

**WILLIAMSBURGH TRUST COMPANY BUILDING (LATER FIFTH DISTRICT  
MAGISTRATES' COURT/ LATER HOLY TRINITY CATHEDRAL)**

177-185 South 5th Street, Brooklyn

Built: 1905-06; Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell, architects

Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn, Tax Map Block 2446, Lot 63, including the entire lot and all improvements on this lot, the sidewalk fence in front of the east and south frontages of this lot, and all land in between the lot line and said fence, including the land underneath any features of the Williamsburgh Trust Company Building that extend over or onto adjacent sidewalks.

On February 8, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Ukrainian Church in Exile (Holy Trinity Cathedral) and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 64). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Three representatives of the building's owner testified in opposition to the proposed designation, and representatives of the American Institute of Architects and Municipal Art Society spoke in favor of the proposed designation.

On October 8, 2015, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a special public hearing on Backlog Initiative Items in the Borough of Brooklyn, including the Williamsburgh Trust Company Building (Ukrainian Church in Exile Holy Trinity Cathedral) (Item II—Borough of Brooklyn Group, C). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. A representative of the owner spoke in opposition to the proposed designation. Eight people spoke in favor of the proposed designation, including representatives of Council Member Antonio Reynoso, the Guides Association of New York City, Historic Districts Council, Municipal Art Society, New York Landmarks Conservancy, Society for the Architecture of the City, and Victorian Society in America. The Commission also received seven written submissions in favor of the proposed designation, including letters or emails from Community Board 1, the Sunnyside Gardens Preservation Alliance, and the Waterfront Preservation Alliance.

Summary

Completed in 1906, the Williamsburgh Trust Company Building is a monumental Neoclassical style bank building recalling Williamsburg's industrial prosperity of the 19th and early 20th centuries and the historic role of the building's surrounding area as a commercial and financial hub serving Williamsburg, Greenpoint, and Bushwick. Designed by Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell, major Brooklyn architects who designed some of the borough's most significant early-20th-century banks and park structures, it initially served as headquarters of the Williamsburgh Trust Company, which enjoyed considerable

financial success following its 1899 founding. It is a superlative example of the luxurious "banking temples" constructed in Manhattan and Brooklyn starting in the late 19th century, featuring classical porticos with acroteria on its two street facades, as well as a saucer dome recalling that of the Pantheon. Originally intended to stand in isolation, the building is remarkable for its four fully developed classical facades as well as its unusual facing material of white terra cotta. The building's opulent design and prominent location at the entrance of the then-new Williamsburg Bridge drew admiration from the press, which described it as a "superb new edifice" that was both "extravagant and palatial." Shortly after the



building's opening, the Williamsburgh Trust Company was rocked by the Panic of 1907, and it served its last customer in 1910. Five years later, the building was acquired by the City of New York as part of a broad effort to reform the city's court system and improve Brooklyn's courthouses, and from 1916 to 1958, it served as Magistrates' Court for the Fifth District of Brooklyn. The building's cross-shaped plan and central dome made it attractive for conversion to an Orthodox church, and in 1961, it was acquired by the Holy Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church in Exile, which renovated it to serve as its Holy Trinity Cathedral. Since then, the church has diligently and sensitively maintained the building, enabling this lavish structure to endure as one of Williamsburg's most prominent and imposing landmarks.

## DESCRIPTION

The Williamsburgh Trust Company Building is a Neoclassical style bank building designed by Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell and constructed in 1905-06. All four of the building's facades are covered with white terra cotta. Portions of the building's primary-facade porticos appear to project beyond the lot line and onto and over adjacent sidewalks. The fences in front of the east and south primary facades also appear to have been constructed within the sidewalk areas beyond the lot line.<sup>1</sup>

### Primary East (Main) Facade

*Historic:* Granite base; white terra-cotta facade, deeply rusticated at each end; classical portico consisting of four monolithic granite columns on a granite base with terra-cotta Ionic capitals, terra-cotta entablature with bead-and-reel and foliated moldings, frieze terminated at each end by a wreath, and angular pediment with denticulated molding, crowned by acroteria at its peak and ends; denticulated cornice and balustrade surmounting all four building facades; central dome with lantern supported by octagonal paneled drum; modillioned drum cornice crowned by heavy garlanded molding; wood main-entrance door frame with stylized triglyphs and guttae; wood main-entrance transom bar with denticulated molding and Vitruvian scroll; wood Roman-lattice transom; pair of paneled main-entrance doors with rosettes and foliated moldings; paneled main-entrance overdoor with plain central medallion; one-over-one double-hung wood windows flanking main-entrance opening; flat arches crowning the main-entrance and window openings; identical terra-cotta reliefs over these three arches, each containing garlands, fasces, scallop shells, olive-branch, ribbon, and cornucopia motifs, and a seal featuring a seated representation of Justice surrounded by an anchor, beehive, and cornucopia, along with the phrases "WILLIAMSBURGH TRUST COMPANY," "INCORPORATED 1899," AND "NOS PROGREDIMUR." *Alterations:* Main-entrance security gates; metal kickplates on main-entrance doors; light fixture and cross on transom bar; camera adjacent to main entrance; two sets of security grilles over each window; signs at each end of facade; bird spikes on top of each Williamsburgh Trust Company seal and on portico; "WILLIAMSBURGH TRUST COMPANY" or "MAGISTRATES COURT" text on portico frieze covered or removed; cross at apex of central portico; terra-cotta tile upper portion of dome roof replaced with, or covered by, smooth roofing surface; cross with base added to dome.

### Primary South Facade

*Historic:* Granite base; white terra-cotta facade, deeply rusticated at each end and at corners of projecting central pavilion; classical portico consisting of four monolithic granite columns on a granite base with terra-cotta Ionic capitals, entablature with bead-and-reel and

foliated moldings, frieze terminated at each end by a wreath, and angular pediment with denticulated molding, crowned by acroteria at its peak and ends; denticulated cornice and rooftop balustrade continued from main facade; three large, and two small window openings, on central pavilion; flat arches crowning the three large window openings; terra-cotta panel over central window opening with Williamsburgh Trust Company seal, identical to those over main-facade entrance and windows; terra-cotta reliefs over two outer large window openings, each containing a lion's head, sword, caduceus, wreath, and olive branches; window opening at east end of facade with bracketed sill, molded eared surround, and modillioned pediment supported by brackets; opening at west end of facade with molded eared window surround and modillioned pediment supported by brackets; wood windows, some possibly historic. *Alterations:* Sill removed at westernmost opening, opening enlarged from window into door opening, and granite stoop with non-historic understoop grilles installed in front of opening (1916); replacement infill within this opening; security grille over transom in westernmost opening; camera at western end of facade; electrical boxes, meter, and conduit installed adjacent to stoop; small basement opening with louver, and water meter reader, adjoining portico on west; fire bell, sprinkler sign, and projecting pipe at eastern end of facade; large windows within central pavilion changed from one-over-one to two-over-two; security grilles over each window; bird spikes on decorative reliefs over large window openings and on portico; bird-control netting in portico ceiling; "WILLIAMSBURGH TRUST COMPANY" or "MAGISTRATES COURT" text on portico frieze covered or removed; drainage pipes from roof of drum to roof of building.

### **West Facade**

*Historic:* White terra-cotta facade, deeply rusticated at each end; partially visible; classical pilasters; entablature with bead-and-reel and foliated moldings; frieze terminated at each end by a wreath; angular pediment with denticulated molding, crowned by acroteria at its peak and ends; three terra-cotta reliefs with lions' heads and other classical elements; denticulated cornice and balustrade continued from primary facade. *Alterations:* Exhaust fan attached to facade with metal bracing; camera at southern end of facade; windows between pilasters removed and openings filled in; bird spikes and netting.

### **North Facade**

*Historic:* White terra-cotta facade, deeply rusticated at each end and at corners of central pavilion; partially visible; projecting central pavilion with classical pilasters, terra-cotta entablature with bead-and-reel and foliated moldings, frieze terminated at each end by a wreath, and angular pediment with denticulated molding, crowned by acroteria at its peak and ends; three window openings between pilasters; terra-cotta reliefs with lions' heads and other classical elements above these window openings; two window openings with molded surrounds and pediments at east and west ends of facade; denticulated cornice and balustrade continued from primary facade; high terra-cotta chimney with classical ornament. *Alterations:* Pitched-roof sheds in front of easternmost portion of facade, obscuring facade and possibly resulting in removal of historic fabric; window security grilles; bird spikes.

