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STAGE 1A SURVEY

Block 768, lots 56 to 71
232 to 262 West 19th Street

for

Benabi Realty Co.

by

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KEY PERSPECTIVES

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INTRODUCTION

This study is designed to fulfill the requirement of a Stage IA documentary survey for block 768, lots 56 through 71, 232 to 262 West 19th Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues, as required by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. The site was flagged for study because it was viewed as being a potential source of significant remains from the historic period, particularly the 19th century, and also because it was considered to be a possible place of prehistoric Amerind activity.

This study consists of an examination, through maps and texts, of the history of the area of block 768 and its natural topography. In addition, the building history of the site has been researched and the site visited and examined in its present condition. The information is analyzed to determine if a Stage IB archaeological survey should or should not be required, and an appropriate recommendation is made. A Stage IB archaeological survey will be required if the site has the possibility of yielding significant archaeological materials.

The research for this study was conducted at The New York Public Library, Avery Library (Columbia University),

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, The Buildings Department of the City of New York (Municipal Building), and The New York City Municipal Archives, in addition to the author's personal library.

TOPOGRAPHY

GENERAL AREA

In its natural, undeveloped form, the site area consisted of an isotopic flat which covered much of the district that today is identified as the Chelsea neighborhood. Viele's 1865 and 1874 Manhattan topographic maps, as well as the topographic map in the New York City Landmarks Commission's 1982 Preparatory Study for a New York City Predictive Model, indicates that there were no distinguishing features to recommend the site area for prehistoric or early Colonial settlement. (See plate 1.)

Before the advent of water landfilling, Manhattan's Hudson River coast at 19th Street was situated approximately along the line of Tenth Avenue, two and a half blocks west of the proposed development site. The river bank in this area was generally featureless, and the nearest "harborage," actually a cove, was located to the south, where the bank began to curve in at West 15th Street to form a landing place near Gansevoort Street.¹

There were three stream heads within the general vicinity of the project area, but none of these were located less than approximately 1500 feet from the site. The closest

¹Grumet 1981: 49f.

stream had twin heads located at West 17th Street and the Avenue of the Americas and at 21st Street and Fifth Avenue. These heads met between West 11th and 12th Streets and Fifth and Sixth Avenues, and from there the stream flowed into the Hudson at Charlton and Greenwich Streets. A second stream flowed towards the East River from twin heads that rose between Fifth Avenue and the Avenue of the Americas in the blocks directly north of West 22nd and 24th Streets, and that joined just north of Broadway and 24th Street. This stream entered the river at East 18th Street and First Avenue. The third and final stream, also with multiple heads, had two heads that rose between the Avenue of the Americas and Eighth Avenue, north of West 27th Street. Additional headwaters were located further to the north. These rivulets joined at the block north of 28th Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues; from there, the stream flowed south to 26th Street and then curved north again to enter the Hudson at 29th Street between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues.

THE PROJECT AREA

The project area as it appears today consists of two flat-paved parking lots that flank a two-story garage building. (See plates 7, 8, 13, 14.) The garage is today identified as block 768, lot 59. The eastern parking lot includes lots 56, 57, and 58, while the western parking lot, of

equivalent size to the lot on the east, is identified as lot 69.² Obviously, in the garage and in the western parking lot, additional early lot numbers are subsumed under the current designation (see building history below, pages 25 - 38 and Table 1).

There are no distinguishing topographic features within the project area. The two open parking lots are level with grade. The lower story of the garage is a semi-subterranean basement that sits approximately 5 feet below grade. There is no cellar in the garage basement, although hydraulic lifts and an office in the north-west corner of the building have been excavated below the level of the basement floor.

In anticipation of construction, eight core borings were made within the project area.³ (See plates 8 - 12.)

All but two of the borings (nos. 2 and 4) were cut in the northern half of the property, where 19th century atlases indicate that a row of brownstone buildings stood. The upper approximately 10 feet of these borings revealed a fill consisting of cinders, concrete, red brick, sand and gravel (not all materials were present in all borings). Below approximately 10 feet there was a level of sand and gravel. Water was encountered between 10 and 21 feet, and bedrock (mica schist) was reached at approximately 20 feet below ground surface on the east and 30 feet below

²Bromley 1957 and Sandborn 1983-1984.

³Ace Borings, Inc. report dated 5-13-83.

ground surface on the west. The sand/gravel layer under the garage building also included boulders (borings 5 and 7), perhaps part of the bedding for the modern building.

The two borings cut within the undeveloped southern half of the property included one in the western parking lot (boring 2) and one in the eastern lot (boring 4). The upper 8 1/2 feet in boring 2 consisted of a fill of red brick, concrete and wood. Below the fill, layers of sand, silt, and clay sat above the bedrock which was encountered at 34 feet below the ground surface. In boring 4, the upper 9 1/2 feet was fill of sand and gravel. A second layer of sand and gravel sat atop the bedrock, which was encountered at 23 feet below the ground surface. Thus, the presence of wood within boring 2 was the only thing that distinguished the borings cut in the undeveloped southern part of the site from the borings cut in the north.

PREHISTORY

Prehistoric occupation in the northeast and New York City area has been divided into the following periods: Paleo-Indian, 10,500 - 8000 B.C., Archaic, 8000 - 1300 B.C., Transitional, 1300 - 1000 B.C., and Woodland, 1000 B.C. - historic occupation. The Archaic and Woodland periods have been subdivided into Early, Middle, and Late phases as follows: Early Archaic, 8000 - 6000 B.C., Middle Archaic, 6000 - 4000 B.C., Late Archaic, 4000 - 1300 B.C., Early Woodland, 1000 - 300 B.C., Middle Woodland, 300 B.C. - 1000 A.D., Late Woodland, 1000 A.D. - European contact.

Each of these periods is characterized by particular settlement types. Paleo-Indian sites are often along areas of low, swampy ground or on very high, protected areas.⁴ Within New York City, Paleo-Indian remains have been excavated at the Port Mobile site on Staten Island, and worked stone implements of Paleo-Indian type have been found at additional locations within that borough.⁵ Although Paleo-Indian materials have not yet been discovered in Manhattan, some portions of the island were, in the recent past, of the topographic type favored by the Paleo-Indian hunters. Thus, the City Archaeologist's predictive model lists the

⁴Ritchie 1980:7.

⁵Ibid.: pp. xvii f. and map, pp. 4f.

Collect Pond area in lower Manhattan and Washington Heights in the north as being probable areas for Paleo-Indian remains.⁶

The project area does not fall into either of the topographic categories that were known to have been favored by the Paleo-Indians, and indeed, it was probably even less desirable for settlement in remote antiquity than it was in early historic times. The topography of Manhattan and its surrounding region have not been constant. The discovery of the remains of land-based megafauna such as mammoth and mastodon on the Atlantic Ocean floor along the Continental Shelf opposite the New York - New Jersey sea coast⁷ serves as a reminder that the geography of the New York area has changed considerably since antiquity. In the remote past, the project area would have been even further from the ocean than it is today. The Hudson would have been of reduced scale during glacial and immediately post-glacial times, and thus the project area also would have been further from the river's banks.

The Early Archaic was characterized by small hunting camps. According to the Landmarks Commission study for a city-wide archaeological predictive model, such sites do not have great archaeological visibility, nor are they likely to be associated with particular land forms.⁸

Finds from other portions of the U.S. northeast indicate

⁶Baughner et al. 1982:10.

⁷Chesler 1982:20.

⁸Baughner et al. 1982: 10.

that during the Middle Archaic there was a large increase of population. As yet, there is little evidence of this time period in the New York City region and thus it is especially important to watch for remains from this era. Discoveries of Middle Archaic components are necessary in order to define occurrence-characteristics and increase the accuracy of future predictions of site occurrence.

For the Late Archaic, sites are most likely to be found in littoral areas, which makes the study area an unlikely place to find remains of this period.⁹

Littoral areas and the zones along major inland water ways such as the Hudson are known to have been settled during Transitional times. Stone projectile points of Transitional type have been found in northern Manhattan, in the Inwood/Washington Heights district.¹⁰ As yet, there is not a large enough body of information to accurately predict Transitional site occurrence within New York City in anything except the most general terms.

In the Woodland period, many different kinds of settlements existed. Permanent and semi-permanent settlements, villages, as well as seasonal campsites and food gathering/processing stations are characteristic. Agriculture was practiced, although this development may date only to the end of the Late Woodland period, following the first

⁹Baughner *et al.* 1982: 10-11.

¹⁰Ritchie 1980:150-178 for general characteristics and distribution of Transitional remains.

contact with Europeans.¹¹ Shellfish collecting sites at tidal inlets are particularly well represented in this period, although this may simply be a reflection of the fact that the tidal zones were less likely to have been disturbed by subsequent city development than were inland areas.

In the mid-17th century, high hills near streams, rivers and agricultural fields, and fishing places were favored by the Indians for settlement. Thus, the isotopic and inland project area can be identified as having a low potential for Woodland settlement.

At the time of European contact and Dutch settlement, Manhattan was occupied by Munsee-speaking Delaware groups: the Canarsee, who occupied western Long Island and probably controlled southern and possibly eastern Manhattan, and other Indian groups, whose territory included the northern portions of the island.¹² Until recently, the Indians of northern Manhattan had been identified as the Reckgawawanks; Robert Grumet has now placed this group at Haverstraw in Rockland County.¹³

The New Jersey side of the the Hudson River across from Manhattan and the project area, was controlled by the Munsee-speaking Hackensack band of Delaware.¹⁴ It

¹¹Ceci 1982: 5-36.

¹²Trigger 1978:214, fig. 1.

¹³Grumet 1982.

