## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking " $x$ " in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

## 1. Name of Property



## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

| As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify |
| :--- |
| that this [ X ] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards |
| for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and |
| professional requirements as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 . In my opinion, the property [ X ] meets |
| [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered |
| signifieant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [ X ] locally. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional |
| comments.) |
| Signature of certifying official/Title |
| State or Federal agency and bureau |




## Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)
See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet 

Elmhurst Avenue
Subway Station (IND)
Name of Property
Queens County, NY
County and State

## 7. Narrative Description

The Elmhurst Avenue Subway Station (Queens Boulevard Line; R, G, V trains) is located in the Elmhurst neighborhood of Queens. The station was completed in 1936 as part of the IND System. It is aligned in an east-west direction beneath and parallel to Broadway. The perimeter of the station lies roughly between the intersection of Elmhurst and $45^{\text {th }}$ Avenues with Broadway in the east and the intersection of Britton Avenue and $82^{\text {nd }}$ Street in the west. The platforms measure approximately 600 feet in length and 80 feet in width. This narrative description was taken largely from the NYCT Historical Properties Survey: Phase II - Elmhurst Avenue Station Inventory Form that was completed in 1994 and was supplemented with field inspections undertaken in August of 2004.

General Characteristics and Construction Methods
The Elmhurst Avenue Station is a two track, center platform station that consists of a platform level and an upper mezzanine. It has the typical expansive IND-style mezzanine and multiple street entrances. The basic structural frame of the station consists of a concrete foundation and side walls with steel columns. Built-up "I" section columns of varying height are spaced 5 feet on-center in the outer walls and between the tracks. The roof above the IND tracks are approximately 6 inches taller and the track width is approximately one foot wider than the original IRT stations. Concrete was used to infill between the columns and create the exterior walls. The "cover" for the station is trough shaped in section, with the $U$ running generally parallel to the tracks in order to accommodate such infrastructure necessities as steam, sewer, gas, and water lines, as well as electrical and telecommunications cables beneath the roadway. The majority of the IND station ceilings consisted of structural steel frames with concrete jack arches between. Along each platform, the roof girder is supported by H -section piers placed at 15 -foot intervals, and the roof girder webs are stiffened above each of the piers. The piers are tied into the vertical supports along the side wall of the station by, lateral, webbed trusses, which are diagonally braced at each end.

The side walls of the station are of four-inch brick separated by a one-inch air space from the outer structural walls. The interiors are covered in uniformly shaped, square white ceramic tiles, with contoured pieces at the corner. These are offset by a colored tile band and black and white mosaic directional and stations signs. Floors throughout are three inch thick graded concrete incised into large squares. All ties are fitted with tie plates (www.nysubways.org).

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Throughout the platform areas there are unifying decorative elements that identify this as a typical IND station. The mezzanine and platforms at Elmhurst Avenue are typical of IND stations: simple utilitarian spaces that are extremely long and expansive to enhance passenger flow. The simple tile band that indicated express or local stops on various lines runs along the top portion of white-tiled IND station platform walls. It is, apart from advertising signs, the only spot of color found in most IND stations.

Station Circulation
The circulation plan for this station incorporates multiple J-staircases located along the length of the platform that lead to the mezzanine level above. From this mezzanine, where the control area is located, there are two entrances at the west end of the station and three at the east end.

## Mezzanine Level

The mezzanine level is a wide, open space with a low ceiling. Five rows of evenly spaced steel columns set at 15 -foot intervals support the mezzanine ceiling (Photo 1 ). The walls are clad in square, white ceramic tiles. They are occasionally punctuated by ceramic tile directional signs that point pedestrians to the exits at 45th or Elmhurst Avenues. The signs are lettered in white against black backgrounds. The pedestrian traffic is channeled using the original grilles and replacement wire fencing. The ticket booth is located centrally along the length of the mezzanine. Two pairs of turnstiles (the exit turnstiles are original) are located at each end of the platform and separate the paid and unpaid spaces. The entire space is lit by suspended, fluorescent fixtures. At the east end of the station, on the north wall, there are station department rooms (employee toilets), and a passageway that leads to an arcade area. An original wooden directional sign for the City Hospital at Elmhurst located along the west wall in this mezzanine.

## Platform Level

The platforms are equally open and expansive spaces. Painted steel H-section columns, set at 15 -foot intervals, line the edge of each platform and three lines of steel columns line each track. The platform walls are covered in a wide expanse of white tiles. A blue band of ceramic tile bordered by a row of narrow black tile runs the full length of each wall (Photo 2). Ceramic mosaic name tablets are evenly spaced between the staircases. They are each approximately two feet by twelve feet and announce "Elmhurst Avenue" (Photo 3) The white letters against a black background with a blue frame are simple and modern in style, without serifs. This is also true for the smaller "Elmhurst" signs

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consisting of white lettering on black ceramic tile (Photo 4). In between the signs are tilefree advertising recesses. Fluorescent lights hang between each pair of columns.

