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2001 Bergoffen

LIGHT BRIDGES AT 100 JAY STREET REZONING
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK
PHASE IA ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Ø B 53 and 52 Rezoning

DRAFT

SUPPLEMENTARY STUDY BLOCK 52, LOTS 1, 2, 32

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July 11, 2001

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I. INTRODUCTION

This study of the potential redevelopment site on block 52 lots 1, 2, and 32 supplements, and is appended to, the archaeological assessment of the 100 Jay Street project site on the adjacent block 53 lots 3, 6, 21, 24, 25, 26 and 27, prepared by Celia Bergoffen (July 6, 2001). For the environmental setting, prehistoric to contact period history, 17th to early 20th century history and bibliography, the reader should refer to sections III, IV and VII of the above-mentioned report.

There is presently no specific plan to redevelop lots 1, 2, or 32

The object of this report, as with the study of Block 53 was to determine whether significant archaeological remains might be present, and if so, whether or not successive construction episodes in the past have negatively impacted them. The repositories consulted were:

the Brooklyn Building Department,
the Brooklyn Sewer Department (tap records),
the Municipal Archives (tax assessments),
the New York Historical Society library,
the New York Public Library: Map Division
the Office of the City Register, Brooklyn (deeds and conveyances).

Because lots 1 and 2 are not only completely covered by standing buildings, but also by their basements, which extend almost over the entire area of the three lots, and lot 32 was not developed until after the sewer system became operational in Brooklyn, the potential redevelopment site is not considered sensitive for archaeological remains.

II. BUILDING HISTORY OF THE POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT SITE.

Addresses: Lot 1: 89 Adams Street; 63-73 York Street; Lot 2: 87/85 Adams Street; Lot 32: 75/77 York Street

The coal yard shown on the 1855 Perris map (fig. 7) occupied the area of lots 1 and 2 beginning in 1839, and the business was run by James Annett until 1855-56, when he died (Brooklyn Directory). It was called the Union Coal Yard. Annett did not live in any of the buildings on the premises of the coal yard but on the west side of Adams Street, at number 55. Samuel A. Dodge bought the property at 89 Adams Street in 1852 (lot 1, tax assessments). He appears in the 1865-66 directory as "S.A. Dodge Coal h224 Gates" ("h" for home). But lot 2, on which the rest of the coal yard was sited, was purchased by David S. Hammond in 1866. We do not know then how long, if at all, the coal yard continued in operation after Annett's death.

In 1855, Lot 2 was essentially vacant, save for a small building at the eastern end of the lot, possibly a shed, and was still vacant in 1869 (Dripps map, fig. 8). Now, however, there are new buildings on the corner and at the eastern end of lot 1. The buildings shown on the 1855 Perris map apparently no longer existed. The 1866 tax assessments, the first available, record three buildings of three stories on lot 1. These correspond to the buildings shown on the 1887 Sanborn map (fig. 9). The 1875-78 tax assessments provide the dimensions of these brick buildings: 22 by 25 feet, 22 by 20 feet and 22 by 20 feet. The area between the corner building and the other two, which are semi-detached, was sometimes occupied by one-story sheds or stables (fig. 9) or left vacant (fig. 11, 12, 13).

There are two sewer permits for buildings on lot 1 dated 1869.

These three buildings, erected in 1860s, are still standing on lot 1. The corner building is the Between the Bridges Bar, at 63 York Street; its restaurant is next door, in a one-story building at 67 York Street, and the other two three-story buildings at 71 and 73 York Street are used as residences. According to the bartender and a patron, questioned separately, all of these buildings contain basements.

Only approximately 16.25 feet at the eastern end of lot 1, seems never to have been built upon.

The evidence indicates that lot 1 and the buildings on it were part of a coal yard containing storage and office areas that was developed in the 1860s for housing. The brick buildings were connected to the sewer system within a few years of their construction.

Lot 2 was the yard of the Union coal yard. John Davol purchased the lot in 1870. In from 1875 to 1882, it contained a wood yard and offices (tax assessments). The Brooklyn Brass and Copper Company is listed as the owner from 1882 until at least 1898. Between 1877 and 1886, the property

on lot 2 was connected to the sewer system.¹ The 1882 tax assessments record one, two-story building on the property. Between 1893 and 1904, a one-story shed was built on the east end of the lot (figs. 11 and 14). This was replaced less than four years later. Between 1908 and 1912, a new wing, 22 feet 4 inches wide by 75 feet long approximately doubled the area of the old structure at 87 Adams Street, and the rear portion of the building also doubled in size, to cover the entire lot (figs. 12 and 13). The 1912 and 1920 Hyde maps indicate that the building was still being used as a foundry (figs. 13 and 15). We are unable to determine how the building shown on the 1920 Hyde map was modified to create the structure shown on the 1929 Hyde maps (fig. 16), but the configuration of the latter is comparable to that shown on subsequent maps, and to the building that stands on lot 2 today. A certificate of occupancy from 1945 states that building was still a factory.

