

USP  
544m  
1994

**Grossman and Associates, Inc.**

*Archaeological Specialists*

---

August 5, 1994

**TO:** Mr. Buckley Yung  
New York City Housing Authority  
123 William Street  
New York, NY 10038

**FROM:** Dr. Joel W. Grossman  
Grossman and Associates, Inc.  
201 East 16th Street  
New York, NY 10003

**RE:** End of Field Report and Recommendations from the Presence and Absence  
Archaeological Test Results within Six Rear Lot Areas of the Police Service Area  
Facility 4 Project Site, New York, New York, CEQRA #: 94HPD302M.

A 6 day field effort from July 26, to August 3, 1994, which combined the logistical support of Sparrow Construction heavy equipment and operators in tandem with a 6 person archaeological field crew, has established the presence and undisturbed survival of significant early 19th century, post 1823, building remains within only 1 of the 6 lots evaluated, Lot 58. Archaeological Stage IB presence and absence field testing by Grossman and Associates, Inc. has provided a sufficient level of definition to establish the presence, location, age, and relative stratigraphic integrity of the surviving early 19th century structural remains and deposits to make concrete recommendations for resource evaluation by the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC). With the exception of a small 10 by 12 foot corner section of an earlier 19th century wall element within Lot 17, which was recorded and established to be of little or no research potential, the investigation of the 4 remaining lots, Lots 55, 57, 59, and 62, documented the fact that either, no rear yard areas survived the subsequent 20th century building construction, or if present, that no other high integrity, undisturbed, early historic remains survived within their limits. Regardless of the nature of material encountered within each lot, each was exposed, photographically documented, and

351

metrically recorded with a high resolution computer transit system, that documented precise XYZ locations of all structural elements, regardless to time period.

The basic field procedure utilized the background information provided by the Stage IA sensitivity evaluation to focus the field effort on only the projected rear lot portions of 6 potentially archaeologically sensitive 19th century lots. While the initial proposal by our firm was based on a projected depth of fill of 18 inches, the availability of deep profile exposure cuts as part of the ongoing construction in the adjacent lots to the east, provided clear evidence that the actual depth of modern demolition rubble and fill extended to some 4 feet below grade. Given this increase in actual versus projected fill depth which had to be penetrated to expose the buried 19th century surfaces, the project contractor provided a large backhoe machine with a 34 inch bucket, onto which a flat steel blade was welded to the teeth to facilitate the careful scraping and horizontal exposure of each rear lot test area.

The first phase of the archaeological investigation was conducted over a 3 day period, and was dedicated to establishing of the horizontal location of buried rear lot party walls belonging to the most recent phase of late 19th century structures as depicted on available maps. A series of long north-south trenches were cut across each of the rear lot areas to an average depth of 3.5 feet to identify the location of the walls, and the presence or absence of basements within the rear of each lot. Once identified in general horizontal extent, each of the surviving rear lot areas (Lot 17, 57, 58, 59, and 62) were fully exposed between the former building and rear lot line wall over an average lateral extent of 25 to 30 feet. The fill removal procedure utilizing the heavy equipment cut down to within 3 to 6 inches of the projected historic surface or interface. Subsequent exposure activities were conducted with careful horizontal, machine scraping at 1 inch intervals and combined with the manual use of hoes and shovels to clean the interface and expose any features on it.

When encountered, each feature was carefully exposed using standard archaeological procedures to reveal the extent, structural characteristics, stratigraphic integrity, and approximate time range of each feature investigated. So as to expedite the review and compliance process, as new data became available, generally on a daily basis, the field director Dr. Joel W. Grossman consulted and briefed both Mr. Buckley Yung of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), and Mr. Dan Pagano of the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) via an in field cellular phone tele-conference call, which facilitated the rapid evaluation and elimination of potential lot study areas during and throughout the 6 day field investigation. This process documented that Lot 55 had been altered in the 20th century, and the size of the building expanded to the rear of the lot which had obliterated the former rear lot area. This process also documented that the former rear yard zone of Lot 59 had been built over with a 20th century cement slab, with only mixed historic and modern debris encountered beneath it.

## Lot Specific Results

### Lot 55

Evaluated with a single north-south trench, measuring 50 feet and extending to a depth of 7 feet below modern grade, Lot 55 was found to be devoid of any buried rear yard surface. Only a modern cement rear party wall was identified, which suggested that the former rear lot area had been destroyed by relatively recent building expansion or alteration activities in the 20th century. Following consultation with LPC it was determined that no additional investigation was warranted, and the trench was immediately backfilled to facilitate ongoing construction and mobilization.

