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East Harlem Triangle Urban
Renewal Area
Manhattan, New York

Archaeological Testing Report
CEQR #89-106M

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LANDMARKS PRESERVATION
COMMISSION

Prepared for:
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Introduction

The East Harlem Triangle Housing Project consists of portions of Blocks 1791 and 1792 in Manhattan, New York. During July 1993, Greenhouse Consultants Incorporated conducted a Stage Ib archaeological survey of lot numbers 5,9,101,106 and 109 on Block 1791 in East Harlem, Borough of Manhattan. These lots were recommended for archaeological testing in the documentary study completed for the East Harlem Triangle project (Rubinson and Winter 1991:30-32). See Figure 1 for the location of the project area.

The work was undertaken for the New York City Department of Housing, Preservation and Development. Field work was conducted by Alfred Cammisa and Felicia Burgos Cammisa. Report preparation was conducted by William I Roberts IV and Alfred Cammisa who acted as co-principal investigators. Word processing and editing were done by Paula Crowley.

The general purpose of archaeological testing is to document the presence or absence of potential prehistoric and/or historic archaeological resources through the use of physical testing techniques. The specific purpose of this testing was to provide evidence of the presence or absence of two categories of potential archaeological resources on this block. The most recent category consists of features associated with late nineteenth century residences. Expected features included privies as well as cisterns or ~~G~~ells, which would be located at or near the present surface. The older category consists of prehistoric resources.

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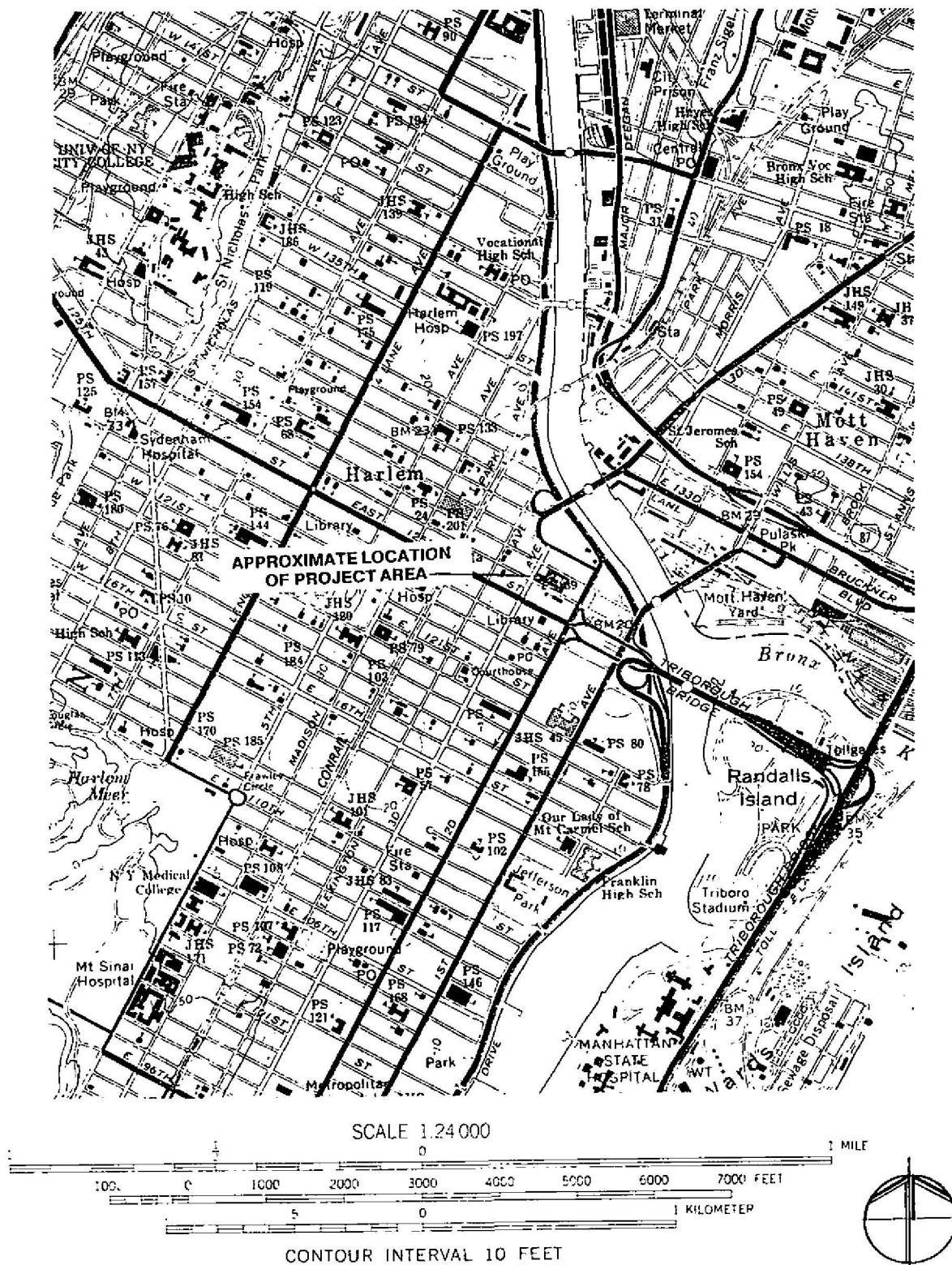


