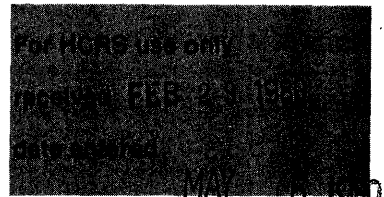


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**



**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) Subway Control Houses: Thematic Resources  
and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number (See continuation sheet) \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication  
city, town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district 19-17-21-14  
state ny code \_\_\_\_\_ county Bronx, King and New York code \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Classification**

| Category   | Ownership                                  | Status  | Present Use                                    |  |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied          | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture           | <input type="checkbox"/> museum                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> building(s)               | <input type="checkbox"/> private           | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial | <input type="checkbox"/> park                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure                 | <input type="checkbox"/> both              | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress             | <input type="checkbox"/> educational           | <input type="checkbox"/> private residence         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site                      | <b>Public Acquisition</b>                  | <b>Accessible</b>                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment         | <input type="checkbox"/> religious                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object                    | <input type="checkbox"/> in process        | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted              | <input type="checkbox"/> government            | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thematic Group | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation |
|  |  | <input type="checkbox"/> no                           | <input type="checkbox"/> military              | <input type="checkbox"/> other:                    |

**4. Owner of Property**

name (See continuation sheet) \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_  
city, town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. (See continuation sheet) \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_  
city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

LP-1021 and LP-0829 See continuation sheet  
title Landmarks Preservation Commission has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
date 1979 and 1973  federal  state  county  local  
depository for survey records Landmarks Preservation Commission, 305 Broadway  
city, town New York state New York 10007

|                   |             |
|-------------------|-------------|
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| DATE ENTERED      | MAY 6 1980  |

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET      IRT Subway Control Houses : Thematic Resources      Bronx, Kings  
ITEM NUMBER 2      PAGE 1      and New York  
Counties

---

- A. 72nd Street Control House  
W. 72nd Street and Broadway, Manhattan  
New York (036), New York County (061)  
19th Congressional District
  
- B. Battery Park Control House  
State Street and Battery Place, Manhattan  
New York (036), New York County (061)  
17th Congressional District
  
- C. Mott Avenue Control House  
149th Street and Grand Concourse, Bronx  
New York (036), Bronx County (005)  
21st Congressional District
  
- D. Atlantic Avenue Control House  
Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues, Brooklyn  
New York (036), Kings County (047)  
14th Congressional District

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Bronx, Kings and New York Counties  
IRT Subway Control Houses: Thematic Resources

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 4 PAGE 1

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72nd Street (A), Battery Park (B), and Mott Ave. (C):  
John D. Simpson, Executive Director  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
347 Madison Avenue  
New York, New York 10017

Atlantic Avenue (D):  
James F. Capalino, Commissioner  
Department of General Services  
1800 Municipal Building  
New York, New York 10007

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

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MAY 6 1980

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IRT Subway Control Houses: Thematic Resources

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72nd Street (A), Battery Park (B):  
New York County Register's Office  
31 Chambers Street  
New York, New York

Mott Avenue (C):  
Bronx County Courthouse  
851 Grand Concourse  
Bronx, New York

Atlantic Avenue (D):  
Kings County Register's Office  
Municipal Building, 210 Joralemon Street  
Brooklyn, New York

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Bronx, Kings and New York Counties

IRT Subway Control Houses : Thematic Resources

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 6 PAGE 2

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Historic American Engineering Record  
Summer, 1978, Federal  
Library of Congress  
Washington, D. C.

## 7. Description

|  |                                       |   |   |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Condition</b>                         |                                       | <b>Check one</b>                            | <b>Check one</b>                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent       | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered | <input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair            | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed    |   |   |

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Interborough Rapid Transit Subway Control House Thematic Nomination comprises four buildings which originally served as ornamental entrances to underground subway stations. The four control houses were erected as part of the Interborough Rapid Transit Subway, begun in 1899, and were designed by the firm of Heins & LaFarge, consulting architects for the subway system. All are one story in height and constructed of buff-colored brick with limestone and terra-cotta trim.

The Control House at 72nd Street (A) on the Upper West Side of Manhattan was completed in 1904 and is still in use as a station entrance. The architects took advantage of a traffic island and placed the building at the same angle as Broadway to create a focal point in Sherman Square. The building is fifty by thirty-seven feet in size, one story tall, and rests on a granite block foundation. It is faced with buff-colored Roman brick. Limestone quoins at the corners support a low gable roof of terra-cotta blocks covered with copper sheets with raised joints. A limestone string course is broken by projecting sills of single-sash center-pivot windows placed just below the eaves. The entrance and exit are located in projecting bays on the north and south sides. These bays are topped by shaped gables with terra-cotta coping and four round terra-cotta finials. The number 72, placed in a terra-cotta cross, is centrally located near the top of this gable, and a glass and louver monitor connects the two gables along the roof ridge. The entrance and exit are formed by four side-hinged doors (a fifth has been added to the entrance side) topped by a small pediment and a window decorated with wrought-iron scrollwork. The entire entrance is framed by a modified Gibbs surround executed in limestone. The interior contains the ticket booth, lavatories and five stairways, and is finished in white glass tile.

