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1990

LORIMER/MIDDLETON STREETS REZONING
BLOCK 2240
BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

CEQR #89-116K

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OCTOBER 1990

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LORIMER/MIDDLETON STREETS REZONING CEQR #89-116K

INTRODUCTION

The following historical study of the Lorimer Street Rezoning project was conducted due to the concern of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) for the potential survival of historic nineteenth century cultural resources. According to the established LPC standards this potential exists if a property has had an occupation of twenty years or longer during the nineteenth century by one family or homogeneous group during the time when water and sewer services were introduced. Historic significance may also be established based on other criteria, such as architectural design or occupation by a person important to local history or relationship to a specific historical event.

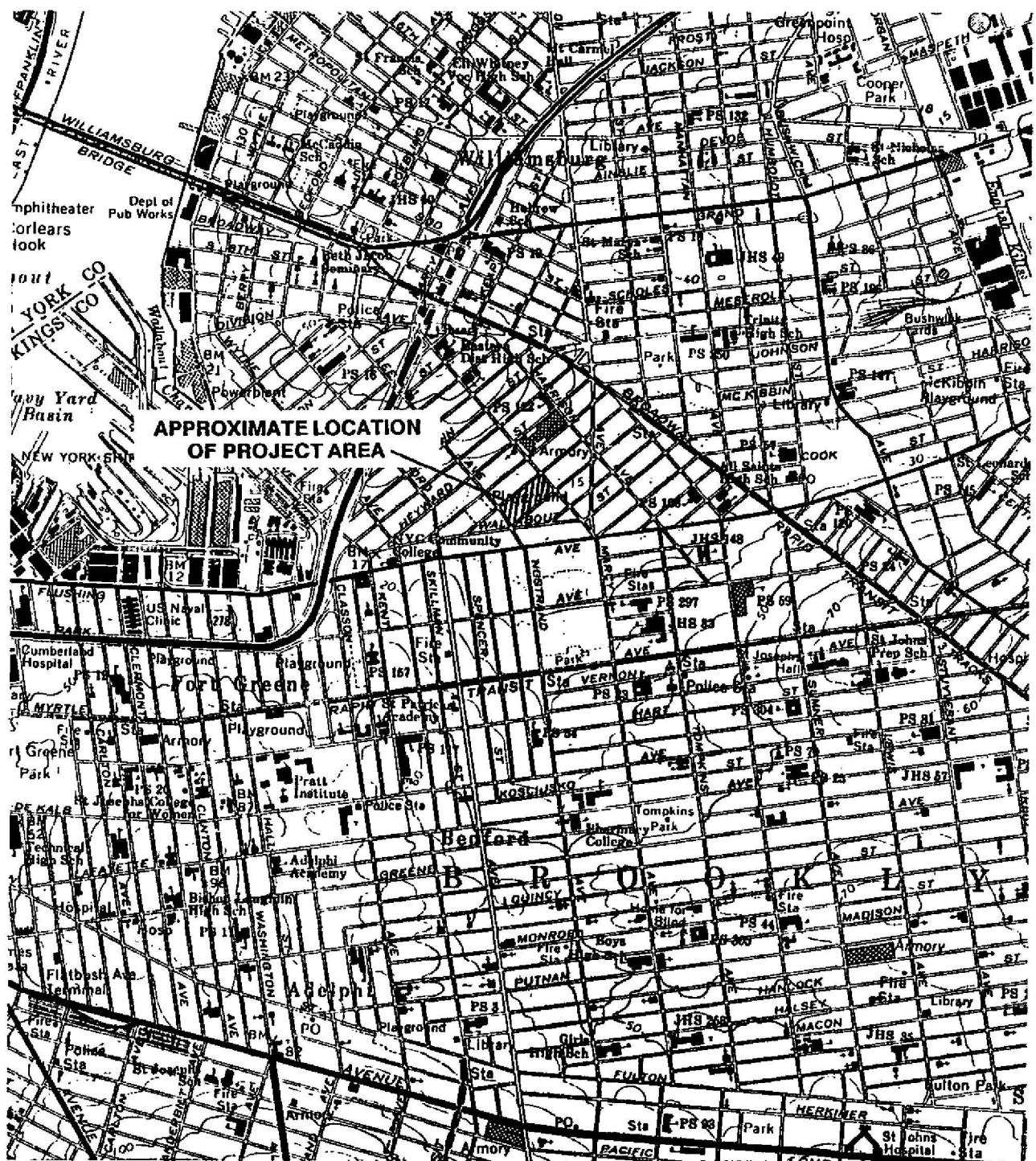
The project area, also known as Brooklyn Block 2240, is located in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. It is bounded by Lorimer Street to the south, Lee Avenue to the west, Middleton Street to the north and Marcy Avenue to the east. See Figure 1 for the project area location. Figure 2 depicts the current lot designations.