The concrete, jack-arch ceiling over the platform is punctuated by large metal grates decorated with a geometric, Art-Deco-style design to provide ventilation (Photo 5). Each platform is accessed by seven steel and concrete staircases located along the length of the platform and against the platform wall (Photo 6), Each staircase retains original metal railings, with simple straight balusters. The sides and backs of the open string staircases are covered in white tile.

## Exterior Elements and Stairwells

Three stairway entrances (Britton Avenue and Broadway; 82nd Street and Broadway; and $45^{\text {th }}$ Avenue and Broadway) have standard IND-style railings consisting of straight and undulating stiles, decorated rails with pyramidal studs, and replacement lamps and globes. A fourth entrance (45th and Broadway) has simple metal railings (Photo 7). A fifth entrance (Elmhurst Avenue and Broadway) is through a building where four concession stands are located along an arcade leading from the mezzanine. An original stairway was abandoned this arcade and entrance. The stairwells are covered with tan tile with some non-matching replacement tile. Most of the double-wide staircases have the original pipe railing running down the middle of the stairs. Some have the original wood handrails along the stairwell walls but about half have been replaced with simple metal handrails. Fluorescent lighting is used in all the stairway entrances.


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Elmhurst Avenue Subway Station (IND)
Name of Property Queens County, NY County and State

## 8. Narrative Statement of Significance

As part of the Multiple Property Submission of the Historic Resources of the New York City Subway System, the Elmhurst Avenue Subway Station (IND), Queens Boulevard Line, is significant under Criterion A in the areas of transportation, community planning and development, and social history. The station also meets Criterion C in the areas of engineering, and architectural design. The Elmhurst Avenue Subway Station began operation in 1936 as an extension to the Independent (IND) system. The Elmhurst Avenue Station retains a relatively high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Many of the remaining IND stations, including Elmhurst Avenue, are significant at the local level.

The Elmhurst Avenue IND Subway Station was opened on December 31, 1936. This local station on the Queens Boulevard Line has two side platforms and four tracks, including two express tracks that run through the center.

In 1924, the newly formed Board of Transportation (BOT) assumed the responsibility of expanding the subway system. The BOT planned, designed, built and operated a third subway system, known as the Independent Subway System (IND), that operated separately from the BMT and IRT. Three IND lines were built in Brooklyn--the Fulton Street and Prospect Park lines and a Brooklyn-Queens crosstown line. When it first opened, the IND system was celebrated for its expansive platforms, large mezzanines and multiple access points. The interior tiling of IND stations is notable for its "modern" design that utilized bands of identifying colors; bold, sans serif lettering and uniform, square, white wall tile. Stations were coded by a solid, ornamental, ceramic tile band running along the top of the platform wall. The color was changed at each express stop so that passengers on a moving train could readily identify their location. The wall tiling and mosaic signage in the Elmhurst Avenue Station follows typical IND models. The station is one of about 100 subterranean IND stations. After unification of the three systems in 1940, the IND was linked to certain BMT lines ( $60^{\text {th }}$ Street, Chrystie Street, Culver and Liberty Avenue) to form one operating division - "Division B".

The Queens Boulevard Line was one of the IND's trunk lines, and perhaps one of the easiest of all the IND's lines to build. Aside from the river crossing and some construction in the Queens Plaza area, the areas of Queens through which it passed were sparsely developed. Parts of Queens Boulevard were then lined with billboards rather than buildings, and the street was so wide that surface traffic could continue in the outer lanes while excavation proceeded through the center area.

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Robert Ridgeway, Chief Engineer of this station, was born and bred in Brooklyn. He did not receive a formal education in his trade but instead gained his experience while working under Alfred Craven, Chief Engineer of the Dual Contracts system. Design Engineer, Aaron I. Raisman, worked closely with Ridgeway on numerous projects for the BRT and later IND lines.

In the Elmhurst Station, the consistency of the materials and the architectural detail are impressive. It is architecturally significant as a well preserved example of the simplicity of the 1930s Art-Deco style, designed for maintenance and efficiency. The Elmhurst Station, as part of the IND subway system, retains a high degree of integrity of original material and craftsmanship.

The Queens Boulevard Line linked separate settlements across Queens Long Island City, Newtown (now Elmhurst) and Jamaica, opening up rural areas to urbanization, and increasing property values. It made vast suburban and rural areas easily and cheaply accessible to Manhattan workplaces. Today many of the side streets are part of quiet residential neighborhoods and Broadway is the main commercial street of Elmhurst featuring one-to seven-story buildings.

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## 9. Bibliography

Cudahy, Brian. A Century of Subways: Celebrating 100 Years of the New York City's Underground Railways. New York: Fordham University Press, 2003.

Hood, Clifton. 722 Miles: The Building of the Subways and How they Transformed New York. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

Interborough Rapid Transit Company. The New York Subway: Its Construction and Equipment. 1904. Reprinted on website managed by David Pirmann (2004). Retrieved 03/14/04 from source: http://www.nycsubway.org/irt/irtbook/.