Currently, the 85/87 Adams Street is owned by the Excalibur Bronze Sculpture Foundry. The 46.4 by 75 foot building has a basement, but the one-story addition at its eastern end does not.²

Lot 32, 75/77 York Street, was vacant in 1855, but does not appear to have been part of the Union Coal Yard. It was still vacant in 1869. There are no tax assessments for any property on York Street on this block before 1882, although a property on lot 32 was connected to the sewer system in 1873. The 1880 Bromley map shows a frame building occupying most of the lot (fig. 10). In 1887, this one story building was expanded to cover the entire lot. It was a hay, straw, & feed store (fig. 9). In 1904 the same structure, still shown as a frame building, became the Ajax Iron & Wire Co. (Fig. 14); in 1912, it was the Atlas Iron & Metal Works (fig. 13). The structure was torn down between 1929 and 1938 (figs. 16 and 17).

Between 1938 and 1950, a new one-story building was erected directly behind the building at 87/85 Adams Street, measuring approximately 26 by 47 feet (figs. 17 and 18). This building still stands. The rest of the lot is vacant and is being used for storage.

¹ The sewer permit book has not survived. We thank Dina Lokshina, the Engineer in Charge, for providing this estimate of the time period involved.

² I am indebted to Rachel Gold, Vice President of the company, for showing me the building on July 15, 2001.

III. CONCLUSIONS

In the decades preceding their connection to the city sewer system in the 1860s to 1870s, the properties on the lots comprising the potential redevelopment site were either vacant (lot 32) or occupied by a coal yard (lots 1 and 2) or a wood yard (lot 2), with offices. It can be demonstrated that the owner of the coal yard in the 1840s to 1855 did not reside on the site and therefore any potential yard features such as privies or cisterns would not be associated with a domestic context. Nor would the yards possess industrial archaeological features of historical significance. Save for a 25 foot deep, one-story addition without a basement at the eastern end of the Excalibur foundry (lot 2), and an approximately 16.25 foot wide unbuilt portion at the eastern end of lot 1, the rest of these lots are presently covered by buildings with basements which would in any case have destroyed any potential archaeological remains. There is no evidence that Lot 32 was developed before the 1860s or early 1870s, at which time the building was connected to the sewer system. It was a store and later an iron works. The equipment and installations connected with the iron works would have been removed when the building was torn down in the 1930s.

In view of the above, the potential redevelopment site on lots 1, 2, and 32 is not considered archaeologically sensitive.

IV. SUPPLEMENTARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

Sanborn

- 1887 *Insurance Maps of the Borough of Brooklyn*, vol. 2, pl. 32.
- 1904 *Insurance Maps of the Borough of Brooklyn*, vol. 2, pl. 15.
- 1938 *Insurance Maps of the Borough of Brooklyn*, vol. 2, pl. 15.
- 1950 *Insurance Maps of the Borough of Brooklyn*, vol. 2, pl. 15.
- 1980 *Insurance Maps of the Borough of Brooklyn*, vol. 2, pl. 15.

