

Landmarks Preservation Commission  
June 8, 1988, Designation List 204  
LP-1634

FORMER NEW YORK BANK FOR SAVINGS, 81 Eighth Avenue a/k/a/ 301 West 14th Street, Borough of Manhattan. Built 1896-97; architect Robert H. Robertson.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 738, Lot 33.

On September 15, 1987, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the former New York Bank for Savings and the proposed designation of the related Landmarks Site (Item No. 10). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Ten witnesses spoke in favor of the designation; twenty-one letters were received in support of designation. Two speakers representing the owner expressed opposition to designation.

#### DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

##### Summary

The New York Savings Bank,<sup>1</sup> built in two sections in 1896-97, was designed by R.H. Robertson in the Academic Classic style popularized by the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago (1893). It is one of his most successful designs: for its size, its scale is monumental; its materials and workmanship are exceptionally fine. While Robertson used the classical architectural vocabulary, he was by no means a strict classicist. His propensity for functional considerations place him among the significant New York architects of the late nineteenth century. Subsequent alterations to meet the changing needs of the bank have been largely compatible with Robertson's original design. The bank occupies a prominent corner site at the axis of two major thoroughfares, and it is complemented by its classical counterpart, the Manufacturers Hanover Trust Bank built in 1907 on the south side of 14th Street.

##### New York Savings Bank - the patron

The New York Savings Bank was organized in 1854 and opened at 21st Street and Third Avenue. Three years later the bank moved to the basement of the four-story New York County Bank building on the northwest corner of 14th and Eighth Avenue (81 Eighth Avenue) -- the site of the present building. Following the Civil War the city continued to push northward and 14th Street, east and west, became a significant commercial thoroughfare; the introduction of rapid transportation encouraged the growth of light industry and tenement dwellings.<sup>2</sup> The New York Savings Bank prospered.<sup>3</sup> Subsequently the bank bought the building and to achieve greater visibility moved from the basement to the first floor. Other savings institutions were also aware of 14th Street's growing importance; for example, the Greenwich Savings Bank, founded in 1833, moved to its fifth home and first new building at Sixth Avenue and 16th Street in 1892. In 1896-97 the New York Savings Bank demolished its older building to make way for a new and more conspicuous headquarters on the same site.

## Banks and Architectural Imagery<sup>4</sup>

As industry, business, and commerce prospered after the Civil War, New York became the nation's financial capital. Apart from a few imposing buildings on Wall Street, however, banks were for the most part located in converted residences, or in office buildings, but prior to the 1880s and 1890s, rarely in quarters designed for them. Property values being so high in the financial district, many commercial banks began to build office buildings, conducting business on the ground floors and renting revenue-producing office space above. Savings banks, many of which catered to small private investors, were, in contrast, generally not located in the Wall Street area; therefore, taking advantage of less expensive real estate, they were able to build monumental bank buildings for their exclusive use, many on corner sites.<sup>5</sup> Savings bank buildings proliferated in the 1890s. Among them were the Greenwich Savings Bank (see above), designed by Robert W. Gibson; the Bank for Savings at 22nd Street and Fourth Avenue, designed by Cyrus L.W. Eidlitz (1892); the sumptuous Bowery Savings Bank, designed by McKim, Mead & White (1894); and Robertson's Bank for Savings. (Eleven years later, in 1907, the New York County National Bank, later a branch of the Manufacturers Hanover Trust Co., joined the Bank for Savings on the south side of 14th Street.)

The Academic Classicism popularized by the Columbian Exposition in Chicago (1893), replaced both the Richardsonian Romanesque and subsequent neo-Renaissance styles in popularity. Its leading proponent was the firm of McKim, Mead & White.<sup>6</sup> Of all public building types, certainly banks lent themselves particularly well to the monumental classical style initiated by this firm. Although by 1896 Robertson had already produced classical designs, a possible prototype for his New York Savings Bank building may have been Robert W. Gibson's Greenwich Savings Bank; it was rough-cut granite and tentatively neo-classical, rather than an example of developed classicism.<sup>7</sup> What may have attracted Robertson to the Greenwich Savings Bank building was Gibson's use of the corner site, so like that of the New York Savings Bank. The entrance was through a deep, arched and pedimented portico on the narrow Sixth Avenue elevation. Along 16th Street, Gibson's building was three bays long; a low dome was placed above this elevation's wider, central bay. Robertson could very well have borrowed this solution, resolving Gibson's nascent neo-classicism in his own design.

## The Architects

R. H. Robertson was a distinguished and prolific New York architect active during the last three decades of the 19th and the first two decades of the 20th century.<sup>8</sup> His designs reflect the major styles current during those years -- the High Victorian Gothic of the 1870s, the Romanesque Revival in the 1880s, and the Free Classic or neo-Renaissance style during the next two decades -- but even during his lifetime the freedom and individuality of his stylistic approach was recognized and admired.

Robert Henderson Robertson (1849-1919) was born and raised in Philadelphia. He graduated from Rutgers College in 1869 and joined Henry A. Sims, the Philadelphia architect, as an apprentice in the same year. Subsequently he moved to New York where he worked both for George B. Post and then Edward Tuckerman Potter. In 1875, after an association with

Potter's half-brother, William Appleton Potter, he joined him in partnership. Robertson opened his own office five years later. In the 20th century he was associated with Potter's nephew Robertson Burnside Potter and his son T. Markoe Robertson. Robertson joined the AIA in 1873, the New York Chapter the following year, and was elevated to the status of Fellow in 1885; he became a member of the Architectural League in 1886.

A survey of Robertson's work reveals he learned from his mentors to create an expedient plan and to build well. In the 1880s the Romanesque Revival was his preferred style. Notable examples include the YWCA (1883) at 7 East 15th Street; the Madison Avenue Methodist Church (1884, demolished) at East 60th Street and Madison Avenue with its unusual spire, more watch tower than belfry; St. James Episcopal Church (1887, remodelled in the 1920s by Ralph Adams Cram) at East 71st Street and Madison Avenue; Rutgers Riverside Church (1889, demolished) at West 73rd Street and Broadway; and St. Lukes Episcopal Church (1892), located on Convent Avenue in the Hamilton Heights Historic District. Contemporaries commented that it was Robertson's practice to juxtapose architectural elements, often for picturesque effect. This may be seen in Robertson's work which reflects the Free Classic style. Such buildings include the Academy of Medicine (1889, demolished) on West 43rd Street with its second story library emphatically expressed on its four-story facade; the tall American Tract Society Building (1894-95) at Nassau and Spruce Streets, crowned with a unique, colossal loggia and hipped roof; the Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew, originally the St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church (1895-97), a designated New York City Landmark, at West End Avenue and West 86th Street with its bold octagonal campanile tower and flying buttresses; and the twenty-seven story Park Row Building (1896-99) at 15 Park Row with its twin cupolas, for a time the tallest building in the world. The New York Savings Bank is an expression of the Academic Classic style popularized by the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago (1893).