### Lot 17

Lot 17 was one of the 2 lots out of the 6 tested found to contain surviving early 19th century structural remains in the form of a ca. 12 by 12 foot northeast corner wall section, which was capped and built over by poured cement and lot party walls at later date. The identification of this wall element was important because it demonstrated that the late 19th century maps and lot lines had changed significantly from those of the early 19th century building locations. The early stone wall corner section of Lot 17 was aligned north-south 8 to 12 feet west of the later cement lot walls. In other words, the archaeological evidence showed that the late 19th century map depictions were not consistent, or reflective of early 19th century conditions. Deep strata cuts to the south in Lot 55 and to the west in Lot 16 established that no rear yard elements, or surviving sections of the Lot 17 stone wall element existed to the south (Lot 55) or to the west (Lot 16).

The archaeological research potential and relative significance of the historic early 19th century stone wall corner section was investigated through the use of two, 3 by 3 foot, strata control units on either side of the north-south section of the stone wall. The purpose of these strata control tests was to establish three categories of information or criteria for evaluation: 1) the potential presence and stratigraphic integrity of an interior living surface within the stone wall corner section, 2) the presence and potential chronological utility of a possible builder's trench on the exterior of the wall of the building, which would, through the recovery of datable artifacts, document the date of construction, and 3) the potential presence and possible stratigraphic integrity of a living surface containing contemporary cultural materials, which would have dated to the time period of the stone wall construction. The tests unequivocally documented that none of these criteria or conditions were encountered or found to survive in association with the buried stone wall of Lot 17 (See Figure 1 and Figure 2).

The interior strata control unit was excavated to depth of ca. 2.5 feet and exposed the presence of a laminated series of ash and soil fill layers, which pre-dated the construction of the stone wall, and documented the lack of a surviving interior living surface which was historically associated with the building and period of use of the stone wall. Likewise, the exterior strata control unit documented the lack of any builder's trench, and the lack of any well defined living surface associated with the stone wall. In addition to a large number of datable ceramic pipes, the

excavation of the interior strata control unit through the pre construction fill beneath the stone wall resulted in the recovery of a copper coin which was electrolytically cleaned and found to date to 1845. This chronological evidence and its stratigraphic position beneath the building establishes that both the fill and the subsequent stone wall construction were deposited, and built, after 1845. The only feature encountered within Lot 17 consisted of a rectangular brick and cement platform with a long basin, or trough down its center, which appeared, from its structural elements and the presence of a cement top, to significantly post date the era of the stone wall (see Figure 3 through Figure 6).

Based on these lines of archaeological evidence and the level of data control established by the archaeological testing, it was recommended to LPC that, given the lack of an interior surface, the lack of a builder's trench, and the lack of an associated exterior living surface, no additional data recovery or mitigation work was warranted beyond the already completed graphic and photo documentation of the plan, profile, structural, and stratigraphic context of the stone wall and brick feature. Based on an on site conference call between Dr. Grossman and Mr. Pagano, all parties concurred that, aside from the plan and profile recordation of the stratigraphic context and structural characteristics of these elements within Lot 17, no additional data recovery activities were warranted, or should be recommended. All elements within Lot 17 were precision measured with a computer transit and photo documented. Once completed, this lot was also cleared verbally by LPC, and the Lot 17 exposure was filled and compacted as of 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 3, 1994.

#### **Lot 57**

The exposure of Lot 57 documented the presence of only late 19th century brick and stone/slate slab structural elements associated with modern artifacts and construction debris. No elements of earlier stone wall construction were exposed, and no 19th century artifacts were encountered within the rear of Lot 57. Based on an on-site conference and inspection by members of NYCHA and LPC, it was determined that, once recorded, no additional data recovery activities were warranted, and the lot was filled in as of Tuesday afternoon, August 2, 1994.

#### **Lot 58**

The archaeological investigation of Lot 58 established the presence of early 19th century brick and stone features, and unmixed deposits of early 19th century artifacts. Once delimited and exposed, the extent of the rectangular stone wall suggested the former presence of only early 19th century materials in this rear lot section. No late 19th century or 20th century materials were recovered. Because of the density of early 19th century artifacts exposed on the buried surface 4 feet below modern grade, this area was divided into a grid of 5 by 5 foot horizontal control units, and two, 5 by 5 foot strata control units were excavated to establish the nature and stratigraphic integrity of cultural materials within Lot 58. In addition to the recovery of large quantities of diagnostic early 19th century artifacts, the age of the building itself was established by the recovery of a well preserved Dutch coin within the matrix of the stone wall itself, apparently placed there by

the builder, and once electrolytically cleaned and conserved, documented a date of 1823 for the building (See Figure 9). As detailed below, based on these findings, it is strongly recommended that this lot be further investigated and mitigated through controlled excavation, prior to clearance for demolition and construction.

