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Feb,
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February 20, 2002

Arthur Bankoff, Ph.D.
Archaeological Advisor to The Chairman
New York City Landmarks Commission
1 Centre Street - 9N
New York, NY 10007

Re: Block 1770, Lot 49 (160 East 122 Street), Manhattan: Letter Report on Field Findings

Dear Dr. Bankoff:

In accordance with the accepted work plan (February 1, 2002), which proposed a letter report if testing found nothing of archaeological significance, this letter report documents the methods and findings of field testing at the above-referenced property on February 12, 2002. On that day, the developer, BFC Construction, provided a backhoe and operator to test the backyard of 160 East 122 Street. The goal was to locate any archaeological evidence of an early 19th-century slaughter house that might remain on the lot (Figure 1). Although up to five trenches were proposed in the work plan (Figure 2), it was understood that the number and placement of the trenches would depend on field conditions and findings, and would be adjusted accordingly. The day was clear and cold, and the site ready for testing when we arrived at 8:00 in the morning.

Using a rubber-tired CAT backhoe with a 24-inch bucket, three trenches were opened that ultimately tested almost the entire 23 by 17-foot backyard (Figure 3). The developer also provided the services of two laborers to expedite testing, and all trenching was under my direction assisted by Shelly Spritzer.

As outlined in the work plan, all tests were to be taken to sterile soil, but, as it turned out, bedrock was reached in most cases. Bedrock, which was found to slope up to the north and east, was at its deepest in the southern part of Trench 1 (TR1) in the center of the yard where it was 8 feet below the ground surface (BGS). However, its depth varied: it was exposed just below the ground surface along the eastern property line and approximately 4 feet BGS in the northern part of the trenches, near the rear foundation wall of the former house structure on the lot. Its depth in this part of the yard would have accommodated only a half-basement under 160 East 122 Street and the 1940 tax photo shows this to be the case (see Figure 4).

Testing exposed only one feature. This was a brick-walled, rear appendage to the 1880 house structure, referred to here as Feature 1, a feature not documented on any map. Initially, what proved to be the feature's eastern wall was partially exposed on the west side of TR1. When it was more fully revealed in Trench 2 (TR2), the feature appeared to be the remnant of a narrow (3.35-foot wide north to south), stone-floored access behind the western end of the former structure. Steps with 1-foot

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stone treads and 10-inch stone risers were exposed on the western end of its south wall (Figure 5). Excavation of the feature's southeastern corner revealed that the brick courses of its eastern and southern walls did not align, and that the south wall was more crudely made than the east wall (Figure 6). At first this led to speculation that the south wall might represent reuse of a foundation wall from a stable structure once located on the site (Geismar 2001:16), but the configuration of the stable shown on an 1870 Perris and Browne atlas did not conform to what was found in the ground (Figure 7 this letter report). Instead, as mentioned above, this feature appears to be a structural element of the 1880 house, but perhaps one that was altered over time. No evidence was found for a row of sheds documented along the lot's rear property line (e.g., see Figures 2 and 3).

The three trenches were plotted (see Figure 3) and photographed (for example, Figures 8 - 10), but the excavations were far from photogenic. In addition, a schematic profile was made of a section of the east wall of TR1 (Figure 11). Testing was completed by 11:30 AM, and all trenches were backfilled.

In summary, extensive testing in the former backyard of 160 East 122 Street (Block 1770, Lot 49) did not reveal any evidence of significant features or structures. No further testing or field investigations are required.

