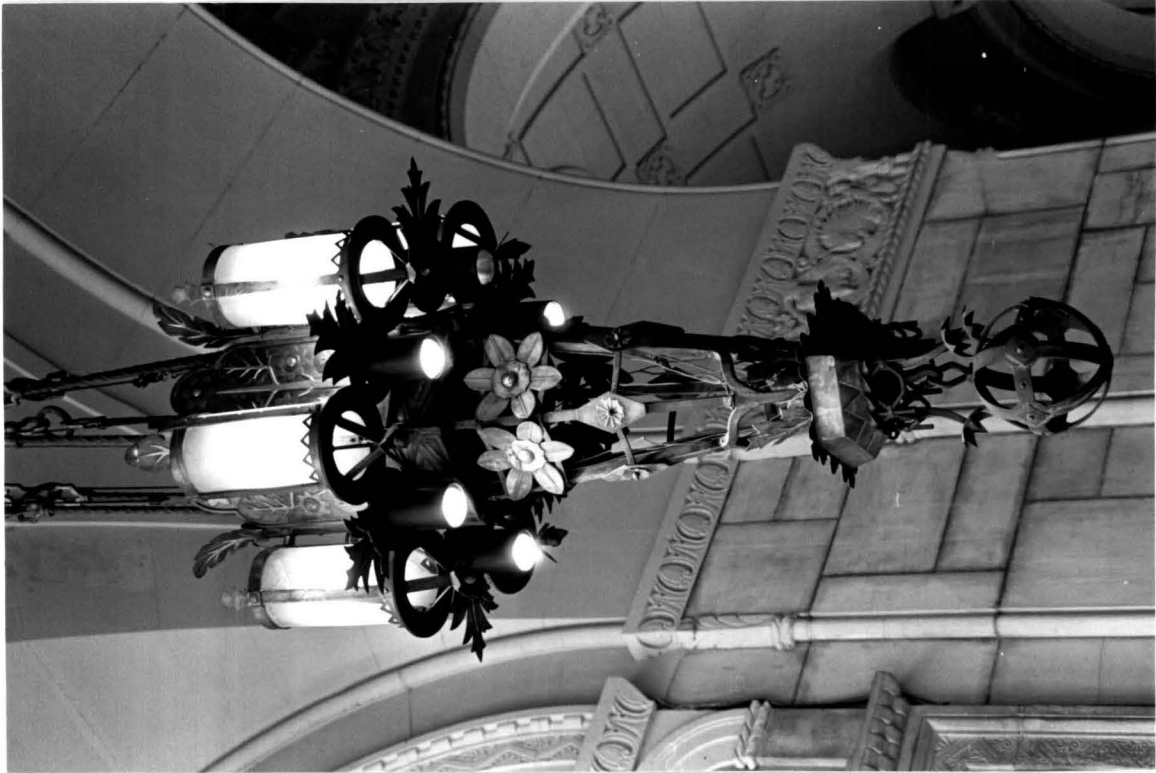
43. Banking room, vault at bay over mezzanine, 1996

Richard Brotherton



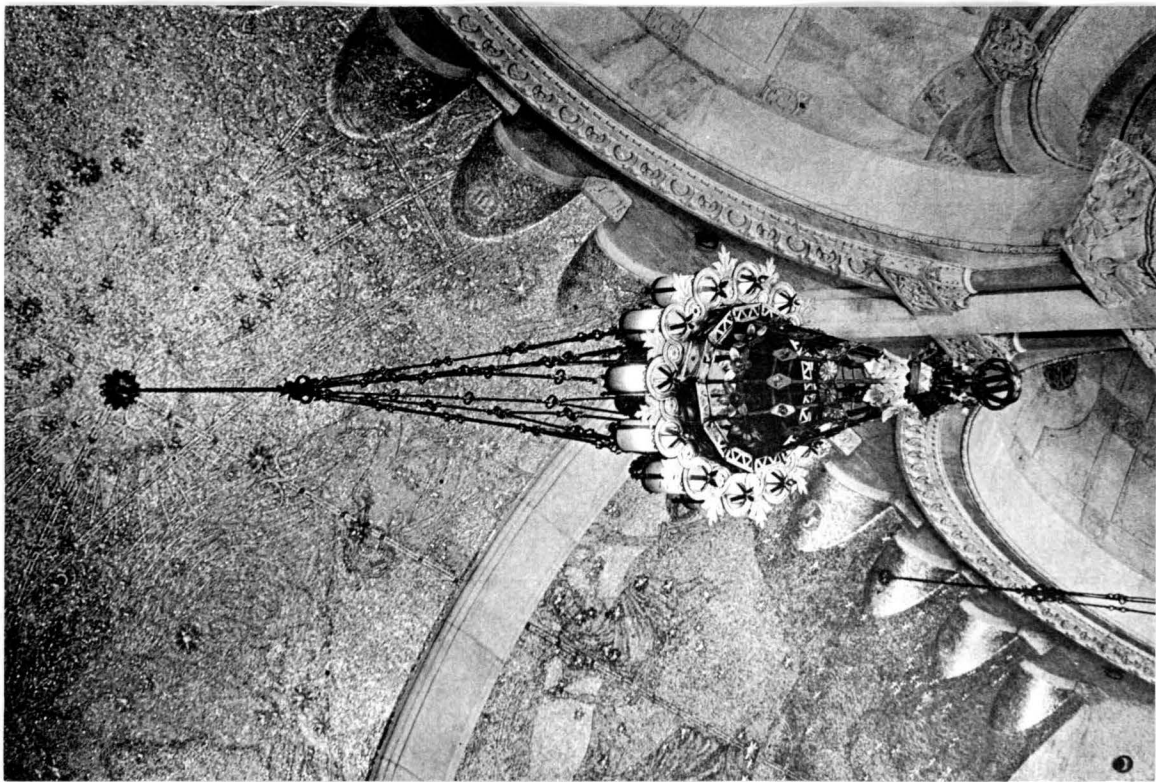
44. Banking room, detail of mosaic vault of nave, 1996