¹⁴Goddard 1978: 213-239.

is not known if there were actually settlements along this shore. The New Jersey shore of the Hudson in this area is, of course, extensively built up and developed, and no archaeological surveys or excavations have been published that reveal evidence of prehistoric occupation along this part of the river.¹⁵

According to Bolton, temporary or seasonal fishing camps would have been likely along the major river shores and streams of Manhattan, particularly on the island's sheltered east side.¹⁶ The interior of Manhattan, especially in the middle portions of the island, was not likely to have been much occupied. This is due to the combined factors of a relatively rugged terrain and a relatively limited supply of wildlife (itself a result of the restricted area of the island). Areas along stream courses are likely to have been the only exceptions to this general rule that focuses settlement along the island's coast. Thus, again, according to current understanding of prehistoric land use within the metropolitan area, the project site has a low potential for providing remains of prehistoric occupation.

The closest area of documented prehistoric activity to the development site was Sapokanikan, a tract of land in Greenwich Village that Bolton identified as a canoe landing on the Hudson shore near Gansevoort Street.¹⁷

¹⁵Chessler et al. 1982: passim.

¹⁶Bolton 1922:61.

¹⁷Bolton 1920:79; 1922:221; Grumet 1981:49f.

In addition, Stokes suggested that the historic Fitz Roy Road, which ran along the western side of the project area prior to 1830, followed the line of an earlier Indian path running from Greenwich Village/Sapokanikan to Great Kill (42nd Street).¹⁸ This suggestion seems entirely reasonable, but even the existence of a prehistoric pathway running along the side of the project area does not establish the area as a place of prehistoric settlement.

In conclusion, there is no evidence in the historic documentary or prehistoric archaeological record which would suggest that the project area was a place of either transitory seasonal or permanent prehistoric settlement. The probable existence of an Indian pathway along the western side of the project area indicates some limited degree of utilization/activity, but in the absence of fresh water sources in the vicinity of the site, this utilization probably consisted of nothing more than transit through the area.

¹⁸Stokes VI: 14b.

HISTORICAL PERIODS

The study for the predictive model divides the historical periods of Manhattan into six phases: 1609-1664, 1664-1720, 1720-1783, 1783-1815, 1815-1865, and 1865-1900.

In our study area, only woodlands and farms occupied the region in the earlier three phases. At the time of the so-called Manatus map, a map drafted in ca. 1670 that shows the European settlement in the metropolitan region as it was in ca. 1639, the project area was undeveloped, but isolated farmsteads had been established to the north and south of the site. (See Plate 2.) Along the Hudson River shore, Jan Cornelissen von Rotterdam had two houses: one just north of Great Kill (West 42nd Street near Eleventh Avenue) and the other in Greenwich, near West 15th/16th Street and Tenth Avenue. Inland from von Rotterdam's southern holding, at approximately West 15th Street and Sixth/Seventh Avenue, was Thomas Betts' (or Bets, or Bescher) farm house; and inland from Great Kill, at approximately West 42nd Street and Seventh Avenue, was the farm of Hendrick Pietersen van Wesel (or Hasselt).¹⁹

Von Rotterdam was killed in 1644 during Gouvernor Keift's ill-conceived Indian War, and his land was transferred

¹⁹Kouwenhoven 1972: 35-37.

to the Government. On 14 March 1662, his land became vested in Allard Anthony and Paulus Leenderts van der Grift. On his map of Manhattan's original grants and farms, Stokes depicted Fitz Roy Road, the western corner of the project area, as the easternmost edge of the Anthony/van der Grift farm.²⁰

There is no indication of development within the project area or its immediate vicinity on the 1664-1668 Nicolls map. (See plate 3.) The site is shown as wooded, and the only development in the area consists of a single farmstead, located near the point on Manhattan's Hudson River coast that fell near West 15th Street and Tenth Avenue, before modern landfilling changed the city's outline. This farmstead seems to occupy the position of the southernmost von Rotterdam house of 1639. As drawn by Nicolls, the farmstead consisted of a twin-roofed structure and a smaller out-building, both of which were positioned within a compound that was set off (perhaps by a fence or bordering path) from the surrounding countryside. The other farmsteads and buildings that were depicted on the 1639 Manatus map along West 15th Street and Great Kill are not shown on Nicolls' map.

On December 30, 1680, a plot of farmland to the east of Fitz Roy Road, including the project area, was granted by Governor Edmund Andros to Jellis Jansen Mandeville. Mandeville did not reside on his patent, however; his homestead

²⁰Stokers VI: pl 84 B-b, p. 118.

was located at Gansevoort Street and the Hudson (between Ninth and Tenth Avenues).²¹

In June of 1737, Mandeville's farm was purchased by Sir Peter Warren of Greenwich (Village). Warren's holding extended east to the Avenue of the Americas where it bordered the swampy land owned by Arien Cornelissen. When Warren died in 1752, his farm became the property of his wife, in accordance with the will he had prepared in 1746.²²

Lady Warren's holdings were extensive. On the Ratzer map, surveyed in 1766/67, her main farmstead is located in southern Greenwich (Village), and the project area is shown as being cleared but undeveloped. Similarly, a 1773 map of Sir Peter's estate shows no development within the project area. On this estate map, the project area is designated as "Field 29."²³

The estate of Peter Warren was divided between his three daughters in 1787: the wife of the Earl of Abington, the wife of William Skinner and the wife of Charles Fitzroy, who eventually was named Baron Southampton. Each of the three daughters' husbands gave his name to a Manhattan roadway. Fitzroy's name came to designate the previously unnamed pathway that ran to the west of the project area. Abington Road was located along the line that is today occupied by 21st Street. Skinner Road became Christopher

²¹Stokes VI: pl 84 Bb.

²²Stokes VI: 159f.

²³Stokes III: 865f.

Street. On the modern Manhattan street map, Abington Square in Greenwich Village is the only toponym that survives to commemorate these Warren family in-laws.²⁴

By the early 19th century, the project area had passed out of the hands of the Warren family descendants, and in Sackerdorf's 1815 Manhattan Blue Book, the area is indicated as being part of the farm of Abraham Brinkeroff. (See plate 5). Brinkeroff's farm house was situated on the south side of West 18th Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues. Both in the Blue Book and on Hooker's 1824 plan of New York City, there is no development indicated within the project area or, indeed, anywhere within the project's block, Block 768. This situation was soon to change, and between 1830 and the mid-nineteenth century, Block 768 was transformed from suburban farmland to an urban, predominately residential neighborhood.

A number of factors contributed to the urban development of the project area.²⁵ Turn of the century yellow fever epidemics that ravaged the densely settled districts of lower Manhattan had encouraged the development of outlying neighborhoods during the early 1800's. The city fathers, anticipating the enlargement of the city north of the previously developed portions of the island, had established the street grid for all of Manhattan by 1811. The city's population

²⁴Stokes III: 865f.

²⁵Morgan 1983: pp. Manhattan 1F, for summary of these factors.

was growing at a rapid pace (there was a 50% increase in population between 1800 and 1812, from 60,529 to 95,519), and this also encouraged development and expansion, as did the city's success as a center of trade and light industry.

If a number of factors may be seen as contributing to the expansion of the city into the project area, a single individual may be recognized as establishing the character of the newly developing neighborhood. Clement Clarke Moore, the Columbia College professor who is best remembered as the author of "A Visit from St. Nicholas," was a major property holder in the district adjacent to the project site.

Moore's property extended from Eighth Avenue to the Hudson and from West 19th Street to West 24th Street. Moore's family had come to the area in 1750, when Captain Thomas Clarke, Moore's maternal grandfather, had obtained a farm located northwest of Sir Peter Warren's estate.²⁶ Thomas named his farm, which was purchased from Jacob and Teunis Somerindyke, and which extended from West 21st Street to West 50th Street and from Fitz Roy Road to the Hudson, "Chelsea" after the district in London. Thomas' land passed to his widow and then, when she died in 1802, the southern portion of the estate was given to their daughter, Charity. Charity was married to Benjamin Moore, the Episcopal Bishop of New York and the President of Columbia College. Moore,

²⁶Stokes VI: 83-85.

in 1789, had purchased a strip of land to the south of the original Thomas farm, and this strip, combined with Charity's share of the original Chelsea estate, was deeded to Clement Clark Moore by his parents in 1813.

When it became clear in the later 1810's and 1820's that the city was going to expand into the neighborhood, Moore established a number of guidelines for the development of his properties. These development covenants included limitation on the heights of buildings, which were to be not more than three stories on the side streets and four on the avenues, as well as regulations that all structures fill the lateral space of their lots, so as not to leave unsightly alley ways between the buildings. Additional rules governed the style of the building facades and the design of the gardens that sat in front of the buildings on the side streets. Individually, none of these regulations were unique, but their use in combination as part of a coherent plan for the development of an urban neighborhood marks an important first in city planning.²⁷

The first major construction within Chelsea took place during the 1820's when work began on the General Theological Seminary, or "Chelsea Square," the central element in Moore's development scheme. The first building of the seminary, when is located between Ninth and Tenth Avenues and West 20th and 21st Streets, was opened in 1827. The

²⁷Goldstone and Dalrymple 1974: 229-233.

oldest remaining residence in the Chelsea neighborhood, 404 West 20th Street, located directly across from the seminary, was completed in 1829-1830.

The development of Moore's Chelsea affected and encouraged the development of the surrounding neighborhoods, including the project area. Eighth Avenue had been opened in 1816 and Ninth Avenue in 1819; Seventh Avenue, which forms the eastern border of the project block, was opened below West 21st Street in 1828.²⁸ The cross streets in the teens and low twenties were cut through during the later 1820's.

A critical event for the development of the project block was the closing of Fitz Roy Road. On 19 April 1830, the Common Council ordered the road shut between West 14th and West 22nd Streets.²⁹ Block 768 was now, finally, set for development.