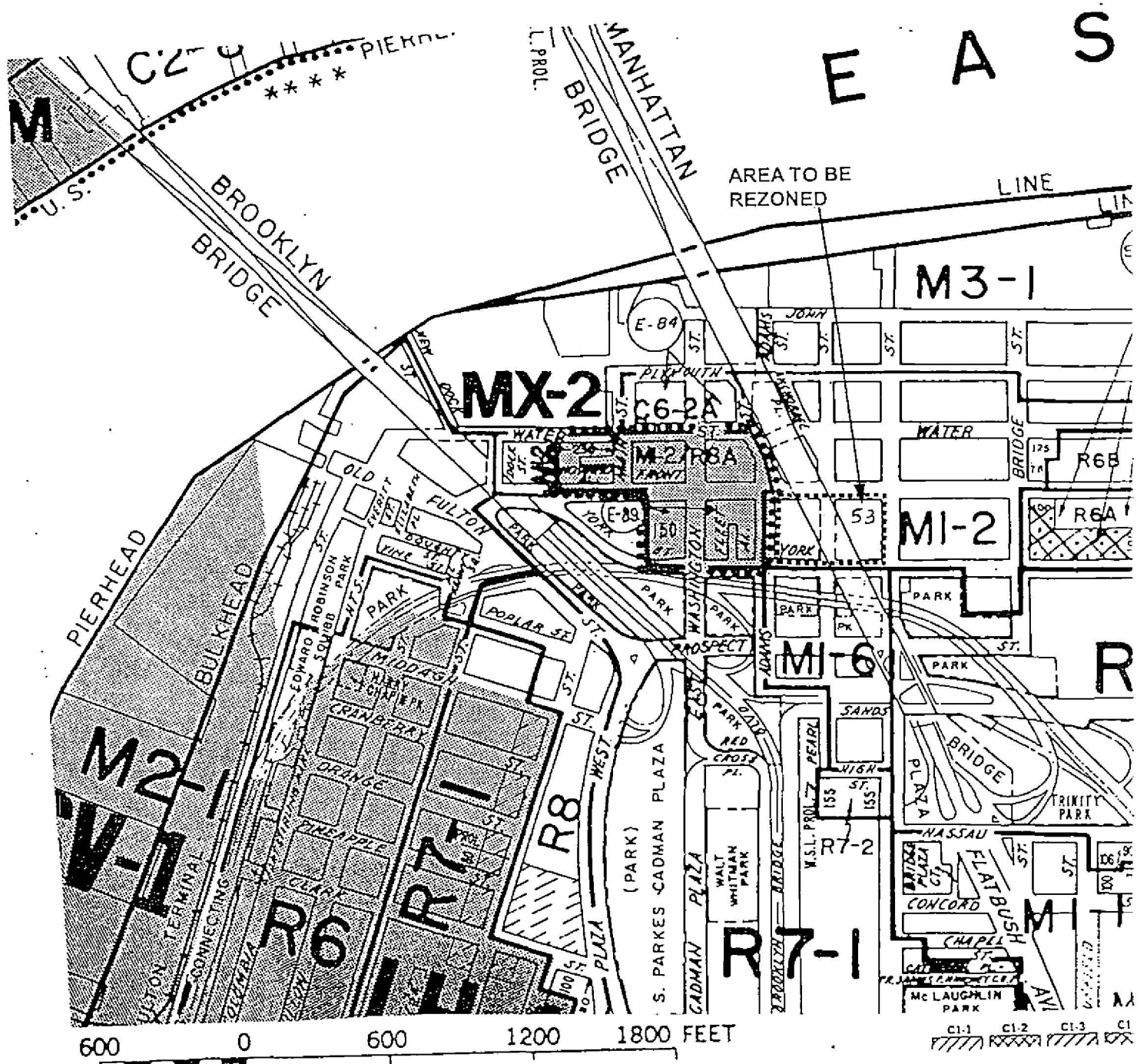


Fig. 1. Zoning map showing the location of the potential redevelopment site (Light Bridges at 100 Jay Street Rezoning Environmental Assessment Statement, Philip Habib & Associates, fig. 3).



Fig. 3. View of lots 2 and 1 from the corner of York and Adams Streets looking northeast.

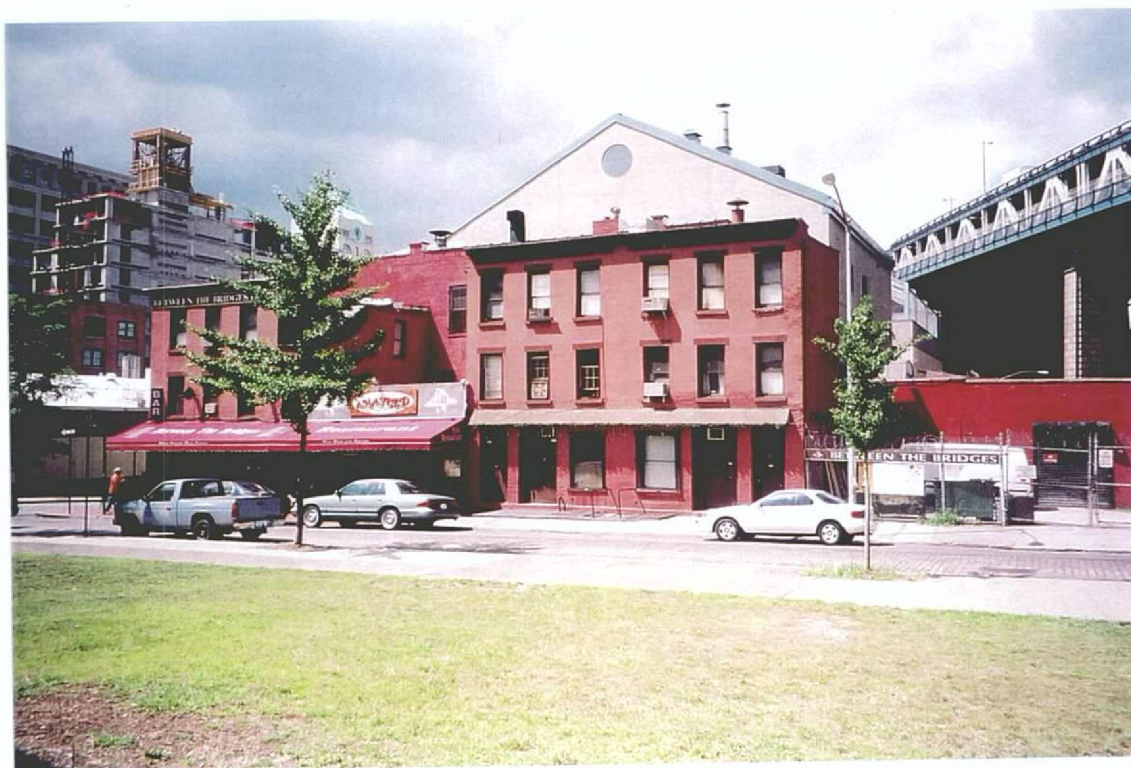


Fig. 4 View of lots 1 and 32 looking north.



