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ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

WATERVIEW NURSING CARE CENTER

COLLEGE POINT, QUEENS COUNTY, NEW YORK

00 DCP 029 Q

December 1999

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CEQR NUMBER 00DCP029Q

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December, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Because of the state-mandated Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process, Historical Perspectives, Inc. has conducted this cultural resources (Phase 1A) study for the *Waterview Nursing Care Center* project. The purpose of the study is to identify significant archaeological and/or historical resources in the immediate vicinity of the proposed nursing home facility and to assess disturbance to the site caused by past construction/ demolition episodes, landscaping or even farming practices. If significant adverse impacts from the proposed construction are identified, the study is also to delineate appropriate mitigation measures.

Site Location

The project site (Block 4291, Lot 20) consists of approximately half a block in the College Point section of Queens County, N.Y. (See Figure 1.) It is bounded on the north by 26th Avenue, on the east by private homes, and on the south by 27th Avenue. Both 26th and 27th Avenues dead end at the western side of the parcel, which is Flushing Bay. The site is currently occupied by the *Waterview Nursing Care Center*.

Methodology

In order to determine the original topography of the site and any subsequent building episodes that would have disturbed potential archaeological resources, various sources of documentary data were researched. Regional and local histories were consulted, and primary source material on the project site was sought from original building plans, historical maps and photographs, as well as descriptions of the study area from the collections of the Long Island Division of the Queens Borough Public Library in Jamaica. A visit to the site was made on October 28, 1999, and photographs were taken. Interviews were also conducted with people knowledgeable about the study area.

William A. Ritchie's *The Archaeology of New York State* provided a valuable overview of Native American culture and lifeways during the prehistoric period. Other archaeological literature, available site reports and journal publications were researched for data specific to the project area. Inquiries concerning inventoried prehistoric and historic sites were sent to the New York State Museum and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and the results are incorporated in this report.

Geological Setting

Long Island is the top of a Coastal Plain ridge formation that is covered with glacial drift, in reality an elevated sea bottom demonstrating low topographic relief and extensive marshy tracts. In the last million years, as glaciers advanced and receded three times, the surficial geology of the island, including College Point, was profoundly altered.

The glacier was an effective agent of erosion, altering the landscape wherever it passed. Tons of soil and stone were carried forward, carving and planing the land surface. At the margins of the ice sheet massive accumulations of glacial debris were deposited, forming a series of low hills or terminal moraines.
(Eisenberg 1978:19)

Circa 18,000 years ago, the last ice sheet reached its southern limit, creating the Harbor Hill moraine that traverses the length of Long Island, running south of the present Flushing Meadows Corona Park.

North of this terminal moraine, the section of Queens from approximately the Greenpoint Avenue/Newtown Creek vicinity to LaGuardia Airport and eastward through Flushing and Whitestone, including the project site, is part of the Piedmont Lowlands (Boesch 1997:4.) In Queens, the undulating surface is immediately underlain chiefly by post-Pleistocene aged unconsolidated lacustrine and fluvial sediments associated with Glacial Lake Flushing and its drainages (Schuberth 1968). The project area and much of what is today Manhattan, the Bronx, Upper New York Bay, the East River, and the western portion of Long Island Sound were covered by this lake. An extension of the lake extended further southeastward covering what is today Flushing Meadows - Corona Park.

The complex rising and subsidence of the coastal plain, relieved of its glacial burden, and the rising sea level, caused by the volume of melting ice, created the coastline of embayed rivers and estuaries, with extensive tidal marsh and meadow tracts, which stabilized approximately 3,000 years ago (Schuberth 1968:195,199). These tidal marshlands, such as Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, are highly vegetated, relatively calm environments where fine-grained sediments and organic detritus accumulate, creating thick deposits.

The project site itself is at the southern end of an elevated area that comprises most of College Point. There was marshland only three blocks to the southeast, which was traversed by the College Point Causeway. As can be seen in Figure 1, the ground slopes steeply west to a tidal flat with rocks, bare or awash according to the tide, in Flushing Bay.

Current Conditions

The present nursing home is a three story building, with partial basement, fronting on 27th Avenue, with one story wings flanking the south-facing center door. (See Photograph A.) The area between the west side of the building and Flushing Bay slopes steeply toward the water and is overgrown with weeds, wild shrubs and trees, and is strewn with trash. (See Photograph B.) Although 119th Street shows on some maps as running between the building and the water, it actually dead ends about 50 feet from the end of 26th Avenue. A stream of water of unknown origin was flowing from a pipe in the bank into the bay on the day of the site visit.

The north side of the nursing care center includes an outdoor sitting area and two single story buildings. (See Photograph C.) An employee of the nursing facility says that there is no basement or crawl space under these one story buildings, and this is confirmed by the 1955 building plans (Turano-Gardner Associates 1955). The northeast corner of the parcel is paved and now contains dumpsters. (See Photograph D.)

The waterline appears to be in its original condition, a stony beach with rocks. The elevation above Mean High Water was the same 11.0' at the Flushing Bay end of 26th Avenue in 1979, after construction of the nursing facility, as it was in 1908, before the area was developed. However, the elevation at 26th Avenue and College Point Boulevard was 36.4' in 1908 and 24.0' in 1979, a decrease of 12.4'. Soil borings, done in 1955 in preparation for the construction of the nursing home, show a maximum of one foot of fill at the northeast and northwest corners of the lot, so some topographic alteration was done. (See Figure 2.)

College Point Boulevard crossed over a knoll that peaked at approximately 50' at its intersection with Graham Court in 1908, and it is probable that this was at least partially leveled. This procedure may have affected only the northeast section of the block, as there were no buildings there as late as 1979 (Powell 1916, Hyde 1979). (See Figure 3.)

