



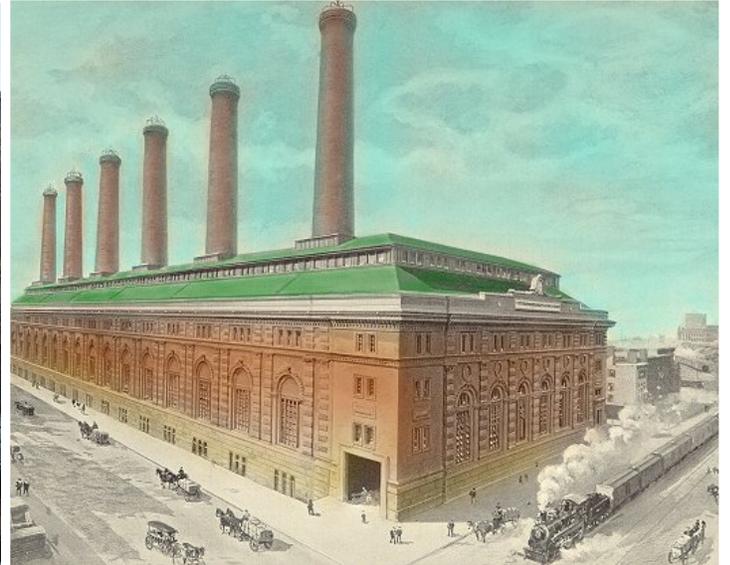
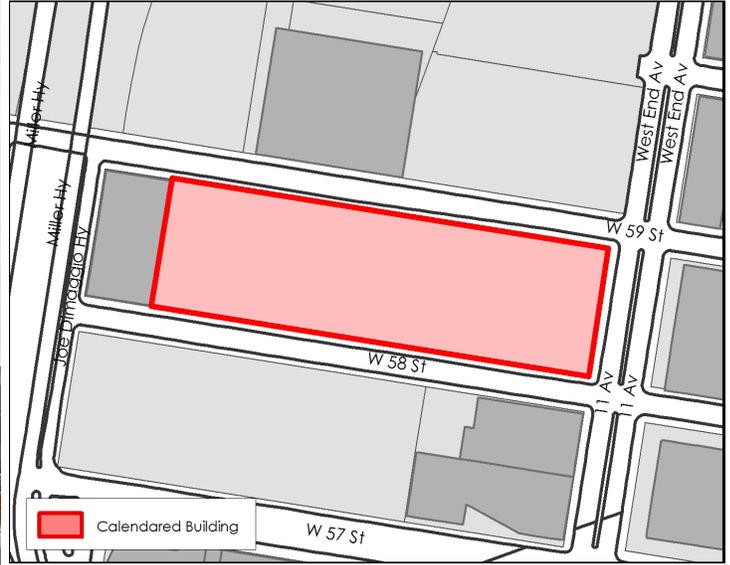
Landmarks Preservation Commission

Backlog Initiative: Addressing 95 Properties
Manhattan A Group 1 Items

Interborough Rapid Transit Powerhouse, now Consolidated Edison Powerhouse

850 12th Ave. aka 840 Joe Dimaggio Highway, Manhattan
Manhattan Block: 01106; Lot: 0001

Manhattan Community Board 4
Public Hearing Date(s): 09/11/1979; 07/10/1990;
07/14/2009



Photos: (left) 2014 (right) undated historic image

Special Public Hearings

The Landmarks Preservation Commission will hold a public hearing on the backlog of buildings in the Borough of Manhattan on **November 5, 2015** and encourages interested parties to submit written testimony in advance of that hearing. Each speaker will be given three minutes total to speak, and in that time may address all of the items within Manhattan A Group 1, just particular items, or add comments to support written testimony. In order to conduct efficient hearings, we ask speakers to register in advance, and submit their written statements and materials that will be read at the hearing by **October 29, 2015** to backlog95@lpc.nyc.gov. If you are unable to attend the hearing, your written submissions will be entered into the record and distributed to the Commissioners.

If you have questions about this property or the hearing process please contact backlog95@lpc.nyc.gov or call (212) 669-7817. If you would like more information about this property, please see the research file summary (over) and go to our website (<http://www.nyc.gov/html/lpc/html/backlog95>) and click on the link for this building's research file.



