

**DRAKE
DESIGN
ASSOCIATES**

Re: IRT Powerhouse, 59th Street and 11/12th Avenues

Dear Commissioner Tierney:

I am writing to add my name to the growing list of supporters of the proposed landmarks designation for the IRT Powerhouse at 59th Street and 11th/12th Avenues.

This monumental building, composed of two great halls, was designed to generate and supply electrical power for the IRT, the city's first subway line. In spite of its purely utilitarian function, the lavishly detailed powerhouse was designed by acclaimed architect Stanford White, of McKim, Mead & White. Since its completion in 1904 the building has been in continual use, providing power for the IRT, the New York City Subway, and now Con Edison. Though the original smokestacks have been leveled—the last one was dismantled this past spring—and the elaborate cornice was removed under Con Edison's stewardship, the remaining ornate Beaux-Arts detail on the exterior and the massive scale ensure that this remains one of New York City's greatest industrial buildings.

This fantastic structure's architectural merit alone warrants landmark status. However, it is also a cultural asset that could make it one of the top destinations in the city. By recognizing its distinction and helping to insure its survival, it becomes possible for the most creative people in our city to imagine new uses for it. The Powerhouse can be compared to the Tate Modern museum in London which has become one of the great cultural spaces in the world and an attraction for nearly five million visitors each year. It has come to represent a new generation of cultural vitality and global relevance for London. Re-imagined, the Powerhouse has the potential to do the same for New York.

I urge the Landmarks Preservation Commission to ensure that this great structure be protected and enjoyed by future generations and not added to the list of those similar buildings that have been forever lost such as the Kent Avenue Powerhouse, the Long Island City Powerhouse, and Waterside 1 and 2.

Sincerely,


Jamie Drake