The neighborhood in which the block's inhabitants would live never became the bastion of upper class fashion and propriety that Moore had hoped, but it remained comfortable, and its solidly middle-class population resisted the inroads of the Hell's Kitchen slum to the north.³⁰ It has, unfortunately, not been possible to ascertain the ethnic identity of the occupants of the actual project site. The city's nineteenth century tax records are not currently available for consultation since they are in the process of being

²⁸Stokes VI: 593,599.

²⁹Stokes V: 69.

³⁰Goldstone and Dalrymple 1974: 231.

transferred between the Municipal Archives and 31 Chambers Street.

The main religious institutions of the neighborhood were the General Theological Seminary and St. Peter's Church, both Episcopal and both established before Block 768 was developed, and the surnames of the known inhabitants of the Chelsea lots on West 20th and 21st Street also suggest that the neighborhood was predominantly Anglo-Saxon Protestant (eg. Coggill, J. Smith, F. Smith, Cushman, Tucker, Roome, Wells, Forrest.)³¹ On the other hand, the presence of a mid-nineteenth century Jewish cemetery near the project site, on 21st Street near the Avenue of the Americas, hints that the district was not ethnically homogenous.

The growth of the district was fostered by the development of the city's public transportation system. The Eighth Avenue Street Railway had been put through in 1852; other lines followed, and before the end of the century there were streetcar lines on both Seventh and Eight Avenues and an elevated railroad line on Ninth.

While Chelsea proper remained solidly residential, the blocks adjacent to the project site included commercial facilities along with the residential buildings. The westernmost lot within the project site (lot 71) held a small store during the 1850's. During the earlier 1850's, there was a lumber yard across the street from the project site.

³¹Chelsea Historic District Designation Report, 1970: 2.

By 1859, the lumber yard had become a coal yard. Other light industries were located on the same block: a carpenter's shop, a carriage maker and a hat manufacturer. The carriage maker remained near the site through the end of the nineteenth century, by which time the other industries were no longer noted on the city atlases.

There were a number of breweries on the project block and in its vicinity. These are noted on atlases beginning in 1859. The names of the breweries suggest Scot's and German ownership, and provide another possible indication of the ethnic make-up of the area (eg: McPherson, Smith, Hermann, Burr; company names include the Knickerbocker and Bavarian Breweries). In 1879, in addition to the breweries, there was a distillery located on the north side of 19th Street. A tobacco factory had been established on Block 768 by 1859. Other vices were not noted in the historic atlases, although the presence of a nineteenth-century police station of the block north of the project site implies their existence (formerly the 18th precinct, now designated the 10th, at 230 West 20th Street).

The entertainment industry moved to the project's neighborhood during the 1860's. In 1866, Samuel Pike purchased the land on the northwest corner of West 23rd Street and Eighth Avenue from Clement Clarke Moore. Pike's Opera House opened on 9 January 1868, but it was not initially a financial success. In 1869, Pike sold the building to

Jay Gould and James Fisk, Jr., who renamed the structure the Grand Opera House. Under Fisk and Gould's ownership, the Opera House became a center of political and financial intrigue. The two notorious stock manipulators had moved the offices of their Erie Railroad to the fourth floor of the Opera House in 1868. After purchasing and refurbishing the building, they began to make alterations in the house's repertoire. In place of traditional operas, they imported the risque Parisian opera bouffe; their first successful production was titled "The Twelve Temptations."

It was from their upstairs offices in the Opera House that Fisk and Gould attempted to corner the gold market in 1869, leading to the market collapse of Black Friday, 24 September, 1869.

The Grand Opera House was the scene of non-financial intrigues as well. Private all-night parties in Fisk and Gould's upstairs offices often followed the public performances in the ground-floor opera house. Finally, in 1872, Fisk's excesses caught up with him. Shady financial arrangements, lawsuits and counter-suits resulting from his affair with Josie Mansfield, "the Cleopatra of 23rd Street," resulted in his murder on 6 January 1872. Fisk lay in state in the Opera House for four days before his massive public funeral.

Nevertheless, the Grand Opera House continued to thrive. Live performances continued and, in 1902, it became the

first theater on the city's "Subway Circuit," presenting plays fresh off Broadway at moderate prices. RKO Theaters took over the building in 1938 and it remained a movie theater through the 1950's. In 1960, the Grand Opera House was demolished following a severe fire.³²

On the opposite side of the project block, the area along Broadway, Fifth Avenue and the Avenue of the Americas was equally famous, if considerably less notorious. From 8th Street to 23rd Street, the Avenues were known as the "Ladies Mile," the site of the largest, most fashionable and most famous department stores in the world. Beginning in 1862, when Alexander Turney Steward moved his dry goods business uptown from Chambers Street to the cast-iron department store that filled the block between 9th and 10th Streets on Broadway, the Ladies Mile became the place to shop. Development culminated with the opening in 1896 of the huge, six-story Siegel-Cooper department store on the Avenue of the Americas between West 18th and 19th Streets. More than 150,000 people showed up for the store's opening. By 1910, the grandeur of the Ladies Mile was fading, and by the beginning of World War I, it was gone. The department stores had followed the wealth of the city uptown.

During the first half of the twentieth century, the neighborhood around the project site retained its mixed

³²For historical summaries, see New York Herald Tribune, 18 July 1837 and Chelsea Clinton News Supplement, 30 June 1983, "The Rebirth of Twenty-Third Street."

residential/light industrial character. The residents of the neighborhood tended to be mainly lower middle-class, a situation that persisted into the early post-World War II decades, when Hispanic immigrants became the project block's dominant ethnic group. Beginning in the late 1960's, and progressing more rapidly in recent years, a gradual process of gentrification has raised the financial level of the neighborhood's residents and reduced the living space available to the traditional ethnic populations.

BUILDING HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

None of the nineteenth-century buildings that stood on the development site can be fully documented from existing records. Unfortunately, following then-current city practice, all building records for the early structures were discarded when demolition and modern construction took place during the mid-twentieth century. Thus, atlases and maps were the principal sources of information about the development of the project site.

In addition, some information has been obtainable from searches through the city building docket books in the Municipal Archives, which list building alteration and repair permits issued during the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These docket listings do not include details of the work conducted; they simply record that some work was done. Nor do these records include data from before the late nineteenth century, and thus, there is no information from the period when these buildings were constructed. In addition, the city's nineteenth century tax records have not been available for consultation during the period when this report was being written. However, despite the absence of detailed records, it is possible

to provide a general description of the buildings that stood within the project area.

PROJECT AREA

By the time G. Hayward prepared his map of New York City for the 1851 edition of Valentine's Manual, Block 768 and, indeed, the entire west side up to 30th Street, was fully developed. The Perris map of 1854 indicates the size and type of the buildings that occupied the project area. With the exception of the westernmost portion of the project site, the proposed construction area held 14 brick residential buildings that were each 5 stories high, 15'5" wide and approximately 56 feet deep. According to the demolition permit issued in 1938 for the building at 258 W. 19th Street (lot 69), these structures had no basements. There is no indication in the building records regarding the presence of cellars, although cellars would be normal under this type of structure.³³ These buildings were part of a uniform row of 18 houses which began four lots east of the project site.

There is a discrepancy between the Perris Atlases of 1854 and 1859 that results in some confusion regarding the mid-nineteenth century street addresses and lot numbers

³³In fact, both a basement story and a cellar were typical for such rowhouses as these, which were commonly built from standardized plans. See Lockwood 1972:xiii, 17,70.

of these buildings.³⁴ (See Table 1.) According to the 1854 atlas, the development site would occupy numbers 148, 150, 152, 154, 156, 158, 160, 162, 164, 166, 168, 170, 172, 174, and 176 West 19th Street. According to the 1859 atlas, the addresses should be two digits lower than those given in the 1854 edition. By 1875, the street numbering system had changed to the modern sequence, with the 18 row buildings now occupying numbers 224 to 258 West 19th Street and the project site incorporating numbers 232 to 262. The old lot numbering system was still being used at this time, and the 14 identical row buildings on the development site were designated as lots 2399 (at 232 W. 19th Street) to 2384 (at 258 West 19th Street). The modern lot numbering system was introduced during the 1890's. In the modern designation, 232 West 19th Street became lot 56 and 262 West 19th Street became lot 71.

The row buildings were constructed on lots that were 92 feet deep. The buildings were set back slightly from the lot edge (sidewalk line), and this set back, combined with the 56 foot depth of the row houses, left a rear yard area of slightly more than 30 feet behind each building. There is no indication on any of the nineteenth century atlases or maps of any construction or development within

³⁴Additional confusion results from the fact that modern street and lot numbering systems eventually, but not simultaneously, replaced the mid-nineteenth century notations, making reconciliation of the information more difficult.

these yard areas.

Normally, it would be assumed that early nineteenth century yards would hold the cisterns and privies required by their building's occupants. This assumption was no longer true after 14 October 1842, when the opening of the Croton Water System made possible the construction of indoor plumbing.³⁵ While many of the city's older buildings were not immediately adapted to take advantage of the new water supply, new construction, especially in middle and upper class neighborhoods, usually had indoor water facilities. It is quite possible that the West 19th Street row houses had indoor plumbing from the time of their construction.

On the other hand, the Hyde 1907 atlas notes the presence of a small frame structure at the rear of the yard along the property line between lots 57 and 58 (234 and 236 West 19th Street). In 1917, a building alteration permit was issued to the owner of 234 West 19th Street to remove wc's from the yard of his building (Alt. 2791/1917). Was this an original nineteenth century privy or was this frame structure a more recent addition, perhaps a late-dating supplement to the existing water system? As noted above, there were no out-buildings or structures in the yards indicated on any of the nineteenth century atlases or maps. And certainly, 1917 seems surprisingly late for the retention of an original outdoor privy in mid-Manhattan.

