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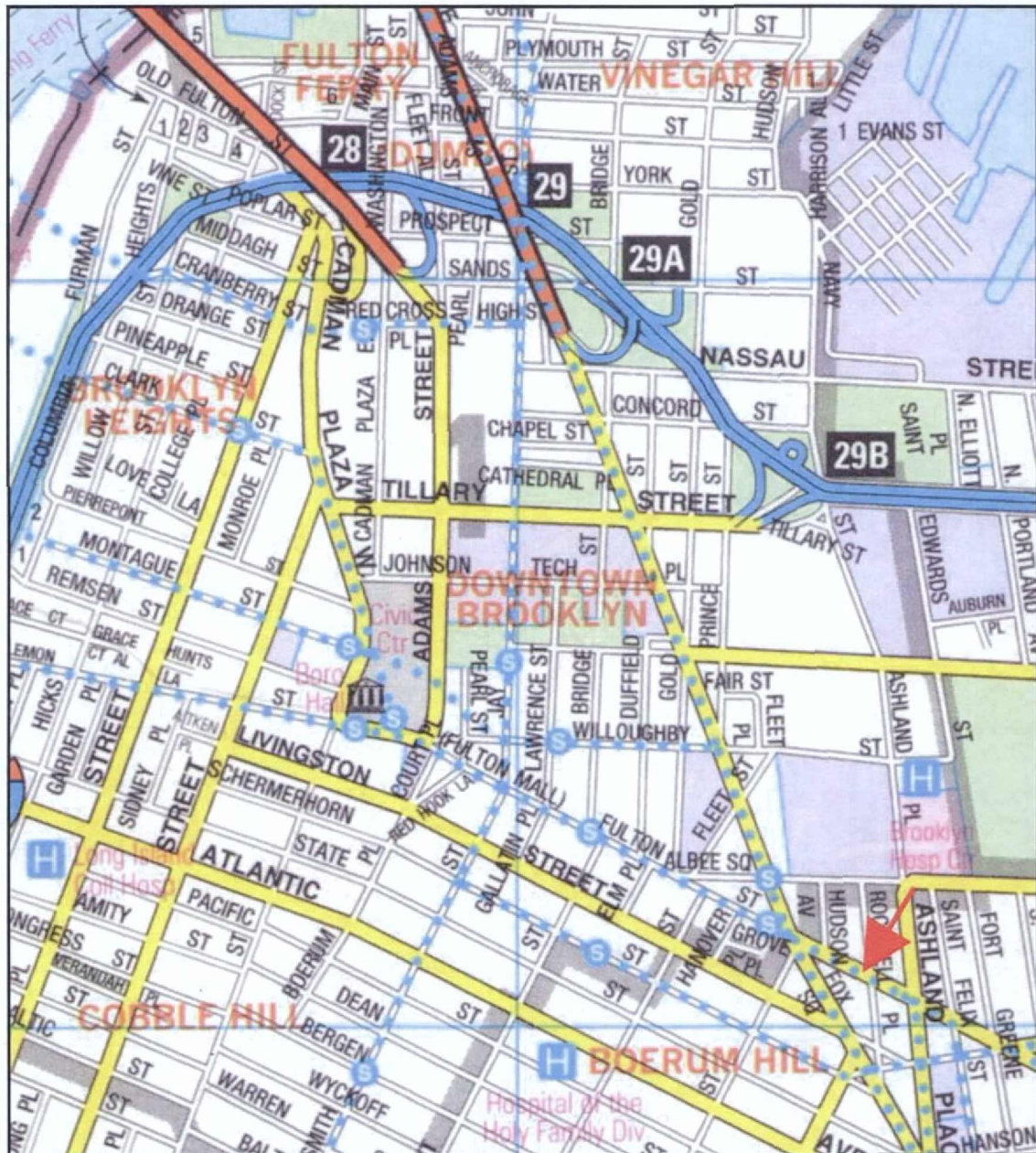
Bergoffen

