

PHASE 1B ARCHEOLOGICAL FIELD RECONNAISSANCE

**Brooklyn Public Library New Lots Branch
Sankofa Park/New Lot Cemetery (04701.024904)**

New Lots, Brooklyn
Kings County, NY

Hartgen 5947-PH1B
SHPO 24SR00495

Submitted to:

Philip Jenkin
Brooklyn Public Library, New Lots
665 New Lots Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11207

Prepared by:

Hartgen Archeological Associates, Inc.

1744 Washington Avenue Ext.
Rensselaer, New York 12144
p +1 518 283 0534
hartgen@hartgen.com

www.hartgen.com

An ACRA Member Firm
www.acra-crm.org

June 2025

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

SHPO Number: 24SR00495
Involved Agencies: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) and New York State Historic Preservation Office (NYSHPO)
Phase of survey: Phase 1B Archeological Field Reconnaissance

LOCATION INFORMATION

Municipality: Brooklyn (New Lots)
County: Kings

ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEY OVERVIEW

Survey Area: 0.01 acres
Units: 2 units, cumulative area 2 square meters

RESULTS OF ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Precontact sites identified: None, no further investigation recommended
Historic sites identified: Sankofa (formerly Schenck) Park/New Lots Cemetery (04701.024904), Phase 2 or avoidance recommended

RECOMMENDATIONS

A Phase IB study was initiated at Sankofa (formerly Schenck) Park/New Lots Cemetery (04701.024904), where burials from the 17th, 18th, 19th, and perhaps even the early 20th century were interred. The cemetery originated as part of the New Lot Dutch Reformed Church patent, but eventually the plot became a community burial ground that included many local Black residents. The church moved some of the interments after 1841 across the street to a new Church lot. However, other burials were left in place and many new burials excavated over time. The proposed New Lots, Brooklyn Public Library Reconstruction Project includes the southwest portion of the burial ground, as documented on historical maps and surveys. The archeology focused on identifying intact burials and disarticulated human remains through Ground Penetrating Radar survey and limited ground-truthing excavations.

The results of the GPR proved to be inconclusive, as a presumed anomaly investigated in Unit 1 did not represent a burial shaft. Additionally, an intact burial was identified by fieldwork where the GPR failed to detect an anomaly. The results from the GPR data could be due to the shallowness of the burials relative to the modern ground surface, the absence of well-defined grave shafts, and the highly mixed and disturbed nature of the soils. This was particularly true with respect to the identified burial in Unit 2 which contained modern construction debris such as concrete and asphalt.

Moving forward, the potential for encountering shallow intact burials located beneath the eastern parking lot is deemed to be high. Additionally, there are fragmentary human remains within the soil column starting at 40 cm below the surface.

It is recommended that construction be designed to avoid disturbing intact burials, and disarticulated human remains to the greatest extent possible. Impacts should be limited to the asphalt and subbase, approximately 30 centimeters below current ground surface. Any utilities within the eastern parking lot could also potentially be installed via direction drilling beneath the anticipated depth of burials.

An open forum was conducted May 15, 2025 when descendant community members were invited to discuss the preliminary Phase 1B findings, explore how the human remains will be handled and reinterred, and the development and proposed disturbance associated with reconstruction of the library. The descendent

community has stated the importance of incorporating spiritual elements before construction starts and that remains should remain at rest, to the greatest extent possible. This includes no further disturbance of potential intact burials and no further testing on remains that have been collected from excavations.

Currently, project plans are being redesigned to include utilizing fill soil within the eastern parking lot area to avoid ground disturbance and further disturbance of potential intact burials and disarticulated and fragmentary remains.

The cemetery site is likely to be considered a National Register-eligible resource under Criterion D, as having data potential for the understanding of major historical trends in the expansion of New York City from the 17th to early 20th centuries (Little et al. 2000). Further, the site is significant and relevant today as part of a contested and shared landscape between the former colonial Dutch community and African diasporas within New York state.

The cemetery is an important local historical resource that has deep meaning to its various constituents. The library has made great strides in engaging the community with respect to the construction of the new library and the services and programs it will provide. The cemetery, although long forgotten and buried under the modern city infrastructure, remains partially intact. Its future preservation and interpretation will be an enduring part of the new library's legacy.

Principal Investigator:	Matthew Kirk, MA
Report Authors:	Jaclyn Galdun, MA
Date of Report:	June 2025

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1 Introduction

Hartgen Archeological Associates, Inc. (Hartgen) completed this Phase 1B field investigation for the proposed Brooklyn Public Library New Lots (Project) in the Borough of Brooklyn, Kings County, New York. In accordance with applicable historic preservation law, archeological investigations in New York State proceed in phases. Phase 1B field investigations use preliminary field tests to assess the likelihood of archeological deposits in the area where the proposed action may affect historic properties, an area known as the APE, or area of potential effects. This phase is largely concerned with determining the presence or absence of archeological sites but may yield information about a site's type, boundaries, age, and integrity. In this instance, the Phase 1B is more focused on whether human remains survive intact and/or disturbed and scattered within the soil column.

This study is required for Project compliance with Section 14.09 of the State Historic Preservation Act and meets established standards for archeological reporting. It will be reviewed by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), adheres to the New York Archaeological Council's *Standards for Cultural Resource Investigations and the Curation of Archaeological Collections* (1994), which are endorsed by OPRHP, and follows OPRHP's *State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Phase I Archaeological Report Format Requirements* (2005). The Project requires approvals by Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC). In addition, this work conforms to the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in New York City* (Landmarks Preservation Commission, June 2018).

