

Landmarks Preservation Commission
July 19, 1994, Designation List 259
LP-1889

DOLLAR SAVINGS BANK BUILDING (now Emigrant Savings Bank), 2516-2530 Grand Concourse, The Bronx. Built 1932-33; 1937-38; 1949-52; architect Adolf L. Muller of Halsey, McCormack & Helmer.

Landmark Site: Borough of The Bronx Tax Map 3154, Lots 1001-1002.

On June 2, 1992, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Dollar Savings Bank and the related Landmark Site (Item No. 5). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Four witnesses spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. A representative of the bank's current owner, the Emigrant Savings Bank, expressed the bank's approval of designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Summary

The monumental Dollar Savings Bank building with its tower dominates the intersection of Fordham Road and the Grand Concourse. Designed by Adolf L. Muller of the noted firm of bank architects, Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, the building is a major example of classicizing Art Deco architecture. The building's easternmost bay was constructed as the bank's Fordham branch office in 1932-33. Five years later the bank was expanded another 100 feet along the Grand Concourse. After World War II, in 1949-50, the bank's Grand Concourse frontage was extended fifty more feet when the ten-story office block and fifty-foot clock tower were constructed and the building became the bank's headquarters. Although the design was carried out over some twenty years, there is a consistency in the use of the classicizing Art Deco style and classical proportions. The skeletal frame of steel that supports the original building and each of the extensions is particularly apparent in the ten-story office block and clock tower which added a strong asymmetrical silhouette to the earlier symmetrical design. An important feature was the raised "Liberty Head" logo (some now covered with large disks bearing the logo of Emigrant Savings Bank), echoed by the round clock faces in the tower and over the entrances.

The first thrift institution to be organized in the Bronx, the Dollar Savings Bank had opened for business in 1890 at 2808 Third Avenue as a mutual savings bank, which assured that most local savings would not leave the Bronx. The bank's trustees used the bank's capital to fund improvements in the borough. Since 1992, the building has housed facilities of the Emigrant Savings Bank. It still enjoys great prominence on the Grand Concourse.

Bronx Development¹

Until the mid-nineteenth century, the block formed by the Grand Concourse, East 192nd Street, Valentine Avenue, and East Fordham Road on which the bank is located, was a part of the farm of John Valentine, described as located at Fordham in the Town of West Farms. Only in 1888 did Valentine's heirs begin to sell the land.

Improvements in transportation throughout the nineteenth century not only made the Bronx more accessible to Manhattan but contributed to its growth. The New York & Harlem Railroad (1838), following the Bronx River valley, was opened to White Plains by 1844 and established stations at Morrisania, West Farms (Fordham), and Yonkers. The Third Avenue & Fordham Railroad, a horse car line formed in 1861, though never completed, was succeeded two years later by the Harlem Bridge, Morrisania & Fordham Railroad Company. Electric-powered trolley lines were introduced in 1892. But for the greater part of the century, the high ground just north of Fordham Road between the Harlem and Bronx Rivers remained largely unaffected by the development that redefined the south Bronx.

It was the introduction of the Grand Concourse, begun in 1902 and finished in 1909, running from 161st Street to Mosholu Parkway, which gave access to this ridge and spurred its development. The impetus behind the Grand Concourse,² came, in part, from the influential members of the Rider & Driver Club, many of whom belonged to the American Jockey Club and were habitués of the Jerome Park Racing Association Grounds,³ who advocated a road free of commercial traffic and limited to pleasure driving. Influential Bronx residents favored the new road as well; members of the Haffen family of Melrose were particularly involved with the improvements of the borough's streets and highways.⁴ Bronx Borough President Louis Haffen officiated at the ground breaking in 1902. The tree-lined four-and-one-half mile long road was 180 feet wide with a central roadway flanked by outer roadways, although the Concourse's central carriage drive was not paved until 1925 when five- and six-story apartment buildings had replaced single-family houses. This increased real-estate activity was the result of the opening of the elevated branch of the Lexington Avenue IRT over Jerome Avenue, to the west of the Concourse, in 1918, and it was that year that the block created by the Grand Concourse, 192nd Street, Valentine Avenue, and East Fordham Road was subdivided into lots.

With the growth in the area's population during the 1920s, Fordham Road, from Jerome Avenue to Webster Avenue, became lined with retail shops. The Adam Wertheimer Department Store established itself at the northwest corner of the Concourse and East Fordham Road, several movie palaces -- the RKO Fordham, the Concourse, the Valentine, and the Windsor -- were constructed nearby, and automobile showrooms opened further down either side of the ridge. But the most direct impetus to the commercial development of these blocks occurred when the Eighth Avenue IND subway line, which continued uptown under the Grand Concourse, opened in 1931-32. Although the Hub at Third and Willis Avenues was the borough's major shopping district, Fordham Road at the Concourse was fast becoming another. Alexander's, with its main store in the Hub, opened a branch in the remodelled Adam Wertheimer store. The Dollar Bank for Savings, likewise headquartered in the Hub, established a branch first at 2480 Grand Concourse in 1932, then up the boulevard at No. 2516.

