

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

DRAFT

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Dollar Savings Bank  
 other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_  
 name of related multiple property listing N/A

## 2. Location

street & number 2516-2530 Grand Concourse  not for publication  
 city or town Bronx  vicinity  
 state NY code NY county New York code 005 zip code 10458

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
 I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.  
 In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:  
 \_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

\_\_\_ entered in the National Register \_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register  
 \_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_ removed from the National Register  
 \_\_\_ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- Site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE / financial institution

COMMERCE/TRADE / business

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

WORK IN PROGRESS

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT / Art Deco

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: STONE/Granite

roof: ASPHALT

other: BRICK, TERRA COTTA, METAL/Bronze

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**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

**Summary Paragraph**

The Dollar Savings Bank building is located at 2530 Grand Concourse between East Fordham Road and East 192<sup>nd</sup> Street in the Fordham neighborhood of the Bronx, Bronx County, New York. Constructed in three phases between 1932 and 1952, the building consists of a three-story banking hall and a ten-story office tower surmounted by a fifty-foot-tall clocktower. All three phases of the building were designed by Adolf F. Muller of the architecture firm Halsey, McCormack & Helmer.

The earliest portions of the building—the three-story banking hall built in 1932-33 and extended in 1937-38—are executed in a classicized Art Deco style with polished granite ashlar cladding, large double-height openings, and stylized decorative features such as the “Liberty Head” silver dollar representations above the main entrances. The ten-story office tower addition, built in 1949-52, references the design of the earlier portion of the building with its polished granite base and matching double-height openings, but adds an asymmetrical silhouette to the earlier symmetrical design. Above, the office tower rises eight stories and is clad in red and rose-colored brick with terra-cotta spandrels and trim. The tower is surmounted by a four-sided clocktower, each clock featuring a glass face and bronze hands. The main section of the banking hall interior is a vast two-story unobstructed space, richly decorated with polished red marble, buff limestone, granite flooring and decorative plaster ceiling in the Art Deco style. The building is currently vacant.

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**Narrative Description**

*Location*

The Dollar Savings Bank is located on the Grand Concourse, a major commercial thoroughfare that is roughly 180-foot wide and runs through several neighborhoods including Bedford Park, Concourse, Highbridge, Fordham, Mott Haven, Norwood, and Tremont. Many of the buildings on the Grand Concourse, including those on the same block as the Dollar Savings Bank and across the Concourse, are five- and six-story apartment buildings that were constructed in the 1930s, many in the Art Deco style. To the south of the Dollar Savings Bank is 2500-2514 Grand Concourse, a former movie palace that was built in 1916 and known as the Concourse Theatre; to the north of the building is 2540 Grand Concourse, an office building completed in 1971.

Other notable commercial buildings located along Grand Concourse include the Wagner Building (NR Eligible) at 2488 Grand Concourse, a ten-story Art Deco-style building built in 1931 and designed by Nathan Rotholz, and Loew’s Paradise Theater (NR Eligible, LPC Designated 1997) at 2401-2419 Grand Concourse, a movie palace that opened in 1929 and was designed by theater architect John Eberson.

Other nearby National Register-listed properties include the Poe Cottage (NRHP 1980) at 2640 Grand Concourse, a farmhouse built around 1812 in which Edgar Allen Poe lived from 1846 to 1848 and located within Poe Park, and St. James’s Episcopal Church (NRHP 1982) at 2500 Jerome Avenue, a Gothic Revival-style building designed by Henry Dudley and built in 1863 when Fordham was mostly occupied by farms and country estates.

*Exterior*

The Dollar Savings Bank is a dominant presence at the intersection of Fordham Road and the Grand Concourse. The building was constructed in three phases: the southernmost bay of the three-story banking hall was built as a fifty-foot-wide freestanding bank in 1932-33; a 100-foot-wide addition was added to the north in 1937-38, and a fifty-foot-wide, ten-story office building and clocktower were added at the northern end in 1949-52.

The 150-foot-long banking hall portion of the building is two- and three-stories tall with one- and four-story extensions at the rear of the lot. At its primary Grand Concourse elevation, the façade is symmetrically arranged with double-height entries flanking three double-height windows. The banking hall is clad in polished Texas pink granite ashlar and designed

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in a classicized Art Deco style with streamlined and geometric decorative details incorporated into a monolithic, planar façade with classically inspired proportions.

The main entrances to the banking hall are provided within two recessed monumental openings, each capped by a projecting granite canopy and set within a slightly projecting pavilion. The entries feature pairs of sliding bronze pocket doors, adorned with intricate ornamentation and sculptural relief, including a central figure bearing a large key flanked by others ensconced within diamond-shaped frames. The entry doors have been removed from the openings as part of the current rehabilitation project. Above the entry openings, three decorative bronze panels with small windows are set within the transom above. 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. Above the entrances are large multi-light steel windows with decorative bronze grilles. Each hexagon-shaped canopy features a bronze lattice with opaque glass infill at the soffit and originally had a pendant light fixture which is no longer extant.

The banking hall's central bays are articulated with three double-height window openings separated by a system of low-relief buttresses and narrow panels. The windows consist of multi-light sash set within bronze mullions with a decorative bronze window grille. At the attic level, the building features two "Liberty Head" coin representations at the flanking entry pavilions and four inscribed tablets at the center bays. Historically, the "Liberty Head" reliefs had illuminated neon signs for the bank attached to their faces. The south elevation of the banking hall, which is partially visible from the street, is clad in red brick. Windows on this elevation are steel multi-lights with operable sash.

The ten-story office tower addition, constructed in 1949-1952, is built with a steel frame, concrete floors, and brick exterior walls. The base of the ten-story office tower is clad in the same polished ashlar granite as the banking hall with a large double-height opening at the south side of the tower and a lower building entry to the north, centered beneath the clock tower above. The larger opening was originally a window but was converted to an entry in 2018 with aluminum-and-glass infill. The office entrance is through a pair of brass-clad doors with a transom above; one leaf of the entrance doors is missing from the office entrance.

The upper eight stories of office tower and the clock tower at the roof are clad in orange brick with terra-cotta trim. The façade is asymmetrically organized with four projecting bays to the south and a slightly recessed bay at the north with a single bay of windows, which visually supports the clocktower above. At the projecting section, the window bays have recessed pink terra-cotta spandrels set between the brick piers. The windows at this elevation are aluminum replacements with three-over-three double-hung sash. Above the tenth story the tower features a representation of the "Liberty Head" coin on a wide, fluted panel.

The clock tower, which is integrated into the design of the office building below and contains the building's fire stairs and elevator core, is located at the northwest corner of the office tower roof from which it rises fifty feet. Each elevation contains a twelve-foot diameter clock adorned with glass faces and bronze embellishments; some elements of the clocks have been removed. To the east of the clocktower is a large elevator bulkhead clad with red brick.