2008

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572 FULTON STREET DISPOSITION
BLOCK 2106 LOT 40 - BROOKLYN, NEW YORK
PHASE IA ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT



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 May 16, 2008

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I. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT SITE AND PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

The project site is located at 572 Fulton Street in Downtown Brooklyn on block 2106 lot 40, just east of the Brooklyn Mall (henceforth, the “project site”; Cover map). It is roughly in the center of the triangular block 2106, which is bounded by Flatbush Avenue on the southwest, Fulton Street on the northeast, and Rockwell Place on the east. Lot 40 is zoned C6-4, and also falls within the Special Downtown Brooklyn District. It is currently vacant and being used as a parking lot (Fig. 1). It is bordered on the northwest by a three-story stucco building and on the southeast by a vacant parking area (lot 19, Fig. 2). At the rear of lot 40, fronting on Flatbush Avenue, is a five-story brick building.

The owner of the adjacent lot 19, 29 Flatbush LLC, is seeking the disposition of the City-owned lot 40 from the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development in order to merge it with lot 19. The sale and merger of the two lots would allow 29 Flatbush LLC to erect a 41-story residential building with ground-floor retail and accessory parking that would occupy both lots 19 and 40.

On the site visit conducted on May 15, 2008, C. Bergoffen observed that portions of lot 40 beginning approximately 40 to 45 feet from the northwestern corner of the lot on Fulton Street and extending past the east lot line, had been extensively trenched (Figs. 3, 4 and 6). This trenching was done since the photographs taken by Philip Habib and Associates (PHA) on March 26th, 2008 (Fig. 2). The backhoe trench was in the former yard immediately behind the three-story, 40-foot deep building that stood on the lot from at least 1867 (according to the earliest tax assessments, and probably the brick building already shown on the 1855 Perris map), until the 1950s or 60s.

Trenching has also been conducted at the south end of lot 40, in the back of the former yard (Fig. 6). This yard had mainly been covered by a one-story brick extension, built between 1869 and 1886 (Fig. 8). Its northwest wall is visible in the cut, extending several feet below grade (Fig. 6). There remained only an approximately 12 foot square yard behind the extension. This final portion of the yard was covered between 1898 and 1904,

according to the Hyde maps (Fig. 9), but demolished again by 1929 (Desk Atlas). It is unclear whether it is depicted on the later maps or not. A stub of stuccoed brick wall, possibly part of the building that stood over the rear yard, runs along the southeast lot line. A foundation wall of the rear extension of lot 19 is visible in the sunk yard between lot 19 and the five story brick building behind it, fronting on Flatbush Avenue. The brick wall south of it is no doubt one of the foundation walls of the Orpheum Theater, built on lot 19 in 1899-1900 (Fig. 9; *Brooklyn Eagle* 1900).

The client stated that the test pits were dug because an oil tank had been discovered, and noted that the former basements had probably just been filled in when the buildings were demolished. PHA's photographs show the sinking of large sections of the project site probably due to the presence of voids in the filled-in basements.

Lot 40 was developed prior to the introduction of sewer or water services and must have been equipped with a privy, if not also a cistern. But these features will have been truncated or destroyed by the construction of the rear extensions in the late 19th century, if not by the recent trenching. This report therefore concludes that lot 40 is not sensitive for potential archaeological remains.

The following repositories and databases were consulted in the preparation of this report:

Brooklyn Sewer Department (tap records),
Municipal Archives (tax assessments),
New York Historical Society library (Brooklyn Directories, maps, and secondary sources),
New York Public Library Map Division,
Office of the City Register, Brooklyn (deeds and conveyances).
U.S. Census 1860-1910

