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ARCHAEOLOGICAL/HISTORICAL SENSITIVITY
STUDY OF THE
WEST HOUSTON, WOOSTER, GREENE STREETS DEVELOPMENT
MANHATTAN, NEW YORK
CEQR# 98-BSA-007M and -008M

BS14

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LIST OF PERSONNEL

William I. Roberts IV	-	Principal Investigator Co-Author
Paula M. Crowley	-	Historian Word Processor Co-Author



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this archaeological/historical sensitivity study is to document the potential prehistoric and historic sensitivity of the proposed development at 55 West Houston Street through a review of existing archival, cartographic and published references. In order to provide a context for evaluating any identified resources within the parcel itself, this survey shall include a synthesis of published and unpublished prehistoric sites in the immediate area surrounding the project area and a summary of the history of this location.

The 55 West Houston Street development project area is located in the southern part of the Borough of Manhattan. The project area consists of Lot 14 on Block 514. The project area consists of portions of Lots 14, 18 and 21, and all of Lot 13 using the designations from 1902. Lot 13 is 158 Wooster Street, Lot 14 is 160 Wooster Street, Lot 18 is 628 Houston, later 55 West Houston Street, and Lot 21 is 145 Greene Street. See Figure 1 for the location of the project area.

This study is organized in the following manner: first, a ^{sp}description of the geography and physical setting; second, an analysis on the prehistoric sensitivity of the area; third, a review of the historic sensitivity of the area; and fourth, the sensitivity study results and recommendations for testing.



Figure 1 Location of the project area shown on portions of U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute series Brooklyn, N.Y. quadrangle (1967, photorevised 1979) and Jersey City, N.J.-N.Y. quadrangle (1967, photorevised 1981).



GEOGRAPHY AND PHYSICAL SETTING

Manhattan lies within the New England Upland Physiographic Province which is a division of the Appalachian Highlands. There are two prongs or projections of the New England Upland Physiographic Province. The smaller, eastern prong is known as the Manhattan Prong, and extends through southwestern Connecticut, Westchester County and into New York City, stopping at the southern tip of Manhattan Island. This bedrock is igneous and primarily metamorphosed and underlies the whole of Manhattan. The most recent formation and the closest to the surface is the Manhattan formation. This bedrock is mainly of mica schist and extends through almost all of Manhattan south of 110th Street. Since it is a medium to high grade of metamorphic rock and close to the surface, it is particularly advantageous for supporting large buildings, including skyscrapers (Schuberth 1968: 10, 65-66, map).

In 1866 the topography was described by Dr. Warner for the Citizens' Association and the Council of Hygiene. Dr. Warner was in charge of District 5A, bounded by Houston Street on the north, Broadway on the east, Spring Street on the south and the Hudson River to the west. The district featured two hills. The one closest to the project area was one with its highest elevation at Wooster Street, which descended toward Thompson Street. The second hill, Richmond, was to the west at Varick, and this also sloped toward Thompson Street. The ravine formed by the slopes drained water from the center of the district into the Collect, that was the former natural drainage of the district. In 1866 the area bounded by Broadway, and Thompson Street, and Macdougall and Thompson Streets, was drained by a sewer extending through Thompson to Canal Street, and then to the river (Warner 1866:66).

Dr. Warner described the streets as having an average width of 35 feet. All were paved with cobblestones, excepting Broadway and Greenwich. All the streets had sewers except for a small portion of West Houston Street and those closest to the Hudson River which were below the high water mark. The curbs and gutters of the district were usually well kept, and the surface was well drained (Warner 1866:67).

The Principal Investigator visited the project area during October 1997. The majority of the project area consists of a parking lot paved with asphalt. This includes all of the project area excepting 158 Wooster Street. The parking lot includes only one structure: a small shelter for the operator. 158 Wooster is



nearly completely covered by a one-story structure. Only the rear five feet of the lot remains open.



PREHISTORIC SENSITIVITY

As part of the project evaluation process, this sensitivity study has surveyed published and unpublished sources in the files of the New York State Museum Division of Historical and Anthropological Services, the Research Branch of the New York Public Library, as well as material on file at Greenhouse Consultants Incorporated.

The only two confirmed Manhattan prehistoric sites within two miles of the project area are New York State Museum Sites Numbers 4059 and 4060. Arthur C. Parker described both sites as villages. Unfortunately, Parker provided no description of the artifacts recovered, so determination of date range or cultural affiliation is not possible (Parker 1922). Judging from Parker's description of these sites as villages, it is probable that they date to the Woodland Period, but no information exists to confirm this. Both are located next to the most substantial fresh water course that could be documented within the two mile radius of the project area, the former stream that ran near the present course of Canal Street. See Figure 2 for the location of these sites relative to the project area.

The only other locations within two miles of the project area that may have supported prehistoric occupation are suggested on the basis of linguistic evidence by Robert S. Grumet in his book *Native American Place Names in New York City* (1981). This work provides the name "Sapokanikan" for an area north of Houston Street and south of West 14th Street in western Greenwich Village. Grumet notes cultivated fields here with a habitation site along the north side, which indicates an occupation during the Woodland Period. The location of this settlement and its associated fields is shown on Figure 2 as two ovals. Valentine (1853:69) located Sapokanikan in the Eighth and Ninth Wards. The project area is located approximately 0.4 miles to the southeast. Unfortunately no archaeological evidence exists to confirm this location as a former planting field. Grumet supplies several other native place names within two miles of the project area, but these evidently refer to geographic features and not settlements (Grumet 1981:49-50).

In terms of potential prehistoric sensitivity, the project impact area was evaluated from two points of view:

1. the proximity of known prehistoric sites in or near the project area, and

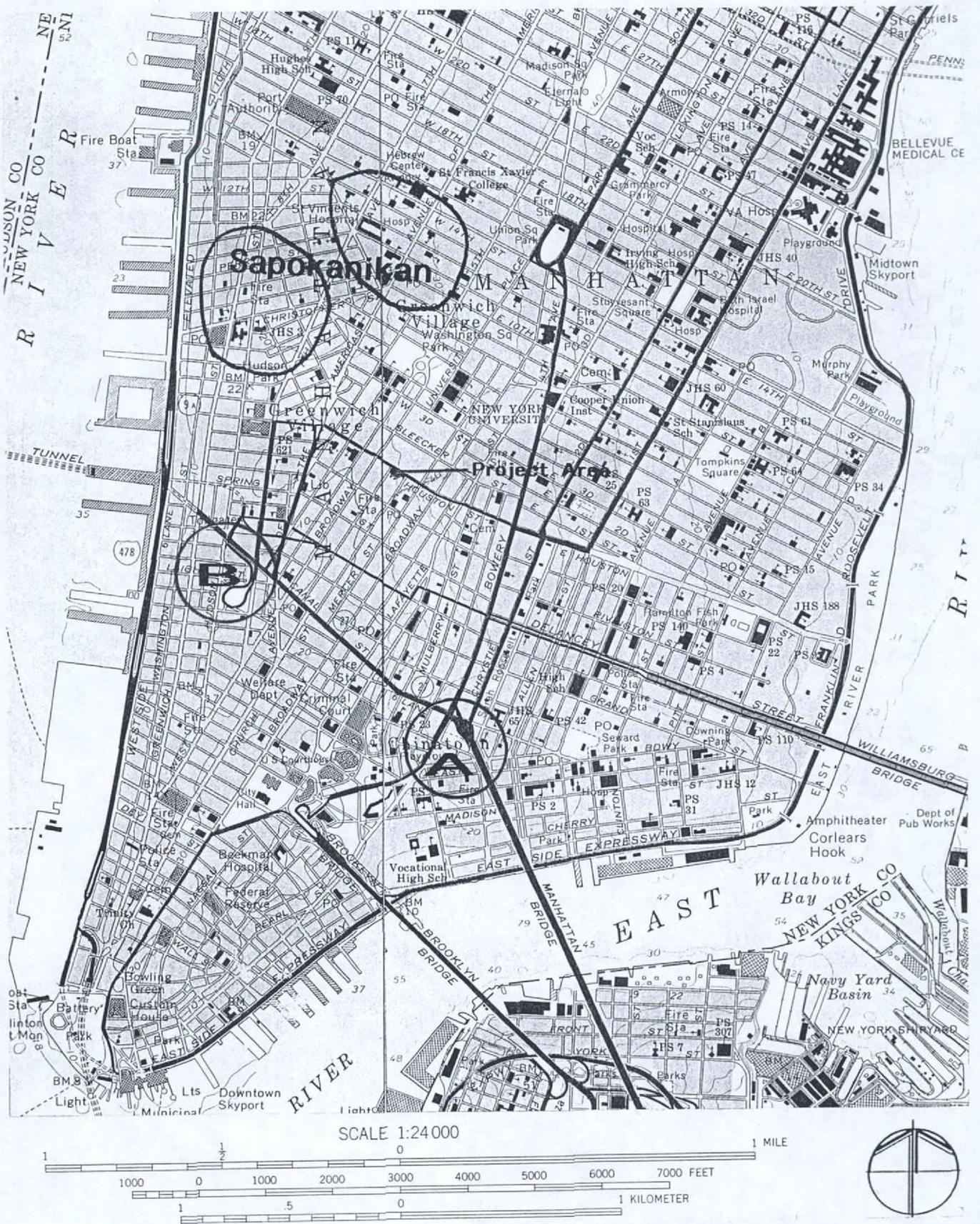


Figure 2 Prehistoric sites on Manhattan within two miles of the project area.



