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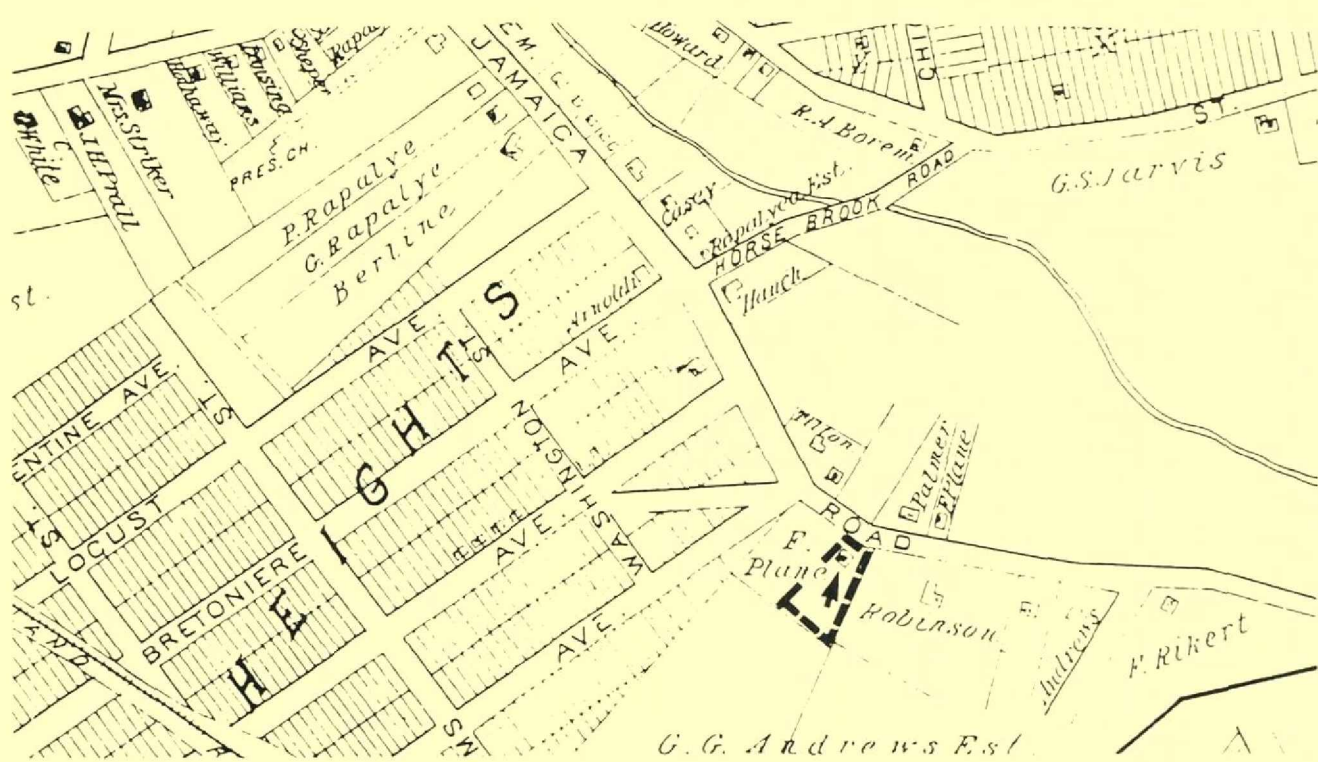
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Addendum to the Archaeological Documentary Study for the St. John's Queens Hospital Proposed Parking Garage Block 2860, Lots 16 and 25

CEQR No. 89-167Q



Prepared for the
Catholic Medical Center of Brooklyn and Queens, Inc.

Prepared by
Joan H. Geismar, Ph.D.

August, 1990

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
1. HOW WAS THE SITE USED OR DEVELOPED DURING THE REVOLU- TIONARY WAR PERIOD	5
2. OWNERSHIP/OCCUPATION HISTORY	10
3. TOPOGRAPHICAL CHANGES AND CONSTRUCTION HISTORY	20
4. THE SITE'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL AND A SUGGESTED FIELD METHOD	24
REFERENCES	28
TABLE 1. Ownership History	11
FIGURES	
1. Project Site	2
2. 58-02 Hoffman Dr. (photo)	3
3. Western side of 58-02 Hoffman Dr. (photo)	3
4. Eastern side of 58-02 Hoffman Dr. (photo)	4
5. South from Hoffman Dr. across parking lot (photo) ...	4
6. Map Identifying Cited Historical Locations	7
7. Revolutionary War Huts	9
8. Wolverton 1891	14
9. South side of Hoffman Dr., 1924 (photo)	15
10. Rear of above houses, 1924 (photo)	15
11. View of Hoffman Dr. west of Woodhaven Blvd., 1925 (photo)	15
12. Coast Survey 1845	16
13. Riker 1852	17
14. Revolutionary War Map Showing Structures	19
15. Topographical Survey 1904	21
16. Belcher Hyde 1915	23
17. Starting sewer construction on Queens Blvd.	25
18. Proposed Testing Plan	27

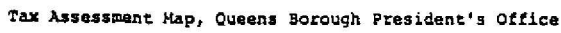
Graphics: J. Geismar & S. Spritzer

Photos as Identified

INTRODUCTION

This addendum was prepared in response to correspondence from CEQR dated June 18, 1990, and conversations with Dr. Sherene Baugher, the archaeologist for the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. Its goal is to clarify and resolve issues regarding the archaeological potential of a site in the Elmhurst section of Queens where the Catholic Medical Center of Brooklyn and Queens, Inc. proposes to build a parking garage. At this writing, a house and parking lot located at 58-02 and 58-04 Hoffman Drive occupy the site (Figures 1-5).

Item 3 of the above-referenced correspondence indicates the need for revision to the documentary study prepared for the site's owner by Key Perspectives, Inc., dated May 15, 1989. Among the concerns raised in Dr. Baugher's comments are the resolution of the issue of field testing on the site and corrections to the report's bibliography. The bibliographic issue will have to be resolved by the report's original authors. This addendum addresses the larger issue of the field testing rationale and strategy. In order to address this issue, additional documentary research was undertaken to assess the likelihood of finding Revolutionary War era deposits, both military and domestic, and later, nineteenth century domestic features such as privies, wells, cisterns, or trash heaps. Moreover, an attempt was made to identify the owners of the property and those who may have lived on the site and used the backyard features that might be a concern. To this end, deeds, wills, census manuscripts, directories, and tax records were researched, as were historical maps.

