

The Bulletin



New York Division, Electric Railroaders' Association

Vol. 48, No. 10

October, 2005

The Bulletin

Published by the New York Division, Electric Railroaders' Association, Incorporated, PO Box 3001, New York, New York 10008-3001.

For general inquiries, contact us at nydiv@electricrailroaders.org or by phone at (212) 986-4482 (voice mail available). ERA's website is www.electricrailroaders.org.

Editorial Staff:
Editor-in-Chief:
Bernard Linder
News Editor:
Randy Glucksmann
Contributing Editor:
Jeffrey Erlitz

Production Manager:
David Ross

©2005 New York Division, Electric Railroaders' Association, Incorporated

**In This Issue:
New Rochelle's
Interesting
History
...Page 2**

NYC TRANSIT'S REHABILITATION PROGRAM

When NYC Transit started its station modernization program several years ago, it favored new elements and a modern interior. But the new tile on the platform extensions did not match the original tile on the rest of the station.

Meanwhile, legislation was passed to protect the original sites. New York City established its Landmarks Preservation Commission in 1965. Congress passed the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966, establishing the National Trust and National Register. New York State established the New York State Historic Preservation Office in 1980.

To commemorate the IRT's 75th anniversary (1979), the Landmarks Preservation Commission designated 12 IRT station interiors, two control houses, and the IRT Manhattan Valley Viaduct (125th Street) as historic landmarks. In the early 1980s, the control houses at the Atlantic Avenue, Bowling Green, 72nd Street, Mott Avenue (149th Street-Grand Concourse), and E. 180th Street stations were listed in the National Register. In 1991, all 1,850 sites were surveyed to determine their historical significance. Subsequently, the New York State Historic Preservation Office selected 64 sites as eligible for listing on the National Register. The Stillwell Avenue terminal became the first site listed, in 2001. The State Historic Preservation Office accepted the rest of the list and added one site in January for a nominating process to be completed in 2005.

In 1991, NYC Transit adopted a new policy. It approved new guidelines requiring preservation of historic features whenever possible.

50th Street-Broadway, completed in 1993, was not a careful restoration. But landmarked stations 33rd Street-Park Avenue (1997) and

72nd Street-Broadway (2003) were true restorations.

On stations with landmarked interiors, restoration work requires prior approval by the Landmarks Preservation Commission and the State Historical Preservation Office. The work, which is highly specialized, must be supervised by a preservation specialist. Because the Czech manufacturer of the original tiles is out of business, NYC Transit had a hard time finding a replacement. Most modern tilesetters cannot make even, tight seams like the 1904 tilesetters made. The designers make every effort to retain or restore the original materials, but use a modern equivalent if necessary.

CONTRACT ONE SPECIFIED WELL-DESIGNED STATIONS

Contract One stipulated that, "All the exposed parts of the structure are to be designed, constructed, and maintained with a view to the beauty of their appearance as well as their efficiency." To comply with the specifications, the Rapid Transit Commission appointed George Heins and Christopher Grant LaFarge the subway's consulting architects. They had studied architecture at MIT and were influenced by the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. They chose high-quality materials which were so expensive that their use was curtailed. In 1903, Chief Engineer William Barclay Parsons discontinued using marble.

Although it is difficult to preserve this artistry, NYCT does not expect to replace it.

Our sources for this article are NYCT's newsletter, **At Your Service**, March, 2004 and **Architectural Designs for New York's First Subway**, by David J. Framberger.