### **Areaway**

Non-historic iron fence with gates on concrete curb in front of primary facades; non-historic pitched-roof shed with light fixture, door, and iron gate, in north areaway; two sets of iron gates in front of west areaway.

## SITE HISTORY

### Williamsburg, Brooklyn<sup>2</sup>

Constructed in 1905-06, the Williamsburgh Trust Company Building is located at the corner of South 5th Street and South 5th Place in Brooklyn's Williamsburg neighborhood. When it received its city charter in 1852, Williamsburg had more than 30,000 residents and was the country's 30th-largest city. At that time, its East River waterfront was developing into a major industrial center lined with docks, shipyards, distilleries, foundries, mills, petroleum and sugar refineries, and glass and pharmaceutical factories attracted by its deepwater piers, available land, and ample labor provided by a booming immigrant population. In 1855, Williamsburg was consolidated with the City of Brooklyn and Town of Flatbush, and Williamsburg, together with Greenpoint to its north and Bushwick to its east, became known as the "Eastern District."

In the years leading up to the Civil War, major commercial and financial institutions were established to serve Williamsburg's thriving companies and growing population. Following the war, several of them constructed lavish new buildings along Broadway, the neighborhood's main thoroughfare, including the Kings County Savings Bank (King & Wilcox, 1868) at 135 Broadway; the Smith, Gray & Company Building (attributed to William H. Gaylor, 1870), now at 103 Broadway; and the Williamsburgh Savings Bank (George B. Post, 1870-75), now at 175 Broadway, all designated New York City Landmarks. Although ferry service between Williamsburg and Manhattan was a key to the neighborhood's 19th-century development, its population surged following the completion of the Williamsburg Bridge (Lefferts L. Buck and Henry Hornbostel) in 1903.<sup>3</sup> Soon after its opening, thousands of Eastern European Jews from the crowded Lower East Side crossed the bridge to settle in Williamsburg, and large Italian, Polish, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian enclaves also developed there. Williamsburg's population doubled during the 20th century's first two decades, reaching its historical peak of 260,000 residents in 1920. Many of the neighborhood's more prosperous residents left during the Depression, and by the late 1930s, Hasidic refugees fleeing Nazi-occupied Europe began settling there.

Following World War II, large numbers of Puerto Ricans moved to Williamsburg, attracted by the neighborhood's abundant manufacturing jobs. Older residential buildings were demolished for housing projects and the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, and over subsequent decades, manufacturers increasingly departed Williamsburg, leaving vacant industrial buildings in their wake. Musicians and artists began trickling into the neighborhood in the 1970s and have since become a major presence there. Since the 1990s, Williamsburg has seen extensive gentrification and redevelopment, especially following the rezoning of many of its former industrial areas for residences. In addition to its large Hasidic population, Williamsburg today has a sizeable Latino community, augmented since the 1980s by immigrants from the Dominican Republic, and is home to substantial African-American, Italian, and Polish communities.

### The Williamsburgh Trust Company and Its Building<sup>4</sup>

Organized in 1899, the Williamsburgh Trust Company was one of many such institutions established in New York and Brooklyn in the late 19th century. Trust companies in general are commercial banks that also act as estate or trust managers, and their services were especially in demand following the Civil War, which left many widows and their families in need of financial guidance. Former New York Governor Roswell P. Flower was among the founders of the Williamsburgh Trust Company, and its president, John G. Jenkins, was considered "one of the

most distinguished bankers in the metropolitan field,” having started in the mid-1850s as an office boy at the Williamsburgh City Bank—later renamed the First National Bank of Brooklyn—before rising to the positions of acting cashier, cashier, and in 1883, president of the institution.<sup>5</sup> Widely viewed as “one of the most prominent figures in the financial and business world of Brooklyn,” Jenkins also served as a director of several financial and insurance companies and of the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company, among other firms.<sup>6</sup> Early directors of the Williamsburgh Trust Company included Brooklyn brewer Otto Huber; Marshall S. Driggs, who inherited the presidency of the Williamsburgh Fire Insurance Company from his father, Edmund Driggs, after whom Driggs Avenue in Williamsburg is named; and stockbroker Bird S. Coler, who had previously been New York City Comptroller and would go on to serve as Brooklyn Borough President and as the city’s Commissioner of Public Welfare.<sup>7</sup> The firm was headquartered in its namesake neighborhood, at the corner of Broadway and Kent Avenue. Soon after opening, it added two branches: one in Downtown Brooklyn, and the other at Broadway and Myrtle Avenue on the Williamsburg-Bushwick border.

Profits were solid over the company’s first four years, and in 1902, it announced plans for a new Downtown Brooklyn office designed by Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell. This branch opened in January of 1905, and in May of that year, the same architectural firm filed plans for the Williamsburgh Trust Company’s lavish new headquarters adjacent to the recently completed Williamsburg Bridge. Seven months after the bridge’s opening, in June of 1904, the Williamsburgh Trust Company acquired two parcels on the block bounded by South 4th and South 5th Streets on the north and south, and by Driggs Avenue and Roebling Street on the west and east.<sup>8</sup> Together, these properties formed a backwards L-shaped parcel at the bridge’s entrance, fronting on both South 5th Street and the new Williamsburg Bridge Plaza and providing an “uncommonly fine location” for the company’s new banking showplace.<sup>9</sup> The building was sited at the southeastern corner of the property—the western and northern legs of the “L” were later sold—and as construction progressed, its location gained additional prominence with the announcement, in October of 1905, that a new statue of George Washington on horseback would be installed “immediately in front of the new building of the Williamsburgh Trust Company and facing the approach to the bridge.”<sup>10</sup> This statue, designed by Henry M. Shrady, remains in front of the building today, within the park known as Continental Army Plaza.

The addition of the Williamsburgh Trust Company Building reinforced the area’s status as Williamsburg’s leading commercial district and contributed to Bridge Plaza’s emergence as “the financial center of [the] Eastern District ... where large banking concerns are establishing themselves.”<sup>11</sup> While under construction in December of 1905, it was included in a *Brooklyn Eagle* profile of “notable new bank buildings of Brooklyn,” where it was described as a “monumental design in the Roman classic period of architecture.”<sup>12</sup> In October of 1906, the Williamsburgh Trust Company’s headquarters relocated to the new building and this “superb new edifice” was opened to the public.<sup>13</sup>

Soon afterward, the firm encountered serious problems. John G. Jenkins retired from its presidency in November of 1906 and was succeeded by his son Frank, although John retained a hand in its affairs. John continued to control the First National Bank of Brooklyn, and his son John G. Jr. was president of the Jenkins Trust Company, a new bank founded in 1905. These two institutions, along with the Williamsburgh Trust Company, were collectively known as the “Jenkins banks.” Their difficulties began in May of 1907, when the entire board of the First National Bank, except for the Jenkinses themselves, resigned, objecting to the bank’s purchase of

the Jenkins and Williamsburgh Trust Companies. Five months later, Wall Street was rocked by the financial crisis now known as the Panic of 1907. Several New York banks suspended their operations, including all three Jenkins banks, which shut down on October 25. Five days later, Frank Jenkins surrendered the bank's presidency to Marshall Driggs, and in November, all of its employees were let go. All three Jenkinse along with an additional son Frederick, who served as a director, were indicted on charges of conspiring to obtain loans from their banks in excess of those allowed by law, although John G. Jr. was acquitted and the charges against his brothers were subsequently dismissed. Their father died of a stroke in March of 1908 while awaiting trial.

