

HISTORICAL **PERSPECTIVES** INC.



Phase IA Archaeological Documentary Study Addendum

**2555 Shell Road Rezoning
Block 7192, Lot 65
Brooklyn, Kings County, NY 11223**

Department of City Planning / LA-CEQR-K

Phase IA Archaeological Documentary Study Addendum

**2555 Shell Road Rezoning
Block 7192, Lot 65
Brooklyn, Kings County, NY 11223**

Department of City Planning / LA-CEQR-K

Prepared For:

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December 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

New development is proposed in the Gravesend neighborhood of Brooklyn, Kings County, New York at 2555 Shell Road, Block 7192, Lots 1, 65, 68, and 74 (Figure 1). The development project requires a rezoning application which involves environmental review under CEQR by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC). An earlier iteration of this development project (then known as 2569 Shell Road) was smaller in extent, and included only Block 7192, Lots 1, 68, and 74. A Phase IA Historical Documentary and Archaeological Assessment Report was completed by Chrysalis Archaeological Consultants, Inc. in March 2020 for these three lots, as well as adjacent Lots 3 and 4 and parts of Lots 6 and 90, which were included in the overall rezoning project area but which are not slated for development. That report concluded that there was potential for Indigenous and nineteenth-century archaeological resources on Lots 1, 68 and 74 if there had not been significant disturbance to the original landform. The degree of landfilling on the lots was unknown at the time that the report was completed, and Chrysalis recommended review of future soil borings to confirm the amount of landfill and potential intact soil horizons prior to any archaeological testing on the lots. The report was submitted to and accepted by LPC at that time.

In June 2023 the updated project was submitted to LPC for review. LPC responded that Block 7192, Lot 65 should be added to the archaeological assessment for the project (Santucci 2023). Lot 65 is bounded by Bouck Court on the south, Shell Road on the west, and privately owned lots on Block 7192 on the north and east (Figures 1 and 2). Lot 65 contains an active bowling facility that covers the entire footprint of the lot. In 2024, Historical Perspectives, Inc. (HPI) was contracted by the project sponsors to fulfill the LPC requirement for archaeological review of Lot 65.

This report, addressing the Lot 65 archaeological potential, constitutes a Phase IA Archaeological Documentary Study Addendum to the 2020 Chrysalis archaeological study. This Phase IA Archaeological Documentary Study Addendum has been prepared to satisfy the requirements of CEQR and to comply with the standards of the LPC (LPC 2018; CEQR 2021).

In its pre-development condition, the Lot 65 project site was largely covered by tidal marshlands, with only the northeast corner of the property on firm ground. The project site remained undeveloped until the 1880s, when a short-lived railroad alignment was constructed running diagonally through the lot. The project site was not fully landfilled until after the mid-1920s. The current bowling alley building on Lot 65 was constructed in 1960, covering the entire lot footprint.

The main entrance of the Lot 65 building is at the same elevation as the adjoining sidewalk, which itself is several inches above the Bouck Court roadway. The top of the lower level floor is approximately 3-4 feet below the sidewalk level, and as described above, the base of the building's foundation and pilings extend at least several feet below that elevation. Given the depth of the building's lower floor and foundations, it appears that the original landform would have been substantially disturbed during preparation for and construction of the building.

The degree of disturbance to the Lot 65 project site from construction of the subgrade portions of the bowling facility appears to have destroyed any potential earlier land surfaces that could have supported Indigenous occupation or use, including within the former tidal marshlands. HPI concludes that there is no Indigenous period archaeological sensitivity for the Lot 65 project site.

The Lot 65 project site was undeveloped until the 1880s, when the railroad alignment was constructed along the tidal marshland border. There was no other historic period development on the property, and given the degree of disturbance described above, it does not appear that any potential historic archaeological resources associated with adjacent lots could have survived on the property. The existing bowling facility was not constructed until 1960. Based on these factors, HPI concludes that there is no historic period archaeological sensitivity for the Lot 65 project site.

Based on the conclusions outlined above, HPI recommends that no additional archaeological studies are warranted for the Lot 65 project site.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ii
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. METHODOLOGY	1
III. CURRENT CONDITIONS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING	1
A. CURRENT CONDITIONS	1
B. TOPOGRAPHY AND HYDROLOGY	2
C. SOILS	2
IV. HISTORIC PERIOD SUMMARY	2
V. CONCLUSIONS.....	3
VI. RECOMMENDATIONS	4
VII. REFERENCES	5

FIGURES

PHOTOGRAPHS

FIGURES

1. Overall project site on New York City tax map. Lot 65 is the southernmost lot.
2. Lot 65 project site on *Coney Island, New York-New Jersey 7.5 Minute Quadrangle* (U.S.G.S. 2023).
3. Lot 65 project site first floor building layout and photograph locations.
4. Lot 65 project site on web soil survey (U.S.D.A. 2024).
5. Lot 65 project site on *From Fort Hamilton to Coney Island, New York* (U.S.C.S. 1835).
6. Lot 65 project site on *Map of Kings and Part of Queens Counties, Long Island, N.Y.* (Conner 1852).
7. Lot 65 project site on *Coney Island and Dead Horse Inlet, New York* (U.S.C.S. 1855-6).
8. Lot 65 project site on *Atlas of Long Island, New York* (Beers 1873).
9. Lot 65 project site on *Atlas of Kings County New York* (Robinson 1890).
10. Lot 65 project site on *Insurance Maps of the Borough of Brooklyn, City of New York* (Sanborn 1906).
11. Lot 65 project site on *Atlas of the Borough of Brooklyn, City of New York* (Bromley 1907).
12. Lot 65 project site on *Sectional Aerial Maps of the City of New York* (Bureau of Engineering 1924).
13. Lot 65 project site on *Insurance Maps of the Borough of Brooklyn, City of New York* (Sanborn 1930).
14. Lot 65 project site on *Insurance Maps of the Borough of Brooklyn, City of New York* (Sanborn 1951).
15. Lot 65 project site on 1951 aerial photograph (NYCityMap).

PHOTOGRAPHS
(see Figure 3 for locations)

1. The Lot 65 project site containing the Bowl 360 facility. View looking northeast from the intersection of Shell Road and Bouck Court.
2. Detail of the Lot 65 Bowl 360 facility Shell Road emergency exit door on the right, at the sidewalk level. View looking east from Shell Road.
3. The main entrance to the Lot 65 Bowl 360 facility on Bouck Court. View looking north.
4. Detail of the Lot 65 Bowl 360 facility entrances on Bouck Court. The main entrance is in the left background and an emergency exit door is in the left center. View looking northwest.
5. A view of the first floor bowling lanes, as seen from the mezzanine level. View looking west.
6. A view of the first floor of the bowling facility. The stairs leading to the Bouck Court street level at the main entrance are in the far background. View looking south.
7. The main entrance of the Lot 65 Bowl 360 facility from the interior looking south toward Bouck Court. The car in the background is at the street level and the floor in the foreground is the first floor level of the bowling facility.
8. The main entrance of the Lot 65 Bowl 360 facility from the interior looking up the stairs to the mezzanine level. The first floor bowling lanes are in the background. View looking west.
9. The emergency exit stairs leading to the Bouck Court street level from the first floor. View looking southeast.
10. The emergency exit stairs leading to the Shell Road street level from the first floor. View looking west.