The Battery Park Control House (B), completed in 1905, is located in Battery Park in Lower Manhattan. The building rests on a granite base. The corners are defined by limestone quoins which support elaborate triglyphs and volutes. A smooth limestone band course encircles the building just below the eaves. Below this band, the plain brick walls on the east and west sides are pierced by simple high windows. The gable ends of the building are each decorated with a central bull's-eye with four radiating keystones. A banded wreath follows the curve of the bull's-eye and is crowned by a terra-cotta coping that descends along the sides of the gables.

The northern front of the control house has a projecting limestone porch with square engaged columns supporting a stylized pediment on brackets. The pediment over the doorway is crowned by a small rosette flanked by volutes. The southern front has a large brick porch with three doors. The enframing of the central door is identical to that of the northern porch. The extension is edged by plain stone quoins and topped by a copper entablature and roof.

The Battery Park Control House was completely renovated in 1978 under the direction of Paul Katz, architect for the Transit Authority. New aluminum

(See continuation sheet)

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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IRT Subway Control Houses: Thematic Resources

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ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

and glass doors and windows were installed. A glass roof replaced copper sheets, and the exterior was cleaned and repaired. A new railing was installed in the center of the interior stairway. The control house serves as the entrance to the Bowling Green Station.

The Mott Avenue Control House (C), completed in 1905, is no longer used as a station entrance. It is situated near the southwest corner of 149th Street and Grand Concourse in the Bronx and is finished on the street facade with Roman brick and limestone trim. Entrance was gained through a porch which extended beyond the building line. The porch was removed in 1918 when the Woodlawn branch of the IRT was completed.

The porch featured three large windows divided by pilasters on the front, and double entrance doors located on the sides. The building is finished at the top with a glazed terra-cotta cornice and a large name tablet of faience in three colors. The Mott Avenue Control House presently houses elevator machinery for the 149th Street subway station located below it. No important interior features remain.

Also no longer in use as a station entrance is the (D) Atlantic Avenue Control House (1908), at Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues in Brooklyn. The building is situated on a triangular traffic island similar to the one at 72nd and Broadway in Manhattan. The building itself is similar in appearance to the 72nd Street Control House, but has large, shaped gable ends with the words "Atlantic Avenue" executed in terra-cotta. The building is presently used as a concession stand, and is surrounded by a modern steel structure. The gable ends and general building outline are still clearly visible. No important interior features remain.

# 8. Significance

| Period                                    | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below    |   |   |  |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric      | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric  | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning     | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499        | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic     | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation           | <input type="checkbox"/> law                    | <input type="checkbox"/> science                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599        | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> economics              | <input type="checkbox"/> literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education              | <input type="checkbox"/> military               | <input type="checkbox"/> social/<br>humanitarian   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799        | <input type="checkbox"/> art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> theater                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899        | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)           |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> invention              |   |  |

**Specific dates** 1904, 1905, 1908 **Builder/Architect** George L. Heins, Christopher Grant LaFarge

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Interborough Rapid Transit Subway Control Houses are the only remaining ornamental entrances from New York City's first subway system. The IRT was the first underground railroad in the United States, one of the first transit systems to utilize electric traction, and one of the largest public works projects ever undertaken.<sup>1</sup> Designed by the prominent firm of Heins & LaFarge, the control houses reflect the influence of the City Beautiful movement on public works. They indicate the effort taken by public works planners in the early twentieth century to embellish and beautify a system that was essentially an engineering project. There were originally six ornamental control houses. Two of them, at 103rd and Broadway and 116th and Broadway, Manhattan, have been demolished.

Proposals for an underground rapid transit system to alleviate traffic congestion in New York had been put forward as early as the 1860s. In 1864 the Metropolitan Railway Company was incorporated; the intent was to build an underground railroad. Because of political opposition and the competition for franchise rights, the scheme was not successful. Instead, elevated steam railroads were built beginning in 1868.

The New York State Legislature created a Rapid Transit Commission in 1891 to explore the possibility of a subway system. To meet the problem of construction costs, the City of New York was authorized in the Rapid Transit Act of 1894 to issue bonds and enter into a contract with a private corporation to build and operate an underground railroad. Although several years of delay and litigation followed, a contract was finally let by the city on October 11, 1899, to the Rapid Transit Subway Construction Company, formed by John B. McDonald with the financial backing of banker August P. Belmont, Jr. Belmont created the Interborough Rapid Transit Company (IRT) in 1902 to lease the subway from the city and to operate it for fifty years.