Construction Plans

According to Wall & Associates, the existing three story nursing care center and the wings flanking the entrance are to remain standing, as is the one story building on the northeast corner of the lot. A single story building on the northwest corner is to be demolished. A new four story building, with basement, measuring approximately 230 x 60 feet, is proposed to be erected on the north half of the lot. It will cover the existing one story building on the lot's northeast corner and will be connected to the old building by a three story bridge building measuring approximately 52 x 20 feet. The east end of the new building will have a loading dock next to a parking area for ten cars. Plans show the outline of the proposed structure superimposed on the footprint of the current building. (See Figure 4.) Earlier building episodes are further discussed in the section of this report headed *Construction History*. There are several areas that may not have been heavily impacted by construction, and these will also be detailed later.

NATIVE AMERICAN BACKGROUND

The prehistoric era on the north shore of western Long Island can be divided into three time periods, based on prehistoric man's adaptations to changing environmental conditions. These are generally known as the Paleo-Indian (c.12,000 to 10,000 years ago), the Archaic (c.10,000 to 2,700 years ago) and the Woodland (c.2,700 to 300 years ago). In order to be able to assess the project site's potential for prehistoric exploitation, it is first necessary to review these time periods and their associated settlement patterns.

Paleo-Indian Period (c.12,000 y.a. - 10,000 y.a.)

There is currently a lively debate about the origin of the first human occupants of the Western Hemisphere. Three recent theories suggest that:

- People, possibly from Japan, migrated along the west coast by skin-covered boat and on foot, eventually reaching as far south as Monte Verde, a 12,500 year old site in Chile;
- People from southeast Asia came to South America via Australia, an idea popularized by Thor Heyerdahl and backed by DNA testing;
- The earliest inhabitants were Europeans who followed the calmer water along the ice on the shores of what are now Iceland and Greenland, landing on the east coast of North America and moving west and south (Wilford 1999:F1,4).

The fourth and still most widely held theory to date is that, toward the end of the Wisconsin Glaciation, during the Late Pleistocene Epoch, the first humans wandered across the exposed land bridge which connected Siberia and Alaska. These small groups of hunters were probably following the roaming herds of megafauna which were their chief prey. The distinctive weapon in their chipped stone tool kit was the fluted point, which has been found in association with mammoth, mastodon, bison and horse remains at various sites in the southwestern United States. Although none of these "kill sites" is located east of the Mississippi, the discovery of campsites such as that at Port Mobil, Staten Island, suggest a scattered, highly mobile population in bands of approximately 20 individuals, who ranged across a vast area necessary to support lifeways organized around the hunting of migratory game (Ritchie 1980:1-3, 13). In the Northeast, the glacially lowered sea level exposed a broad coastal plain of which Long Island was a part; here there was abundant large game.

The fluted, lanceolate points, two to five inches in length with a concave base and channeled or fluted faces, presumably to facilitate hafting, exhibit a considerable range in shape and size. They were usually made from a high-grade siliceous stone, often exotic to the region in which they are recovered, a function of their makers' seasonal migrations.¹ Other artifacts in the

¹ This view has been questioned by Dr. Roger Moeller, a Connecticut archaeologist, who thinks that the Paleo-Indians often used glacially deposited cobbles for their raw material (1999).

Paleo-Indian tool kit include scrapers, knives, borers and gravers, tools which indicate extensive handiwork in wood, bone and leather (Ritchie 1980:3,6).

From the locations of recorded sites in the Northeast, Paleo-Indians exhibited a marked preference for well-elevated situations. However, 30% of sites were found on or near the margins of swampy ground. Environmental characteristics which appear to have been attractive to Paleo-Indians include the proximity of major waterways, large fertile valleys and the coastal plain, where the densest population of desired food animals was supported (Ritchie 1980:7). However since 10,000 years ago, the rise in sea level estimated to be from 75 to 80 feet, has submerged large numbers of these sites.

The retreat of ice from Long Island approximately 18,000 years ago and a global warming trend circa 14,000 years before present, encouraged Paleo-Indian settlement in the Northeast. The post-glacial environment of spruce and pine underwent a gradual modification in favor of deciduous hardwoods such as oak and hickory, which have greater importance in terms of nutritional value to both animals and humans than do conifers. By 10,000 years ago, these deciduous species dominated forests along the eastern seaboard. In addition, the megafauna on which Paleo-Indian diet was based were rapidly becoming extinct, and were being replaced by the temperate-climate fauna that are indigenous today.

Archaic Period (c.10,000 y.a. - 2,700 y.a.)

The warming trend at the end of the last glaciation completely transformed the northeastern coastal environment from tundra and conifer-dominated forests, to the present deciduous woodlands with generally modern distributions of fauna. Due to the dwindling contribution of meltwater from disappearing glaciers, the reduced flow of streams and rivers promoted the formation of swamps and mudflats. These wetlands created a congenial environment for migratory waterfowl, and a host of edible plant species and shellfish. The new mixed hardwood forests of oak, hickory, chestnut, beech and elm attracted such mast-eating fauna as white-tailed deer, wild turkey, moose and beaver.

Although the Archaic diet was still based on hunting and gathering, due to the greater variety of plants available and exploited, excavated Archaic sites yield a wide array of plant processing tools, including grinding stones, mortars and pestles. The diagnostic tool was the grooved axe. In the coastal areas of New York, have been found numerous, small "nearly always multi-component sites variously situated on tidal inlets, coves and bays, particularly at the heads of the latter, and on fresh-water ponds on Long Island" (Ritchie 1980:143). By the Late Archaic, these areas provided shellfish, small game, fish, salt hay and tuberous grasses making larger more permanent settlements possible. Semi-nomadic life is still indicated, but wandering occurred within well-defined territorial limits, with seasonal movements between camps near exploitable resources.