³⁵Spann 1981:117-120.

At the western side of the proposed development site there were two lots with buildings that did not follow the plan of the row houses on the eastern lots of the project area. Lot 70 at 260 West 20th Street (lot 2385 in the old numbering system) was occupied by a building that stood five stories high, was 17'1" wide and was approximately 65 feet deep. Thus, this building was slightly wider and deeper than the row houses. This building was shown on the 1891 Bromley Atlas; it was not indicated on the less detailed 1867 Dripps map. The 1854 and 1859 Perris atlases show this building as being identical to the remaining 18 row houses to the east. There are no building records in the buildings department or information in the municipal archives to resolve this discrepancy. As with the row houses, there are no indications of development within the yard.

Lot 71, on the westernmost edge of the development area, was occupied in 1891 by two structures. The front approximately 50 feet of this 25-foot wide lot was occupied by a 4-story brick structure. The rear approximately 20 feet of the lot held a second structure. There was an undeveloped strip approximately five feet wide behind the rear structure, and another undeveloped strip, approximately 15 feet wide between the two buildings. A similar arrangement is indicated on the 1897 Bromley atlas and also earlier on the 1867 Dripps atlas.

However, in the 1859 Perris atlas, the rear approximately 35 feet of the lot was shown as occupied by a first-class brick building. The front approximately 35 feet of the lot, with the exception of a narrow alley between lot 71 and lot 70 to the east, was filled by a frame building that held a store. In the 1854 Perris atlas, the brick building at the rear of the lot was not present. Rather, at that time, there was an undeveloped band at the back of the lot, an alley on the eastern side of the lot, two independent frame buildings, each approximately 25 feet square, occupying the rear two-thirds of the lot, and in front, the frame building with store noted in the 1859 Perris atlas. In summary, by 1900, the only portion of this lot that had never held a structure was the section of narrow alley along the eastern side of the central portion of the lot. According to the 1867 Dripps and the 1891 and 1897 Bromley atlases, this lot was positioned directly above the line of Fitz Roy Road, and the eastern edge of the lot falls approximately along the eastern edge of the old roadway. (See plate 6.)

The demolition of the buildings on the development site took place in three phases. The buildings on the ten central lots that today are occupied by the garage building were replaced first (lots 59 to 68, 238 to 256 West 19th Street). These structures were down by 1919, by which time the area was already a motor garage (New York Electrical

Sign Permit #883, 1919, issued to the West 19th Street Garage Corporation for the Manhattan Motors Corporation). The buildings on the west parking lot came down next (lots 69 to 71, 258 to 262 West 19th Street). These buildings were demolished in 1939, under a permit issued on 30 December 1938. At the time of demolition, the buildings on these lots were owned by the Central Savings Bank; demolition was carried out by the Works Progress Administration. Finally, the three buildings on the east parking lot were demolished in 1957 (lots 56 to 58, 232 to 236 West 19th Street). These building may have been vacant for a number of years before their demolition. A handwritten notation in the city alterations permit docket book under the typed entry for an unspecified alteration on 10 October 1938 (alt. perm. 2995/1938) states that 232, 234, and 236 West 19th Street were "abandoned 1.4.43." All three areas of the project site continue to function as automobile parking and garage facilities today.

LOT BY LOT BUILDING HISTORIES

232 West 19th Street - Lot 56

1851: Lot was occupied by a 5-story high, 15'5" wide, approximately 56-foot deep building that was part of a row of 18 identical houses that ran from 224 to 258 West 19th Street.

1938: Alteration permit 2995/1938 issued to owner, the estate of Henry Dexter, for unspecified work on the property.

1943: Handwritten addition to city building docket ledger indicates that the building is abandoned by this date.

1957: Demolition permit issued to Aron Garage Inc. Parking lot permit issued in same year.

1984: "Ghost" of building preserved on the western wall of the loft building located at 230 West 19th Street indicates that a five-story structure with no rear extensions once occupied lot 56. Site is at present occupied by an open parking lot.

234 West 19th Street - lot 57

1851: See lot 56, an identical five-story building.

1907: Hyde Atlas shows a small, one-story frame structure in the southwest rear corner of the lot, extending over the property line into lot 58.

1938: See lot 56, unknown alteration.

1943: See lot 56, building abandoned.
1957: See lot 56, demolition and parking lot.
1984: Site occupied by open parking lot.

236 West 19th Street - lot 58

1851: See lot 56, an identical 5-story building.
1885: Alteration permit 1825/1885 issued to owner, Philip Hermann, for unspecified work.
1907: Hyde Atlas shows a small, one-story frame structure in southeast rear corner of the lot extending over the property line into lot 57.
1938: See lot 56, unknown alteration.
1943: See lot 56, building abandoned.
1957: See lot 56, demolition and parking lot.
1984: "Ghost" of building preserved on the eastern wall of the garage at 238-256 West 19th Street shows no signs of construction beyond the original approximately 56-foot deep nineteenth century structure. Site occupied by an open parking lot.

238 West 19th Street - lot 59

1851: See lot 56, a five-story building.
1919: Permit issued to owner, West 19th Street Garage Corporation, to install a sign for the tenant, Manhattan Motors Corporation. Obviously, by this date, a garage had replaced the earlier dwelling.

1984: Site occupied by a garage with a semi-subterranean lower level and one story above grade.

240 West 19th Street - lot 60

1851: See lot 56, a five-story building.

1919: See lot 59, garage sign.

1984: See lot 59, 2-story garage.

242 West 19th Street - lot 61

1851: See lot 56, a five-story building.

1919: See lot 59, garage sign.

1984: See lot 59, 2-story garage.

244 West 19th Street - lot 62

1851: See lot 56, a five-story building.

1919: See lot 59, garage sign.

1984: See lot 59, 2-story garage.

246 West 19th Street - lot 63

1851: See lot 56, a five-story building.

1919: See lot 59, garage sign.

1984: See lot 59, 2-story garage.

248 West 19th Street - lot 64

1851: See lot 56, a five-story building.

1919: See lot 59, garage sign.

1984: See lot 59, 2-story garage.

250 West 19th Street - lot 65

1851: See lot 56, a five-story building.

1919: See lot 59, garage sign.

1984: See lot 59, 2-story garage.

252 West 19th Street - lot 66

1851: See lot 56, a five-story building.

1919: See lot 59, garage sign.

1984: See lot 59, 2-story garage.

254 West 19th Street - lot 67

1851: See lot 56, a five-story building.

1919: See lot 59, garage sign.

1984: See lot 59, 2-story garage.

256 West 19th Street - lot 68

1851: See lot 56, a five-story building.

1919: See lot 59, garage sign.

1984: See lot 59, 2-story garage.

258 West 19th Street - lot 69

1851: See lot 56, a five-story building.

1938: Demolition permit issued to owner, the Central Savings

Bank. Work to be done by the Works Progress Administration.
Demolition completed by 8 March 1939.

1951: Permit issued for use as parking lot.

1984: In contrast to the nineteenth century building atlases, which show a five-story building, approximately 56 feet deep, with no rear extension, the "ghost" image of this lot's building that appears on the west wall of the garage that occupies the adjacent lot indicates that lot 69 was occupied by an approximately 60-foot deep building that was two stories tall on its front two-thirds, and only one-story tall on its rear third. The "ghost" indicates that the rear approximately 30 feet of this lot was undeveloped. There is no firm evidence to resolve the discrepancy between this ghost image and the data included in the building atlases, although in favor of the atlases it must be recognized that the ghost reflects points of bonding with the adjacent building, while the atlases represent the building on lot 69 itself. The lot is currently part of an open parking lot.

260 West 19th Street - lot 70

1854: Shown on Perris atlas as identical to buildings on lots 56 to 69.

1867: Lot shown as vacant on Dripps map.

1891: Bromley atlas shows building 5 stories tall, 17' 1" wide and approximately 65 feet deep. The same building

appears in the 1897 and 1920 Bromley atlases.

1938: Demolition permit issued to owner, the Central Savings Bank. Work to be carried out by the Works Progress Administration. Demolition completed by 9 March 1938. Building is described in demolition permit as 16'11" wide, 55'11" deep and five stories tall. It has not been possible to resolve the discrepancy between these figures and those given in the Bromley atlases.

1984: Lot currently occupied by an open parking lot.

262 West 19th Street - lot 71

Before 1830: The lot is positioned over the old course of Fitz Roy Road. The eastern edge of the lot is approximately on the line of the east side of the road. The road was closed by act of the Common Council in 1830.

1854: Lot was occupied by three free-standing structures: a frame building on the north of the lot, wood buildings on the central and rear sections of the lot. An alley, approximately 4 feet wide, was positioned along the east side of the lot.

1859: The rear of the lot was occupied by a brick structure; the central part of the lot was an open yard. The front part of the lot held a frame structure. There was a narrow alley on the eastern side of this frame structure that connected the central yard with West 19th Street.

1867: The Dripps map shows the lot with an open yard in

the center and buildings in the front and rear.

1880: Robinson's Atlas of 1880 and the Bromley Atlases of 1891 and 1897 show two buildings on the 25-foot wide lot: a four-story, approximately 55-foot deep brick building in the front of the lot and an approximately 20-foot deep building at the lot's rear. There is an open, approximately 15-foot deep yard at the center of the lot and a narrow undeveloped strip of approximately 1 foot at the lot's rear.