Figure 1 Location of the project area shown on portion of U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute series Central Park, N.Y.-N.J. quadrangle, 1966 photorevised 1979.



Methodology

The subsurface archaeological testing of the East Harlem Triangle Project in Manhattan, New York began on July 14, 1993 and was completed on July 16, 1993. As stated in the scope-of-work for this testing, the technique used to examine buried deposits and thereby determine the presence or absence of archaeological resources was the mechanical excavation of trenches. A total of six trenches were excavated by backhoe (see Figure 2), the results of which were closely monitored by archaeologists. This testing strategy was approved by the staff of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.

The use of mechanical means of excavation expedites the removal of large quantities of fill. A total of approximately 6,210 cubic feet of soil were removed from the trenches, the dimensions of which varied from 20 feet to 50 feet long, 5 feet to 7 feet wide, and 5.0 to 6.0 feet deep.

Trench 1 was located at the rear of Lots 5 and 106 on Block 1791 which faced East 126th Street. It measured approximately 50 feet east-west by 5 feet north-south by 5 feet deep.

Trench 2 was located near the center of Lots 5 and 106 on Block 1791. It also measured approximately 50 feet east-west by 5 feet north-south by 5 feet deep.

Trench 3 was placed near the center of Lots 9 and 109 on Block 1791 which faced East 126th Street and measured about 35 feet east-west by 5 feet north-south by 5 feet deep. The scope-of-work showed the proposed location of Trench 3 as staggered, with the 17.5 foot long portion to the west (within Lot 9) approximately 10 feet closer to East 126th Street than the portion to the east (within Lot 109). The western portion was moved back 10 feet when the backhoe revealed that the original location was within a filled cellar.

Trench 4 lay to the rear of Lots 9 and 109 on Block 1791 East 126 Street and measured the same as Trench 3.

Trenches 5 and 6 lay near the center of Lot 101 on Block 1791 which faced Third Avenue and measured about 20 feet north-south by 6-7 feet east-west by 6 1/2 feet deep. Only 10 feet separated the two trenches.

Soil samples were selectively removed from the layers encountered. The soil was randomly screened through 1/4 inch mesh by stratum. All debris were examined for [historic potential].