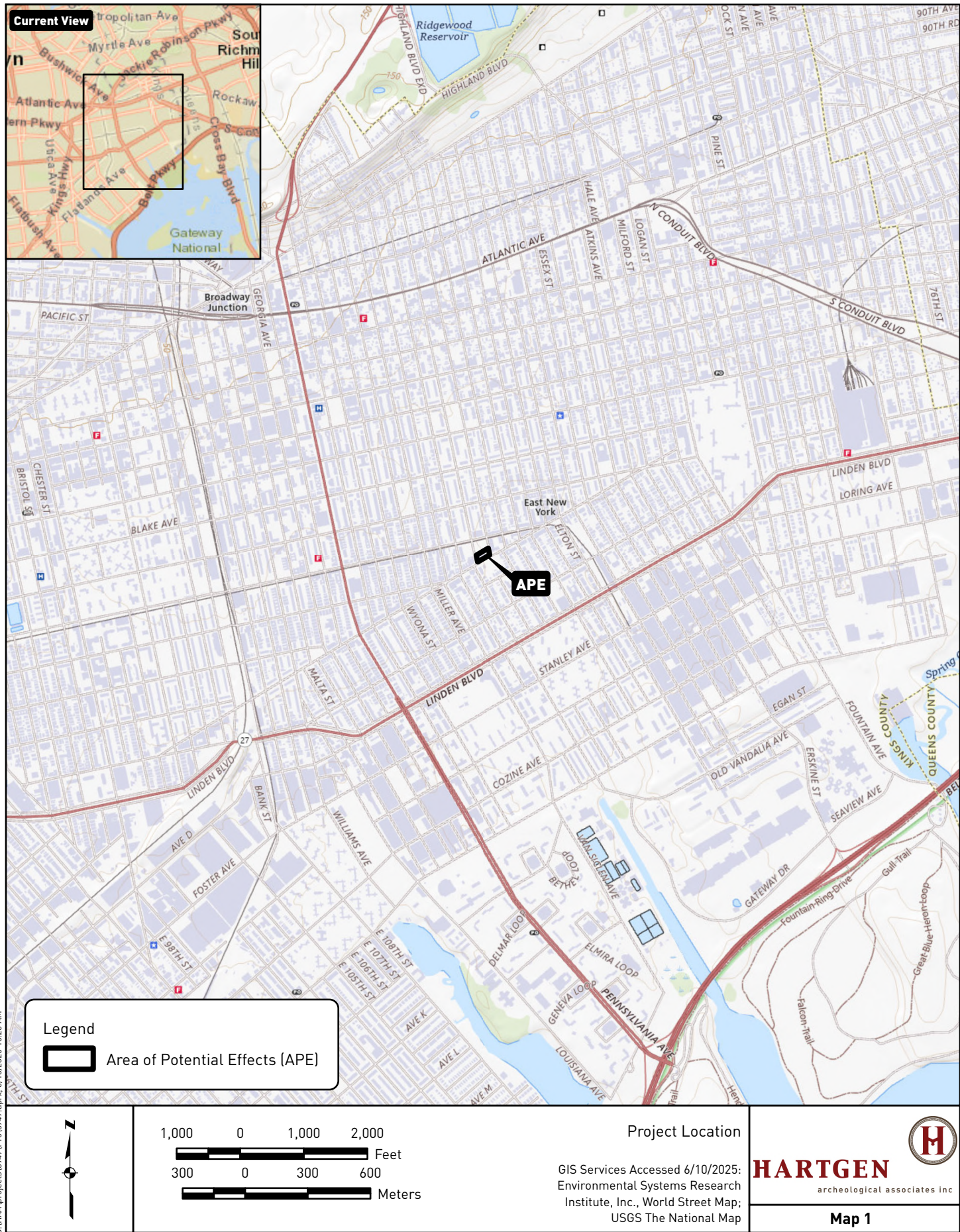
2 Project Information

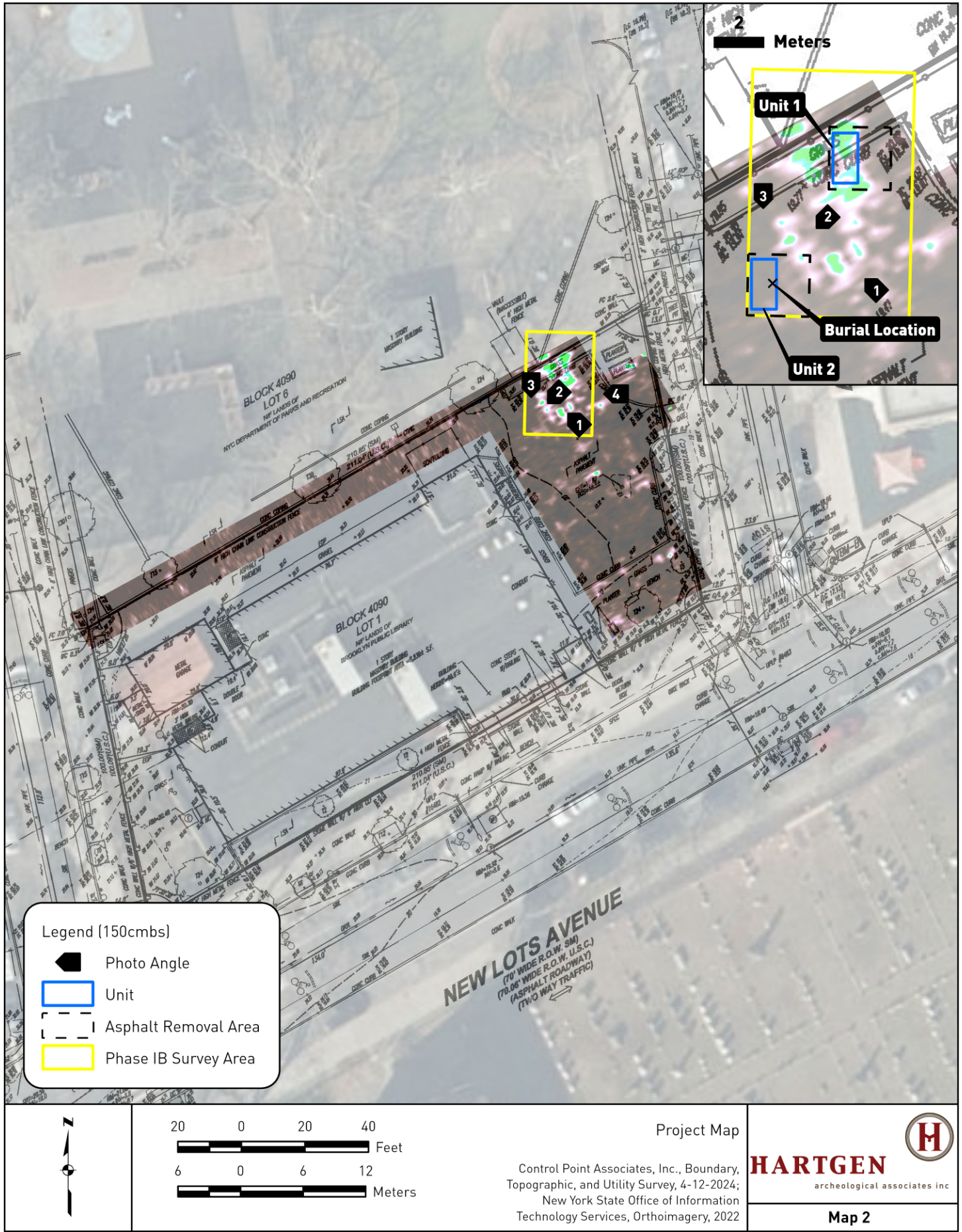
The Project is considered an undertaking for the purposes of historic preservation law and regulatory review. As such, this study is concerned with the effects the Project may have on resources determined eligible for the State and National (or local) Registers of Historical Places or that may be determined eligible by the SHPO or the involved federal agency. The assessment of potential effects is largely focused on proposed ground disturbing activities but may include other actions that may alter or destroy archeological resources.

The Project entails the proposed reconstruction of the existing New Lots Branch of the Brooklyn Public Library, south of Sankofa Park (formerly Schenk Park) in the New Lots Section of Brooklyn, Block 4090, Lot 1. The Project is bounded by Schenck Avenue, New Lots Avenue, and Barbey Street. Site plans for the proposed library are in development. The area of potential effect (APE) for Phase 1B testing is 0.01 acres (Map 2). The APE for Phase 1B testing was identified during a previous Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) Survey that identified an anomaly beneath the north central portion of the eastern parking lot.

A Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey was conducted prior to any ground disturbing activities and utilized a Geophysical Survey Systems, Inc. (GSSI) SIR 4000, 350 MHz Hyper Stacking (HS) GPR unit hereafter referred to interchangeably as a GSSI 350HS or GPR unit. The GSSI 350HS emits radar signals into the ground and captures the return signals. The radar signals reach a maximum depth of 2 meters. This depth can be variable based on changes in ground conditions, especially recent rain (Hartgen Archaeological Associates 2023). A total of three grids of GPR data were collected east and north of the New Lots Library building. Grid 002, located in the eastern parking lot area, where the previously mapped "Old Burying Ground" was located, identified a number of cultural anomalies. These anomalies include a large rock or architectural feature located along the eastern edge of the library, a flat and circular anomaly that extends four to five meters deep and is most likely a dry-well that was filled in and capped, and towards the north center portion of the parking lot located around 140 centimeters below surface (cmbs) that continues to 200 cmbs is an amorphous anomaly which is an approximate depth and size of a burial. The depth and size as well as the amorphous boundaries of the anomaly lend to the validity that the anomaly could potentially be a burial that was once part of the "Old Burying Ground" and is amorphous due to the age of the burial degrading over the last 250 years (Hartgen Archaeological Associates 2023).

Brooklyn Public Library New Lots, Brooklyn, Kings County, NY
Phase 1B Archeological Field Reconnaissance





3 Survey Methodology

The survey entailed the excavation of two, 2 x 1 meter excavations units, with one unit placed over an anomaly identified during the previous ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey completed by Hartgen in 2023. The second unit was placed within an area without an anomaly to assess the soil stratigraphy beneath the eastern parking lot asphalt. The Project was deemed to be archeologically sensitive by the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) and the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), as it was the former location of a 17th-century to 20th-century local cemetery, Sankofa (formerly Schenck) Park/New Lots Cemetery (04701.024904).

The purpose of the Phase IB fieldwork is to assess the potential for encountering intact burials and disarticulated and fragmentary human remains from the former New Lots Cemetery in advance of the proposed construction of the New Lots library. The vast majority of anticipated construction activities are proposed within the existing footprint of the extant library building. The building has a basement and if burials were once present, they have since been removed from the footprint.

The current parking lot east of the library building holds various buried utilities identified in as-built plans and data from the GPR study. This portion of the lot has been disturbed but there is still the possibility of intact burials and fragmentary remains despite utility installations.

3.1 Monitoring

The archeological monitor observed the contractor's excavations in areas designated as archeologically sensitive. The monitor inspected excavation areas, soil profiles, backdirt piles, and collected artifact and soil samples and mapped and documented all archeological deposits using field notes, photography, and measured scale drawings. The locations of archeological deposits were mapped with a GPS unit.

3.2 Unit Excavation

Units were rectangular, with dimensions of 2 × 1 meter. Soil levels were excavated separately, and all excavated soil was passed through 0.25-inch hardware mesh and examined for artifacts. Soil depths, Munsell colors, textures, artifact content, and other relevant observations were recorded (Munsell Color 2000). Profiles and plan views were drawn when appropriate. The location of each unit was mapped with a GPS unit. Unit excavation fieldwork and unit wall stratigraphy were photographed.

3.3 Artifacts and Laboratory

Significant historic artifacts such as glass, ceramics, food remains, hardware, and miscellaneous items were collected. Coal, ash, cinder, brick, and modern materials were only noted. Collected artifacts were placed in paper or plastic bags, labeled by provenience, and inventoried in a bag list. Provenience information was entered into a database. Artifacts were cleaned, sorted by type, counted, weighed, bagged, and described in a catalog (Appendix 1).

Fragmentary human remains recovered from outside an intact burial were placed in a labelled bag for analysis and counted. The remains were stored temporarily at the New Lots Branch of the Public Library and then transported to the Frank R. Bell Funeral Home in Brooklyn, New York and will remain there until reinternment is completed.

4 Survey Results

The Phase IB archeological field reconnaissance was conducted from April 9-11, 2025. The field crew consisted of Amber Cook, Xavier McClean, and Samuel Whitehead under the direction of Jaclyn Galdun, MA. Matthew Kirk was the principal investigator. The weather was cool with a slight breeze and overcast. All field and artifact photos are by Hartgen staff unless otherwise noted.

An archeologist was present on-site April 8th to monitor the removal of asphalt and subbase of the parking lot prior to fieldwork, to identify and collect any artifacts or potential fragmentary human remains that could be located beneath the parking lot subbase (Photo 1). No artifacts or fragmentary remains were identified during asphalt and subbase removal. A total area of two 8 feet by 8 feet squares were removed in the northern area of the eastern parking lot. The asphalt was cut by hand, and the asphalt and subbase was removed by hand, with shovels. The asphalt pieces were placed in a truck and removed and the subbase, which was a fill sand, was stockpiled adjacent to the asphalt removal area.

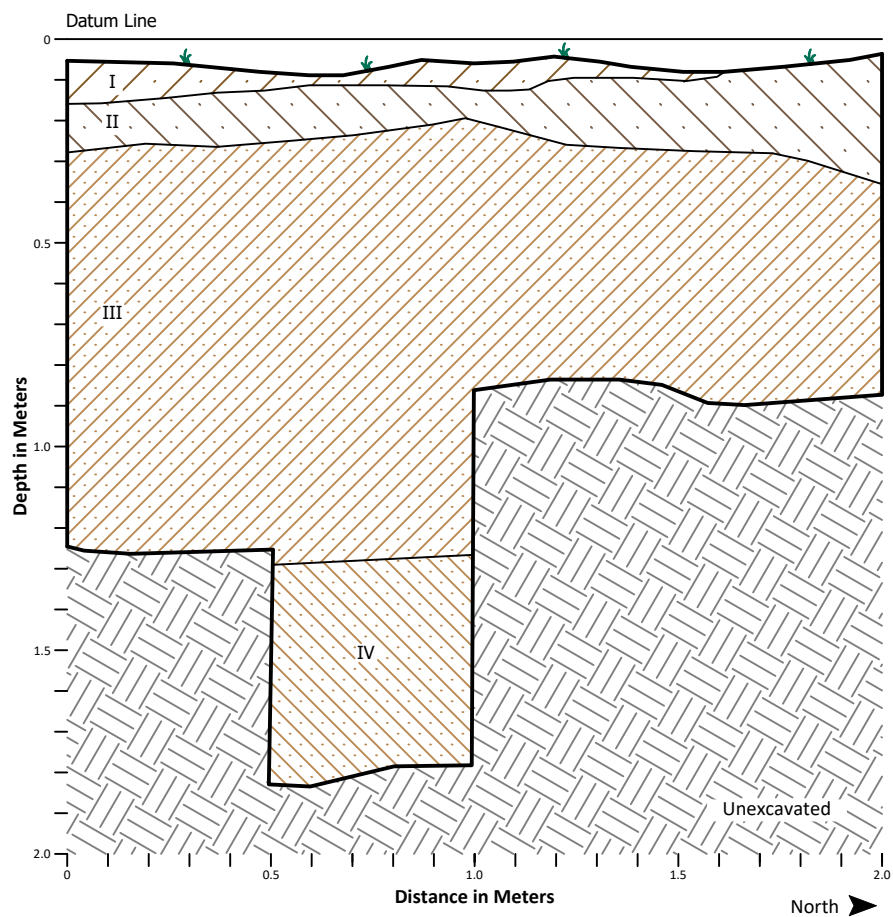
A total of two, 2 x 1-meter units were placed in the northeastern portion of the paved parking lot area (Photo 2 and Photo 3). Unit 1 was placed directly on top of the anomaly identified approximately 1.5 meters below surface in the northeast corner of the parking lot. Unit 2 was placed southwest of Unit 1, in an area that identified no anomalies. Units were then backfilled once excavations were complete (Photo 4).