The Williamsburgh Trust Company passed into the hands of a court-appointed receiver. It reopened in June of 1908 following the removal of "Jenkins interests" from the board and an infusion of cash from the Metropolitan Trust Company, whose president, General Brayton Ives, became its new leader. In early 1910, the company "abandoned its extravagant and palatial headquarters on the Williamsburg Bridge Plaza" and moved its main office to Downtown Brooklyn.<sup>14</sup> In December of that year, the Williamsburgh Trust Company announced that it was liquidating due to "diminishing profits and diminishing business," although all its depositors would be paid in full.<sup>15</sup> In 1931, it was reported that John G. Jenkins Jr. had spent the previous 24 years repaying the \$1.3 million in obligations resulting from the failure of the Jenkins banks in an effort to "clear ... not only the indebtedness but also the reputation of his father."<sup>16</sup>

#### Bank Design and the Williamsburgh Trust Company Building<sup>17</sup>

As industry, business, and commerce flourished after the Civil War, New York became the nation's financial capital, headquarters to many major banks and financial institutions. Even so, at the close of the war, most of these institutions were housed in former residences or other converted buildings and rarely in quarters designed for them. Toward the end of the 19th century, many banks in high-rent areas like the Financial District and Downtown Brooklyn began to construct office buildings, conducting business on their ground floors and renting the office space above to commercial tenants. At the same time, savings banks—which catered to small private depositors in neighborhoods outside of the city's major financial districts—took advantage of their less-expensive locations to construct lavish, freestanding bank buildings solely for their own occupancy. Frequently located in prominent locations within their neighborhoods, these new savings banks advertised their owners' wealth and commercial success. Private banks and trust companies realized that they too could benefit from the symbolism of occupying their own monumental buildings and soon began following suit. The elegant, low-scale bank structures constructed by financial institutions at the turn of the 20th century projected an image of strength, security, and permanence during volatile economic times and were intended to evoke a sense of trustworthiness and civic responsibility.

In 1909, the *Architectural Record* published a lengthy illustrated survey of America's new bank buildings, in which the author invoked ancient Greek and Roman temples—which also served as banks—as ancestors of the modern type. The article's illustrations attested to the pervasiveness of the classical bank type, of which the author stated, "The effect of the structure must be one of great importance and simplicity. It must make on the depositors the impression of being a perfectly safe place to leave their money and valuables."<sup>18</sup> This bank imagery was a response to both the freewheeling economic conditions of the time and to the popularity, starting in the late 19th century, of opulent, classically derived architectural styles drawing upon Greek, Roman, and Renaissance prototypes. Largely inspired, along with the City Beautiful movement, by the "White City" of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, Neoclassicism represented

order, clarity, sobriety, and timelessness, qualities considered appropriate to the ideals of the expanding nation and particularly germane to the design of banks and public institutions. One of the first truly grand bank buildings representing these trends was Manhattan's Bowery Savings Bank (McKim, Mead & White, 1894, a designated New York City Landmark), which features a colossal Corinthian order and pedimented front drawn from Roman precedents. The approach represented by the Bowery Savings Bank and by other monumental bank buildings of its time would dominate bank design in New York City over the following three decades.

Among the most impressive bank structures of this period are those, like the Williamsburgh Trust Company, that combine temple-like colonnades with great domes recalling the architecture of ancient Rome and the Renaissance. These "banking temples" include the exceptionally early Williamsburgh Savings Bank (George B. Post, 1870-75 with 1905 and 1925 additions) one block to the south, at 175 Broadway; R. H. Robertson's New York Bank for Savings (1896-97) at Eighth Avenue and 14th Street; and the Dime Savings Bank of Brooklyn (Mowbray & Uffinger, 1906-08; enlarged by Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, 1931-32), all of which are designated New York City Landmarks. The Williamsburgh Trust Company is an especially sumptuous and finely proportioned example of this type, featuring Ionic temple porticos crowned by acroteria on both its east facade facing Bridge Plaza and its south facade overlooking South 5th Street and the Williamsburg Bridge. Reliefs over the doorway and central window openings include the Williamsburgh Trust Company's seal flanked by fasces and featuring a seated figure of Justice, cornucopia, and beehive (symbolizing industry) in front of a distant sailing ship. Its saucer dome, likely inspired by that of the Pantheon, is set upon a high, paneled octagonal drum. The building is remarkable for its facing material of bright white terra cotta—deeply rusticated at its corners to add a sense of solidity—as most classical buildings of the time were faced in granite, marble, or limestone; stone was used only for its monolithic granite columns. The four fully developed facades of the Williamsburgh Trust Company Building are an especially rare and extravagant feature. When the company purchased the land for its new headquarters, it bought the property extending northward to South 4th Street and westward to Driggs Avenue, apparently intending for the building to stand in splendid isolation with clear views on all sides. Although the north and west facades did not receive the same porticos as the street facades, they were exuberantly decorated, featuring shallow temple-like pavilions echoing the porticos on the primary facades as well as lion's-head and other ornate classical reliefs. The rooftop balustrades of the primary facades continue across these facades to crown the entire building.

Remarkably few changes have been made to the building since its 1906 completion. These include the conversion of the westernmost window opening on the south facade to a door opening and the installation of a granite stoop there, very early in the building's history, in 1916. Small signs as well as crosses over the building's main entrance, atop its east portico, and on a pedestal above the dome, discreetly announce the building's function as a Ukrainian Orthodox cathedral.

Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell<sup>19</sup>

Frank J. Helmle (1869-1939)

Ulrich J. Huberty (1876-1910)

William H. Hudswell (1869?-1934)

The firm of Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell, which designed the Williamsburgh Trust Company Building, was formed in 1902 by a trio of established architects. Frank J. Helmle was

born in Ohio and educated at the Cooper Union and the School of Fine Arts of the Brooklyn Museum. In 1890, he entered the office of McKim, Mead & White, but by the mid-1890s, he had formed his own firm in Williamsburg with Ephraim Johnson under the name of Johnson & Helmle. From 1902 to 1903, he served as Brooklyn's Superintendent of Public Buildings and Offices. Ulrich J. Huberty served as the head draftsman in architect Frank Freeman's office and in 1897 began practicing on his own. New York native William H. Hudswell, Jr. opened his own architecture office in the Fort Greene area of Brooklyn in 1896; prior to that he was listed as a draftsman.

Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell, along with its successor firms, was among the most notable proponents in Brooklyn of the brand of classicism espoused by the City Beautiful Movement. A significant number of the borough's most prominent bank and commercial buildings were designed by the firm, including, in addition to the Williamsburgh Trust Company Building, the Lawyers Title Insurance Company Building at 188 Montague Street (1904-06, within the Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District); the 1905 and 1925 additions to the Williamsburgh Savings Bank (a designated New York City Landmark); the Dime Savings Bank of Williamsburgh at Havemeyer and South Fifth Streets (c. 1906); and the Greenpoint Savings Bank at 807 Manhattan Avenue (c. 1906, within the Greenpoint Historic District). The firm also designed the Hotel Bossert at 98 Montague Street (1908-13, within the Brooklyn Heights Historic District) and completed notable municipal commissions including the Prospect Park Boathouse (1904, within Prospect Park, a designated Scenic Landmark) and the Winthrop Park Shelter Pavilion (1910, a designated New York City Landmark) in Greenpoint. Numerous residences and ecclesiastical buildings throughout the borough were also designed by the firm, including many within New York City Historic Districts.

Helmle, Huberty, and Hudswell's partnership lasted only until 1906, when Hudswell left to open his own office. Helmle & Huberty continued in partnership until Huberty's death in 1910. Helmle subsequently joined forces with Harvey Wiley Corbett, sometimes working under his own name and sometimes under the firm name of Helmle & Corbett (later Helmle, Corbett & Harrison). Helmle is credited individually with the designs of the Brooklyn Central Office, Borough of Fire Communications (1913, a designated New York City Landmark) and for St. Gregory the Great Roman Catholic Church (1915-16, within the Crown Heights North II Historic District). Corbett was both an architect and urban theorist whose contributions to the design of the setback, streamlined skyscraper would make him one of New York's most important architectural figures of the 1920s and 1930s. Together with Helmle, the firm designed several innovative Manhattan skyscrapers, including the Bush Tower (1916-18), which helped pioneer setback massing for tall buildings, as well as the Master Building (1928-29), widely considered one of the city's finest Art Deco high-rises. Both of these buildings are designated New York City Landmarks.

