

The New York Public Library

Request for Full Designation

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Great Spaces at the New York Public Library

Should we wish to reflect upon New York City at the opening of its greatest century, The New York Public Library is the perfect embodiment of the time. Built upon once water bound public land, newly enlarged civic pride could well be summed up with the New York Public Library. Although a generation after the more intellectual city in America, Boston, built a really public library and a half century after England created the Reading Room at The British Museum, The New York Public Library encapsulated the sense of New York around 1900.

The new library was created from the earlier and not very public Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundation libraries. It was to be a monument to America's absorption of European cultural accomplishments. The objective was to make all the public spaces of the library the very best America could produce with a great architectural firm, extraordinary materials from America and the world accomplished by members of the waves of craftsmen settling in America. Every detail of the spaces, even the creating of a cataloguing system, had to loudly exclaim America as the inheritor of European culture and New York City on Fifth Avenue as the carrier of this now American patrimony.

The Library is landmarked. Some of the rooms and a passage way were designated as well. Now is the time for the New York City Landmark Preservation Commission to make this monument whole again as a treasure icon to the City a century ago. So very many, myself included, have spent significant time in the reading rooms never daunted by the heat or cold outside, just a perfect period on one of the tables in this glorious space. The inside of the Library is surely as splendid as its exterior.

Yours truly,

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