The tower's southern secondary elevation largely repeats the fenestration of the primary western façade with vertical brick piers dividing the single window bays with terra-cotta spandrel panels. The tower's eastern elevation has setbacks at the first, third, fifth, and seventh stories. A broad electric sign ("Emigrant Savings Bank") has replaced the original neon sign ("Dollar Savings Bank") at the top of block's southern face. Historically, large electric signs for Dollar Savings Bank and later Emigrant Savings Bank were located on the south elevation of the tower and on the south elevation of the banking hall, but these are no longer extant. The north elevation, where the fire stair and elevator core are located, is mostly devoid of windows and is articulated with brick buttresses. Most of the windows on the secondary elevations are three-over-three replacement windows that match the historic configuration, with some replacement six-over-six double-hung metal windows.

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*Interior*

The Art Deco-style banking hall of the Dollar Savings Bank largely reflects the 1932-33 and 1937-38 building campaigns. The main section of the banking hall, constructed in 1938, is a double-height space that is connected to a subsidiary one-story section that was added as part of the office tower in 1952.

Access to the banking hall is granted through two Art Deco-style vestibules adorned in brass, positioned at the north and south ends of the Grand Concourse elevation. These vestibules feature three glazed swinging doors, each crowned by a tripartite transom. Due to the variance in grade along the Grand Concourse, the south entrance is distinguished by its greater height, including taller transoms. Internally, the vestibules are framed by polished brass panels, complemented by an ornate brass grille concealing the air register. Above these enclosures, a brass inscription reads, "Dollar Savings Bank," flanked by meander motifs. Within each vestibule there is a clock set within the brass enclosure that faces towards the banking hall.

The main banking hall features polished red marble pilasters flanking the east and west walls, with large windows punctuating the west wall. The areas between the pilasters and the north and south walls are sheathed in polished limestone. Along the north and south perimeters of the banking hall, large clerestory windows are set between terra-cotta corbels. Those on the south wall open outward, while their counterparts on the north wall illuminate the former executive offices in the tower. Above the east wall's architrave, five murals depict the early settlement history of the Bronx. Areas below the murals and surrounding the clerestory windows to the south are clad in ashlar limestone.

The flooring in the main banking room is light-colored granite with a dark inlaid grid design. To the west and north, the flooring transitions to polished concrete where the original teller counters were located (they were removed during the 1952 expansion).

A striking ceiling of ribbed and paneled plaster, embellished in silver gilt and gold leaf, crowns the banking hall. Classical-inspired decorative elements such as rosette bosses and emblematic meanders highlight the intersection of ribs or their soffits. The historic chandeliers, located at the outer edges of the ceiling, are composed of ribbed opaque glass cylinders adorned with fin-like disks and spheres. In 1949-1952, acoustical tile was installed in the flat areas between the ornamental ribs and included recessed light fixtures within the flat acoustic tile segments and the decorative plaster ribs.

The 1949-1952 extension of the banking hall maintains a similar aesthetic to the main banking hall. Its walls are a mix of flat plaster and limestone, with limestone-clad columns located around the perimeter of the space. The floors continue the square granite pattern of the main banking hall. Within the extension's ceiling, decorative plaster ribs intersect with flat plaster surfaces. Ventilation and lighting elements, in the form of HVAC vents and round/linear fixtures, are integrated within the plaster ribs.

At the southwest corner of the main banking hall is an open stair that leads down to the safe deposit box lobby in the basement. The stair and lobby are continuations of the public areas of the bank and have similar decorative treatment. The stairwell is faced with polished limestone with polished red marble wainscot and banister. A brass handrail runs down the center of each of the flights with an aluminum and opaque glass light fixture hanging above. The safe deposit box lobby walls are finished with polished red marble wainscot and pilasters and limestone infill. The lobby's floor is paved with terrazzo in varied hues and patterns, and the low ceiling is decorative plaster.

The basement is accessible from the southwest corner staircase opening in the safe deposit vault lobby and from the banking hall service elevator bank and stair to the east. The safe deposit box vault has a decorative gate and grilles which are fine examples of Art Deco foliate metalwork and designed to conform to the symmetrically pitched low ceiling. Beyond the public-facing safe deposit box lobby, the basement was used for vaults, storage, and banking operations. The finishes in this part of the basement are utilitarian; the only historic character-defining features are the bank vaults themselves. Finishes within the non-public areas of the basement consist of poured concrete floors, painted plaster or concrete walls, and exposed concrete ceilings. The vault interiors are constructed of painted steel.

The third floor of the banking hall, historically offices and break rooms for the bank, is now configured as open space with no partitions or decorative features. The walls and ceilings are built with flat plaster and the floors are concrete.

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The 1949-1952 office tower lobby is located at the northwest corner of the building and is entered through a vestibule from the Grand Concourse. The interior vestibule doors and transom are brass clad, matching the decorative details of the exterior doors and transom. Two fire stairs exit into the vestibule, one from the basement and the second from the upper floors.

The office tower lobby walls are finished in a polished red marble with variegated veining along the north wall and ashlar limestone along the east and south walls. Two elevators are located along the north wall of the lobby, set within chamfered marble openings. A historic open marble staircase is located at the south side of the lobby and leads up to the mezzanine floor. The ceiling is flat plaster with decorative crown moldings.

The majority of the upper floors of the office tower retain their historic floor plan, with elevators that open directly onto open or partitioned floor plates. Vertical circulation is provided by elevators located at the northwest corner of each floor as well as a fire stair. Each elevator bank area features historic red marble baseboard and ceramic tile flooring. The upper floors have been altered over time and have flat plaster walls, gypsum board ceilings, and concrete floors with a variety of non-historic floor coverings.

*Integrity*

The Dollar Savings Bank stands as an exceptional example of early to mid-twentieth-century Art Deco-style bank architecture and maintains a high level of integrity at its exterior and interior. Though minimal changes have been made to the bank over time—including the replacement of windows in the office tower, the creation of a new entry to the banking hall, and changes to signage—character-defining elements of the historic layout, design, and finishes are intact.

By retaining its polished granite, brick, and terra-cotta cladding system, its distinctive massing including a 180-foot-tall clocktower, and its richly ornamented interior banking hall, Dollar Savings Bank remains a highly legible landmark of Bronx's bank architecture of the early-to-mid twentieth century.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1932-1952

**Significant Dates**

1932-33, 1937-38, 1949-52

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Adolf F. Muller (Halsey, McCormack & Helmer)

Angelo Magnanti (mural artist)

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance is based on the construction dates of the building, beginning with the construction of first portion in 1932-33 and ending with the completion of the tower in 1952.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Dollar Savings Bank, located in the Fordham neighborhood of the Bronx, New York, is a monumental example of classicized Art Deco-style bank architecture. The bank, built for the first thrift institution to be organized in the Bronx, was constructed in phases between 1932 and 1952. The building's easternmost bay was constructed as the bank's Fordham branch office in 1932-33, and the building was subsequently expanded another 100 feet along Concourse Avenue in 1938-39. In 1949-52 the bank made its Fordham branch its company headquarters and it constructed a third and final addition—a new ten-story office tower with a fifty-foot clocktower. All the phases of development were designed by Adolf F. Muller of architecture firm Halsey, McCormack & Helmer.