#### Fifth District Magistrates' Court<sup>20</sup>

Following its 1910 closure, the former Williamsburgh Trust Company headquarters sat unused for five years, until its acquisition by the City of New York for use as the Magistrates' Court for Brooklyn's Fifth District.<sup>21</sup> Magistrates' Courts were new at the time, created by the Inferior Criminal Courts Act of 1910. This law was a major achievement of court-reform advocates, most notably for abolishing the city's old system of "police courts," which had been exposed by muckraking journalists for their scandalous exploitation of the accused, especially the poor and recent immigrants. In the police courts, defendants were routinely shaken down by



corrupt lawyers, court officers, and clerks, and trials were “shameful in their lack of dignity and fairness,” influenced more by the predilections of ward bosses than by the facts of the case.<sup>22</sup> Within the new inferior court system—which also included the Court of Special Sessions and Children’s Court—political influence was limited by the appointment of magistrates and justices to ten-year terms. Magistrates’ Court was the “court of first instance,” arraigning everyone accused of a felony, misdemeanor, or, in the vast majority of cases, lower-level offenses including disturbing the peace, littering, and other minor violations of the sanitary code. For those accused of a felony or misdemeanor, the magistrate decided whether to refer the case to the grand jury or Court of Special Sessions; all other cases were decided and discharged by him. Court reformer Mary E. Paddon saw the inferior courts as “a very real factor in Americanization,” dispensing “real justice, dignified, yet so simple that our new citizen is not merely bewildered by red tape and complicated formalities ... but inculcated with the idea that the law is to be respected and obeyed.”<sup>23</sup>

While the Inferior Criminal Courts Act brought major improvements to the city’s judicial system, its courthouses remained grossly inadequate. Conditions were especially bad in Brooklyn, where magistrates’ courts occupied a ragtag collection of converted row houses and commercial buildings, sharing these structures with saloons, laundries, and cigar stores. In 1910, Otto Kempner, Chief City Magistrate for Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island, observed that

Our courthouses are makeshifts of the clumsiest kind. Perfect work is next to impossible amid the imperfect conditions that prevail in these courtrooms, not to mention the effect on litigants. The grave impressiveness which should accompany judicial proceedings can only be secured by suitable surroundings, but when old stables, dancehalls, and discarded residences are converted into courthouses, that which should add tone and dignity to such places must be missing. The great City of New York cannot afford to have court buildings that would disgrace a third-rate provincial town.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to their lack of grandeur, Brooklyn’s courthouses were afflicted with poor ventilation, archaic restrooms, inadequate space, lack of privacy, and vermin. Some were fire hazards. From 1910 until his 1914 death, Kempner worked diligently to acquire functional court space reflecting the majesty of the judicial system. This was especially important in the Fifth District, which was Brooklyn’s second-largest judicial district, serving a population of 325,000 and carrying out almost 8,000 arraignments per year.<sup>25</sup>

Kempner considered the Williamsburgh Trust Company Building to be “a magnificent piece of architecture.”<sup>26</sup> Certainly, it met his desire for “impressive architectural effects and stateliness of design which cultured minds instinctively associate with public structures dedicated to court purposes,” and its isolation from the noises and odors of other buildings added to its appeal and appropriateness.<sup>27</sup> *Brooklyn Life* magazine described it as “a ready-made public building” and “an architectural adornment to the bridge approach peculiarly suitable for the purpose” of a courthouse.<sup>28</sup> The city first considered acquiring the building for a courthouse shortly after its closure in 1910 but passed on it because of the price, which was around \$80,000. By the summer of 1914, as part of its ongoing liquidation, the Williamsburgh Trust Company lowered the price to \$60,000, and Comptroller W. A. Prendergast recommended its acquisition, estimating that an additional \$15,000 to \$20,000 would be needed for its conversion. In November of 1914, the Aldermanic Finance Committee agreed, concluding that “the necessary

changes can be made at a moderate cost to the city, which will then have a well-equipped courthouse which will be a credit to the city for many years to come.”<sup>29</sup> Although conditions in the old Fifth District Courthouse at Manhattan Avenue and Powers Street were becoming increasingly unsanitary and intolerable, the city did not officially acquire the Williamsburgh Trust Company Building until August of 1915. Four months later, architect Stephen W. Dodge of Dodge & Morrison filed plans for its alteration. Most of the work was within the building’s interior, but it also included the conversion of the westernmost window opening on the south facade to a door opening and the installation of a new granite stoop there. This door, according to Dodge’s drawings, was set within a classical frame with a pedimented hood below a Roman lattice transom, opening into a new interior vestibule and corridor leading to the magistrate’s bench and the magistrate’s and clerk’s offices. The work was officially completed in October of 1916.

The building continued to serve as the Fifth District Magistrates’ Court with few changes for more than 40 years. In 1938, W.P.A. funding provided for the installation of new heating equipment and for repointing and cleaning the terra-cotta exterior. By the 1940s, the building’s deficiencies as a courthouse had become apparent, including its basement cells, which were considered “unsuitable and unfit”; inadequate recordkeeping facilities; and problems in keeping the enormous domed courtroom adequately heated during the winter. In 1947, the city decided to hand the building over to the American Legion and move the Fifth District Court a few blocks away to a recently renovated structure on Lee Avenue, but the funding for this never came through. Over the protests of politicians and other prominent local figures, it closed as a courthouse on March 1, 1958. In 1962, as part of a citywide reorganization and streamlining of the city’s judicial system, Magistrates’ Court was merged with the Court of Special Sessions and renamed New York City Criminal Court.

Three auctions followed the building’s closure. In the first, the city offered the building for a minimum of \$58,000, but it failed to sell. In the second, the price was dropped to \$30,000, but again there were no takers. Finally, in October of 1960, Bessie and Saul Deutch, who owned an auto body shop a few blocks away, purchased the Williamsburgh Trust Company Building for \$19,000, although they had no immediate plans for it. At that point, it had been vacant for more than two years. According to Saul, the Deutches considered removing the building’s dome to “make it more commercial,” converting it into a “social hall of some kind,” or demolishing it and replacing it with “a replica of an antique car with a sign advertising our collision shop.” His plans were derailed, however, by the difficulty of tearing the building down. “It’s built like a battleship,” he told the *New York Herald Tribune*. “We’ve talked to a couple of demolition guys and they want too much money.”<sup>30</sup> The Deutches kept the building only a short time before selling it to the Holy Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church in Exile in 1961.<sup>31</sup>

### Holy Trinity Cathedral of the Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church in Exile<sup>32</sup>

There is evidence that Ukrainians settled in the Americas, including New Amsterdam, as early as the 17th century. They took part in the American Revolution and were part of the Russian colony in California but did not begin immigrating to the United States in large numbers until the late 1870s, when poor economic conditions, high taxes, forced military conscription, and the lack of political freedom led to massive emigration, especially from the western portion of Ukraine under Austro-Hungarian rule. Between 1870 and 1914, approximately 200,000 Ukrainians immigrated to the U.S., with most settling in Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey. After 1920, a second, much-smaller wave of migration began, largely from Galicia,

where many Ukrainians were resistant to the Polish takeover of their homeland. Following World War II, there was a third major period of immigration, when many refugees who had fled Ukraine during the war and refused to return to their homeland under Soviet rule, were permitted to settle in the U.S. under the Displaced Persons Act of 1948. Ukrainian cultural institutions began to develop in New York City around the turn of the 20th century. Although portions of the Lower East Side now known as the East Village constituted the heart of New York's Ukrainian-American community at that time, a sizeable Ukrainian enclave developed in and around Williamsburg following the 1903 opening of the Williamsburg Bridge. In 1919, the *Brooklyn Eagle* reported on a parade in Williamsburg of 5,000 Ukrainian- and Lithuanian-Americans in support of the new Ukrainian and Lithuanian states, and in 1925, the paper noted that of the 16,000 Ukrainians in Brooklyn and on Long Island, "5,000 alone are in Greenpoint and Williamsburg, engaged as fur dyers, tailors, rope and jute workers, shoemakers, and iron founders, in the chain of Ukrainian grocery stores, and in the Swift packing houses."<sup>33</sup>

The Holy Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church in Exile was organized in New York City in the early 1950s by Archbishops Palladii (Palladios) Vydybida-Rudenko and Ihor Huba. It traced its origins to the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church, or PAOC, the spiritual home of millions of Orthodox Ukrainians formerly living within the Russian Empire who became residents of Poland following the 1921 Treaty of Riga. This church received its autocephaly (independence) through a 1924 *Tomos*, or edict, from the Patriarch of Constantinople, and despite its strict oversight from Polish authorities was permitted some Ukrainian customs and Ukrainian leaders. During World War II, PAOC leaders were crucial in re-establishing, in neighboring Ukraine, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC), which had formed during the country's early years but was destroyed by Soviet authorities in the 1930s.