4.1 Unit 1

Unit 1 was placed directly on top of the previously identified GPR anomaly. Soils encountered, have been initially separated into stratum which refers to individual levels of soils identified by color and texture, have initially been interpreted as:

- Stratum 1 (30-40 cm below ground surface) - 10YR 4/6 dark yellowish brown loamy sandy—Fill (artifacts such as fragmented glass, tobacco pipe stem, metal, and ceramic sanitary pipe were recovered throughout stratum)
- Stratum 2 (34-64 cm below ground surface) – 10YR 4/3 brown loamy sandy—Disturbed (artifacts such as fragmented glass, ceramics, nails, and disarticulated fragmentary human remains recovered throughout stratum).
- Stratum 3 (54 – 150 cm below ground surface)— 10YR 6/6 brownish yellow sand—Natural-C-horizon (artifacts such as fragmented glass, ceramics, nails, and disarticulated fragmentary human remains recovered from first 20 cm of this stratum, no artifacts recovered from the other levels).
- Stratum 4 (150- 210 cm below ground surface) – 10YR 6/6 brownish yellow gravelly sand—Natural C-horizon

A range of historic and modern materials was noted within the top three strata of this unit which included fragmentary glass, nails, unidentifiable metal objects, ceramic sherds (dating from the mid-19th to 20th century), and fragmentary human remains. The fragmentary human remains recovered ranged in size from 2 centimeters to 8 centimeters in size with no discernable elements identified in the field. The fragmentary remains are believed to be mostly cranial fragments, but a sample of smaller elements may be highly fragmented long bones such as those in the arms or legs. No intact burials were identified during excavations of Unit 1. Materials noted but not collected included modern construction debris such as concrete, asphalt, coal, and slag that was noted then discarded from the top three stratum.



Legend

- I Dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/6) loamy sand - fill
- II Brown (10YR 4/3) loamy sand - disturbed
- III Brownish yellow (10YR 6/6) sandy loam - fill
- IV Brownish yellow (10YR 6/6) sandy loam with increased gravel

Unit 1
West Wall Profile

4.2 Unit 2

Unit 2 was placed approximately three meters southwest of Unit 1. No burials nor intact features were expected based on the results of the GPR. Soils encountered have been initially interpreted as:

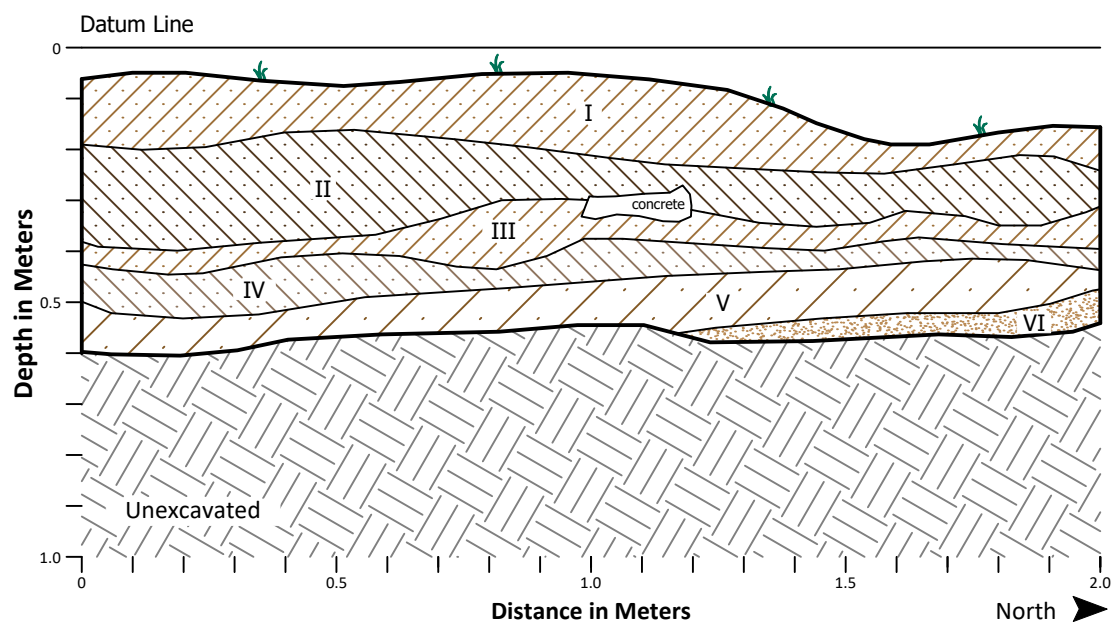
- Stratum 1 (20-36 cm below surface) – 10YR 5/6 yellowish brown sandy loamy—Fill (artifacts such as fragmented glass, tobacco pipe stem fragments, ceramic sherds, and a metal ring were recovered throughout the stratum).
- Stratum 2 (24-44 cm below surface)— 10YR 3/3 dark brown loamy sand—Fill (artifacts such as fragmented glass, ceramic sherds, nails, a metal spike, and corroded metal).
- Stratum 3 (38-66 cm below surface)— 10YR 5/6 yellowish brown loamy sand—Fill (artifacts such as fragmented glass, ceramic sherds, and nails were recovered throughout the stratum).
- Stratum 4 (40–70 cm below surface) – 10YR 5/3 brown sand—Disturbed (artifacts such as fragmented glass, glass bottle base, ceramic sherds, metal hardware, other unidentifiable metal, and disarticulated fragmentary human remains were recovered throughout the stratum).
- Strata 5 and 6 (70-84 cm below surface) – 10YR 4/6 dark yellowish brown loamy sand and 10YR 6/6 brownish yellow sand—Disturbed (artifacts such as bottle glass fragments, metal nail, and coffin nails were recovered). A potential intact burial was identified at this level and excavation ceased.

Similarly to Unit 1, modern materials were noted throughout the strata which included concrete, asphalt, coal, slag, and tile that was discarded in the field. Located along the eastern wall of the unit and potentially extending beyond the unit, a nearly intact human cranium and coffin nails were identified.