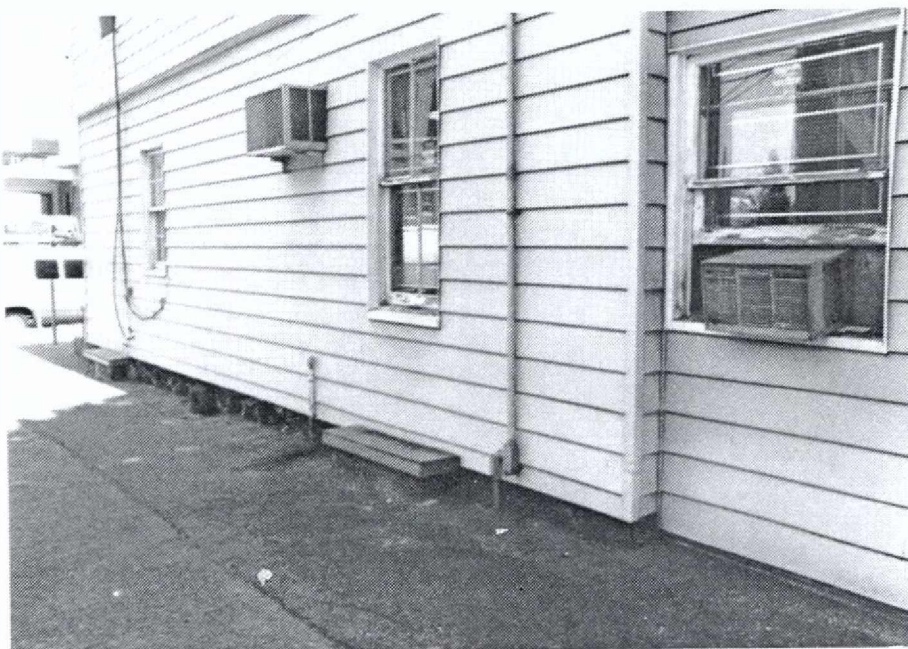


0 120

ft.



2 58-02 Hoffman Dr., formerly a store and two apartments, located on the northwest corner of the project site. Note cars in parking lot surrounding structure on two sides. View from the corner of Hoffman Dr. and 58th Avenue looking south. (Geismar 8/90)



3 Western side 58-02 Hoffman Dr. Originally of frame construction, the building now has aluminum siding and serves as offices for St. John's Hospital located across Hoffman Dr. View from the corner of Hoffman Dr. and 58th Ave. looking northeast. (Geismar 8/90)



4 Eastern side of 58-02 Hoffman Dr. from parking lot. Note rear extension which may have been added and the profile of the building. (Geismar 8/90)



5 Looking south from Hoffman Dr. across Parking lot. 58-02 Hoffman Dr. is on right. Note relative flatness of the terrain which gradually rises about 4 ft. from north to south. (Geismar 8/90)

Many of these maps were found in the original report, others were located through research as were photos from the archives of the Long Island Room of the Queensborough Public Library, the New York Public Library, and the Municipal Archives. Vincent Seyfried's indexes to Long Island newspapers were also very helpful. Secondary sources included Mr. Seyfried's fine book, Queens, a Pictorial History (1982), Leslie's History of the Greater New York (Van Pelt II 1898), and clippings and miscellany housed in the Long Island Room of the Queensborough Public Library (Mr. William Asadorian, Librarian of the Long Island collection, provided invaluable assistance and cooperation). In addition, Mr. Edward Lenik, an archaeologist who has excavated American Revolutionary War sites, was contacted.

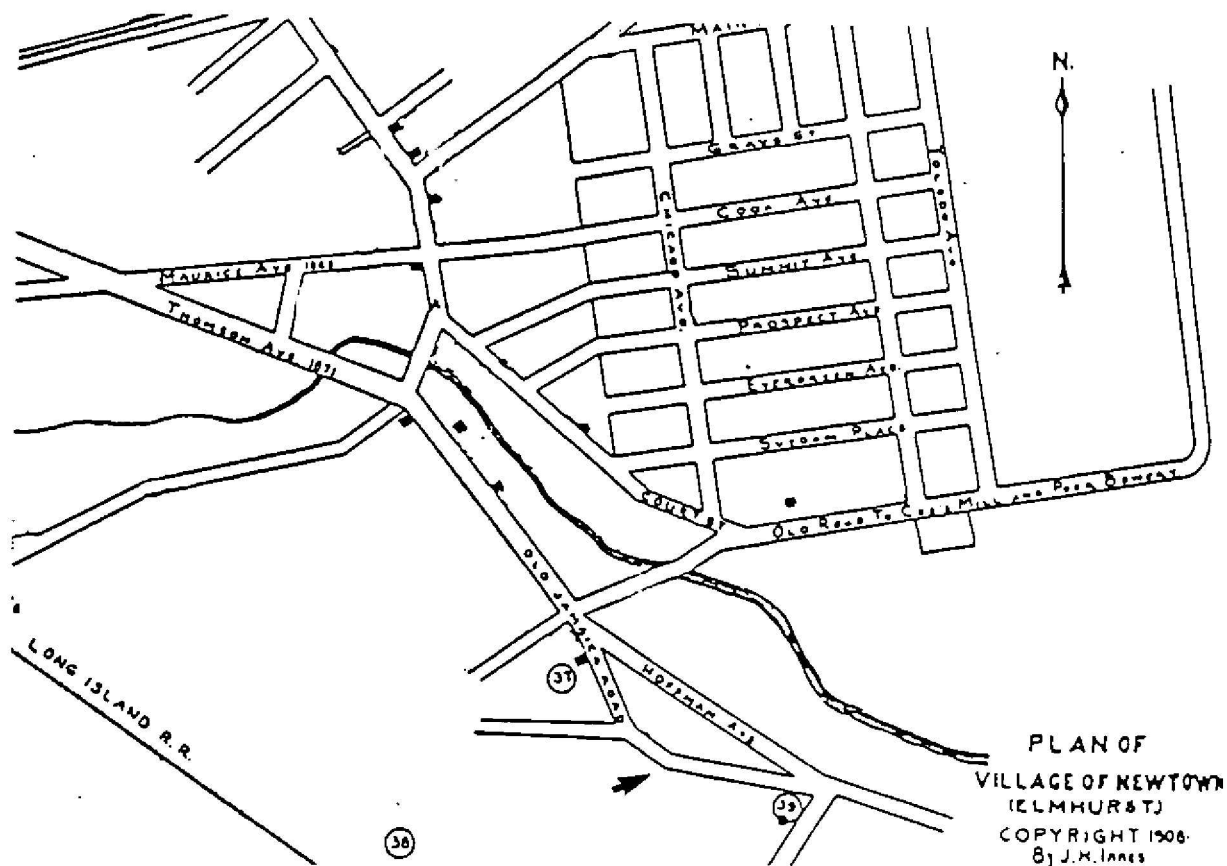
Four major issues are addressed here: how was the site used or developed during the Revolutionary War period; what was its ownership and occupation history, particularly in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries; what topographical or structural changes have occurred on the site; and, based on this information, what is its archaeological potential and the most efficient and cost effective means of approaching this issue.