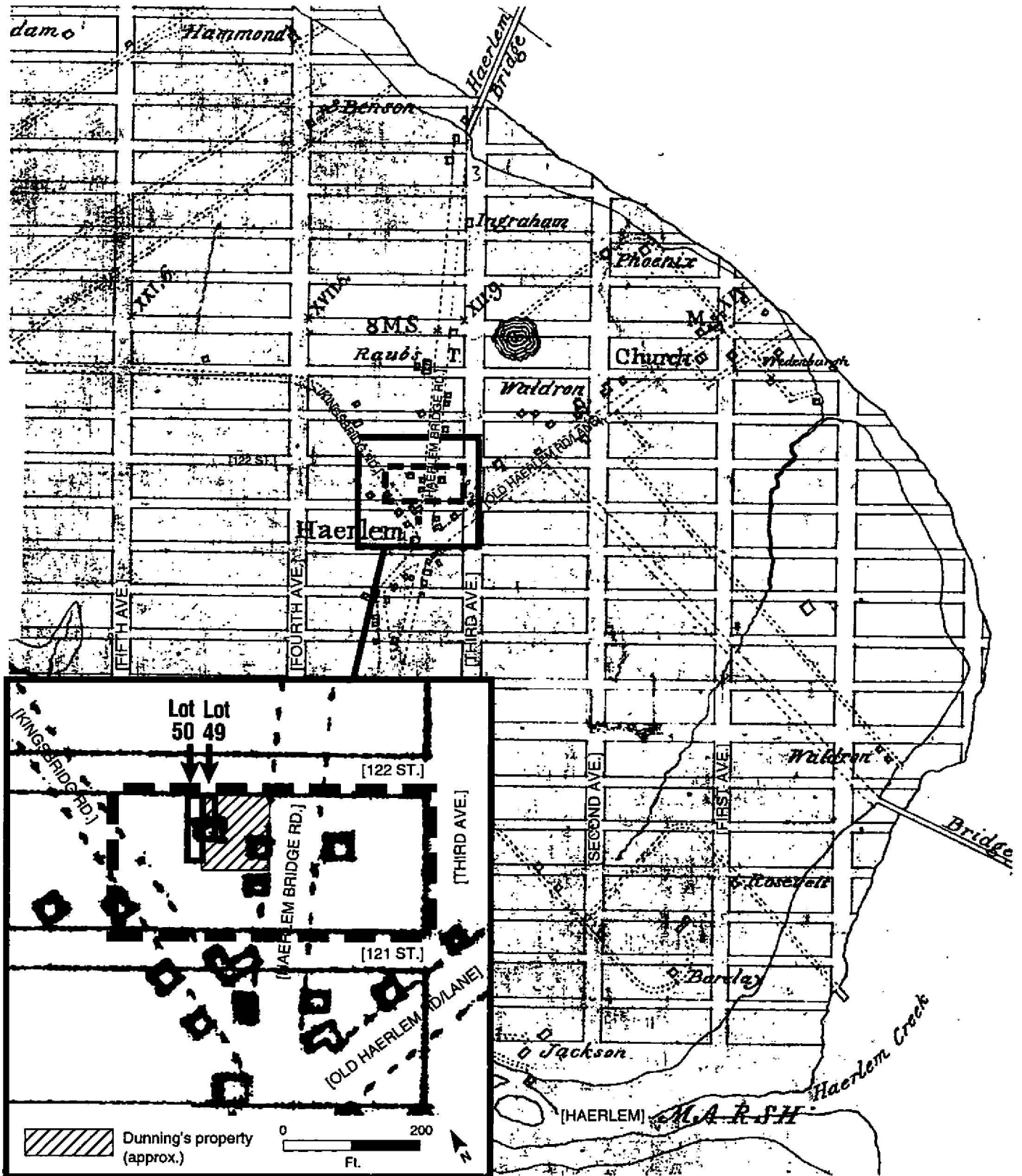
Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

