

THE REGISTER/JAMAICA ARTS CENTER, 161-04 Jamaica Avenue, Borough of Queens. Built about 1898.

Landmark Site: Borough of Queens Tax Map Block #0101, Lot 11.

On October 8, 1974, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of The Register/Jamaica Arts Center at 161-04 Jamaica Avenue and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 8). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. One witness spoke in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

#### DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

This building is the finest neo-Italian Renaissance style building in Queens. It once served as the Office of the Register and is now the home of The Register/Jamaica Arts Center. The building is being used as an important center in the redevelopment of the Jamaica community: the first two floors are used as an art gallery; York College is to use the third for classroom space; and the top two floors of the rear extension are to be rearranged to provide space for arts related groups and for offices of the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation. The Register was built in Queens in the year of the incorporation of Greater New York--1898. The designer may have been A. S. Macgregor, a Queens architect, who submitted a New Building Application for the structure in 1898.

One of the most striking features of the facade of this stone building is the contrast between the deep rustication of the lower floor and the smooth-face of the upper two stories. The contrast is emphasized by the strong entablature over the lower floor.

The building stands on a rusticated dark stone base which is separated from the first floor by a bold, rolled molding. The rusticated first floor is pierced by deeply recessed square-headed windows with flat arches. The focal point of the facade is the centrally located round-arch doorway which is en-framed by rusticated engaged columns that support a Doric entablature. A classically inspired wrought-iron railing crowns the entrance. The seven tall windows of the second floor have round arches with scroll keystones. Small cornices at the impost level tie the windows to one another and create the effect of pilasters which visually soften the stark simplicity of the second floor. Above the molded band course which divides the second from the third floor are seven simply en-framed square-headed windows. Console brackets support a handsome stone cornice which is underlined on its lower edge by an egg-and-dart molding and dentils. A low parapet wall rises above the cornice.

#### FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

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 Register/Jamaica Arts Center 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 Register/Jamaica Arts Center is the finest neo-Italian Renaissance building in Queens, that it adds dignity and prestige to a commercial street, that it has served an important function in the government of Queens, and that it continues to play an important role in the life of the community.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 63 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 8-A of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark The Register/Jamaica Arts Center, 161-04 Jamaica Avenue, Borough of Queens and designates Tax Map Block 10101, Lot 11, Borough of Queens, as its Landmark Site.