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October 10, 2008

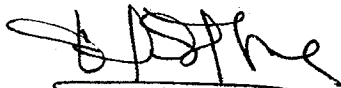
Mr. Robert Tierney, Chairman
Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street, Room 910
New York, New York 10007

Dear Mr. Tierney,

It would be difficult to name an industrial structure in New York City that is more beautiful than the powerhouse designed by Stanford White for the Interborough Rapid Transit Company. Standing at Eleventh Avenue and Fifty-ninth Street, the structure, completed in 1904, flawlessly fitted a classical architectural envelope over the generators which produced the electricity to run the system's subway trains. When White got the contract shortly after the IRT Company was incorporated in the spring of 1902, with a charter which mandated construction of a fourteen-mile subway stretching from Park Row near City Hall to Kingsbridge in the Bronx, he might well have been expected to design a brutal and unremarkable industrial building like numerous others which were springing up all over New York. But Stanford White was a genius and one of New York's greatest architects. The powerhouse he produced was a stunning combination of structural practicality and esthetical brilliance. Standing on base of pink granite, which marks the level of the water table, the buff brick edifice rises in bays delineated by pilasters which echo the internal steel girders. These steel girders supported the enormous coal hoppers which once fed the powerhouse's steam engines which ran the dynamos that, in turn, produced the electricity for the subway system. Here is form following function in its most sublime embodiment. When completed White brilliantly and wittily had the powerhouse's six 162-foot-tall smoke stacks mimic the stacks of the lordly liners like the *Deutschland* and the *Caronia* riding upon the nearby Hudson. Though the stacks have been leveled and certain classical elements, such as the bold cornice, have disappeared, the IRT powerhouse remains one of New York's most majestic and exciting industrial structures.

The Beaux Arts Alliance urges the New York City Landmarks Commission to designate the IRT Powerhouse a landmark.

Sincerely yours,



David Garrard Lowe
President

cc: Jimmy Finn
The Powerhouse Group