I. INTRODUCTION

New development is proposed in the Gravesend neighborhood of Brooklyn, Kings County, New York at 2555 Shell Road, Block 7192, Lots 1, 65, 68, and 74 (Figure 1). The development project requires a rezoning application which involves environmental review under CEQR by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC). An earlier iteration of this development project (then known as 2569 Shell Road) was smaller in extent, and included only Block 7192, Lots 1, 68, and 74. A Phase IA Historical Documentary and Archaeological Assessment Report was completed by Chrysalis Archaeological Consultants, Inc. in March 2020 for these three lots, as well as adjacent Lots 3 and 4 and parts of Lots 6 and 90, which were included in the overall rezoning project area but which are not slated for development. That report concluded that there was potential for Indigenous and nineteenth-century archaeological resources on Lots 1, 68 and 74 if there had not been significant disturbance to the original landform. The degree of landfilling on the lots was unknown at the time that the report was completed, and Chrysalis recommended review of future soil borings to confirm the amount of landfill and potential intact soil horizons prior to any archaeological testing on the lots. The report was submitted to and accepted by LPC at that time.

In June 2023 the updated project was submitted to LPC for review. LPC responded that Block 7192, Lot 65 should be added to the archaeological assessment for the project (Santucci 2023). Lot 65 is bounded by Bouck Court on the south, Shell Road on the west, and privately owned lots on Block 7192 on the north and east (Figures 1 and 2). Lot 65 contains an active bowling facility that covers the entire footprint of the lot. In 2024, Historical Perspectives, Inc. (HPI) was contracted by the project sponsors to fulfill the LPC requirement for archaeological review of Lot 65.

This report, addressing the Lot 65 archaeological potential, constitutes a Phase IA Archaeological Documentary Study Addendum to the 2020 Chrysalis archaeological study. This Phase IA Archaeological Documentary Study Addendum has been prepared to satisfy the requirements of CEQR and to comply with the standards of the LPC (LPC 2018; CEQR 2021). The HPI project team consisted of Julie Abell Horn, M.A., R.P.A., who conducted research and wrote the report and Rosita Tirado, R.A., who conducted the site visit. The Area of Potential Effect (APE) is the area that could be affected by potential project development. For this study the APE for the property is the same as the project site, and includes the entirety of Lot 65.

II. METHODOLOGY

As will be described below, the Lot 65 project site location was largely covered by tidal marshland until the twentieth century and was not developed with any structures until the present bowling facility was constructed in 1960. As such, the methodology for this study focused on documenting the previous conditions on the property and the history of landfilling and building construction to ascertain past disturbance. Resources reviewed included historic maps and photographs, Department of Building records, and architectural plans. A site visit by HPI provided existing conditions photographs.

III. CURRENT CONDITIONS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

A. Current Conditions

The Lot 65 project site contains the Bowl 360 Brooklyn building, which is a bowling facility with an address at 1 Bouck Court. The building covers the entire Lot 65 footprint (Figure 3). The facility was constructed in 1960, according to Department of Building records and a Certificate of Occupancy. The building has frontages on Bouck Court to the south and Shell Road to the west, and borders privately owned lots on the interior of the block on the north and east (Photographs 1-4).

The bowling alley building has two floors. The lower level contains 32 bowling lanes, divided into two sets of 16, with associated automatic mechanical pinsetters at the rear of the lanes, and a common area with tables between the two sets of lanes (Photographs 5-6). The mezzanine level, which is in the center of the building and overlooks the bowling lanes, contains an eating and food service area. The lower level is accessed by a short flight of stairs totaling five steps leading down from the main entrance at the street level (Photograph 7). The mezzanine level is accessed by two short angled flights of stairs totaling 13 steps (Photograph 8). There are two emergency exits leading to the street level from the south and north sides of the building. On the south side, the emergency exit contains five steps leading from the lower level to the Bouck Court sidewalk at the street level (Photograph 9). On

the north side, the emergency exit contains five steps leading to the Shell Road sidewalk at the street level (Photograph 10). Given the height of the stairs leading to and from the lower level, the top of the lower level floor appears to be approximately 3-4 feet below the sidewalk level. The base of the lower level below the top of the floor and the depth of the building's foundations are unknown, but at a minimum it is expected that the building's lower level base extends several feet below the floor elevation, and any building pilings supporting the foundation would extend significantly deeper.

B. Topography and Hydrology

In its pre-development condition, the Lot 65 project site was largely covered by tidal marshland that surrounded Coney Island Creek, which prior to landfilling ran in a meandering course roughly west-east approximately 1500 feet south of the project site, and emptied into Sheepshead Bay. A small tributary of Coney Island Creek, known historically as Williamsons' Creek, was located to the southeast of the project site. Historic maps suggested that the northeastern corner of the Lot 65 project site may have been on firm ground immediately adjacent to the tidal marshland (U.S.C.S. 1835 [Figure 5], 1845, 1855-6 [Figure 7]; Conner 1852 [Figure 6]; Beers 1873 [Figure 8]; Bien and Vermeule 1891; U.S.G.S. 1891).

Determining the precise pre-development and current elevations of the Lot 65 project site poses some challenges. The only nineteenth-century historic map that indicated elevations merely showed that the project site was below the 10-foot contour line (Bien and Vermeule 1891). Given that the project site straddled tidal marshland, it is likely that elevations were only a few feet above sea level, at most. In the early twentieth century, prior to landfilling in the area and before Bouck Court was laid out, the 1906 Sanborn map (Figure 10) noted that the projected roadway of Avenue Y near Shell Road was 5 feet, while the projected intersection of Avenue Y and West Third Street was 6 feet. The intersection of Avenue X and Shell Road was 7.5 feet and the intersection of Avenue X and West Third Street was 8.5 feet. No vertical datum was given for the Sanborn maps.

Today, there are several elevations listed for the roadway of Bouck Court between Shell Road and West Third Street, just south of the Lot 65 project site. The Final Section Maps for Brooklyn indicate the elevation is 9.30 feet, using the Brooklyn Highway Datum, which is 2.56 feet above the U.S.C & G.S. Datum at Sandy Hook, New Jersey. The NYCityMap (using data from the Map Pluto database) indicates that the same location is at elevation 8.46 feet, using the NAVD 88 datum which is 1.447 feet below the Brooklyn Highway Datum. Comparing the 1906 elevations with the modern elevations suggests that several feet of landfill were added to the original landform to bring the area up to its present grade, although the precise amount is unclear.

D. Soils

According to the U.S.D.A. web soil survey (Figure 4), the majority of the Lot 65 project site is mapped as UmA—Urban land, tidal marsh substratum, 0 to 3 percent slopes. This soil group consists of introduced fill (urban land) over natural tidal marshland. The northeastern corner of the Lot 65 project site is mapped as UoA—Urban land, outwash substratum, 0 to 3 percent slopes. This soil group consists of introduced fill (urban land) over glacial outwash soils, such as gravelly sand.

No soil borings have been completed on the Lot 65 project site.

IV. HISTORIC PERIOD SUMMARY

The 2020 Chrysalis report presented a detailed history of the lots north of the Lot 65 project site. Much of that history also applies to the Lot 65 project site, and will not be repeated here. To summarize the Chrysalis findings, Shell Road was constructed in the 1820s, linking Gravesend with Coney Island. Through the nineteenth century, the Williamson family owned a large tract of farmland and tidal marshland on the east side of Shell Road and extending as far east as Ocean Parkway and Avenue Z, which included the Lot 65 project site. The 1852 Conner map (Figure 6) indicated that the Williamson holdings totaled 101 acres. The Williamson family home was located north of the project site on Village Road, but an unnamed building, sometimes attributed to the Williamson family, was shown on a number of historic maps, just north of the Lot 65 project site along the shoreline of the marshland (Sidney 1849; U.S.C.S. 1855-6 [Figure 7]; Conner 1852 [Figure 6]; Beers 1873 [Figure 8], 1886). All of the nineteenth-

century historic maps showed that the majority of the Lot 65 project site was within tidal marshland, with only the northeastern corner of the project site on firm ground. None of the historic maps showed any buildings on the Lot 65 project site.