The 1899 contract called for the construction of a subway system according to the route and plan that had been devised by William Barclay Parsons (1859-1932), Chief Engineer of the Rapid Transit Commission, in 1895 and revised in 1897. This route began with a loop under City Hall, went up the east side of Manhattan along Lafayette Street and Fourth Avenue to Grand Central Station at 42nd Street, then went west to Times Square and turned north along Broadway to 96th Street; there it branched into two lines leading to the Bronx. Construction began in March, 1900 and was completed in October, 1904. A second contract extended the route south from City Hall into Brooklyn where it terminated at the

(See continuation sheet)



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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Long Island Railroad Terminal at Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues. Work was begun on this section of the route in 1902 and completed in 1908.

While the system and the station plans were determined by the engineers of the Rapid Transit Commission working under Parsons, a consulting architect was sought to design the decoration of the underground stations, the control houses and the kiosks of the subway, and a search committee was appointed in 1901. The firms of Carrère & Hastings and Robert Gibson were considered, but on March 7, 1901, the firm of Heins & LaFarge was selected.

George L. Heins (1860-1907) and Christopher Grant LaFarge (1862-1938) both received their architectural training at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology under the supervision of French-born and trained Eugene Letang. LaFarge, the son of the noted painter John LaFarge, then worked in the architectural office of Henry Hobson Richardson, while Heins acquired experience in Minneapolis and St. Paul. The two formed a partnership in 1886, which continued until Heins' death in 1907. They are best remembered for their ecclesiastical architecture, especially the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York. Winning the competition for the cathedral design in 1891, they served as architects for the first phase of construction. Among their other major church designs are the Fourth Presbyterian Church and Parsonage at West End Avenue and 93rd Street in New York and St. Matthew's Roman Catholic Cathedral in Washington, D. C. They also designed residences for prominent people in New York and Washington. In 1899 the firm began to design buildings for the New York Zoological Gardens in the Bronx. There were no obvious prototypes for such buildings, so the architects chose modified classical designs, ornamented with appropriate animal motifs. Perhaps through the influence of August Belmont, Jr., for whom the firm had designed a chapel in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the architects received the subway contract in 1901. They were faced with a problem similar to that in the Zoological Gardens--devising an architecture for which there was no obvious historical prototype.

The architectural solution developed by Heins & LaFarge was a quaint historical design which utilized a variety of classical elements. They may have been inspired by a feature of the Boston Subway; a small ornamental house served as the entrance to the Scollay Square station. LaFarge and chief engineer Parsons would certainly have seen it when they

(See continuation sheet)

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visited Boston in May, 1901 to examine the architectural features of that city's transportation system.<sup>2</sup>

The first segment of the New York subway was officially opened to the public on October 27, 1904, to wide acclaim. The city was praised for its contribution to "Civic Art" in the design of the new subway system.<sup>3</sup> The control houses remain as distinctive architectural features of New York and significant reminders of the first subway.

The IRT Subway Control Houses are the only remaining original entrances from New York City's first subway system. As part of the first underground railroad in the United States, these control houses are of national significance for their importance in the history of urban transportation.

<sup>1</sup>A short section of the Boston Trolley system traveled underground in 1898, but this was not a true underground railroad as in New York.

<sup>2</sup>William Barclay Parsons, "Construction Diary," Unpublished manuscript, May 3, 1901.

<sup>3</sup>"The Old Rapid Transit and The New," Real Estate Record and Builder's Guide, 74 (October 29, 1904), 896.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

(See continuation sheet)

# 10. Geographical Data

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

Acreege of nominated property each site is less than 1 acre  
 Quadrangle name (See continuation sheet for building code)

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

UMT References

A 

|      |    |         |   |    |   |          |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|----|---------|---|----|---|----------|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 18 | 5       | 8 | 15 | 8 | 16       | 10 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| Zone |    | Easting |   |    |   | Northing |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

  
 C 

|      |    |         |   |    |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|----|---------|---|----|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 18 | 5       | 9 | 10 | 3 | 9        | 0 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 8 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Zone |    | Easting |   |    |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

  
 E 

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| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

  
 G 

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| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

B 

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|------|----|---------|---|----|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 18 | 5       | 8 | 13 | 2 | 1        | 0 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| Zone |    | Easting |   |    |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

  
 D 

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|------|----|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 18 | 5       | 8 | 6 | 3 | 3        | 0 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Zone |    | Easting |   |   |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

  
 F 

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|------|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

  
 H 

|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
|       |      |        |      |
| state | code | county | code |

# 11. Form Prepared By

Contact: Elizabeth Spencer-Ralph  
518-474-0479

David J. Framberger, Research Consultant  
 name/title For Joan R. Olshansky, National Register Coordinator

organization Landmarks Preservation Commission date October, 1979  
 street & number 305 Broadway telephone (212) 566-7577  
 city or town New York state New York 10007

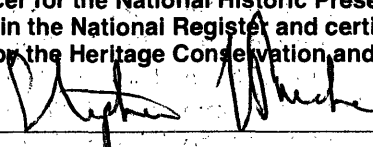
# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title Director, Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau

date 2/26/80

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register:

  
 Keeper of the National Register

date May 6, 1980

Attest:   
 Chief of Registration

date April 26, 1980

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Bronx, Kings and New York Counties

IRT Subway Control Houses : Thematic Resources

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