Fig. 5. View of lots 32, 1, and 2 looking northwest along York Street.



Fig. 6. View of lot 32 (right) and the east end of lots 1 and 2, looking north.

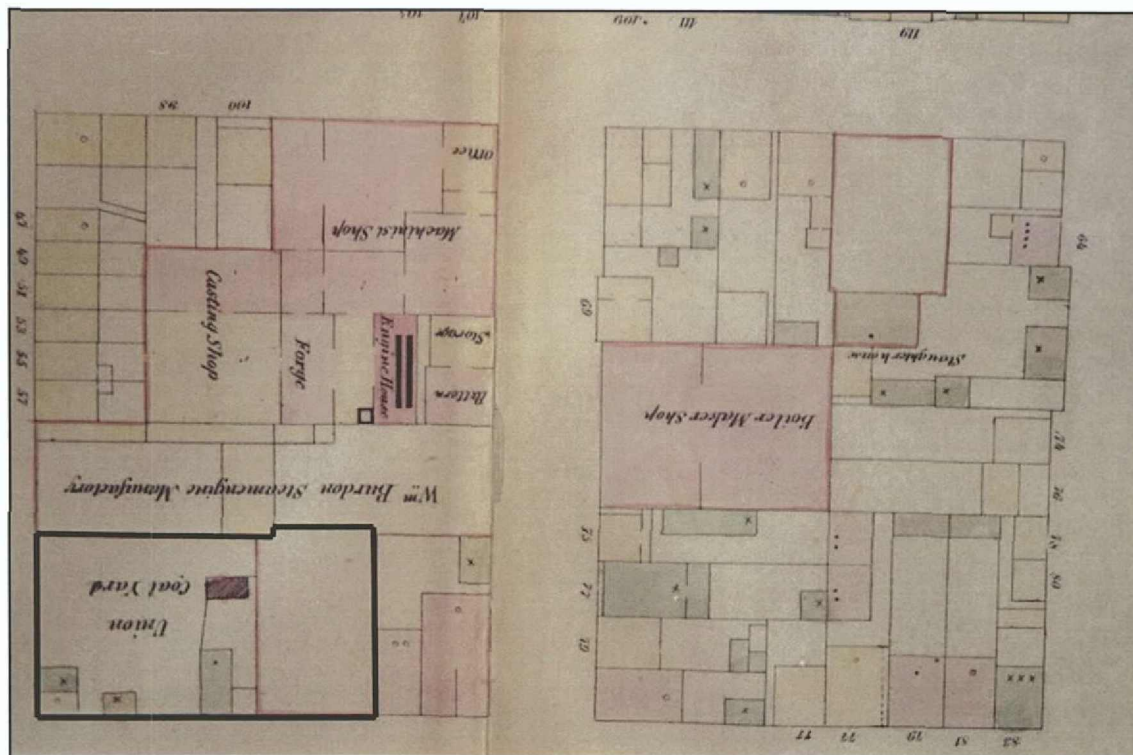


Fig. 7. 1855 Perris map showing the location of the potential redevelopment site.



Fig. 8. 1869 Dripps map showing the location of the potential redevelopment site.

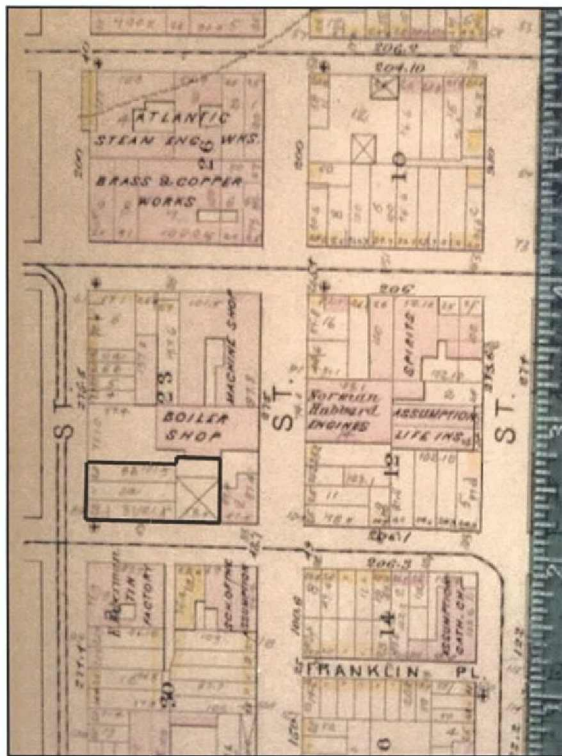


Fig. 10. 1880 Bromley map showing the location of the potential redevelopment site