There was a short-lived transportation resource on the Lot 65 project site in the 1880s and 1890s. A branch of the Sea Beach and Brighton Railroad ran from 86th Street near Avenue W to Brighton Beach, with the route crossing northwest-southeast through the Lot 65 project site along the approximate edge of the tidal marshland (Bien and Vermeule 1891). The line only operated for one year, from 1880-1881. In 1886, the defunct line was leased by the New York and Sea Beach (NY&SB) Railroad, although the line was never reactivated. Rather, the route was used as the experimental Boynton Bicycle Railroad, an early monorail, from 1890-1892 (Feinman n.d., Huneke 2021). The route was abandoned after that time, although the easement for the railroad still appeared on historic maps through the 1910s (Sanborn 1906 [Figure 10]; Bromley 1907 [Figure 11]; Hyde 1907, 1916-1920).

Despite the fact that a city street grid, with blocks and lots including the Lot 65 project site, was projected on historic maps as early as the 1890s, aerial photographs showed that as late as the mid-1920s, the tidal marshland was still present surrounding the creek in this area and the project site remained undeveloped (Bureau of Engineering 1924, Figure 12). The aerial photograph also showed slight visual remains of the former railroad alignment that ran through the Lot 65 project site. The landfilling of the tidal marshland occurred after the mid-1920s. By issuance of the 1930 Sanborn map (Figure 13), Bouck Court was shown, although the Lot 65 project site was still vacant. Similar conditions were shown on the 1950 Sanborn map (Figure 14) and a 1951 aerial photograph (Figure 15).

The present bowling facility on the Lot 65 project site was completed in 1960, according to its Certificate of Occupancy. The bowling alley was originally called Shell Lanes, and has had several changes in ownership and business names since 1960. Although the interior and exterior façade of the building has been renovated several times, the footprint and envelope of the building has not changed since its original construction.

V. CONCLUSIONS

In its pre-development condition, the Lot 65 project site was largely covered by tidal marshlands, with only the northeast corner of the property on firm ground. The project site remained undeveloped until the 1880s, when a short-lived railroad alignment was constructed running diagonally through the lot. The project site was not fully landfilled until after the mid-1920s. The current bowling alley building on Lot 65 was constructed in 1960, covering the entire lot footprint.

The main entrance of the Lot 65 building is at the same elevation as the adjoining sidewalk, which itself is several inches above the Bouck Court roadway. The top of the lower level floor is approximately 3-4 feet below the sidewalk level, and as described above, the base of the building's foundation and pilings extend at least several feet below that elevation. Given the depth of the building's lower floor and foundations, it appears that the original landform would have been substantially disturbed during preparation for and construction of the building.

The degree of disturbance to the Lot 65 project site from construction of the subgrade portions of the bowling facility appears to have destroyed any potential earlier land surfaces that could have supported Indigenous occupation or use, including within the former tidal marshlands. HPI concludes that there is no Indigenous period archaeological sensitivity for the Lot 65 project site.

The Lot 65 project site was undeveloped until the 1880s, when the railroad alignment was constructed along the tidal marshland border. There was no other historic period development on the property, and given the degree of disturbance described above, it does not appear that any potential historic archaeological resources associated with adjacent lots could have survived on the property. The existing bowling facility was not constructed until 1960. Based on these factors, HPI concludes that there is no historic period archaeological sensitivity for the Lot 65 project site.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions outlined above, HPI recommends that no additional archaeological studies are warranted for the Lot 65 project site.

VII. REFERENCES

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1845 *Map of New-York Bay And Harbor And The Environs*. F.R. Hassler, Superintendent. USC&GS, Washington D.C.

1855-6 *Coney Island and Dead Horse Inlet, New York*. U.S.C.S., Washington, D.C.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

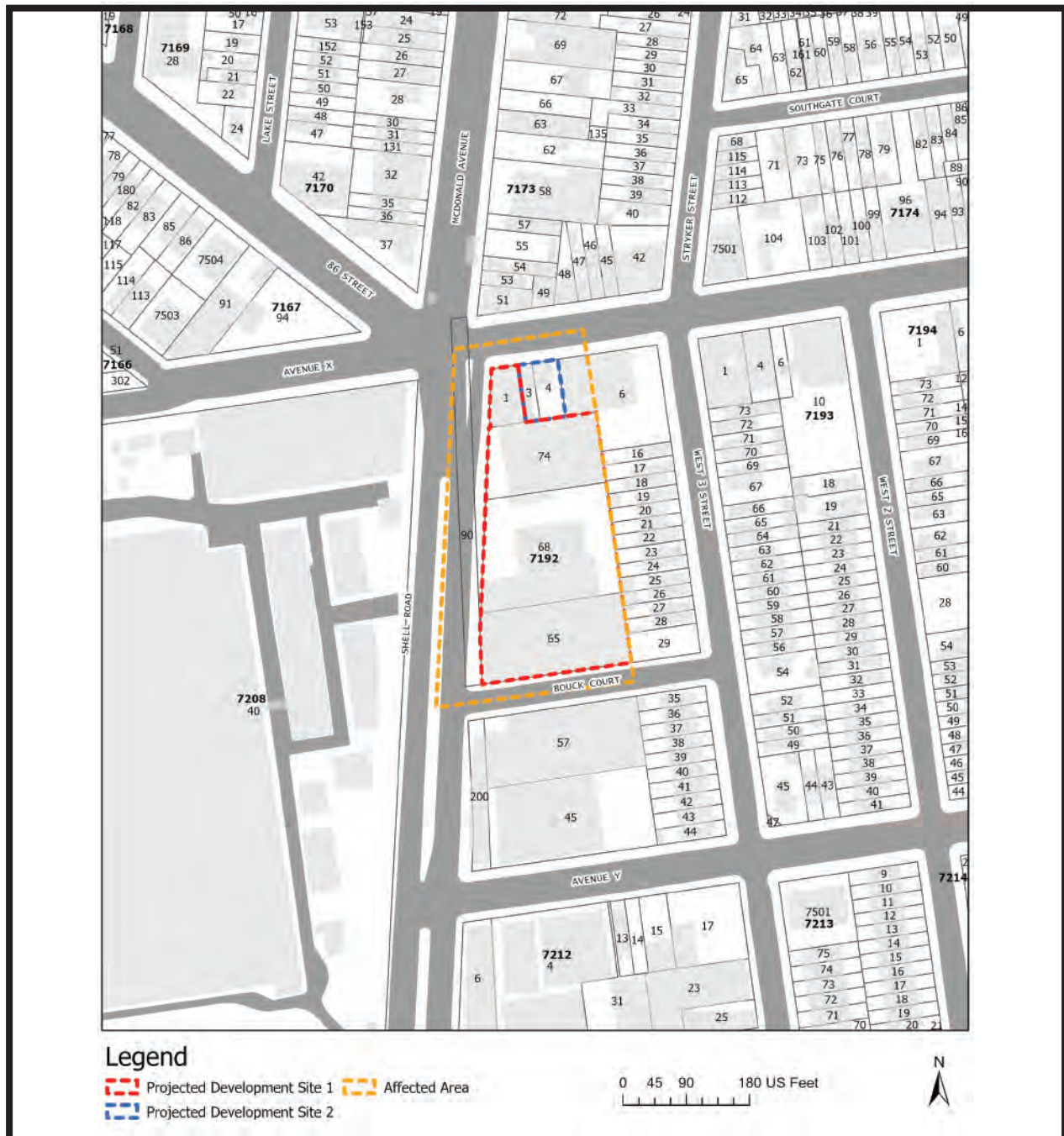
2024 Web soil survey.

United States Geological Survey (U.S.G.S.)

1891 *Brooklyn, N.Y.* 15 Minute Topographic Quadrangle.

2023 *Coney Island, New York-New Jersey*. 7.5 Minute Topographic Quadrangle.