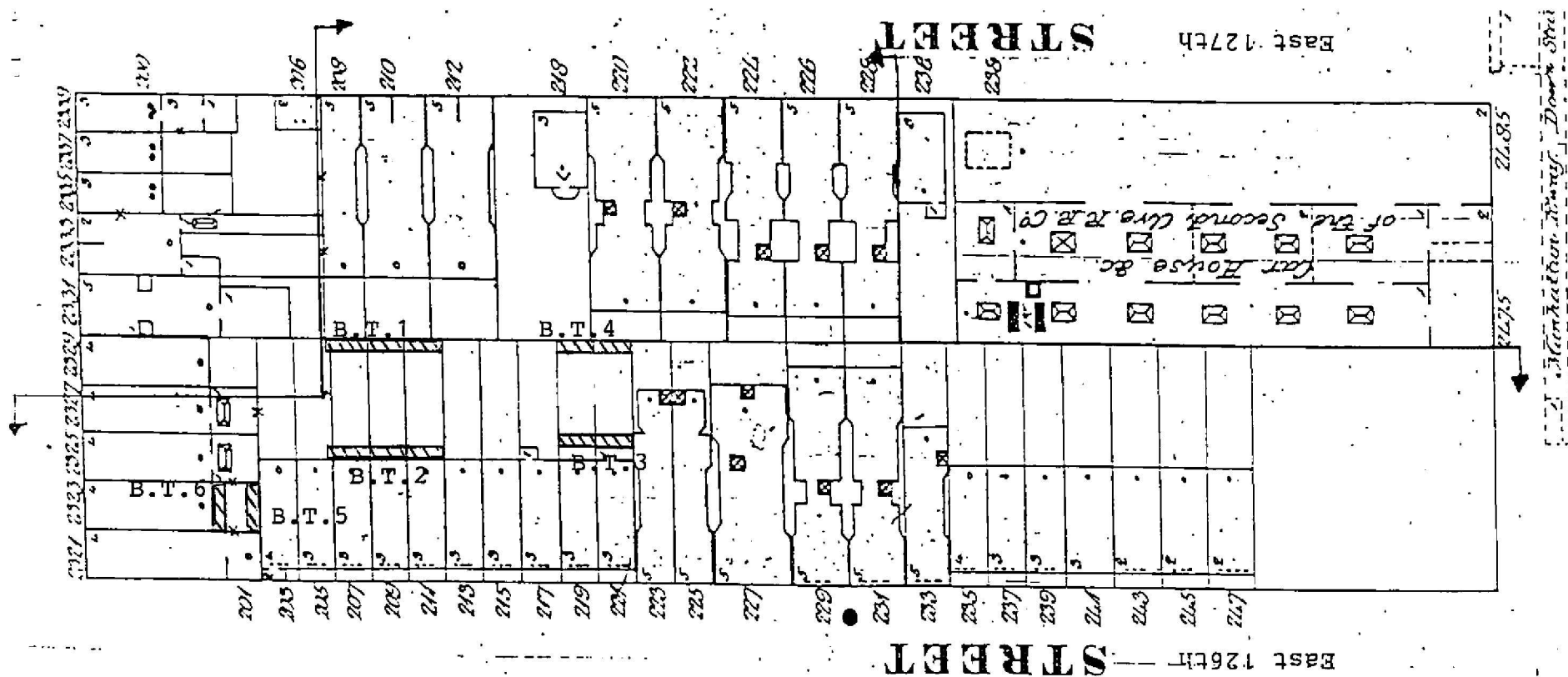
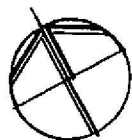


Figure 2 Locations of Backhoe Trenches shown on portion of the 1894 Sanborn Map of Block 1791. Approximate Scale 100 feet = 1.5 inches. Trenches indicated by hatchure.



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Areas that were not screened included any stratum that contained abundant modern debris. Soil strata were measured, described, and recorded for all trenches. All trenches were backfilled immediately following excavation and the recording of data.



Stratigraphic Summary

A total of 6 backhoe trenches numbered 1 through 6 were excavated within Block. See Figure 2 for the locations of these trenches, and Plates 1 through 6 for illustrations of them.

No prehistoric features or artifacts were encountered in any of the excavated trenches. No significant deposits of historic artifacts were found in the six trenches.

Stratigraphy can be summarized as follows:

Trenches 1 through 6 had fill and rubble from the surface to approximately 3 to 4 1/2 feet below surface

Trenches 1 through 4 had an original, intact soil of 7.5YR4/6-5/8 sand with river cobbles from 3 1/2 to 4 feet to the bottom of the trench at 5 1/2 feet below surface. Trench 3 had an additional stratum of 10YR5/6 sandy loam of probable river deposit, overlying the basal stratum (of 7.5YR 4/6 sand). Trench 3, levels 7 and Trench 4, level 4 had dark stains with some ash remains. This seems to represent a small fire that had occurred here and is associated with modern debris.