II. PREHISTORY AND HISTORY OF THE PROJECT SITE AREA TO ca. 1850

The British Headquarters map (1782) indicates that the project site was at the edge of a low ridge along which ran the dirt road that would later turn into Fulton Street. For the Indians, as later for the Europeans, the principal landing place for river traffic was at the point which later became the pier of the Brookland Ferry, at the foot of Fulton Street (Cover). Their main path to the interior ran along the line of later Fulton Street, then just east of Flatbush Avenue, across the Eastern Parkway, to the Prospect Park reservoir (Armbruster 1919, 5ff.; Bolton 1922, 131; Cropsey 1925). The 18th century road forked just northwest of the present intersection of Fulton Street and Flatbush Avenue, one branch continuing to Jamaica, the other to Flatbush and Flatlands (Stiles 1867, facing p. 250; Armbruster 1919, 9). In the late 18th century, there were cultivated tracts bordering the road on both sides, including the project site and its immediate area (Ratzer 1766-67).

At the time of the European conquest, the area of present-day downtown Brooklyn was settled by the Marechkawiek Indians, one of the Long Island Canarsee groups possibly related to Delaware subtribes (Bolton 1920, 271; Bolton 1922, 132). South of Wallabout Bay, a neck of land jutting into the East River was called the "Cape of the Marechkawiek" (Stiles 1867, 307), and the 1639 Manatus map shows a Marechkawiek longhouse in this area (Grumet 1981, 27). By that time, the Dutch West India Company had acquired most of the Indian land in western Long Island and established the first European settlement at what would become Brooklyn Heights on Marechkawiek Indian territory (Bolton 1922, 135).

One of the Marechkawiek settlements was discovered in 1826 on a hill on Bridge Street, between Front and York Streets, two blocks north of the project site (Bolton 1922, 133). Bolton suggested that another Indian settlement, called Werpos or Worpus, should be located near Warren and Hoyt Streets (*Ibid.*, p. 137). Cropsey (1925) placed the longhouse buildings mentioned above at Borough Hall and Fort Hamilton, and noted an Indian village located near Lawrence and Jay Streets at Fulton Street. Stiles (1869, 35) reported that Indian artifacts were found "on the right of the Old Ferry" (HPI 1984, 5).

There are, however, no site reports to accompany any of these findings. The SHPO sensitivity map also records sites east and southwest of the Brooklyn Bridge, on or near the waterfront (Sensitivity map A0047-01-0074, A047-01-0179, A047-01-0102). Yet in their 1984 report on a site immediately south of the Brooklyn Bridge, HPI consulted Solecki, who was then excavating in the Fulton Ferry area and he stated that he had found no prehistoric remains (HPI 1984, 7).

The principal transport arteries that made possible Brooklyn's development during historic periods were created in the 17th and early 18th centuries. By 1642, a ferry service, by row boat, was launched between Manhattan's Peck Slip and the ferry slip at the foot of Fulton Street. Fulton Street became one of the major arteries of Brooklyn once it was laid out by Lord Cornbury in 1704. It was then known as the "Kings Highway". The section of the road within Brooklyn Village was renamed Fulton Street in 1817, in honor of Robert Fulton (Armbruster 1919, 10). Further on, it became Fulton Avenue. During this period of development in the 17th and 18th centuries, the village of Brooklyn remained largely farmland (1766-67 Ratzer map). On the eve of the Revolutionary War, there were still only 56 buildings in Brooklyn village proper (Brooklyn Directory 1822, 63).

Steam ferry service was introduced in 1814 by Robert Fulton and ferry services linking Brooklyn to Manhattan, its principal market, began. From this time on, Brooklyn grew rapidly. It was incorporated as a village in 1816 and divided into seven districts. Between 1814 and 1820, it doubled in size (Brooklyn Directory 1822, 51, census of 1820). In 1834, the village was incorporated as a city (Manufacturers 1886, 58).

By 1844, the built up area stopped just northwest of the project site and the fork in the road (USCS 1844-45). There were still no street numbers on block 2106 (Brooklyn Directory 1844-45), which was only developed after 1849, but certainly by 1855, when the Perris map records a brick building on the site, still without a house number. According to Armbruster (1919, 27) the section of Fulton Avenue above Bridge Street (southeast, presumably) was still a "country road" in the early 1850s. Flatbush Avenue

was opened in after its intersection with Fulton Street only in 1856 (Armbruster 1919, 34).