2. the presence of freshwater drainage courses in general, particularly the identification of river or stream confluence situations where two or more drainages come together, providing access to both water and food supplies of both systems.

This survey has documented the recorded or published locations of two prehistoric sites within two miles of the project area. Neither of the locations is within nor immediately adjacent to portions of the project area.

The 55 West Houston Street project area lies on relatively elevated well-drained land used for agriculture during the 18th century. The nearest possible fresh water source is over 450 yards away to the southwest. While use of the project area during prehistory is possible, it appears unlikely given the distance to a water source. It is also unlikely that any prehistoric remains would survive over 150 years of intensive development, undisturbed.

TABLE 1
Prehistoric Sites in the Vicinity of West Houston Project Area

	Site Name	NYSM#	Parker#	Reference	Period	Description
A.	---	4060	ACP-NYRK	Parker 1922:Pl. 192	Woodland (?)	Village
B.	Shell Point	4059	ACP-NYRK-9	Parker 1922:627	Woodland (?)	Village Shell heaps



HISTORIC SENSITIVITY

Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

The project area was located north of New Amsterdam on the Nicholas Bayard farm. Nicholas Bayard arrived in New Amsterdam, shortly after Governor Stuyvesant, who was his in-law by way of his wife. Bayard was appointed Clerk of the Court of Major and Aldermen in 1665 and was a brewer and merchant, with a residence on the north side of Stone Street near Hanover Square (Valentine 1853:228). At the time of the Leisler Rebellion Bayard was a member of the Governor's Council. He was captured by Leisler and put on trial for treason, but sued for his pardon. When Leisler lost, Bayard regained his former positions and successfully brought Leisler to the scaffold. When the Leisler party gained power again in 1702, Bayard again was tried for treason and condemned to death. Again luck held for Bayard, and the political winds changed, saving his life. Nicholas Bayard died in 1711, his son, Samuel, inheriting his property (ibid.:228-229).

In 1674 Nicholas Bayard owned property of the first class on the north side of Stone Street between William and Broad Streets. He also owned third class property on Beaver Street between William and Broad. His wealth in 1674 was estimated at \$15,000 (Valentine 1853:325, 327). A 1703 listing of inhabitants shows that Nicholas Bayard had one female, one child, two negroes and one negro child residing at his house. Samuel Bayard had one male, one female, three children, one negro and one negress at his place (ibid.:345). In 1703 Nicholas Bayard held a tax rank of 7, as a merchant with a residence at Duke in the Dock Ward. Samuel Bayard, with a tax rank of 0, was a merchant residing at Burgherspa in the Dock Ward. (Rothschild 1990:186).

During the colonial period, wealthy families used their property as collateral to raise capital (Blackmar 1989:25). Land, such as the Bayard farm, was simply money in the bank. In the mid-eighteenth century, country estates began to be developed, following the lead of the English gentry (ibid.:26). Nicholas Bayard, a butcher, held 200 acres of the farm in the middle of the island below Houston and above Chambers Streets (ibid.:30). Bayard sold part of this farm in 1771 to a syndicate (ibid.:30).

The situation of the project area during the mid-eighteenth century is illustrated by Figure 3, taken from the 1766-1767 Ratzer map. The project area is located within an area of cultivated fields. The fields are part of the Nicholas Bayard farm. The farmhouse and other buildings are located

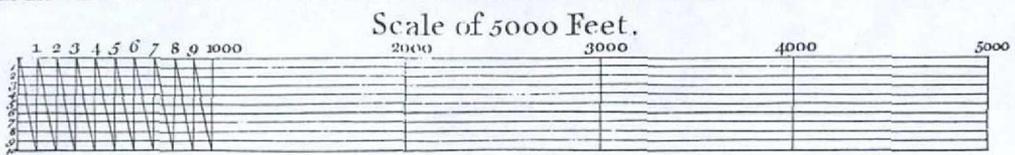
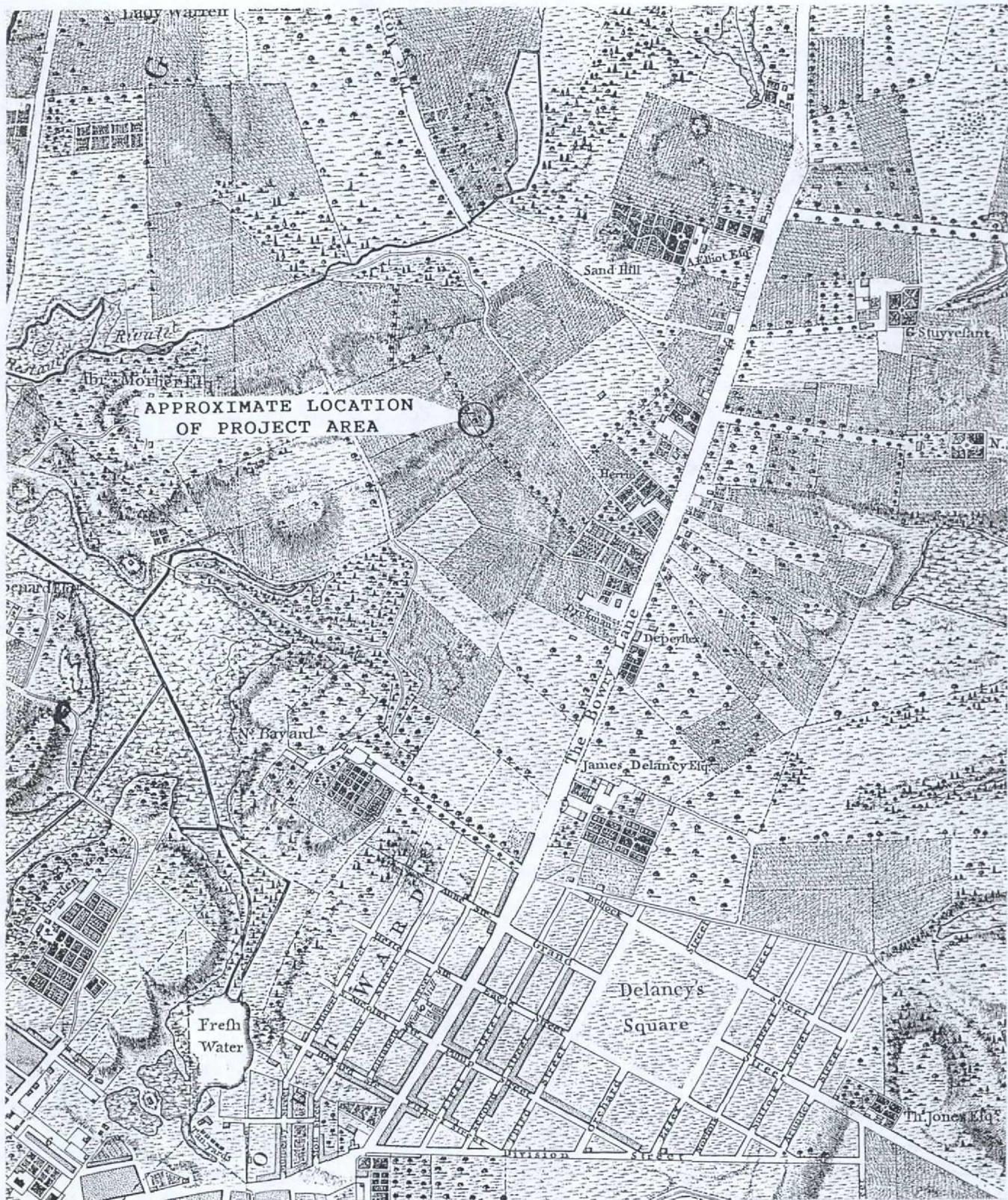


Figure 3 Location of the project area shown on portion of the 1766-1767 Rutzer map, published 1776.



approximately 2,400 feet to the south-southwest. The nearest stream is approximately 1,300 feet to the northwest.

Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

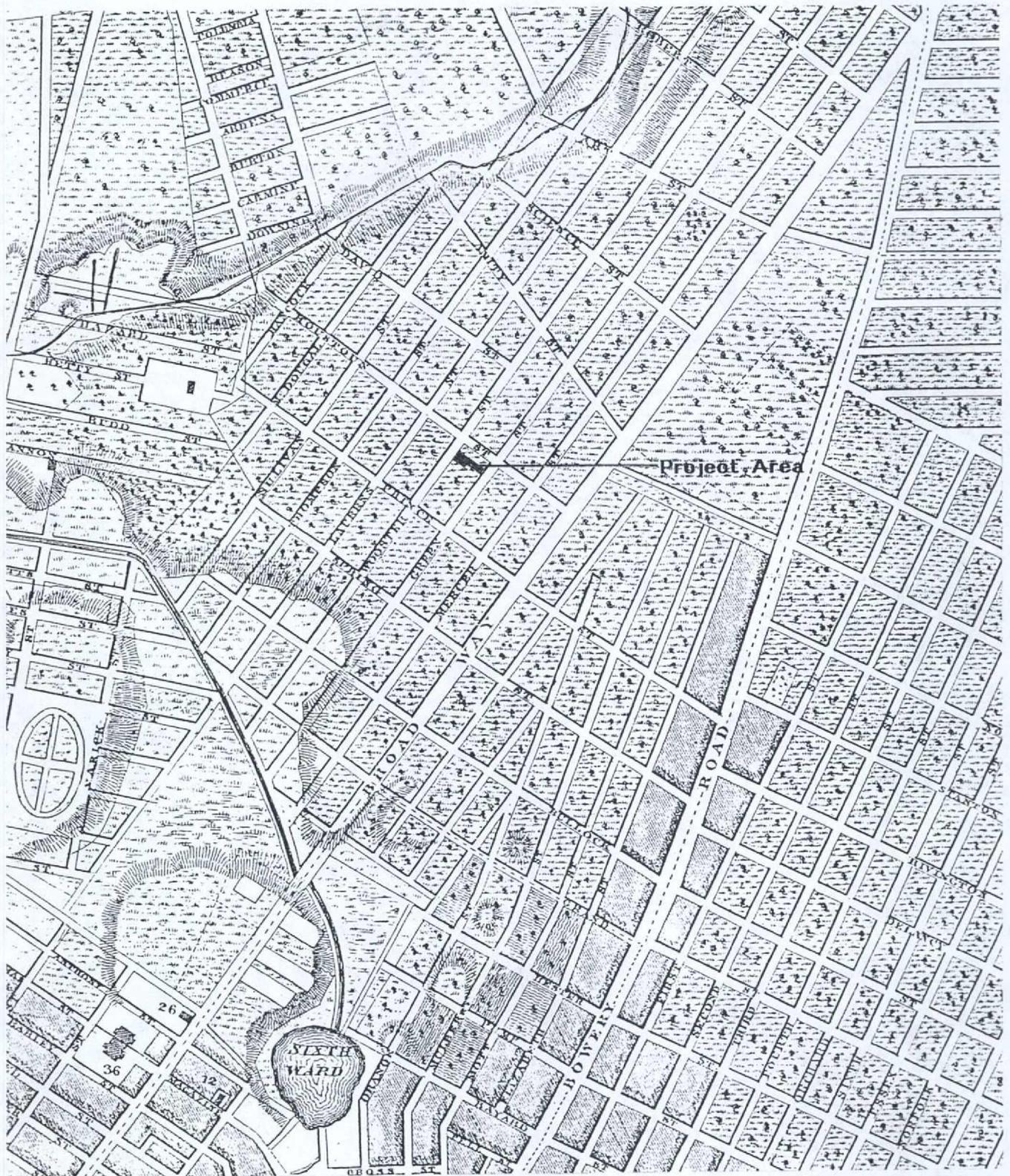
The Houston Street project area became part of the Eighth Ward when the ward was formed in 1803 (Ernst 1994:191). Houston was corrupted from Houstoun, a Georgian who married Mary, the daughter of Nicholas Bayard III. Bayard cut the street through his farm and the city extended it at the beginning of the nineteenth century to include North Street. By 1808 the city had begun misspelling Houstoun's name (Moscow 1978:61). Greene Street was named after Nathaniel Green, a Revolutionary War general, and General Washington's right hand man (ibid.:55). Wooster Street was named after another general, David Wooster (ibid.:113).

Three maps were found depicting the project area during the *first half of the nineteenth century*. They illustrate the advance of development from the south. The earliest of these is the 1803 Goerck and Mangin plan. See Figure 4. This map shows Houston Street with its original spelling of Houstoun. Although streets are laid out around the project area, this location is shown as old farm fields. The closest developed area is near Bowery Road and North Street about seven blocks southeast of the project area. The stream course to the northwest is still visible.

Figure 5 is taken from the 1817 Longworth map. The project area is now within the shaded zone indicating that development has now reached this far. Locations north of Amity Street, now shown aligned with the grid, are still depicted as fields. Houstoun Street retains its correct spelling.

The next map presented is taken from the 1834 Fireman's Guide. See Figure 6. This is the earliest map to show a structure within the project area. A large building is shown on the southwest corner of Houston and Greene Streets. Houston Street has its modern spelling.

The Eighth Ward grew from 9,128 people in 1810 to 30,098 people in 1865. In 1865 the ward had experienced a loss in population, since in 1860 it had 39,406 (Ernst 1994:191). In 1845 the ward had 30,900, 6,620 from Great Britain and its possessions, 1,160 from Germany, 273 from France, 179 from other parts of Europe, and 37 from Mexico or South America (ibid.:192). In 1855, 43.7 percent of the population in the ward was foreign-born, of which Irish constituted 21.2 percent and Germans were 11.2 percent. This percentage fits in a range from the 21 other wards ranging from 34.2 percent foreign-born



500 0 feet 1000
SCALE APPROX.



Figure 4 Location of the project area shown on portion of the 1803 Goerck and Mangin Plan of the City of New York.



600 feet 0 SCALE (approx.) 1200

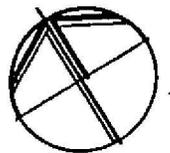
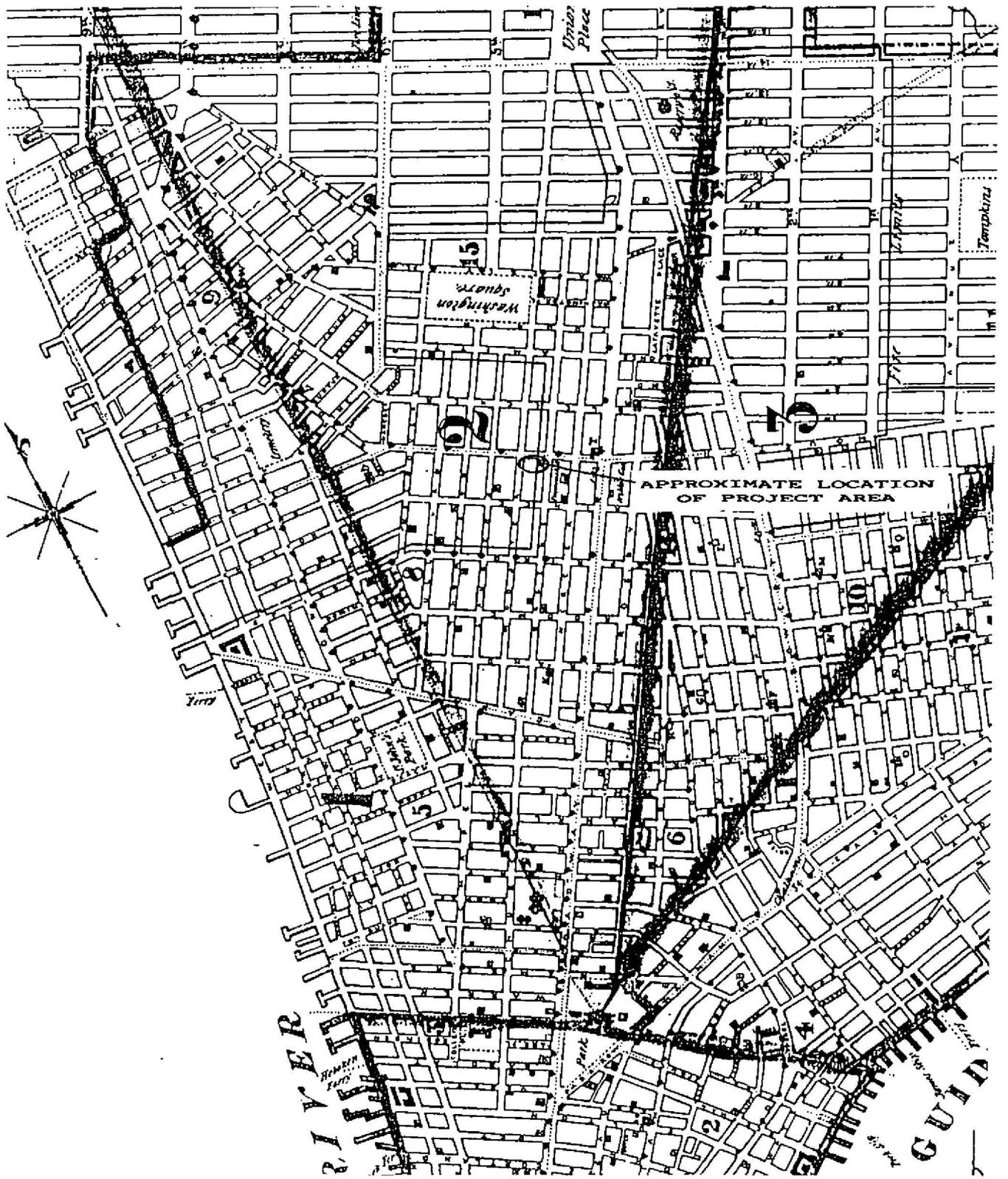


Figure 5 From the 1817 Guide Through the City of New York by Longworth.



1500 0 feet 3000
 SCALE APPROX.

Figure 6 From the 1834 Fireman's Guide.



to 70.0 percent. Only three wards, the 21st, the 15th and the 9th had lower proportions of foreign-born (ibid.:193). Of the 14,877 foreign born in 1855, Ireland and Germany top the list at 7,210 and 3,717 respectively. The next highest group was England at 1,568. France contributed 757, Scotland 625, Canada at 175, Italy with 138 and the West Indies at 120. The other twenty-three countries contributed numbers in the double or single digits (Ernst 1994:194-196).