According to Montgomery Schuyler, the noted late-nineteenth critic, Robertson was more interested in the parts, or "features," of his buildings which, as a consequence, lacked a pleasing unity, "a physiognomy."<sup>9</sup> But Schuyler overlooked one of Robertson's important strengths; the architect went to extraordinary lengths to express a building's interior function on its exterior. For him the expression of function was of great importance. This may be seen in his successful design for the New York Savings Bank.

Two other architects are responsible for subsequent alterations and additions to the former New York Savings Bank. George Provot (1869-1936) was born in New York City but received his early education in France. He graduated from Columbia's School of Architecture in 1889. In 1895 he formed a partnership with Bowen B. Smith and Alexander M. Welch, later a vice-president of the New York Savings Bank.<sup>10</sup> In a collaboration with W.W. Hall and T.M. Hall, speculative builders, Welch, Smith & Provot designed a number of houses in Manhattan's Upper East Side Historic District as well as 1009 Fifth Avenue, a designated New York City landmark. The partnership was dissolved in 1908, and Provot continued independently. Though he designed the old French Hospital on West 34th Street, he was known for his alteration work as well, including the remodelling of the Brevoort Hotel and his alterations to the New York Savings Bank in 1930.<sup>11</sup>

At present little is known of Adolf L. Muller, the registered

architect whose name appears on the drawings for the 1940 addition north of the bank building along Eighth Avenue. At that time he was employed by Halsey, McCormick & Helmer, Inc. at 286 Fifth Avenue. Muller's name appears on the drawings for the consequent remodelling of the banking hall, as well. Despite its Manhattan address, this firm is best known for its Brooklyn bank buildings. Foremost among these is the Williamsburg Savings Bank of 1927-29, a designated New York City Landmark. They also designed the Brevoort Savings Bank, 1931, at 1281 Fulton Street in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood, and the additions to the Dime Savings Bank at 9 DeKalb Avenue in the same year. Twelve years after his initial work for the New York Savings Bank, Muller's name reappears on the plans for the remodelling of the bank's main entrance vestibule.

### Construction and Design

In an effort to maximize space, Robertson made good use of the "L" shaped lot (plate 2). A savings institution houses two functions, a public one and an administrative one, requiring two separate spaces. Reserving the 'staff' of the "L" with its Eighth Avenue frontage for the public space, he relegated the bank's officers, clerks and tellers to the "L's" long base, extending from 14th Street deep into the blocks's interior (plate 2). So that business could continue without interruption, the building was constructed in two campaigns, the administrative western section first and the public eastern soon after. This is why the western portion of the 14th Street elevation has a contained though asymmetrical character. It was the bank's initial public entrance as well. By May 1897, to enter the western section while the eastern was being constructed, depositors climbed a temporary wooden staircase from 14th Street through the central western window (plate 3).<sup>12</sup>

Within a year depositors could ascend the broad steps from Eighth Avenue and enter the bank through either of the central pair of double doors within the monumental portico (plate 4). The dome and its drum with stained-glass lights were located directly above the terminal curve of the center tellers' counter. With transactions completed, the depositor could leave directly from either of the counter's sides through either of the extreme pair of exit doorways. This quartet of doors, changed by George Provot in 1930, is an example of Robertson's concern with function.

### Subsequent History

In 1940-41 a limestone-faced addition to house expanded services was constructed north of the banking hall, along Eighth Avenue. Upon merging with the Bank for Savings in 1964 the bank became the third largest savings institution in the city, behind The Bowery and Dime Savings Banks, under the new name The New York Bank for Savings.<sup>13</sup> In 1981 the New York Bank for Savings was bought by the Buffalo (N.Y.) Savings Bank and the name of this new entity was changed to Goldome two years later.<sup>14</sup> But even before the name was changed, the Buffalo Savings Bank elected to sell the building in an effort to cut maintenance costs, taking from the new owner a five-year lease which expired in 1987. The bank was then closed.

## Building Description

The exterior of the New York Bank for Savings (plate 1), despite minor alterations caused by subsequent street widening and subway construction, remains much the way it was designed. This corner bank building is of fireproof construction. While of uniform height above a basement, it varies on the interior from one to three stories. It has two classically-styled elevations faced in marble with a combed chisel ashlar from quarries in South Dover, Vermont.<sup>15</sup> These two elevations, along Eighth Avenue and 14th Street, are united by a common, monumental ordonnance, a continuous entablature and polished granite base. The building is crowned with a low copper dome.<sup>16</sup> Because of its scale, choice of materials, and relation to the two major thoroughfares on which it is situated, the building is one of Robertson's most successful designs. On the building's 14th Street elevation, the pedimented bay and dome are the external expressions of the important public space within (plate 5). Each, the initial western section and the subsequent eastern section, is symmetrically disposed although the overall elevation is asymmetrical, a result of the building's sequential construction. This may be seen as an example of Robertson's practice of expressing interior function on the exterior design.

## The Eighth Avenue Facade

The narrower Eighth Avenue elevation is the bank's principal facade (plate 6). Its chief feature is the monumental portico. Two paneled antae and two fluted Corinthian columns in antis support the entablature and pediment. Instead of capitals the antae are capped with anthemion bands and egg-and-dart moldings. The wall immediately behind this major order is articulated to suggest a minor order.<sup>17</sup> Two stories are apparent within the antae: the entrance, up the narrow steps between the columns, is the only opening in the lower story; and the three windows above mark the second story.<sup>18</sup> An expandable (accordion) gate of gilded metal can be rolled open and shut on a hinged track (plate 7). The finials atop the gate's vertical elements alternate: knobs and anthemia -- the anthemia perforated with a knob-sized hole to receive the knobs' greater width when the gate is folded. Flanking the entrance, two attached pillars with anthemion band capitals and, on either side of the columns, the wall itself, articulated with shallow paneling, supports a modified entablature, an undecorated frieze with an egg-and-dart molding.<sup>19</sup> A variation of the anthemion band atop the antae serves as a cornice behind the columns and above the windows. A motif of raised disks ornaments the frieze below this cornice. Until recently the two limestone pedestals between the columns and antae flanking the entrance supported bronze lamp standards and were connected to the columns and antae by a bronze fence articulated in the Roman lattice motif.<sup>20</sup> One of the building's most remarkable fixtures is the gilded bronze eagle secured to the minor entablature above the entrance (plate 8). A gilded bronze lantern -- eight-sided with scroll cresting and anthemion finials -- depends from a chain through the eagle's beak. The lantern is glazed with opaque glass.<sup>21</sup>