PHYSICAL SETTING

During October 1990 the Lorimer/Middleton Streets project area was visited by Greenhouse Consultants. Block 2240 is a long rectangular block. The majority of the lots facing Lorimer and Middleton Street are approximately sixteen to seventeen feet wide by one-hundred feet long. All of these lots facing Lorimer Street are vacant as are ten of the twenty-six lots facing Middleton Street. There is one 65 foot wide warehouse structure and one 50 foot wide bus garage facing Middleton Street while the remainder of the lots are occupied by two and one-half story residences. The eight lots facing Marcy Avenue are all approximately 25 by 80 feet in size and are occupied by more residences. The Lee Avenue end of the block includes three large lots all occupied by manufacturers and warehouses. Nearly all the vacant lots along Lorimer Street have had all of the foundations and destruction rubble from the previously existing buildings removed. The block is largely flat although the Middleton Street side appears slightly higher with a gentle slope from Lorimer Street.

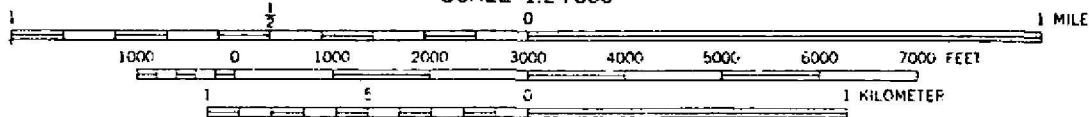
HISTORIC SENSITIVITY

As part of the property evaluation process, this historic sensitivity study has surveyed published and unpublished sources located at the Main Research Branch of the New York Public Library and the Brooklyn Historical Society. In addition, primary resources housed at the Brooklyn Register's Office, the Brooklyn Sewer Department and the New York City Department of Water Supply were also surveyed.



APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF PROJECT AREA

SCALE 1:24 000

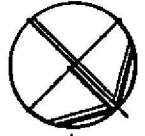


CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET

Figure 1

Location of the project area shown on U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute series, Brooklyn, New York Quadrangle, 1967, photorevised 1979.

LEE AVE.



MIDDLETON

755'	262'	52	48	794
156.00'	1392	5	9	794
		Warehouse bldg.	11	69
		Warehouse bldg.	12	16
		owned by	13	16
		applicant	14	16
100	173	71 Vacant Lot	15	16
100	170	70 Vacant Lot	16	16
535	467	69 Vacant Lot	17	16
100	172	68 Vacant Lot	18	16
17	17	67 Vacant Lot	19	16
16	16	66 Vacant Lot	20	16
16	16	65 Vacant Lot	21	16
16	16	64 Vacant Lot	22	16
15	15	63 Vacant Lot	23	16
15	15	62 Vacant Lot	24	16
15	15	61 Vacant Lot	25	16
15	15	60 Vacant Lot	26	16
15	15	59 Vacant Lot	27	16
15	15	58 Vacant Lot	28	16
15	15	57 Vacant Lot	29	16
15	15	56 Vacant Lot	30	16
15	15	55 Vacant Lot	31	16
15	15	54 Vacant Lot	32	16
15	15	53 Vacant Lot	33	16
15	15	52 Vacant Lot	34	16
15	15	51 Vacant Lot	35	16
15	15	50 Vacant Lot	36	16
15	15	49 Vacant Lot	37	16
15	15	48 Vacant Lot	38	16
100	100	47 Vacant Lot	39	16
7210	793		40	808
	797		41	803
	791		42	797
	783		43	793
	780		44	780
	776		45	776
	782		46	782
	770		47	770

LORIMER

ST.

MARCY AVE.

Approximate Scale
72 feet = one inch

Figure 2
Current conditions Block and Lot map of the Lorimer/Middleton Street Rezoning.