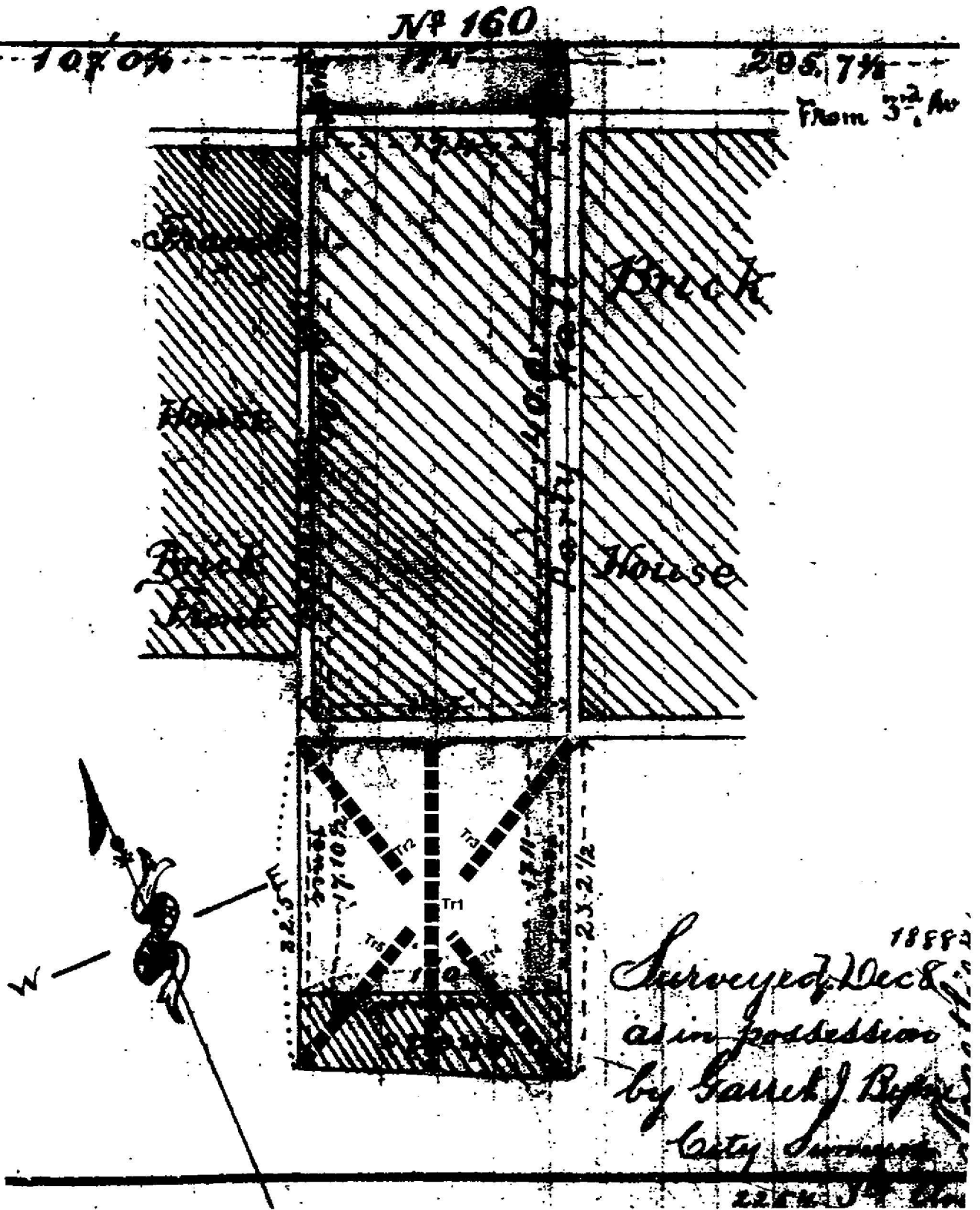
Sincerely,

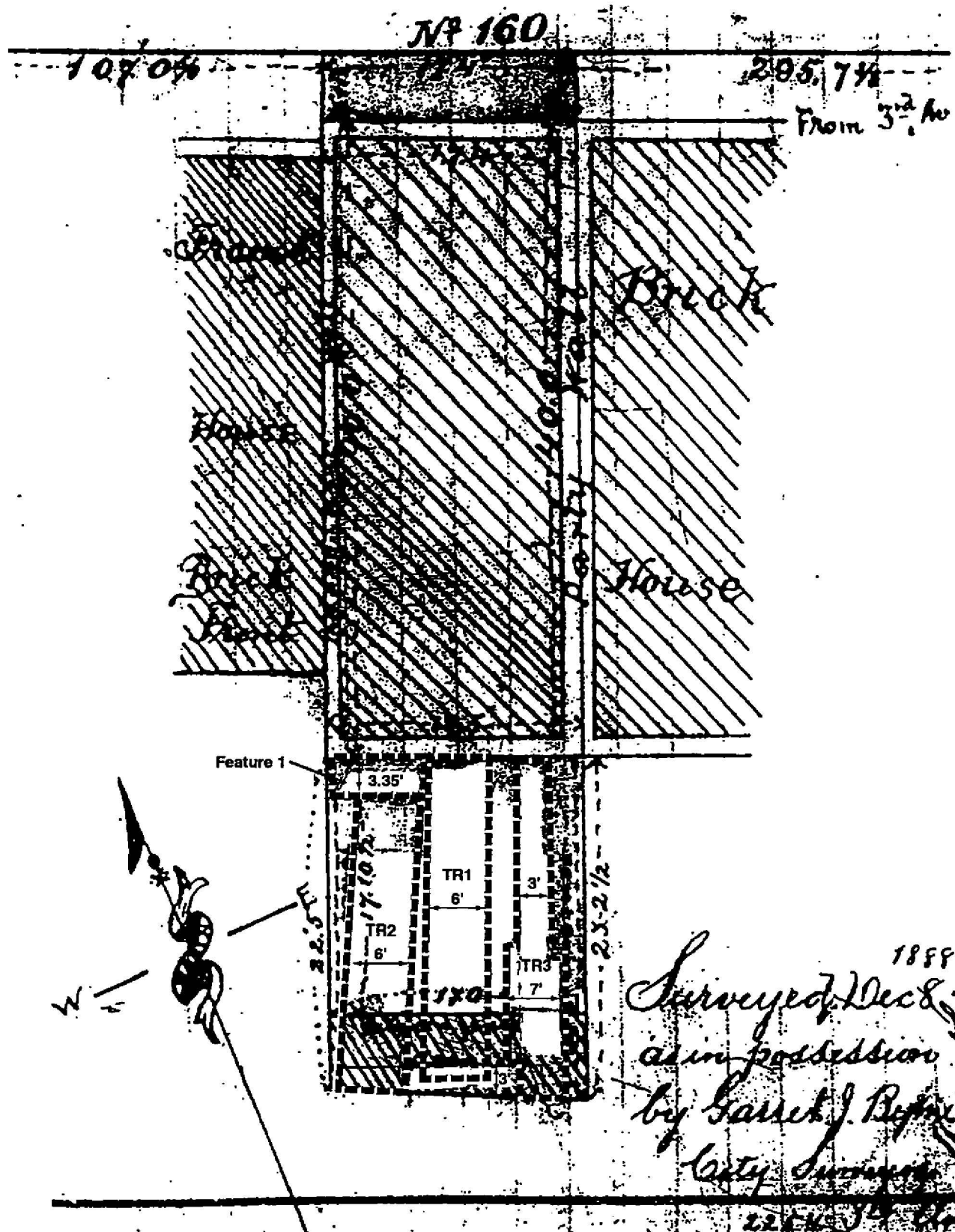
A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Joan H. Geismar". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