1. HOW WAS THE SITE USED OR DEVELOPED DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR PERIOD

Every history consulted unequivocally notes that the Newtown section of Queens, which was renamed Elmhurst as a developer's fancy in the mid 1890s, was occupied by the British throughout the seven years of the Revolutionary War (Seyfried 1982:26-27; Van Pelt II

1898:381; White 1917:10). This long-term occupation began immediately after the British won the historic Battle of Long Island on August 27, 1776, and continued until late in 1783 when the area was finally evacuated. Among the known occupiers were the troops of the victorious British Commander-in-Chief, Sir William Howe (the 23rd Regiment or the Royal Welsh Fusiliers), and the 42nd Highland Regiment quartered in Newtown for the winter of 1778-1779 (Van Pelt 1898:382; Kelley 1906:302). Although the major British encampments apparently were located west of the project site, in Astoria and what is now the Sunnyside yards (Seyfried 1982:27; Seyfried 1990:personal communication), vestiges of their huts were noted on a hill behind the nearby Renne or Brettoniere House as late as 1906 (Kelley 1906:302). The pre-Revolutionary War Renne house, which was demolished in 1939 (Long Island Star 1939), briefly served as Howe's headquarters and was where he wrote an account of his Long Island victory to Lord Germaine in England on September 3, 1776 (Kelley 1906:302; see Figure 6 for locations of the Renne House and the nearby soldiers' huts in relation to the project site).

Given this information, there is little question the project area, if not the site itself, was actively used during the long British occupation and that this occupation included winter encampments. Based on references to "huts," it is possible the structures used as cold weather quarters were akin to the "curious" huts constructed for the Hessian soldiers in Brooklyn that are described and illustrated in Leslie's History of the Greater New York (Van Pelt II 1898:79, 82, 112) and reproduced in Seyfried's Queens, a Pictorial History (1982:



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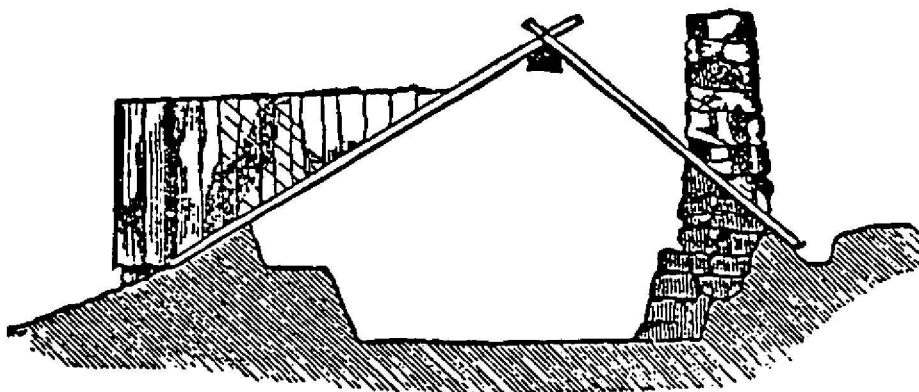
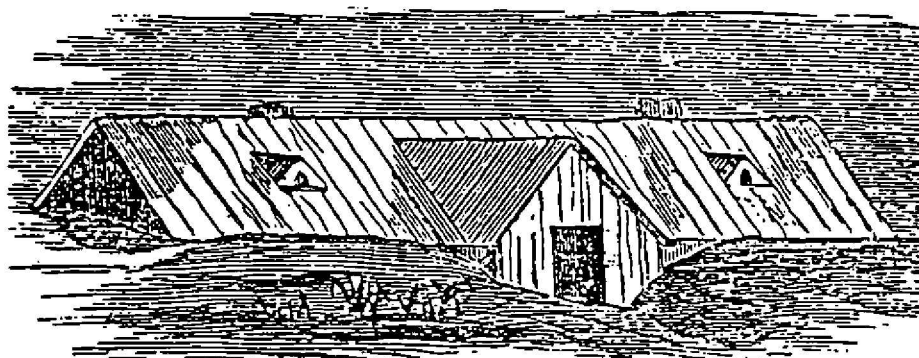


- ③⑦ Samuel Renne (Brettoniere) House
- ③⑧ site of encampment, 23rd Regiment/Royal Welsh Fusiliers
- ③⑨ Quaker Meeting House c. 1722 until 1844; later, Robt. Mack
- ➔ project site area

30); these were "...deep trenches covered with wooden roofs" and stone fireplaces (see Figure 7). Or, they may have been more traditional log huts. Whatever their construction, the trees in Newtown, and presumably the site area, like those in most of Queens, were cut down to provide fuel for the occupiers (Van Pelt II 1898: 381) and probably to build shelters. Apparently the Presbyterian church that once stood near the site was slowly demolished by the Torries (its members were mainly Patriots) and the woodwork and pews used to build huts for the British soldiers [Van Pelt II 1898:381).

As mentioned above, it seems likely that huts were built on or into the hill located at what is now the intersection of 54th Avenue and Seabury Street, about six blocks west and one block south of the project site, the only hill of note in the immediate project area. Whether any shelters were located directly on the project site remains a question. Ed Lenik, who excavated military huts and latrines at the New Windsor Cantonment in New Windsor, New York, informed me that evidence of huts at the site was found in shallow deposits; these comprised stone sills and fireplaces located within a foot of the surface (Lenik 1990:personal communication).

There is also the remote possibility that the project site may have been used for Revolutionary War era latrines. These features have been documented at the above-mentioned New Windsor Cantonment, a winter campground for American troops (Lenik 1987:8-66). Here four large but shallow pits or depressions, ranging from 4 by 7 to 9 by 7 ft., were located about 250 ft. from the site of the soldiers' huts.