The building is **locally significant** under **Criterion C** in the area of *Architecture* as a representative example of classicized Art Deco-style bank architecture. Since the turn of the twentieth century the predominant architectural style for bank buildings in the United States was classical; but beginning with the 1925 Paris Exposition architects began to look to modernism to meet the needs of twentieth-century banking. The Dollar Savings Bank's earliest sections reflect the transition from Beaux Arts planning and composition principles to modernism, with its sleek, yet classicized, Art Deco-inspired exterior of polished Texas pink granite ashlar cladding, large double-height openings, and stylized decorative features such as the "Liberty Head" silver dollar representations above the main entrances. Similarly, the 1949-1952 tower addition reflects the needs of banks in the World War II era to create more space, either to be rented out on a speculative basis or used as for the company itself. While the asymmetrical office tower carried over elements of the original design, its upper stories reflected a simpler, yet still monumental, attitude toward bank symbolism.

The Dollar Savings Bank is also **locally significant** under **Criterion A** in the area of *Commerce* for its association with the commercial development of the Bronx. Established in 1890 by Bronx business leaders, the Dollar Savings Bank was the first thrift institution, or mutual savings bank, created in the Bronx. Its creation allowed Bronx residents to keep their savings in the borough and allowed the bank to use these funds to pay for improvements in the borough. The original 1932 structure was constructed to house the Fordham branch office for the company. As the building expanded on Grand Concourse during the twentieth century, it became the main branch and headquarters for Dollar Savings Bank, which remained in the building until 1992 when the bank was absorbed into Emigrant Savings Bank. The building was used as a bank until 2014 at which point the property became vacant.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance**

*The development of the Bronx*<sup>1</sup>

Until the mid-nineteenth century, the block bounded by Grand Concourse, East Fordham Road, Valentine Avenue, and East 192<sup>nd</sup> Street, upon which the Dollar Savings Bank now stands, was part of a farm owned by John Valentine, which part of the Town of West Farms. Although Valentine's heirs began to sell the land in 1888 it remained sparsely built with wood-frame farmhouses and related outbuildings.

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 came, in part, from the influential members of the Rider & Driver Club, many of whom belonged to the American Jockey Club and

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<sup>1</sup> This section on the history of the Bronx is directly excerpted with minor changes from the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Dollar Savings Bank*, LP-1889 (New York: July 19, 1994), prepared by Charles Savage. Sources consulted for this section not included.



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were habitues of the Jerome Park Racing Association Grounds, 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. Bronx Borough President Louis Haffen officiated at the groundbreaking 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 (demolished) established itself at the northwest corner of the concourse and East Fordham Road, several movie palaces—the RKO Fordham (demolished), the Concourse (1916), the Valentine (1920), and the Windsor (1920)—were constructed nearby, and automobile showrooms opened farther 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 remodeled 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 Bank<sup>2</sup>*

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 then opened its doors at 2808 Third Avenue, just below the intersection of Third and Willis Avenues and 148th Street. 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. 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 the twentieth century. 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 ensured that most local savings would not leave the borough. 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. In 1926 Manson had enlarged the Dollar's headquarters building (1919, NR Listed 2011) 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 to accommodate the increased volume of business in the district.<sup>3</sup> Manson opened the new Fordham branch at 2516 Grand Concourse, designed by Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, in 1933. The following year the Dollar

<sup>2</sup> This section on the history of the Bronx is directly excerpted with minor changes from the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Dollar Savings Bank*, LP-1889 (New York: July 19, 1994), prepared by Charles Savage. Sources consulted for this section not included.

<sup>3</sup> "Dollar Bank's New Building Ready Monday," *New York Times*, October 1, 1933.

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trustees purchased three additional lots north of their new Fordham branch office 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. By 1948, of the 532 mutual savings banks in the nation, Dollar had grown to be the sixth largest. 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 this work was designed by the Halsey, McCormack, & Helmer office.

*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, prior to the 1880s and 1890s, banks were, for the most part, located in converted residences, or in office buildings, rarely in quarters designed for them. With high property values in the financial district, many commercial banks began to build office buildings, conducting business on the ground floor and renting out 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. They could take advantage of less expensive real estate and were able to build monumental bank buildings for their exclusive use, many on corner sites. Among them were the Greenwich Savings Bank, designed by Robert W. Gibson (1892, demolished); the Bank for Savings at East 22nd Street and Fourth Avenue, designed by Cyrus L.W. Eidlitz (1892, partially demolished); the sumptuous Bowery Savings Bank, designed by McKim, Mead & White (1893-95, NR Listed 1980); and R.H. Robertson's New York Bank for Savings at Eighth Avenue and 14th Street (1896-97, NR Listed 2011).

This trend continued after the turn of the century. In 1909, the *Architectural Record* published a lengthy, illustrated survey, in which the author invoked the ancient Greek and Roman temples as ancestors to the modern bank building type; the recent banks, however, had evolved due to "the marvelous growth of modern consumerism."<sup>5</sup> The illustrations attest to the pervasiveness of the classical bank type, about which the author states: "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>6</sup> In part, Academic Classicism was popularized as a means to create an architecture characterized by order, clarity, and sobriety, qualities considered appropriate to the democratic ideals of the expanding nation, and particularly appropriate to the design of banks and public institutions. The Dollar's earlier headquarters building (1919, NR Listed 2011) at 2792 Third Avenue followed this prototype.

By the mid-1920s architects were beginning to question the rigid historicism that had thus far dominated bank architecture.<sup>7</sup> Increasingly, architects were looking for ways to adapt the design of banks to the needs of twentieth century banking, but they were unwilling to completely abandon the classicism that had prevailed for decades. Thus, architects adopted a new transitional approach, in which the classical language was reinterpreted within a modern idiom. The concept gained popularity after the *Paris Exposition des Arts Decoratifs* in 1925, which showcased examples of buildings that were symmetrical and classical in massing but had simplified or abstracted ornament. The style would later become known as Art Deco. One of the most influential practitioners of the classicized Art Deco style on bank buildings was the firm Walker & Gillette, which designed the National City Bank of New York (1927) on Canal Street, a building that became a recognizable prototype for all the bank's branches.

<sup>4</sup> This section on banks and architectural imagery is adapted from the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Dollar Savings Bank*, LP-1889 (New York: July 19, 1994), prepared by Charles Savage, and NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, *(Former) Dollar Savings Bank*, LP-2370 (New York: January 12, 2010), prepared by Theresa C. Noonan.