As an archeologist was using a small handheld trowel to scrape some soil from the base of the unit, fragments from a larger bone were identified. The bone was friable and brittle. Archeologists then carefully removed soil around the larger bone by hand which revealed to be a mostly intact cranium located close to the eastern wall of the excavation unit. No photographs of the remains were taken, and none will be included within this report with respect to the remains and the individual. The cranium was left in place but pedestaled within the excavations to ascertain whether it was in situ. During pedestalling excavations, a series of nails with attached wood, believed to be coffin nails, were recovered around (west) the cranium. While other fragmentary human remains recovered from excavations ranged in size from two to eight centimeters in length, the cranium appears largely intact. In addition, while the unit was placed in a north-south configuration perpendicular to the potential burial, the burial appears to be oriented in a traditional east-west direction, with excavations uncovering the very edge of the burial.

No discernable burial shaft was identified both on top of and around the nearly complete cranium. This could potentially be due to the fact the burial shaft was truncated from grading and ground disturbance associated with the construction of the library building and demolition of previous structures and alterations to the landscape. The burial was identified approximately 80 centimeters (31 inches) below surface. The shallow burial could also be associated with the common practice of stacked burials when space within a cemetery is limited, or the landscape was altered, and soil was graded and removed which would place the burial closer to the ground surface.

The natural subsoil appears to be a brownish yellow sand with small gravel inclusions. The fill soils could be easily distinguished based on the presence of a dark yellowish brown loamy sand that was typically found below the asphalt subbase and typically included historic artifacts and modern construction debris.



- | | | | |
|-----|--|----|--|
| I | Yellowish brown (10YR 5/6) sandy loam - fill | IV | Brown (10YR 5/3) sandy loam - disturbed |
| II | Dark brown (10YR 3/3) sandy loam - fill | V | Dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/6) loamy sand - disturbed |
| III | Yellowish brown (10YR 5/6) sandy loam - fill | VI | Brownish yellow (10YR 6/6) sand - disturbed |



4.3 Artifact Summary

A total of 237 artifacts were collected which include modern window glass, ceramics, architectural tile, drinking glass fragments, and nails (Photo 5-Photo 14). Materials such as fragmented brick, coal, slag, clinker, asphalt and concrete was noted but not collected during excavations. Of the 237 artifacts collected, a total of 156 artifacts were retained. Modern materials such as window and vessel glass, plastic, sanitary sewer fragments, and architectural debris, such as mortar, concrete, and tile were discarded from the collection. These artifacts are most likely related to subsequent demolition of the school structure and construction of the modern library building.

4.3.1 Unit 1

A total of 45 artifacts were recovered from excavations of Unit 1. Artifacts recovered include ceramics, glass, metal, tobacco pipe stems, and disarticulated and fragmentary human remains (Table 1).

4.3.1.1 Ceramics

A total of 10 ceramic sherds recovered from excavations of Unit 1 include porcelain, whiteware (c.1820-present), white granite (c. 1840-present), and yellowware (c. 1840-present) (Photo 6). Porcelain and whiteware are common ceramics that have a wide time range of production that range from the early 19th century to present, which offers little information regarding time of deposition and usage of these ceramic types, except to say it was after the new, New Lots Church was constructed in 1824, and the cemetery entered into a period of decline.

Meanwhile white granite, also known as ironstone was produced as early as 1840, and yellowware being produced as early as 1843. While fragmented, ceramic fragments appear to largely be domestic or part of architectural elements, such as electrical insulators or bathroom appliances.

One tobacco pipe stem fragment was recovered from level 1, fill soils, with a 4/64" bore hole which has an approximate production date of after 1750 (Photo 7).

4.3.1.2 Glass

A total of 13 glass fragments were recovered from excavations of Unit 1 which include bottle glass, hexagonal molded tableware, molded rectangular vessel glass, and window glass. Fragmented tableware glass includes a likely tumbler and wine glass base (Photo 5). Glass artifacts recovered are domestic in nature and could potentially be from when a headmaster once lived on school grounds in the mid-19th century or are evidence of refuse discarded on the lot.

4.3.1.3 Metal

A total of 12 metal artifacts were identified and recovered from Unit 1 excavations. These metal artifacts include wire nails produced after 1870 (n=15), a potential coffin nail with concretion of wood, a strap, and unidentified hardware. Wire nails began to be utilized in the late 19th to present. The inclusion of wire nails, a metal strap, and unidentified hardware are most likely due to previous demolition and construction events related to the current library building. The only metal artifacts related to the cemetery, is the potential coffin nail identified in Level 5, disturbed soil.

4.3.1.4 Shell

One shell was recovered from Unit 1, Level 5. The shell appears to be an oyster shell and was most likely evidence food preparation related to when a headmaster once lived on the grounds of the school that once stood in the place of the current library building.

Table 1. Unit 1 Artifact Summary by Level.

Artifact	Level 1 (Fill)	Level 2 (Disturbed)	Level 3 (Disturbed)	Level 4 (Disturbed)	Level 5 (Disturbed)	Total
Ceramics						
Whiteware		1				1
White granite		1				1
White bodied					1	1
Porcelain	1	2		1	1	5
Yellowware		1				1
Glass						
Window	1		4	1	1	7
Bottle		4				4
Vessel		3		1		4
Tableware		1				1
Metal						
Nail	1	6	8			15
Nail (coffin)					1	1
Strap	1					1
Hardware			1			1
Tobacco Pipe						
Stem	1					1
Shell						
Oyster					1	1
Total	5	19	13	3	5	45

4.3.2 Unit 2

A total of 111 artifacts were recovered from excavations of Unit 2. Artifacts recovered include ceramics, glass, metal, tobacco pipe stems, coffin nails, personal artifacts, and disarticulated and fragmentary human remains (Table 1)(Photo 8, Photo 9, and Photo 10). Unit 2 was terminated before reaching sterile subsoil when a presumed intact burial was encountered at the base of Level 5.

4.3.2.1 Ceramics

A total of 16 ceramic artifacts and two tobacco pipe stem fragments were recovered from excavation. Types of ceramics recovered include whiteware (1820-present), white-bodied earthenware (1820-present), porcelain, buff/pink bodied stoneware (ubiquitous), redware (ubiquitous), and pearlware (1780-1820).

Similar to Unit 1, porcelain, whiteware, and white bodied have wide ranges of production and can potentially be dated to the 19th to 20th centuries. The redware recovered from level 1 is most likely a modern terracotta flowerpot. However, the stoneware (level 3 – disturbed) and pearlware (level 5 – disturbed) can be dated to the 18th and 19th centuries. Similar to ceramics recovered from Unit 1, the ceramics recovered from Unit 2 are related to domestic and architectural use related to the previous PS 72 building and after the construction of the new, New Lots church in 1824.