1984: The "ghost" image on the east wall of 264 West 19th Street indicates that lot 71 was occupied by a building that was four stories tall on the front portion of the lot and three stories tall at the building's rear. According to the "ghost," there was an approximately 10-foot wide unoccupied strip at the rear of the lot. The lot is currently occupied by an open parking lot.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This project site is not likely to have significant prehistoric remains. There were no fresh water sources in the immediate vicinity, nor were there other topographic features that would recommend the site area for early settlement. The only factor suggesting prehistoric activity in the site area was the presence of Fitz Roy Road, which was probably established along the lines of a pre-European pathway. With the exception of one small strip along the eastern side of the central portion of the lot through which it ran (lot 71), all portions of the former route of the road within the project area have been developed. Thus, only meager traces of the pathway or road are likely to be preserved, and the presence of the path itself is not sufficient evidence to assume significant archaeological remains from pre-contact times.

In historic times, early maps of New York City indicate that the project area was still not developed in 1824. Fitz Roy Road was not officially closed until 1830, and development probably did not take place until after that date. By 1851, lots 56 to 69 were shown in the building atlases as being occupied by five-story row houses that

extended approximately 60 feet into the 92-foot deep lots (there was an approximately 4-foot set-back in front of the approximately 56-foot deep buildings). Based on the evidence of the neighborhood's churches, the population of these buildings was predominantly Anglo-Saxon Protestant, although in cosmopolitan New York, this does not preclude the presence of other religious and ethnic groups. There was no development noted in the rear yards of the lots before 1907, when a small wood-frame structure was shown in the rear of the yards of lots 57 and 58. Because the buildings within the project area were constructed around the time that the Croton Water System was first making indoor plumbing available in New York City, it is possible that these lots never held the cisterns and privies that would have been included in earlier buildings.

Archaeology might be able to resolve the discrepancy between the building "ghosts" shown on the wall adjacent to lot 69 and the atlas records of the structure that supposedly occupied that lot. And excavations would also be able to determine if the row houses within the project site had basements or cellars. However, these limited questions do not seem appropriate to justify the expense and time of large-scale excavations. On the other hand, the presence of preserved features such as cisterns or privies could justify archaeological investigation, but considering the uncertainty regarding the existence of these features,

it seems that it would be more appropriate to arrange for archaeological monitoring at the time of site preparation for construction. One step in site preparation which should be monitored is the removal of the black-top within the east and west parking lots. Monitoring of the removal of the basement floor within the rear section of the garage might also be worthwhile, since the lower sections of cisterns or privies, if present, would probably not have been disturbed by the construction of the semi-subterranean basement, which only extends approximately 5 feet below grade. In that way, if significant features are found, mitigating archaeological excavations could be conducted.

LOT and STREET NUMBERS

Street Address			Lot Numbers		Site	
West 19th Street						
<u>1854</u>	<u>1859</u>	<u>1880</u>	<u>to present</u>	<u>after 1897</u>	<u>before 1891</u>	
148	146	232		56	2399	East Lot
150	148	234		57	2398	East Lot
152	150	236		58	2397	East Lot
154	152	238		59	2396	Garage
156	154	240		60	2395	Garage
158	156	242		61	2394	Garage
160	158	244		62	2393	Garage
162	160	246		63	2392	Garage
164	162	248		64	2391	Garage
166	164	250		65	2390	Garage
168	166	252		66	2389	Garage
170	168	254		67	2388	Garage
172	170	256		68	2387	Garage
174	172	258		69	2386	West Lot
176	174	260		70	2385	West Lot
178	176	262		71	2384	West Lot

