



NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Robert B. Tierney
Chairman

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COMMISSION APPROVES LANDMARK STATUS FOR FORMER CITIZENS SAVINGS BANK BUILDING IN CHINATOWN



The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission today voted unanimously to landmark the former Citizens Savings Bank building at 58 Bowery, a massive Beaux-Arts style building that opened in 1924 and is currently an HSBC branch.

Citizens Savings Bank, chartered in 1860 to serve small depositors such as clerks, mechanics and servants, originally opened at 13 Avenue A. The bank moved to 58 Bowery in 1862, occupying a building at the site that was torn down to construct the existing one to meet an increase in demand for services. The bank commissioned architect Clarence W. Brazer to design the new building. Brazer spent part of his career in the offices of the noted architect Cass Gilbert, where he worked on such buildings as the State Capitol in St. Paul, Minnesota and the U.S. Customs House in Lower Manhattan, a New York City landmark.

Located on a roughly square-shaped lot across from Carrere & Hastings' ornate Manhattan Bridge Arch and Colonnade (a New York City landmark), the comparatively restrained granite building is 110 feet high and capped by a low dome. The street facades feature rusticated bases and an enormous arched window framed by pilasters. The cornice is decorated with beehives _ symbols of thrift _ an eagle and seated figures of a Native American and a sailor, all derived from the bank's seal. Charles Keck, whose work became well-known in mid-20th century, is responsible for the sculptures, which were intended to be visible to passengers on the former Third Avenue elevated rail line.

"The design and materials were meant to convey the bank's financial stability and assure the public that their deposits were safe," said Commission Chairman Robert B. Tierney. "At the same time, the building was a strong visual anchor for pedestrians, El passengers or anyone coming on and off the Manhattan Bridge."

Citizens Savings Bank merged with the Manhattan Savings Institution in 1942 and became the Manhattan Savings Bank. The bank was acquired in 1990 and later renamed the Republic Bank for Savings until it was bought by HSBC Holdings in 1999.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission is the mayoral agency responsible for protecting and preserving New York City's architecturally, historically and culturally significant buildings and sites. Since its creation in 1965, LPC has granted landmark status to more than 28,000 buildings, including 1,291 individual landmarks, 112 interior landmarks, 10 scenic landmarks, 104 historic districts and 16 historic district extensions in all five boroughs. Under the City's landmarks law, considered among the most powerful in the nation, the Commission must be comprised of at least three architects, a historian, a realtor, a planner or landscape architect, as well as a representative of each borough.

Contact: Elisabeth de Bourbon/ 212-669-7938