

HOBART
AND
WILLIAM SMITH
COLLEGES

August 27, 2009

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

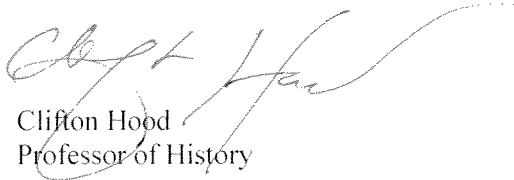
Dear Mr. Tierney,

I write in support of granting landmark status to the IRT powerhouse. As someone who has written extensively about the history of the subways, I have long been aware of this structure's significance.

As a creation of McKim, Mead and White, the powerhouse is a living reminder that buildings that serve an ostensibly utilitarian purpose do not have to be built in a utilitarian way. The powerhouse has a magnificence that ennobles the urban landscape and merits preservation. Beyond that, the powerhouse played a critical role in the evolution of the electrical engineering of early rapid transit, which was being radically transformed in the 1890s when the city's first subway was being planned. Without the powerhouse, it simply would not have been possible for the 1904 IRT subway to have been developed as the high-speed, high capacity transportation line that it was. The Columbia planning & historic preservation students' report, *Preserving the Former IRT Powerhouse*, well documents this structure's importance.

I urge the Landmarks Preservation Commission to give the powerhouse landmark status.

Cordially,



Clifton Hood
Professor of History