Both the living quarters of this military camp and the latrines apparently adhered to strict directives set down by George Washington who, as the American Commander-in-Chief, was attempting to safeguard the health of his troops (Lenik 1987:58, 60). Assuming the British had similar concerns, and depending on the location of the Newtown huts and the subsequent development history of the site, latrines could be present on the project site. However, if the encampments were mainly to the west and south as seems likely, the site appears too far removed to be used in this way.

2. OWNERSHIP/OCCUPATION HISTORY

Using deeds, tax records, wills, and historical maps, site ownership has been traced to 1694 and is quite complete until speculative buying and selling occurred in the early years of the twentieth century (see Table 1). One longtime owner was Francis Plain (or Plane), a jeweler and watchmaker originally from New York City who acquired the property in 1852 (Liber of Deeds [hereafter LD] 103:70). When Plain bought the property, his business was at 165 "Avenue 6," a work address he maintained until 1876 (New York Directories 1849-1877); at the time, his home was next door at 163. From 1856 to 1861, no home address is listed, and from 1862 to 1869, the directories merely say "h LI" (home Long Island).

Only two directories have been located for Newtown, 1867-1868 and 1877-1878, and Plain appears in the earlier one. He is listed as a jeweler and his home is given as "Jamaica rd n Plank-rd" (Curtin's Long Island Directory 1867-1868), therefore on or near the project

Table 1. ST. JOHN'S GARAGE SITE (58th Avenue and Hoffman Drive, Elmhurst, Queens, New York)--Ownership History

Date	Owner	Comments	Source
3/15/1694	Robert Coe (Newtown)	From: Deliverence Graves of Newtown, land formerly belonging to William Graves deceased, bequeathed to her in his will; does not describe property.	LD A:107
-----Turn of the Century-----			
1794	Garrett H. Van Wagener	From: Emelia Coe (widow, NYC). Relationship to Robert Coe not established). 10 ac.; it appears that the site property remained in the Coe family for a century.	LD G:34
-----Turn of the Century-----			
1806	Francis Elsworth	From: Garrett H. Van Wagener. 10 ac..	LD I:272
8/20/1806	Daniel Lawrence (grocer, NYC)	From: Francis Elsworth (brass founder, NYC) & Hannah his wife. 10 ac.	LD K:358
12/1/1852	Francis Plain (NYC)	From: Maria Antwerp & Wm. Lawrence (Bklyn), exec. of will of Daniel Lawrence. 10 ac.	LD 103:70
3/19/1888	Francis Plain	Land leased to John Glodowski of Newtown.	LD 747:355
7/2/1890	Adam Gardner (LIC)	From: Francis & Harriet M. Plain (LIC). 10 ac.	LD 828:455
5/1/1891	Julius Bleckwenn (LIC)	From: Adam & Anna Gardner (LIC) 10 ac.	LD 867:103
5/2/1891	Michael Keppler (LIC)	From: Julius Bleckwenn (Blackwenn) for #1; as described in K:358: 10 ac. bounded by the road to Jamaica (from Newtown) on the north, land of Geo. and Abraham Brinkerhoof (sic?), on the east, the widow Howard on the south, and Wm. Dean and Dr. Wm. Greenwood on the west.	LD 867:107
6/7/1892	James V. S. & Emma Woolley	From: Michael and Annie Keppler his wife (LIC); no size, but describes c. 5.5 ac. bounded N. by the road, E. by Mary Robinson & Aaron Howard, and S. by Howard. Woolley was then actively amassing land for speculation.	LD 930:202
-----Turn of Century-----			
1892-1918	During this period, the site property apparently was subject to intensive buying/selling. Tax information, which is often enlightening in regard to ownership, is not helpful during this period.		
4/5/1905	Peter P. and Mary Josephine Dexter	From: F. DeHass Simonson (Elmhurst). Deed describes property that seems to include site.	LD 1365:256
7/1/1918	Christian C. Schou (NYC)	From: Mary Josephine Dexter; Lots 113-116. Dexter then living on Bowne Street (now 58th Ave.).	LD 2170:180
7/26/1926	John L. Weiss	From: Christian O. Schou; Lots 113-116.	LD 2931:302
c. 1936-?	H. Goldman	From: (?)	
7/8/1946	Frank Hadala	From: John L. Weiss; Lots 113-116.	LD 5231:328
11/17/1949	Assoc. Medical Properties Inc.	From: Carrie Ballback; Lots 106-109 (previous owner not identified).	LD 5853:601
1/26/1950	Assoc. Medical Properties Inc.	From: Frank Hadala; Lots 113-116	LD 5925:310
3/2/1950	Assoc. Medical Properties Inc.	From: Margaret Mackinnon; Lots 110-111 (previous owner not identified).	LD 5925:314

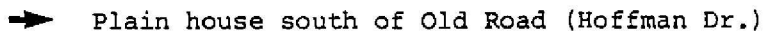
Table 1. ST. JOHN'S GARAGE SITE (58th Avenue and Hoffman Drive, Elmhurst, Queens, New York)--Ownership History

Date	Owner	Comments	Source
7/25/1952	Horace Harding Medical Properties	From: Assoc. Medical Properties, Inc.	LD 6390:271
1/20/1959	Assoc. Medical Properties, Inc. 90-02 Queens Blvd.	Release of part of mortgaged premises from East New York Saving Bank, Lots 106-116 on "Map of 716 Lots Situate in Newtown Heights, Queens Co., N.Y. belonging to James V.S. Woolley" dated 1892, Cornelius Hyatt, Surveyor. Filed County Clerk's Office NYC 9/17/1892, File map #2174; property described in this release.	LD 7126:331
12/16/1960	Assoc. Medical Properties Inc.	From: Horace Harding Medical Properties, Inc.	LD 7297:430
1/3/1961	St. John's Hosp. Assoc. Medical Properties Inc.	From: Assoc. Medical Properties, Inc.	LD 7299:38

