

The Museum of Modern Art

July 10, 2009

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

Dear Chairman Tierney,

I am writing to add my strong support of the designation the 59th Street IRT Powerhouse as a NYC landmark at your July 14, 2009. The Powerhouse is an excellent candidate for designation.

Built in 1904 to power New York City's first subway, the Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) Powerhouse occupies an entire city block from West 59th to 60th Street between West End Avenue and the West Side Highway. The exterior of the building was designed by Stanford White in 1902 and represents an important work from the final stage of White's career. It is part of the uplifting, civic-minded architecture of the City Beautiful movement on a par with other New York City Beaux-Arts designated landmarks such as Columbia University Campus, the New York Public Library, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Farley Post Office.

New York City sold the building to Consolidated Edison in 1960 and uses it to generate steam. I understand that Con Edison only occupies a small percentage of the interior space today. I was disappointed to learn that Con Edison recently removed the last remaining historic smokestack on the building. Clearly, the existing preservation protections for the building are not adequate. I urge you designate the building as a NYC landmark.

Sincerely,



Barry Bergdoll
The Philip Johnson Chief Curator of Architecture and Design

CC: Kevin Burke, President Con Edison