Supporters within Poland of the reconstituted UAOC included Vydybida-Rudenko, who was born in the Podilia region of southwestern Ukraine in 1891, studied mathematics at Kiev University, and graduated from the Kamianets-Podilskyi Theological Seminary. He joined the finance department of the new Ukrainian National Republic in 1918 and was ordained in 1921, after which he served as a parish priest and as an administrator for the PAOC. He took his monastic vows in 1935 and was consecrated as Archbishop of Krakow and the Lemko region in 1941. In this position, Vydybida-Rudenko was a key figure in introducing "new [church] statutes stressing the Ukrainian character of the church ... and much was done to introduce Ukrainian religious practices."<sup>34</sup> He also served as chancellor of the revived UAOC. The co-founder of the Holy Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church in Exile, Ihor Huba, was born in Kherson gubernia in southern Ukraine in 1885.<sup>35</sup> Huba served as a parish priest in Poland before his consecration as a bishop in Kiev in 1942. He was subsequently elevated to archbishop of the UAOC. Following the 1944 Soviet reoccupation of Ukraine, almost all of the UAOC's bishops, and many of its priests and followers, fled to other countries. In 1948, the Patriarch of Moscow annulled the 1924 *Tomos* granting the PAOC's autocephaly and replaced it with his own edict affirming his control over the formerly independent church.

Archbishop Ihor came to the United States in 1949, and Archbishop Palladios followed a year later. They appear to have organized the Holy Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church in Exile in 1951. Three years later, the church came under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople based on its historical connection with the Orthodox Church in Poland. It was independent of America's other Ukrainian churches, most notably the long-established Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, which, by that time, comprised dozens of parishes with tens of thousands of members. By 1958, the Holy Ukrainian Autocephalic

Orthodox Church in Exile had six churches, 16 ordained clergy, and approximately 1,650 members, and was headquartered on East 146th Street in the South Bronx. That number increased to 16 churches and 5,000 members by 1961, when the church acquired the Williamsburgh Trust Company Building for its Holy Trinity Cathedral and administrative center. Most of its members were recent immigrants who had arrived after the Second World War.

With its cross-shaped plan and central dome—both traditional Orthodox church features—the Williamsburgh Trust Company Building was especially suited to the church’s needs. Vacant and neglected, the building was badly in need of repairs, and it owes its survival and preservation to the diligence and sensitivity of the church’s leaders and parishioners in maintaining its historic features over the past five decades. When the church purchased the building, its myriad problems included extensive leaking, collapsing ceilings, broken windows, and rusted beams that threatened its structural integrity. Shortly after its acquisition, interior work was begun to convert the former courthouse into Holy Trinity Cathedral. These alterations, completed in early 1963, were designed by Ukrainian-American architect Apollinare Osadca, whose best-known work in New York City is St. George’s Ukrainian Catholic Church (1977) at East 7th Street and Taras Shevchenko Place in the East Village. During its ownership, the church has made few visible changes to the cathedral’s exterior other than the installation of crosses over the main entrance and on top of the dome. Following the deaths of Archbishop Ihor in 1966 and Archbishop Palladios in 1971, the church was led by the Very Reverend Serhij Kindzeriavyj-Pastukhiv, a noted artist and promoter of the *bandura*, a traditional stringed instrument closely associated with Ukrainian ethnic identity and nationalism. In 1980, the Holy Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church in Exile ceased as an independent church, and most of its clergy and parishioners joined the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA. Today, Holy Trinity Cathedral is one of six UOC of USA parishes in New York City, and, along with St. Panteleimon Parish in Midwood, one of two in Brooklyn.

Under the care and ownership of the Holy Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church in Exile, the Williamsburgh Trust Company Building remains remarkably well-preserved. One of Brooklyn’s most outstanding and monumental Neoclassical bank buildings, this lavish structure continues to recall Williamsburg’s industrial prosperity of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as well as the surrounding area’s historical role as a major financial and commercial district serving Williamsburg, Greenpoint, and Bushwick.

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Several historic maps show the porticos extending beyond the lot line into adjacent sidewalks. These include Sanborn Map Company, *Insurance Maps of the Borough of Brooklyn, City of New York, Volume 3* (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1918, updated to 1992), plate 13. In addition, plans filed with the building's New Building Application (NB 1283-05) show the southerly "building line"—apparently the lot line—cutting diagonally through a portion of the south portico, and the easterly "building line" following the front facade line behind the portico, indicating that a portion of the south portico, and all of the east portico, were constructed outside of the lot boundaries.
- <sup>2</sup> This section is largely adapted from LPC, *Long Island Business College Designation Report* (LP-2544) (New York: City of New York, 2013), prepared by Michael Caratzas.
- <sup>3</sup> The bridge was initially opened to carriages, streetcars, and pedestrians, with subway service following in 1908. See "Mayor Runs a Train Over New Bridge," *New York Times*, September 17, 1908, 16.
- <sup>4</sup> Sources for this section include drawings and other documents associated with New Building Application 1283-05 within the block-and-lot folder for Block 2446, Lot 63 at the Brooklyn office of the New York City Department of Buildings, as well as "Williamsburgh Trust Company Incorporated," *Wall Street Journal*, March 27, 1899, 4; "To Increase Its Capital Stock," *New York Tribune*, April 16, 1899, A4; "Otto Huber Dead," *New York Times*, March 23, 1900, 4; "Real Estate," *Brooklyn Life* (February 22, 1902), 32; "New York Trust Companies," *New York Times*, August 24, 1902, 30; "Moses May Made President," *Brooklyn Eagle*, April 10, 1902, 20; "Williamsburgh Trust Co. to Put up New Building," *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 18, 1902, 1; "Local Stocks and Bonds," *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 20, 1902, 26; "Business Changes," *Brooklyn Eagle*, September 17, 1902, 6; "New Fulton Street Building," *Brooklyn Eagle*, December 5, 1902, 12; "Williamsburgh Trust Company's New Home on Broadway," *Brooklyn Eagle*, March 15, 1903, 33; "Real Estate," *Brooklyn Life* (May 9, 1903), 32; "Olcott in for Parker," *New York Sun*, August 23, 1904, 8; "Brooklyn's Prominent Citizens," *Brooklyn Life* (July 1, 1905), 11; "Committee Approves of Shrady's Washington," *Brooklyn Eagle*, October 8, 1905, 8; "Notable New Bank Buildings in Brooklyn," *Brooklyn Eagle*, December 14, 1905, II:1; "Shrady's Washington Statue Is Already in the Foundry," *Brooklyn Eagle*, February 22, 1906, 16; "Future Financial Center of Eastern District," *Brooklyn Eagle*, March 25, 1906, 5; "Financial Notes," *New York Times*, July 13, 1906, 10; "Financial Brooklyn," *Brooklyn Life* (July 14, 1906), 24; "Local Stocks and Bonds," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, September 23, 1906, 45; "Financial," *Brooklyn Life* (October 20, 1906), 30; "Williamsburg Trust Co.," *Wall Street Journal*, November 9, 1906, 8; "Financial," *Brooklyn Life* (November 10, 1906), 28; "Bank Directors Resign," *Wall Street Journal*, May 20, 1907, 8; "Williamsburg Trust Closes," *Wall Street Journal*, October 26, 1907, 7; "Solvent, but Closes," *Washington Post*, October 26, 1907, 2; "Six Banking Houses in Brooklyn Close," *New York Times*, October 26, 1907, 4; "Financial Sky Nearly Clear of the Clouds," *Nashville American*, October 26, 1907, 1; "Six Small Banks in New York Close," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 26, 1907, 1; "Run Continues," *Manchester Guardian*, October 26, 1907, 9; "Our Own Correspondent," *The Observer*, October 27, 1907, 5; "The Story of the Panic," *The Observer*, October 27, 1907, 5; "Panic Now Seems Over," *Baltimore Sun*, October 27, 1907, 2; "M. S. Driggs in Control," *New York Tribune*, October 30, 1907, 2; "Williamsburg Trust Company," *Wall Street Journal*, October 30, 1907, 6; "Ask to Name Receivers," *New York Tribune*, November 16, 1907, 2; "Receivers for Six Banks," *New York Tribune*, November 17, 1907, 1; "Bank Methods Wrong," *Washington Post*, November 17, 1907, 10; "Gotham Bankers Face Grand Jury," *Chicago Tribune*, November 17, 1907, 4; "Bad Banking, He Says," *Baltimore Sun*, November 17, 1907, 2; "Banks to Grand Jury," *New York Tribune*, November 18, 1907, 2; "Brooklyn Banking Investigation," *Wall Street Journal*, November 19, 1907, 7; "Trust Co. Funds Used in Stock Deals," *New York Times*, November 19, 1907, 1; "May Indict To-day in Borough Bank," *New York Times*, November 20, 1907, 1; "New Revelations in Brooklyn Bank," *New York Times*, November 24, 1907, 6; "Williamsburg Trust Co.," *Wall Street Journal*, November 26, 1907, 7; "Five More Arrests of Bankers To-day," *New York Times*, November 26, 1907, 1; "Three Brothers Arraigned," *Baltimore Sun*, November 27, 1907, 2; "Three Jenkinses Held," *New York Tribune*, November 27, 1907, 2; "Jenkins Torn from His Wife," *Austin Statesman*, November 27, 1907, 1; "Pushing Probe into Brooklyn Bank Misdoings," *Nashville American*, November 28, 1907, 1; "For the State," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, November 28, 1907, 2; "Big Sums Drawn Out," *New York Tribune*, December 1, 1907, 1; "Security Less than Loans," *Boston Daily Globe*, December 1, 1907, 15; "Made Free with Funds of Banks," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 1, 1907, 49; "Loans to Jenkins Family," *New York Times*, December 1, 1907, 16; "Jenkinses Held Sway," *New York Tribune*, December 5, 1907, 8; "Plan Big Syndicate to Buy Closed Banks," *New York Times*,