A Brief History of the Dollar Savings Bank⁵

The Dollar Savings Bank of the City of New York, the first thrift institution to be organized in the Bronx (1887), received its charter in 1890 and opened its doors at 2808 Third Avenue, just below the intersection of Third and Willis Avenues and 148th Street.⁶ Its founder and first president, John Haffen (1847-1910), also was one of the organizers and served as vice-president of the Twenty-third Ward Bank.⁷ Among the Dollar Bank's early trustees were Charles W. Bogart, president of the Twenty-third Ward Bank and George E. Edwards, Haffen's successor as president of the Dollar. These business leaders and their associates represented the vanguard of the borough's commercial developers in the first half of this century.⁸ Neither descendants of the Bronx's older landowning families nor scions of the well-to-do city merchants whose estates formed a patchwork across the borough, these men grew up in and around the Hub (in Morrisania, Port Morris and Melrose).

These business leaders, who thought of themselves as "progressives," moved quickly to control the new borough's development. Establishing the Dollar Savings Bank as a mutual savings bank assured that most local savings would not leave the borough.⁹ The Dollar Bank's trustees used the savings deposits to fund improvements in the borough.

Howell Taylor Manson (1875-1944), fourth president of the Dollar Savings Bank, initiated the bank's branch expansion. A native of Greenpoint, Brooklyn, he began his lifelong career in banking as a clerk at the Third National Bank (New York) in 1895. After a year at Goldman Sachs, he joined the Gallatin Bank in 1897, becoming an officer in 1902, and remained with the Gallatin through its merger with the National Hanover Bank (1912) until 1920. He joined the board of trustees of the Dollar Savings Bank in 1911, becoming the Dollar's treasurer in 1920 and comptroller two years later. Manson, who was president from 1925 until 1941, embodied the "progressive" spirit of the bank's founders.¹⁰ In 1926 Manson had enlarged the Dollar's headquarters building (1919) at Third Avenue and 147th Street. In 1932 the Dollar Savings Bank merged with the Fordham Savings Bank and located its first Grand Concourse branch office at No. 2480; that September the Dollar trustees purchased a fifty-foot wide lot near the intersection of the Grand Concourse and Fordham Road.¹¹ Manson opened the new Fordham branch at 2516 Grand Concourse, designed by Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, in 1933.¹² The following year the Dollar trustees purchased three additional lots north of their new Fordham branch office¹³ and subsequently expanded the branch. The enlarged branch opened in January 1939. Again, the architect was the firm of Halsey, McCormack & Helmer.

Manson's successor, Robert M. Catharine, continued the bank's expansion policy. A survey published in 1936 found that the Dollar, once a local institution, had become the eighteenth largest in the nation.¹⁴ By 1948, of the 532 mutual savings banks in the nation, the Dollar had grown to be the sixth largest.¹⁵ In New York State savings per capita increased by sixty percent between 1941 and 1950. State banking laws permitted the Dollar Bank to open two more new branches: the Dollar's Parkchester branch opened in 1948 at Hugh J. Grant Circle and East 177th Street; the branch at 1046 Southern Parkway opened the following year. In 1950 the Grand Concourse building began to be enlarged once again, this time with a ten-story tower. Robert Catharine designated the Fordham branch as the bank's home office in 1951. Three years later the branch at Walton Avenue and East 170th Street was opened. All of this work was designed in the Halsey, McCormack, & Helmer office.

Banks and Architectural Imagery¹⁶

The freestanding bank building, although not a new building type, became more prevalent at the end of the last century when the savings bank industry made itself more accessible to the individual depositor. Edward Hale Kendall's German Savings Bank (1872) on Union Square was an early example in the Second Empire style. Robert W. Gibson's building for the Greenwich Savings Bank (1892) at Sixth Avenue and West 16th Street marked a return to the classical orders from the intervening Queen Anne and Romanesque Revival styles. Other examples of classically-inspired bank buildings include the Bank for Savings (1892) at East 22nd Street and Fourth Avenue, designed by Cyrus L. W. Eidlitz; McKim, Mead & White's Bowery Savings Bank (1893-95, a designated New York City Landmark) at Grand Street and the Bowery; and R. H. Robertson's New York Bank for Savings (1896-97, a designated New York City Landmark) at Eighth Avenue and West 14th Street. The Dollar's earlier headquarters building (1919) at 2792 Third Avenue followed this prototype.

In the 1920s, York & Sawyer strongly endorsed this traditional model for the firm's numerous bank building commissions, including the Greenwich Savings Bank (1922-24) and the Central Savings Bank (1926-28), both designated New York City Landmarks. In the early 1930s another stylistic variation for the bank typology was introduced, a classicizing Art Deco; planar massing and streamlined detailing replaced the classical orders, but scale and spatial arrangement changed very little.

The Architects¹⁷

The architects Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, Inc. maintained an office at 286 Fifth Avenue, Manhattan, from 1928 or 1929 into the 1960s.¹⁸ Hayward S. Halsey had co-founded the architectural and real estate development company of Thomas Bruce Boyd in 1920 and then changed its name to Halsey, McCormack & Helmer in 1925. George H. McCormack (d.1954), who started his professional career as a banker, had been an officer of the Boyd company. Robert Helmer, whose name often followed the firm's full title in its advertisements ("Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, Inc., Robert Helmer, R.A., Architects and Engineers"), was a registered architect in New York.¹⁹ The firm often contracted with consulting engineers, among whom were Lange & Noske. Its first large commission, the Williamsburgh Savings Bank's 512-foot skyscraper at 1 Hanson Place in Brooklyn, was awarded in 1927;

the cornerstone was laid in 1928 and the building was completed a year later.