<sup>5</sup> "Recent Bank Buildings of the United States," *Architectural Record* 25, v. 1 (January 1909): 1-3.

<sup>6</sup> M. Christine Boyer, *Manhattan Manners: Architecture and Style 1850-1900* (New York: Henry L. Hintz, 1985), 45.

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion on the use of "Modern Classicism" after the Great Depression, see Charles Belfoure, *Monuments to Money: The Architecture of American Banks* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc, 2005), 212-222.

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The prosperity that led to the construction of many banks in the 1920s came to a halt with the stock market crash of 1929, which led to a recession and became the Great Depression in 1933. Some bank construction, like at Dollar Savings Bank, continued after the crash, likely to take advantage of lower material and labor prices, but it largely ended by 1933.<sup>8</sup> During this time the transition from classicism to modernism became complete as architects and banking companies sought to project a new image after the crash. By 1936 bank construction began again. The conversion of a store into the Corn Exchange Bank (Fellheimer & Wagner, 1936) on Broadway near Chambers Street, with its smooth, unadorned exterior surfaces and simple glass block and casement windows, exemplified the new dominance of modernism.

*The design and construction of the Dollar Savings Bank*<sup>9</sup>

In December 1932, the Dollar Savings Bank announced its intention to building a new bank on the Grand Concourse to be its Fordham branch. The plans, for “a two-story structure of brick and stone,” were filed by the architecture firm Halsey McCormack & Helmer.<sup>10</sup> The firm was established by Hayward S. Halsey, who 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. Its first large commission, the Williamsburgh Savings Bank's 512-foot skyscraper at 1 Hanson Place (NR Listed 1984) 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, the firm was a leading designer of bank buildings and branch offices for some of the foremost savings banks in the metropolitan areas as well as upstate New York, Long Island, and New Jersey.

When Adolf L. Muller joined Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, he appears to have become one of the principal architectural designers. 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 likely joined Halsey, McCormack & Helmer in 1930 or 1931. The firm's use of the Art Deco style appears to have coincided with Muller's advent.

The Dollar Saving Bank's new Fordham branch was designed by Muller by September 1932 and the bank opened in October 1933.<sup>11</sup> The design consisted of a freestanding, symmetrical composition with a tall central entrance bay buttressed by lower flanking bays (this façade now forms the southern section of the banking room's twin entrance pavilions). The façade, which *Bankers' Magazine* noted was “modernistic in style and at the same time retains enough of the conservative to be appropriate to the dignity of banking quarters,” was clad in polished Texas pink granite ashlar with setbacks and pylons. According to the *New York Times*, the exterior design presented “a combination of strength, beauty and simplicity, which is carried throughout every detail of the interior.”<sup>12</sup> Prominent features, including the deeply set bronze entrance doors, below an overhanging granite canopy, and the “Liberty Head” relief above the entry, which acted as an insignia of the bank. Inside, the building presented an uninterrupted space filled with natural light and finished in marble and bronze. Safe deposit boxes and cash vaults were located in the basement below. The new building, declared the *New York Times*, “sounds a distinct note of progress, both in architecture and banking facilities.”<sup>13</sup>

In August 1937, the bank announced its plans to enlarge its Fordham Branch with an 100-foot addition “of polished red granite, with bronze doors and windows” that will “match the rest of the building.”<sup>14</sup> When Muller integrated the original

<sup>8</sup> Belfoure, 235.

<sup>9</sup> This section on the design and construction of the Dollar Savings Bank has been adapted from the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Dollar Savings Bank*, LP-1889 (New York: July 19, 1994) and NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Dollar Savings Bank Interior*, LP-1890 (New York: July 19, 1994), both prepared by Charles Savage. Sources consulted for this section not included.

<sup>10</sup> “New Bronx Bank,” *New York Times*, December 8, 1932.

<sup>11</sup> See Plate 2 in NYC LPC, *Dollar Savings Bank*.

<sup>12</sup> “New Bank Building Proposed,” *Bankers' Magazine* 126 (January 1933): 95; “Dollar Bank's New Building Ready Monday,” *New York Times*, October 1, 1933.

<sup>13</sup> “Dollar Bank's New Building Ready Monday.”

<sup>14</sup> “Bank Will Enlarge Branch in Fordham,” *New York Times*, August 6, 1937.

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façade 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 original façade, Muller created one with a more horizontal aspect.

At the interior, Muller created a monumental new banking hall that was, like the original banking hall, unobstructed by columns due to Muller's use of steel structure. Elements of the original banking room were replicated, most notably the order of monumental terra-cotta corbels with the face of each oblong, cantilevered section bearing a panel of angulated reeding, the brass-enclosed vestibules, the chamfered corners at the clerestory level, the bronzework at the window openings, and the chandeliers composed of vertical cylinders of ribbed opaque glass with fin-like disks and spheres. The order of corbels appears in profile on the east and west walls adjacent to the red marble pilasters separating these walls into bays. The whole north wall of the original banking room was removed, support for the third story was substituted above the banking room ceiling, and a new truss to incorporate a clerestory wall was erected across the entire north end of the new space. While the corbels appear to support the ceiling, they are, in fact, hung from the ceiling beams. The ribbed and paneled ceiling is a stylized version of the coffered ceiling that would have been found in a classical design.

On the east wall, five murals designed by Angelo Magnanti (d. 1969) depict aspects of early Bronx settlement.<sup>15</sup> Magnanti, born and trained in Italy, had worked with Halsey, McCormack & Helmer at the Williamsburgh Savings Bank, undertaking the mosaic ceiling of the banking room. He also executed work in the Supreme Court Building in Washington, the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, and churches in the New York metropolitan area. The central mural, *Welcoming Settlers at Fort Schuyler*, was the last of Magnanti's five murals at Dollar and was installed in 1957.

The Dollar Saving Bank's final expansion came after World War II in the form of a ten-story office tower and a clocktower, constructed in 1949-52 and designed by Muller. The ten-story office block and clock tower, built with a steel frame, created an asymmetrical addition to the previously symmetrical design. At the base, the building repeated the design of the earlier sections in its proportions, detailing, and use of polished Texas pink granite. The tower above featured red and pink brick walls, with brick piers dividing window bays and recessed terra-cotta spandrels. Above the tenth-story windows Muller included a smaller representation of the "Liberty Head" coin. 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. Additionally, the tower became the primary architectural symbol of the bank, both highly visible in the neighborhood and identifiable in the bank's advertising materials.<sup>16</sup>

### *Later History*

By the early 1980s the Dollar Savings Bank was in financial straits and seeking to avoid being auctioned off by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.<sup>17</sup> In 1983, the bank merged with the Dry Dock Savings Bank to become the Dollar Dry Dock Savings Bank. At the time of the sale, Dollar had seven branches in the Bronx, two in Manhattan, and the rest in Queens, Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester counties. In 1985, the bank sold off the office tower to a real-estate partnership, moved its employees to White Plains, and kept the banking hall.<sup>18</sup> The developers, organized as Jefferson Realty Associates, converted the tower to an office condominium while the bank was maintained as an active branch of Dollar Dry Dock Bank. In 2005, the tower was purchased by Family Support Systems Unlimited, a social service agency that later closed amid financial difficulties, leaving the building vacant around 2013.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> See Footnote 25, in NYC LPC, *Dollar Savings Bank*.