Trench 5 had a fill rubble stratum from 0 to 6 1/2 feet below surface. This might have been the remains of an old basement. The backhoe could not excavate deeper than 6 1/2 feet to locate the undisturbed soil.

Trench 6 had a fill and rubble stratum from 0 to about 4 feet below surface. The underlying, undisturbed soil was a 10YR 4/3 sandy loam with river cobbles and gravel.

Features

Trench 1: A stone lot wall, located on the lot line. It is about 18 inches wide and was exposed in the west section of the trench (Figure 3). The wall was encountered at about 3 feet below surface and continued down to the bottom of the trench. It ran in a north-south direction. No historic artifacts were found associated with this feature. See Plate 1 for a view of Backhoe Trench with this wall.

Trench 2: A brick wall with mortar over it was exposed in the north wall in the western portion of the trench (Figure 3). It was exposed from about one foot below surface to the bottom of the trench. Approximately six feet of the wall was exposed before it continued beyond the end of the trench. This wall was most likely the rear wall of the structure occupying this lot. Perhaps this building was expanded after the 1894 Sandborn map was published. No historic artifacts were found here.

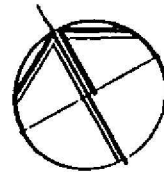
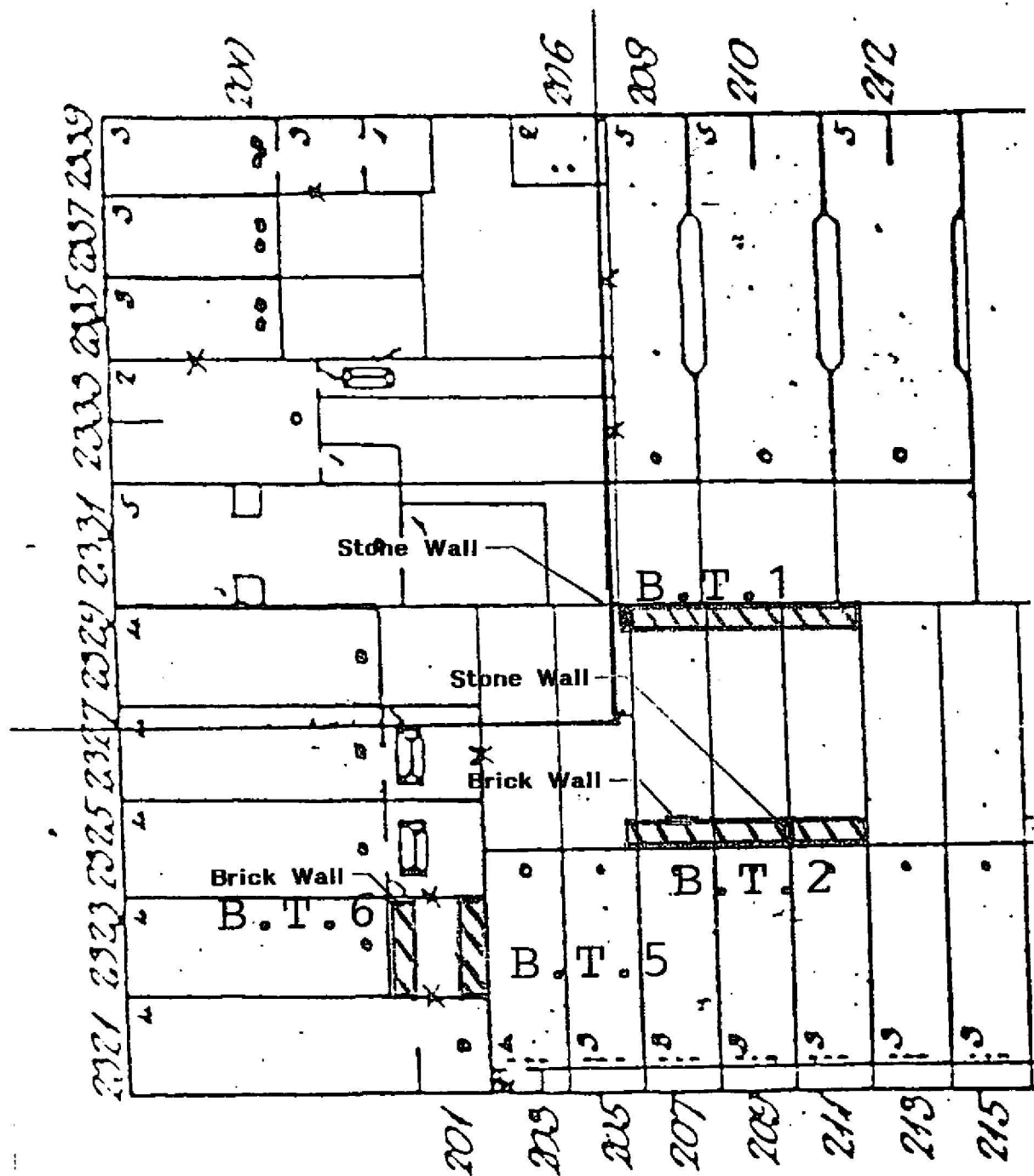