TABLE 1

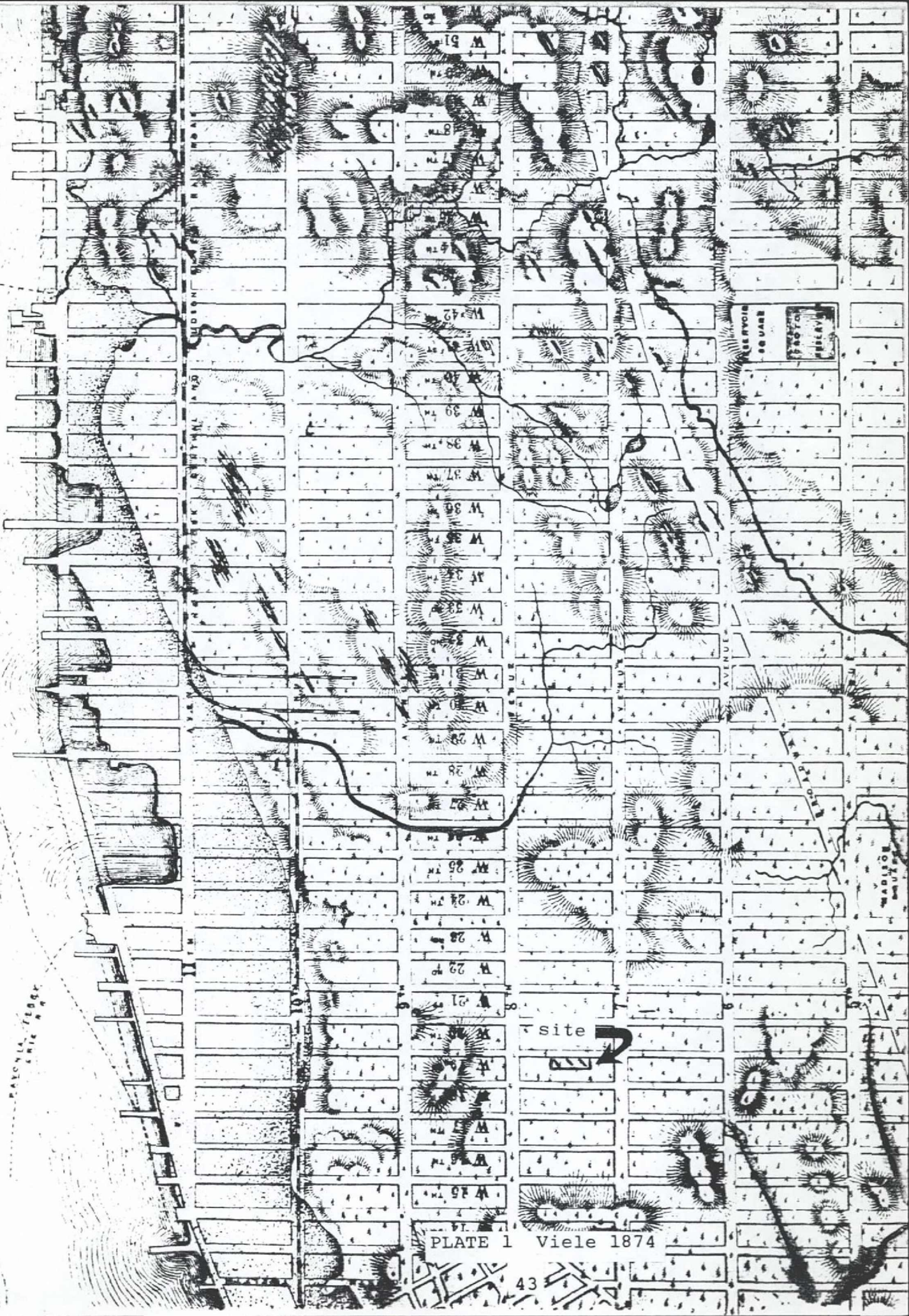


PLATE 1 Viele 1874

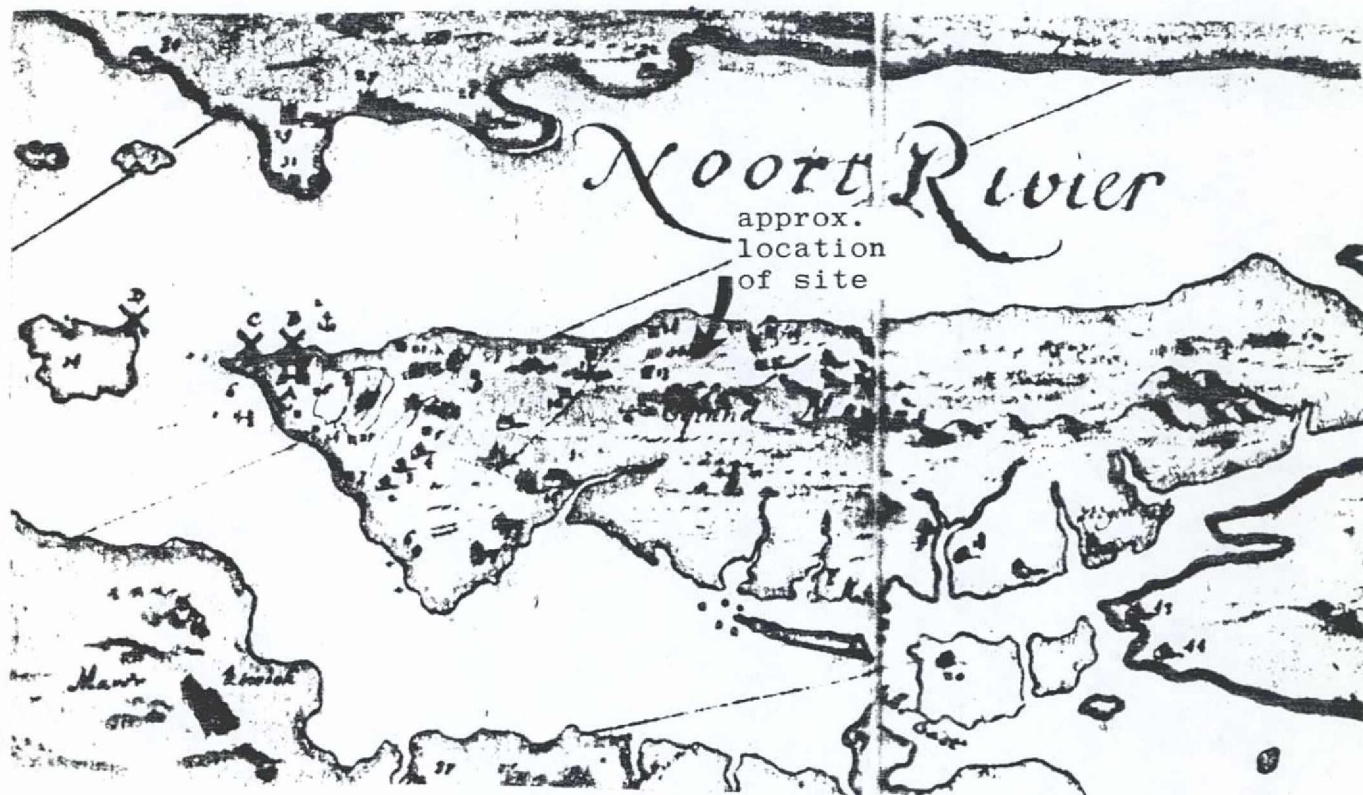
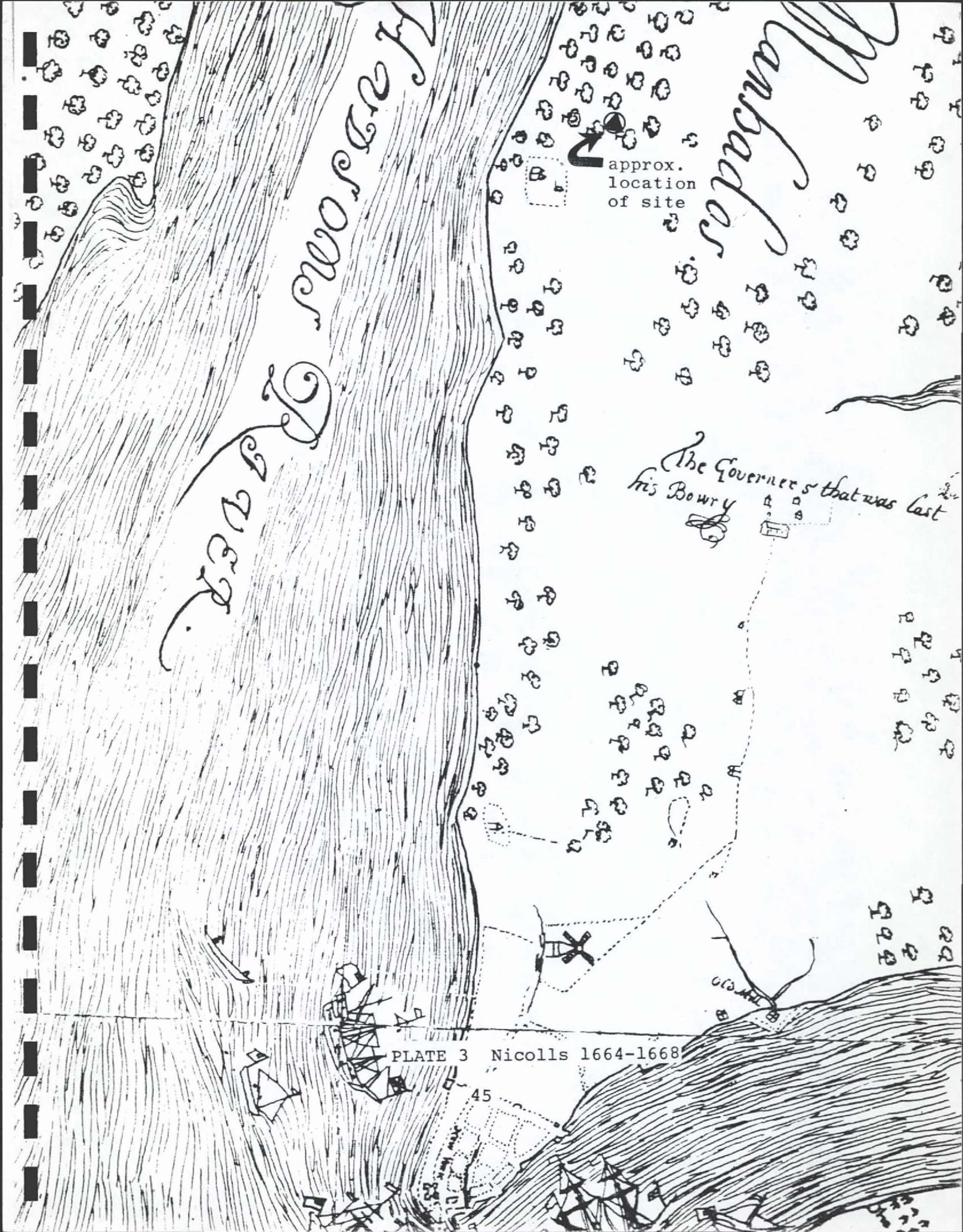


PLATE 2 Manatus c. 1639



approx.
location
of site

The Governor's that was last
his Bowry

PLATE 3 Nicolls 1664-1668

45

Abingdon Road or Love's Lane

Lemuel Wells

2.63

Andrew Clark

site

Ab. Brinkerhoff

7.24

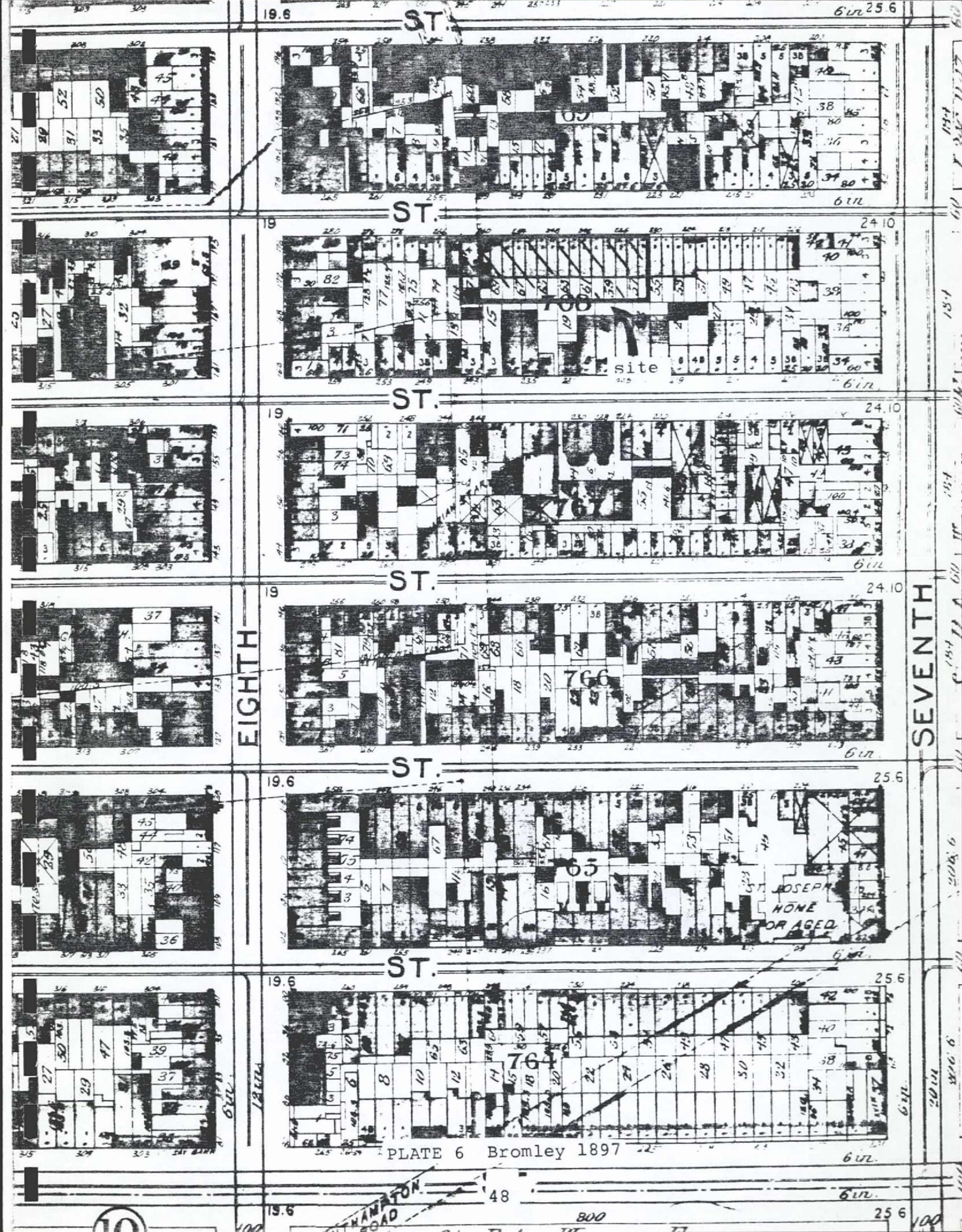
L. Wells



William Bayard

a. 9.16

Vredenburg
1.55



WEST 19TH STREET

262 260 258 256 254 252 250 248 246 244 242 240 238 236 234 232

71	70	69	68	67	66	65	64	63	62	61	60	59	58	57	56
----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

