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Landmarks Preservation Commission

One Centre Street

New York, NY 10007

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am writing to offer unqualified support for the designation as an interior landmark of the Rose Reading Room (room 315) at the New York Public Library. Other historic rooms should also be designated, as letters by other advocates will make clear, but my principal concern is the Rose Reading Room. It was rehabilitated thanks to the Rose family, prominent in New York City's real estate industry, and it is now newly secured after the fall from the ceiling of a plaster rosette. It is an ideal moment to designate it as an official city Landmark so that it cannot be violated in the future.

That violation has been threatened in the past should make the designation all the more obvious. The ill-conceived Central Library Plan envisioned the demolition of the metal stacks that support the building (and that used to provide books within twenty minutes of a request before the stacks were emptied and several million books were moved to a repository in New Jersey). Had the plan been effectuated, the entire Rose Room would likely have collapsed, and certainly the fragile ceiling would have been shattered even if nearly a half-billion dollars had been allocated for shoring up the floor. The threat of further ambitious and useless plans makes designation seem the most prudent way to preserve one of the city's great interiors, one open to the public and used daily by hundreds of visitors and local residents.

There are not many grand interiors of this scale anywhere, with formal refinements of high quality, warm woodwork, harmonious furnishings, and the warmth of vari-colored books around the perimeter. The lighting from large windows and matched lamps serves readers well. Sturdy furniture ample enough to seat even the stoutest readers makes reading comfortable. The neo-Renaissance aesthetic complements the antiquity of some of the texts that readers consult, and makes the past vivid to newcomers to research. In every way, from the convenient provision of reference materials to the broad tables that accommodate two facing readers at once, this is an impressive and functional space that warrants designation. I hope that you will quickly move to provide protection for Room 315.

Respectfully yours,

Carol Herselle Krinsky
(Prof.) Carol Herselle Krinsky