National Park Service, Department of the Interior Historic American Engineering Record NY-122, "Interborough Rapid Transit Subway (Original Line): The NY Rapid Transit Decision of 1900: Economy, Society, Politics" prepared by Walter B. Katz, 1979.

New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. IRT Subway System Underground Interior Designation Report. New York: NYC LPC, October, 1979.

Orlando, Barbara. "Recapturing the Past: Station Architecture," At Your Service: MTA New York City Transit Employee Newsletter, March, 2004.

Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Quade \& Douglas, Inc., Historical Perspectives, Inc. and Robert E Olmstead, P.E. "Phase I: Reconnaissance Level Historical Survey of Transit Authority Properties," June, 1991.


## Sheets

## Maps

A USGS map ( 7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

## Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

## Additional items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)


Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act. As amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20503.

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## 10. Geographical Data

The boundary of the Elmhurst Avenue Station - Queens Boulevard Line is shown as the bold line on the accompanying site plan entitled, "Elmhurst Avenue Station, Station Plan, Queens Line - IND Division, 1997." The above-ground station boundaries are also shown on the accompanying location map entitled, "Neighborhood Map, NYCTA, 1985." The designation for the Elmhurst Avenue Station includes all portions of the station at track and mezzanine levels that fall within the boundaries of the current platforms, as well as the exterior entrances.

## Boundary Justification

The boundaries for the Elmhurst Avenue Station encompass the entire station.

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## 11. Form Prepared By:

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Stacey Vairo, Architectural Historian
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860-247-7200

## United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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## Additional Documentation

List of Black and White Photos
Elmhurst Avenue Subway Station (IND)
Queens County, NY
Photographer: Stacey Vairo
Date: March 12, 2004
Negatives on file: Fitzgerald \& Halliday, Inc.
72 Cedar Street
Hartford, CT 06106

1. Mezzanine level. View west.
2. Platform level. View west.
3. Name tablet. View south.
4. Small name tablet. View south.
5. Ceiling ventilation grate. View southwest.
6. Stairway to mezzanine. View west.
7. Exterior entrance. View east.


Elmhurst Avenue Subway Station
Queens County, NY.
Location map-
Hagstroin Map of. New York City
1998 1998 scale: $1^{\prime \prime}=2000^{\prime}$


# UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE <br> NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET 

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION
PROPERTY Elmhurst Avenue Subway Station (IND)
NAME:
MULTIPLE New York City Subway System MPS NAME:

STATE \& COUNTY: NEW YORK, Queens

| DATE RECEIVED: | $5 / 27 / 05$ |  | DATE OF PENDING LIST: | $6 / 10 / 05$ |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| DATE OF 16TH DAY: | $6 / 25 / 05$ |  | DATE OF 45TH DAY: | $7 / 10 / 05$ |
| DATE OF WEEKLY LIST: |  |  |  |  |

REFERENCE NUMBER: 05000672

REASONS FOR REVIEW:
APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N


ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Bntored in the<br>Vational Ratione

RECOM. / CRITERIA
REVIEWER $\qquad$ DISCIPLINE $\qquad$
TELEPHONE $\qquad$ DATE $\qquad$
DOCUMENTATION see attached comments $\mathrm{Y} / \mathrm{N}$ see attached SLR $\mathrm{Y} / \mathrm{N}$ If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.


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The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street, $9^{\text {th }}$ Floor North, New York NY 10007 TEL: 212-669-7922 FAX: 212-669-7797
http://nyc.gov/landmarks/


## Ronda Wist

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
rwist@lpc.nyc.gov

March 11, 2005

Ms. Ruth Pierpont, Director
New York State Office of Parks Recreation
and Historic Preservation


Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau
Peebles Island
P.O. Box 189

Waterford, New York 12188-0189

## Re: $\quad$ The Historic Resources of the New York City Subway System, various counties, New York

Dear Ms. Pierpont:
I write on behalf of Chair Robert B. Tierney in response to your request for comment on the eligibility of The Historic Resources of the New York City Subway System (Bronx, Kings, Queens, and New York Counties) and the individual substations nominated for the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

The Commission has reviewed the materials submitted by the Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau and believes that the Morris Park Station, Woodlawn Station, Avenue U Station, Bay Parkway Station, $15^{\text {th }}$ Street-Prospect Park Subway Station, $4^{\text {th }}$ Avenue Station, New Utrecht Avenue Station, $9^{\text {th }}$ Avenue Station, Ocean Parkway Station, Substation \#401, Wilson Avenue Subway Station, Brooklyn Bridge-City Hall Subway Station, Chambers Street Subway Station, $14^{\text {th }}$ Street-Union Square Subway Station, and Elmhurst Avenue Subway Station appear to meet the criteria for inclusion on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

Sincerely yours,


[^0]
[^0]:    cc: Robert B. Tierney, Chair
    Mary Beth Bats