Key: LD=Liber of Deeds

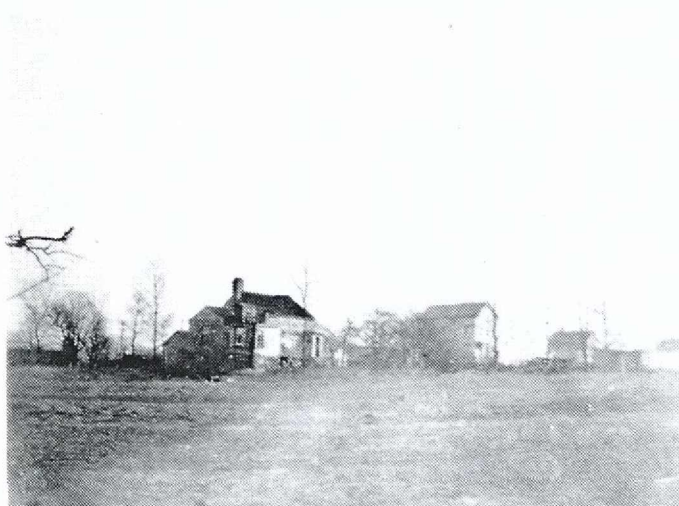
site. Census data are only marginally better, but it seems that Plain ultimately made his home on the north side of Hoffman Road, across from the project site as indicated on the 1873 Beers atlas (Beers 1873:51) and reiterated on the 1891 Wolverton atlas shown in Figure 8 of this report. One reason to assume this is that Plain is listed next to John Palmer on the 1880 census and Palmer's house is on the north side of Hoffman Drive; moreover, these census data do not associate Plain with the Robinson property which bounds the project site on the east (see Figures 9-11). However, it is possible he may initially have lived on the project site since both the 1845 Coast Survey map (Figure 12) and the 1852 Riker Map (Figure 13) show a house at this location prior to Plain's purchase. Plain's house on the project site eventually became a rental property (for example, an 1888 lease to a John Glodowski has been found [LD 747:355]) and by the time it was sold in 1890, the Plains were living in Long Island City (LD 828:455).

Census data suggest that several families may have occupied the Plain house, mainly laborers, but, unfortunately, none can be specifically identified as residents. What is apparent, however, is that the house on the site in the mid nineteenth century was the first documented structure on the site and that it was tenanted some of the time; it was replaced sometime between 1891 and 1902 by the structure now standing on the corner of 58th Avenue and Hoffman Drive. In 1892, the site property was part of the 716 lots acquired by James V. S. Woolley, a speculator (LD 930:202; Map of 716 Lots Belonging to James V. S. Woolley 1892).





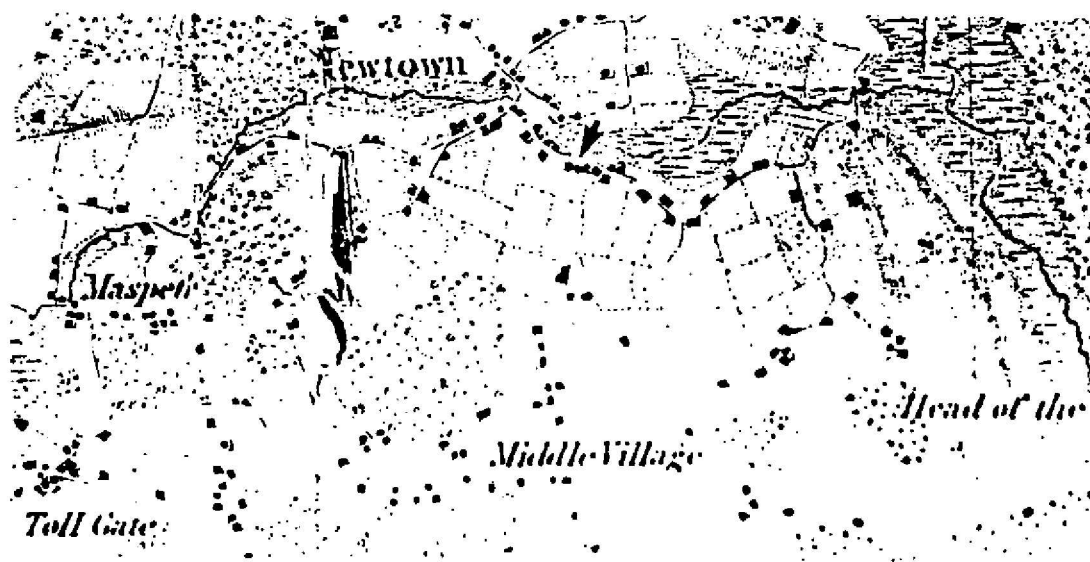
9 South side of Hoffman Dr. looking west from Woodhaven Blvd. (Trotting Course Rd.) February, 1924. Arrow marks approximate site area. Building to left of arrow is a shed on the Robinson property that abuts the project site. (Armbruster Photo, NYPL New York Views 1135:C11)



10 Rear of above houses, probably taken from 58th Ave. February, 1924. This view is looking east toward Woodhaven Blvd. The Robinson house is on the left. Note flatness of the terrain which is now a playground just east of the site. (Armbruster Photo, NYPL New York Views 1135:C12)



11 View of Hoffman Dr. west of Woodhaven Blvd., March, 1925. This road goes past the project site which can not be seen but is identified by an arrow. The shed on left is on the Robinson property which abuts the site. (Armbruster Photo, NYPL New York Views 1135:D1)



0 1000

yds.

N

➔ Plain house prior to 1852 purchase



Building department data offer limited answers to questions concerning the later occupancy and use of the site. Although we do not know exactly when the Plain house was demolished and the structure now on the site built, we can assume this later building was occupied by the Dexters who lived on "Bowne Street" (58th Avenue) when they sold the property to Christian Schou of New York City in 1918 (LD 2170:180). It appears from these data and the 1902-1914 Sanborn map that the building now on the site was originally built as a store and two apartments prior to the Dexters' purchase, and that two subsequent owners, John Weiss and Frank Hadala (see Table 1) were occupants for at least part of their respective ownerships.

Since this part of the site was where the earliest documented structure was located (in this case, a mid-nineteenth century dwelling), it has received the most research attention. Other site structures located on 58th Avenue appear to be late-nineteenth or early-twentieth century rental properties (see Table 1 for owners). All these structures are now demolished.

