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June 27, 2006

Robert B. Tierney, Chair
Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street, 9th fl. North
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Tierney,

I would like to offer strong support for the landmark designation of the former Horn & Hardart automat at 2710-14 Broadway (at 104th Street). This Art Deco building, designed by E.F. Platt & Bros. in 1930, retains much of its original exterior character. It is an example of automat architecture at its best. Despite alterations to create a Rite Aid drug store on the sidewalk level, significant aspects of the original ground floor remain intact underneath the new storefront. The upper level is ornamented with vibrant polychromatic terra cotta panels and bands with stylized Art Deco designs. Automats were once a ubiquitous feature of Manhattan neighborhoods, but the 104th street automat is one of only a few that survive.

One of the most striking aspects of the Broadway corridor in this area is the variety in architecture. This structure's streamline facade and low scale offers diversity to the streetscape. Its low scale fits well into the 'look' of Broadway, but also threatens its survival by making it more vulnerable to redevelopment. So many similar buildings have disappeared as a result of development pressures. I urge you to consider the Automat for landmarking to preserve not only beautiful architecture, but also an architectural icon of an important and unique moment in New York City history.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melissa Mark Viverito'.

Melissa Mark Viverito

Cc: Kate Wood, Executive Director Landmark West