Dear Chair Carroll:

We are surprised and troubled by your recent letter to Council Member Marte explaining why the Commission did not choose to designate the unique public lobby at 60 Wall Street.

Your letter spoke of the economic benefits of POPS. We agree, but we do not see a conflict between this and preservation, which has well established economic benefits of its own. Designation of the 60 Wall Street interior public space would not have prevented changes to this privately owned public space; it would simply have allowed LPC to review and approve any changes to assure that they were appropriate to the original design. It is a rare and special Post Modern public space, and the notion of designating it had garnered significant support. To designate would have offered another benefit as well, which is that it would have enhanced the significance of POPS all across the city. Landmark designation of this space would not have diminished public access or public control, but underscored them.

We are puzzled by your statement that Post Modern architecture requires more study and is not always understood. There has been debate about Post-Modern architecture for a generation, going through the cycle of disfavor and rediscovery. Obviously, having less Post-Modern architecture to study will not help anyone's understanding.

While it is understandable that the Commission would have its own priorities so far as designations are concerned, that should not prevent the Commission from pivoting to designate important architecture that is threatened.

Despite City Planning's jurisdiction over POPS, the Landmarks Preservation Commission could have, and should have, taken this designation as an opportunity to show that the goals of preservation need not conflict with the goals of CPC regarding POPS, and that LPC and CPC can partner to keep a critical work of twentieth century architecture vibrant and in active use. The loss of Kevin Roche's imaginative design diminishes the City.

Sincerely,

Robert A.M. Stern and Paul Goldberger