It should be mentioned that although the archaeological report cites Riker's notation (1852:110) that a seventeenth century house belonging to Anthony Gleane was located somewhere between Brettoniere's and Mack's land (see Riker map, Figure 13 this report) and therefore possibly on the project site (Key Perspectives 1989:25), no record has been found to document Gleane's land ownership in the site vicinity. Revolutionary War maps showing houses do not indicate any on the project site (e.g., Figure 14), but neither these maps nor



→ project site area

no scale available



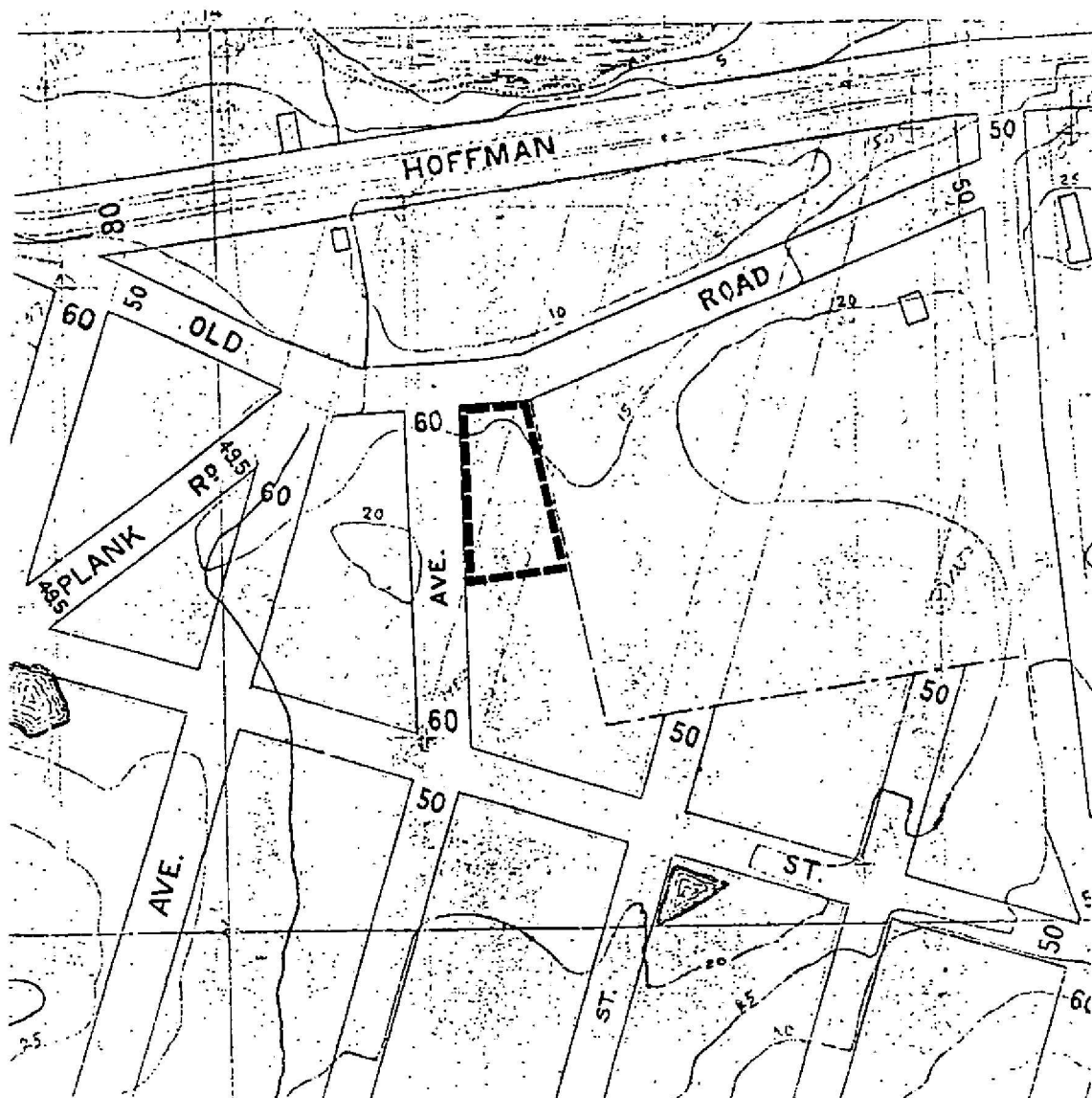
Note: structure to left of site area is the Renne/Brettoniere house at what is now 57th Ave. and Queens Blvd; to the right is the Quaker Meeting house, later the Robert Mack property adjacent to Trotting Course Lane (Woodhaven Blvd).

land records document the period of Gleane's proposed ownership. The earliest map located to show structures possibly on the site is the 1845 Coast Survey Map (see Figure 12), however, this does not preclude earlier, unknown structures.

3. TOPOGRAPHICAL CHANGES AND CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

Major issues in determining a site's archaeological potential are its topographical and construction histories. The 1989 report presents numbers that suggest a 4 to 5 ft. difference in grade between a 1909 survey and one done recently (Key Perspectives 1989:7), but this may be merely the effect of presentation since the writers note little difference in grade despite these numbers. To clarify the issue, an early topographical map of the area, thought to have been executed in 1904 (see Figure 15) was consulted. It indicates little or no change when compared with the modern survey map (both record elevations of approximately +16 in the northern part of the site and +20 in the southern portion). Unfortunately, there is no information available regarding topography prior to 1904, but Mr. Vincent Seyfried, who is familiar with the area, thinks no notable change has occurred (1990:personal communication). Based on available data, it appears that neither grading nor filling is an issue in regard to the site's archaeological potential.

As noted previously, it is possible that a seventeenth century structure may have been located on the site (it is equally possible that it was located to the east or west) and known that a mid-nineteenth century dwelling stood on the project site; it is assumed