A dietary shift to shellfish in coastal New York near the end of the Archaic suggests a

scarcity of large game, and a change from the early Archaic inland adaptation of forest hunting. Coastal sites show a principal reliance upon shellfish, especially oysters, hard and soft shell clams and bay scallops, which were easily gathered all around Long Island. Characteristic of the Late Archaic were "fish-tailed" projectile points and soapstone bowls (Ritchie 1980:142,166, 167, 171). In contrast to conditions during the Paleo-Indian, Early and Middle Archaic, by Late Archaic times sea level was very close to present levels. Hence the Late Archaic Wading River complex, four sites on the north shore of Suffolk County, was found at the edge of a salt marsh, on dry ground ranging only two to seven feet above mean high water (Wyatt 1982:71).

Woodland Period (c. 2,700 y.a. - 385 y.a.)

Pottery use became widespread following the use of soapstone vessels in the Late Archaic, and although copper tools were utilized during that period, the earliest copper ornaments, tubular beads, made their appearance during the Woodland period. Stone or clay smoking pipes were also an Early Woodland innovation (Ritchie 1980:179-180)

Settlement patterns were substantially altered with the introduction of agriculture, the systematic cultivation of maize, beans and squash possibly beginning as early as 1000 A.D. During this time large villages within palisaded enclosures developed for the use of a semi-sedentary people, with groups moving seasonally, depending on exploitable food resources, between villages and camps of varying population concentrations. Preferred village/camp sites were in protected, elevated locations at the confluence of two water systems. Nearly all the permanent sites are situated on tidal streams and bays on the second rise of ground above water. Because growing corn quickly leached nutrients from the soil, fields were frequently abandoned after a few years of cultivation, and a new location was planted.

Despite the advent of agriculture, shellfish and small game remained an important component of the Woodland diet. Shellfish refuse heaps, termed "middens," reached immense proportions, covering from one to over three acres. Deer, turkey, raccoon, muskrat, ducks and other game were stalked with bow and arrows, replacing the spear and javelin, while dug-out boats, bone hooks, harpoons and nets with pebble sinkers were employed in fishing (Smith 1950:101; Ritchie 1980:180,267).

Contact Period (c. 385 y.a. - c. 300 y.a.)

The first recorded visit to the College Point area by a European was probably that of the trader/explorer Adriaen Block, in the ship *Onrust*, who sailed up Long Island Sound and explored the bays on either side in 1614 (Waller 1899:5). Contact with Europeans had far-reaching effects on Native American cultures. European goods such as metal and glass began to replace traditional materials. Trade for these and other goods probably encouraged a more sedentary lifestyle, and larger villages developed into permanent settlements. The population of these villages would expand and contract with the seasonal availability of natural food resources, and maize agriculture contributed surplus food which could be stored to bolster their already rich diet.

Tragically, these cultural developments were cut short, as natives were exposed to European diseases against which their bodies had no resistance. The Native American population was decimated.

Due to these tremendous stresses, the socio-political situation of Long Island's Native Americans was extremely fluid, with groups splitting and combining in complex ways, which are only beginning to be understood. Most 19th century histories of Flushing and Queens County identify the 17th century inhabitants of the Flushing area as being Matinecock Indians (Waller 1899:17). The seafaring Matinecock claimed jurisdiction over northern Long Island east of Newtown and as far east as Smithtown in Suffolk. They are described as being once numerous in northeastern Queens, with their settlements in Little Neck and Bayside and a large one in Flushing, where they made wampum, and dried oysters and clams for winter use (Munsell 1882:19,76).

Wampum was manufactured from the shell of the whelk and the hard-shelled clam by Native American women, who cut, polished and bored the beads without the use of metal tools. Originally the beads were strung on sinew into belts and necklaces and exchanged between Indian groups as a show of good faith and friendship on important occasions. With the arrival of Europeans and the perennial lack of specie which plagued all of the American colonies, during the 17th century wampum was adopted by both the English and the Dutch as legal tender, and various colonial governors published rates of exchange between the beads and European currencies. Wampum was also highly prized by the Iroquois of upstate New York, and its manufacture became a valuable industry for Long Island Indians (Thompson 1918:113-114; Bolton 1972:100,102; Van Wyck 1924:108).

Other sources record the original sellers of the land as the Massapequa (despite recording the presence of the Matinecock's Flushing settlement) (Thompson 1918:I 126,III 3), or Canarsee or even Rockaway (Kearns and Kirkorian 1985:6). At present, it is generally believed that western Long Island was inhabited by Munsee-speaking members of the Delaware culture group. According to the research of Robert Grumet and archaeologist Reginald Bolton, the divisions or sub-divisions known as the Matinecock and the Massapequa maintained fairly close ties. They were allies during the late 17th century, and eventually combined in 1676, and went to live in the Rockaways. The Massapequa sachem signed treaties with the Dutch in the name of other groups such as the Rockaway on more than one occasion, and when he was killed, the Matinecock sachem signed an agreement representing his own and some of the Massapequa's towns. Thus, there existed a complex relationship between the Indian groups on Long Island which is yet to be explained sufficiently (Grumet 1981:5-6,30-33).