Fig. 11. 1893 Bromley map showing the location of the potential redevelopment site

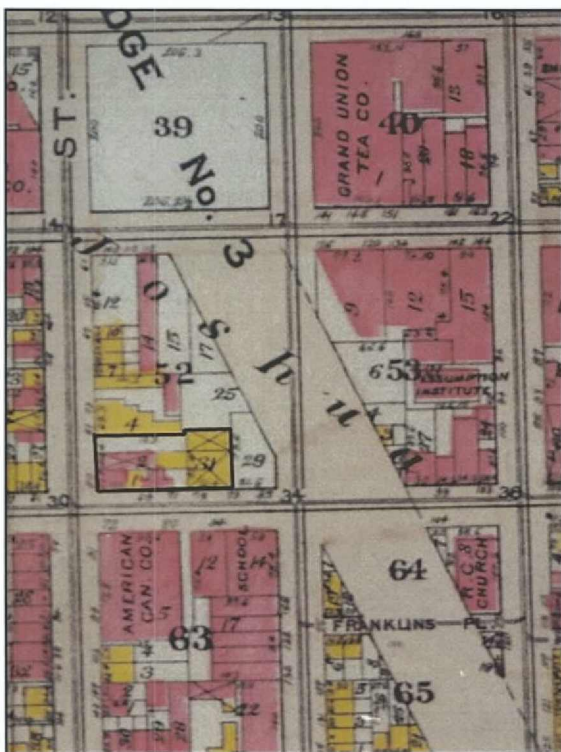


Fig. 12. 1908 Bromley map showing the location of the potential redevelopment site.