Figure 3 Locations of walls found within Backhoe Trenches 1, 2 and 6, shown on portion of 1894 Sanborn map. Approximate Scale: 100 feet = 3 inches.

A second feature was exposed which consisted of a stone lot wall. This was also located along a lot line (Figure 3). It was exposed from three feet below surface to the bottom of the trench at approximately the middle of the trench. It was orientated on the north-south axis and was one foot wide. See Plate 2 for a view of Backhoe Trench 2 with this lot wall.

No historic artifacts were associated with either feature.

Trench 6: A brick wall was exposed on the north wall of this trench from just below the surface down to the bottom of the trench. It ran east-west and into the trench sidewalls (Figure 3). Since the trench was about 6 feet wide, the length was at least the same and probably longer.

No historic artifacts were found associated with this feature.



Conclusions and Recommendations

It is our conclusion that no potentially significant cultural resources were found within the six mechanically excavated test trenches. Based on this subsurface testing, we further conclude that it is highly unlikely that any significant cultural resources will be impacted by the proposed East Harlem Triangle Housing project. We recommend that no additional archaeological testing or mitigation is necessary at these locations within Block 1791 in the Borough of Manhattan, New York.



Plate 1 View of Backhoe Trench 1 looking west showing stone wall.



Plate 2 View of Backhoe Trench 2 looking east showing stone lot wall.



Plate 3 View of Backhoe Trench 3 looking east.



Plate 4 View of Backhoe Trench 4 looking east.



Plate 5 View of Backhoe Trench 5 looking north.



Plate 6 View of Backhoe Trench 6 looking north.



Bibliography

- Rubinson, Karen S and Frederick A Winter
1991 Documentary Study East Harlem Triangle Site. Prepared for
the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and
Development. Prepared by Key Perspectives.
- Sandborn Map Company
1894 *Insurance Maps of New York*. Volume 8, Plates 176 and 177.
- United States Geological Survey
1966 *Central Park, N.Y.-N.J. Quadrangle*. 7.5 minute series.
Photorevised 1979.

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APPENDIX I
FIELD RECORD FORMS

CONTEXT NUMBER:

011

ST EXCAVATION RECORD SHEET - SHOVEL TESTS, POST HOLES, AUGER HOLES

Project: <u>East Harlem A</u>		Coordinates:		Test Type: <u>TT1</u>	Area:
Date: <u>7-14-93</u>	Excavators: <u>backhoe operator</u> <u>Gary</u>	Screeners:	Screened?: <u>no</u>	Size of Excavation: <u>56' X 50' Length</u>	
LAYER	TOP DEPTH - BOT. DEPTH	MUNSELL	COLOR	TEXTURE	CULTURAL MATERIAL
.00	above ground surface				
.01	0.00 - .4			asphalt	Ncm
.02	.4 - 1.8	<u>10YR 4/3</u>	Brown	sand & rubble	Ncm
.03	1.8 - 2.2			concrete cement & rubble	Ncm
.04	2.2 - 3.5	<u>10YR 5/4</u>	Brown	sand w/ heavy gravel	Ncm
.05	3.5 - 5.0	<u>7.5YR 4/6</u>	strong brown	coarse sand and heavy rubble gravel	Ncm
.06					
.07					
.08					

GENERAL NOTES - Samples, Discards, Vegetation, Conditions, etc.
 backhoe broke through the asphalt. We encountered a feature, a lot
 wall ~ 3' feet down on the west section of Trench ~ 18' wide.

