

THE NEW YORK  
LANDMARKS  
CONSERVANCY

December 18, 2009

Hon. Robert B. Tierney  
Chairman  
Landmarks Preservation Commission  
One Centre Street, 9th Floor North  
New York NY 10007



Re: Interborough Rapid Transit Powerhouse now Con Ed Powerhouse

Dear Chairman Tierney:

We know that the Commission has on two separate occasions considered conferring individual landmark status to the former Interborough Rapid Transit Powerhouse at Eleventh Avenue and 59<sup>th</sup> Street. We strongly believe that now, under your leadership, it is time for the Commission to once again review the merits of this extraordinary building.

We understand that the building has been altered, as have the vast majority of landmarks, but this particular property possesses so many attributes that make it a landmark. It was built in 1899 as the most monumental building constructed for the NYC subway system; the facades were designed by Stanford White of McKim Mead and White and is a rare example of that firm's industrial designs; and it is an important link to a chapter in our history when the architectural legacies of ancient Rome and Greece were combined with the latest engineering advances of their day.

This magnificent Beaux-Arts masterpiece is visually a landmark if not yet an official Landmark. The Commission's own report from 1979 states that the building is "the embodiment of the aesthetic ideals of the civic-minded City Beautiful movement, spawned by the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893".

The alterations, including the missing cornice are minor compared to what survives. Namely, the imposing terra-cotta and brick facades and the enormous smoke stack. We urge you to bring this back in front of the Commission and once and for all do what should have been done many years ago. Designate the powerhouse a city landmark.

Sincerely,



Peg Breen  
President

Cc: Kevin Burke