

A 3-Way Landmark Is Studied

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By ROBERTA GRATZ

A West Side bank may become the city's first "petroglyphic landmark."

The package includes the interior and exterior of the Central Savings Bank at Broadway and 74th St., plus Verdi Square—a wedge of green where Broadway and Amsterdam Av. converge. In the triangular park is a 1866 statue of the Italian composer.

If designation follows the Landmarks Commission's May 20 public hearing, it will be the first interior landmark since the 1965 landmarks law was broadened last December to allow for interior and scenic designations. And it will be the city's second scenic landmark. The first, Central Park, was designated April 16.

Italian Renaissance Architect

"It is very exciting to have an opportunity to consider application of the three mandates—exterior, interior and scenic—at the same time," Landmarks Commission Chairman Beverly Moss Spatt said of the forthcoming public hearing. "We really feel that the commission is broadening its perspective, opening up new frontiers and with the assistance of the citizens of New York meeting the challenge of the 1970s."

The 1928 Central Savings Bank is considered one of the city's finest examples of Italian Renaissance architecture. It was turned down for designation by the commission in June, 1968. But it has been the focus of considerable community interest, particularly following the hard-won landmark designation in March of 1972 of the ornate 1904 Ansonia Hotel across from the bank on Broadway.

Community groups have been pressuring the landmarks commission ever since to reconsider the Central Savings Bank as a logical landmark partner to the Ansonia, probably the West Side's favorite and most familiar structure.

Apartment House Considered

The Main Banking Room of the Florentine-style bank has a vaulted ceiling distinguished by octagonal panels with gold and multi-color etched outlines. There is a geometric patterned floor of variegated marble, three enormous wrought-iron fixtures and intricate iron detailing on the teller cages at the room's center.

Also to be considered for designation at the May 20 City Hall hearing is the 1900 Durillon Apartment House at 71st St. and Broadway. The 10-story Beaux Arts apartment building is an interesting combination of brick with stone trim, mansard roofs and an entrance with wrought iron gates and a stone arch. The Durillon's architect's James & Lee were also responsible for most of the richly carved townhouses on the 20th St. block off Riverside Dr. that was designated an historic district last year.