The Eighth Ward was characterized by residences of cartmen, mechanics and laborers (Warner 1866:67). It was an artisan class mixed with a middle class area characterized by fine residences. It was a ethnic mix as well as a commercial and residential mix. Theaters and hotels appeared on Broadway as the population moved north. The Jewish population moved uptown in the 1820s from its old center at Pearl, Water and Greenwich Streets. The wealthier Jews moved west of Broadway on Greenwich, Laight, Charlton, Greene and Wooster Streets. The poorer Jews moved east of Broadway on Centre, White, Pearl, Franklin, Canal, Broome and Houston Streets (Ernst 1994:46). During the 1840s-1850s, the French centered on Greene, Laurens (West Broadway), Wooster, Broome, White, and Spring Streets, just below Houston (ibid.:45). The black population moved into West Broadway, Thomas, Leonard, Sullivan, Greene, Mercer and Mulberry Streets during the 1820s. Then there was a retreat from the Eighth Ward to the Fifth Ward until mid-century when the black population started moving back to the Eighth Ward (ibid.:41). The Fifth and the Eighth Wards had the largest concentration of black population in the city at 9.6 and 7.3 percent (Scherzer 1992:246, FN27). Italians moved into the southeast corner of the Eighth Ward in the 1850s while the Spanish moved into the Fifth and Eighth Wards. Central and South Americans, as well as people from the West Indies also moved into the Fifth, Eighth and Sixteenth Wards (Ernst 1994:45). Broadway developed as a commercial street featuring the most fashionable of stores, theatres and hotels, such as the Metropolitan and St. Nicholas.

Figure 7, the earliest detailed depiction, is taken from the 1853 Perris maps. Buildings exist at the front of all four lots, and all have open rear yards. The buildings at 628 Houston, 145 Greene and 160 Wooster are brick or stone. The one at 158 Wooster is frame.

The 1857 Perris map, presented here as Figure 8, shows essentially the same situation. The only change is the removal of a small entryway or shed at the rear of the building at 158 Wooster, and the construction of a rear structure in that lot.

WOOSTER STREET

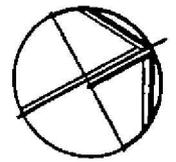
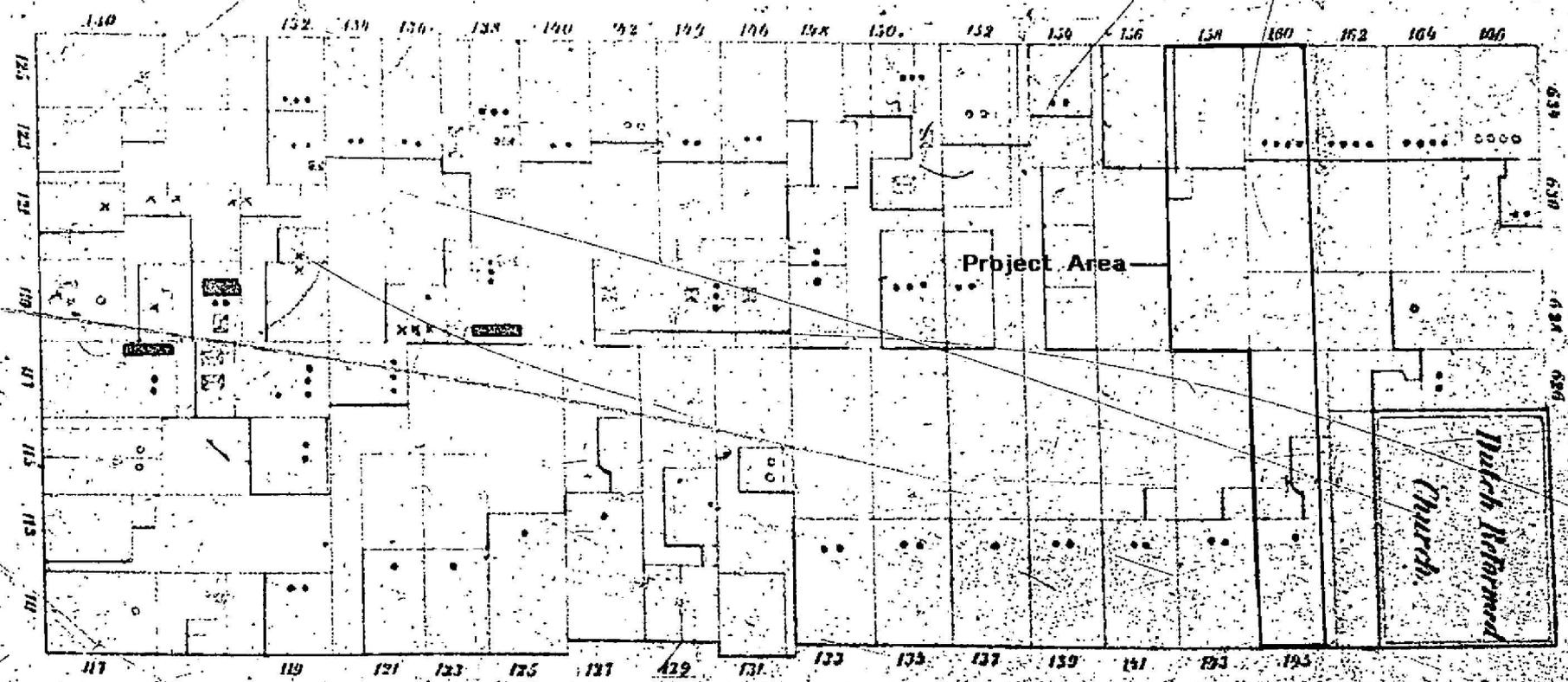
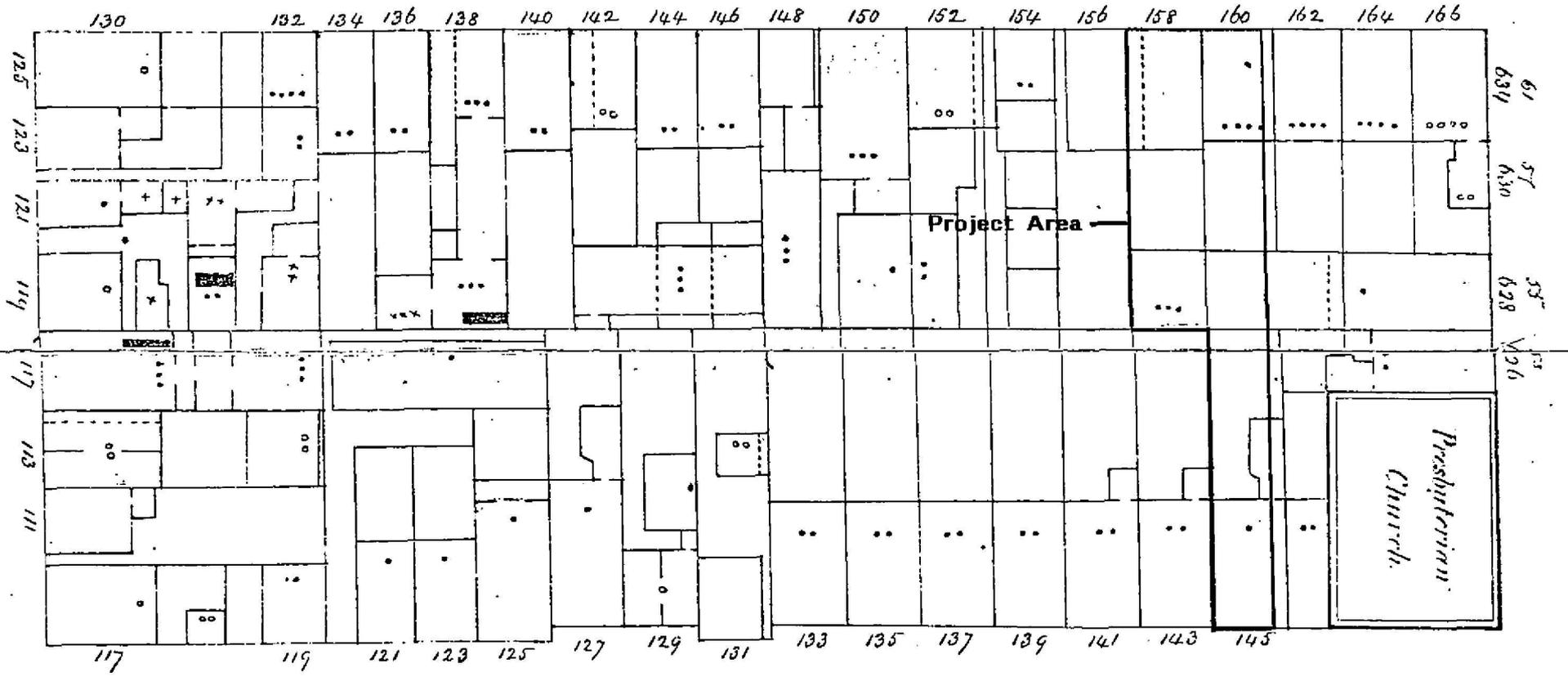


Figure 7 From the 1853 Perris Maps of the City of New York, Volume 3.

STREET



STREET

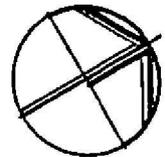


Figure 8 From the 1857 Perris Maps of the City of New York, Volume 3.



