



ROEBLING CHAPTER

Society for Industrial Archeology

www.roeblingSIA.org

Reply to 40 W. 77th Street, New York, New York 10024, PreserveIA@aol.com, 917-709-5291

April 3, 2009

Robert Tierney, Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street
New York, New York 10007

Dear Mr. Tierney:

The Roebling Chapter, Society for Industrial Archeology supports landmarking the Interborough Rapid Transit Power House at 59th Street and Eleventh Avenue.

The IRT Powerhouse was the largest steam-driven power house in the world when it opened in 1904 to drive New York's first subway. It contained the largest reciprocating steam engine generators ever installed and the largest ever built in this country.

One mark of its technological significance—and the size of the equipment—is that the collection of the Smithsonian Institution holds one piston—one piston!--rescued from these massive engines. A model of the power house was part of the permanent exhibition in the National Museum of American History until its recent renovation, greeting all visitors who entered.

We ask the Landmarks Preservation Commission to ensure that this piston and model will not be all that remains of this palazzo of power. Please ensure that it is not added to the list of those we mourn, a list that has grown too long with the recent losses of the Kent Avenue Power House, the Long Island City Power House, and Waterside 1 and 2. We urge you to designate it a New York City Landmark.

Sincerely,

Mary Habstritt, Chair
Preservation Committee

cc: The Powerhouse Group