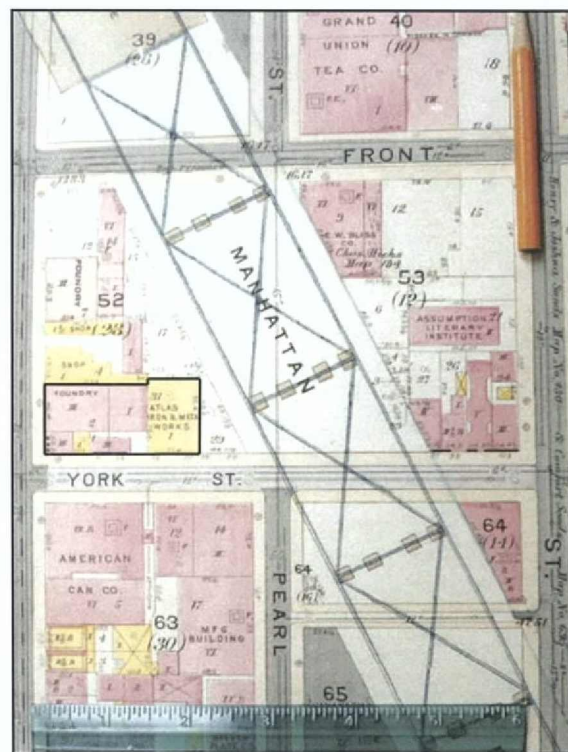


Fig. 13. 1912 Hyde map showing the location of the potential redevelopment site

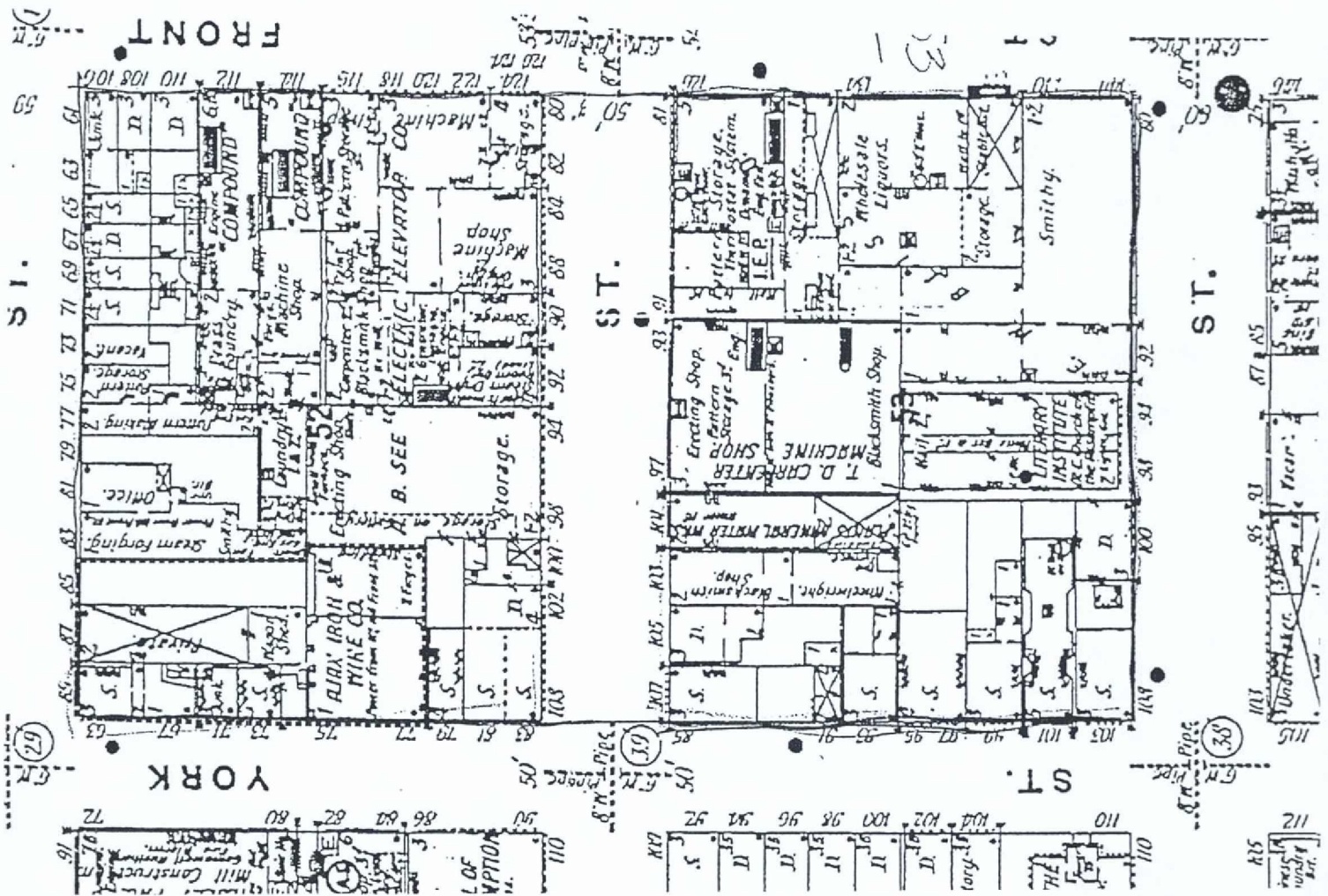


Fig. 14. 1904 Sanborn map showing the location of the potential redevelopment site.

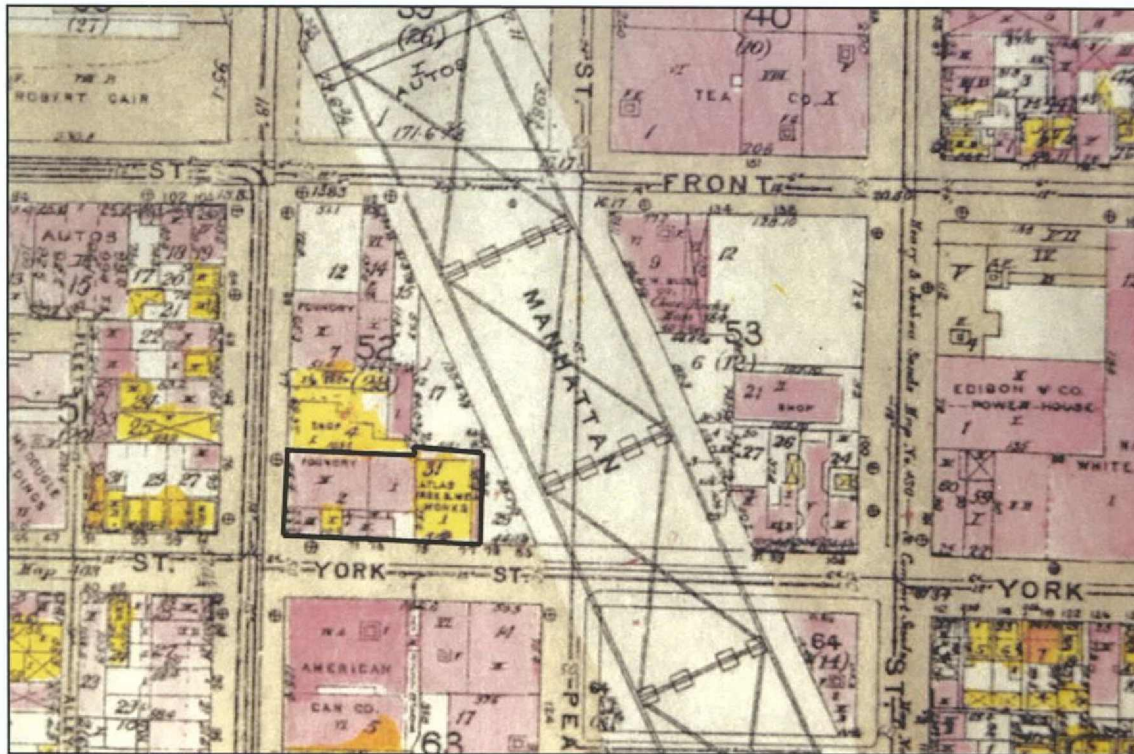


Fig. 15. 1920 Hyde map showing the location of the potential redevelopment site.