Subsequent signage has been removed from the entablature's frieze to reveal this bank building's original name in attached bronze Classic Roman lettering -- The New York Savings Bank. Within the pediment there is a smaller, steel-framed window.<sup>22</sup> Atop the parapet -- above and behind the pediment -- a crisply-carved limestone acroterion crowns the Eighth Avenue elevation.<sup>23</sup>

### The West 14th Street Elevation

The West 14th Street elevation lacks the symmetry of the Eighth Avenue facade (plate 5). Neither of this elevation's dominant features, the pedimented bay and the dome above it, is centrally positioned. Eastward (to the right) of this bay the expanse of ashlar marble wall is unadorned to the corner (except for the corner wall clock). Westward (to the left) three juxtaposed windows, each with its individual and richly embellished architrave, penetrate the wall surface. Although it was an interior arrangement, long since altered, that dictated this elevation's asymmetry, the monumental ordonnance established by the Eighth Avenue portico unifies its diverse elements.

The bay -- base, pilasters, entablature and pediment -- contains three windows with decorative architraves. The extreme pilasters, like the Eighth Avenue antae, are paneled. Again like the antae, instead of capitals, all four pilasters are capped with anthemion bands. A raised disk motif and a water-leaf molding ornament the windows' architraves; guttae support the windows' sills. Horizontal mullions separate the windows into longer, lower and shorter, upper portions. The surface of these mullions is also enriched: panels are defined by a Greek key fret; lions' heads leer from the panels' centers. The corner rosettes in the Greek key fret should be noted; they rest on raised squares. Subsequent signage has been removed and the building's name is spelled out in bronze, upper case, Roman Classic letters across the bay's frieze. The window within the pediment retains its bronze, Roman lattice grille.<sup>24</sup>

Eastward of the pedimented bay, the expanse of ashlar marble wall is unadorned to the corner. There, secured to the wall about twelve feet above the sidewalk, there is a two-faced electric clock (plate 9). Each of its faces has a round dial in a leafy molding within a fluted square frame and spandrels decorated with bees. A glazed vitrine occupies the lower half of each face. Twisted colonnettes at the case's corners support a Roman molding cornice. The beehive finial of the former Bank for Savings surmounts the case.<sup>25</sup>

The three westernmost windows appear to be identical to the three windows under the pediment. But closer observation reveals that four characteristics differentiate them from those already described. Each of the architraves carry cornices -- cymatia articulated with anthemion bands. The windows are narrower. Their jambs are enriched with an A-B-A repeated motif of palmette-rossette-palmette in low relief. And the borders on the mullions, though similar -- Greek key and corner rosettes -- are not identical. Rather than mounted on squares, the corner rosettes are set within circular frames. The Greek key fret is more compressed and in the panels' short sides the fret repetition is in a different configuration.<sup>26</sup>

Below the westernmost window a rear entrance, down six steps from the

sidewalk pavement, breaks the building's polished granite base.<sup>27</sup> Its heavy lintel is crowned with an acroterion device similar to the anthemion above the Eighth Avenue facade.

A copper antefix cresting runs above the entablature's full length except where it is interrupted by the pedimented bay's raking cornice.

### The Roof, Drum and Dome

The roof over the banking hall is peaked (plate 10); steel rafters support a layer of terra-cotta brick which is concealed and protected with copper sheeting.<sup>28</sup>

The drum below the dome, though not unlike McKim, Mead & White's drum on the Whittemore Library in Naugatuck, Connecticut, is comprised of a summary of now familiar motifs rendered in molded copper. Three horizontal zones articulate the drum: a parapet, a clerestory and an entablature (plate 11). These three zones are unified by a vertical correspondence of copper seams, stubby pilasters and lions' heads motifs. The parapet -- two crescents formed by the angle of the roof's slant north and south -- supports a sill at the height of the roof's ridge pole. The parapet is sheathed with vertical strips of copper sheeting; the regular rhythm of the uniform seams is syncopated with that of the more broadly spaced tubular battens. The twenty, short, paneled clerestory pilasters, aligned with the parapet's battens below, support the entablature above. A single repetition of the anthemion-rosette-anthemion motif in the jambs of the western windows in the 14th Street elevation below adorns each of these pilaster panels. The twenty stained-glass, clerestory windows are protected by an external glazed covering.<sup>29</sup> The entablature frieze is decorated with a row of raised disks. The frieze itself is defined by a bead molding below and an egg and dart molding above it. The cornice carries twenty leering lions' heads, recalling those on the mullions of the 14th Street windows, which are aligned with the pilasters. An antefix cresting runs the entire circumference of this drum's entablature.

The surface of the low dome has no applied ornament, save the uniform, vertical rhythm of the copper sheeting's seams and tubular battens. (The battens are aligned with the pilasters.) The dome is crowned by a flat, round finial, reminiscent of an unadorned Corinthian capital. An annular anthemion band joins the splayed surfaces of the battens in pairs at the finial's cornice is a ring of ten lions' heads. A steel framed catwalk and balustrade with plank flooring encircles the drum. Parts of it rest on the roof, others are bracketed from the drum's parapet. A steel ladder leads up from the catwalk to just behind the antefix cresting at the northernmost point of the drum's circumference so as to be hidden from 14th Street. A second step ladder, wood cut to conform to the dome's curvature, leads up the northern arc of the dome to a trap door in the finial's top, flat surface.