#### **Lot 59**

Upon removal of the 4 foot cap of recent demolition material and fill, the rear portion of Lot 59 was found to contain a cement slab which covered all of the former rear yard areas. Heavy machinery was utilized to smash through and remove this cement slab to expose the underlying deposits for archaeological evaluation and investigation. Once exposed, cleared, and cleaned, it was found that in addition to scattered historic artifacts, that the "sub-slab" deposits were dominated by the presence of modern plastic debris, bottles, garbage, and structural remains. With the exception of a rectangular brick feature at the rear northeast corner of the lot, all parties concurred that no additional work for the majority of the lot was warranted and it was also back filled as of Tuesday, August 2, 1994. As will be detailed below, and given the fact that the brick feature was found associated, or structurally integrated with the stone wall elements which appear to relate to the structure in Lot 58, it is recommended that this small section of Lot 59 be evaluated and documented as part of the focused data recovery activities being proposed for Lot 58.

#### **Lot 62**

The exposure of Lot 62 documented the presence of an historic surface at a depth of 4 feet below modern grade, which was heavily disturbed by later 20th century construction activities. Historic 19th century artifacts were found mixed with modern plastic materials, which strongly suggested that this rear lot lacked cultural and chronological integrity sufficient to warrant further investigation.

At the rear of Lot 62, the field team identified the presence of a stone and brick privy feature, cutting down from a higher surface, which was formerly extant ca. 1 foot below modern grade and ca. 2 feet above the disturbed and historic surface. This brick privy was found to contain a stone base and an associated brick drain, running underground to the southeast. At the suggestion of LPC, efforts were made to further evaluate the structural and chronological integrity of this feature as a basis for making recommendations concerning the need for additional work. This expanded feature definition process revealed the presence of a later phase of construction, which involved the placement of a metal pipe within the drain feature connected to a more modern sanitary sewer pipe on its exterior. Although limited in volume, the recovery of ca. 1 cubic feet of interior fill, resulted in the recovery of 2 late 19th century Indian Head pennies. When electrolytically cleaned, these late 19th century coins yielded dates of 1874 and 1882, suggesting that the privy was filled and abandoned sometime after 1882 and probably later, given the metal and ceramic pipe alterations to it. The feature was fully exposed both in plan and profile and measured in with a computer transit (See Figure 10 and Figure 11). Based on the level of information recovered, and the fact that the

privy was altered in the late 19th and 20th centuries, no additional data recovery or documentation is being recommended beyond the already completed level of recordation.

### Recommendations

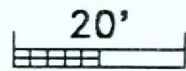
This expanded Stage IB presence and absence testing program has provided strong archaeological evidence to unambiguously establish that no additional archaeological work is necessary for 5 of the 6 lots investigated, (Lot 55, 17, 57, 62, and the majority of Lot 59). However, given the antiquity and integrity of early 19th century historic remains encountered within Lot 58, it is recommended that a controlled excavation of ca. 50% of the lot rear yard area be undertaken, in conjunction with the exposure of the feature in the northeast corner of Lot 59 so as to mitigate the loss of this otherwise undocumented historic evidence. If requested by the involved municipal agencies, Grossman and Associates, Inc. is able to rapidly provide a detailed scope of services for a field data recovery effort and associated laboratory processing and analysis program to address these findings and recommendations. Based on the extent of early historic remains, we believe that such a field effort could be completed within 5 to 10 days with a crew of 6 archaeologists.

cc: Dan Pagano, Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Dean H. DeGhetto, Environmental Risk Limited  
Bruce Uddres, Sparrow Construction

EAST 9TH ST.