<sup>16</sup> Dollar Savings Bank advertisement, *New York Times*, April 25, 1951.

<sup>17</sup> Robert A. Bennett, "Dry Dock Arranges Dollar Link," *New York Times*, September 16, 1982.

<sup>18</sup> Alan S. Oser, "The Transition on Fordham Road," *New York Times*, October 19, 1986.

<sup>19</sup> Winnie Hu, "Plans to Fix a Landmark and a Hole in Time," *New York Times*, December 31, 2013.

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In 1992, Dollar Dry Dock Savings Bank was purchased by the Emigrant Savings Bank, which soon after made minor Xchanges to the exterior of the building, including installing new signage and exterior lighting. In 1994, the building, including the banking hall, its interior, and the office tower, were designated as New York City landmarks.

In 2012, Emigrant sold the bank building to Apple Savings Bank; Apple Savings Bank subsequently closed its branch at 2530 Grand Concourse in 2014. Both the banking hall and the tower are currently vacant but are undergoing rehabilitation for retail and office use.

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Belfoure, Charles. *Monuments to Money: The Architecture of American Banks*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc, 2005.

Bennett, Robert A. “Dry Dock Arranges Dollar Link.” *New York Times*, September 16, 1982.

“Dollar Bank’s New Building Ready Monday.” *New York Times*, October 1, 1933.

Hu, Winnie. “Plans to Fix a Landmark and a Hole in Time.” *New York Times*, December 31, 2013.

Landmarks Preservation Commission. *Dollar Savings Bank (Now Emigrant Savings Bank) (LP-1889)*. New York: New York, 1994. Prepared by Charles Savage.

Landmarks Preservation Commission. *Dollar Savings Bank Interior (Now Emigrant Savings Bank) (LP-1890)*. New York: New York, 1994. Prepared by Charles Savage.

Landmarks Preservation Commission. *(Former) Dollar Savings Bank (LP-2370)*. New York: New York, 2010. Prepared by Theresa C. Noonan.

“New Bank Building Proposed.” *Bankers’ Magazine* 126 (January 1933): 95.

“New Bronx Bank.” *New York Times*, December 8, 1932.

Oser, Alan S. “The Transition on Fordham Road.” *New York Times*, October 19, 1986.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark  
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary encompasses the tax lot historically associated with the Dollar Savings Bank.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Lindsay Peterson & Shreya Bedi ; contact Christopher D. Brazee, NYSHPO

organization Higgins Quasebarth & Partners date August 2024

street & number 11 Hanover Square, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor telephone 212-274-9468

city or town New York state NY zip code 10005

e-mail peterson@hqpreservation.com

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### Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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**Figures**



Figure 1: 1951 Sanborn map, Vol. 12, Pl. 268. (Library of Congress)

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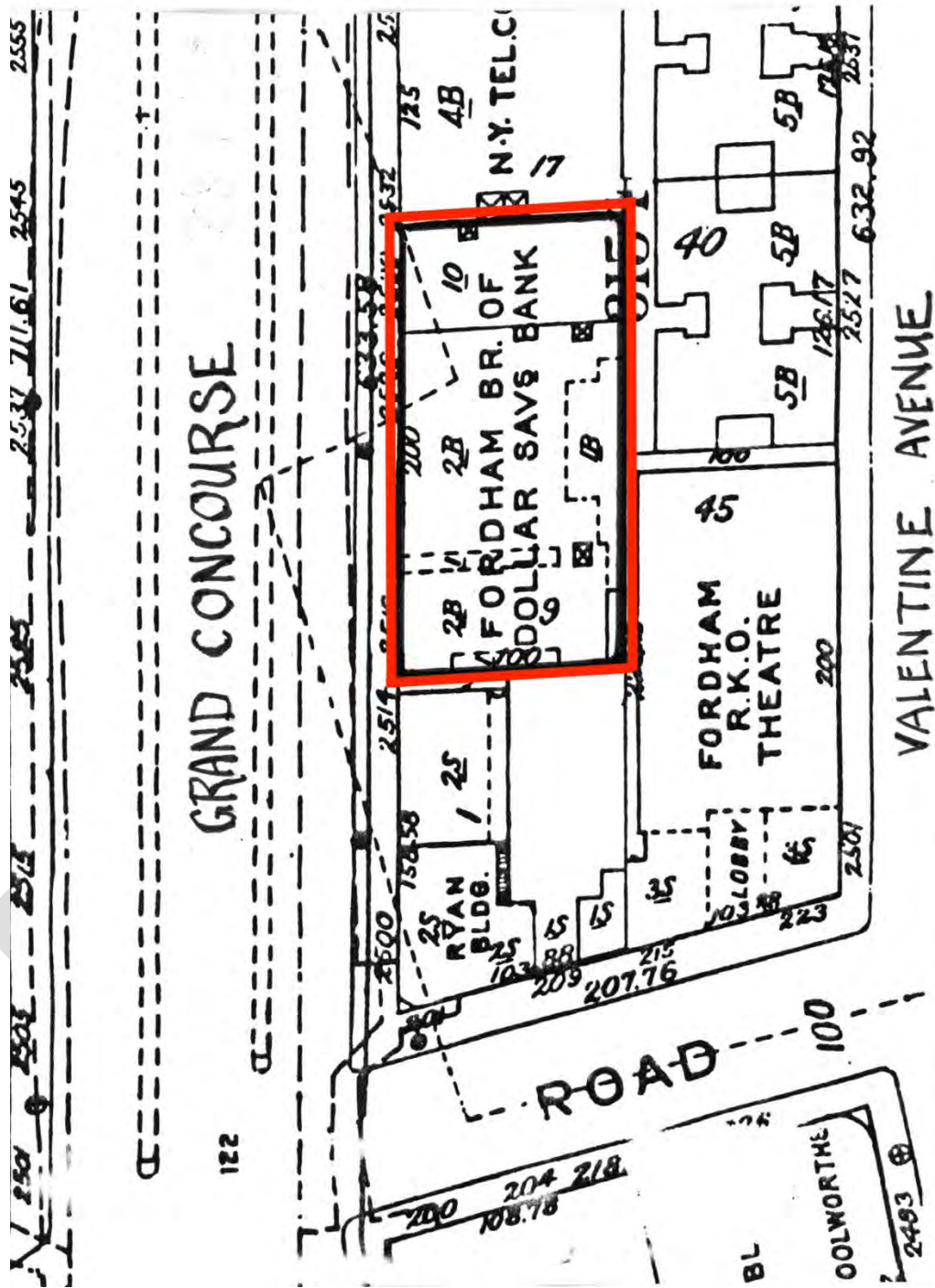