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## Notes

1. For the most of the time the former New York Bank for Savings building has stood on the northwest corner of Eighth Avenue and West 14th Street, it was known for its builder, the New York Savings Bank. Not until 1964 did the bank change its name to reflect the merger between it and the The Bank for Savings. Because both the building records and subsequent alterations documentation reflect the name of the bank's builder, rather than either of the name's subsequent mutations, the building is referred to as the New York Savings Bank throughout this report.
2. Works Progress Administration, New York City Guide, (1939; reprinted New York, 1970), 145-151.
3. The bank's chief financial resources, allowing its depositors a satisfactory return, were Federal, State, municipal and railroad mortgages and bonds.
4. Portions of this section have been adapted from Landmarks Preservation Commission, Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company Building Designation Report (LP-1633), (New York, 1988).
5. A.C. David, "Private Residences for Banking Firms," Architectural Record, 14 (July 1903), 13-14. See also Robert A.M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin, and John Massengale, New York 1900: Metropolitan Architecture and Urbanism, 1890-1915 (New York, 1983), 177.
6. Two McKim, Mead & White commissions, rendered in the classical idiom, of which Robertson might have been aware were the Howard Whittemore Memorial Library in Naugatuck, Conn., and the Walker Gallery at Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine. While the limestone Whittemore Library does not have a dome, it does have a truncated, crested drum. The Walker Gallery is a small domed pavilion of red brick dressed with limestone. McKim, Mead & White's Bowery Bank commission (1896) would certainly have been known to Robertson. Of these three the Whittemore Library's major (Ionic) order, antae and drum suggest that its crisp and angular classicism may have been of some use to Robertson.
7. Gibson is better known for his ecclesiastic commissions. This bank was demolished in the late 1950s.
8. Portions of the discussion of Robertson have been adapted from Landmarks Preservation Commission, "Architects Appendix," Upper East Side Historic District Designation Report (LP-1051), Marjorie Pearson, ed. (New York, 1981), 1325-1328. See S.B. Landau, Edward T. and William A. Potter: American Victorian Architects (New York, 1979), 70-81, for a discussion of Robertson's early professional career.
9. For his comprehensive profile of Robertson, see Schuyler, "Works of R.H. Robertson," Architectural Record, 6 (Oct.-Dec. 1896), 184-219. Robertson was by no means the only architect engaged in what Schuyler called the "free architecture" or Independent Style.

Schuyler may have chosen to profile Robertson because he epitomized the Independent Style -- with which, one senses -- Schuyler had little sympathy. But that Schuyler would treat Robertson's work at all is a measure of Robertson's success.

10. See Appendix - c. He designed St. Stephen's Church, Kingsbridge and the restorations of the Hamilton Grange and the Dyckman House.
11. Provot obituary, New York Times, July 10, 1936. He was active in the real-estate market also.
12. See Appendix - b.
13. The Bank for Savings building at the southwest corner of 22nd Street and Park Avenue South remained a business office of the new bank until 1983-84 when it was gutted to become a screen fronting the lower stories of an apartment tower.
14. In 1981, following the Federal deregulation of banks, the Federal Deposit Insurance Comm. invited stronger banks to bid on weaker (over-extended) ones. The Buffalo Savings Bank merged with the New York Bank for Savings in 1981 and the Union Dime Savings Bank a year later. The name Goldome is derived from the gilded dome crowning the Buffalo bank's home office building designed by Green & Wicks, 1900-01.
15. This marble is now painted gray. In his new building application Robertson specified marble from South Dover, New York. There is no South Dover in New York State.
16. The foundations are fifteen feet deep from the curb line. The walls are of brick in lime and cement mortar and are independent, not party walls. They are coped with bluestone. Over the windows the walls are carried on cast-iron lintels. The marble ashlar is four inches thick. The roof over the banking room is peaked and made of steel, twelve-inch, forty-pound with four-inch centers on the first floor; six-and-a-half-foot centers above. The estimated cost was \$220,000.00.
17. See Appendix - e.
18. These windows have steel frames; two vertical mullions and one horizontal mullion create a single casement of six panes flanked by three and with a transom of four panes overhead. These three superseded the original four when this wall was built in front of the original wall in Provot's 1930 remodelling. See Appendix - e.
19. See Appendix - e. The high, bronze grilled windows were sealed in 1952. See Appendix - j.
20. At present neither lamp is there. The lamp on the right side was reported stolen sometime just before July 1984. The lamp on the left and the bronze fencing were removed in 1987 and, according to the superintendent, are stored in the basement of the apartment building

immediately to the north of the bank. Vestiges of the pedestals flanking the original, broad steps - which were removed in 1930 - remain at the foot of the antae. The lamp standards used to stand on these. Appendix - e.

21. The eagle and the lantern were part of the 1930 remodelling, see Appendix - e.
22. This three-by-three window was cut through the unadorned pediment in 1952 and originally was covered with a bronze, Roman lattice grille like the one still apparent in the 14th Street pediment. See Appendix - j.
23. The drawings indicate that the acroterion as originally designed was a more compressed design than this one. But this acroterion's crisp and intricate carving and its similiarity to original anthemion motifs throughout the building's exterior and interior establish this one as original also.
24. This window was inserted in 1952. See Appendix - j.
25. This is the second clock in this location. The first went up in 1926 - see Appendix - d. It remained until 1965 when this one, reflecting the merger of the Bank for Savings (whose symbol is the beehive finial) with the New York Savings Bank in 1963, replaced it.
26. The bank's western portion was constructed several months earlier than the eastern portion - See Appendix - b. This may account for these discrepancies in detail.
27. This entrance replaced the original basement entrance down steps into the areaway in 1930. This was the year the areaway was eliminated, its handsome bronze and stone balustrade removed, and the polished granite base applied - see Appendix - f.
28. On the weekend of July 25-26, 1987, vandals gained access to the building and cut the copper from the roof's northern slope -- from the drum to the western parapet.
29. The motif within the windows is the same for all of them. All but one of these windows is intact. Four were removed by vandals but only one was taken. The other three are in the hands of the superintendent of the bank building and the adjacent apartment building on Eighth Avenue.



- h) December 23, 1940 Demolition Permit 417-40. Demolition of 85-87 Eighth Avenue, two four-story buildings occupied as stores and vacant dwellings.
- i) August 20, 1945 Exterior of the building cleaned. Application for a shed over the subway stairs approved.
- j) August 7, 1952 Alteration 66-52. Pediment windows inserted - bronze grilles. First story windows sealed, either side of main entrance; restrooms eliminated. Adolf L. Muller, R.A.
- k) December 15, 1964 Electric sign application. New clock and new signage. Approved February 23, 1965.
- l) October 6, 1971 New York Bank for Savings filed an application for new, single family, non-fireproof two story houses along Eighth Avenue and on three lots of 15th Street, except for building, southwest corner Eighth and 15th. Horace Ginsbern & Assoc.s, Arch'ts, 205 East 42nd Street. This project was never realized as stated in this application. Rather:
- m) May 18, 1972 Plan. Architects Survey and borings  
Bank alterations  
1940 addition to be demolished  
Six-story apartment block proposed.
- n) September 25, 1973 Application for an illuminated sign filed; plexiglass and metal; parallel to building; (probably superimposed over friezes of the Eighth Avenue portico and 14th Street fronton).
- o) June 9, 1975 Certificate of Occupancy for six-story apartment house, 85 Eighth Avenue. Cinder-concrete block.

## FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

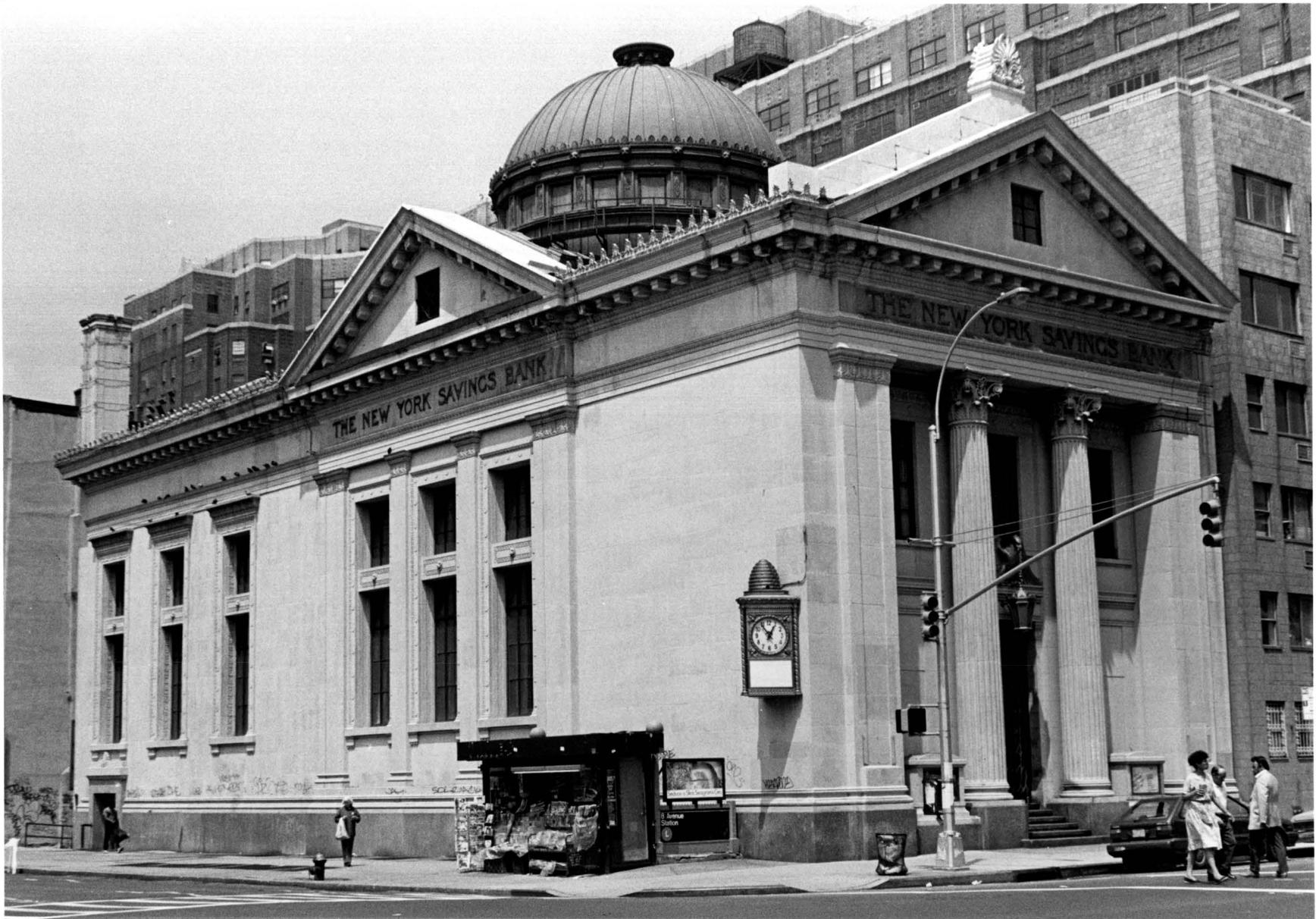
On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the former New York Bank for Savings has a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the New York Savings Bank, built in two sections in 1896-97, has a significant place in the architectural and cultural history of New York City; that it was designed by the well-known architect R. H. Robertson and is one of his most successful designs because of its scale, choice of materials, and relation to the two major thoroughfares on which it is situated; that its Eighth Avenue portico, the 14th Street elevation of pedimented bay and westernmost three windows, the wall clock, cornice and cresting, the drum and the dome comprise fine ornamental detail; that its materials -- granite, marble, bronze and copper -- and the workmanship these represent are exceptional; and that George Provot's remodelling adhered to the classical canon and enhanced Robertson's functionalism; that subsequent alterations, with the exception of the two pediment windows, have not compromised Robertson's design; and that this bank building is complemented by its classical counterpart, the Manufacturers Hanover Trust Bank built in 1907 on the south side of 14th Street.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 21, Section 534 of 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 former New York Bank for Savings, 81 Eighth Avenue aka 301 West 14th Street, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 738, Lot 33, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark site.

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(Carl Forster)

Plate 1. The former New York Savings Bank, east and south elevations  
- Eighth Avenue and West Fourteenth Street.