4.3.2.2 Glass

A total of 51 glass artifacts were recovered from excavations of Unit 2 (Photo 11 and Photo 12). Glass fragments recovered include window (n=28), bottle (n=22), vessel (n=8), and a composite wire glass (n=3). Window glass recovered was encountered in fill and disturbed soils related to previous demolition and construction activities. Notable bottle and vessel fragments, include machine made threaded bottle glass recovered from level 1, handblown green bottle base from level 3, a molded bottle and bottle glass fragments from level 4 with Whitehall Tatum Co. “PAT/JAN 1894” embossed on the base, and bottle glass from level 5 with “H.J. Heinz Co.” embossed on bottle base. Overall, molded bottle and vessel glass began to be produced in the late 19th century. However, the Whitehall Tatum Co. bottle base fragment likely dates to the early 20th

century. The H.J. Heinz bottle is a ketchup bottle that is machine made with a threaded finish and dates to around 1919-1929. The wire glass encountered, often utilized in doors and stairways for safety purposes, was recovered in levels 3 and 4, are most likely from previous versions of structures within the parcel.

4.3.2.3 Metal

A total of 27 metal artifacts were recovered from excavations of Unit 2. Metal artifacts recovered include wire and cut nails, coffin nails, metal wire, sheet metal, and hardware (Photo 13 and Photo 14). Potential coffin nails, identified by size as well as wooden concretions found attached to the nails, were found in Level 5, directly surrounding the potentially intact burial. Metal hardware includes a corroded wrench, copper sheet metal, and coiled copper wire. Besides the identified coffin nails, other metal hardware can be attributed to structural elements deposited during previous ground disturbing events in the parcel.

4.3.2.4 Tobacco Pipe

Similar to Unit 1, two tobacco pipe stem fragments were recovered during excavations located within level 1. The two pipe stems each have a bore hole size of 4/64" which roughly corresponds to a production date of 1750 or later.

4.3.2.5 Shell

A single clam shell was identified in level 5 of Unit 2. While the clam shell was encountered in disturbed fill, it is unclear if the shell was associated with a burial, or potentially linked to household refuse related to food remains.

4.3.2.6 Personal Items

A total of two personal artifacts/items were recovered from level 1 and 3 (Photo 8 and Photo 10). From level 1, a thin band gold ring, which appears to have lost a setting or gem. The identification of a ring in this level could potentially be an unintentional loss of a ring or from a disturbed burial. In level 4, a porcelain Prosser four-hole button which dates to c. 1840. These artifacts could potentially relate to a lost button from a school child's clothing or potentially a button from a burial, the cloth having had degraded and decomposed leaving the button behind.

4.3.2.7 Mineral

Two mineral artifacts were recovered from level 1, a fill deposit, in Unit 2. These include a piece of mortar, and a dome shaped cap that appears to have been attached to a washer or a disk. Both artifacts are unintentional deposits related to previous ground disturbance within the parcel.

Table 2. Unit 2 Artifact Summary by Level.

Artifact	Level 1 (Fill)	Level 2 (Disturbed)	Level 3 (Disturbed)	Level 4 (Disturbed)	Level 5 (Disturbed)	Total
Ceramics						
Whiteware	2	3	1	2		8
White-bodied				3		3
Porcelain	1				1	2
Buff/pink bodied stoneware			1			1
Redware	1					1
Pearlware					1	1
Glass						
Window	8	4	3	6	7	28
Bottle	2	2	2	4	12	22
Vessel	2		1	2	3	8
Wire glass			1	2		3
Metal						
Nail	1	2	3			6
Nail (coffin)					7	7
Hardware	3			1		4
Wire		1		4		5
Sheet metal				5		5
Tobacco Pipe						
Stem	2					2
Shell						
Clam					1	1
Personal						
Ring	1					1
Button			1			1
Mineral						
Unidentified	1					1
Mortar	1					
Total	25	12	13	29	32	111

4.4 Artifact Summary and Discussion

No artifacts were recovered from any intact soil horizons beneath the eastern parking lot of New Lots Library. A level of fill is underlaid by multiple levels of disturbed soils. Artifacts recovered from the fill and disturbed soils range from 18th to 20th centuries with the majority being related to architectural/structural artifacts dating to the demolition of the previous school building.

In 1953, NYC parks took possession of PS 72 and the surrounding grounds with the intention of construction the now Sankofa playground (New York City Department of Parks & Recreation 2018). During this project, PS 72 was razed and the entire block was flattened and graded to create the artificial level ground that is present today. The disturbed levels (stratum) identified in unit excavation are likely the product of this artificial landscaping of the surrounding area in the 1950s. The razing and grading activities within the parcel disturbed and dispersed any domestic or architectural artifacts as well as any burials features (headstones, coffins, etc.) and human remains within the parcel.

4.5 Human Remains

Disarticulated and fragmentary human remains were recovered in both Units 1 and 2. Additionally, a potential intact burial was identified in the base of Level 5 of Unit 2. As an archeologist was using a small handheld

trowel to scrape some soil from the base of the unit, fragments from a larger bone were identified. The bone was friable and brittle.

Archeologists then carefully removed soil around the larger bone by hand which revealed to be a mostly intact cranium located close to the eastern wall of the excavation unit (Figure 6). No photographs of the remains were taken, and none will be included within this report with respect to the remains and the individual. The cranium was left in place but pedestaled within the excavations to ascertain whether it was in situ. During pedestalling excavations, a series of coffin nails were recovered around the cranium. While other fragmentary human remains recovered from excavations ranged in size from two to eight centimeters in length, the cranium appears largely intact. In addition, while the unit was placed in a north-south configuration perpendicular to the potential burial, the burial appears to be oriented in a traditional east-west direction, with excavations only identifying the very edge of the burial.

No discernable burial shaft was identified both on top of and around the nearly complete cranium. This could potentially be due to the fact the burial shaft was truncated from grading and ground disturbance associated with the construction of the library building and demolition of previous structures and alterations to the landscape. The burial was identified approximately 80 centimeters (31 inches) below surface. The shallow encounter of the burial could be associated with the common practice of stacked burials when space within a cemetery is limited, or the landscape was altered, and soil was graded and removed which would place the burial closer to the ground surface.

The disarticulated and fragmentary remains were relatively small in size, and therefore often could not be identified to a particular element, side, or sex. Collected remains include cranial and post-cranial fragments. All remains are currently being stored at Frank R. Bell Funeral Home in Brooklyn for later internment at the conclusion of the project. With the anticipation of archeological monitoring for the Library renovation happening later this year, an inventory of collected human remains will be produced to include any further information of element, age, and sexing which will be completed by a Physical Anthropologist.

The human remains found throughout the identified disturbed soil in both Units 1 and 2. The disturbance and dispersal of remains is directly associated with PS 72 demolition, grading of the block, and subsequent construction of the library building.

The presence of disarticulated and fragmentary human remains, as well as the presence of a potential burial beneath the eastern parking lot of New Lots Library, the entirety of the eastern portion of the parcel. Based on the GPR data and the initial archeological investigations, there does not appear to be a consistent pattern. In the absence of DNA testing, there is no way possible at this point to associate the recovered human remains with any specific ethnic or cultural group that includes the Dutch Reformed Church or the enslaved or freed African American population of the area. Both of which, had interred their ancestors within the cemetery located along the eastern edge of the parcel.