For more than thirty years Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, Inc., specialized in bank buildings and was involved in the construction or enlargement of over two dozen such structures. From the Williamsburgh Savings Bank tower to the Seaman's Bank for Savings (1955) at 30 Wall Street, the firm designed bank buildings and branch offices for most of the leading savings banks in the metropolitan area as well as in upstate New York, Long Island, and New Jersey.²⁰ Halsey, McCormack & Helmer advertised assiduously in the *Savings Bank Journal*, and representatives of the firm attended the annual meetings of the National Association of Savings Banks.²¹ Like Edward Palmer York, who had won many of his firm's large banking commissions, George McCormack was familiar with bankers and banking as a result of his first career. Halsey, McCormack & Helmer's predominance in bank design in New York in the 1930s, '40s, and '50s can be attributed, in part, to McCormack's connections in banking circles.²² In 1936 George McCormack accepted Donald Manson's invitation to join the Dollar Bank's board of trustees.

The firm's success is attributable to innovative construction techniques as well. After the First World War, American architects and engineers continued to collaborate in the development of steel-frame construction to achieve even greater spatial flexibility than had been realized in the previous decades. For example, at Halsey, McCormack & Helmer's Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building the steel framing had to accommodate the sixty-three foot-high banking room and superimposed 26-story office tower. New office towers offered only one of the challenges facing architects and their consulting engineers. Halsey, McCormack & Helmer was commissioned to enlarge existing bank buildings in 1931-32 -- the home office of the Dime Savings Bank at 9 DeKalb Avenue in Brooklyn and the Onondaga County Savings Bank in Syracuse, New York, contracting with the civil engineers Lange & Noske to carry out the initial framing alterations. The wide experience gained with the framing of such large commissions prompted these architects and engineers to adapt this flexibility to smaller buildings as well. The clerestories above the tellers' counters on either side of the banking room that Halsey, McCormack & Helmer designed for the Brevoort Savings Bank (1931) interior at 1281 Fulton Street in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn were, in fact, trusses erected to eliminate any intrusion of the building's

structural frame. The transverse arches over the banking room spring from these trusses.

Stylistically, Halsey, McCormack & Helmer's early work depends upon prototypes created by York & Sawyer. The Romanesque/Byzantine splendor of the Bowery Savings Bank's East 42nd Street branch is evoked in the Williamsburgh Savings Bank's Hanson Place tower and banking room interior. Of the many branch offices Halsey, McCormack & Helmer designed for other banks before 1932, three are in the Romanesque style, and at least twelve more are simpler variations of the classical style exemplified by York & Sawyer's Greenwich Savings Bank.

When Adolf L. Muller joined Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, he appears to have become one of the principal architectural designers. Of the firm's projects for the Dollar Savings Bank, Muller signed the exterior renderings of both the initial Fordham branch office design (dated Sept. 17, 1932) (Plate 2) and the addition (dated simply 1937) (Plate 3) as well as the working drawings for both the 1937-38 and 1949-52 additions. Born in Brooklyn in 1898, Adolf Lancken Muller studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, graduating in 1919, and completed his graduate degree at Columbia University (1922). He began his career as a draftsman with George B. Post & Sons and then worked in the office of Alfred C. Bossom. In 1924 he moved to Starrett & Van Vleck but may have joined Halsey, McCormack & Helmer in 1930 or 1931.²³ The firm's use of the Art Deco style coincided with Muller's advent. The work that stylistically most presages the Dollar's Fordham branch office is the Brownsville branch of the East River Savings Bank (1931-32).

The Design of the Dollar Savings Bank

The design of the Dollar Savings Bank building, as it stands today, is the result of three separate building campaigns: the relatively narrow branch office facade of 1932-33 (Plate 2), occupying a fifty-foot wide lot on the bank's new Grand Concourse site; the addition of 1937-38 (Plate 3) when the facade was extended to a total of 150 feet along the Grand Concourse; and the ten-story office block and clocktower of 1949-52 (Plate 4), bringing the total frontage on the Grand Concourse to 200 feet. These three campaigns were carried out by Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, with the same designer, Adolf L. Muller, in charge. Thus there is a consistency in the use of the classicizing Art Deco style and classical proportions.

The first branch office facade is still apparent (Plates 2 and 5). Originally a freestanding, symmetrical composition consisting of a tall central entrance bay buttressed by lower flanking bays, this facade now forms the southern of the banking room's twin entrance pavilions. A prominent feature was the raised "Liberty Head" dollar logo.²⁴ When Muller integrated the first facade with the design of the 1937-38 addition he removed the northern flanking bay but, by retaining the monolithic and planar massings, the deeply cut openings, and the revetment of polished Texas pink granite ashlar, he created a new symmetry. Joining the two pavilions with a broad wall, he repeated the dimensions of the twin entrances in the three windows lighting the enlarged banking room and their canopy cornices in the molding above the windows. He added an attic with three raised tablets bearing inscriptions conducive to thrift. From the original vertical character of the first facade, Muller created one with a more horizontal aspect.²⁵

The skeletal frame of steel that supports the original building and each of Muller's additions is particularly apparent in the ten-story office block and clock tower, constructed in 1949-52 as the final building campaign. The trusses that support the first building's banking room clerestory and third floor, a system adapted for the 1937-38 addition as well, are masked by the facade's granite return and red brick party walls. But in the tower itself, brick piers and recessed terra-cotta spandrels express the steel frame and screen wall construction. The rhythm of the tall openings in the facades of the 1932-33 and 1937-38 buildings and the pink granite extend across the base of the tower. Other architectural elements repeated from the earlier buildings include the tower's entrance surround, the smaller representation of the "Liberty Head" coin surmounting the broad panel above the tenth-story windows, and the planar buttressing and raised copings of the office block and the clock tower. The round clock face echoes the "Liberty Head" coin logos and the clock faces within the doorway pediments.