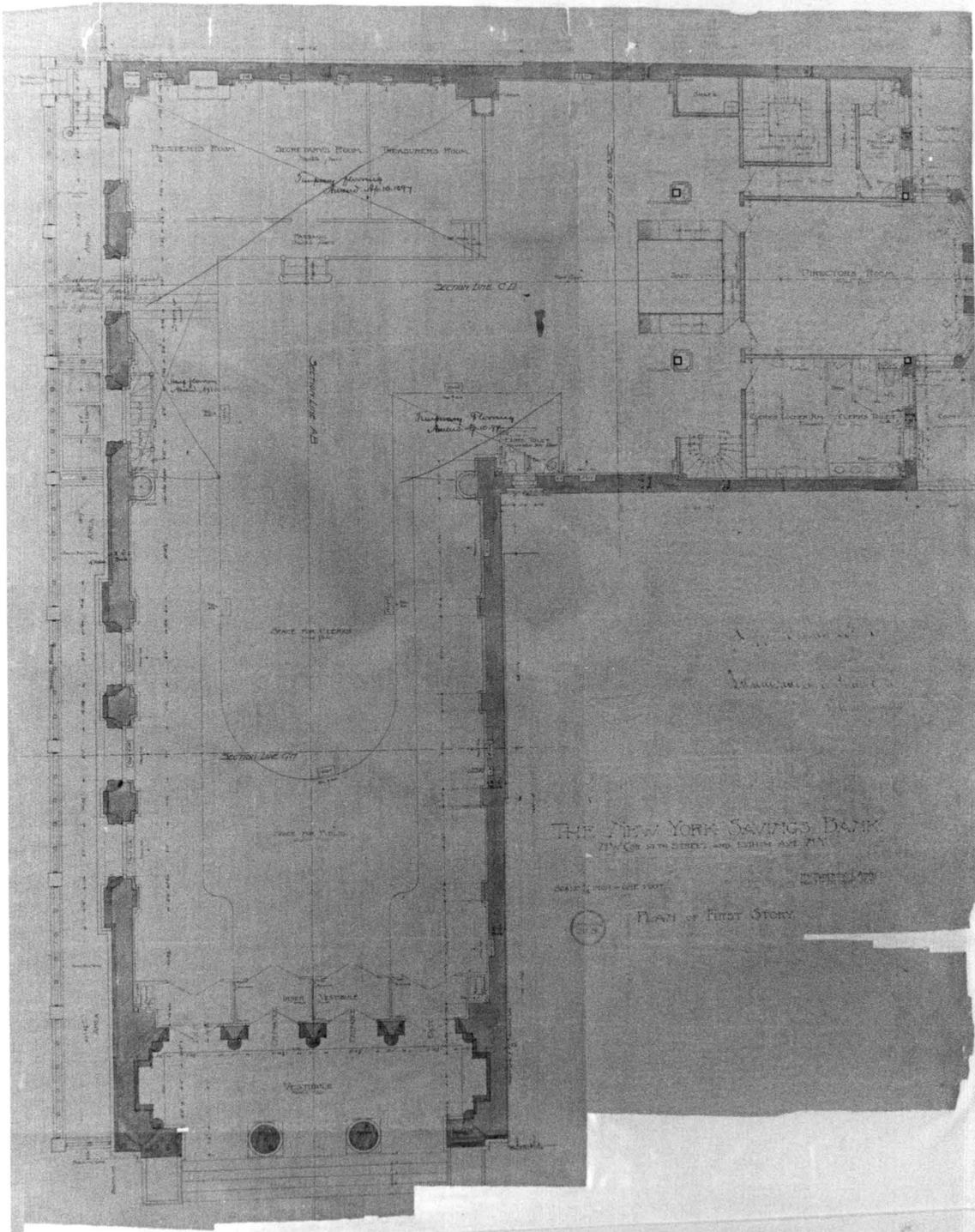


Plate 2. Plan of the First Story. Municipal Archives.

(Carl Forster)

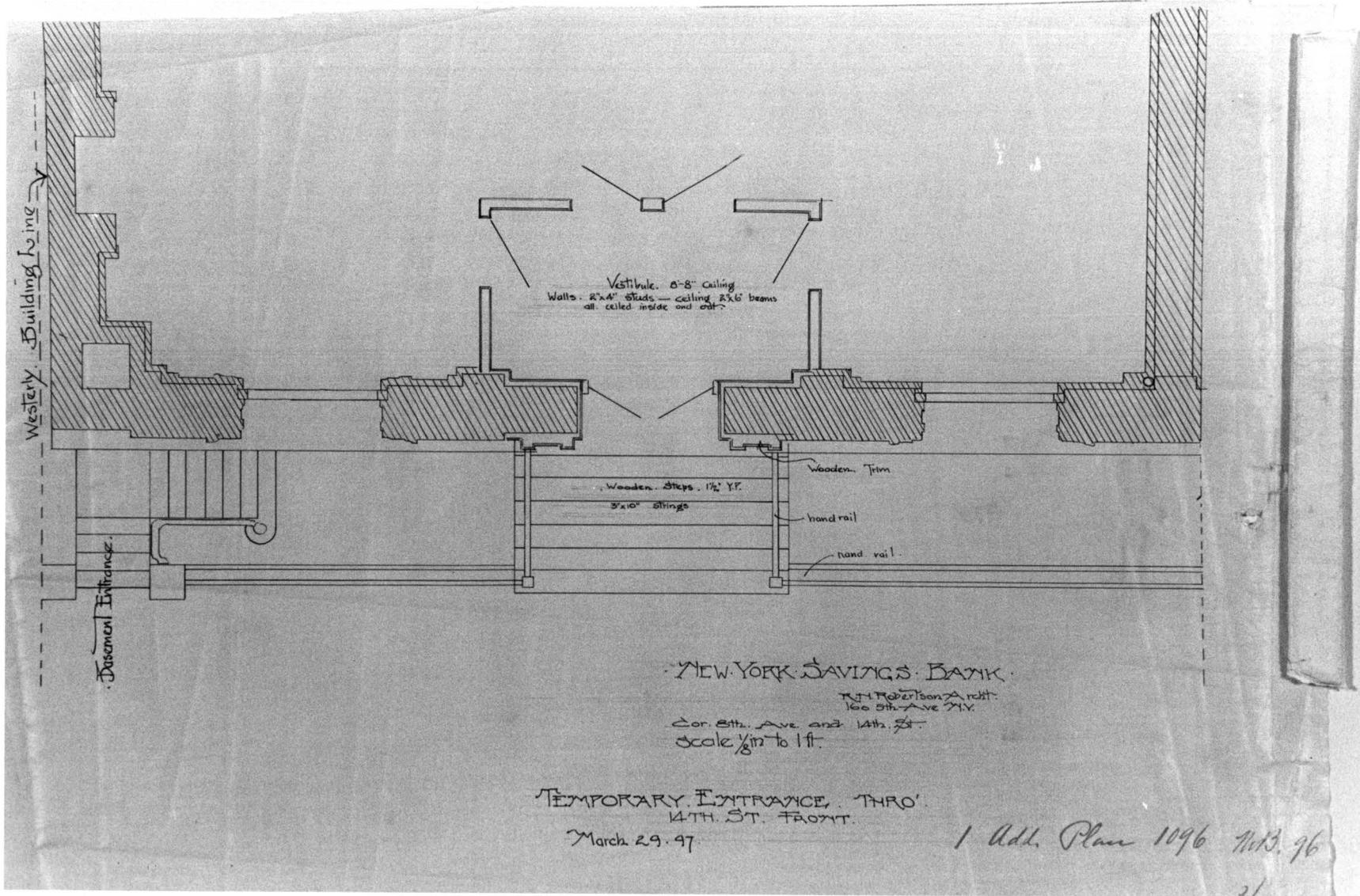


Plate 3. Temporary Entrance, March 1897. Municipal Archives.

