

## **Landmarking Hearing On Jamaica Bank**

The city Landmarks Preservation Commission will hold a hearing next week on whether to landmark a downtown Jamaica building whose elegance has faded due to poor maintenance.

The former Jamaica Savings Bank, located at 161-02 Jamaica Ave., was constructed in 1897-98 for the oldest and most prestigious banking institution in Jamaica. Designed by the noted firm of Hough & Deuell, the building is an example of the classically inspired Beaux Arts style, which became popular in the United States following the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. It is one of only a few buildings in Queens to embrace that architectural aesthetic.

Although the four-story structure is relatively small in scale, the design of the facade conveys a monumentality that is suited to the image and reputation of the banking institution, while lending the build-

ing the formal elegance of a private club or townhouse.

Incorporated in 1866 by a consortium of local citizens — including John A. King, former governor of the State of New York and the eldest son of Federalist statesman Rufus King — the Jamaica Savings Bank played an important role in the development of Jamaica, at that time a burgeoning commercial center.

Two previous attempts to landmark the building, first in 1974 and then in 1992, were overruled by the Board of Estimate and City Council, respectively.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission will hold the hearing on Tuesday, May 15, starting at 9:30 a.m. The hearing will take place at the commission's offices located at 1 Centre Street, 9th Floor North, in Manhattan.

—Dan Hendrick