NATIVE AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SENSITIVITY

The entire shoreline of this part of Long Island is covered with Native American sites, because the land offered everything they needed. There were abundant shellfish and finfish, marshes full of birds and useful and edible plants, woods that provided nuts, building materials, and shelter for game animals. There is clear evidence that Native Americans utilized the project site itself; neighbors found projectile points there before the nursing facility was built (Anne Lavelle, personal communication 11/6/1999). Northern Boulevard, a little over a mile southeast of the project site, was originally an Indian trail, according to Bolton (1922).

Susan K. Brustmann of the Poppenhusen Institute, is convinced that the project parcel was part of a large Indian village in the area, and some of the artifacts found there are now on view at the Poppenhusen. The Graham Court site, a prehistoric archaeological site, is located north of 26th Avenue, only one block from the *Waterview* Nursing Care facility. Newspaper accounts, unfortunately not all dated or sourced, are on file in the Long Island Division of the Queens Borough Public Library. One of these, filed with other articles from the 1940s and 1950s, describes workmen digging in a hill west of 122nd Street and south of 26th Avenue (the project block) and finding bones. Another, dated March 28, 1934, reports that a workman, digging at 26th Avenue between 121st and 122nd Streets, uncovered a human skull that fell apart in his hands when he picked it up (*North Shore Daily Journal* 1934:1:2). This article goes on to say that the area was a government reservation during the Revolutionary War, but further research does not corroborate this; the bones were most probably Native American.

Following is a description of recorded Prehistoric and Contact Period sites within approximately one mile of the project parcel. Their locations are shown on a U.S.G.S. map, in Appendix 1.

- A. Four habitation sites were clustered around the mouth of a creek called "Sackhickneyah," which originated near Newtown, Queens and flowed northwest through Trains Meadow, emptying into Flushing Bay (Grumet 1981:48). Grumet says "Sackhickneyah" derived from a Delaware word meaning "the shore path." It is not clear whether these are the same as State Museum Inventory sites #4540, a burial, and #4543, a camp, or whether they are additional locations of aboriginal activity (Bolton 1922). Arthur C. Parker reported the sites in his 1922 *Archaeological History of New York*, but the locations have not been field checked and are not geographically precise (Kearns & Kirkorian 1985:69).
- B. The Grantville Site was located south of the project parcel between Flushing Bay and a salt marsh at Longitude 73 degrees 52' 40" and Latitude 40 degrees 45' 13". Given the number A081-01-0133 by the Division for Historic Preservation of New York State Parks and Recreation, it was excavated in the 1930s by Ralph Solecki. Components included a pre-ceramic phase, as well as Bowman's Brook and Classon's Point.

- C. New York State Museum #4542 is a camp site reported by Arthur C. Parker. (See A. above.)
- D. New York State Museum # 4540 is a burial site reported by Arthur C. Parker. (See A. above.)
- E. The Graham Court site #94, now known as New York State Museum site #719, is only one street north of the project site. Excavated by Carlyle Smith, it was both a village and a burial site, including a dog burial. The whole ceramic vessel with stamping and cord-marking found there dates it to the Woodland Period.
- F. New York State Museum site, #4527, is located approximately a mile north of the project parcel, at about Tenth Avenue and 117th Street. Discovered in 1861, it was a prehistoric village site with burials (HPI 1986) found on the E. Platt Stratton Estate while excavating for foundation of Knickerbocker Hall (listed in Parker 1920).

An important site near the Whitestone Expressway should be mentioned here, even though it is 1.3 miles north east of the project parcel. Called the Wilkins site, it is near the head of a small tidal cove on 14th Ave. and 142nd St. The topsoil and much of the subsoil had been scraped away for use as fill, revealing 18 shell and refuse pits which were excavated in 1939-40 by a party from the Flushing Historical Society. The original size of the pits could not be determined in all cases, although some were only 2 feet wide and a few inches deep and others extended for 12' and were 3' deep. The pits were bowl-shaped and contained alternating layers of nearly whole shells and stained soil with shell fragments, and their center was reddish orange from use as a fire pit. Artifacts recovered included pottery of the East River and Bowmans Brook traditions, net sinkers, bone awls and flakers, hammerstones and abrading stones, projectile points and scrapers, a mortal and pestle, a hoe or chopper, aboriginal pipe sherds, game pieces and a broken gorget or pendant.

Further excavations in 1950 uncovered the flexed remains of an adult female and child in a refuse-filled pit (Smith 1950:177). This assemblage of artifacts and the burial clearly indicate a Woodland Period habitation site, where the Native Americans fished, worked stone tools and processed and possibly cultivated food, a full range of village activities. A recent Phase 3 mitigation study has just been conducted there by Eugene Boesch (personal communication 11/13/1999). He reports both filling in the area and some disturbance, but more site integrity below the plow zone. His findings lead him to believe the area hosted hunting and gathering in the nearby marsh, and indicated a Late Woodland time period.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

College Point took its name from an Episcopal divinity school, St. Paul's College, founded in 1836 by the Rev. William A. Muhlenberg, an educator and philanthropist (Willensky

and White 1988:762). The panic of 1837 reduced the student population to the point that the school had to close, and it was all over by 1839, but the name appealed to the residents and was retained when the village was incorporated (WPA 1939:570). Tew's Neck was its earliest name, but local historians know almost nothing about the man named Tew (Vincent Seyfried, personal communication 11/15/1999). With the granting of a patent to the Lawrence family in the seventeenth century, it became known as Lawrence's Neck. The Lawrences were distinguished early settlers of the area, and College Point was the northwestern part of William Lawrence's estate (WPA 1939:570). The point at that time was woods and farmland.