(Carl Forster)

THE NEW YORK SAVINGS BANK.  
N.W. COR. 14<sup>TH</sup> STREET AND EIGHTH AVE. N.Y.

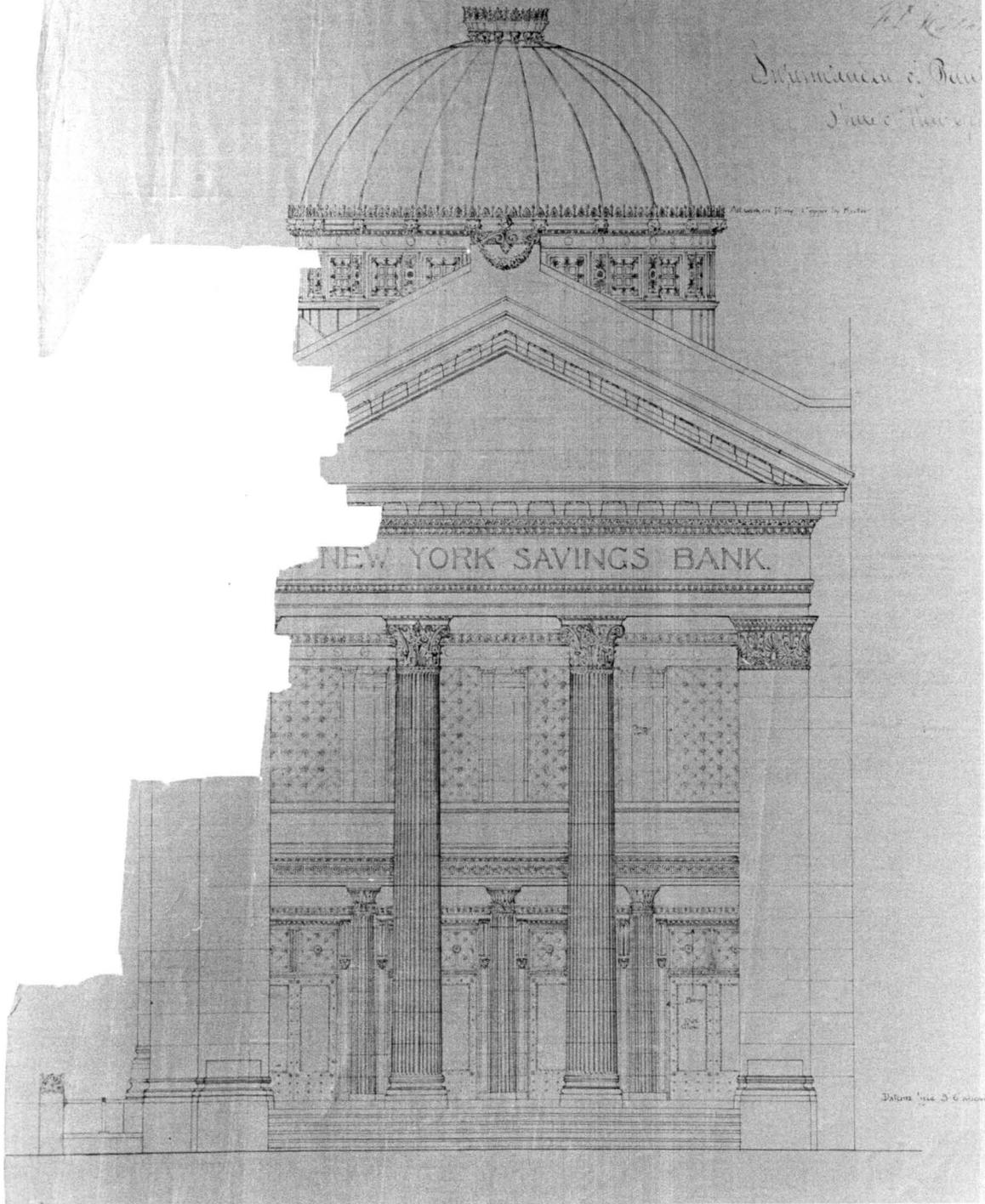
SCALE  $\frac{1}{4}$  INCH = ONE FOOT.

R.H. ROBERTSON, ARCHT.  
160 FIFTH AVE. N.Y.



ELEVATION ON 8<sup>TH</sup> AVE.