The first undertaking of this project was to determine what the property was used for during the nineteenth century and who the owners of it were. The project parcel was likely used as a farm during the early to middle nineteenth century. Beers' Farm Line Map depicts Block 2240 as part of General Jeremiah Johnson's property (1874). General Johnson was a political leader in his time. He was mayor of Brooklyn from 1837 to 1839 (Custer 1911:19). His residence was at the Wallabout (Weld 1938:7). The property was in the Johnson family from 1831 to 1853, when it was deeded to the City of Brooklyn (Brooklyn Historical Society Block Files).

In 1860 the sheriff deeded the block in three parcels. The portion containing the current Lot 1 was deeded to James L. Truslow. The section of the block containing Lots 6-38 and 47-72 went to Valentine G. Hall and the remaining part, Lots 39-46, went to Sarah Onderdonk (ibid.). These three people and their family members would be the only owners to have parts of the project area for twenty years or longer prior to the introduction of the sewer or water service in the nineteenth century (ibid.). The Truslow heirs sold their property in 1903. The Onderdonks sold their in 1885. The Hall heirs retained the property until the early twentieth century. Various lots were then generally sold off individually or in pairs.

Nineteenth century directories were consulted to confirm the addresses and occupations of Truslow, Onderdonk and Hall. None of these people were listed in the 1865/66 directory (Lain 1865). A James L. Truslow was listed in the 1869/70 as being in the cork business. Both his residence and business address were in Manhattan (Lain 1869:662). Both a James L. and James L. Jr. Truslow were listed in the directories for the rest of the nineteenth century. Each had business and residence addresses outside of the project area. Their occupations were corks, whitening or whitening (Lain 1879, 1885, 1890). No connection was made between these Truslows and the project parcel owner. Valentine G. Hall is listed as a real estate agent in Brooklyn with a Manhattan residence (Lain 1875:361, 1879:408). This is likely the same man who owned a substantial portion of the project area. One can assume that he rented out the property he owned on Block 2240. None of the directories consulted had a listing for Sarah or Horatio Onderdonk (Curtin 1872; Lain 1865, 1869, 1875, 1878, 1879, 1885, 1890). Lain's Elite Directory which lists residents by street address was also consulted for Block 2240. This directory began publication in 1877. There were no listings for the project parcel (Lain 1877, 1880, 1885, 1890, 1891).

Dripps' 1869 Map of the City of Brooklyn provides quite a detailed view of the project area vicinity. It shows no buildings within Block 2240. This map also depicts Lorimer Street with the appellation Gwinnett Street, as it was labelled on all nineteenth century maps. Bromley's 1880 Atlas provides the next detailed chronological depiction of the project parcel. It shows frame buildings throughout most of the Block, Lots 11-38 and 47-71 along Gwinnett and Middleton Streets. Sewer service was originally installed on this portion of Block 2240 in 1875 (Brooklyn Sewer Department). The water mains were available on Middleton Street in 1877. Because mains on Lorimer Street were replaced in 1935, the