A number of maps of the Revolutionary War period and shortly thereafter show the project site as almost an island, situated on an elevated terrace of land with Flushing Bay to the west and marsh to the south and east (Long Island Division of the Queens Borough Public Library). (See Figure 5.) No road is shown in the location of the present College Point Boulevard, either because it did not yet exist, or because it was not considered a strategic route to the British, who controlled the area and billeted troops in Flushing. Access to the point was from the east, skirting the marshland.

William Lawrence's descendants sold the land, including the project parcel, to Eliphalet Stratton in 1790. His son and grandson, Platt Stratton and E. Platt Stratton, owned half of the southern section of College Point. Each had a house near the project site, one to the north and the other to the east. A map dated 1852 shows the Stratton complex nearest the project site, directly across the boulevard, where the road turns to head due north. (See Figure 6.) Stratton Woods, a patch of forest nearby on the upland ran 800' north to south and 150' east to west, and was a local landmark (WPA n.d.:206). This tract is shown as trees southwest of Strattons on the 1852 map. The well-drained land to the north became the village of Strattonsport [sometimes called Strattonport]. Marsh still covered the area to the south and east of the project site, then vacant, and the boulevard was called College Point Causeway. The causeway stretch along the project block was dirt until the early twentieth century, and the cobblestone surface was not removed until the middle of the century (Anne Lavelle, personal communication 11/6/1999).

Another neighborhood resident was Captain John Graham, who came to the area from England in 1832. He established a farm adjacent to Platt Stratton, whose sister he married, and built a mansion just north of the project site. One of the features of his estate was a series of brick vaulted caves and tunnels. (See Photograph E.) Thomas Collins, in an undated newspaper article, claims they were used before and during the Revolutionary War by smugglers avoiding British taxes and embargoes. Another rumor says that Graham was involved in the slave trade, imprisoning captive Africans in dungeons at his house and shipping them out by ship to slave markets (WPA n.d.: 225-226). These same caves were reported to be stops on the underground railroad at the time of the Civil War, and a local informant spoke of articles in the *L.I. Star Journal* in the mid 1950s describing bulldozers turning up what she says was "a slave cemetery, with chains still on the ankles of the skeletons" (Anne Lavelle, personal communication 11/6/1999). It is much more likely that the bones found at the site were Native American, and that the caves were used by farmers for storing produce before shipment to market. Mr. Oscar

Weiss, in his reminiscences, said that the local ladies used the tunnels as a shortcut to the beach, then called Sunset Beach, for a dip in the water (WPA n.d.: 225).

Captain Graham had a mysterious aura about him, so it is not surprising that these rumors were whispered. The same Mr. Weiss reported that the Captain always wore gloves, supposedly because he had been captured and his hands branded. Whether this was true or not, he was never seen driving his own horses; he had a very pretty secretary who always drove him. Rumors about him were surely fed by his eventual suicide in 1882, with a claim against the U.S. Government still pending for "unlawful and unwarranted detention" of his three ships in New York harbor in May, June and July of 1855. His mansion was later sold to a real estate developer, who graded the land and sold it off as building lots (WPA n.d.: 226). This may be where the workman, digging in 1934, uncovered the human skull noted earlier.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, College Point became a thriving industrial community, with Swiss and German immigrants manning its rubber works, ribbon mills, toilet goods plants and brewery (WPA 1939:570). Conrad Poppenhusen, also a railroad magnate, moved his hard rubber factory there in 1854 and immediately began to improve the community. He had the roads paved to Flushing, built homes for his workers, and brought in running water. The Poppenhusen Institute, located on 15th Avenue approximately seven blocks north of the project site, opened its doors in 1870; it housed a library, the village offices, the first free kindergarten in the United States and a vocational school (Seyfried 1985:2). The many programs were available to all, regardless of race, religion or creed. The Institute was saved from destruction in the 1970s, when it became a N.Y.C. Landmark. It was placed on the National Register of Historic places in 1973 and has now reopened and is planning a \$4.5 million restoration (N.Y. Times 10/31/99:WCRE 9).

The land above 25th Avenue between 119th and 120th Streets, two blocks north of the project site, was filled in during the spring of 1966, causing a public outcry in the press. The fill was described as "unacceptable material [consisting of] wood, old mattresses and furniture." Fires caused Commissioner Herbert Halberg to ask Building commissioner Charles Moerdler to put a twenty-five year moratorium on construction (L.I. Daily Press 1966). By the following spring, residents of new houses in the middle of the block had to fight a sea of mud a foot deep and were unable to drive to the ends of 23rd and 25th Avenues (L.I. Star Journal 1967). More recently, the marsh east of College Point Boulevard and the project site has been filled and the College Point Industrial Park constructed.

CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

The project site itself was vacant land until 1955, although the west half of the parcel was divided into lots on paper, as was the east end of the block. (See Figure 7.) As late as 1943, and perhaps until after the construction of the nursing home, 26th Avenue was not open. A plot map connected to construction plans from 1955 shows a dirt road, probably a continuation of 119th

Street, crossing the parcel north to south where the current buildings stand. (See Figure 8.) A private sanitary sewer pipe ran along the east side of this road, and the map is marked for both permanent and temporary easements. It is not clear whether the sewer remains in place.

A resident of the neighborhood recalls ice skating on the parcel, in the woods, when she was eight or ten, but because 26th Avenue was not open, the divisions between blocks may not have been clear. She claims that the area was swampy, but also says the site was dry in summer and the basements in the neighborhood have never had water in them (Anne Lavelle, personal communication 11/6/1999). No water was encountered when soil borings were drilled to a depth of 20'-30' below the surface of the ground in 1955. At least her report implies that the area was level enough for skating, if her location for it is within the project block.