FIGURES



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2555 Shell Road Rezoning
Block 7192, Lot 65
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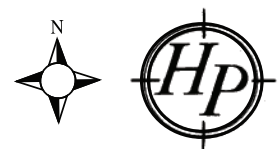
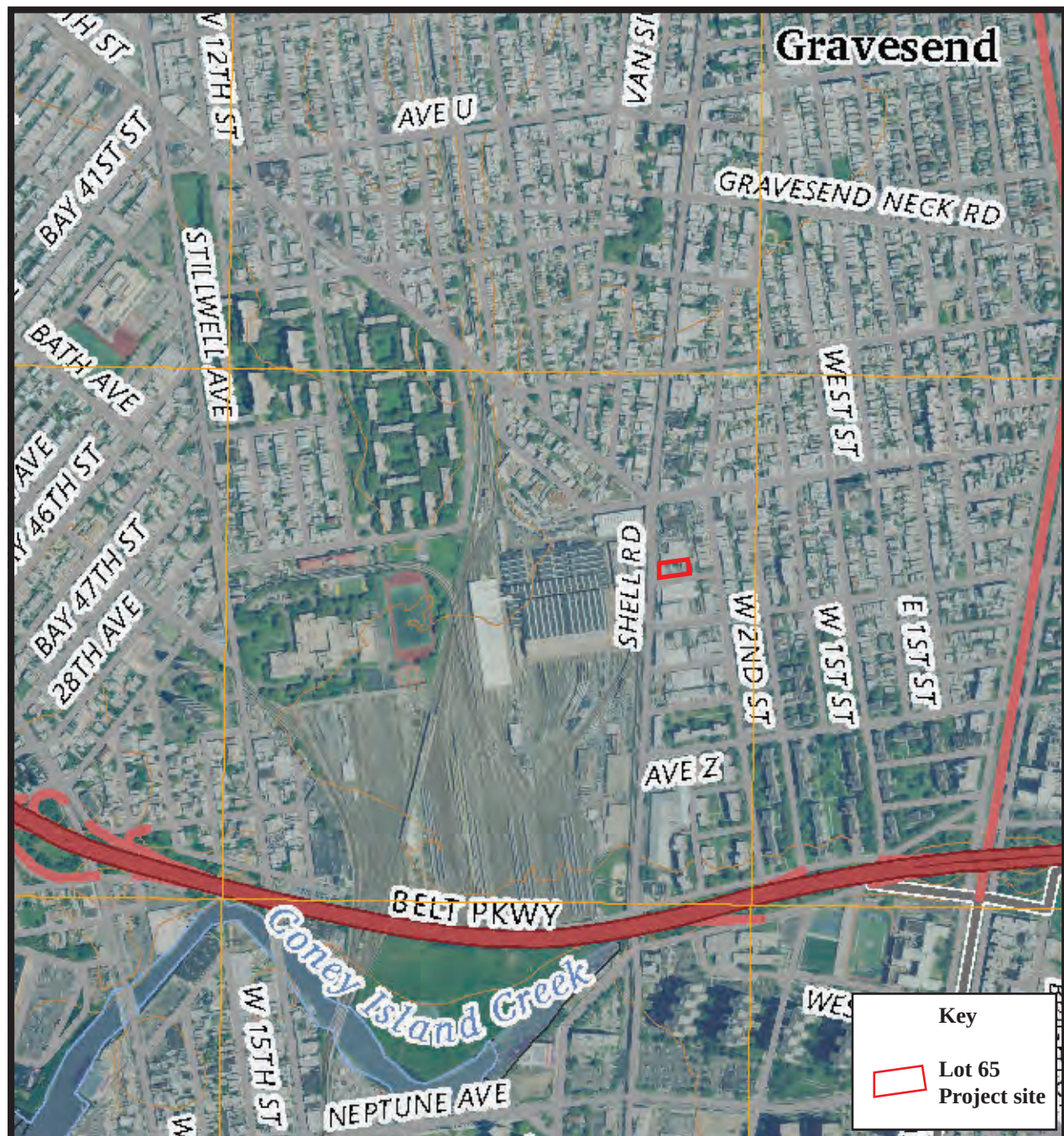


Figure 1: Overall project site on New York City tax map. Lot 65 is the southernmost lot.



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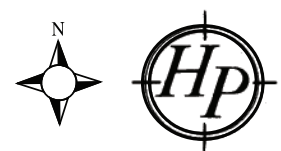


Figure 2: Lot 65 project site on Coney Island, New York-New Jersey 7.5 Minute Quadrangle (U.S.G.S. 2023).

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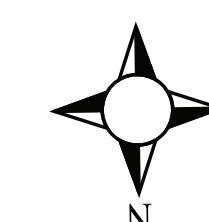
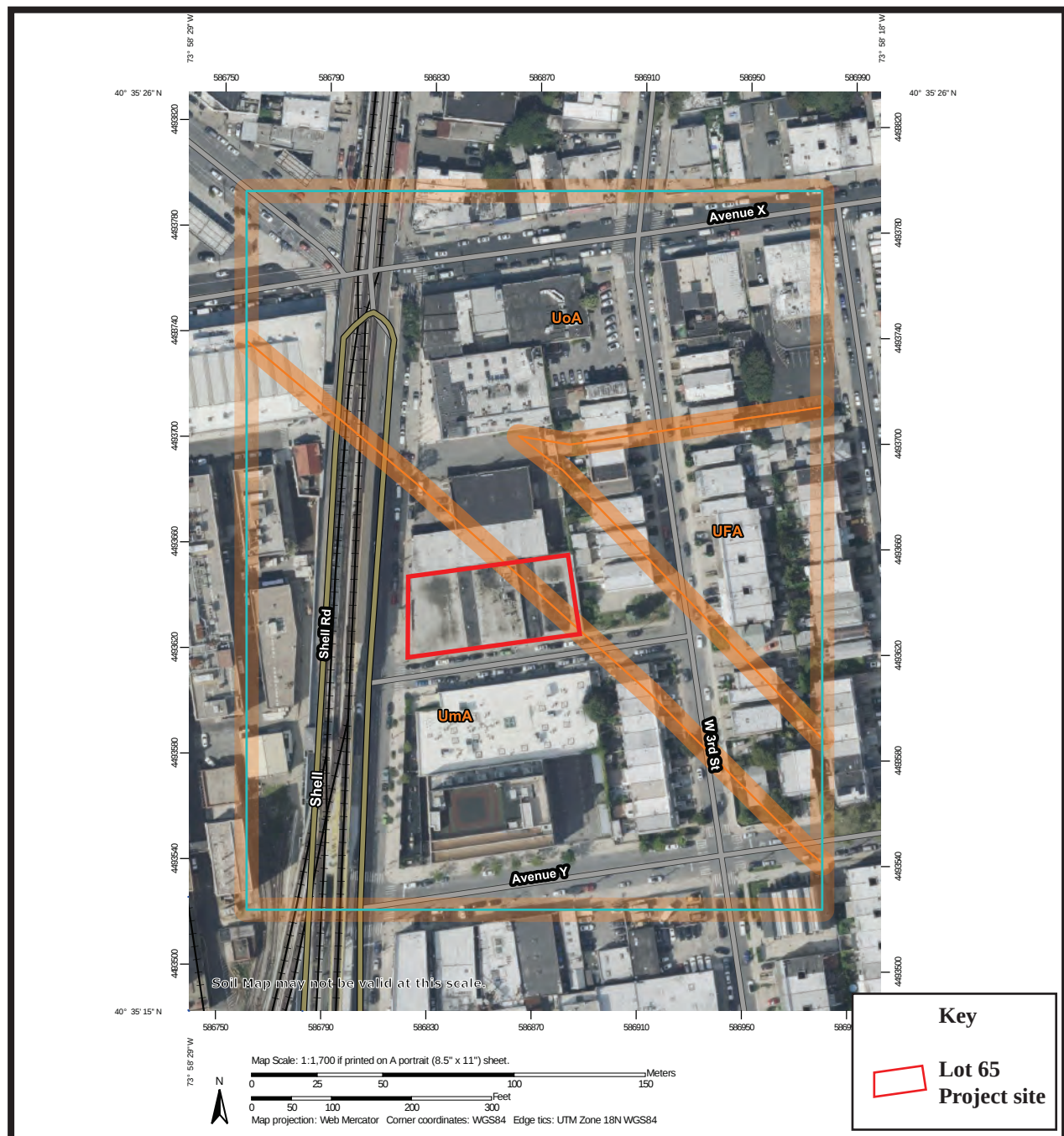


Figure 3. Lot 65 project site first floor building layout and photograph locations.