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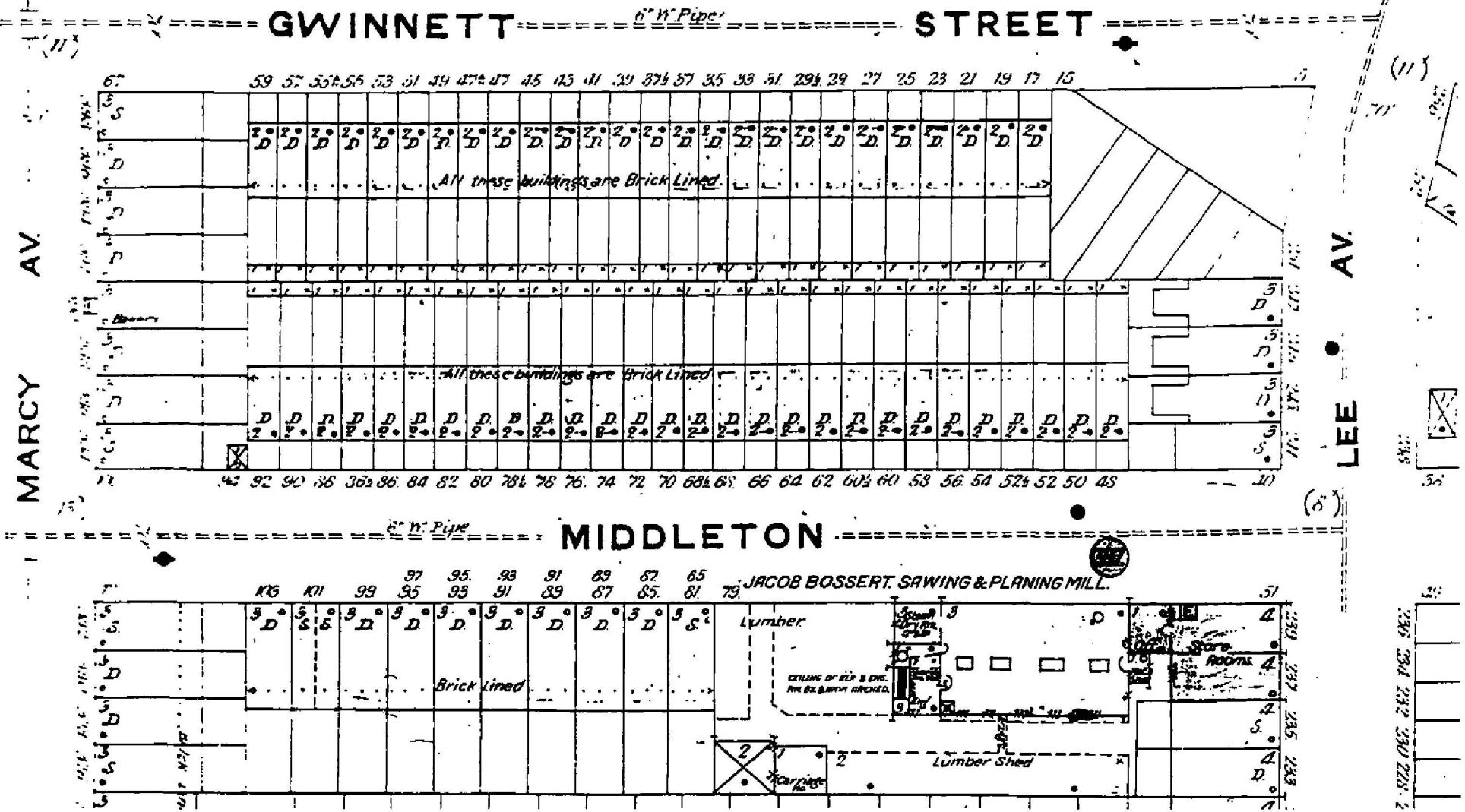
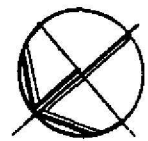


Figure 3 From Sanborn's 1887 Insurance Maps of Brooklyn.



installation date was obscured (DEP Bureau of Water Supply). However it is likely that water service was available on Lorimer Street around the same time as it was on Middleton Street. Since construction on Block 2240 occurred between 1869 and 1880, and utilities were available in 1875 and 1877, one may speculate that the structures depicted on Bromley's 1880 Atlas were built at about the same time water and sewer services became available. Robinson's 1886 Atlas depicts the same situation as Sanborn's 1887 Map (see Figure 3). All lots had dwellings on them except Lot 1. Outbuildings are depicted on all dwelling lots except for Lots 6-9 and 40-46. Lots 6-9 and 39-46 were constructed on between 1880 and 1886. No record of sewer data exist for Lots 6-9. Sewer service was installed on Lots 40-46 in 1885 (Brooklyn Sewer Department). Once again, one may speculate that the dwellings were constructed when sewer service became available and not before. The water mains to these lots were turned on no later than 1907 or 1909. It is possible that water service was available earlier and these twentieth century dates were when repairs or replacements were conducted (DEP Bureau of Water Supply). The last cartographic source of the nineteenth century which was consulted continues to depict the same situation as Figure 3 (Hyde 1898). The construction on Lot 1 was completed sometime between 1898 and 1904 (Sanborn 1904).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While it has been determined that the Lorimer/Middleton Streets project parcel, Block 2240, was owned in full or part for more than twenty years by four families during the nineteenth century, it has also been established that these people lived elsewhere. This is true in the cases of Johnson and Hall. It is likely in the case of Truslow, although the individual identified in the directories cannot be positively identified as the deed holder. No residency could be established for Onderdonk. No property renters could be identified. In addition, it is likely that the dwellings on Block 2240 were constructed simultaneously with the introduction of sewer and water services. It is our conclusion that the Lorimer Street project area has very low potential for the preservation of significant nineteenth century archaeological resources. We recommend that no archaeological field testing for such be conducted on Block 2240.



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