----- project site

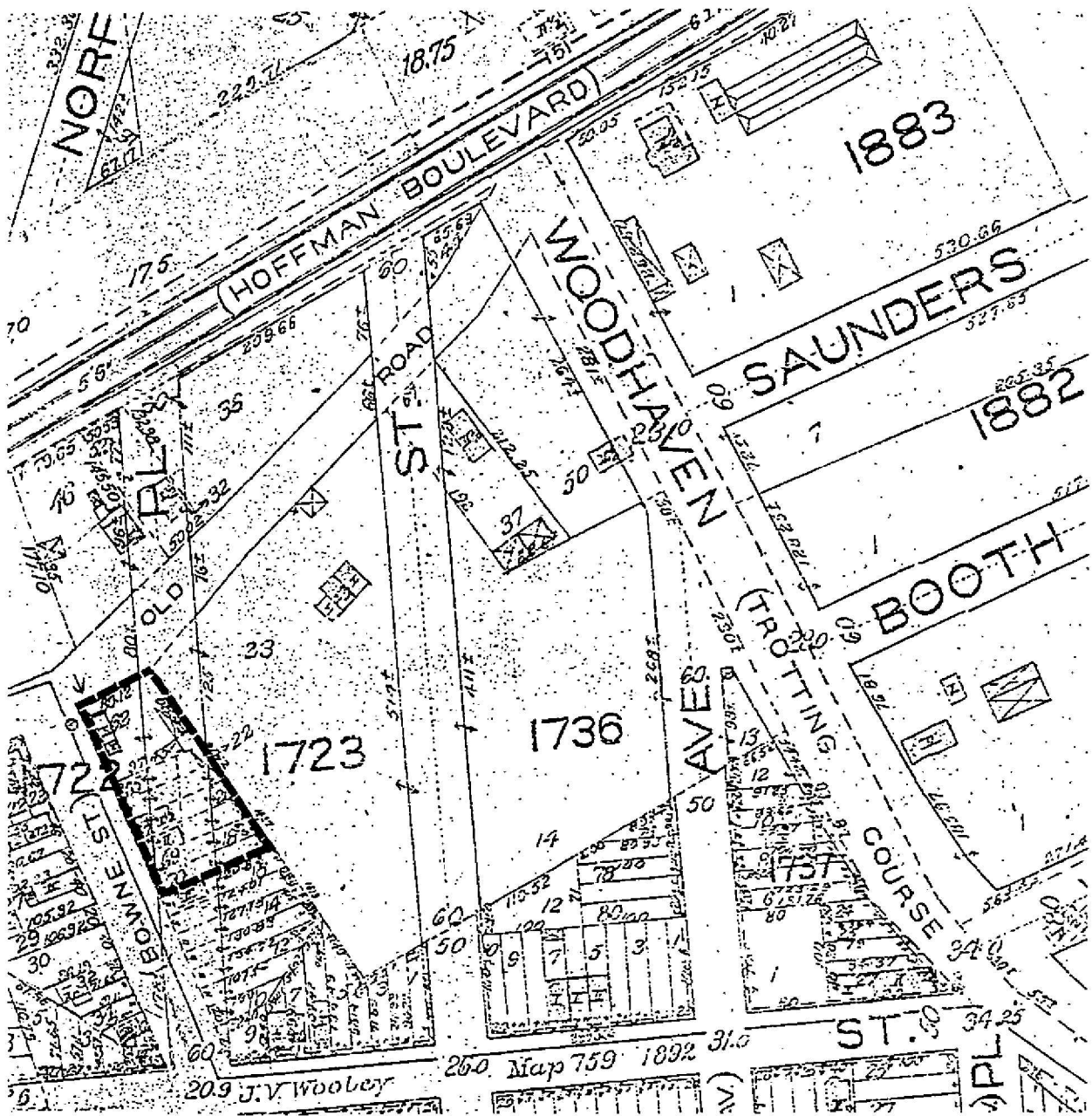
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there would also be outbuildings and yard features associated with either structure, such as barns or sheds, privies, and wells or cisterns.

Sometime between 1891 and 1902, the later house was demolished and replaced by a two story frame building with a store and apartment on the first floor and another apartment on the second. By 1917, its house number was 58-02 Hoffman Road. In this same year, an application was made for a new building on this part of the site (NB 885- 17), probably the garage found on a 1926 map (File Map No. 11299) and later ones; this structure, which is now gone, replaced a stable shown on the 1915 Belcher Hyde map (Figure 16). The application is missing from the building department file, but it could not be for the building that is still standing since this conforms with the structure shown on pre-1917 maps. In 1918, Christian Schou became the building's owner and in 1922, he filed plans to renovate the store and upstairs apartment (Alt. 1410-22), but whether or not this was done remains unknown.

Telephone directories and building department data indicate that John Weiss, the owner of 58-02 Hoffman Drive by 1926 (LD 5231: 328), was at least one occupant from 1930 to 1934 (Brooklyn-Queens Telephone Directories 1929-1935). Who his tenant was and who occupied the store is unknown. In 1928, Weiss installed a new toilet on the ground floor using existing lines (Alt. 1622-28), confirming that indoor plumbing was available by this time (see below for sewer information).



----- project site

0 160
ft.

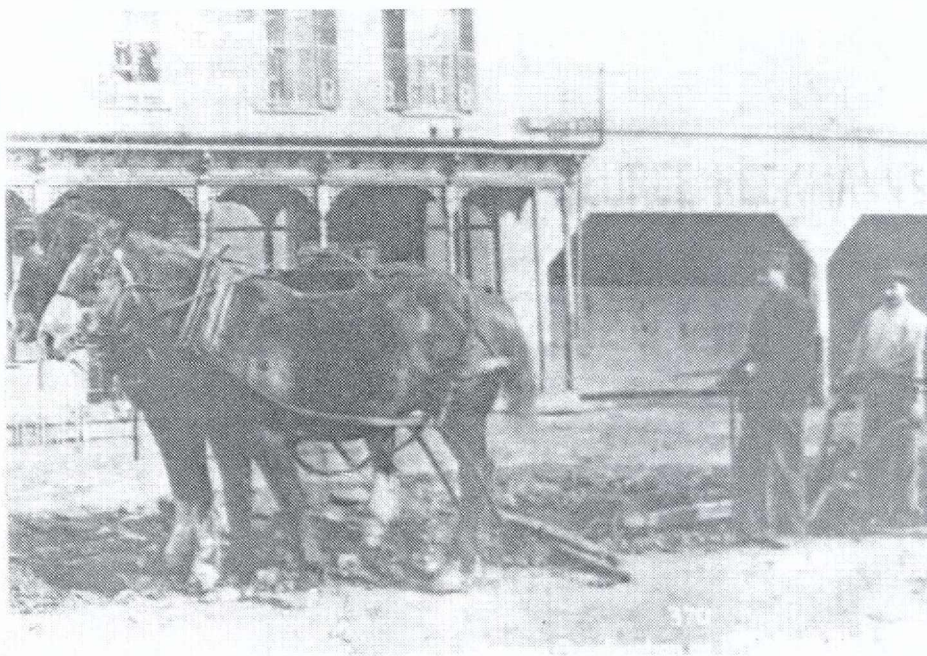


As noted in the 1989 report, between 1891 and 1932, six structures, now demolished, were also constructed on 58th Avenue; these included four houses and two garages. Although these properties, too, may harbor intact privies and yard features, the information from these later structures does not warrant investigation.

Sewers were not laid on Queens Boulevard in the Elmhurst section of Queens until late in 1899 (Seyfried nd:267; see Figure 17) or perhaps later. In 1918, during Schou's ownership, sewers were installed in the vicinity of the project site (Goldenshteyn 1990:personal communication). At least till then, it is assumed that outdoor privies and cisterns or wells were used here as elsewhere throughout rural America. When abandoned and sealed, these backyard features become archaeological time capsules and those associated with the mid-nineteenth century Plain house, perhaps for a time occupied by the Plain family and then tenanted by farm families, would be an archaeological concern. This is also true of any yard features associated with earlier, unknown structures.

