



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

My Letter to the Landmarks Preservation Commission Calling for Designation of the Rose Reading Room and Bill Blass Public Catalog Room

BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL May 22, 2017



May 15, 2017

Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair

Landmarks Preservation Commission

One Centre Street, 9th Floor

New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Srinivasan:

We are writing to urge the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) to calendar and designate the Rose Reading Room and the Bill Blass Public Catalog Room at the New York Public Library (NYPL) Stephen A. Schwarzman Building.

As the Senators representing this esteemed institution and surrounding neighborhoods, we value and cherish the library's role as a cornerstone of New York City culture, education, and history. New York City's libraries inspire New Yorkers and visitors alike to read, grow, and explore. Nowhere is this inspiration more evident than within the walls of our city's Central Library, in its interior spaces that demonstrate a grand celebration of knowledge, scholarship, and community.

Senator Hoylman wrote to your commission in April 2013 in support of the designation of the Rose Reading Room as an interior landmark. We enthusiastically reaffirm our support for this designation. The massive Rose Reading Room is distinguished by its 52-foot-tall ceilings, adorned with ornate sculpted flowers and intricate murals of billowing clouds. The room, which underwent extensive restoration over the past two-and-a-half years, deserves to stand alongside New York City's great interior spaces and be preserved for centuries to come.

We also support and urge the designation of the Bill Blass Public Catalog Room. The room acts as a grand entry to the Rose Reading Room and a magnificent space on its own merit. It has also undergone extensive restoration work, including a complete recreation of the original 1911 mural on the room's ceiling. The Bill Blass Public Catalog Room and the Rose Main Reading Room are two of the city's great public spaces, bringing together New Yorkers and visitors diverse in background to study, read, research, write, and explore.

The NYPL Central Library was designated as an individual landmark in 1967, and it is past time we designate and protect the library's remarkable interiors as well. As the LPC stated in its 1974 designation of Astor Hall and McGraw Rotunda as interior landmarks: "The interior of this great building is as magnificent as its exterior." This holds true today. With restorations of these two major interior spaces complete and public use of the library's interiors at an all-time high, we must now recognize the Rose Main Reading Room and the Bill Blass Public Catalog Room as the historic interior spaces that our city has come to treasure in our beloved library.

Thank you for your attention to this request and for LPC's commitment to preserving our city's history.