

Bar Building gets historic designation

Structure, once at risk of being torn down, is protected

Susan Elan
The Journal News

WHITE PLAINS — State preservationists weighed in on the side of White Plains history buffs yesterday by adding the Bar Building, a 10-story Gothic and art deco structure on Main Street, to the state register of historic places and recommending that the national board do the same.

The Bar Building, constructed in 1926, was among 41 properties recommended for state and national recognition by the New York State Board of Historic Preservation. The designated properties in Westchester County also include the Friends Meeting House in Rye

and the Isaac Young House in New Castle

“Official recognition can have a profoundly positive impact on the way localities view their heritage,” Bernadette Castro, state parks and preservation commissioner, announced in a news release yesterday. “Listing on the registers can help to identify those properties worthy of preservation and foster a variety of community enhancement, tourism, and local revitalization activities.”

The nominations by an independent panel of experts appointed by Gov. George Pataki now go to Castro for her signature. They then become part of the state register.

Until recently, the Bar Building at 199 Main St. was the local point of controversy over a plan by developer Louis Cappelli to

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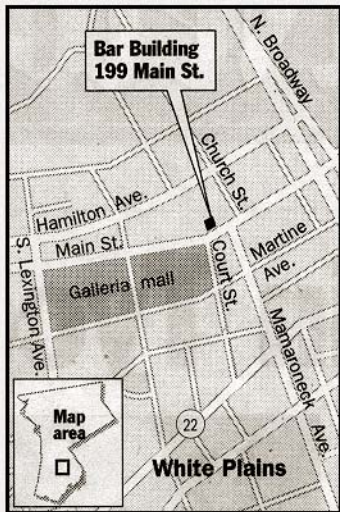
Bar Building gets h

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construct a \$350 million hotel-condominium and office complex next door, Members of the White Plains Historical Society and dozens of Bar Building tenants attended many Common Council hearings at which they implored city officials not to seize the property through eminent domain.

To broaden support for their cause, Historical Society members included the Bar Building on their walking tour of the down town, carried their petition calling for preservation to sports events and other public gatherings, and shepherded the application for state recognition through the process.

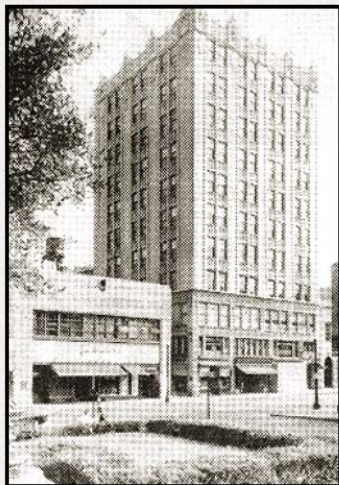
In February, Cappelli and Bar Building owners Anthony and Frank Longhitano worked out a deal that would allow the annex portion to be torn down while preserving the original 10-story structure, which includes a tower formed by a two-story recessed penthouse.



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Bar Building tenant J.J. Sedelmaier, whose studio launched "Beavis and Butt-Head" for MTV and created the cartoon segment "Saturday TV Funhouse" for NBC's Saturday Night Live," greeted news of the state historic designation with enthusiasm.

historic designation



Courtesy of White Plains Historical Society

The Bar Building in downtown White Plains, shown in this photo from the 1940s, was once the tallest building in Westchester County.

“If the historic designation offers further protection for the Bar Building, it’s great,” said Sedelmaier, who hosted a meeting with state preservation officials several months ago in his 10th-floor offices.

As the existing construction continues and future construction looms, it makes it more important to retain any architectural heritage the city has.”

Michael Seymour, president of the White Plains Historical Society, and Jack Harrington, the former president, could not be reached for comment.

Anthony Longhitano, who bought the Bar Building with his brother in 1998, said yesterday that he was delighted” by the nomination, adding that it “might avert any move against the building in the future.”

Even Cappelli expressed satisfaction upon learning the news yesterday. “Since the Bar Building is going to stay, I am an absolute proponent of state recognition because that means it has to be kept up,” he said. “It’s going to stand in front of my \$350 million buildings, so I want it to look beautiful.”