 HIGHRISE GROUP Email: info@highrisegroupny.com Phone: 929-265-8171	
DESIGN-BUILDER:	
INSULATING ENGINEERS:	
THE ARCHITECT SHALL NOT HAVE INTERFERED WITH THE DESIGN OF THE STRUCTURE AND SHALL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY DAMAGE TO THE STRUCTURE OR ITS CONTENTS. THE ARCHITECT SHALL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FAILURE OF ANY PART OF THE STRUCTURE OR ITS CONTENTS. THE ARCHITECT SHALL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FAILURE OF ANY PART OF THE STRUCTURE OR ITS CONTENTS.	
REVISIONS	
DATE	
PROJECT:	
DWG. TITLE: 1ST FL. FLOOR PLAN	
SCALE : DATE : 08-12-20 DRAWN BY : CHECKED BY :	
DWG. No. : A-001.00	
SHEET NO. : 1 OF 2	



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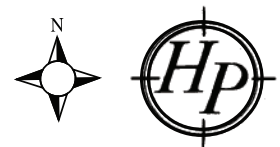
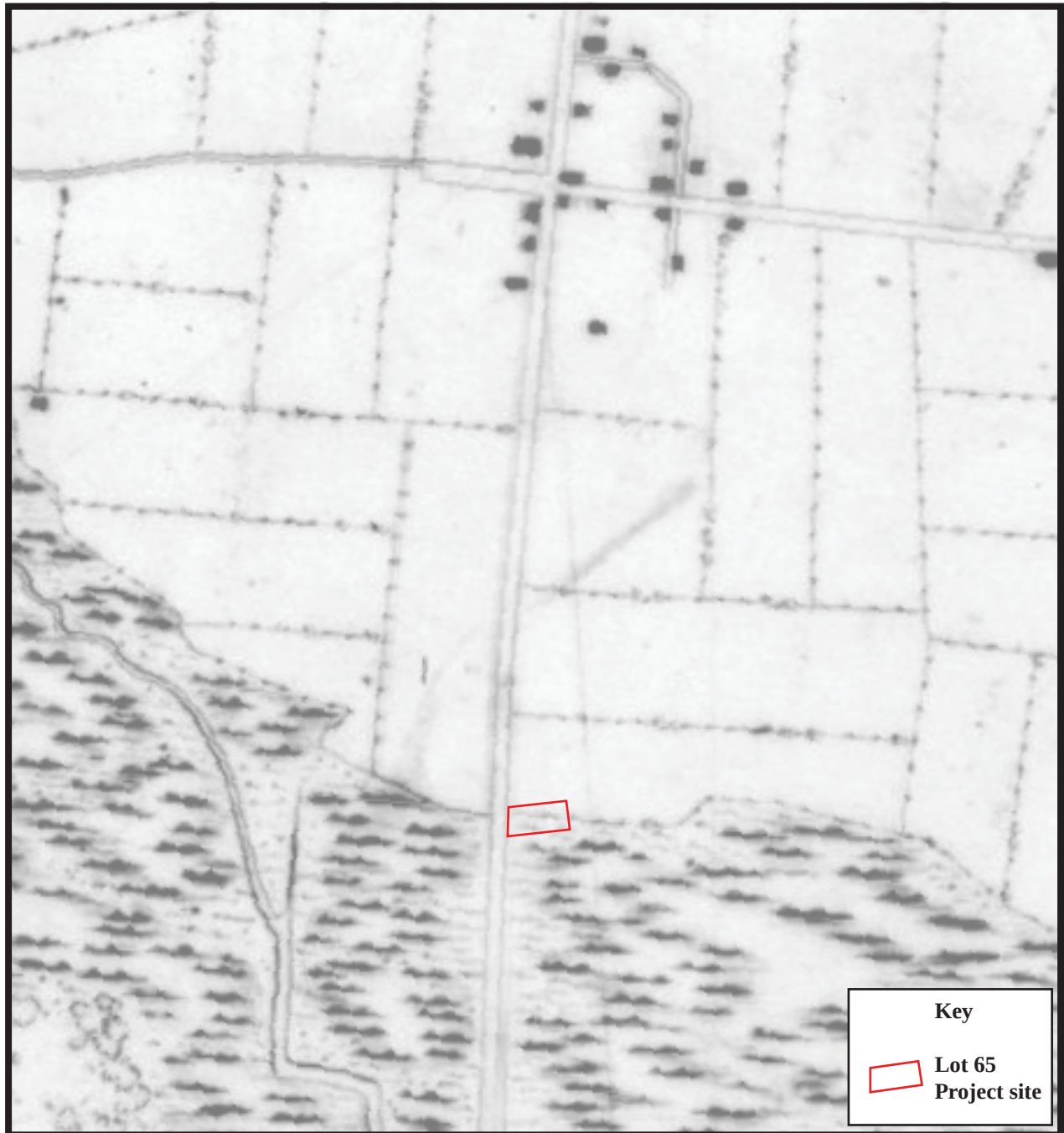


Figure 4: Lot 65 project site on web soil survey (U.S.D.A. 2024).



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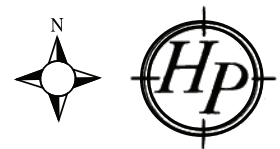


Figure 5: Lot 65 project site on *From Fort Hamilton to Coney Island, New York* (U.S.C.S. 1835).