In the mid-19th century, Brooklyn was divided into pump and well districts and the residents of the building on the project site could have obtained their water from these public facilities, if not from their own cistern (Brooklyn Directory 1824, 42). The 1855-56 Brooklyn Directory still records the existence of public cisterns conveniently located throughout Brooklyn. Following the incorporation of the Nassau Water Company in 1855, work began in 1856 on the excavation of a reservoir in the area of present-day Prospect Park. But it was not until 1859 that water from the reservoir was introduced into the city mains (Manufacturers 1886, 60).¹ Sewer service became generally available by ca. 1860, although the earliest preserved tax records date to 1868, the first three books of connection records being missing. The residents of the building on the project site would then have been using a privy in the yard from ca. 1846/55 until the early- to mid-1860s, the probable date of the first sewer connections. Unfortunately, there is no sewer connection record for the project site, although the lots on both sides of it were connected before 1868, their records contained in one of the first three missing books.

¹ The first 36 inch water main from the Ridgewood reservoir was laid in 1858; a second, 48 inch main was added in 1867; Ostrander 1894, 146.

III. THE PROJECT SITE ca. 1850 TO THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

The 1849 Colton and 1874 Beers map both record that the project site lot was part of the property of St. Felix, possibly the John R. St. Felix and Ann M. St. Felix listed in the Deeds and Conveyances for 1852.

The 1855 Perris map is the first to record a building on the lot (Fig. 7). It was brick and covered approximately the front half of the lot, the rear being vacant. The lot coverage shown on the 1869 Dripps map appears to be the same. Although the 1880 Bromley records a brick building on the project site lot, it does not indicate its length and it is therefore not certain whether this is the same structure as shown on the 1855 Perris map. The 1886 Robinson map, however, shows a much longer structure at 572 Fulton Street that almost completely covered the lot (Fig. 8). The date of the extension is unknown, but the property value jumped from \$5000 in 1880 to 8000 in 1881, the largest increase in a single year between 1867 and 1886. This may reflect the construction of the addition. The larger building also appears on the 1898 Hyde map, which indicates that the vacant area at the rear measured approximately 12 square feet. The 1904 and 1912 Hyde maps show the lot completely covered with the addition of a brick extension at the rear of the original one (Fig. 9). These maps reveal that the original building, possibly the one shown on the 1855 Perris map, was three stories, while the rear addition was one story. The tax assessments record the building as a four-story, 22 by 40 foot building. The 1929 Desk Atlas shows the same building with its one-story extension, but the small, 12-foot deep rear yard is now once again vacant. This building survived until at least 1950 (Sanborn) but was demolished by 1969 when the lot is depicted as vacant (Sanborn). It has been used for parking since at least that date up to the present (1969 Sanborn, 1979 Sanborn, 1989 Sanborn).

The earliest tax assessments, of 1867-70, record the owner in those years as Charles McCafrey. The 1868-69 Brooklyn Directory lists a Charles McCaffrey, engineer, home 176 Tillary, while the deeds and conveyances first record a Charles McCafferty as grantee on block 2106 in 1870. McCafrey paid taxes on the property until ca. 1872. From

1872 to 1886, George D. Pitkin was listed as the owner, then Percy G. Williams, until 1891, and finally, W.J. Skelly (*sic*), at the end of the 19th century (tax assessments). Pitkin had a shoe shop on Murray Street at the corner of Church Street in Manhattan and lived at 127 Prospect Place (Brooklyn Directory 1875). Williams, a manufacturer of electric pads, had his business at 44 Flatbush Avenue and lived at 664 Carroll Street (Brooklyn Directory 1887-88). He was best known as the builder of the Orpheum theater, in 1899-1900, next door to the project site on lot 19 (*Brooklyn Eagle* 1900). W. G. Skelley advertised his "Oldest strictly Custom Tailoring establishment on Fulton Street" in the *Brooklyn Eagle* in 1897 (Nov. 14, p. 6), and also appears as the protagonist in several newspaper articles reporting on burglaries. He had his shop at 572 Fulton Street from 1882-83, but lived at 181 St. John Street, later moving to 257 Raymond Street (Brooklyn Directory 1888-89).