Figure 2: 1982 Bromley map, Vol. 2, Pl. 196. (LPC)

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**Figure 3:** 2023 NYC CityMap (Gis.nyc.gov)

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**Figure 4:** 1932 rendering for the Dollar Savings Bank's Fordham branch office, dated September 17, 1932. (Emigrant Savings Bank collection via LPC, *Dollar Savings Bank*)

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**Figure 5:** 1937 rendering for the Dollar Savings Bank's enlarged Fordham branch office.  
(Emigrant Savings Bank collection via LPC, *Dollar Savings Bank*)

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**Figure 6:** Ca. 1940 view of the banking hall showing the original section and the expansion. (Library of Congress)

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**Figure 7:** Ca. 1940 view of the banking hall interior looking north. (Library of Congress)



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**Figure 8:** Ca. 1940 view of the banking hall interior looking west. (Library of Congress)

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**Figure 9:** Ca. 1949 view of the office tower being constructed. (Bronx County Historical Society)

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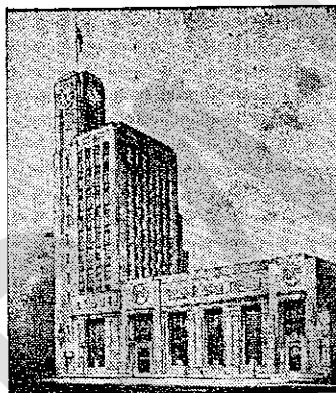
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# New Savings Opportunity!

YOU MAY NOW DEPOSIT

## UP TO \$10,000

And Remember—your deposits up to \$10,000 are fully insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.



MAIN OFFICE

CURRENT  
DIVIDEND

# 2%

A YEAR

## DOLLAR Savings Bank

OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

RESOURCES OVER \$480,000,000

*Main Office: Grand Concourse at Fordham Road*

*Third Avenue Office: Third Avenue at 147th Street*

*Parkchester Office: Hugh J. Grant Circle at East 177th Street*

*170th Street Office: Between Grand Concourse and Jerome Avenue*

*Southern Boulevard Office: Southern Boulevard near Westchester Avenue*

Member Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

Figure 10: 1951 advertisement. (New York Times)

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**Figure 11:** Early 1950s view on the Grand Concourse looking north.

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**Figure 12:** Ca. 1952 view after the office tower was built. (Lehman College Library)

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**Figure 12:** 1983 view of the building's east and south elevations. (Bronx County Historical Society)

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**Figure 13:** 1984 view of the building looking north. (Bronx County Historical Society)

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**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Dollar Savings Bank  
City or Vicinity: Bronx  
County: Bronx State: NY  
Photographer: HQ  
Date Photographed: 2023

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0001

Overall view of Dollar Savings Bank looking northeast from across the Grand Concourse. The base of the building is clad in polished ashlar granite with large double-height openings. The upper eight stories of the office tower are clad in orange brick with terra-cotta spandrels and trim.

NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0002

Overall view of Dollar Savings Bank, looking southeast from the intersection of East 192nd Street and Grand Concourse.

NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0003

View of office tower from Grand Concourse.

NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0004

View of the banking hall along Grand Concourse.

NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0005

Detail of the banking hall façade and north entry.

NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0006

Street-level view looking south along Grand Concourse. The banking hall entrance and windows are set within double-height recessed openings set into the granite façade.

NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0007

Detail of the north entrance to the banking hall entrance.

NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0008

Bronze pocket doors in the open position at the south entrance to the banking hall.

NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0009

View of the office tower showing the base which is clad in Texas pink granite.

NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0010

Detail view of the office tower façade which features red brick cladding and terra-cotta spandrels.

NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0011

Detail view of the top of the office tower. A terra-cotta "Liberty Head" coin is set within a terra-cotta panel at the top of the office tower's western façade.



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NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0012

Interior of banking hall looking southwest. The south wall of the banking hall contains large clerestory windows set between large terra-cotta corbels.

NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0013

View of banking hall looking northwest. The north wall contains large clerestory windows set between large terra-cotta corbels.

NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0014

View of banking hall looking east. Five murals depicting the history of the Bronx's early settlement fill the bays above the wall's architrave. Below these murals, the walls are clad in ashlar limestone.

NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0015

View of historic chandeliers located at the outer edges of the historic ceiling. These are composed of ribbed opaque glass cylinders adorned with fin-like disks and spheres.

NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0016

View of banking hall looking north showing large clerestory windows set between terra-cotta corbels.

NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0017

View of the safe deposit vault lobby in the basement. The safe deposit vault has a decorative gate and grilles which are fine examples of Art Deco foliate metalwork.

NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0018

View of the safe deposit vault lobby in the basement.

NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0019

View of office tower lobby looking west. The lobby is entered through a vestibule from the Grand Concourse.



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NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0002



NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0003



NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0004



NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0005



NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0006



NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0007



NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0008



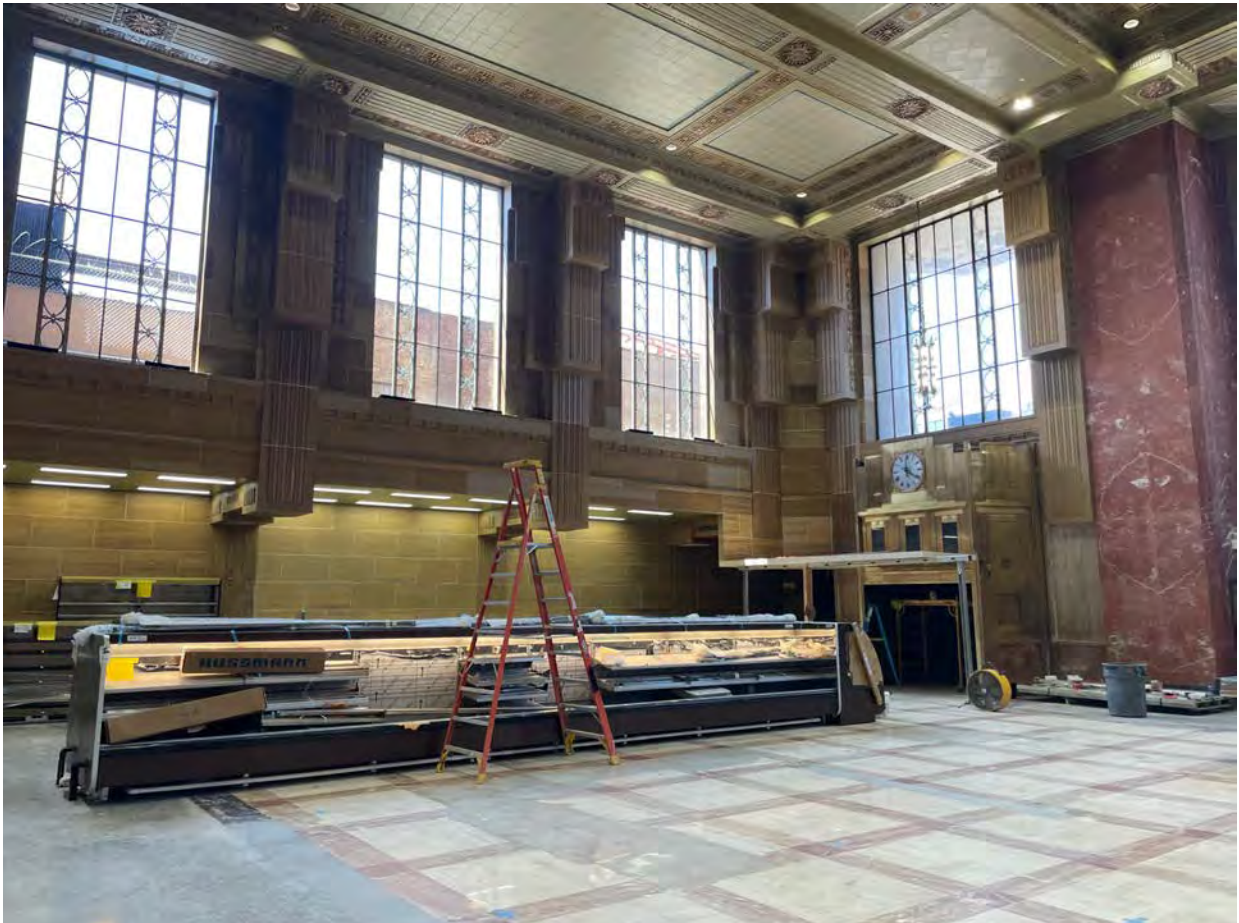
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NY\_Bronx County\_Dollar Savings Bank\_0010



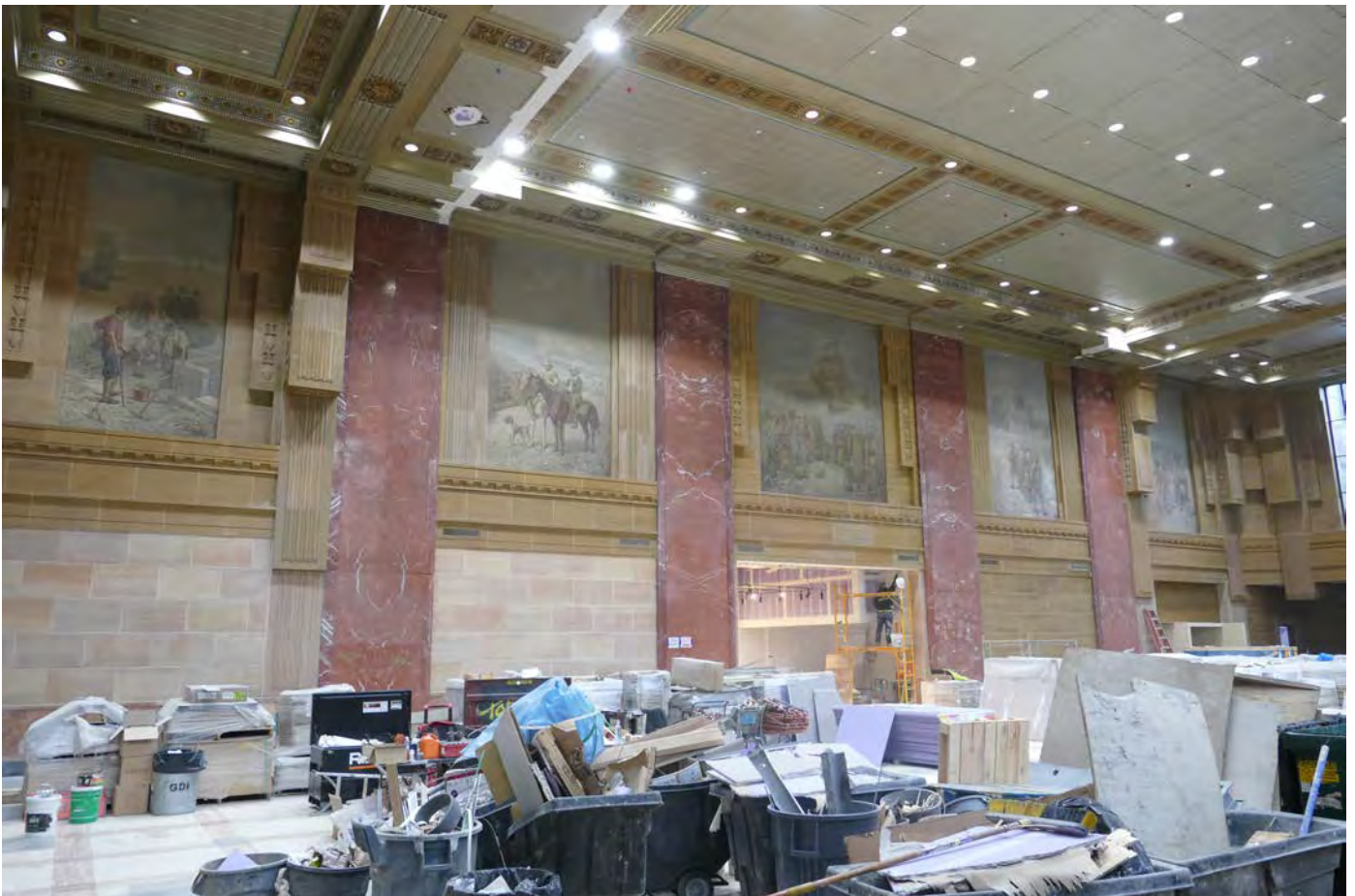
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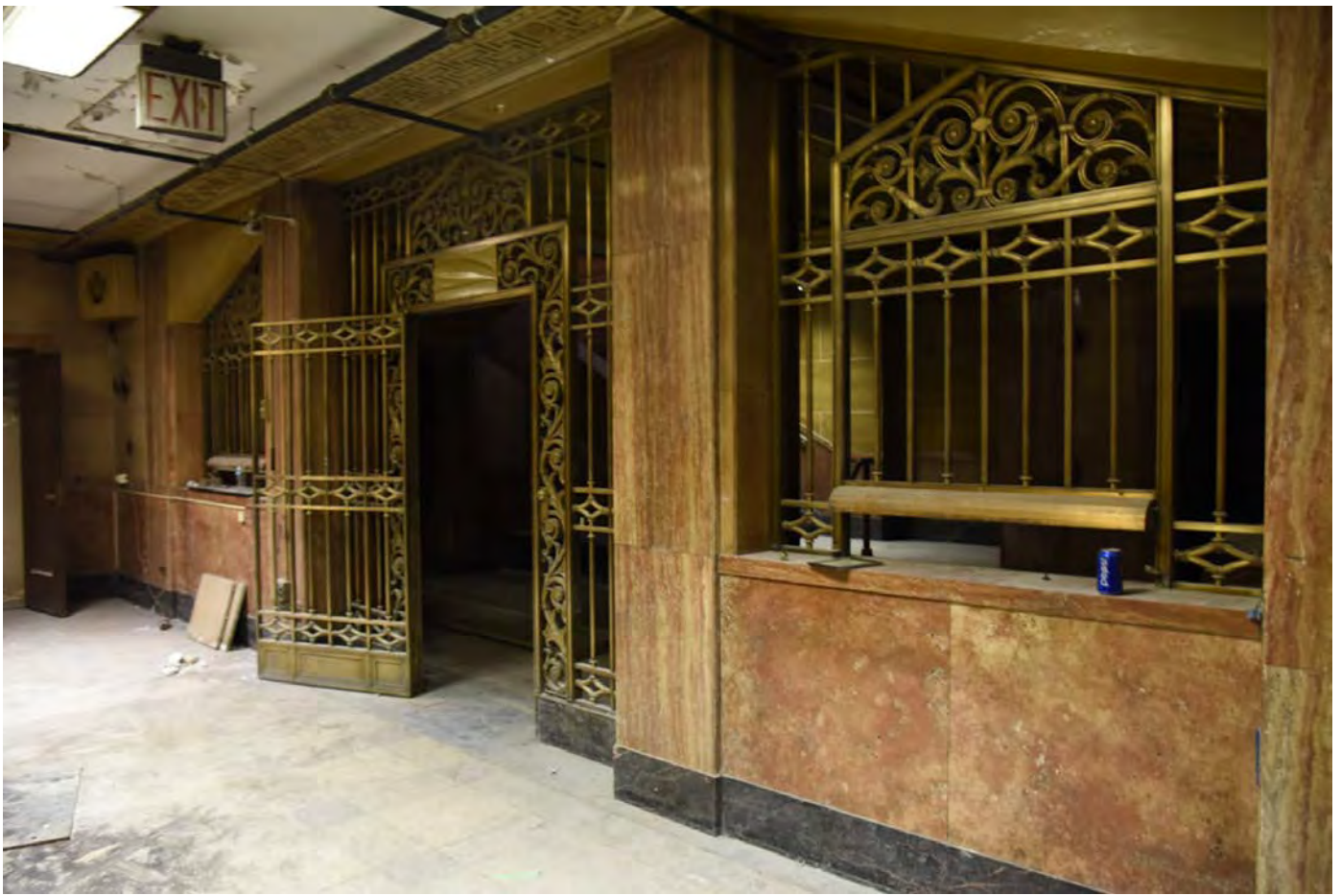