December 5, 1907, 12; “Allege Conspiracy in Brooklyn Bank,” *New York Times*, December 9, 1907, 16; “No Rest for Bankers,” *New York Tribune*, December 11, 1907, 2; “Father and Sons,” *Louisville Courier-Journal*, December 12, 1907, 7; “Father and Sons Held,” *Baltimore Sun*, December 12, 1907, 2; “Father and Three Sons at the Bar,” *Nashville American*, December 12, 1907, 1; “Williamsburg Trust Is to Be Wound Up,” *New York Times*, December 15, 1907, 4; “Williamsburg Trust Co. Receivers,” *Wall Street Journal*, December 16, 1907, 6; “Williamsburg Trust Offer,” *New York Times*, December 28, 1907, 2; “Offer for Brooklyn Bank,” *New York Times*, December 30, 1907, 10; “Williamsburg Stockholders Act,” *New York Tribune*, January 9, 1908, 11; “Object to Jackson’s Methods,” *New York Tribune*, February 29, 1908, 2; “Indicted Banker Dead,” *Baltimore Sun*, March 13, 1908, 5; “John G. Jenkins Dies on Eve of His Trial,” *New York Times*, March 13, 1908, 3; “Williamsburg Trust to Open,” *New York Times*, April 11, 1908, 14; “Williamsburg Trust Co.,” *Wall Street Journal*, April 28, 1908, 4; “Williamsburg Trust Co.,” *Wall Street Journal*, April 29, 1908, 8; “Trust Company to Open,” *New York Tribune*, May 21, 1908, 2; “Ives to Head Company,” *New York Tribune*, May 22, 1908, 11; “Gen. Ives Chosen,” *New York Times*, May 22, 1908, 16; “Williamsburg Trust to Open,” *Boston Daily Globe*, May 23, 1908, 6; “Williamsburg Trust Plans,” *New York Times*, May 23, 1908, 3; “Williamsburg Trust Open Tomorrow,” *New York Times*, June 7, 1908, 10; “Williamsburg Trust Reopens,” *New York Tribune*, June 9, 1908, 11; “New Williamsburg Trust Head,” *New York Tribune*, January 22, 1909, 11; “Mr. Ives Going Abroad,” *New York Tribune*, January 23, 1909, 13; “Official Banking News,” *New York Times*, January 31, 1910, 10; “Solvent, Directors Sure,” *New York Tribune*, April 8, 1910, 1; “Williamsburg Trust to Liquidate,” *Wall Street Journal*, December 15, 1910, 7; “Voting Trust at an End,” *New York Tribune*, December 15, 1910, 11; and “Jenkins Repays \$1,300,000 to Bank Creditors,” *New York Herald Tribune*, August 14, 1931, 3.

<sup>5</sup> “Brooklyn’s Prominent Citizens.”

<sup>6</sup> “Indicted Banker Dead.”

<sup>7</sup> “Its Great Progress,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, August 2, 1891, 13; “Otto Huber Dead”; “Moses May Made President”; Leonard Benardo and Jennifer Weiss, *Brooklyn by Name: How the Neighborhoods, Streets, Parks, Bridges, and More Got Their Names* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 16; and “Bird S. Coler Dies at 72; Ex-City and Boro Official,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, June 13, 1941, 15.

<sup>8</sup> Kings County, Office of the Register, Conveyance Liber 25 (Section 8), 341 (June 3, 1904).

<sup>9</sup> “Financial Brooklyn,” *Brooklyn Life* (July 14, 1906), 18.

<sup>10</sup> “Committee Approves of Shrady’s Washington.” The parcels west and north of the Williamsburgh Trust Company Building were sold by the firm to Selina Jane Story in 1907. See Kings County, Office of the Register, Conveyance Liber 38 (Section 8), 212 (January 8, 1907).

<sup>11</sup> “Future Financial Center of Eastern District.” Other major bank buildings in the vicinity included the Williamsburgh Savings Bank at 175 Broadway, which featured an imposing western addition by Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell; the same firm also designed the temple-fronted home of the Dime Savings Bank of Williamsburgh, begun in 1906 and overlooking the eastern end of Bridge Plaza from the corner of Havemeyer and South 5th Streets. See “Notable New Home on Williamsburg Bridge Plaza of the Dime Savings Bank,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, April 7, 1906, 4.

<sup>12</sup> “Notable New Bank Buildings in Brooklyn.”

<sup>13</sup> “Financial,” *Brooklyn Life* (October 20, 1906), 30.

<sup>14</sup> “The Financial Half Year,” *Brooklyn Life* (July 16, 1910), 17.

<sup>15</sup> “Williamsburg Trust to Liquidate.”

<sup>16</sup> “Jenkins Repays \$1,300,000 to Bank Creditors.”

<sup>17</sup> Portions of this section are adapted from LPC, *Brooklyn Trust Company Building Designation Report* (LP-1905) (New York: City of New York, 1996), prepared by Nancy J. Goeschel; LPC, *Dime Savings Bank Designation Report* (LP-1907) (New York: City of New York, 1994), prepared by David M. Breiner; LPC, *Greenwich Savings Bank Designation Report* (LP-1766) (New York: City of New York, 1992), prepared by Charles Savage; LPC, *Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company Building Designation Report* (LP-1633) (New York: City of New York,

1988), prepared by Elisa Urbanelli; and LPC, *Union Square Savings Bank Designation Report* (LP-1945) (New York: City of New York, 1996), prepared by Donald G. Presa.

<sup>18</sup> Cited in LPC, *Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company Building Designation Report*, 3.