Ms. Lavelle also said the site was a stop on the underground railroad. She is no doubt referring to the "caves" on the Captain Graham estate discussed in the *Historical Background* section of this report, which were probably just north of the project site. She has, stored somewhere, *Long Island Star Journal* stories from the mid 1950s about bones found on the block during bulldozing, but she was unfortunately unwilling to search for them. Although these newspapers are on microfilm at the Long Island Division of the Queens County Public Library, they are not indexed, and a preliminary search of three month's issues during the period of original construction proved to be fruitless. However, her account does indicate that some grading of the site was done during construction of the nursing home.

According to the Sanborn insurance map, 1916 updated to 1942 [Figure 7], there were six dwellings in the center of the block in the southern half, abutting the east side of the project site. (See Photograph F.) The two closest to the project parcel were two story frame combination dwellings and shops, with small warehouses or garages behind them. The structure abutting the project site appears to be the same building, now covered with vinyl or aluminum siding. Layered additions to the map indicate a construction date after 1916 but before 1942. A fire hydrant near the southwest corner of the nursing facility, just off 27th Avenue, was also apparently installed during this period. (See Photograph G.)

The *College Nursing Home* was built on the site in 1955-1956. A Sanborn Insurance map updated to 1956 shows a single story building with a footprint on the north half of the lot just as it is today. The south-facing part of the building was also only one story. A notation on the map reads "NonComb. 1955-1956" with a concrete floor, concrete slab roof, steel posts and beams. There was no cellar (Sanborn 1943 corrected to 1956). This is confirmed by the original 1955 construction plans for the facility made by Turano Gardner Associates, architects, and supplied by Gregory Ceci of Allen H. Feinberg Associates. The entire area under the structure is labeled "unexcavated" on the plans, and the nursing home was built on 8.5" reinforced concrete slab resting on "thoroughly tamped" soil, with no basement under any of it. The ink is badly faded and difficult to read, but the footings, located under the walls only, appear to be 4' deep. (See Appendix 2.)

Plans for an addition to the existing building were drawn up by Tumarkin, Morgan and Emerman in 1965. They called for extending its footprint into the previously vacant southwest corner of the block. The only basement was constructed in this area when the new building was erected. It contained lockers and rest rooms for staff, the superintendent's office and work shop, a laundry, rooms for the boiler, water and electrical equipment, and storage. The addition was three stories high, not counting the basement, and second and third floors were added over the original main building. According to a map updated to 1979, which confirms the new floor plan, the facade became brick and the name was changed to the *Waterview Nursing Care Center* (Hyde 1926-1979).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

Available maps indicate that there was no structure on the project site until the first nursing home was erected in 1955, although it is possible that the old tunnels associated with Captain Graham's farm, located by the press near 26th Avenue, may have been on the parcel. It is more likely that they were slightly north of the nursing home lot, nearer Graham Court. In any case, their razing almost surely destroyed or severely disturbed any historical archaeological potential.

The potential for significant Native American archaeological resources on the site, however, is great. A variety of Indian sites have been reported all along the shoreline, and a local resident told of finding stone tools on the site. Reports from both residents and the press speak of bones being uncovered there as well. A known archaeological site, at Graham Court, lies just one block to the north, and there are other documented sites in the vicinity.

According to the original building plans for what is now the *Waterview Nursing Care Center*, there is only concrete slab under the buildings to be impacted by the proposed new construction. Only the c. 1965 addition in the southwest corner of the parcel has a basement. There are several small windows of opportunity where prehistoric archaeological resources could remain *in situ*. (See Figure 9.) One of these is an approximately 40' by 120' space in the western part of the parcel, between the existing three story main building and the one story building on the north side of the lot that is to be demolished (Number 1, on Figure 9). The second is an area, measuring approximately 45' by 80', between the rear of the main building and the eastern single story wing that is currently used as a patio (Number 2, on Figure 9). The third is the loading dock and paved parking area on the eastern side of the lot, having an el shape and measuring roughly 90' by 40' (Number 3, on Figure 9). A fourth site of archaeological sensitivity is under the single story building in the northwest corner of the lot. Although some grading may have been done, 1955 borings indicate a foot deep layer of topsoil here originally, and the elevation at the west end of the block has not changed from pre-construction days (Number 4, on Figure 9).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the *Waterview Nursing Care Center*, originally the *College Nursing Home*, is almost certainly the first structure on the project site, historical archaeological resources are not a matter of concern. However, there are strong indications of a Native American presence, including burials, on the parcel. Therefore subsurface testing is recommended before the start of new construction.

There are three mostly paved areas that have no buildings on them, as shown on the Archaeological Sensitivity Map [Figure 9] as *Areas of Primary Archaeological Sensitivity*, and each of these three areas may contain undisturbed archaeological resources. If the paving in the loading dock/parking area on the east side of the lot is to remain in place and not be impacted by the construction, it will not need subsurface investigation but should be flagged in case of future building (Number 3, on Figure 9). Any paving in the other two areas should be removed so as not to disturb possible subsurface data, with this process monitored by an archaeologist, in order for archaeologists to conduct subsurface testing (Numbers 1 and 2, on Figure 9).

If archaeological resources are discovered in these areas, testing should also be done on the site of the building to be demolished, on the northwest corner of the lot, which has no basement and only an 8'5" concrete slab resting on earth (Number 4, on Figure 9). Again, demolition should be carefully done and be monitored by an archaeologist, prior to testing.