Because of the presence of hotels and theatres, by the 1850s the area including Mercer, Greene, Wooster, West Broadway, Houston, Prince and Spring had achieved a first in the City of New York. "With forty percent of the prostitution, Soho became the first large-scale, truly exclusive red-light district in New York's history, and the leading brothel guides emphasized its importance" (Gilfoyle 1987:382 and 384). Warren listed eight brothels or assignation houses on Houston Street, five on Spring, seven on Prince, five on Laurens (West Broadway), thirteen on Wooster, 34 on Greene, and 31 on Mercer, totaling 103 brothels and assignation houses out of a total 108 for the sanitary district (1866:69). These statistics show that a little over 95 percent of the brothels were concentrated in this small area of the district. The brothels and assignation houses were described as private dwellings which were kept in a clean condition, both on the exterior and interior. Warren explained their condition as being due to "... these establishments ... are of the most respectable class, being in the vicinity of the great hotels and the places of public amusement" (1866:67). These houses were so respectable-looking that Spann cited a newspaper from the time as saying "... that the *Tribune* could declare sarcastically they could not be houses of prostitution; surely, their respectability was attested to by the fact 'that they are frequently visited by gentlemen of the best standing ... such as aldermen, judges, lawyers, assemblymen, state officers, country merchants, and others'" (1981:99).

The history of the sex industry in the city has been the subject of numerous studies (cf. Gilfoyle, Kneeland, Warren, Whiteaker, Sanger, Ellington, and Hill). Gilfoyle (1987) identifies three stages in the development of New York City prostitution from 1790 to 1860. The first stage, 1790-1819, had three areas of concentration in lower Manhattan, in George Street, East George Street and St. Paul's Church, bounded by Barclay, Vesey and Church Streets. The St. Paul's vicinity was the area of expensive prostitutes. The second stage, 1820-1850, was the "suburbanization" of prostitution, where the industry relocated from waterfront areas to residential neighborhoods. Five Points, the East Dock area and the West Wards were new areas of development. The West Wards, in particular, the Fifth Ward along Church and Chapel, had the expensive brothels. This street, because of its establishments, became nicknamed Rotton Row. The third stage, 1850-1920, saw the development of Soho as the new primary center for prostitution. The shifting of prostitution was caused by two factors. The first was that prostitutes, like any good businessman, went after their customer, who was moving to the suburbs. Secondly, the industrialization of lower Manhattan forced the move, both of prostitute and client. In fact Gilfoyle concluded that the class structure, and thereby

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prostitution in New York was defined and redefined by industrialization (1987:388). Hill (1989) follows a similar geographic and temporal staging. Studying prostitution from 1830 to 1870, she marked three stages. The first from 1830-1850, marked the spread of prostitution out of lower Manhattan to the Fifth Ward and Five Points. The second stage from 1850-1865 saw a shift from Ward Five to Ward Eight. After the Civil War, prostitution shifted north to an area bordered by Broadway and Seventh Avenue, and 22nd to 27th Streets. The Eighth Ward district declined, as had the Fifth Ward district in the previous stage.

Prostitution was not a legal offense, but prostitutes could be prosecuted for vagrancy or disorderly conduct (Whiteaker 1977:54). Various authors, starting with Dr. Sanger's interviews with 2,000 prostitutes in 1858, have identified a hierarchy of industry establishments and workers. Parlor houses were where the first class prostitutes resided. The women did not leave the houses to procure clients. When they did leave the houses, the prostitutes engaged in respectable middle class behavior, such as shopping, or taking an afternoon promenade. The women were young, exceptional in looks and health, well-dressed and respectably dressed, and well-educated. The houses were furnished lavishly, but in good taste. Three to ten prostitutes inhabited a parlor house, paying ten to sixteen dollars a week, not including extras. Their clients were of the upper classes, "men of property." Most were native-born, many with an artistic talent, whether music, art, or literature. The owners of these houses usually were not residents, they had an outwardly respectable life whereby the public did not know the origins of their entire income. A housekeeper usually ran the establishment, usually a former prostitute (Sanger 1858:549-553).

A second grade of parlor houses and women were next in the hierarchy. The women were coarser, sometimes former first class parlor residents. The houses were gaudily furnished, rather than tastefully. Their clients were not as high class as the first class houses. More foreign born women were in the second class houses. Wine and brandy were sold to clients rather than champagne. These women had to hit the streets when company did not appear at the houses. The prostitutes boarded for six to ten dollars a week, and serviced travelers, store clerks, and the higher class of mechanics (Sanger 1858:557-558).

A third grade of prostitution houses were those founded by Germans and Irish. The German houses were run by a German couple, the husband tending the bar and the wife acting as the madam. The barroom was public, but it also



functioned as a reception room for the prostitutes. A male was free to partake of a drink, but was not required to engage in the services of a prostitute. The Irish also had a public barroom which doubled as a reception room. Sanger said that the third class houses were equal to or better than the second class houses, merely discriminating on the basis of ethnicity and structure of the establishment (1858:559-562).

The fourth class of prostitution was the common streetwalker, marked by disease, filth and bad rum (Sanger 1858:564).

A second type of establishment also served the sex industry in a parallel fashion to the brothels. These were assignation houses. The first class type of these houses were in quiet, respectable parts of the city. Prostitutes did not reside in these establishments, rather they served as trysting spots for members of the elite class, married people who were not married to each other. Appointments were made by the gentlemen in question, whose respectability were ascertained by the housekeeper through interviews. Rooms were rented by the hour. These were very exclusive establishments. Business was conducted in these houses between the hours of eleven in the morning until five in the afternoon, times of day when women went shopping or for the Broadway promenade hours (Sanger 1858:566-571; Stansell 1987:174). The second class of assignment house, was still private but not as exclusive as first class. Married upper class women, kept mistresses, best class of serving or shop women visited at these places (ibid.:572). The third class of assignment houses were used by prostitutes refusing to pay the prices at parlor houses and by shop girls moonlighting. Kept mistresses were also at third class assignment houses (ibid.:572-573). The fourth class assignment house was the panel house, where streetwalkers took their prey. Sanger summed up their condition succinctly: "cheap and nasty" (ibid.:573).

Prostitution was big business and a growth industry in the nineteenth century. Sanger calculated that in 1858 \$3,879,100 was invested in the 378 prostitution houses, the 100 assignation houses and the 151 dancing saloons, liquor and lager beer stores that made up the industry (Sanger 1858:600). The owners made money and the prostitutes made money. Parlor house workers could make \$20-\$1400 per week, paying \$10-\$70 in rent a week (Ellington 1972:200, 201). Sanger questioned his 2,000 prostitutes as to their previous weekly wage before they turned to their new trade, the results as follows:



Table 2

<u>Former Weekly Wage</u>	<u># of Respondents</u>
\$1	534
\$2	336
\$3	230
\$4	127
\$5	68
\$6	27
\$7	8
\$8	5
\$20	1
\$50	1
Unknown/don't remember	<u>663</u>
Total	2000

Sanger blasted the problem as one of economics by stating, "No economist, however closely he may calculate, will pretend that fourteen cents a day will supply any woman with lodging, food, and clothes. She who should attempt to exist on such a sum would starve to death in less than a month, and yet it is a notorious fact that many are expected to support themselves upon it" (1858:532).

Some former prostitutes became extremely wealthy by becoming brothel owners. Hill (1989:212, Table XIII) identified and traced a number of prostitutes/brothel owners during the course of the nineteenth century. An abbreviated version of Hill's table illustrates the wealth women could potentially accumulate.

Table 3

Prostitutes' Real and Personal Property: Assessed Valuations of \$5,000 or more 1830-1860

<u>Name</u>	<u>Sources</u>	<u>Highest R.E.</u>	<u>1988\$</u>	<u>Highest Pers.</u>	<u>1988\$</u>
Elizabeth Pratt	1840s-60s	\$33,500	\$2,275,000	\$2,000	\$99,700
Jane McCord	1840s-60s	20,000	1,300,000	—	—
Adeline Miller	1820s-60	16,500	1,072,500	5,000	249,200
Patience Berger	1820s-1850s	8,500	552,500	—	—
Rosina Townsend	1820s-30s	----	—	5,000	249,200

Hill followed the brothel keepers through their changes in addresses for their establishment in the city.



Table 4

<u>Phoebe Doty</u>	<u>J. Ann Malloy</u>	<u>Jane McCord</u>
1820 123 Anthony	1842 112 Canal	1842 35 Warren
1821 129 Anthony	1845 112 Church	1845 75 Duane
1830 167 Church	1850 18 Mercer	1848 80 Reade
1833 44 Orange	1852 155 W. Broadway	1853 71 Mercer
1834 9 Desbrosses	1853 14 Mercer	1859 633 Houston
1835 35 Leonard	1859 24th Street	1862 6 Staple
1838 29 Leonard		186- 56 W. Houston
1843 107 Mercer		1870 42 W. 15th Street
1845 12 Elm		
1846 166 Church		
1850 Deceased		

Phoebe, Ann and Jane ran brothels in the exclusive sections during the earlier period, on Church, Leonard and Reade. They break into the Soho district starting in 1843 with Phoebe at 107 Mercer. Ann and Jane follow in the 1850s. Both Ann and Jane move northward by the end of the study periods. Jane, the second wealthiest brothel keeper in Hill's survey, was a very near neighbor of the project area, at 633 Houston and 56 West Houston. The street was subdivided into East and West Houston circa 1860. The 1857 Perris map showed two numbering systems, both 55 West Houston and 628 Houston Street for the project area.

The Soho red light district was also a very respectable neighborhood. Hill identified the neighbors of the prostitutes Eleanor Barrett and Caroline Cook on Mercer Street as families of a chemist, broker, druggist, engraver, physician, importer, merchant, grocer, painter, music teacher and two respectable boarding houses (1989:375).