The building on the project site was rented for use as a shop and dwelling from at least 1870, according to an advertisement in the *Brooklyn Eagle* (Dec. 12, 1870, p. 3), which states that "...the store has two splendid plate glass windows; dwelling in first class order; gas and water on each floor; basement fitted up for any kind of business, with fine entrance..." Keneaster's Auction Store advertised at this address in 1880 (*Brooklyn Eagle*), but in 1882, an un-named home furnishings store at this address advertised that it was going out of business (*Brooklyn Eagle* 1882).

Three renters' names are known from mentions in the *Brooklyn Eagle*: A. Hayward (April 17, 1880, p. 4); W.A. Broughton, who had a fire in his apartments at 572 Fulton Street on June 10, 1887 (p. 6; but no listing in the Brooklyn Directories of 1887-1889), and W.G. Skelley, the tailor. A tailor named Augustus Hayward is listed in the Brooklyn Directory of 1880-81, but not in earlier or later years (or in the U.S. census), and the address given is 591 Fulton Street. Skelley's store was robbed six times, the last while he sat next door at the Orpheum theater enjoying a first night performance that included, among other entertainments, trained dogs and monkeys and, ironically, a comical skit about a burglar (Jan. 4, 1901, p. 6).

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although it was near an Indian trail, the project site does not fulfill the criteria of Boesch's model for locations that are highly sensitive for prehistoric remains (Boesch 1994, 22). Moreover, the intensive urbanization of the site during the 19th century would have destroyed any potential site remains.

The earliest building on the site dates ca. 1850/1855, before water and sewer service became available. Although public cisterns might have supplied the residents' water needs, they would still have required a privy. The likelihood that such a potential feature would possess archaeological integrity is, however, low because of subsequent building activity over the former yard area. This consisted of the construction of a one story brick rear addition whose walls penetrated below grade, as seen on the northwest side of the recently cut backhoe trench. The Sanborn maps do not record a basement for this part of the building, nor for the three-story front building, although the *Brooklyn Eagle* advertisement states mentions one. In any case, judging by the construction of the perimeter walls of the extension, there would probably have been an unfinished and possibly shallow cellar, this also indicated by the sagging of the parking lot asphalt over the cellar level voids. The construction of the extension would have negatively impacted any potential remains of a privy at the rear of the main building. Since the recent trenching encompassed the yard area of the three-story house (prior to the construction of the extension), any truncated features that might have survived below the floor of the extension would have been destroyed.

This report therefore concludes that the project site is not sensitive for potential archaeological remains, and no further archaeological investigation is recommended.