MODERN LOT # 14 15 16 17

Police Service Area Facility #4  
Archaeological Testing



--- HYPOTHETICAL LOT LINE FROM  
STATED SURVEY ON INSURANCE MAPS

AVENUE C

MODERN LOT # 1

63

62

60

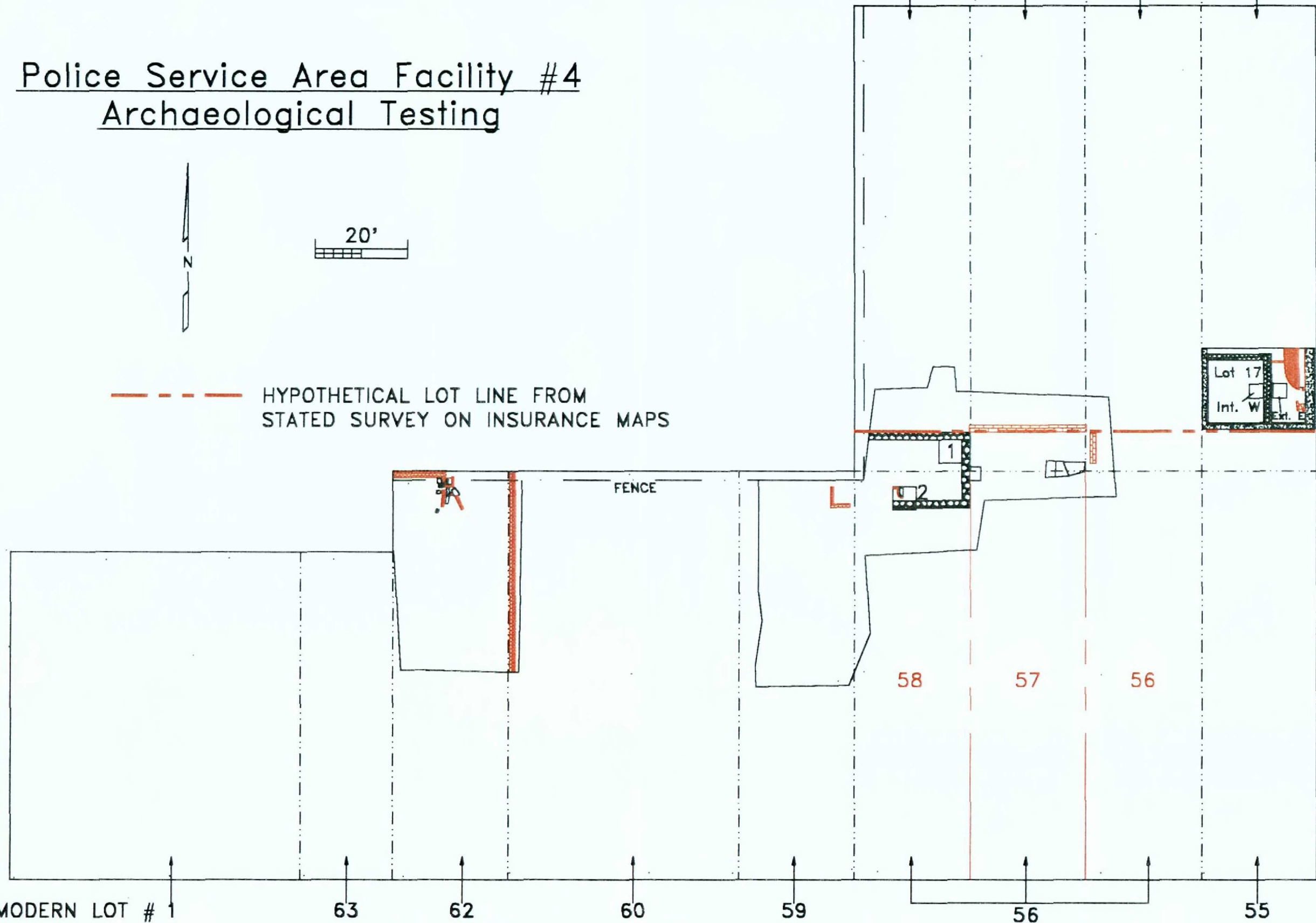
59

56

55

EAST 8TH ST.