In an attempt to determine whether the Appell family, owners of 55 West Houston Street from 1855-1904, was living there during the late 1850s and early 1860s, information was sought from directories and the 1860 U.S. Census. Two listings were found in the 1860 Census index for John Appel, but neither lived in the Eighth Ward (Jackson 1988:18). One lived in the Eleventh Ward and the other in the Seventeenth Ward, traditional wards for German immigrants, *Kleindeutschland*. There were no listings for John or J. Appell or Appelle. New York City Directories compiled during 1856 through 1863 were also searched for John or Mary Appell. None were listed on Houston Street (Wilson 1856, 1857, 1858, 1859, 1860, 1861, 1862, 1863). Since the inhabitants of 55 West Houston Street were not found in the contemporary censuses or city



directories, another form of directory was consulted. Patrons of hotels and theaters had access to the *Fast Man's Directory and Lover's Guide by the Ladies' Man* (1853) and the *Directory to the Seraglios in New York, Philadelphia, Boston and All the Principal Cities in The Union By a Free Lover* (1855) and *The Gentleman's Directory [The Gentleman's Companion]* (1870). In 1839, "Butt Ender" composed *Prostitution Exposed*. The directory which identified the inhabitants of 55 West Houston was located through the efforts of Professor Leo Hershkovits of Queens College, through two directories in his possession entitled *The Guide to the Harem Or Directory to Ladies of Fashion in New-York and Other Cities by The Old Man of Twenty-Five*, for 1855 and 1856. Miss M.J. Randolph ran a "very genteel house" at 628 Houston Street (Old Man 1855:17; 1856:15). Miss Randolph did not appear in the city directories for that period (Hershkovits 1997:pers. comm.) Since the inhabitants were not listed in the city directories or censuses and other researchers were able to locate brothels and prostitutes by using these aids, along with police reports and district attorney indictments, the indications are that this location was a house of assignment. Although Ellington does not give the address in his 1869 book he described an assignment house on Houston Street as,

There is a house in Houston street, of the existence of which very few persons are aware. It is a great resort for unfaithful married women. The front windows are fitted up as if for a store. A display is made at the windows of ladies' white clothing and children's apparel .. Even the neighbors, and many members of the police force, do not know the character of this house, so quietly is it conducted... It is kept by a Southern woman, ..." (Ellington 1869:261).

The place was a three story brick house, as was 55 West Houston Street during 1902. The Perris Maps of 1853 and 1857 show that it was a stone or brick dwelling with a first class roof of slate or metal, fully coped.

By the late 1860s and early 1870s, when Ellington and Warren wrote their sensationalist tracts. Greene Street was described as a hell (Warren 1970:93) and worse, and Hill, cited *The Gentleman's Companion*, which called Greene, Mercer and Wooster "a complete sink of iniquity" in 1870 (1989:404). The finest brothels and assignment houses in the city were twenty years later, at best, wretched third class establishments. Black prostitution houses moved into Canal Street and extended up Wooster, West Broadway, Sullivan, Thompson, Church and Crosby Street (ibid.:405). Furnishings were scavenged "... from Bowery and Chatham street auction rooms..." (Warren 1970:109). The fashionable district for prostitution shifted north to elegant townhouses in Chelsea in West 25th, 26th and 27th Streets (Scherzer 1992:147; Hill 1989:387). Commercialization was the force squeezing residences further north,



sweatshops and the cast-iron commercial district taking the place of residences (Blackmar 1989:253; Scherzer 1992:147).

Figure 9, taken from the 1885 Robinson Atlas shows at least two changes since 1857. A new building now covers all of 145 Greene Street as well as the lot to the north. A rear building remains at 158 Wooster Street leaving only a central yard open. The other two lots appear unchanged. Houston Street has been divided into East and West and renumbered. 628 Houston has become 55 West Houston Street.

During the late nineteenth century the vicinity in which the project area is located became known for cast-iron building of structures. The Soho-Cast Iron Historic District represents the "largest concentration of full and partial cast-iron facades anywhere in the world" still surviving (Diamonstein 1993:449). Use of cast-iron in London's Crystal Palace in 1851 introduced the concept of using cast-iron to a world audience. The method achieved importance in the United States from 1860-1890 (Wolfe 1994:173). It was a breakthrough for construction where a building could be erected in a shorter time using a cheaper material. The load of the building was carried by a skeleton of rolled iron beams, both vertically and horizontally. The method anticipated the modern skyscrapers. The moldings could be fashioned into elaborate designs, could be used from building to building, and repairs could be made easily and cheaply. Functionally, the cast-iron was excellent, and it also served decorative purposes extremely well. From the late 1850s to the 1870s the preferred style was Renaissance. The French Second Empire soon followed (*ibid.*:176). Since this was a commercial district, the new construction method was a means of deterring fires which had plagued lower Manhattan earlier in the century. Drawbacks were that the wooden interior was not fireproof, and the cast-iron was brittle and would rust (*ibid.*:177).

The 1894 Sanborn-Perris map, presented here as Figure 10, shows several changes. The structures at 158 Wooster Street have been demolished and replaced by a six-story structure which covers all but the rear ten feet of the lot. 160 Wooster Street retains the old structure at the front and now has a one-story structure at the rear of the lot. The structure remains at the front of 55 West Houston Street, and a small one-story shed has been constructed in the southwest corner of the lot. The structure at 145-147 Greene Street is six stores and covers all but the rear six feet of the lot.

The 1902 Bromley Atlas again shows several changes. See Figure 11. 158 Wooster Street has a six-story structure covering all but the rear eight feet of

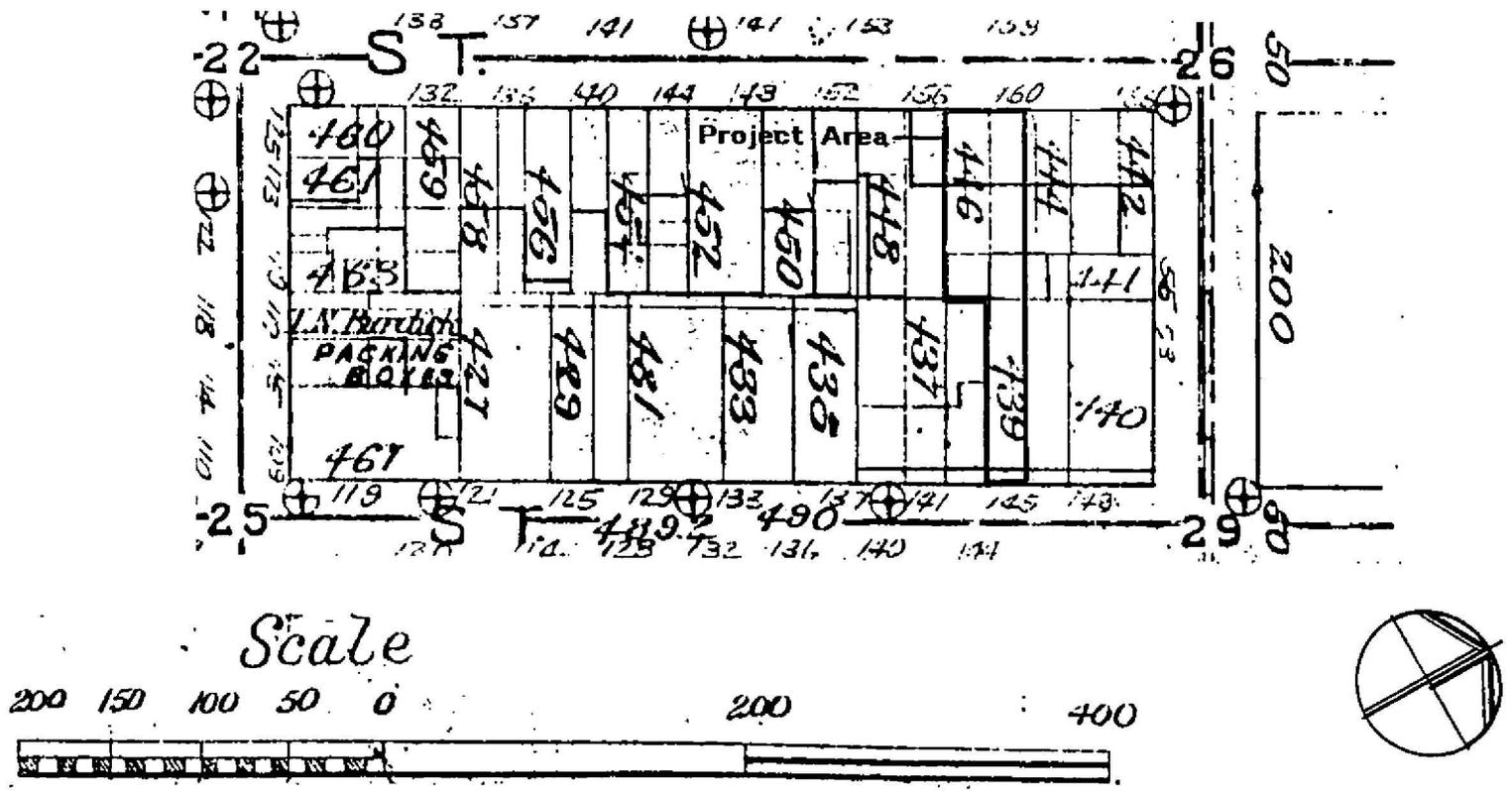


Figure 9 From the 1885 Robinson Atlas.