WEST
PARKING
LOT

GARAGE

EAST
PARKING
LOT

FITZ
ROY
ROAD

PLATE 7 Schematic of site

WEST 19TH STREET

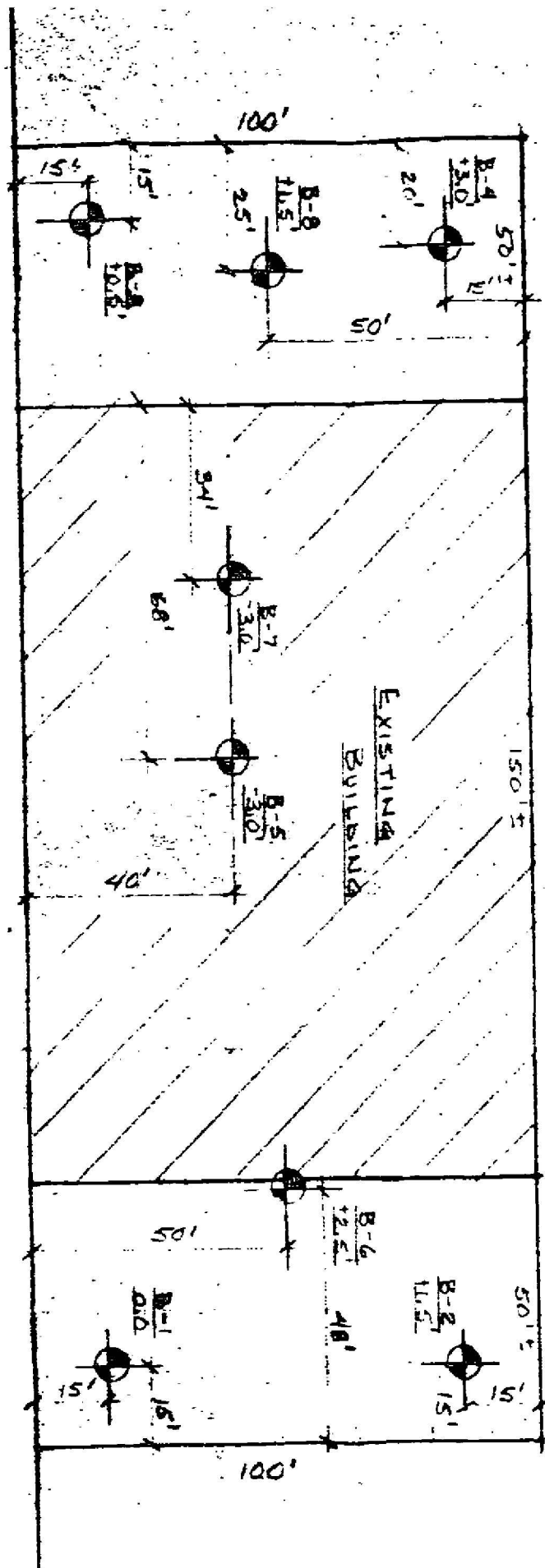


PLATE 8 Plan of site including boring locations

BORING 1			
DEPTH FT.	SPOON BLOWS PER 1/2 FT.	HOLLOW STEM AUGER	MATERIAL
GROUND SURFACE 0.0			
5.0	16 4 43 78		FILL CINDERS RED BRICKS CONCRETE 11-65
10.0	93 34 26		
15.0	20 16 18		
19.0	14		
20.0	15 16 17		C/M SAND AND GRAVEL TRACE SILT SW 7-65
25.0	716 108		
30.0	67 1612		
32.0	1610 1810		CLAY AND SILT SC 9-65
33.0	77		5-65
35.0			MICA SCHIST ROCK 4-65
38.0	DRILLED RECEIVED PC 13		

BORING 2			
DEPTH FT.	SPOON BLOWS PER 1/2 FT.	HOLLOW STEM AUGER	MATERIAL
GROUND SURFACE +1.5'			
5.0	31 92 84 289		FILL CINDERS RED BRICKS CONCRETE WOOD 11-65
8.5	25		
9.5	17		FINE SAND AND TRACE GRAVEL SW 8-65
10.0	25 26 30		C/M SAND AND GRAVEL TRACE SILT SW 7-65
15.0	30 35 14		FINE SAND SILT TRACE CLAY SW 8-65
20.0	13 14 13		
21.5			M/F SAND TRACE GRAVEL SW 7-65
25.0	148 1817		
30.0	1210 2518		CLAY SILT SC 9-65
33.0			5-65
34.0			
35.0	DRILLED RECEIVED PC 17		MICA SCHIST ROCK 4-65
39.0			

PLATE 9 Borings 1 & 2

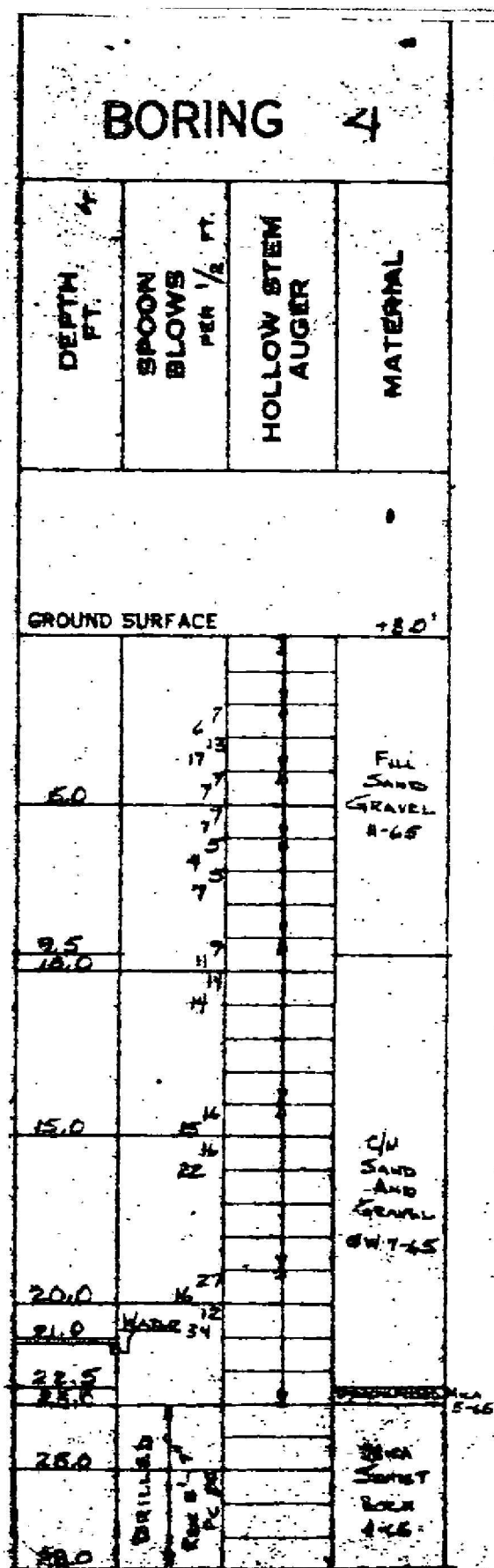
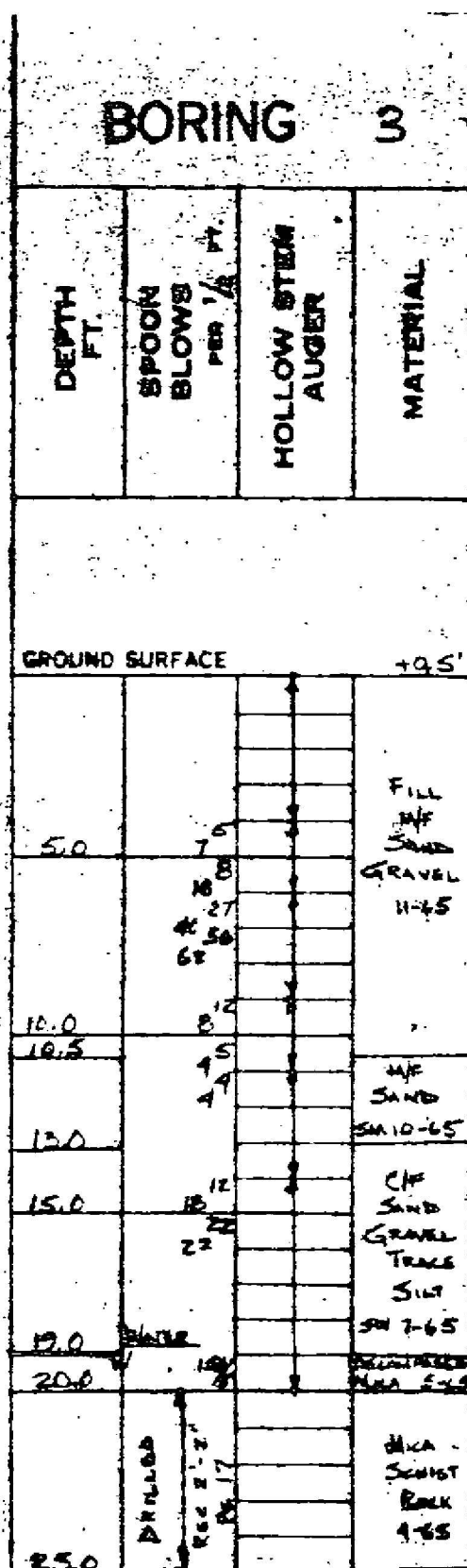
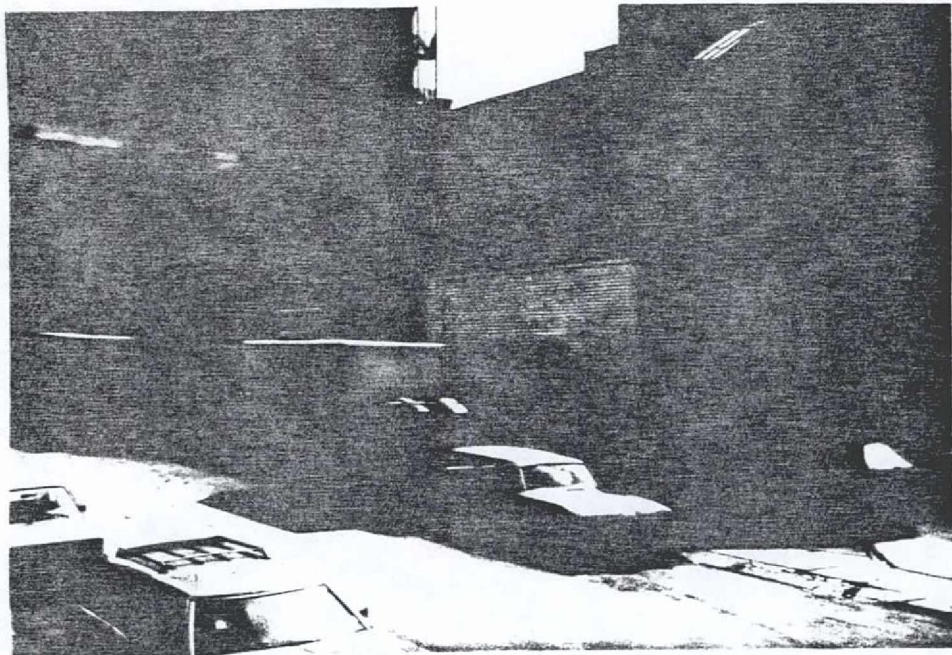