The ten-story office block and clock tower created an asymmetrical addition to the previously symmetrical design. Upon its completion the enlarged bank building, with its four-sided, fifty-foot clock tower, became the Dollar Savings Bank's new headquarters, an indication that the Fordham area had surpassed the Hub as the borough's commercial center. A major example of classicizing Art Deco design, this building has great prominence on the Grand Concourse.

Building Description

The steel frame of the Dollar Savings Bank building carries an exterior cladding of polished Texas pink granite ashlar to the third-story level, red brick and terra cotta on the upper tower stories, and red brick on the building's party walls beyond the facade's eleven-foot granite return. There are three entrances into the building's broad Grand Concourse facade, two into the banking room and one into the base of the tower. These and the four tall windows between them constitute the facade's major features. The "Liberty Head" silver dollar representations (now obscured by the superimposed logo of the building's current owner) and the four inscribed tablets within the attic, correspond with the openings below them.²⁶

The two banking room entrances are identical (Plate 5). Precise reveals articulate each entrance's deep embrasures, framing the doorway's granite block architrave and tall window above. The doorway's pediment contains a clock face. When the bank is closed, cast bronze doors are rolled across the three glazed and brass swinging doors and their transoms (Plate 6). Flanking the doorway, brass-framed and glazed vitrines are set flush with the embrasures' surface; brass letters -- "Dollar Savings Bank Safe Deposit Vault" -- are inset above and below each of them. New signage -- an anodized metal box bearing the name of the bank's current owner, "Emigrant" -- has been placed above the doorway. The granite canopy at the top of the entrance contains down lighting; a bronze lattice with opaque glass infill defines its underside. Above the entrance is the corresponding "Liberty Head" logo, now almost completely covered with a metal and plastic disk carrying the name "Emigrant Savings Bank." A system of low relief buttresses and narrow panels, a variation of the surface treatment of the facade's southernmost bay, articulates the piers between the three banking room windows and is repeated on the three-story base of the tower. Consistent in design, though adapted to the varying dimensions of these large windows, are the window mullion and muntin configurations and bronze window grilles.²⁷ The second- and third-story windows in the brick, southern elevation of the banking room wing -- beyond the granite return, contain steel-frame, multi-paned casements. An element of the original design, a flagpole, still projects from the only remaining lower flanking bay (Plate 5).

The design of the clock tower and that of the ten-story office block are integrated; the tower's buttress reveals rise 180 feet, crisply defined in both granite and brick, through moldings and under copings, to

frame the four clock faces, fifty feet above the office block.²⁸ The entrance to the office block is at the clock tower's base, the northernmost bay of the building's Grand Concourse facade. The office block's elevators and firestairs are located in the tower which is why, except for one window on the fifth story, the north wall is without windows.²⁹ The fenestration of the office block is oriented east, south and west.³⁰ Above the three-story granite base, the walls are of "Spring Garden light rose brick,"³¹ a combination of random, matte red and rose bricks complementing the pink granite below, with raked joints. The paneled window spandrels are a pink terra cotta, again to match the granite. A "Liberty Head" coin superimposed upon a wide fluted panel, both of cream-colored terra cotta, ornaments the top of the block's western face; a broad electric sign ("Emigrant Savings Bank") has replaced the original neon sign ("Dollar Savings Bank") at the top of block's southern face. A large neon sign, "The Dollar Savings Bank," remains high on the block's northern face. Like the coin ornament, the copings are of cream-colored terra cotta. The office block entrance at the tower's base (Plate 7) is distinguished by a

block-like architrave of pink granite -- the pediment incised with "Dollar Savings Bank"; the swinging doors are brass and glazed doors and the transom grille is bronze. The flagpole over the entrance (Plate 4) was moved to this location from the earlier buildings. Another flagpole surmounts the tower.

Subsequent History

The Dollar Savings Bank merged with the Dry Dock Savings Bank to become the Dollar Dry Dock Bank on February 10, 1983. This, in turn, was purchased by the Emigrant Savings Bank on February 21, 1992.³² In conjunction, with this last sale, the Grand Concourse property was divided into two condominium lots, one encompassing the bank facilities and the other containing the office floors of the building. Emigrant has made minimal changes to the exterior of the building consisting of new signage and some additional exterior lighting.

Report prepared by
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Research Department

NOTES

1. Sources for this section include: Bronx County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Section 11, Block 3154; Stan Fischler, *Uptown, Downtown* (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1976); Benedict Fitzpatrick, *The Bronx & Its People, A History, 1609-1927* (New York: The Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., 1927); Martha Golden, "The Grand Concourse, Tides of Change," unpublished typescript, New York Landmarks Preservation Commission Scholars Program, 1976; Stephen Jenkins, *The Story of the Bronx* (New York: G.P. Putnam & Sons, 1912); John McNamara, *History in Asphalt* (Bronx, N.Y.: The Bronx Historical Society, 1984); Lloyd Ultan, *The Beautiful Bronx, 1920-1950* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington House, Publishers, 1979); Lloyd Ultan and Gary Hermalyn, *The Bronx in the Innocent Years, 1890-1925* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985).
2. By 1898 Louis Risse had become Chief Topographical Engineer for the City and two years later proposed a comprehensive plan for the city's development, the first since the consolidation of the five boroughs. In this grand scheme Risse deliberately created boulevards linking the city's newly acquired parkland with its populous urban core. The Grand Concourse connects Van Cortlandt Park with the bridges from Manhattan to the Bronx. See Golden.
3. The suburban character of this ridge, still home to a few estates and old farmsteads, was sustained by the Jesuit College of Saint John (1840, 1843, now Fordham University) to the east and the Jerome Park Racing Association Grounds, leased by the American Jockey Club in 1866, just to the northwest (now the Jerome Park Reservoir).
4. Three of the sons of immigrant brewer Mathias Haffen (1814-1871), were prominent in the transition of the Bronx from an agrarian community to its integration as a part of the City of New York. Of the eldest, John Haffen, see below. His brother Henry Haffen (1852-?) was elected to the New York City Board of Aldermen in 1878 as the representative of the newly annexed Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards. In