Figure 3. Aerial image from 1924 showing PZ 72 and the unoccupied cemetery with a small trail running north to south (NYC Now and Then 1924). Location of the eastern parking lot outlined in red.



Figure 4. Aerial image from 1954 showing t PS 72 demolished and the entire block has been razed and leveled (NETR Online 1954).



Figure 5. Aerial image from 1966 depicting the library structure now within the parcel and occupying the current space, with the eastern parking lot area outlined in red (NETR Online 1966).



Photo 1. Monitoring of removal of asphalt and subbase by hand, view to northwest.



Photo 2. Archeologists excavating Unit 1 beneath the asphalt of the eastern parking lot with the New Lots Library building in background, view to southwest.



Photo 3. Archeologist excavating Unit 2 beneath asphalt of the eastern parking lot area, view to south.



Photo 4. Restoration of the parking lot after Unit backfilling, view to west.



Photo 5. Sample of glass artifacts, vessel (left) and stemware (right), from Unit 1 Level 2.



Photo 6. Yellowware (Rockingham type) and molded porcelain artifacts recovered from Unit 1 Level 2.



Photo 7. Tobacco pipe stem recovered from Unit 1 Level 1.



Photo 8. Gold ring recovered from Unit 2 level 1. Note the gap in the center where a setting is missing.



Photo 9. Unidentified hardware, most likely a wrench, recovered from Unit 2 Level 1.



Photo 10. Prosser, four-hole porcelain button recovered from Unit 2 level 3.



Photo 11. Aqua bottle base dated to approximately ca. 1901 recovered from Unit 2 level 4.



Photo 12. Heinz ketchup bottle base and potential neck recovered from southwest corner of Unit 2 level 5.



Photo 13. Coiled copper wire recovered from Unit 2 Level 4.



Photo 14. A sample of coffin nails with wood concretions around the nail, recovered from directly around the intact burial, Unit 2 Level 5.

5 Archeological Sites

5.1 Sankofa (formerly Schenck) Park/ New Lots Cemetery (04701.024904) (Map 2)

Attribute	Site Description
USN	04701.024904
Date	c. late-1600s and early 1900s
Type	Historic cemetery of Dutch Settlers and enslaved and freed African Americans
Size	430.8 m ²
Depth	1 m
Coordinates	NAD 83, UTM Zone 18, 594172 Easting, 4502209 Northing
Boundary	Parking lot east of New Lots Library building
NR Status	Undetermined- recommended as potentially eligible under Criterion D

A total of 156 artifacts dating to the previous usage of the parcel as school grounds or a cemetery were collected during the excavation of Units 1 and 2 beneath the eastern parking lot. Artifacts recovered date from the mid-18th century to the early 20th century, prior to the razing of PS 72 and grading landscaping of the block to make way for the future, now current, library building.

In addition to the domestic and architectural artifacts, disarticulated, fragmentary human remains, and a largely intact burial were identified during excavations. The remains are an extension of the Sankofa (formerly Schenck) Park/New Lots Cemetery (04701.024904) located directly to the north. While a majority of the artifacts are encountered in disturbed soils, the potential for an intact burial demonstrates the potential for other burials beneath the eastern parking lot and intact soils containing artifacts related to the previous cemetery and school building.

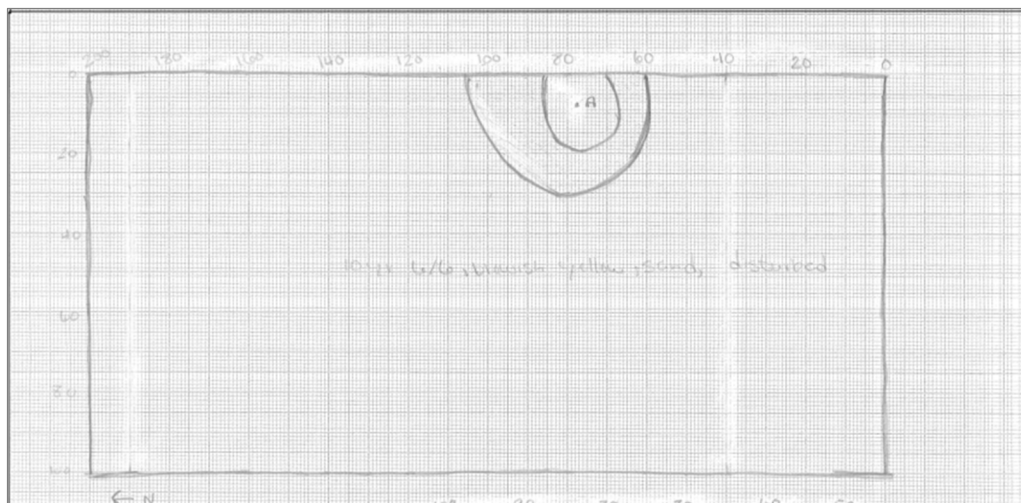


Figure 6. Planview drawing of Unit 2, with location of intact burial/human cranium shown by point A (Map 2).

6 Recommendations

A Phase IB study was initiated at Sankofa (formerly Schenck) Park/New Lots Cemetery (04701.024904), where burials from the 17th, 18th, 19th, and perhaps even the early 20th century were interred. The cemetery originated as part of the New Lot Dutch Reformed Church patent, but eventually the plot became a community burial ground that included many local Black residents. The church moved some of the interments after 1841 across the street to a new Church lot. However, other burials were left in place and many new burials excavated over time. The proposed New Lots, Brooklyn Public Library Reconstruction Project includes the southwest portion of the burial ground, as documented on historical maps and surveys. The archeology focused on identifying intact burials and disarticulated human remains through Ground Penetrating Radar survey and limited ground-truthing excavations.

The results of the GPR proved to be inconclusive, as a presumed anomaly investigated in Unit 1 did not represent a burial shaft. Additionally, an intact burial was identified by fieldwork where the GPR failed to detect an anomaly. The results from the GPR data could be due to the shallowness of the burials relative to the modern ground surface, the absence of well-defined grave shafts, and the highly mixed and disturbed nature of the soils. This was particularly true with respect to the identified burial in Unit 2 which contained modern construction debris such as concrete and asphalt.

Moving forward, the potential for encountering shallow intact burials located beneath the eastern parking lot is deemed to be high. Additionally, there are fragmentary human remains within the soil column starting at 40 cm below the surface.

It is recommended that construction be designed to avoid disturbing intact burials, and disarticulated human remains to the greatest extent possible. Impacts should be limited to the asphalt and subbase, approximately 30 centimeters below current ground surface. Any utilities within the eastern parking lot could also potentially be installed via direction drilling beneath the anticipated depth of burials.

An open forum was conducted May 15, 2025 when descendant community members were invited to discuss the preliminary Phase 1B findings, explore how the human remains will be handled and reinterred, and the development and proposed disturbance associated with reconstruction of the library. The descendent community has stated the importance of incorporating spiritual elements before construction starts and that remains should remain at rest, to the greatest extent possible. This includes no further disturbance of potential intact burials and no further testing on remains that have been collected from excavations.

