

Package Is Unwrapped

By ROBERTA B. GRATZ

The Landmarks Preservation Commission has approved landmark designations for the 1924 American Radiator/American Standard Building at 40 W. 40th St., for Bryant Park, which the building faces, and for the interior of the 42d Street library.

The library's 1911 exterior was already an official landmark.

The American Standard Building is the first New York City skyscraper to gain landmark status. And designation of these three adjacent sites forms the city's first landmark package, containing an exterior, an interior and a scenic space.

The commission also designated yesterday:

¶ First Houses, the country's first low-income housing project, completed in 1936. The low-rise L-shaped complex on Avenue A between Second and Third Streets is built around a landscaped courtyard and was the inspiration for the nation's public housing programs.

¶ Cage and Tollner, one of Brooklyn's best known restaurants, at 372 Fulton St., where it has been located since 1892. The four-story Italianate brownstone dates from the 1870s and has a Greek-style painted wooden storefront that is thought to have been added in 1892 when the restaurant moved in.

Criticism of the Group

¶ The 1898 Register/Jamaica Arts Center, at 161-04 Jamaica Av., and the 1897 Jamaica Savings Bank next door. The neo-Italian Renaissance limestone structure that houses the Jamaica Arts Center is currently the focal point of a broad-scope redevelopment of the Jamaica community. The richly ornamented bank is considered the finest Beaux Arts building in Queens.

Designation of the American Standard Building follows considerable criticism of the commission for not having given landmark status to any skyscraper—a uniquely American contribution to world architecture.

The commission's designation report describes the American Standard Building as a "striking 23-story black-and-gold tower, one of the finest and most significant skyscrapers in Manhattan."

All designations have yet to be approved by both the Planning Commission and the Board of Estimate.

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