

AIA New York Chapter

The Founding Chapter of
The American Institute of Architects



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

Dear Chair Tierney:

The New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, representing 4,000 architect and public members, strongly supports the landmark designation of specific, historically significant interior spaces of the Plaza Hotel. These interior spaces include the Grand Ballroom, the Terrace Room, the Edwardian Room, the Palm Court, the Oak Room, the Oak Bar, and the lobbies at both the 59th Street and Central Park South entrances.

These beautiful rooms, designed by eminent New York architects Henry Hardenburgh, FAIA, and Warren & Wetmore, AIA, are among the most distinctive interior settings in the city. These spaces have been the symbol of New York in films, for visitors, and for notable New Yorkers' events, including Truman Capote's 1966 "Black and White Ball" honoring Katherine Graham. Protection of these rooms from inappropriate alterations can only be achieved with the oversight of the Landmarks Preservation Commission. The Plaza Hotel's public rooms deserve to be listed alongside the Villard Houses, Grand Central Terminal and Radio City Music Hall. These are all significant spaces that say "New York City" to one and all.

As importantly, the designation of these spaces caps a cooperative effort between the project developer, the hotel workers representatives, and the design community to assure ongoing public access to these grand spaces which will hereby be safeguarded for generations to come. The AIA New York Chapter supports the plans by ELAD Properties and the value of adaptive reuse in preserving historic structures. This comes at a price that should be recognized by moving forward on the procedural aspects of approval with alacrity.

We urge the Commission to designate these significant and privately owned "public" spaces, in order to honor, protect and reaffirm the preservation precepts of adaptive re-use..

Yours truly,

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