*Carl Forster*  
*1892*  
*Architect*  
*160 Fifth Ave. N.Y.*



*Detail see 3-6 above*

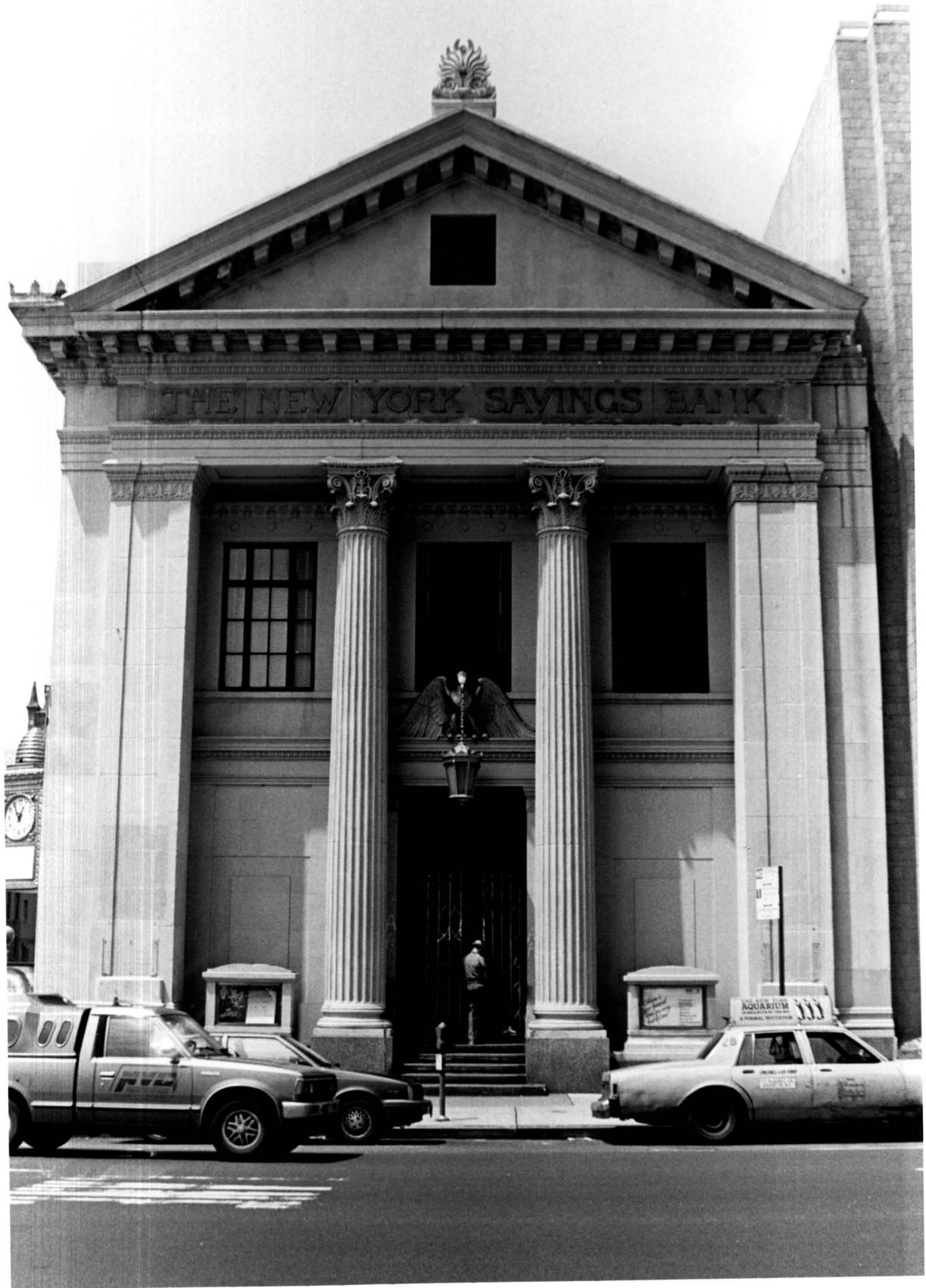
(Carl Forster)

Plate 4. Original Eighth Avenue elevation.



Plate 5. The West Fourteenth elevation.

(Carl Forster)



(Carl Forster)

Plate 6. The Eighth Avenue elevation.



(Carl Forster)

Plate 7. The Retractable, gilded metal gate  
across the main entrance - Eighth Avenue.



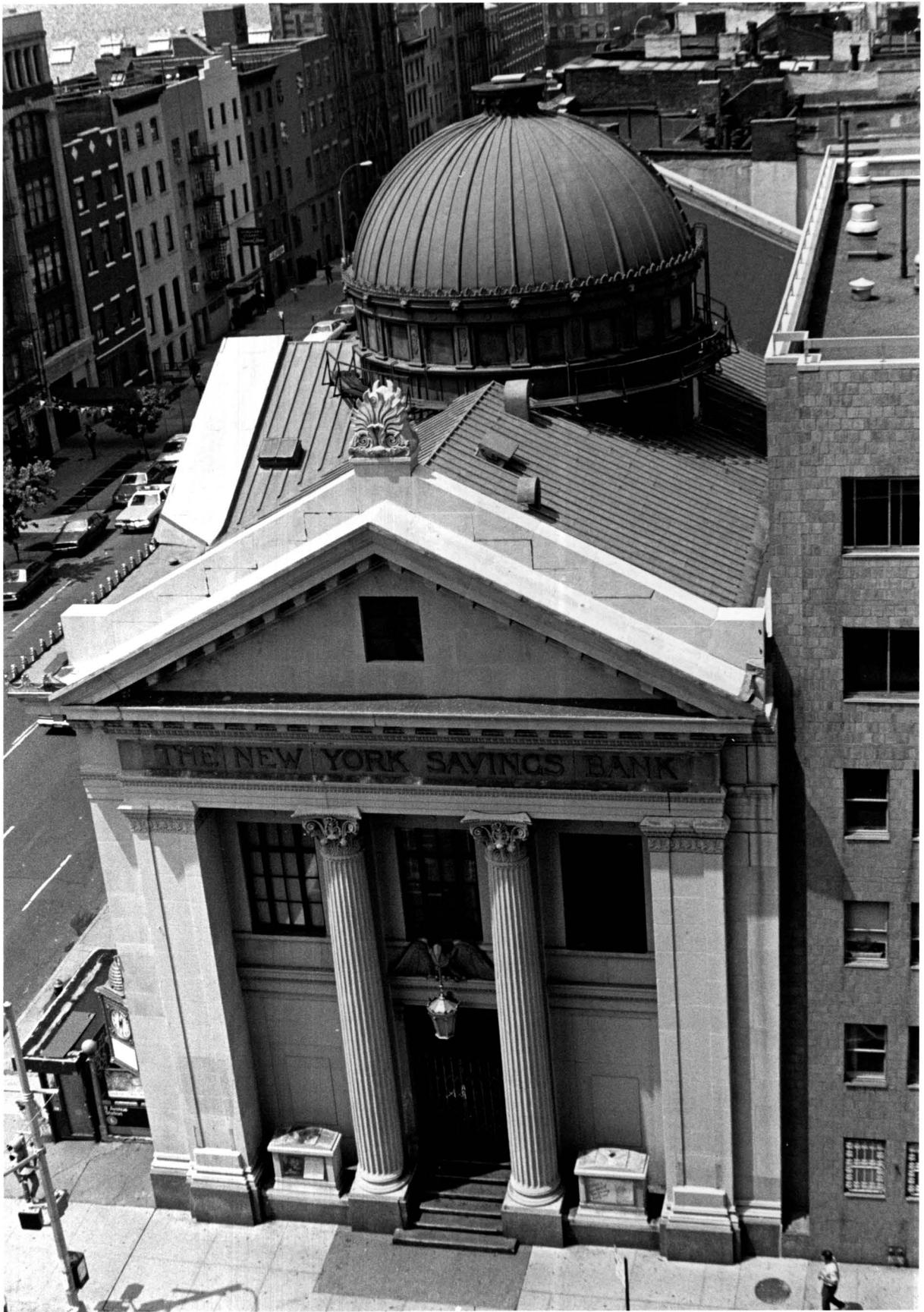
(Carl Forster)

Plate 8. Gilded bronze eagle and lantern,  
over the main entrance - Eighth Avenue.



(Carl Forster)

Plate 9. Exterior clock, corner of West 14th and Eighth Avenue.



(Carl Forster)

Plate 10. The roof, drum and dome.



(Carl Forster)

Plate 11. The drum and the dome.