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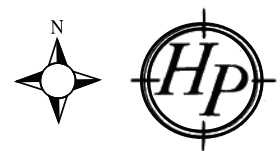
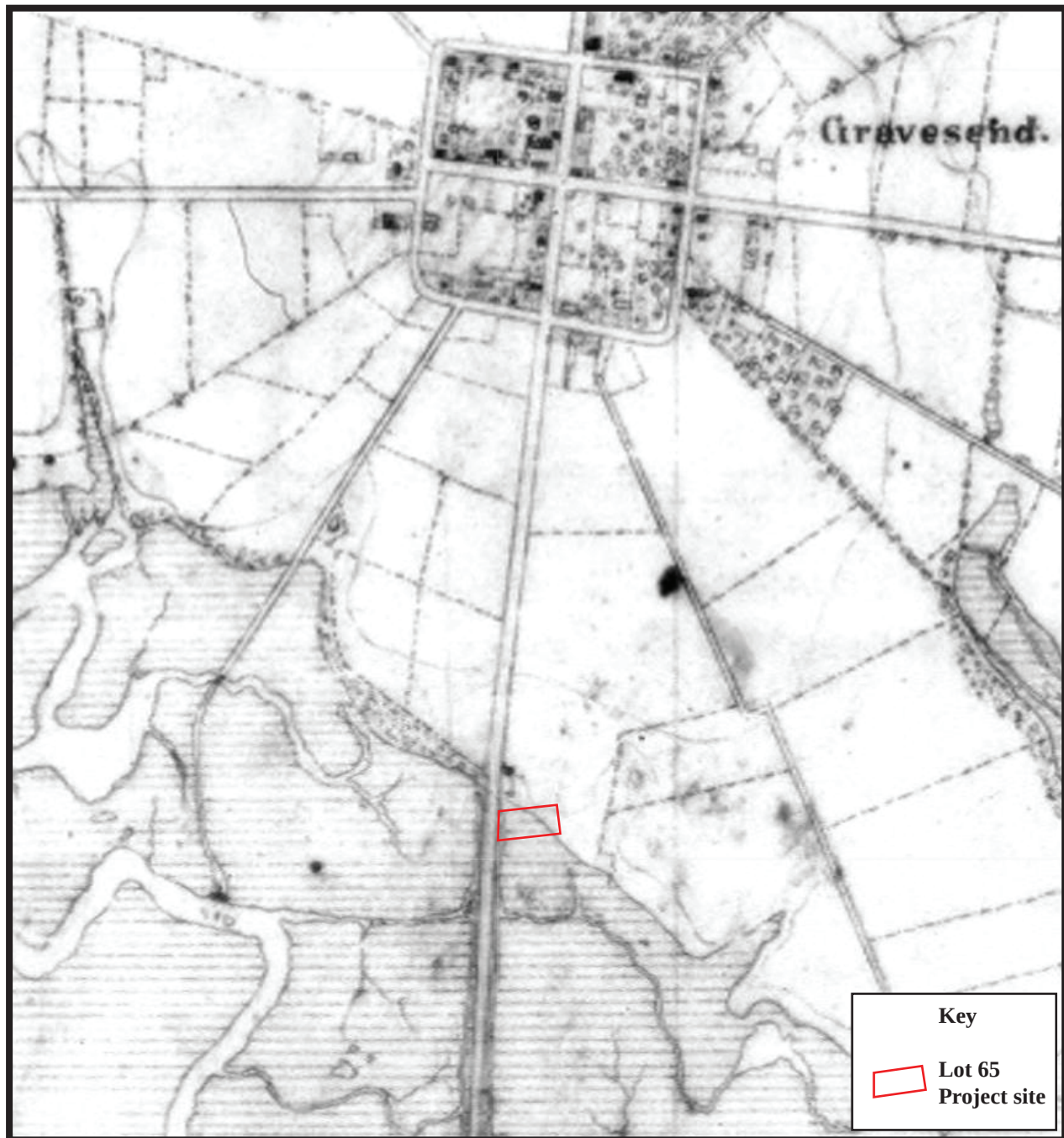


Figure 6: Lot 65 project site on Map of Kings and Part of Queens Counties, Long Island, N.Y. (Conner 1852).

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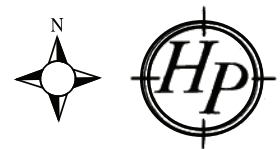


Figure 7: Lot 65 project site on *Coney Island and Dead Horse Inlet, New York* (U.S.C.S. 1855-6).

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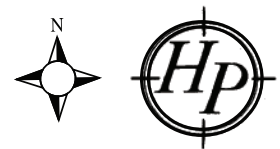
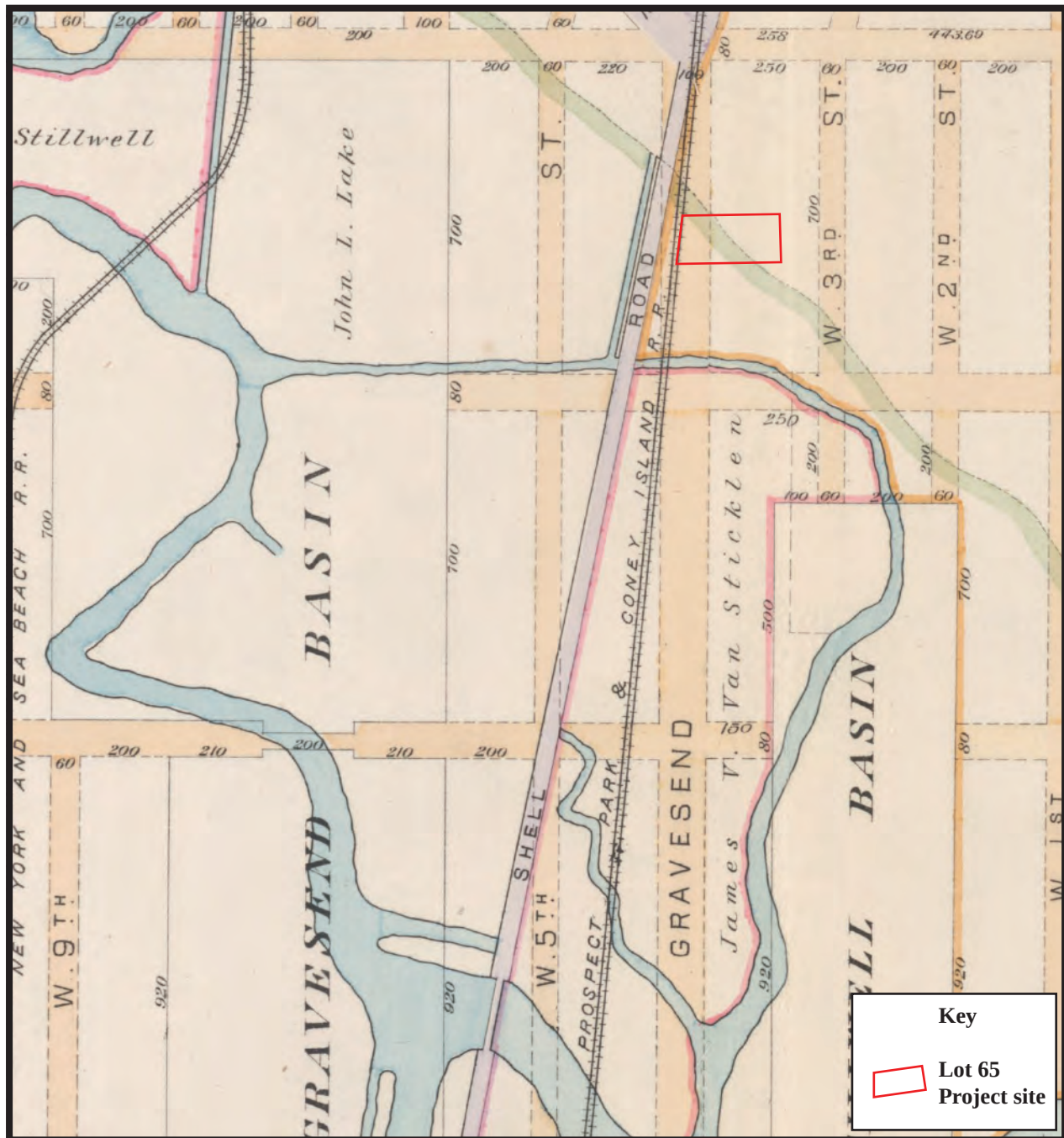


Figure 8: Lot 65 project site on *Atlas of Long Island, New York* (Beers 1873).