Currently, project plans are being redesigned to include utilizing fill soil within the eastern parking lot area to avoid ground disturbance and further disturbance of potential intact burials and disarticulated and fragmentary remains.

Moving forward, the potential for encountering shallow intact burials located beneath the eastern parking lot is deemed to be high. Additionally, there are fragmentary human remains within the soil column starting at 40 cm below the surface.

Table 3. Summary of soil stratigraphy identified during excavations.

Unit	Stratum	Depth (below surface)	Interpretation	Human Remains (Y/N)
1	1	30-40	Fill	No
	2	34-64	Disturbed	Y
	3	54-150	C	Y (very top)
	4	150-210	C	N
2	1	20-36	Fill	N
	2	24-44	Disturbed	N
	3	40-66	Disturbed	Y
	4	40-70	Disturbed	Y
	5/6	70-84	Disturbed	Y

The cemetery site is likely to be considered a National Register-eligible resource under Criterion D, as having data potential for the understanding of major historical trends in the expansion of New York City from the 17th to early 20th centuries (Little et al. 2000). Further, the site is significant and relevant today as part of a contested and shared landscape between the former colonial Dutch community and African diasporas within New York state.

The cemetery is an important local historical resource that has deep meaning to its various constituents. The library has made great strides in engaging the community with respect to the construction of the new library and the services and programs it will provide. The cemetery, although long forgotten and buried under the modern city infrastructure, remains partially intact. Its future preservation and interpretation will be an enduring part of the new library's legacy.

7 References Cited

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Appendix 1: Artifact Inventory

5947PH1B: Phase IB Archeological Investigation, New Lots Library

Artifact Inventory

<u>Provenience</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Feature</u>	<u>Bag</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Artifact Description</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Material Not Collected</u>	<u>Weight (g)</u>
U 1	1		1	1	1	porcelain	porcelain		4.6
U 1	1		1	2	1	tobacco pipe	ball clay-white		2.0
U 1	1		1	3	1	window	glass		6.3
U 1	1		1	4	1	nail	iron alloy		7.2
U 1	1		1	5	1	strap	iron alloy		56.5
U 1	2		2	1	1	whiteware	refined earthenware		1.3
U 1	2		2	2	1	white granite	refined earthenware		9.1
U 1	2		2	3	1	yellowware	refined earthenware		36.0
U 1	2		2	4	2	porcelain	porcelain		2.2
U 1	2		2	5	4	bottle	glass		25.2
U 1	2		2	6	1	tableware	glass		63.3
U 1	2		2	7	3	vessel	glass		149.6
U 1	2		2	8	6	nail	iron alloy		44.7
U 1	3		3	1	4	window	glass		35.1
U 1	3		3	2	8	nail	iron alloy		62.2
U 1	3		3	3	1	unidentified hardware	iron alloy		4.6
U 1	4		4	1	1	unidentified	porcelain		2.6
U 1	4		4	2	1	vessel	glass		6.9
U 1	4		4	3	1	window	glass		3.2

5947PH1B: Phase IB Archeological Investigation, New Lots Library

Artifact Inventory

<u>Provenience</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Feature</u>	<u>Bag</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Artifact Description</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Material Not Collected</u>	<u>Weight (g)</u>
U 1	5		5	1	1	white bodied	refined earthenware		0.4
U 1	5		5	2	1	porcelain	porcelain		2.0
U 1	5		5	3	1	window	glass		4.2
U 1	5		5	4	1	nail	iron alloy		15.5
U 1	5		5	5	1	shell	shell		4.3
U 2	1		6	1	1	redware	coarse earthenware		2.1
U 2	1		6	2	2	whiteware	refined earthenware		0.9
U 2	1		6	3	1	porcelain	porcelain		34.2
U 2	1		6	4	2	tobacco pipe	ball clay-white		1.7
U 2	1		6	5	2	bottle	glass		44.7
U 2	1		6	6	2	vessel	glass		1.2
U 2	1		6	7	8	window	glass		19.4
U 2	1		6	8	1	jewelry	gold		1.2
U 2	1		6	9	1	nail	iron alloy		8.1
U 2	1		6	10	1	grommet	copper alloy		0.2
U 2	1		6	11	2	unidentified	iron alloy		46.8
U 2	1		6	12	1	mortar	mortar		0.2
U 2	1		6	13	1	unidentified	mineral		1.3
U 2	2		7	1	2	whiteware	refined earthenware		3.0
U 2	2		7	2	2	bottle	glass		39.7

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Artifact Inventory

<u>Provenience</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Feature</u>	<u>Bag</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Artifact Description</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Material Not Collected</u>	<u>Weight (g)</u>
U 2	2		7	3	4	window	glass		16.1
U 2	2		7	4	2	nail	iron alloy		93.6
U 2	2		7	5	1	wire	iron alloy		68.3
GP								Slag, unidentified corded metal	
U 2			8	1	1	whiteware	refined earthenware		2.0
U 2	3		9	1	1	whiteware	refined earthenware		1.8
U 2	3		9	2	1	buff/pink bodied stoneware	stoneware		2.8
U 2	3		9	3	2	bottle	glass		47.7
U 2	3		9	4	1	vessel	glass		10.6
U 2	3		9	5	3	window	glass		7.2
U 2	3		9	6	1	wire glass	composite		10.3
U 2	3		9	7	1	button	porcelain		0.4
U 2	3		9	8	3	nail	iron alloy		30.4
U 2	4		10	1	2	whiteware	refined earthenware		4.2
U 2	4		10	2	3	white bodied	refined earthenware		2.4
U 2	4		10	3	4	bottle	glass		75.6
U 2	4		10	4	2	vessel	glass		3.5
U 2	4		10	5	6	window	glass		19.6
U 2	4		10	6	2	wire glass	composite		35.5
U 2	4		10	7	1	unidentified	iron alloy		13.9

5947PH1B: Phase IB Archeological Investigation, New Lots Library

Artifact Inventory

<u>Provenience</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Feature</u>	<u>Bag</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Artifact Description</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Material Not Collected</u>	<u>Weight (g)</u>
U 2	4		10	8	5	sheet metal	copper alloy		9.0
U 2	4		10	9	4	wire	copper alloy		0.2
Above Soil Change									
U 2	5		11	1	1	pearlware	refined earthenware		0.1
U 2	5		11	2	7	bottle	glass		21.9
U 2	5		11	3	3	vessel	glass		11.4
U 2	5		11	4	6	window	glass		18.5
U 2	5		11	5	1	unidentified	porcelain		1.3
U 2	5		11	6	1	nail	iron alloy		6.6
U 2	5		11	7	1	shell	shell		1.4
Below Soil Change									
U 2	5		12	1	1	window	glass		3.6
SE, Below Soil Change									
U 2	5		13	1	6	nail	iron alloy		35.1
SW Corner									
U 2	5		14	1	5	bottle	glass		102.3