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1781

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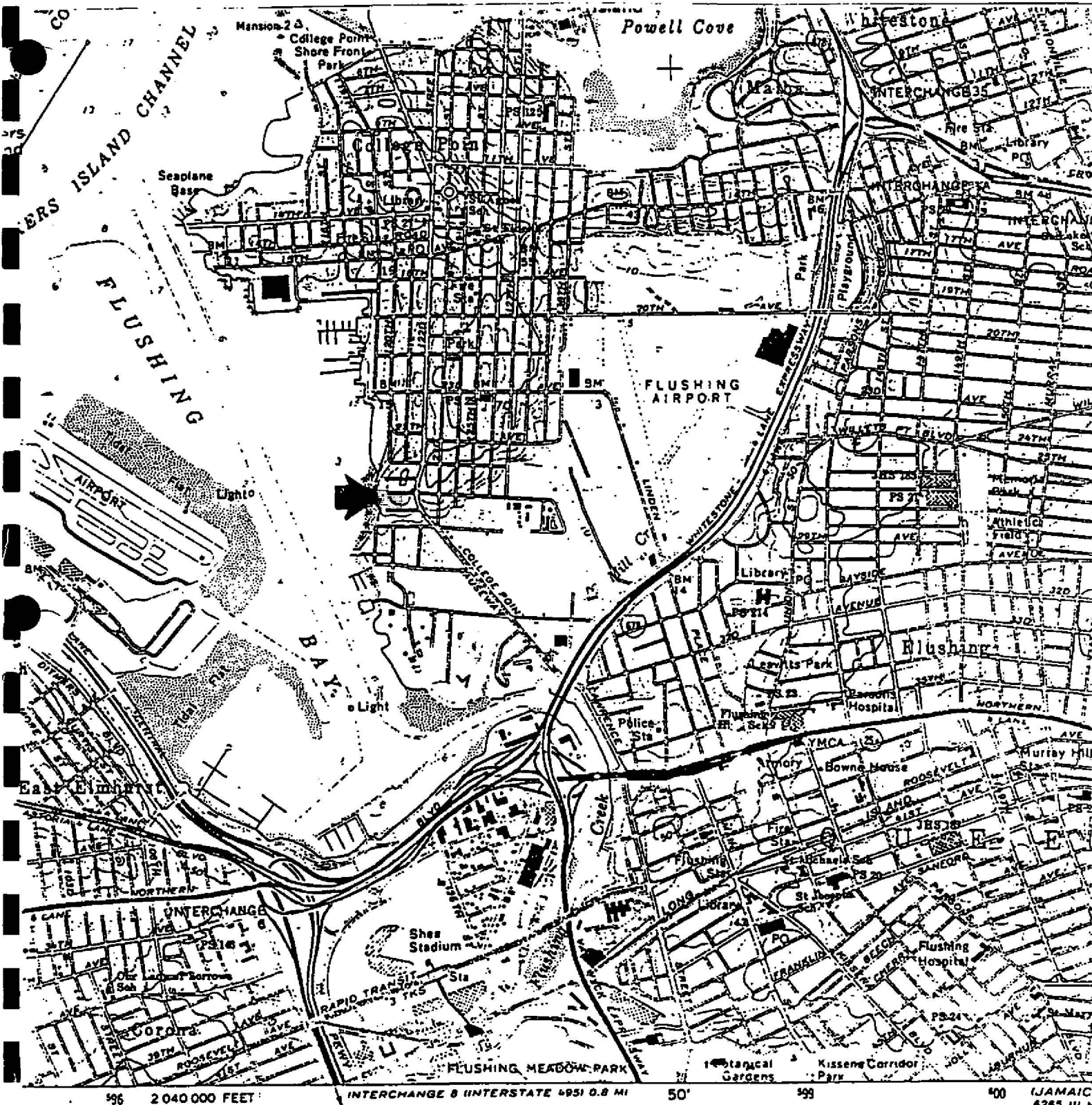
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U.S.G.S. Topographic Map - Flushing Quadrangle

* Not shown

FIGURES



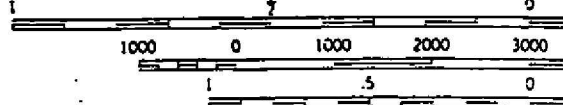
and published by the Geological Survey
in cooperation with New York Department

