



## **Feature of the Month: Bleecker Street subway station given a new link and restored by Lee Harris Pomeroy Architects; a \$94.5 million joint venture project with Weidlinger Associates, structural engineers**

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The MTA's \$94.5 million rehabilitation of the Bleecker St. station complex, designed by Lee Harris Pomeroy Architects (LHPA) in a joint venture with Weidlinger Associates, structural engineers, introduces an uptown link between two major subway lines while returning one of the city's oldest stations to its original glory. It includes a 300-foot extension of the Bleecker St. IRT uptown platform and a new transfer connection between it and the Broadway-Lafayette station on the IND line. It also restores the landmarked IRT station's 1904 Beaux-Arts finishes, which were designed by architecture firm Heins & LaFarge; widens the downtown platform by 240 feet; introduces ADA access and efficient movement; and consolidates NYCT facilities. Creating the dramatic uptown link between the stations - there was already a link on the downtown side - required widening the tunnel and then introducing structural supports to extend the uptown IRT platform so that it could connect it with the formerly unused but now reopened IND East Mezzanine. The IRT station runs north-south one level - 20 feet - below the street and the IND line runs east-west two more levels below that.

"There are many structural differences between the two stations," said Bernard Kho of LHPA, "With several structural grids of steel to penetrate. We aimed carefully and made a three-level cut through the floor slabs to introduce an escalator and stairs which connect the two stations as well as an elevator which provides ADA access from the street."

Adding drama and light to the contemporary connection is a digital art installation that hangs from the ceiling. Designed by artist Leo Villareal as part of NYC's Percent for Art program, it is an expansive, honeycomb structure of LED lights with pulsating color that changes throughout the day. The enlarged, contemporary IND East Mezzanine control area will serve as the new full-time control area for the Bleecker St. uptown platform. It will allow transfers and ADA access to the IND platforms as well as the Bleecker Street downtown platform. The reconfigured control areas will improve passenger convenience, create secure passageways and waiting areas, and allow for efficient control of station operations.

"The restoration of Bleecker St. Station, which is part of NYC's first subway line, will remind New Yorkers of an era that celebrated transportation and the growth of the city," said Lee Harris Pomeroy, FAIA, the firm's founder. The decorative scheme, which consists of eight, bold, blue and white polychrome faience name plaques and pale blue tile borders set against white glass tile walls, typified the elegance of turn of the 20th century transportation. But over the years it was dulled by stains from rust colored water that had leaked from the sidewalk above. Now completely renewed, "The station has a remarkable, vibrant presence that demonstrates the role design played in making New York a modern city," said Pomeroy.

Lee Harris Pomeroy Architects is a New York-based architectural firm, founded in 1964, that has a long association with New York City Transit. They have restored and renovated other historic and noteworthy stations including Union Square/14th St., Lincoln Center/66th St., Bleecker St., and MoMA/53rd St. as well as the Plaza Hotel, Grand Central Terminal, Trinity and Saint James Churches and Saks Fifth Ave.

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