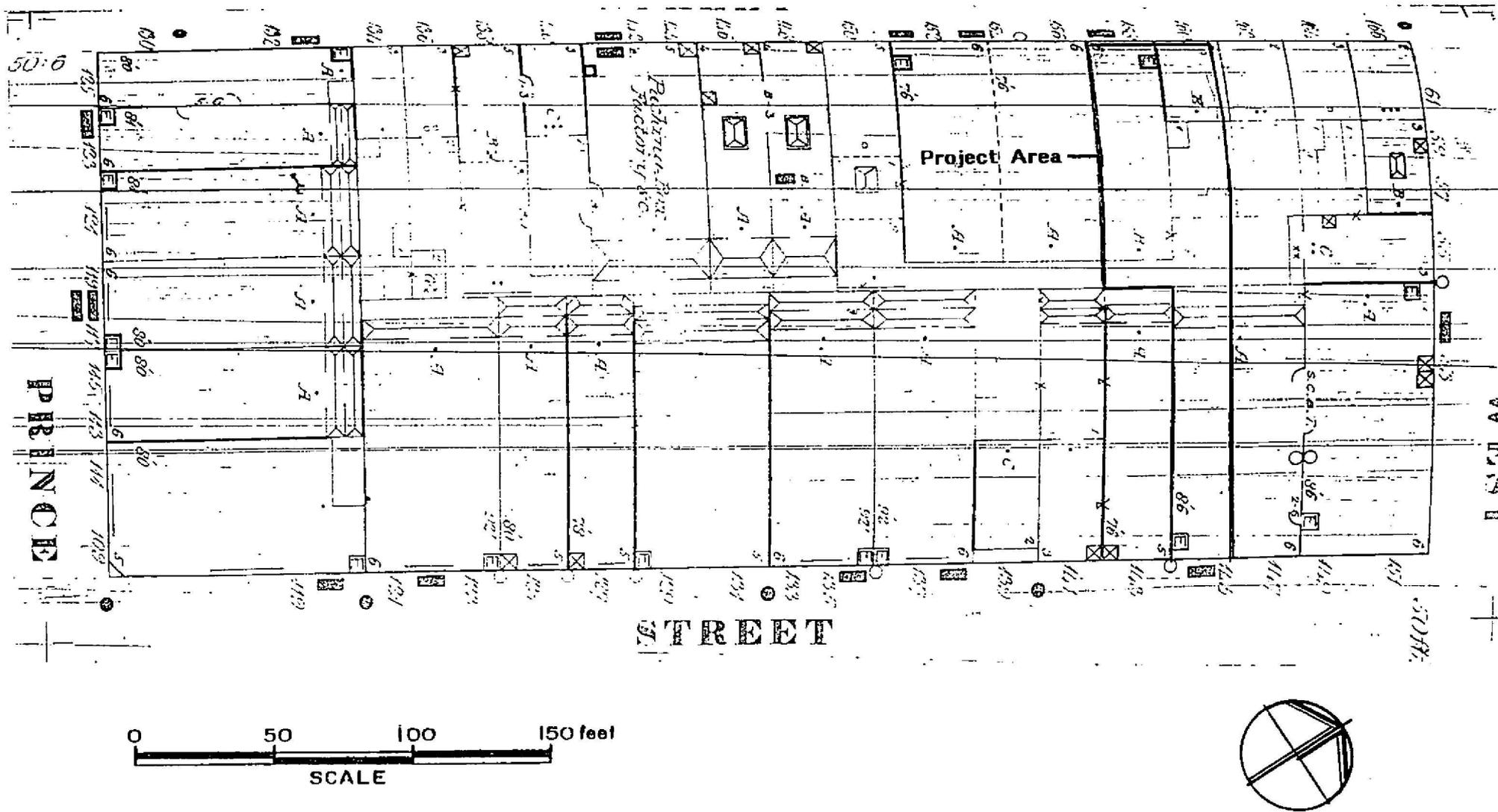
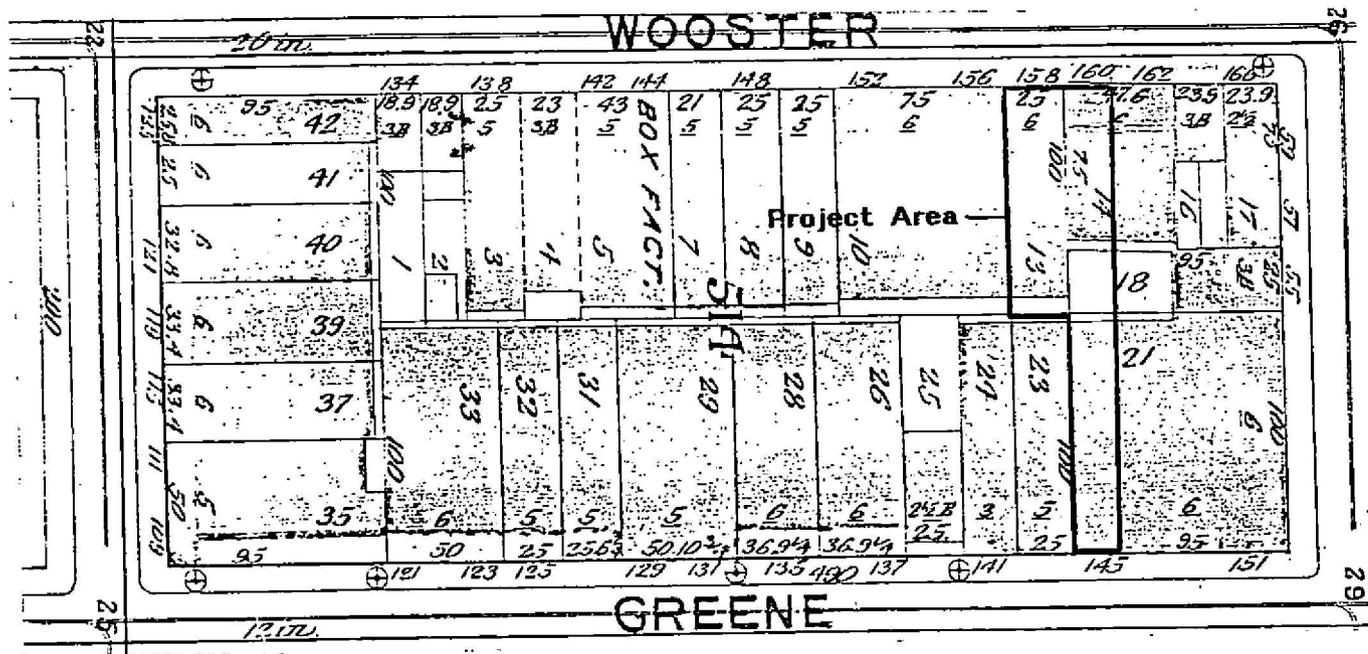


Figure 10 From the 1894 Sanborn-Perris maps, Volume 1.



Scale 80 Feet to an Inch.

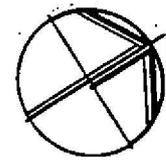
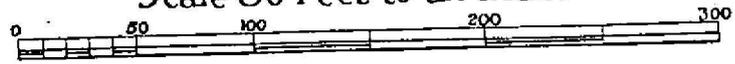


Figure 11 From the 1902 Bromley Atlas, Volume 1.



the lot. Lot 14 has been combined with Lot 15 to the north. A six-story structure now covers all but the rear four feet of this lot. The old three-story structure at the front of 55 West Houston Street remains. The small shed has been removed and the entire rear yard is vacant. 145 Greene Street is now part of a large corner lot 95 feet by 100 feet. A six-story structure covers all but the rear three feet of 145 and 147 Greene Street.

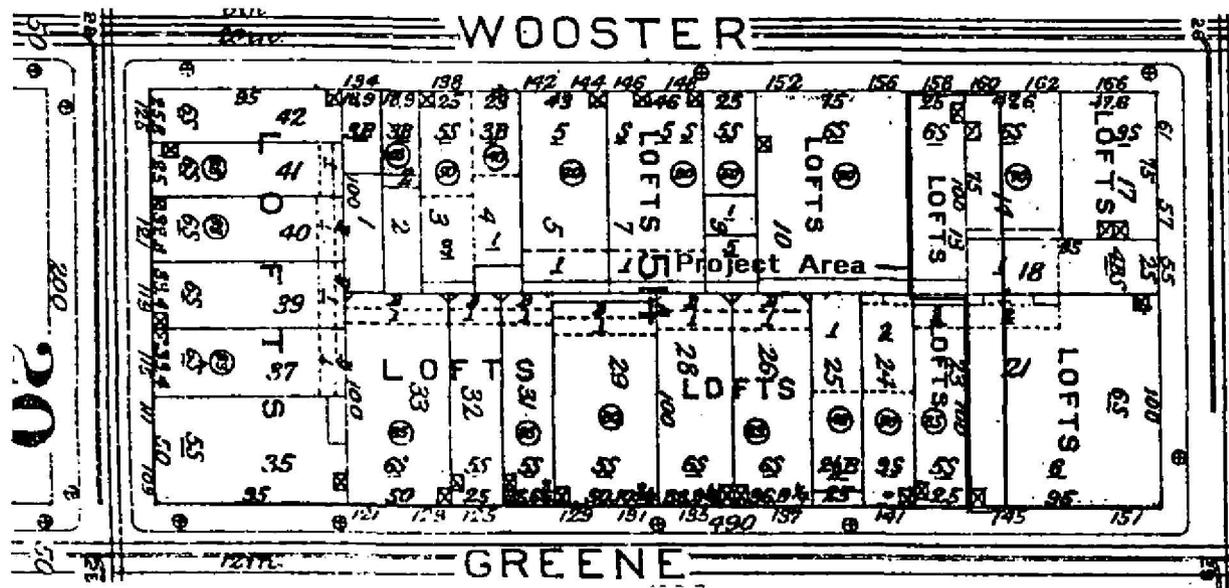
By the early twentieth century, usage of the district changed again, to a millinery manufacturing center. Currently the commercial manufacturing and warehouses are mixed with the art galleries, shops and gentrification (Wolfe 1994:174).

