

**THE NEW YORK
LANDMARKS
CONSERVANCY**

July 18, 2017

STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE N.Y.C. LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGARDING THE PROPOSED DESIGNATION OF THE MAIN READING ROOM AND CATALOG ROOM, THIRD FLOOR INTERIORS AT THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY (STEPHEN A. SCHWARZMAN BUILDING), 476 FIFTH AVENUE MANHATTAN, AS AN INTERIOR LANDMARK

Good day, Chair Srinivasan and Commissioners. I am Andrea Goldwyn speaking on behalf of the New York Landmarks Conservancy. We are pleased to support designation of the Rose Main Reading Room and Bill Blass Catalog Room.

As the most significant public spaces in one of the City's, if not the country's, finest landmarks, these rooms are so well-known and well-regarded that it would likely surprise most New Yorkers that they are not already designated. In a 2013 letter we requested designation of these and several other interiors at the Library (a copy is attached.) At the time, we noted the extraordinary design, materials, and craftsmanship of these rooms. Carrere and Hastings created a Beaux-Arts masterpiece of elegant symmetry and grand open space, juxtaposed with rich ornament and lush detailing, in rooms that sanctify research and the pursuit of knowledge.

There is no question that they should be landmarks. We thank the Public Library for its stewardship of them, including the late-90s restoration that brought them back to their original glory and the more recent work on the ceiling, both of which received the Conservancy's Lucy Moses Preservation Award. We also thank the Commission for moving ahead with this designation and hope that more will be forthcoming.

Thank you for this opportunity to express the Conservancy's views.

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June 14, 2013

Honorable Robert B. Tierney
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Re: New York Public Library Interiors

Dear Bob:

The recent controversial proposal for major alterations to the 42nd Street Building of the New York Public Library has focused attention on this magnificent building and specifically on its interior. It is surprising that so little of the interior has been landmarked. This is one of the most beautiful buildings in the country. It contains exquisite rooms and spaces made of the best materials and exhibiting the finest craftsmanship. It is universally loved and admired. I am certain that most visitors assume that all of the stunning interiors are protected by law. But as we know, they are not.

The Conservancy urges the Commission to complete the work of designating the building's outstanding interior, a task begun under your predecessors so many years ago.

All the public circulation spaces in the building should be protected. The entire progression of spaces and rooms from the main Fifth Avenue entry to the Rose Main Reading Room should be protected. All the special reading rooms, reference rooms, map room and Trustees room should be protected.

There is an inscription in the Trustees' Room that reads: "The City of New York has erected this Building for the free use of all the People". This marvelous gift must be preserved for the people.

It is the Landmarks Preservation Commission's obligation to safeguard outstanding public interiors like these. Although the library has been good stewards up to now, one never knows what the future will bring.

Following is a list of the spaces we believe should be designated.

Sincerely,

Peg Breen

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President

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New York Public Library

The New York Landmarks Conservancy's List of proposed interior designations at the 42nd Street Building of the New York Public Library:

The Rose Main Reading Room (Room 315)
The Bill Blass Catalog Room (Room 316)
The Gottesman Exhibition Hall (Room 113)
The Dorot Jewish Division (Room 111)
The Milstein Genealogy room (Room 121)
The Wallace Periodicals Room (Room 108)
The Princess Firyal Map Room (Room 117)
The Celeste Bartos Forum (Room 80)
The Trustees' Room (Room 206)
The Edna B. Salomon Room (Room 316)
The Art and Architecture Room (Room 300)
The Brooke Astor Reading Room for Rare Books (Room 328)

In addition,

The South-North Gallery

The 42nd Street staircases and landings