1894 he became both general foreman and inspector of highways in the Bronx. Louis F. Haffen (1854-1935) was engineer of the Department of Parks, New York City, from 1883 until 1893 when he was made commissioner of street improvements in the twenty-third and twenty-fourth wards. He was the borough's first president, following the consolidation and was re-elected until 1910 when removed from office by state Governor Charles Evans Hughes. A Tammany man, he was charged with misappropriating public funds. Though he sought public office subsequently, he never won it again. However, in his obituary he was remembered as the "Father of the Bronx." Louis F. Haffen obituary, *New York Times* Dec. 26, 1935, p. 17:1.

5. Sources consulted for this section include: William E. Dunkman, *A Study of Savings and Savings Facilities in New York State, 1941-1950* (New York: New York State Bankers' Assoc., 1952); Benedict Fitzpatrick, *The Bronx & Its People, A History, 1609-1927* (New York: The Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., 1927); *Dollar Savings Bank* (Bronx, 1902); John Haffen obituary, *New York Times*, Sept. 26, 1910, p. 13:6; *Savings Bank Fact Book, 1965* (Albany: Savings Bank Association of New York State, 1965); "Dollar Savings in the Bronx to Have Assets of More than \$100,000.00," *Savings Bank Journal* 13, no. 7 (Sept. 1932), 50; Franklin J. Sherman, *Modern Story of Mutual Savings Banks* (New York: J.J. Little & Ives Co., 1934); *Statement of the Dollar Savings Bank of the City of New York*, Jan. 1, 1917.
6. The Dollar Savings Bank was founded sixteen years before any comparable institution in the borough; the Bronx Savings Bank was founded in 1906. The Fordham Savings Bank was founded in 1923 and absorbed by the Dollar Savings Bank nine years later.
7. John Haffen's son, John Mathias Haffen (1872- ?), succeeded his father as a director of the Twenty-third Ward Bank. Acquiring a controlling interest in the bank in 1919, he renamed it the Bronx County Trust Company six years later.
8. These included: Brian G. Hughes, vice president of the Dollar under Haffen and Edwards, then president; Frederick Alfred Wurzbach, a founder of the Bronx National Bank (1907); Frederick Berry, subsequently president of Bronx Trust Company; Lloyd I. Phyfe, architect and apartment builder; William Henry Steinkamp, president of the Fordham Savings Bank; George W. Fennell, president of the Bronx National Bank; Roderick Stephens of the Stephens Fuel Company; Joseph Buckbee Hare, president of the Central Union & Northern Union Gas Company; and Howell T. Manson, successor to Hughes as president of the Dollar.
9. Mutual savings banks which were banks managed for the benefit of the depositors with the profits returned to the depositors as interest dividends, originated in the early nineteenth century in Scotland, the United States, and in England (the earliest in this country is the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society of 1816; the earliest in New York was The Bank for Savings, 1819).
10. "Banks Continue Building Program," *Savings Bank Journal* 7, no. 12 (Feb. 1932), 52.
11. This was lot 9 with a fifty-foot frontage and 100 feet deep, located 158 feet north of the intersection of the Grand Concourse and East Fordham Road. Bronx County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 849, p. 289.
12. Chapter 248 of the [New York State Banking] Laws of 1923, permitting a savings bank to operate one branch office in the same city in which its main office is located (in the case of New York City, the same borough or county), superceded Chapter 689, Laws of 1892, which required that the usual business of the bank be transacted at the one location of the bank's legal address and nowhere else.
13. Lots 15 and 13 were purchased in May 1934 and lot 11 was purchased in December 1934. Bronx County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 886, p. 337; Liber 887, p. 340; and Liber 908, p. 135.