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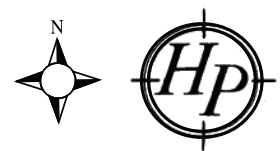
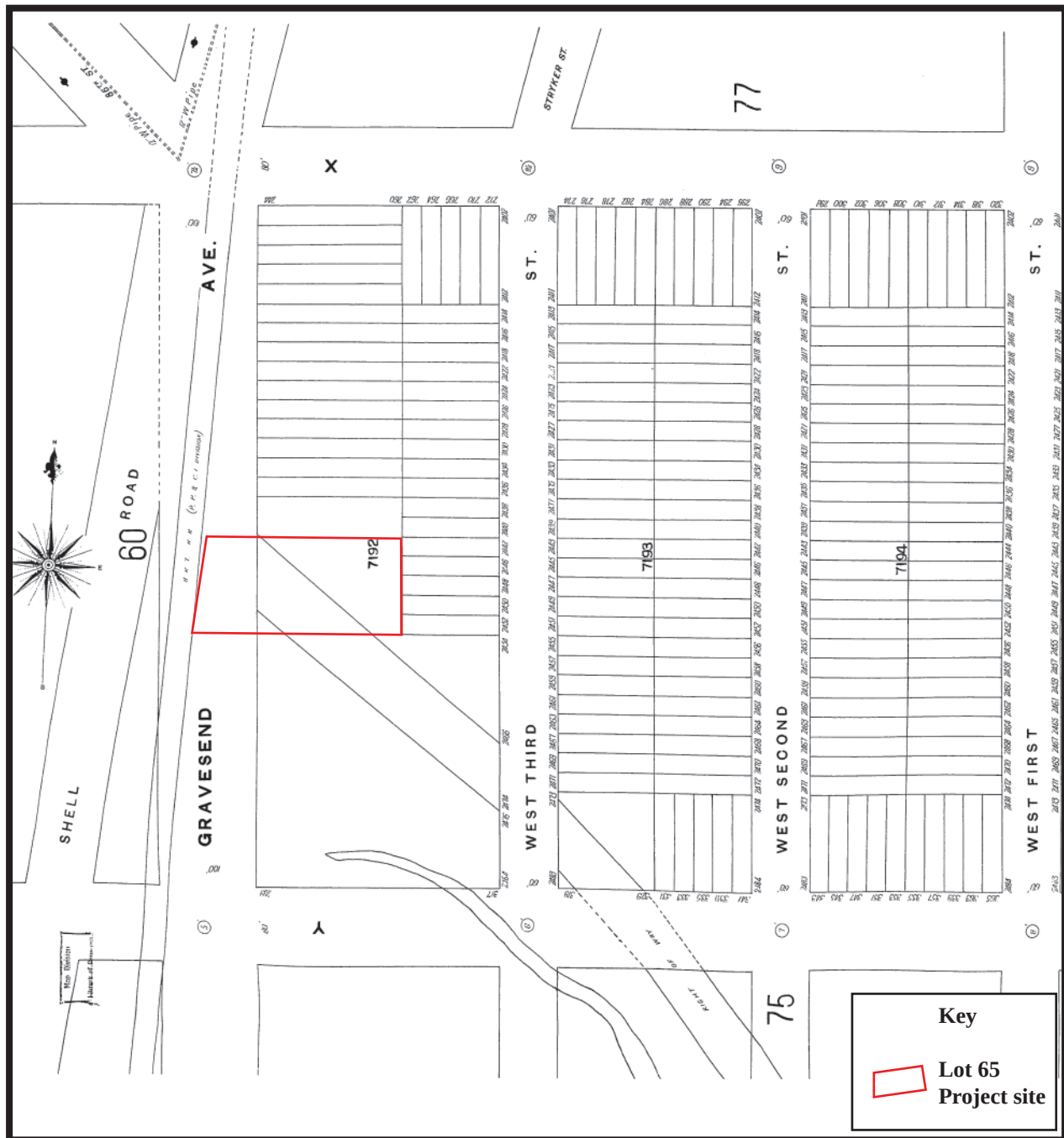


Figure 9: Lot 65 project site on *Atlas of Kings County New York* (Robinson 1890).

0 200 400 600 800 1000 FEET



Phase IA Archaeological Documentary Study Addendum
 2555 Shell Road Rezoning
 Block 7192, Lot 65
 Brooklyn, Kings County, NY 11223

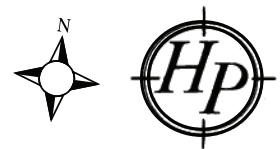
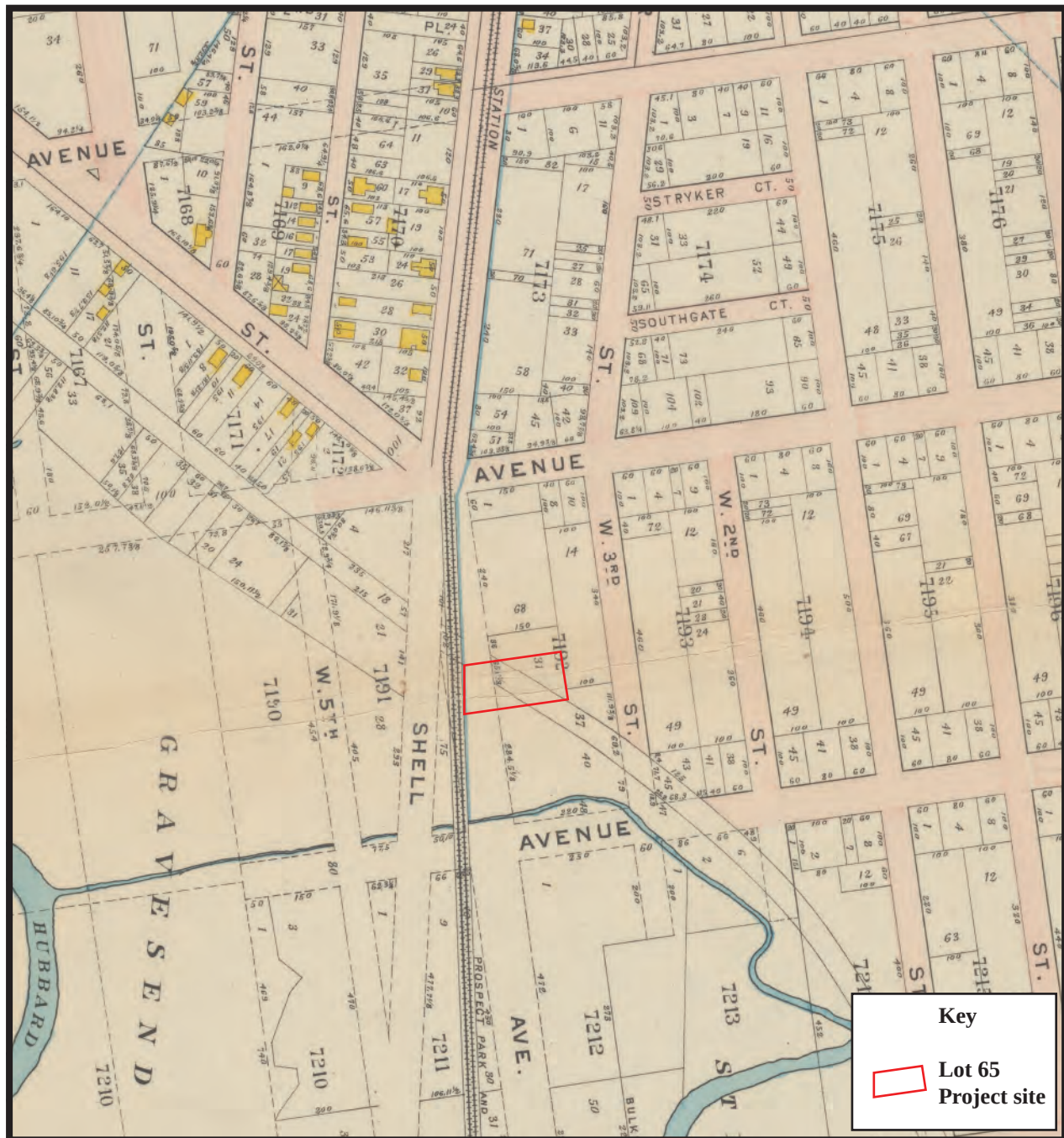


Figure 10: Lot 65 project site on *Insurance Maps of the Borough of Brooklyn, City of New York* (Sanborn 1906).

0 100 200 300 400 500 FEET



Phase IA Archaeological Documentary Study Addendum
 2555 Shell Road Rezoning
 Block 7192, Lot 65
 Brooklyn, Kings County, NY 11223

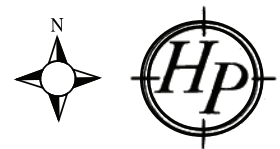


Figure 11: Lot 65 project site on *Atlas of the Borough of Brooklyn, City of New York* (Bromley 1907).