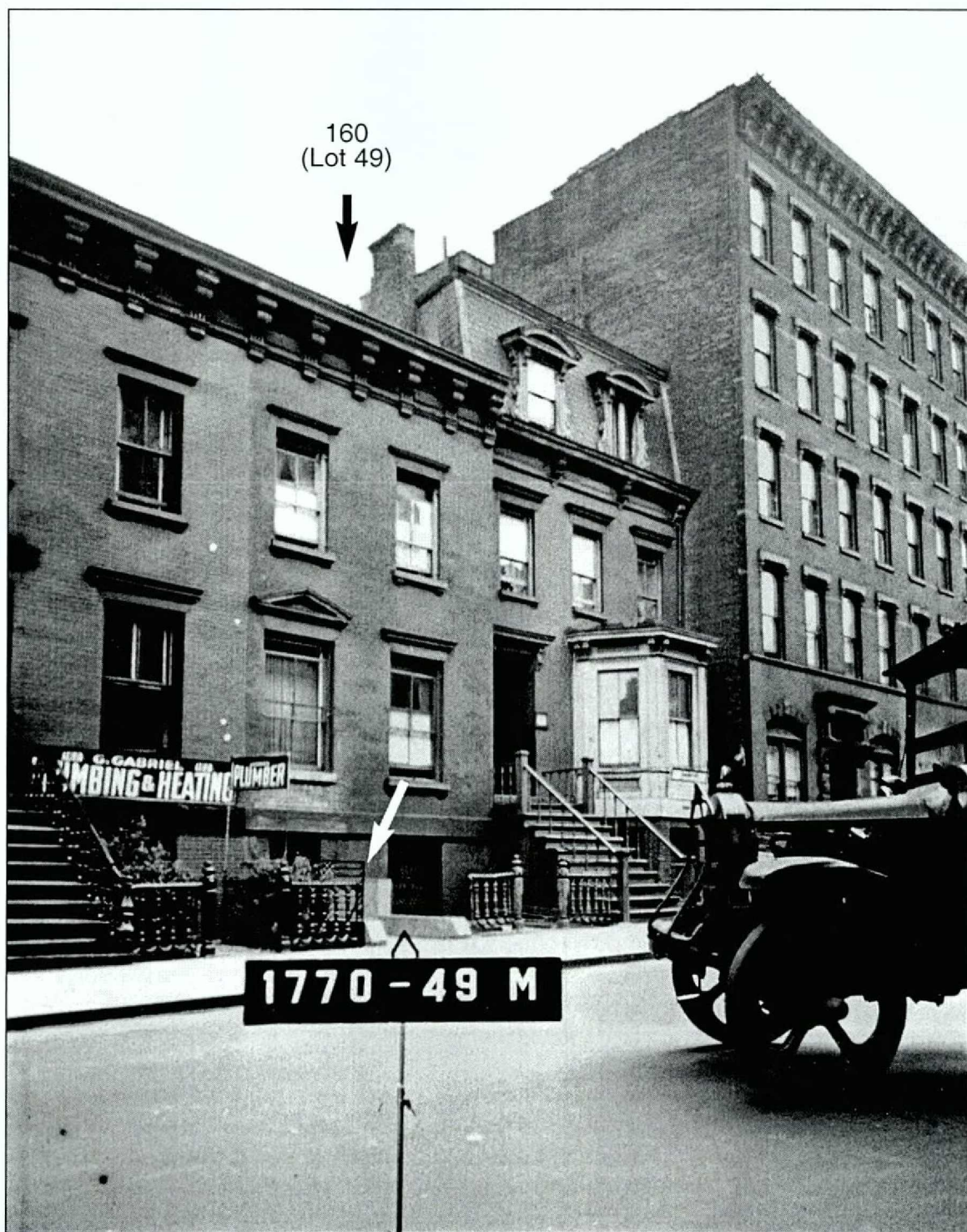
Joan H. Geismar, Ph.D.