<sup>19</sup> This section is primarily adapted from the Architects' and Builders' Appendix, by Marianne S. Percival, to LPC, *Bedford Stuyvesant/Expanded Stuyvesant Heights Historic District* (LP-2496) (New York: City of New York, 2013), 602-03.

<sup>20</sup> Sources for this section include drawings and other documents associated with Alteration Application 9025-15 within the block-and-lot folder for Block 2446, Lot 63 at the Brooklyn office of the New York City Department of Buildings, as well as Charitable Organization Society of the City of New York, *The Forgotten Army: Six Years' Work of the Committee on Criminal Courts of the Charity Organization Society of the City of New York, 1911-1917* (New York: Charitable Organization Society, 1918?); Mary E. Paddon, "Inferior Criminal Courts of New York City," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* (May 1920 to February 1921), 8-20; *Annual Report of the Board of City Magistrates of the City of New York, Second Division* (1910 to 1914) and *Annual Report, City Magistrates' Courts, City of New York* (1915 to 1958); "Hope to Sweep District Under Broom Emblem," *Brooklyn Eagle*, March 13, 1912, 8; "City May Buy Williamsburgh Trust Building," *Brooklyn Life* (March 16, 1912), 32; "Bar Ass'n Scores Dike's Remarks," *Brooklyn Eagle*, June 13, 1914, 1; "Objects to Court Site," *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 26, 1914, 6; "Trust Co. Building for Police Court," *Brooklyn Eagle*, September 24, 1914, 3; "Protest over New Court," *Brooklyn Eagle*, October 3, 1914, 16; "Finance Committee for Trust Co. Site," *Brooklyn Eagle*, November 25, 1914, 4; "Aldermen Reject Court House Site," *Brooklyn Daily Standard Union*, December 9, 1914, 5; "Insanitary State of Court Ignored," *Brooklyn Eagle*, March 27, 1915, 3; "Long Delay in the Removal of Court," *Brooklyn Daily Standard Union*, March 28, 1915; "Asks Action on Court," *Brooklyn Eagle*, April 1, 1915, 24; "Dooley Protests Abolishing Court," *Brooklyn Eagle*, April 7, 1915, 4; "Brooklyn Court Bonds Approved," *Brooklyn Eagle*, April 8, 1915, 4; "Will O.K. New Court," *Brooklyn Eagle*, April 15, 1915, 2; "New Court House July 1," *Brooklyn Eagle*, April 17, 1915, 2; "Courts Don't Halt Excise Violations," *Brooklyn Eagle*, May 21, 1915, 9; "To Acquire Trust Building," *Brooklyn Eagle*, June 19, 1915, 18; "City Takes Title," *Brooklyn Eagle*, August 12, 1915, 2; "5th District Court Abandons Quarters," *Brooklyn Eagle*, October 25, 1915, 3; "To Fit out New Court," *Brooklyn Eagle*, January 17, 1916, 2; "Ink Frozen on Judge's Desk," *Brooklyn Eagle*, February 14, 1916, 1; "Court a Firetrap; Suit May Close It," *Brooklyn Eagle*, February 28, 1916, 18; "Will Sue to Close Bedford Ave. Court," *Brooklyn Eagle*, March 17, 1916, 26; "To Start Repaving Broadway Soon," *Brooklyn Eagle*, April 19, 1916, 8; "Improper Buildings Retard Court Work," *Brooklyn Eagle*, May 2, 1916, 4; "Prentice Praises Work of Park Dept.," *Brooklyn Eagle*, May 9, 1916, 5; "\$3,600 for New Court: Nothing Lavish—Pounds," *Brooklyn Eagle*, May 30, 1916, 1; "For Court Furnishings," *Brooklyn Eagle*, June 15, 1916, 3; "Plan Assessment Hearing," *Brooklyn Eagle*, June 16, 1916, 1; "\$10,000 for Court During 'Patching,'" *Brooklyn Eagle*, June 21, 1916, 9; "Holds Court Under Many Difficulties," *Brooklyn Eagle*, August 6, 1916, 4; "LaGuardia Lauds Work of Moses After Bridge Tilt," *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 2, 1935, 1; "16 Old and New Courts to Get WPA Patching," *Brooklyn Eagle*, August 31, 1938, 4; "City Hall Slants," *Brooklyn Eagle*, February 17, 1947, 3; "Living in Brooklyn: The Bridge Plaza in Williamsburg," *Brooklyn Eagle*, May 16, 1951, 17; "Expressway Link Will Open Today," *New York Times*, December 6, 1952, 16; "Unwanted Courthouse Still Begging for Buyer," *New York World Telegram and Sun*, September 26, 1960, B2; "Courthouse to be Sold; Incinerator, too," *Greenpoint Weekly Star*, September 30, 1960, 1; "Buyer Hunts Ways to Use a Courthouse," *New York Herald Tribune*, October 30, 1960, 29; "Chief City Magistrate Is Named to State Court," *New York Times*, July 6, 1962, 52; "Many City Courts Get a New Venue," *New York Times*, September 4, 1962, 28; and "Judicial Board Hails New Criminal Court," *New York Times*, December 27, 1963, 1.

<sup>21</sup> Kings County, Office of the Register, Conveyance Liber 3564, 169 (August 10, 1915).

<sup>22</sup> Charitable Organization Society of the City of New York, 12; Paddon, 8.

<sup>23</sup> Paddon, 8.

<sup>24</sup> *Annual Report of the Board of City Magistrates of the City of New York, Second Division, for the Year Ending December 31, 1912*, 6.

<sup>25</sup> Brooklyn's Fifth District was bounded by the East River, Newtown Creek, Flushing Avenue, Classon Avenue, Hewes Street, and the Brooklyn Navy Yard. *Annual Report, City Magistrates' Courts, City of New York, 1917*, 6.

- <sup>26</sup> *Annual Report of the Board of City Magistrates of the City of New York, Second Division, for the Year Ending December 31, 1912*, 6.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.
- <sup>28</sup> “A Ready-Made Public Building,” *Brooklyn Life* (August 22, 1914), 12.
- <sup>29</sup> “Finance Committee for Trust Co. Site,” *Brooklyn Standard Union*, November 25, 1914, 4.
- <sup>30</sup> “Buyer Hunts Ways to Use a Courthouse,” *New York Herald Tribune*, October 30, 1960, 29. The building’s value was undoubtedly affected by its location on Williamsburg Bridge Plaza, which never became the great civic gathering place intended by its planners. Early in its history, the eastern portion of the plaza between Roebling and Havemeyer Streets was used as a station and yard for various trolley lines before its conversion to LaGuardia Playground in 1935. In 1952, the elevated highway linking the bridge with the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway opened, bisecting the playground and cutting off the western end of the plaza—and the Williamsburgh Trust Company Building—from the area to its east.
- <sup>31</sup> Kings County, Office of the Register, Conveyance Liber 8977, 364 (December 1, 1961).
- <sup>32</sup> Portions of this section are adapted from LPC, *First German Baptist Church (Later Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church of St. Volodymyr/Later Congregation Tifereth Israel-Town and Village Synagogue* (LP-2475) (New York: City of New York, 2014), prepared by Gale Harris. Other sources include drawings and other documents associated with Alteration Application 3665-61 within the block-and-lot folder for Block 2446, Lot 63 at the Brooklyn office of the New York City Department of Buildings, as well as *Yearbook of American Churches* (New York: Round Table Press, 1957-1972) and *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1973-2012); James E. Mooney, “Ukrainians,” in *Encyclopedia of New York City, Second Edition* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2010), 1343; Ivan Korovytsky and Myroslav Trukhan, “Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church”; Halyna Myroniuk, “Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the USA”; Arkadii Zhukovsky, “Autocephaly” and “Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church”; and “Huba, Ihor,” “Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church in Exile,” “Ukrainian Orthodox Church of America,” “Valedinsky, Dionisii,” and “Vydybida-Rudenko, Paladii,” in Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, *Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine* ([www.encyclopediaofukraine.com](http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com)), accessed May 18, 2016; “An Outline History of the Metropolia Center of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA” and “Directory of Parishes,” website of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA ([www.uocofusa.org](http://www.uocofusa.org)), accessed May 18, 2016; “Rev. Pastukhiv, Bandurist, Profiled in Newsday,” *The Ukrainian Weekly*, September 12, 1980, 8; and letters from Rev. Wolodymyr Wronskyj, Holy Trinity Cathedral, to Alan Burnham, Landmarks Preservation Commission (February 10, 1966) and Sarah Carroll, Landmarks Preservation Commission (September 24, 2015).
- <sup>33</sup> “Near East Parade in Williamsburg,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, October 3, 1919, 5; “Easter Bells Ring Joyous Today for Boro’s Ukrainians,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, April 19, 1925, 10A.
- <sup>34</sup> “Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church,” accessed May 18, 2016.
- <sup>35</sup> The *Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine* defines “gubernia” as “an administrative territorial unit in the Russian Empire” ([www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages\G\U\Gubernia.htm](http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages\G\U\Gubernia.htm)), accessed May 18, 2016.



## FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of the building and site, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Williamsburgh Trust Company Building has a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest, and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds, that among its important qualities, the Williamsburgh Trust Company Building was completed in 1906 and is a monumental Neoclassical style bank building recalling Williamsburg's industrial prosperity of the 19th and early 20th centuries and the historic role of the building's surrounding area as a commercial and financial hub serving Williamsburg, Greenpoint, and Bushwick; that it was designed by Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell, major Brooklyn architects who designed some of the borough's most significant early-20th-century banks and park structures; that it originally served as headquarters of the Williamsburgh Trust Company, which enjoyed considerable financial success following its 1899 founding; that it is a superlative example of the luxurious "banking temples" constructed in Manhattan and Brooklyn in the late 19th century, featuring classical porticos with acroteria on its two street facades, as well as an unusual facing material of white terra cotta; that the building's opulent design and prominent location at the entrance of the then-new Williamsburg Bridge drew admiration from the press, which described it as a "superb new edifice" that was both "extravagant and palatial"; that after the Williamsburgh Trust Company was rocked by the Panic of 1907, the building served its last banking customer in 1910; that the building was acquired in 1915 by the City of New York as part of a broad effort to reform the city's court system and improve Brooklyn's courthouses, and that it from 1916 to 1958, it served as Magistrates' Court for the Fifth District of Brooklyn; that in 1961, it was acquired by the Holy Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church in Exile to serve as its Holy Trinity Cathedral; and that the church has diligently and sensitively maintained the building, enabling this lavish structure to endure as one of Williamsburgh's most prominent and imposing landmarks.

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 a Landmark the Williamsburgh Trust Company Building, and designates Borough of Brooklyn, Tax Map Block 2446, Lot 63, including the entire lot and all improvements on this lot, the sidewalk fence in front of the east and south frontages of this lot, and all land in between the lot line and said fence, including the land underneath any features of the Williamsburgh Trust Company Building that extend over or onto adjacent sidewalks, as its Landmark Site.

Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair

Diana Chapin, Wellington Chen, Michael Devonshire, Michael Goldblum, John Gustafsson, Jeanne Lutfy, Adi Shamir-Baron, Kim Vauss, Commissioners



Williamsburgh Trust Company Building  
Primary south and east facades  
*Photo: Sarah Moses, 2016*





Williamsburgh Trust Company Building  
East facade, showing main entrance  
*Photo: Sarah Moses, 2016*



Williamsburgh Trust Company Building  
Relief over main entrance  
*Photo: Sarah Moses, 2016*





Williamsburgh Trust Company Building  
South facade  
*Photo: Sarah Moses, 2016*

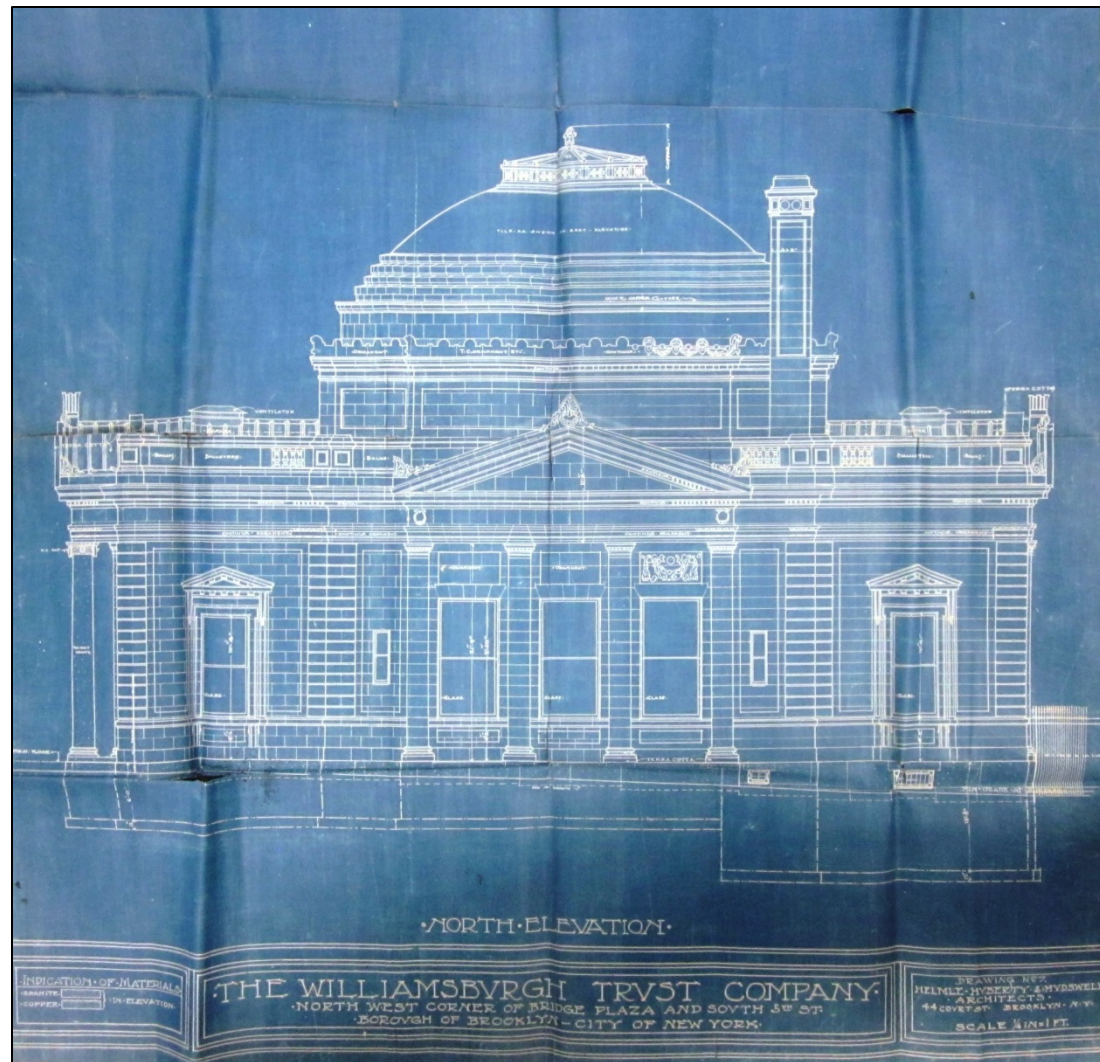


Williamsburgh Trust Company Building  
 South elevation drawing by Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell, 1905  
*New Building Application 1283-05*  
*Folder for Block 2446, Lot 63, Brooklyn office of the New York City Department of Buildings*





Williamsburgh Trust Company Building  
West elevation drawing by Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell, 1905  
New Building Application 1283-05  
Folder for Block 2446, Lot 63, Brooklyn office of the New York City Department of Buildings



Williamsburgh Trust Company Building  
North elevation drawing by Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell, 1905  
*New Building Application 1283-05*  
*Folder for Block 2446, Lot 63, Brooklyn office of the New York City Department of Buildings*





Williamsburgh Trust Company Building under construction, c. 1906  
*Detroit Publishing Company Collection, Library of Congress*



Williamsburgh Trust Company Building  
*American Architect and Building News, December 15, 1906*