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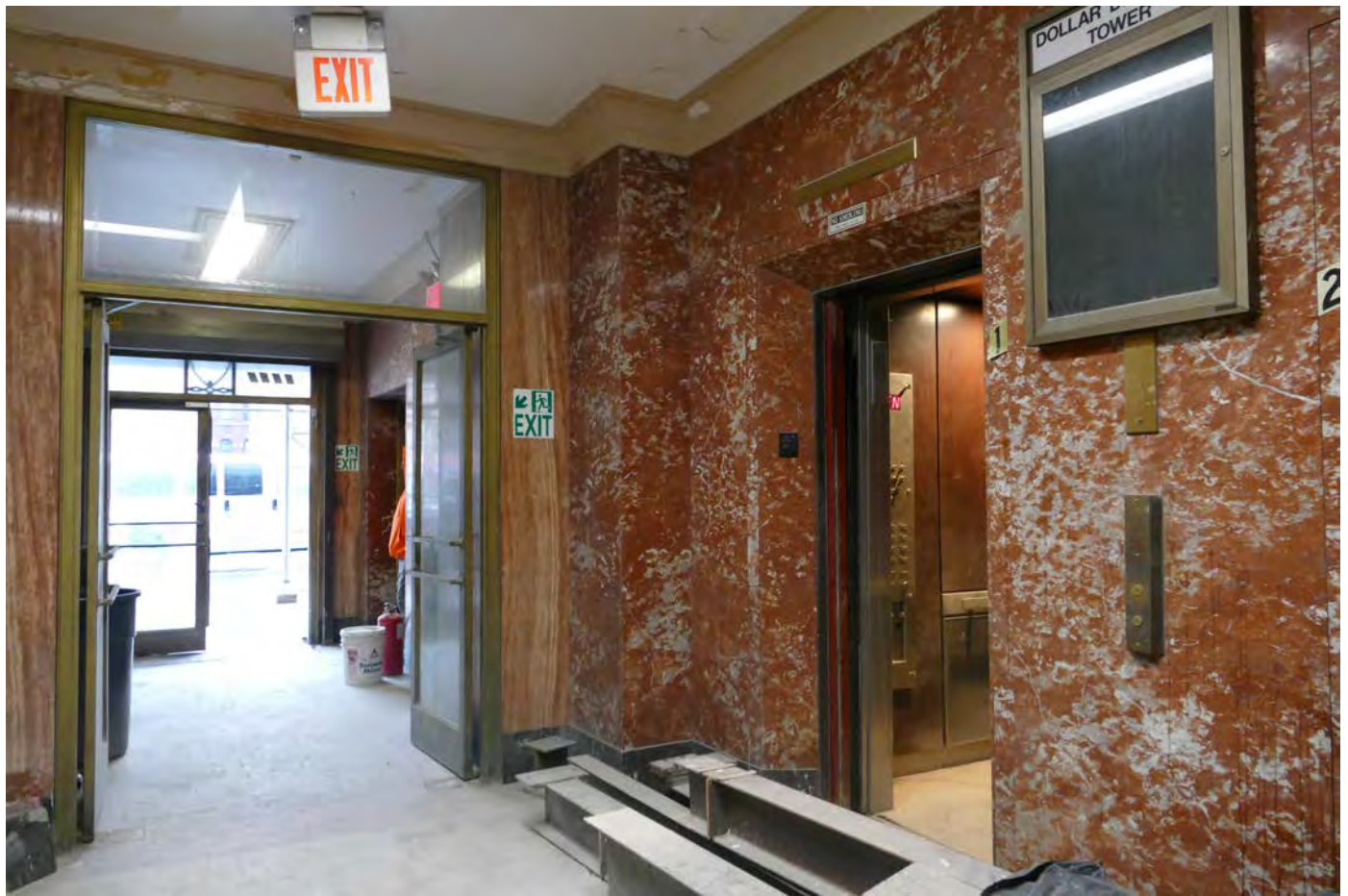
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