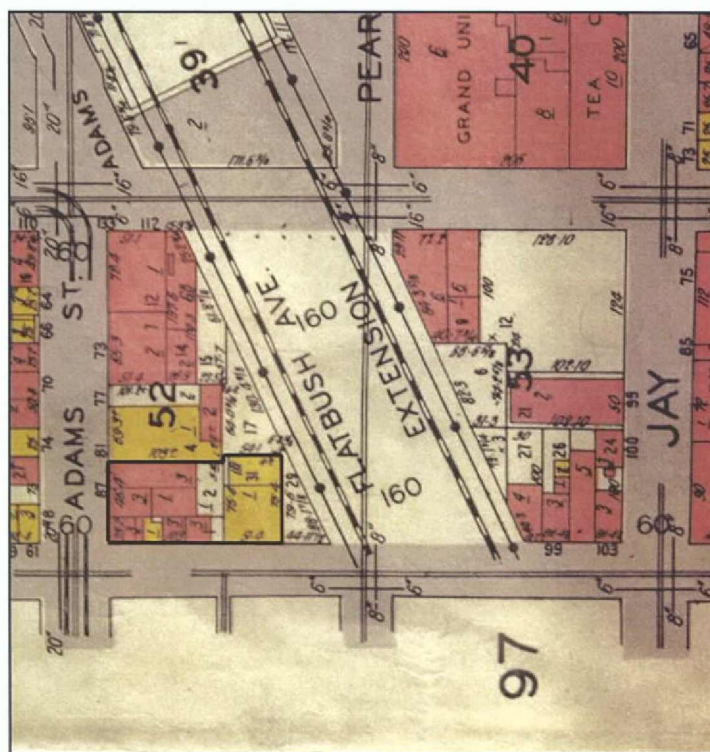


Fig. 16. 1929 Hyde map showing the location of the potential redevelopment site.