cc. Adelle Kleiman-Levine, DAS Resources, Inc.







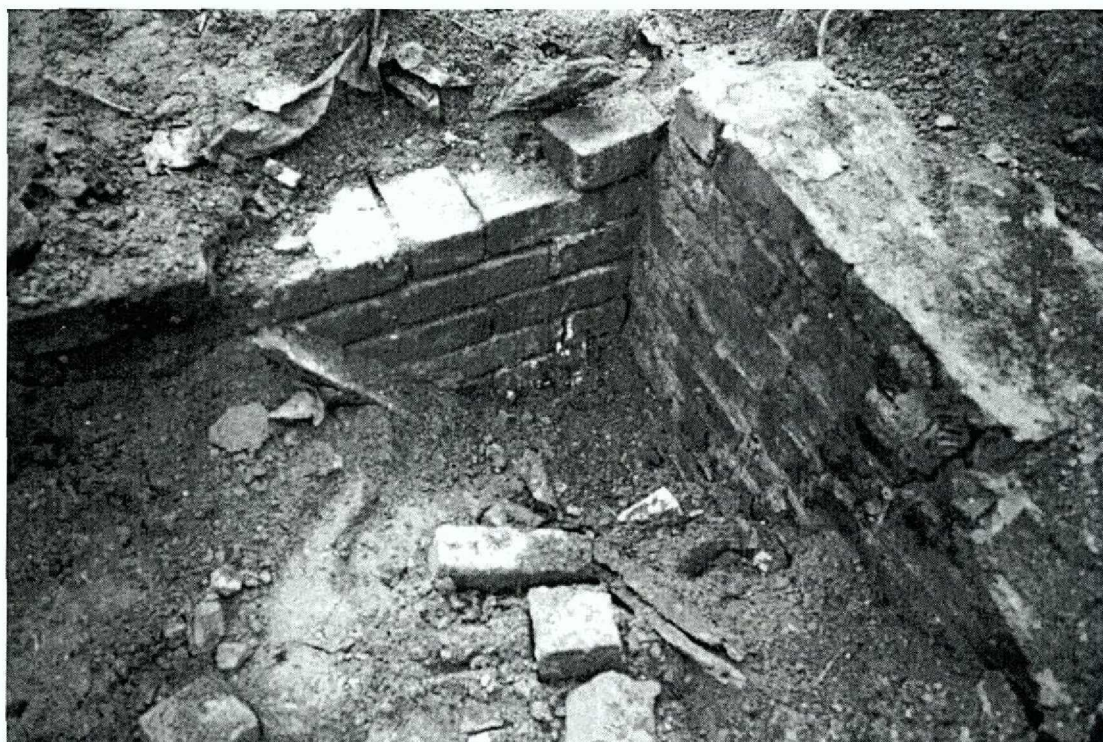


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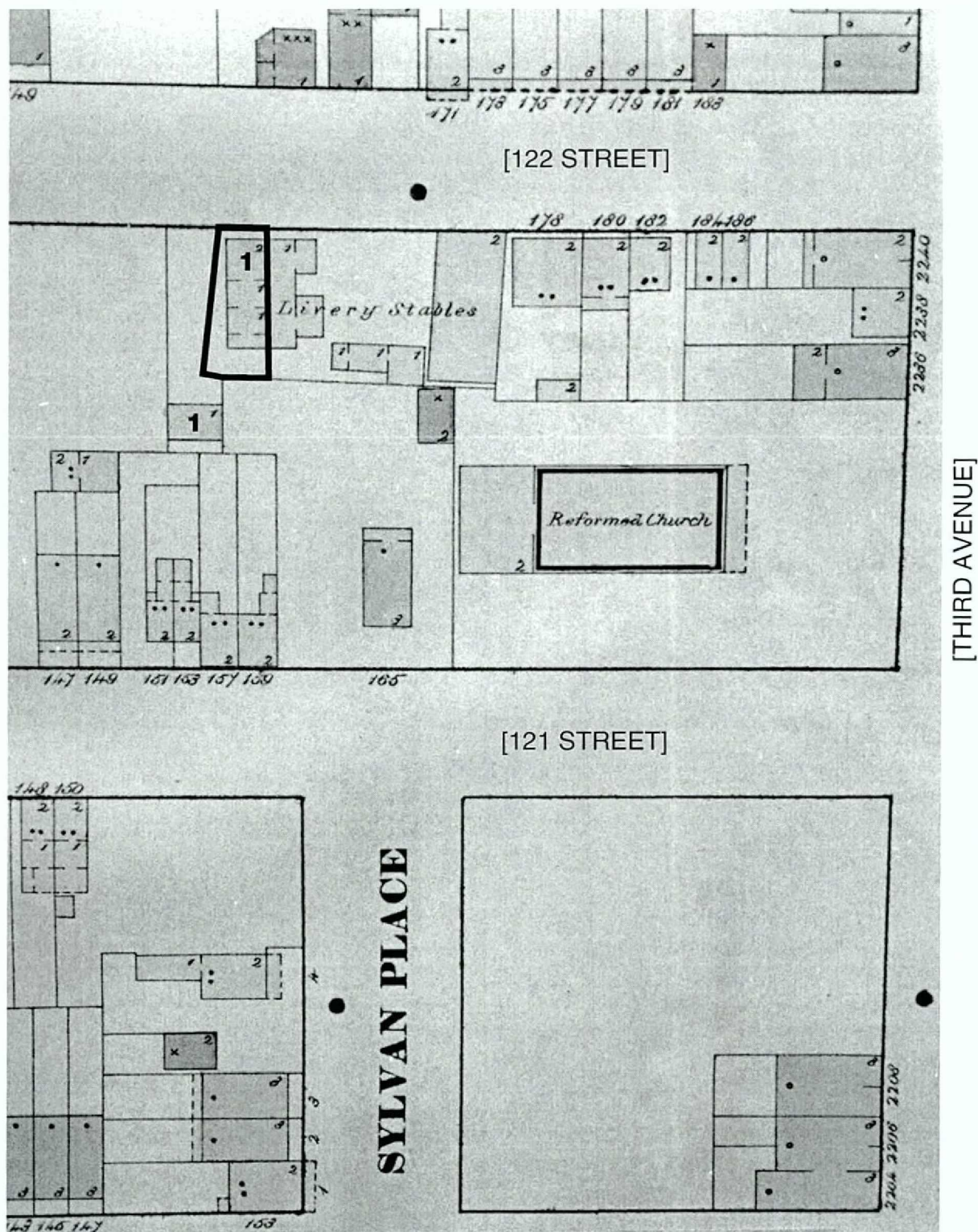
Tax photo of 160 East 122 Street c. 1940. Note half basement (white arrow).



5 Stone steps exposed in southwest corner of Feature 1. (Geismar 2/12/02)



6 Exposed southeast corner of Feature 1 in TR2. Note that brick courses in the east wall (left) do not align with the feature's more crudely-made south wall (right). (Geismar 2/12/02)



Courtesy of the New York Historical Society

- project lot
- 1** part of a livery stable with frame structures, Lot 49





8 Trench 1, looking south toward back of yard. The deepest bedrock exposed during testing (arrow) was found in this trench. (Geismar 2/12/02)



9 Trench 3 (TR3) along eastern edge of backyard. View is looking south. Note shallow bedrock (arrow) to the left. (Geismar 2/12/02)



10 Same as above, looking slightly northeast. Note stone facing (black arrow) that was under a stone ledge in this part of the yard. Also, note bedrock exposed under the dressed stone (white arrow). (Geismar 2/12/02)

