

March 30, 2009

The Honorable Robert B. Tierney, Chair  
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission  
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Tierney:

Friends of the High Line takes special interest in the preservation of important industrial structures in New York City. Just ten years ago, the High Line was considered obsolete and was scheduled for demolition, but because the City joined with the community in recognizing its future value, we now have a new, much needed public park on this industrial structure that will greatly contribute to New York City's public realm for decades to come. We strongly believe that the preservation of the IRT Powerhouse is an opportunity just as great and urge the Commission to take all possible actions to preserve this invaluable historic resource on the West Side.

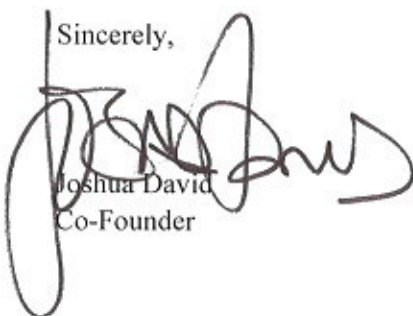
A broad coalition of experts, organizations and elected officials has expressed support for preserving the former Interborough Rapid Transit Powerhouse, designed by Stanford White of McKim, Mead & White and built in 1904 to provide electricity for New York City's first subway system.

Now, there is a new urgency calling for the Commission's swift, definitive action to landmark this building. The current owner, Consolidated Edison, has begun to demolish the sole surviving 1904 smokestack, a potent symbol of the building's legacy as the engine for "a new era of electrified urban transportation, illustrating the power of technology to improve urban life" (from the Commission's own significance statement for the IRT Powerhouse.)

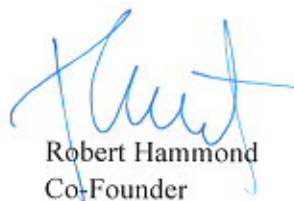
We understand that ConEd claims the stack poses a public safety risk, but, were the Powerhouse an officially designated landmark, as it deserves to be, such a significant alteration would require careful review and exploration of alternatives by the full Commission. As it is, the building is vulnerable to continual erosion that may ultimately undermine its landmark integrity.

Please act right away to preserve the IRT Powerhouse.

Sincerely,



Joshua David  
Co-Founder



Robert Hammond  
Co-Founder