14. *Savings Bank Journal* 16, no. 12 (Feb. 1936), 9. The survey was conducted by the National Association of Mutual Savings Banks.
15. *Savings Bank Journal* 29, no. 6 (Aug. 1948), 22.
16. For a comprehensive discussion of banks and architectural imagery, see Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Manufacturers Hanover Trust Building Designation Report* (LP-1633), report prepared by Elisa Urbanelli (New York: City of New York, 1988).
17. This section is based on the following sources: *American Architects Directory*, George S. Koyl, ed. (New York: American Institute of Architects, R.R. Bowker, 1962), 501; H. D. Balcom, "Structural Frames of Banks," *Architectural Forum* 48, no. 6 (June 1928), 945-948; Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Central Savings Bank Interior Designation Report* (LP-1804), (New York, 1993), report prepared by Charles Savage; Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Former New York Bank for Savings and Former New York Bank for Savings Interior Designation Reports* (LP-1634 and LP-1635), (New York, 1988), reports prepared by Charles Savage; Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Greenwich Savings Bank and Greenwich Savings Bank Interior Designation Reports* (LP-1766 and LP-1767), (New York, 1992), reports prepared by Charles Savage; Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Williamsburgh Savings Bank Designation Report* (LP-0971), (New York, 1977); Harold D. Lauf, *Design of Steel Buildings* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1949); George H. McCormack obituary, *New York Times*, July 23, 1954, p. 17:5; W. T. McIntosh, "Pre-Stressed Footings," *Construction Methods* 14, no. 5 (May 1932), 33-35.
18. James Ward, *Architects in Practice, New York City, 1900-1940* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1989), 32, lists the firm at this address between 1928 and 1940. In George H. McCormack's *New York Times* obituary, 1929 is the year given for the firm's commencement. Adolf L. Muller of Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, was still at this address in *American Architects Directory*.
19. Helmer was located at 286 Fifth Avenue from 1915 to 1917. Perhaps World War I interrupted his professional career. Then, following the war, he returned to this address.
20. In a full-page advertisement of its representative bank buildings, small photos of each bank frame a map of the five contiguous states and this list: the Citizens' Bank, White Plains, N.Y.; National Savings Bank, Albany, N.Y.; Flatbush Savings Bank, Brooklyn, N.Y.; East New York Savings Bank, Brownsville branch, Brooklyn; West Side Savings Bank, New York City; the Dime Savings Bank alteration, Brooklyn; Kings County Savings Bank, Brooklyn; Dime Savings Bank, Bensonhurst branch; Brooklyn; Port Chester Savings Bank; First National Bank, Binghamton, N.Y.; Brevoort Savings Bank, Brooklyn; Dime Savings Bank, Flatbush, Brooklyn; Ridgewood Savings Bank, Queens; National City Bank, Troy, N.Y.; South Shore Trust Co., Rockville Center, N.Y.; Greenburgh Savings Bank, Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.; Williamsburgh Savings Bank, Brooklyn; and Peoples Bank & Trust Co., Passaic, N.J. *Savings Bank Journal* 13, no. 4 (June 1932), 51. Additional bank buildings by Halsey, McCormack & Helmer published in *Savings Bank Journal*: Mechanics Savings Bank, Cohoes, N.Y., 7, no. 2 (April, 1931), 26; Onondaga County Savings Bank, Syracuse, N.Y., 7, no. 12 (Feb., 1932); Lincoln Savings Bank, Flatbush branch, Brooklyn, 13, no. 8 (Oct. 1932), 29; Savings Bank of Richmond Hill, Queens, 16, no. 7 (Sept. 1935); Greenpoint Savings Bank, Flatbush branch, Brooklyn, 17, no. 11 (Jan. 1937), 50-51; Staten Island Savings Bank, St. George branch, 17, no. 12 (Feb. 1937); Citizens Savings Bank, branch interior, ground floor alteration, General Electric Building, 570 Lexington Ave., New York, 19, no. 8 (Oct. 1938), 52; and the Harlem Savings Bank, branch at Broadway and 207th Street, 30, no. 12 (Feb. 1950), 21.
21. E. M. Benjamin, H.J. Dickson, and George McCormack represented the firm at the annual National Savings Banks Association meeting in 1932 at the Waldorf-Astoria, *Savings Bank Journal* 13, no. 4 (June 1932), 155.
22. There were two other architecture firms that sustained extensive practices in bank design in the East, Tilghman-Moyer Company of Allentown, Pennsylvania, and Hutchins & French in Boston.

23. In the *American Architects Directory* (1962) Muller lists his advent at Halsey, McCormack & Helmer as 1937. Perhaps this is a typo. If not, 1937 may have been the year he was given greater responsibility at the firm. The evidence of the signed rendering (1932) suggests the earlier date. In his later work -- the alterations to the New York Bank for Savings at 81 Eighth Avenue (1940 and 1952) in Manhattan, for example -- his authorship is acknowledged: in the working drawings for the 1940 alteration are signed "Adolf L. Muller, R.A., Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, Inc."; in 1952 the drawings bear only his name, "Adolf L. Muller, R.A." and the name of the firm is omitted.
24. The outline of the "Liberty Head" silver dollar is discernable in Muller's 1932 and 1937 renderings. The "Liberty Head," designed by George T. Morgan, was minted from 1878 until 1904, then again after 1921. This was the dollar coin in use when the Dollar Savings Bank was established. Wayle Raymond, *The Silver Dollars of North and South America* (Racine, Wisconsin: Whitman Publishing Company, 1964), 116.
25. Muller's published rendering of the 1937-38 facade does not show the parapet linking the entrance pavilion's raised copings. Without the parapet, the pavilions are emphasized and the facade has a different appearance, "The Dollar to Enlarge New Branch," *Savings Bank Journal* 18, no. 7 (Aug. 1937), 15. A line-cut representation of the facade without the parapet appears two years later in a pamphlet, *The Murals in the Main Banking Room of the New Fordham Office of the Dollar Savings Bank* (1939), n.p. It seems likely that the parapet was added as part of the 1949-52 alteration, to strengthen the appearance of the horizontal "line" in the desired asymmetrical balance between tower and banking room.
26. The tablet above the window in the tower's base is inscribed: "Dollar Savings Bank in the City of New York, Chartered in 1890." Of the three tablets in the attic of the banking room's facade, the lefthandmost is inscribed, "Teach Economy - It is one of the first virtues - It begins with saving money"; the center, "Without Economy none can be rich - With it few will be poor"; and the righthandmost, "If you know how to spend less than you get you have the philosopher's stone."
27. Above and behind the doorway enframingent is a tall window with paired, vertical filigree mullions (a linear pattern of intersecting ovals) and muntins of bronze separating the window into sixteen panes in the center flanked by four each on the side. Like the windows above the doorways, each of the three banking room windows is comprised of paired, vertical, bronze filigree mullions (with the same overlapping oval pattern) and bronze muntins. But the banking room windows are longer, and each has a horizontal bronze filigree mullion. The resulting configuration has, above the horizontal mullion, sixteen panes in the center, flanked by four on each side, and below the mullion twelve panes in the center and three on each side. The large window opening in the base of the tower repeats the mullion and muntin pattern of the banking room windows. The small window in this southern bay is protected by a bronze grille incorporating the overlapping oval motif. Some of the panes pivot open horizontally.
28. Each clock face is twelve feet in diameter.
29. The wall above the office block/tower entrance is pierced with openings at each story. These openings ventilate the firestairs. Only the second-story opening has a bronze grille. The grille design incorporates a variation of the overlapping ovals seen to the south. The other eight openings have no grilles.
30. In the office block, four bays of three-over-three steel double-hung windows light each floor of the block's west side, seven bays of the same on the south side, and four of the same on the block's east side.
31. "Dollar Erects 10-Story Building," *Savings Bank Journal* 32, no. 12 (Feb. 1952), 12.
32. Letter from Robert J. Sofia, Vice President, Emigrant Savings Bank, to Charles Savage, February 9, 1994.