PLAN SECTION PHOTOS 24-26 1-2 NOTEBOOK

CONTEXT NUMBER:

012

ST EXCAVATION RECORD SHEET - SHOVEL TESTS, POST HOLES, AUGER HOLES

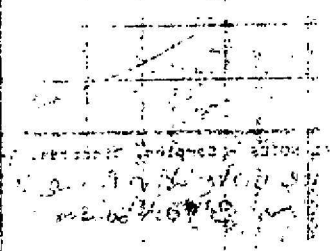
Project: <u>East Harlem A</u>		Coordinates:		Test Type: <u>TT2</u>	Area:
Date: <u>7-14-93</u>	Excavators: <u>backhoe operator</u> <u>Gary</u>	Screeners: <u>A.C. FBC</u>	Screened?: <u>Y4"</u>	Size of Excavation: <u>56' X 50' L</u>	
LAYER	TOP DEPTH - BOT. DEPTH	MUNSELL	COLOR	TEXTURE	CULTURAL MATERIAL
.00	above ground surface				
.01	0.00 - .2			asphalt	
.02	.2 - 1.5	<u>2.5YR 4/3</u>	reddish brown	rubble - building material bricks	
.03	1.5 - 2.0			concrete - cement	
.04	2.0 - 2.8	<u>10YR 5/3</u>	Brown	rubble and gravel, cobbles, concrete, bricks	
.05	2.8 - 5.5	<u>7.5YR 4/6</u>	strong brown	loamy sand rubble gravel	
.06					
.07					
.08					

GENERAL NOTES - Samples, Discards, Vegetation, Conditions, etc.
 backhoe broke through asphalt to dig trench ~ 5 1/2 feet down
 found building foundation on north wall - marked 2 bricks
 in cross section with brick mortar wall
 2' across and 1' deep down wall foundation ~ 1' wide.

PLAN SECTION PHOTOS 3-7 NOTEBOOK

EXCAVATION RECORD

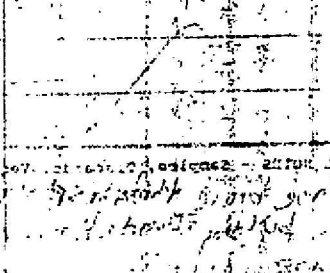
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



western section screened 2 bucket load.
 near building foundation.
 some glass - bath room porcelain
 some wood, some metal.

EXCAVATION RECORD

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



CONTENT NUMBER:

03

ST EXCAVATION RECORD SHEET - SHOVEL TESTS, POST HOLES, AUGER HOLES

Project: East Harlem A		Coordinates:		Test Type: TT3	Area:
Date: 7-15-93	Excavators: backhoe operator - Garry		Screeners:	Screened? NO	Size of Excavation: 5W x 35L
LAYER	TOP DEPTH - BOT. DEPTH	MUNSELL	COLOR	TEXTURE	CULTURAL MATERIAL
.00	above ground surface	North wall			
.01	0.00 - .2	✓		asphalt	Ncm
.02	.2 - .8	10YR 5/2	gray brown	Gravel & sand	Ncm
.03	.8 - 1.4	—	—	brick layers Rubble	Ncm
.04	1.4 - 1.8	—	—	Rubble	Ncm
.05	1.8 - 2.2	10YR 5/6	yellowish brown	brick layer & rubble w/ sand	Ncm
.06	2.2 - 3.3	—	—	Rubble layer	Ncm
.07	3.3 - 4.2	10YR 3/2	very drk grayish brown	sandy ash debris	Ncm
.08	4.2 - 4.7	10YR 5/6	yellowish brown	sandy loam	Ncm
GENERAL NOTES - Samples, Discards, Vegetation, Conditions, etc. backhoe broke through asphalt - went down to 5 feet.					
PLAN		SECTION		PHOTOS 8-11	NOTEBOOK