On August 14, 1973 a twenty-six block area was designated as a historic district by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, the first commercial district to achieve this distinction (Wolfe 1994:173; Diamonstein 1993:449; New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission 1979:6). It has also been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. No buildings of this type are currently extant on the project area.

Figure 12, taken from the 1916 Bromley Atlas, shows only one significant change. 55 West Houston Street has an additional story added to the front structure. A one-story extension now covers the entire rear yard. The front structure is four stories with a basement, but no basement is noted for the extension. The six-story structures remain in the other three lots. Those in Lots 13 and 21 are now labeled "Lofts."

The 1922 Sanborn map updated to 1950 is presented here as Figure 13. By this time all of the structures have been demolished excepting the one in Lot 13. West Houston Street has been widened to 80 feet. Lots 14, 18 and 21 are part of a parking lot. Since 1950 West Houston Street has been widened again to 160 feet. This leaves only the southern twenty feet of Lots 14, 18 and 21. The structure in Lot 13 is now one-story. Either the top five stories were demolished or it has been rebuilt.

In summary, it appears that only Lot 18, 55 West Houston Street, has the potential to contain subsurface features. The other three lots all had six-story structures covering nearly all available space. The rear three to eight feet left open would almost certainly have been disturbed by excavations for the deep foundations required for these buildings. Lot 18 only had a one-story extension over its rear yard. The rear twenty feet survive under the present parking lot. A cistern is not possible since this feature would have been just



Scale

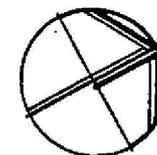


Figure 12 From the 1916 Bromley Atlas, Volume 1.



behind the front structure, now under West Houston Street. A privy is possible at the rear of the lot. The Manhattan Sewer Department was consulted to determine the date of sewer installation here. A sewer was installed under this block of Houston Street during 1857 (Manhattan Sewer Department n.d.:Sheet B55).

The indices for deed transactions in New York County were then consulted to reconstruct a chain of title for the project area. This search was limited to former Lot 18 at 55 West Houston Street since the cartographic evidence indicated that features could not survive in the other lots. It proved possible to reconstruct the ownership of this lot from 1697 through 1904 with only one gap between 1827 and 1847. See Table 5. After subdivision of the former Bayard farm during the 1790s, the longest period of ownership is from 1855 through 1904. John and Mary Elizabeth Appell purchase this lot during June 1855. It is finally sold by Mary Elizabeth and Lois Virginia Appell during September 1904.

Table 5: Chain of Title for 55 West Houston Street

Grantor	Grantee	Record Date	Liber:Page	Lots
Fletcher, Benjamin (Governor of Province of New York)	Bayard, Nicholas	June 21, 1697	7:130	All
Bayard, Nicholas Livingston, Peter Van Brugh Beekman, William Beekman, Mary Graham, John A. Ten Eyck, Henry Dowe, Peter W. Smith, Elias	Ludlow, Daniel (trustee) Livingston, Brockholst (trustee)	August 22, 1792	48:191	All
Ludlow, Daniel (trustee) Livingston, Brockholst (trustee)	Saidler, James	September 16, 1796	52:65	All
Saidler, James Saidler, Jane	Low, Nicholas	September 27, 1796	52:96	All
Low, Nicholas	Chapple, Anthony	March 26, 1823	164:358	14-18
Chapple, Anthony	Jenkins, James Higgins, William	August 8, 1825	191:307	14-18
Jenkins, James Jenkins, Susannah Higgins, William Higgins, Phebe	Chapple, Anthony	August 13, 1825	193:333	14-18



Hoffman, Murray (Master in Chancery) Chapple, Anthony et al. (Defendants)	Post, William Post, Gerardus	January 13, 1827	213:201	14, 17, 18
Post, William Post, Catharine Post, Gerardus Post, Susan	Mould, Charles	May 5, 1827	219:552	14, 18
Gunter, Hariman H. Gunter, Adeline-Caroline	Bouton, Samuel	April 10, 1847	487:558	14-16, 18
Bouton, Samuel	Gunter, Harmon H. Gunter, Adeline-Caroline	April 10, 1847	487:559	14-16, 18
Hibbard, David R. Hibbard, Matilda H.	Gunter, Harmon H. Gunter, Adeline C.	January 29, 1849	515:65	18
Postly, S. Brooks (assignee of H. Gunter) Gunter, Harmon H. Gunter, Adeline-Caroline	Appell, John Appell, Mary Elizabeth	June 15, 1855	686:402	18
Appell, Mary Elizabeth	Woodruff, Hannah	February 14, 1860	808:32	18
Woodruff, Hannah C.	Appell, Mary Elizabeth	September 29, 1860	822:556	18
Appelle, Mary Elizabeth	Appelle, Lois Virginia	October 27, 1887	2082:432	18
Appelle, Lois Virginia	Appelle, Mary Elizabeth	November 26, 1887	2099:51	18
Appelle, Mary Elizabeth Appelle, Lois Virginia	Frey, Charles	July 30, 1891	6:365	18
Appelle, Mary Elizabeth Appelle, Louis Virginia	Walsh, James R. Wertheim, Samuel J.	September 9, 1904	130:36	18

The 1890 Police Census lists the following people as residents at 55 West Houston:

Name	Gender	Age
Freys, Charles	M	50
Freys, Christina	F	48
Freys, Louisa	F	18
Freys, Edward C.	M	15
Freys, William	M	13
Abadoe, Lewis	M	54
Abadae, Annie	F	46
Friese, Charles E.	M	38
Wagner, George	M	36
Wagner, Lena	F	30
Wagner, Gustave	M	10
Wagner, Paul	M	8
Wagner, Eliza	F	6
Fossaty, Margaret	F	35
Oetroesacion, Joseph	M	31

? ethnicity
individual
occupation



Charles Frey or Freys may have signed a lease with the Appells/Appelles in 1891 and then took in boarders as represented in the police census.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this sensitivity evaluation was to determine the potential of the project area for preserving archaeological evidence from either or both the prehistoric and historic time periods.

It is our conclusion that the none of the lots composing the project area are likely to preserve evidence from the prehistoric period. Although two prehistoric sites are known within two miles, and place name evidence for a third location has survived, the project area was not near to a source of fresh water. This situation gives it a fairly low probability for having been used during prehistory. In addition, over 150 years of intensive development at this location would likely have disturbed or destroyed any such evidence, should it exist.

It is also our conclusion that the only part of the project area likely to preserve archaeological evidence from the historic period is former Lot 18. This applies only to the rear twenty feet of the former Lot 18, which is 55 West Houston Street itself, and not to any of the other lots within the project area. This is the only sizable location that was not covered by a large structure. This rear yard remained open space until circa 1916. A one-story extension to the house was built over it by that time. All structures within the lot were demolished by 1950, and the location has remained a parking lot since that time. A sewer was installed under this portion of Houston Street during 1857. A privy could survive at the rear of this lot, probably filled during 1857 or shortly thereafter. The widening of Houston Street has claimed the location of any cisterns or wells in the lot.

The property was owned by the Appells at this time. There is no evidence that they lived there however. 55 West Houston Street, formerly 628 Houston Street, was the location of a house of assignation operated by Miss M.L. Randolph during 1855 and 1856. It is likely she was still at that address in 1857, although no directory was available for that year. It appears likely that the privy was filled by Miss Randolph and her employees. Any factual data pertaining to the nineteenth century sex industry would be welcome since nineteenth century observations are always slanted or sensationalized, whether they are the moral reformers' dens of iniquity or a *Gentleman's Companion* promoting the business. Personal objects and furnishings surviving in the ground may either support the information of a "very genteel" establishment in a respectable neighborhood or not. Spann states that patent medicines, such



as "Red Drops" and "Unfortunate's Friend" were used to treat venereal disease (1981:251). Would these bottles be present or would laudanum, the favorite drug for girls on Greene Street (Ellington 1972:224)? Drug stores in the vicinity also had some of the largest sales of opium in the city (ibid.:227). At least 25 patents were issued for pessaries between 1850 and 1885, a device for correcting a prolapsed uterus (Green 1983:122-125). Composed of wood, bone, metal, or their combinations, pessaries may have functioned as an intrauterine device. Prostitutes and upper class women certainly would have suffered from the dress apparel causing a prolapsed uterus, and at the same time both would have wanted to prevent unwanted pregnancy if they were engaged in illicit sex. Would such devices appear at 55 West Houston?

It is our recommendation that archaeological testing be completed within the 55 West Houston Street project area prior to construction. This testing will be limited to the rear ten feet of the former Lot 18. The purpose is to search for a possible privy filled by Miss Randolph. We recommend one backhoe trench six feet by twenty-five feet in this location.



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