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 Dollar Savings Bank Building (now Emigrant Savings Bank) 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 Dollar Savings Bank, built in three stages, in 1932-33, 1937-38, and 1949-52, was designed by Adolf L. Muller of the noted firm of bank architects, Halsey, McCormack & Helmer and is a major example of classicizing Art Deco design; that it served as the headquarters of the first thrift institution to be organized in the Bronx; that, occupying a 200-foot frontage on the Grand Concourse near Fordham Road, its presence signaled the importance of this area as a commercial center for the borough; that although the design was carried out over some twenty years, there is a consistency in the use of the classicizing Art Deco style and classical proportions, as well as the facade material of red granite; that the skeletal frame of steel that supports the original building and each of Muller's additions is particularly apparent in the ten-story office block and clock tower which added a strong asymmetrical silhouette to the earlier symmetrical design; that an important feature was the raised "Liberty Head" dollar logo, echoed by the round clock faces in the tower and over the entrances; that since 1992, the building has housed facilities of the Emigrant Savings Bank; and that it still enjoys great prominence on the Grand Concourse.

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 Dollar Savings Bank Building (now Emigrant Savings Bank), 2516-2530 Grand Concourse, Borough of the Bronx, and designates Bronx Tax Map Block 3154, Lots 1001 and 1002, as its Landmark Site.