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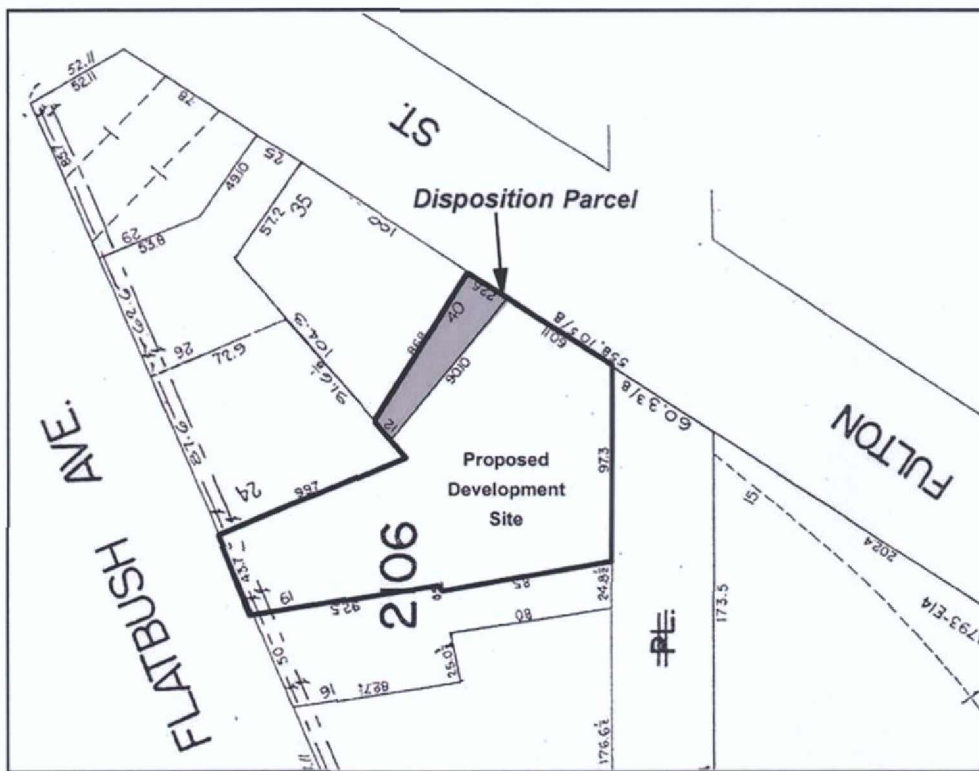


Fig. 1. Tax map showing the location of the project site on lot 40 ("Disposition Parcel")



Fig. 2. View of the project site from Fulton Street, March 26, 2008 (Courtesy Philip Habib and Associates)



Fig. 3. View of the northwest side of the project site looking southwest, showing the area of trenching in the rear half of the project site



Fig. 4. View of the project site looking north, showing the area of trenching in the rear half of the project site

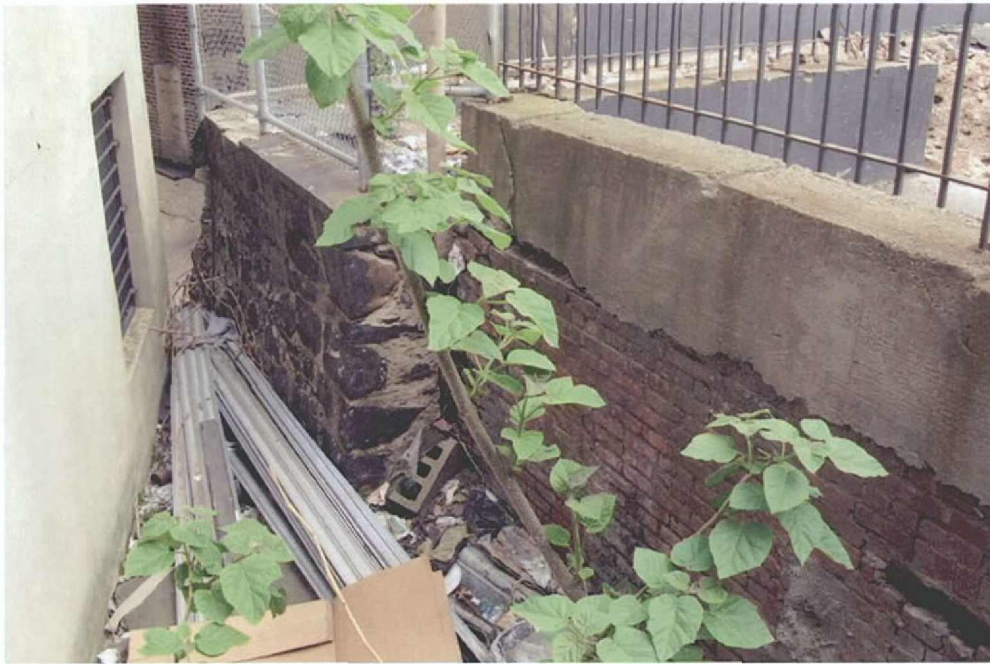


Fig. 5 (above). View of the rear foundation walls of the rear extension of lot 40 (left) and lot 19 (right)