**Landmarks Preservation
Commission**

**Interborough Rapid Transit Powerhouse, now
Consolidated Edison Powerhouse Description**

Landmark Type: Individual

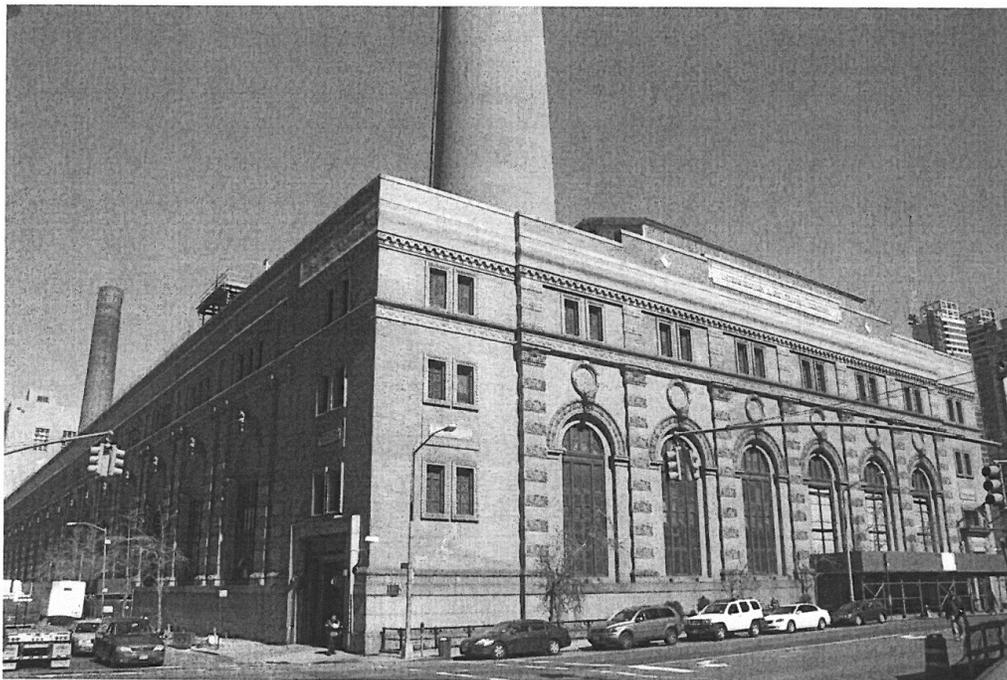
Built: 1904

Architect: McKim, Mead & White

Style: Beaux-Arts

Research Staff Hearing Statement (2009), page 1 of 2

INTERBOROUGH RAPID TRANSIT POWERHOUSE
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN



Occupying the entire block bounded by Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues, West 58th and 59th Streets, the original powerhouse of the Interborough Rapid Transit Subway is the most monumental building associated with the subway system in New York City. This mammoth structure was the largest powerhouse in the world upon its completion in 1904, and it represented the highest level of technical sophistication in the production of electrical power at that time. From the powerhouse, current was generated and fed to eight substations to power the signal and lighting systems. In its role as company symbol, the building heralded a new era of electrified urban transportation, illustrating the power of technology to improve urban life. The IRT Powerhouse still stands as a monument to the engineers and architects who planned and built New York City's first successful underground transit system.

The exterior of the powerhouse was designed by Stanford White of the prominent firm of McKim, Mean & White and is a rare example of utilitarian design by that firm. Executed in the Beaux-Arts style and drawing upon Renaissance prototypes, it is the embodiment of the aesthetic ideals of the civic-minded City Beautiful movement, spawned by World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago, which held that public improvements could beautify American industrial cities. The structural design of the powerhouse was the responsibility of William C. Phelps, assistant engineer in charge of the Mechanical Department of the Subway Construction Company.



**Landmarks Preservation
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**Interborough Rapid Transit Powerhouse, now
Consolidated Edison Powerhouse Description**

Built: 1904

Architect: McKim, Mead & White

Style: Beaux-Arts

Landmark Type: Individual

Research Staff Hearing Statement (2009), page 2 of 2

Standing on a base of smooth ashlar granite, the building has symmetrically designed facades of buff-colored brick arranged in bays with two-story arched window openings that are decorated with terra-cotta moldings and keystones. The arcades are surmounted by an attic story with paired window openings framed by terra-cotta moldings. The six windows of the Eleventh Avenue facade are separated by brick pilasters with foliated terra-cotta rustication blocks and topped by terra-cotta wreaths. At the long north and south facades, pairs of rusticated brick pilasters separate the arched bays. Many of the windows retain their original multipane industrial sash. It is unclear whether any of the original six chimneys—which were erected on a steel substructure 76 feet above the basement floor of the powerhouse in order to maximize floor space—remain, and a new, much taller chimney has been added near the southeast corner. The original terra-cotta roof tiles and the upper cornice have also been removed. Four openings have been cut into the base on the south side and one on the north side, and three of the window openings have been partially bricked in (two on the south side, one on the north). An addition was constructed in the 1940s at the Twelfth Avenue facade of the powerhouse, which IRT engineers had purposefully left vacant for such an expansion to the plant. This extension was not included in the proposed designation in 1990.