4. THE SITE'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL AND A SUGGESTED FIELD METHOD

Research for this addendum confirmed the possibility, albeit remote, that Revolutionary War era deposits spanning seven years of use and intermittent occupation may remain on the site. It also indicates that a mid-nineteenth century dwelling stood on its Hoffman Drive portion, and that this was probably the site's earliest construction. Both possibilities warrant subsurface testing to ascer-

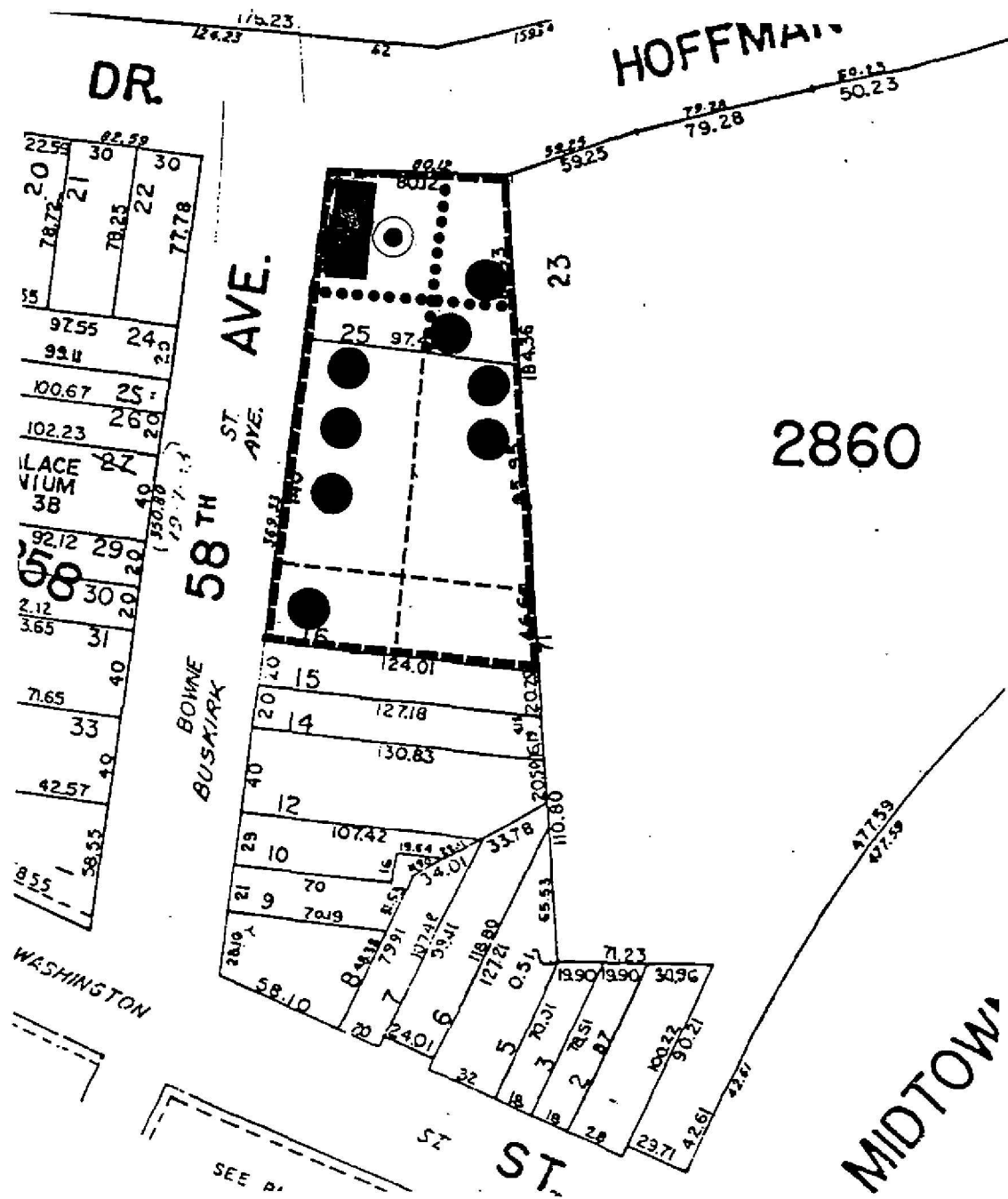


17 "Starting construction [for] first Queens Blvd. sewer." Notation on back of photo says "Geo. Heckmann's Halfway House, Elmhurst, West of Woodhaven Blvd." (Photographer and date unidentified. Courtesy of Queensborough Public Library, Long Island Collection; copied by Geismar 8/90)

tain whether intact archaeological deposits remain. Moreover, it is possible that remnants of a seventeenth century house complex may be found on the site, but this is speculative.

It is therefore recommended that borings planned for the proposed parking lot construction accommodate archaeological concerns. The procedure for this subsurface testing, which will be worked out with the developer, the archaeological consultant, and the drilling contractor, should include continuous sampling for the first eight feet of drilling in selected areas; in addition, an archaeologist should be on the site for at least part of the time to examine the samples and ensure that soil descriptions are comprehensive enough to be meaningful; the soil boring logs, and if necessary, the soil samples, should be made available for analysis.

Unless soil borings indicate deep disturbance, further field testing will be necessary. If this is the case, an attempt should be made to locate the former Plain house foundation and yard features through monitored machine trenching guided by map data in the northern part of the site (Testing, Phase 1, Block 2860 Lot 25); if found, these or earlier domestic features, or any Revolutionary War military features, will be documented. Depending on what is found, further testing or excavation may be recommended, in this case to determine whether Revolutionary War deposits remain on the site's southern part (Testing, Phase 2, Block 2860 Lot 16; see Figure 18 for suggested testing plan). Should such a field program be necessary, the developer is willing to sponsor a scope of work that will satisfy the Landmarks Commission archaeologist and the archaeological consultant.



- project site
- ⊙ former Plain House site (approx.)
- demolished structure (dwelling, garage, shed, stable)
- 58-02 Hoffman Drive (standing structure)
- proposed test trenches (Phase 1, Block 2860, Lot 25)
- proposed test trenches (Phase 2, Block 2860, Lot 16)

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Map of 716 Lots Belonging to James V. S. Woolley.

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NB

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New York Directories

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Queensborough Public Library Long Island Collection Photo Archives
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Revolutionary War Map

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