GROSSMAN & ASSOCIATES  
DRAFT



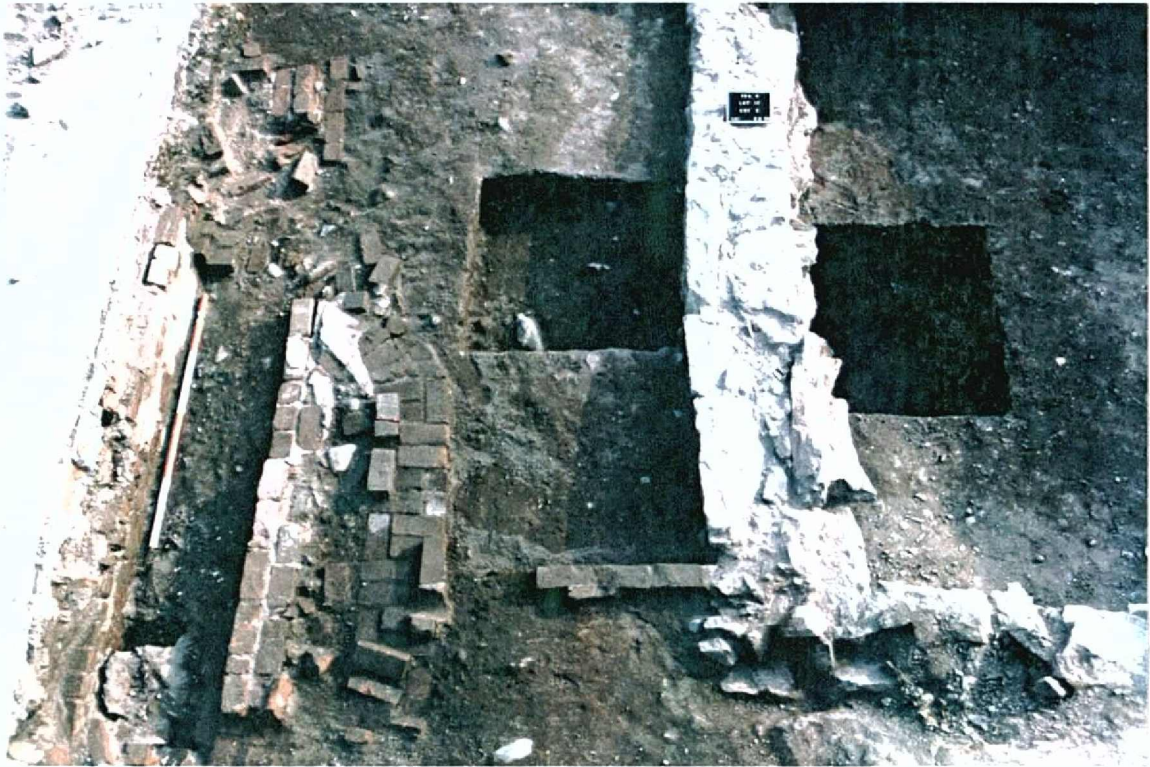


**Figure 1:** General view looking northeast towards 9th Street showing historic stonewall in Lot 17 beneath more modern cement lot line parting walls.





**Figure 2:** Detail of excavated and stratigraphically evaluated historic wall remains within the rear of Lot 17. Note the presence of a more recent brick and cement support structure (boiler base?) which post dates the earlier mid 19th century stone structural remains.



**Figure 3:** Overhead photo looking due south at Lot 17 showing the placement of two, 3 by 3 foot test units on either side of the early historic stone wall with an unassociated and later brick and cement feature to the left (east) of the stone wall.



**Figure 4:** Overhead view of Lot 17 looking due west showing a historic stone wall at the top of the photo and a plan view of the rectangular brick and cement boiler base (?) feature with rubble fill in the interior.



**Figure 5:** Detail looking east at the Lot 17 exposure showing a strata control unit on both interior and exterior of the historic stone wall.



**Figure 6:** Detail looking east within Lot 17 showing the sequence of pre construction fill levels beneath the early 19th century stone wall which documented the lack of an intact floor.



**Figure 7:** General view looking southwest across the rear of Lot 58 showing the partially exposed intact remains of a post 1823 stone structure and the general placement within a 5 foot grid of two test units, which established the stratigraphic integrity of the interior deposits within the stone structure.



**Figure 8:** Detail looking west of a 5 by 5 foot test excavation unit showing a well preserved stone wall to the right and in tact, partially exposed brick and stone slab feature of undetermined function within Lot 58.



**Figure 9:** Detail of electrolytically conserved and reconstructed ca. 1823 Dutch coin which was found within the wall matrix of the historic stone structure within the rear of Lot 58, which documents that the wall was constructed some point after the date of the coin.



Figure 10: Profile view looking due north towards the rear parting wall of Lot 62 showing the excavated profile of a late 19th and 20th century brick privy which was altered with the addition of 20th century iron and ceramic sewer pipes. The recovery of 2 Indian Head pennies (1874 and 1882), within the small amount of interior fill documents that it was abandoned sometime after the first decade of the 20th century.



Figure 11: Overhead view of brick privy at the rear of Lot 62 showing an original brick drain at the bottom of the photo with the addition of later iron and ceramic sewer pipes dating to the turn of the century.