CONTENT NUMBER:

04

ST EXCAVATION RECORD SHEET - SHOVEL TESTS, POST HOLES, AUGER HOLES

Project: East Harlem A		Coordinates:		Test Type: TT4	Area:
Date: 7-15-93	Excavators: backhoe operator - Garry		Screeners:	Screened? NO	Size of Excavation: 5W x 35L
LAYER	TOP DEPTH - BOT. DEPTH	MUNSELL	COLOR	TEXTURE	CULTURAL MATERIAL
.00	above ground surface	North wall			
.01	0.00 - .2	—		asphalt layer	Ncm
.02	.2 - 1.5	10YR 5/2		gravel & rubble layers sand	Ncm
.03	1.5 - 2.0	10YR 5/6		sand & rubble	Ncm
.04	2.0 - 4.0	10YR 2/1		black stain - loam (some rubble)	
.05	4.0 - 6.5	7.5Y 5/8		sand & gravel cobbles	Ncm
.06	-				
.07	-				
.08	-				
GENERAL NOTES - Samples, Discards, Vegetation, Conditions, etc. backhoe dug a trench (broke through asphalt) 5' x 35' in diameter. lot of brick, rubble debris. TT4 - 6.5' down no features were encountered - 4' of rubble and asphalt & garbage					
PLAN		SECTION		PHOTOS 11-16	NOTEBOOK

1150

CONTENT NUMBER:

05

ST EXCAVATION RECORD SHEET - SHOVEL TESTS, POST HOLES, AUGER HOLES

Project: <u>East Harlem A</u>	Coordinates:	Test Type: <u>TTS</u>	Area:		
Date: <u>7-16-93</u>	Excavators: <u>backhoe operator: Garry</u>	Screeners:	Screened? <u>NO</u>		
			Size of Excavation: <u>6'6" x 20'6"</u>		
LAYER	TOP DEPTH - BOT. DEPTH	MUNSELL	COLOR	TEXTURE	CULTURAL MATERIAL
.00	above ground surface				
.01	0.00 - 2.0			brick layer rubble	chunks of concrete
.02	2.0 - 3.5	<u>4YR 2/1</u>	black	black stain rubble & sand	chunks of concrete
.03	3.0 - 6.5	<u>4YR 4/3</u>	Brown	brown sand rubble	chunks of concrete
.04	-				
.05	-				
.06	-				
.07	-				
.08	-				
GENERAL NOTES - Samples, Discards, Vegetation, Conditions, etc. <u>backhoe did not go through asphalt. TTS was ~ 6'6" x 20'6". no features were encountered</u> <u>& rubble - lots of concrete chunks all the way to bottom of trench.</u>					
PLAN		SECTION		PHOTOS	NOTEBOOK

TRACKER-Archaeology Services

CONTENT NUMBER:

06

EST EXCAVATION RECORD SHEET - SHOVEL TESTS, POST HOLES, AUGER HOLES

Project: <u>East Harlem A</u>	Coordinates:	Test Type: <u>TTS</u>	Area:		
Date: <u>7-16-93</u>	Excavators: <u>backhoe operator: Garry</u>	Screeners:	Screened? <u>NO</u>		
			Size of Excavation: <u>6'6" x 20'6"</u>		
LAYER	TOP DEPTH - BOT. DEPTH	MUNSELL	COLOR	TEXTURE	CULTURAL MATERIAL
.00	above ground surface				
.01	0.00 - 2.5			rubble, brick, cement chunks	
.02	2.5 - 4.0			asphalt, gravel & some brick	
.03	4.0 - 6.5	<u>4YR 4/3</u>	Brown	sandy loam w/ cobble gravel	
.04	-				
.05	-				
.06	-				
.07	-				
.08	-				
GENERAL NOTES - Samples, Discards, Vegetation, Conditions, etc. <u>located brick wall on north wall - local businessmen who worked in area for 70 years said that there were tenements housing in this particular lot - built around the 1880's - Topped down ~ 1967. Adjacent was a string of brownstone building from 3rd Ave to 2nd Ave.</u>					
PLAN		SECTION		PHOTOS	NOTEBOOK