



IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated December 15, 2017, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of Interborough Rapid Transit Powerhouse (Block 1106, Lot 1), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on December 5, 2017 (Designation List No. 503 / LP-2374), Borough of Manhattan, Community District 4.

Pursuant to Section 3020.8(b) of the City Charter, the City Planning Commission shall submit to the City Council a report with respect to the relation of any designation by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, whether a historic district or a landmark, to the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements, and any plans for the development, growth, improvement or renewal of the area involved.

On December 5, 2016, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) Company Powerhouse as a City landmark. The landmark site, at 855-969 11th Avenue (Block 1106, Lot 1), is located on the west side of 11th Avenue between West 58th and West 59th Street, in the Clinton/Hell's Kitchen neighborhood of Community District 4, Borough of Manhattan.

The IRT Powerhouse is a large manufacturing building, occupying the entire block bounded by 11th and 12th avenues and West 58th and West 59th streets, with the property extending to the Hudson River's bulkhead line. It was designed in the French Neoclassical style and represents a unique integration of 20th century engineering and classical architectural expression.

At the time of its construction, the IRT Powerhouse was the largest generating station in the world. In response to the City's population increase in the late 19th century, the City committed to funding a new subway line that would be built and operated by a private company: the IRT. This subway would be the longest subway line completed as a single project and would need an unprecedentedly large powerhouse. The block was acquired in 1901 and the basic layout of the plant was designed by a team of distinguished engineers including S.L.F. Deyo, John Van Vleck, and Lewis B. Still.

IRT chose Stanford White, one of the country's most celebrated architects, as the exterior architect. This choice reflected the IRT's desire to transform the utilitarian structure into an architecture landmark, with an opulent design that would reflect the ideals of the City Beautiful movement.

The building consists of two main sections, divided lengthwise into a southern and northern section. The southern section was the boiler house and the northern section the operating room, but the roof unites the two functions behind a single façade. White incorporated French Neoclassical and Neo-Grec designs and ornaments on the northern, eastern, and southern façades. (The western end adjoins a circa 1949-51 generating station that is not part of this designation.) Although the three façades are similar, the east elevation (facing 11th Avenue) is the shortest and most elaborately decorated and consists of eight bays. The historic entrance was on the northernmost bay. The roof was originally covered with terra-cotta tile and would have had five smokestacks at the time of its opening; they have been removed.

The development of the IRT subway catalyzed the development of Upper Manhattan and the Bronx. In 1940, the City's Board of Transportation took over in the IRT's operations in an effort to consolidate the subway network. In 1949, the Board of Transportation began building the new generating structure. In 1959, the building was acquired by the Consolidated Edison Company, which still owns the property and uses it as a steam and electric generating plant. The building retains its classical grandeur, memorializing the architectural and engineering achievement of the early 20th century and serves as a reminder of the original IRT system and the City's industrial history. It continues to play a critical role in the City's energy production and infrastructure.

The IRT Powerhouse is situated in an M3-2 zoning district, which allows a maximum base floor area ratio (FAR) of 2.0 for commercial and manufacturing uses. The building contains 833,846 square feet of floor area on a 163,204-square-foot zoning lot (5.1 FAR).

Pursuant to section 74-79 of the zoning resolution, a landmark building may transfer its unused development rights to a lot contiguous to the zoning lot occupied by the landmark building or

one that is across the street and opposite to the zoning lot occupied by the landmark building, or in the case of a corner lot, one that fronts on the same street or intersection as the lot occupied by the landmark (“adjacent lot”). The IRT Powerhouse is built above the maximum allowable zoning FAR, so there is no floor area available for transfer.

Pursuant to Section 74-711 of the Zoning Resolution, landmark buildings or buildings within Historic Districts are eligible to apply for use and bulk waivers upon application to the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

The subject landmark does not conflict with the Zoning Resolution. Furthermore, the Commission is not aware of any conflicts between the subject landmark designation and projected public improvements or any plans for development growth, improvement or renewal in the vicinity of the landmark.

MARISA LAGO, *Chair*

**RAYANN BESSER, ALFRED C. CERULLO, III, MICHELLE R. DE LA UZ,
JOSEPH DOUEK, CHERYL COHEN EFFRON, HOPE KNIGHT,
ANNA HAYES LEVIN, LARISA ORTIZ**, *Commissioners*