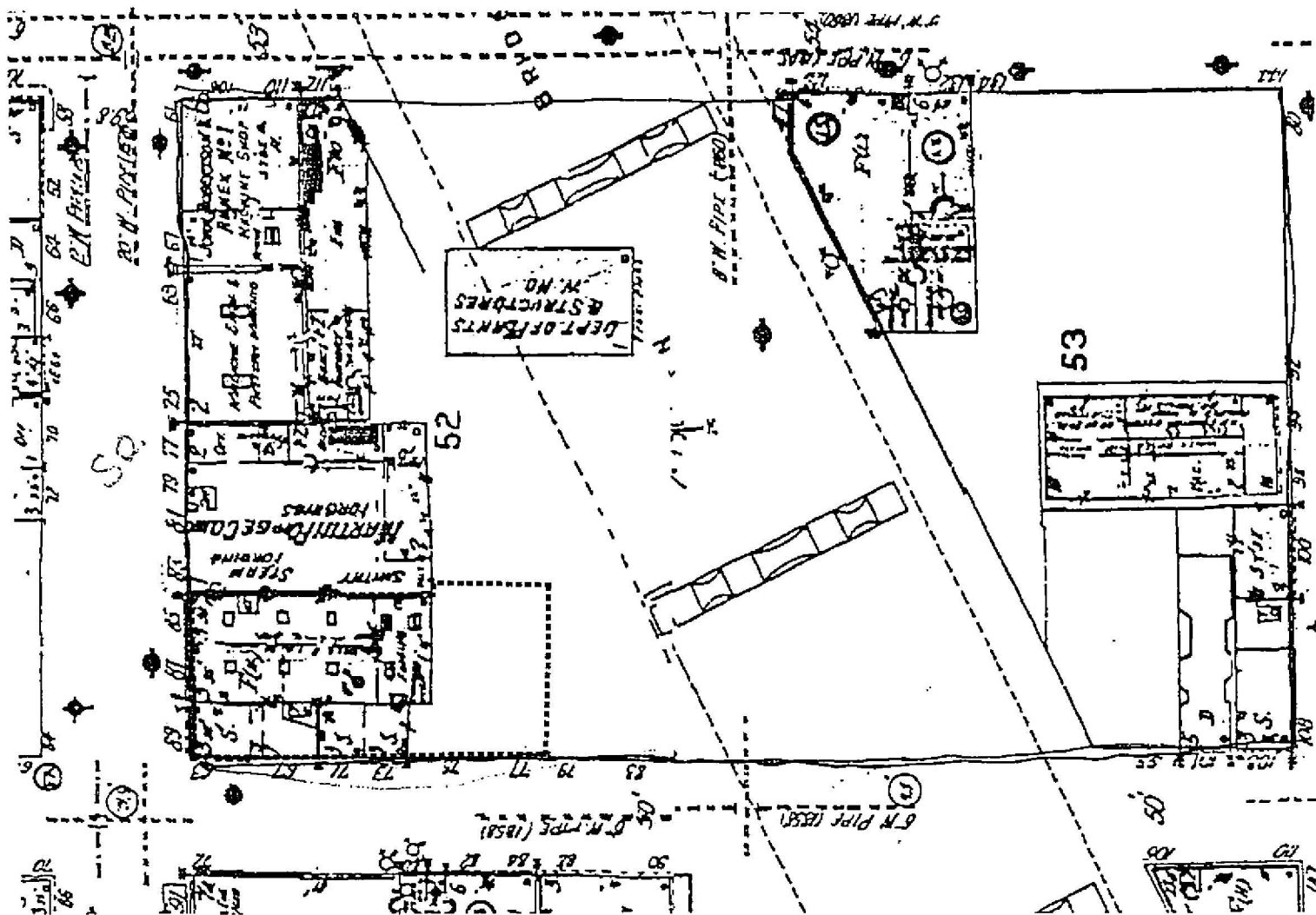


Fig. 17. 1938 Sanborn map showing the location of the potential redevelopment site.

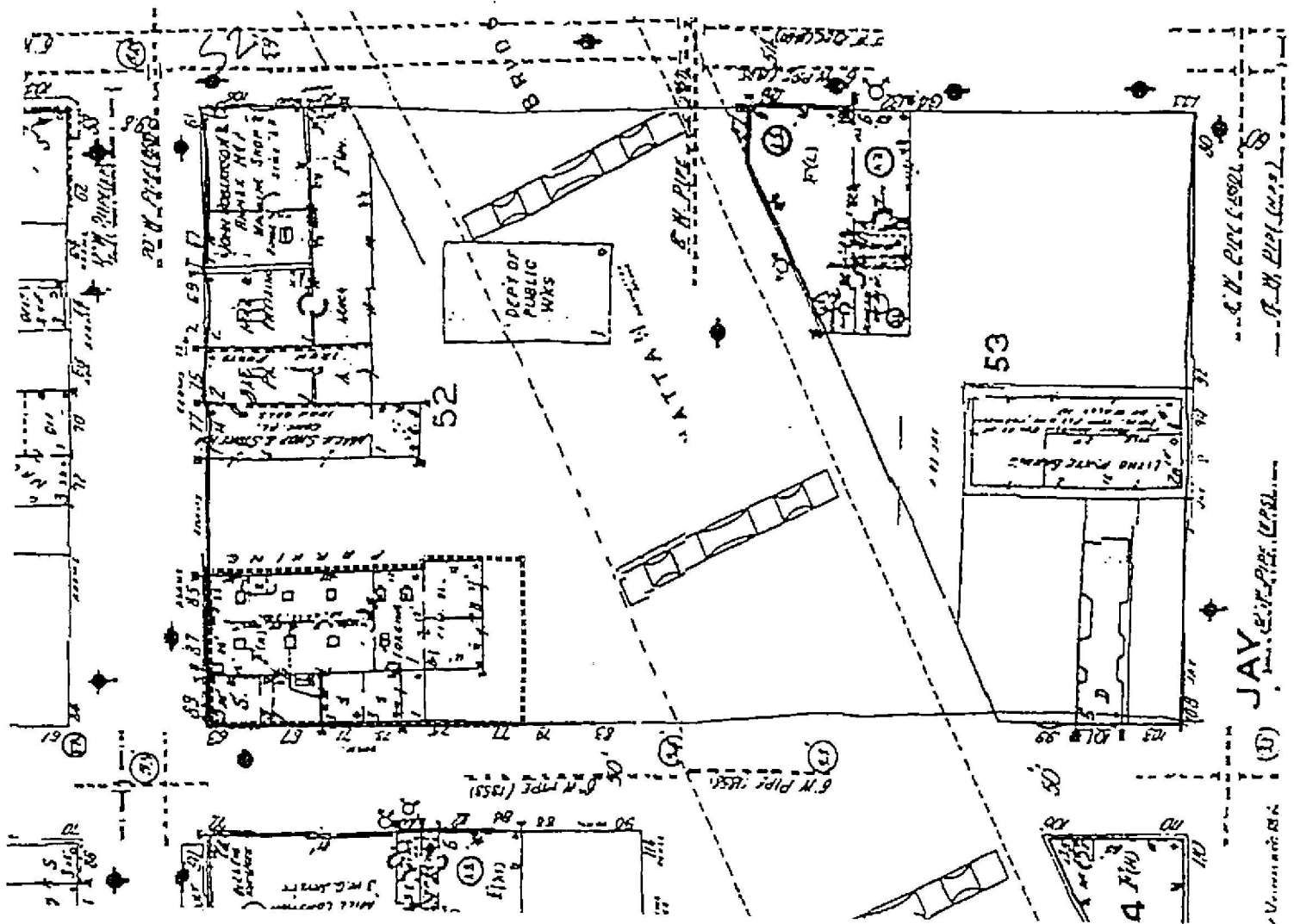


Fig. 18. 1950 Sanborn map showing the location of the potential redevelopment site.