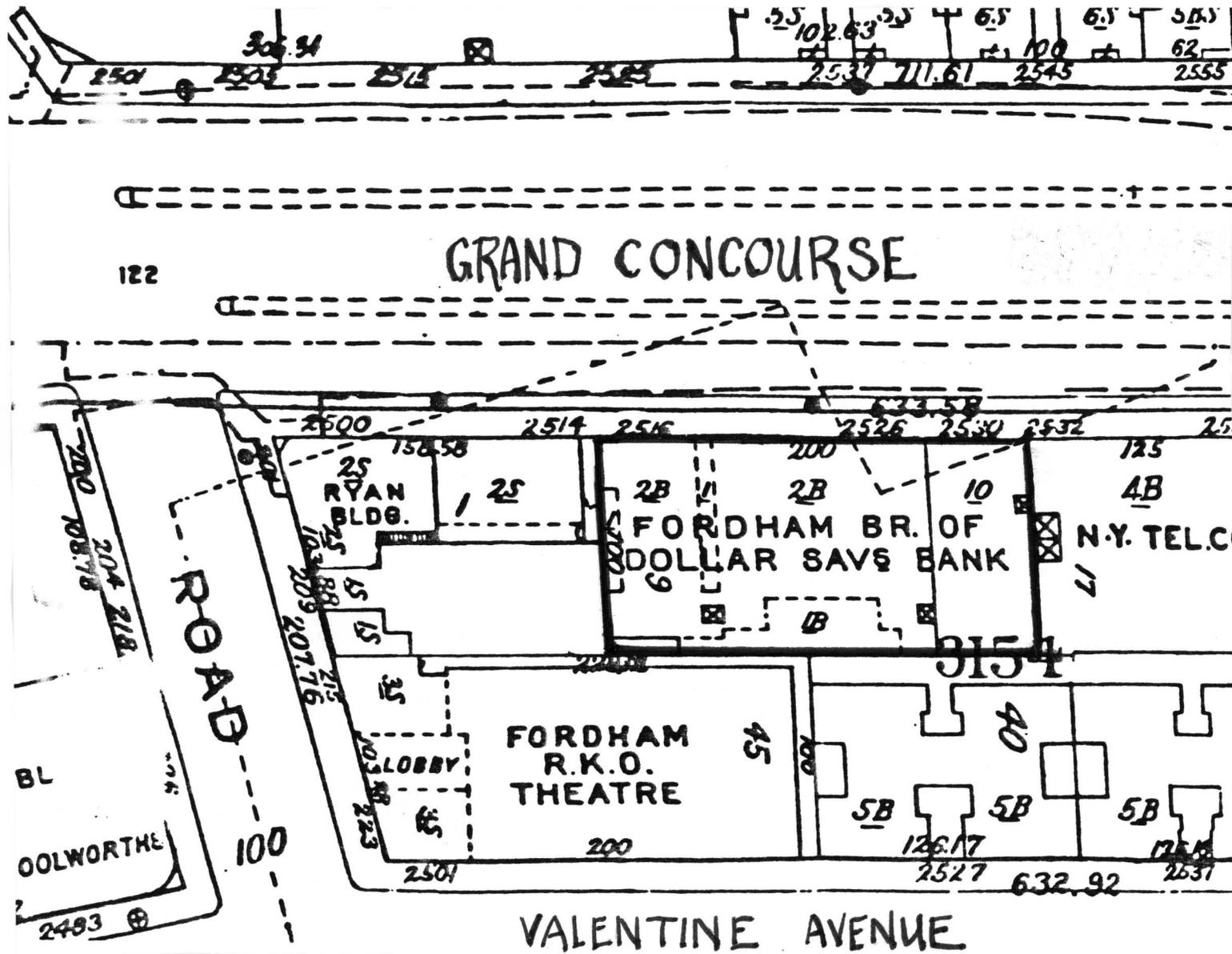


Plate 1. Dollar Savings Bank, 2516-2530 Grand Concourse, The Bronx. *Bronx Land Book* vol. 2, (New York: G.W. Bromley, 1982), plate 196.



(Carl Forster)

Plate 2. A. L. Muller. Rendering for the Dollar Savings Bank's Fordham branch office, Sept. 17, 1932. Coll., Emigrant Savings Bank.



(Carl Forster)

Plate 3. A. L. Muller. Rendering of the Dollar Savings Bank's enlarged Fordham branch office, 1937. Coll., Emigrant Savings Bank.

Plate 4.

Dollar Savings
Bank (now Emigrant
Savings Bank), 2516-
2530 Grand Concourse.

(Carl Forster)



Plate 5.

South banking room
entrance, Dollar Savings
Bank.

(Carl Forster)





Plate 6. (Carl Forster)
Detail, bronze doors, banking room entrance.

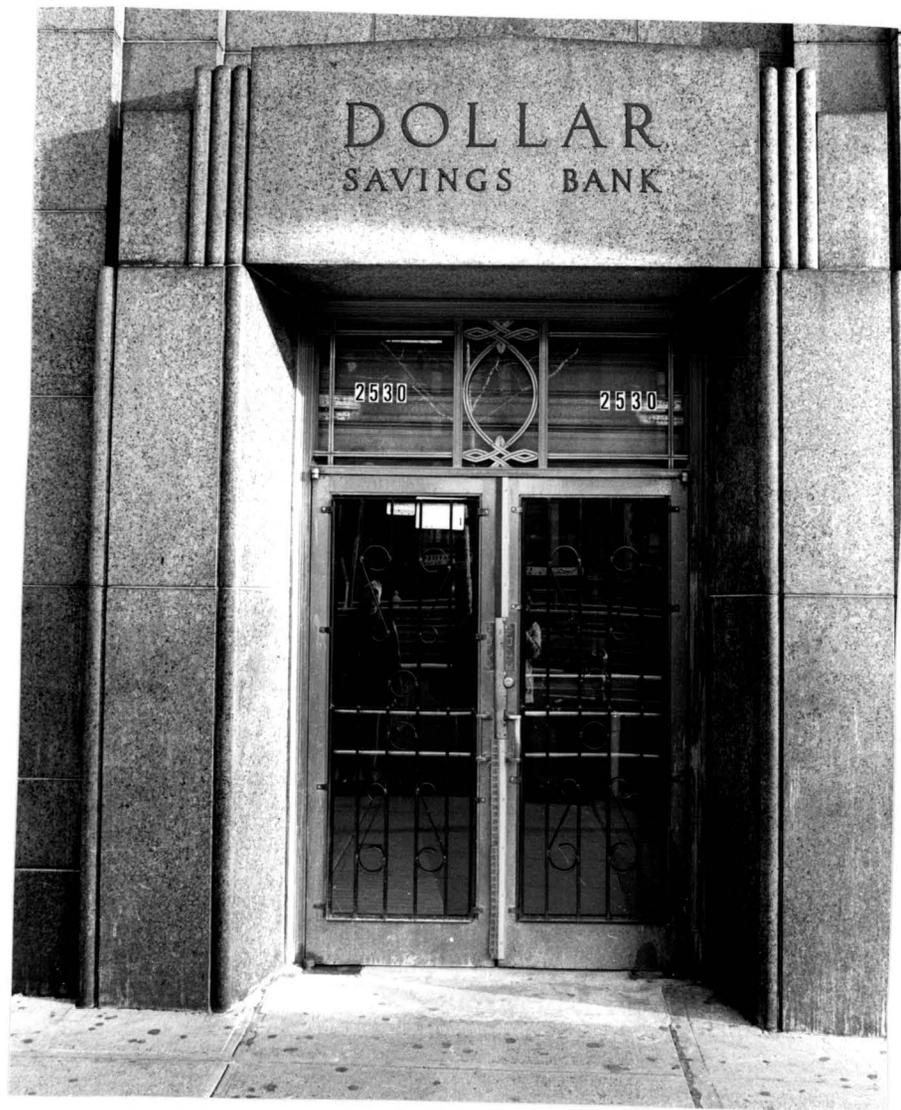


Plate 7. (Carl Forster)
Detail, office block/tower entrance.