PLATE 10 Borings 3 & 4

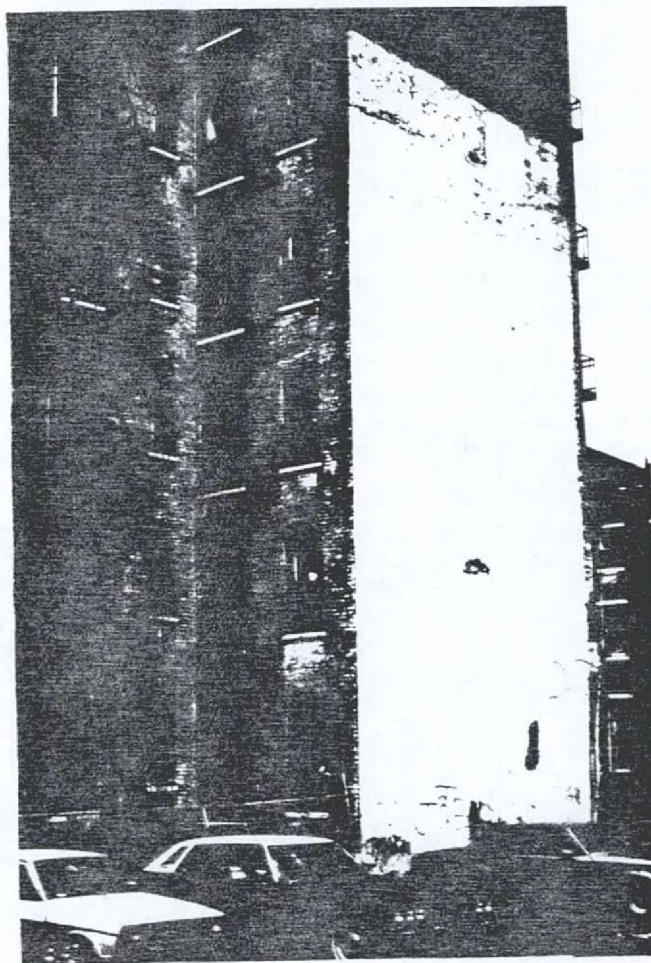
BORING 5			
DEPTH FT.	SPOON BLOWS PER 1/2 FT.	HOLLOW STEM AUGER	MATERIAL
GROUND SURFACE -2.0'			
0.5			CONCRETE
5.0	36		FILL SAND GILLY GRAVEL 11-65
7.0	13 8 28 52		
10.0	30 20		MF SAND TRACE GRAVEL Boulders SN 8-65
14.0	15		
15.0	15		
16.0	WATER		
	20 2 17 2 4 25 15		CM SAND TRACE GRAVEL SN 7-65
20.0	25		
20.5	25		
22.5			CLAY SAND GRAVEL SN 7-65
23.0			
24.0	25 2 15 2 15 2		

BORING 6			
DEPTH FT.	SPOON BLOWS PER 1/2 FT.	HOLLOW STEM AUGER	MATERIAL
GROUND SURFACE +2.5'			
5.0	4 5 4 3		FILL CINDER RED BRICKS CONCRETE 11-65
10.0	7 2 17		
15.0	15 2 15 2		CM SAND AND GRAVEL SN 7-65

PLATE 11 Borings 5 & 6

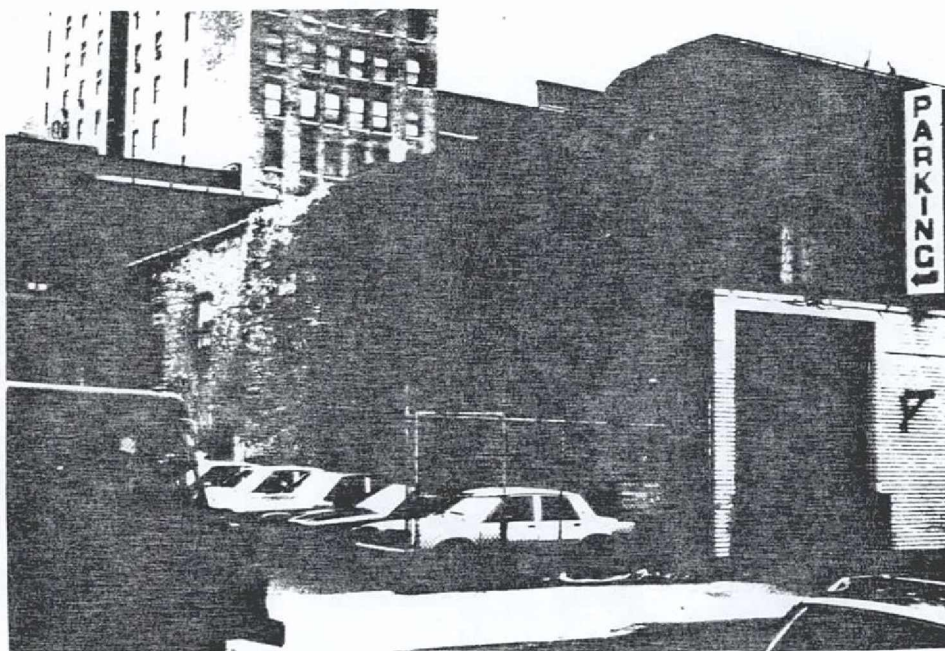


View of garage from west

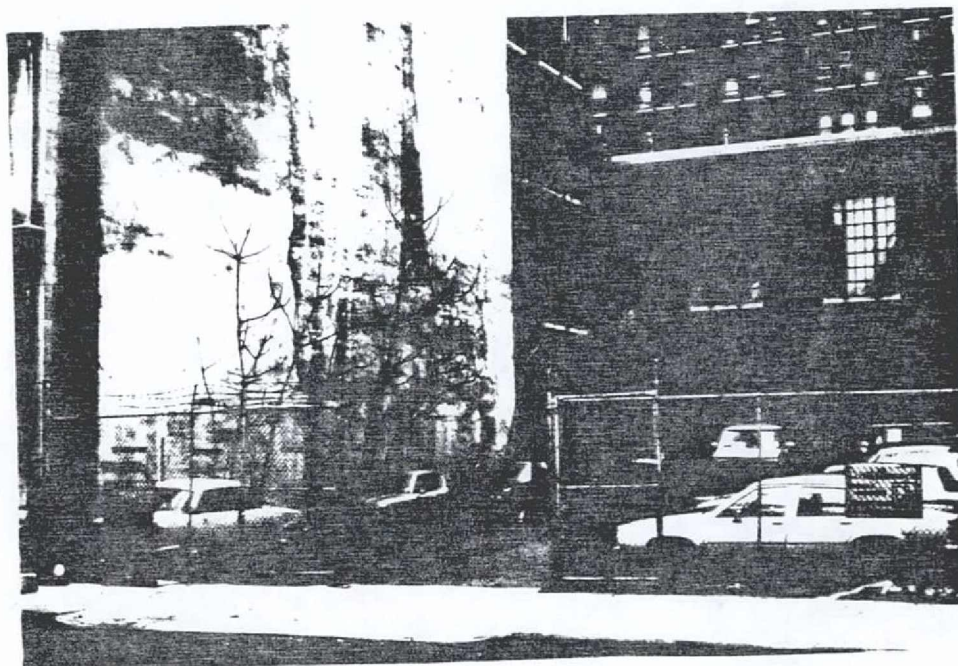


264 W. 19th Street
showing "ghost" of
building on lot 71

PLATE 13 Site views



"ghost" of building on lot 58
on east wall of garage



230 W. 20th Street, west wall,
showing "ghost" of 5 story building
on lot 56

PLATE 14 Site views

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LIST OF MAPS CONSULTED

ca. 1639/1670	Manatus Map
1766/1767	Ratzer Map
1815	Sackersdorf Blue Book
1817	Prior and Dunning: Plan of the City of New York
1824	William Hooker: New Pocket Plan of the City of New York
1851	G. Hayward: Map of the City of New York engraved for Valentine's Manual
1854	Dripps Map
1854	Perris Atlas
1859	Perris Atlas
1867	Dripps Map
1874	Viele Map
1875	Dripps Map
1879	Bromley Atlas
1880	Robinson Atlas
1891	Bromley Atlas
1897	Bromley Atlas
1907 (to 1950)	Hyde Atlas
1920	Bromley Atlas
1957	Bromley Atlas
1983-84	Sanborn Atlas