Fig. 6 (left) View of the southwestern end of the project site; the brick rear wall of the extension is visible at the bottom of the cut

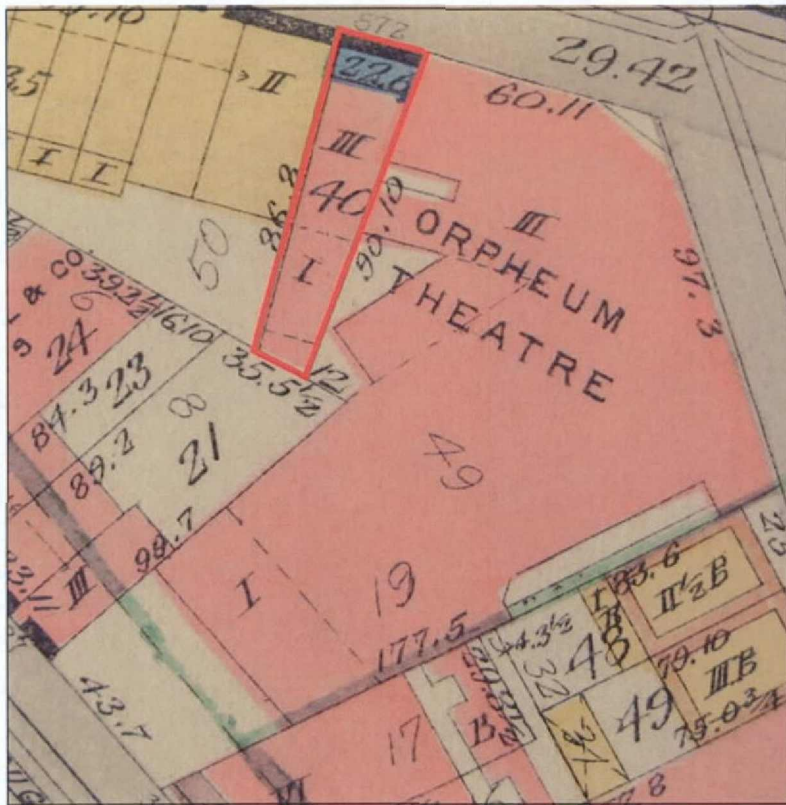


Fig. 9. 1904 Hyde map showing the location of the project site

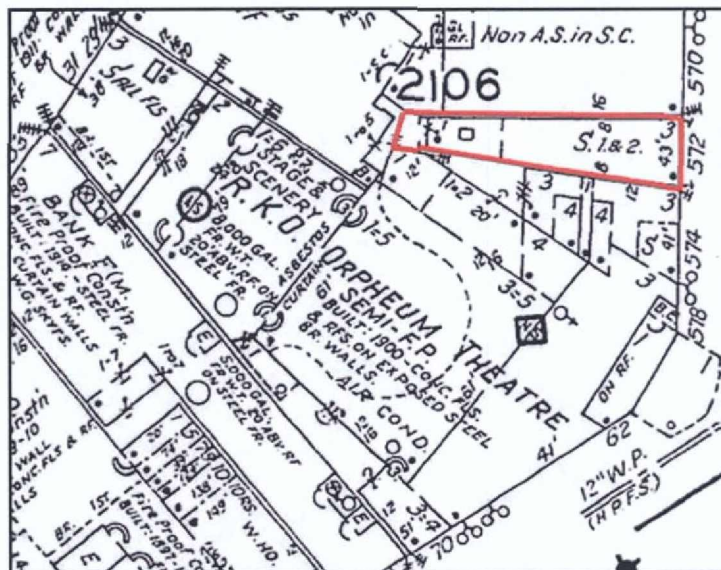


Fig. 10. 1950 Sanborn map showing the location of the project site