Richard Brotherton



45. Banking room, electrolier at bay over mezzanine, 1996

Richard Brotherton



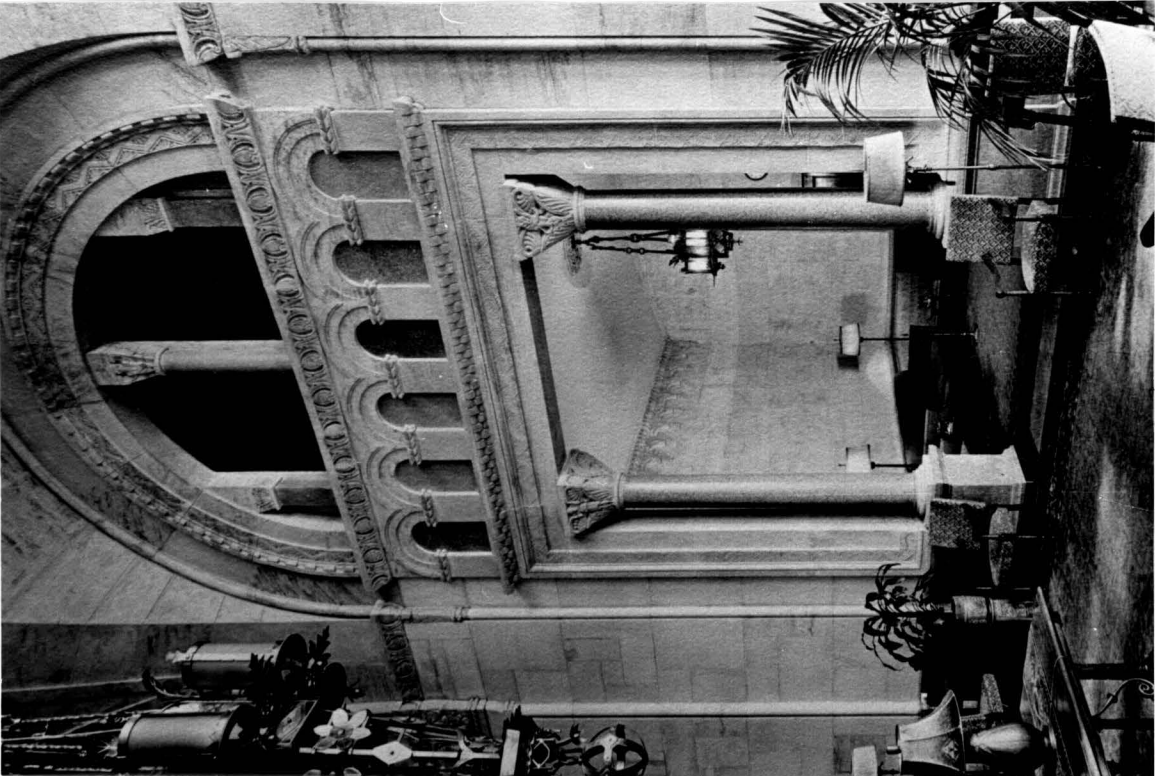
46. Banking room, central electrolier, 1930

Year Book, Architectural League of New York



47. Mezzanine, as used as a mail room, 1996

Richard Brotherton



48. Mezzanine, furnished as a Ladies' Smoking and Rest Salon, 1929

Courtesy Mancini Duffy