0 200 400 600 800 1000 FEET



Phase IA Archaeological Documentary Study Addendum
 2555 Shell Road Rezoning
 Block 7192, Lot 65
 Brooklyn, Kings County, NY 11223

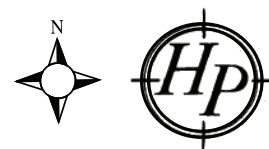


Figure 12: Lot 65 project site on *Sectional Aerial Maps of the City of New York* (Bureau of Engineering 1924).

0 200 400 600 800 1000 FEET

A horizontal scale bar with alternating black and white segments, marked with the numbers 0, 200, 400, 600, 800, and 1000, followed by the word 'FEET'.



Phase IA Archaeological Documentary Study Addendum
 2555 Shell Road Rezoning
 Block 7192, Lot 65
 Brooklyn, Kings County, NY 11223

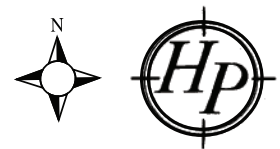


Figure 15: Lot 65 project site on 1951 aerial photograph (NYCityMap).

0 100 200 300 400 500 FEET

PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph 1. The Lot 65 project site containing the Bowl 360 facility. View looking northeast from the intersection of Shell Road and Bouck Court.



Photograph 2. Detail of the Lot 65 Bowl 360 facility Shell Road emergency exit door on the right, at the sidewalk level. View looking east from Shell Road.



Photograph 3. The main entrance to the Lot 65 Bowl 360 facility on Bouck Court. View looking north.



Photograph 4. Detail of the Lot 65 Bowl 360 facility entrances on Bouck Court. The main entrance is in the left background and an emergency exit door is in the left center. View looking northwest.



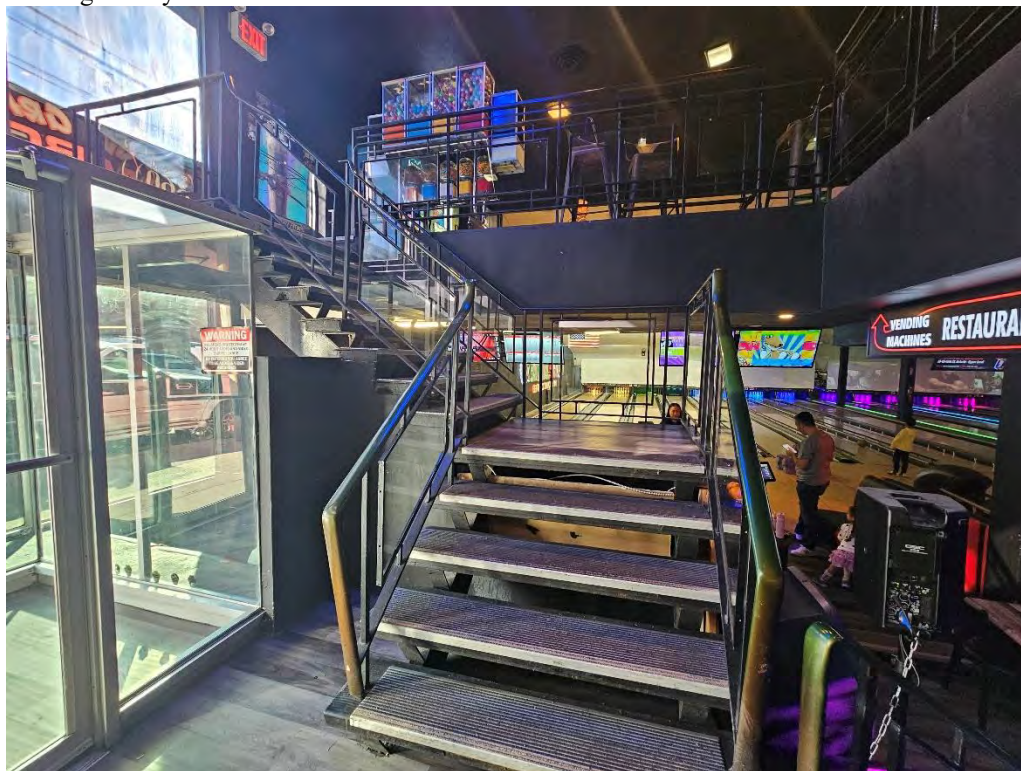
Photograph 5. A view of the first floor bowling lanes, as seen from the mezzanine level. View looking west.



Photograph 6. A view of the first floor of the bowling facility. The stairs leading to the Bouck Court street level at the main entrance are in the far background. View looking south.



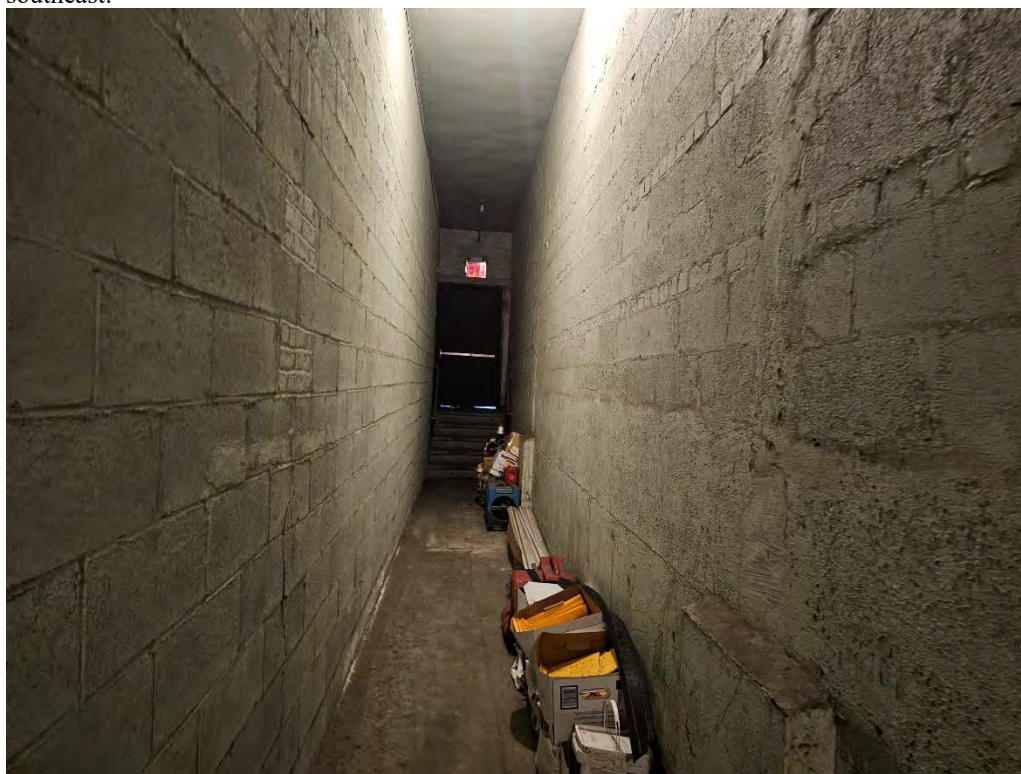
Photograph 7. The main entrance of the Lot 65 Bowl 360 facility from the interior looking south toward Bouck Court. The car in the background is at the street level and the floor in the foreground is the first floor level of the bowling facility.



Photograph 8. The main entrance of the Lot 65 Bowl 360 facility from the interior looking up the stairs to the mezzanine level. The first floor bowling lanes are in the background. View looking west.



Photograph 9. The emergency exit stairs leading to the Bouck Court street level from the first floor. View looking southeast.



Photograph 10. The emergency exit stairs leading to the Shell Road street level from the first floor. View looking west.