U.S. Geological Survey and Nassau County

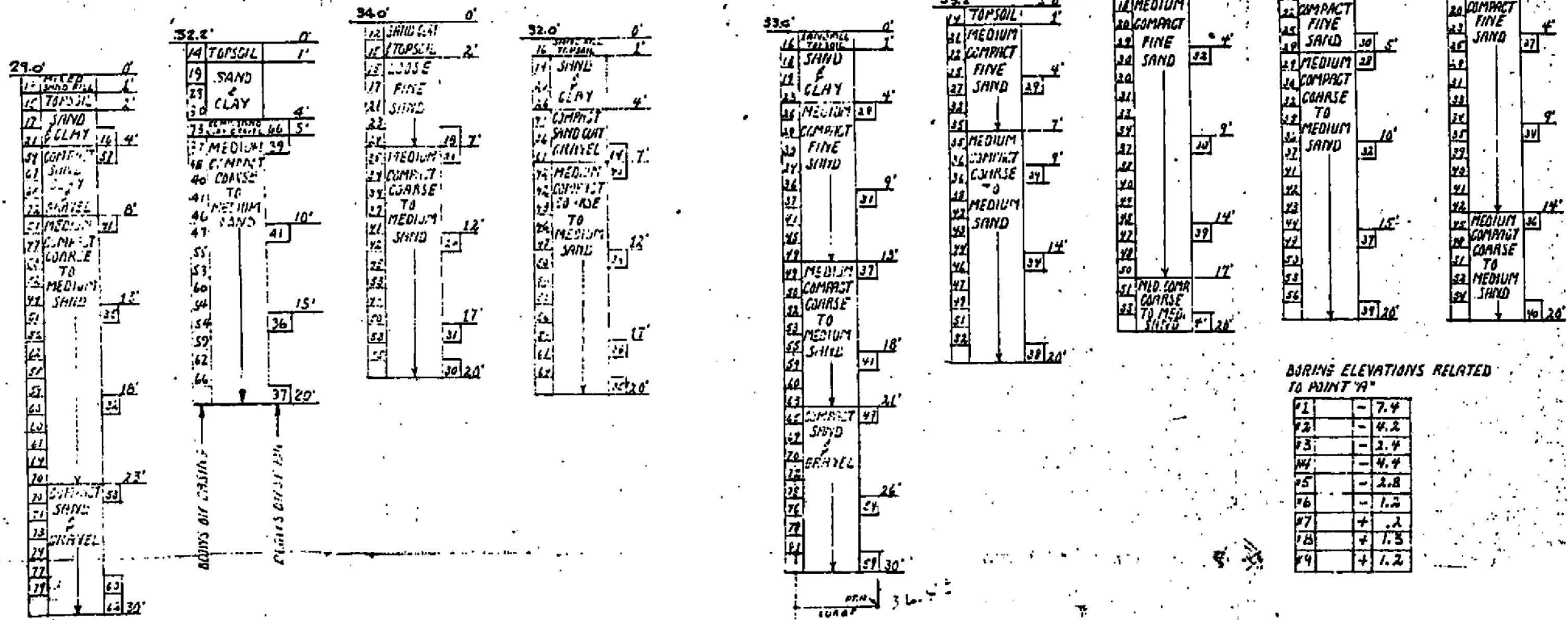
Map derived from USC&GS Charts T-5089, T-5090,
T-5078. Topography by photogrammetric methods
from aerial photographs taken 1954. Field checked 1955.

Topographic data compiled from USC&GS Charts
T-5076 (1967). This information is not intended

MN
 12" = 213 MILS
 0"47" = 14 MILS
 12" = 304.8 MILS
 0"47" = 11.93 MILS

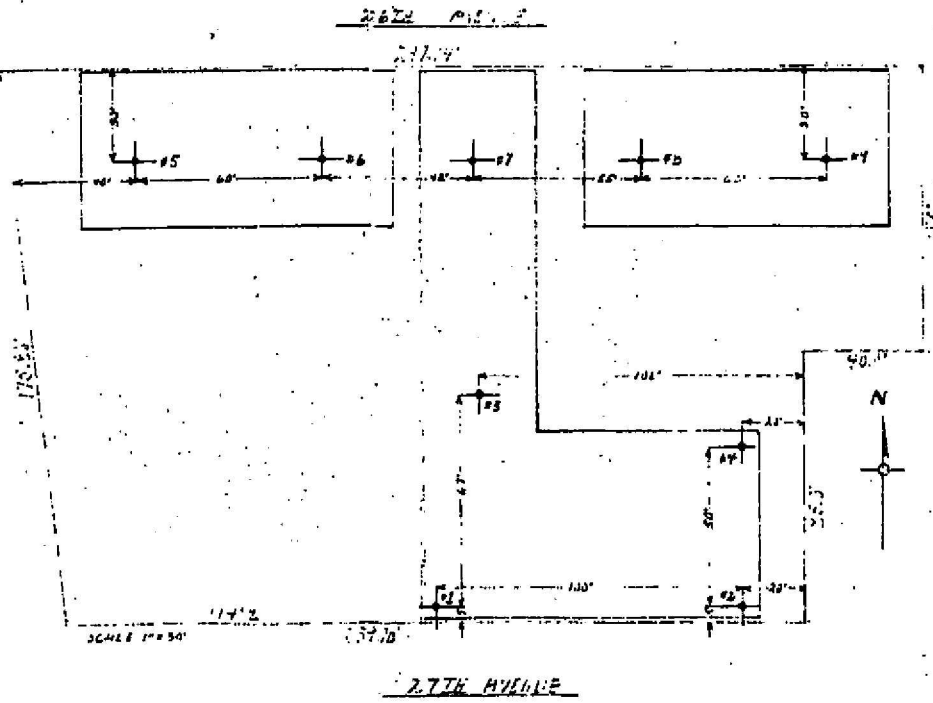


CONTOUR INTERVAL
 NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTIC
 DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEE
 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE
 SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPRO
 THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS AP



BORING ELEVATIONS RELATED TO POINT 'A'

#1	- 7.4
#2	- 4.2
#3	- 2.4
#4	- 4.4
#5	- 2.8
#6	- 1.2
#7	+ .2
#8	+ 1.5
#9	+ 1.2



NOTES
 1: 20" DIA. 18' FALL DIA. 2 1/2" CASING
 150" DIA. 15" 2" SPACI
 2: SAMPLES = SWEENEY & GRAY CO. INC.
 3: NO WATER ENCOUNTERED
 4: FOREMEN: C. PALM - D. FRISBY
 HELPERS: P. BASS - E. PANZARILE
 5: JOB DATES - JUNE 13-14-15-20-21-22-23
 6: SIEVE ANALYSIS - MED. COMP. COARSE SAND
 10% RETAINED BY #4 SIEVE
 40% #20
 45% #65
 5% #200
 MED. COMP. FINE SAND
 12% RETAINED BY #65 SIEVE
 80% #200
 8% PASSES #250

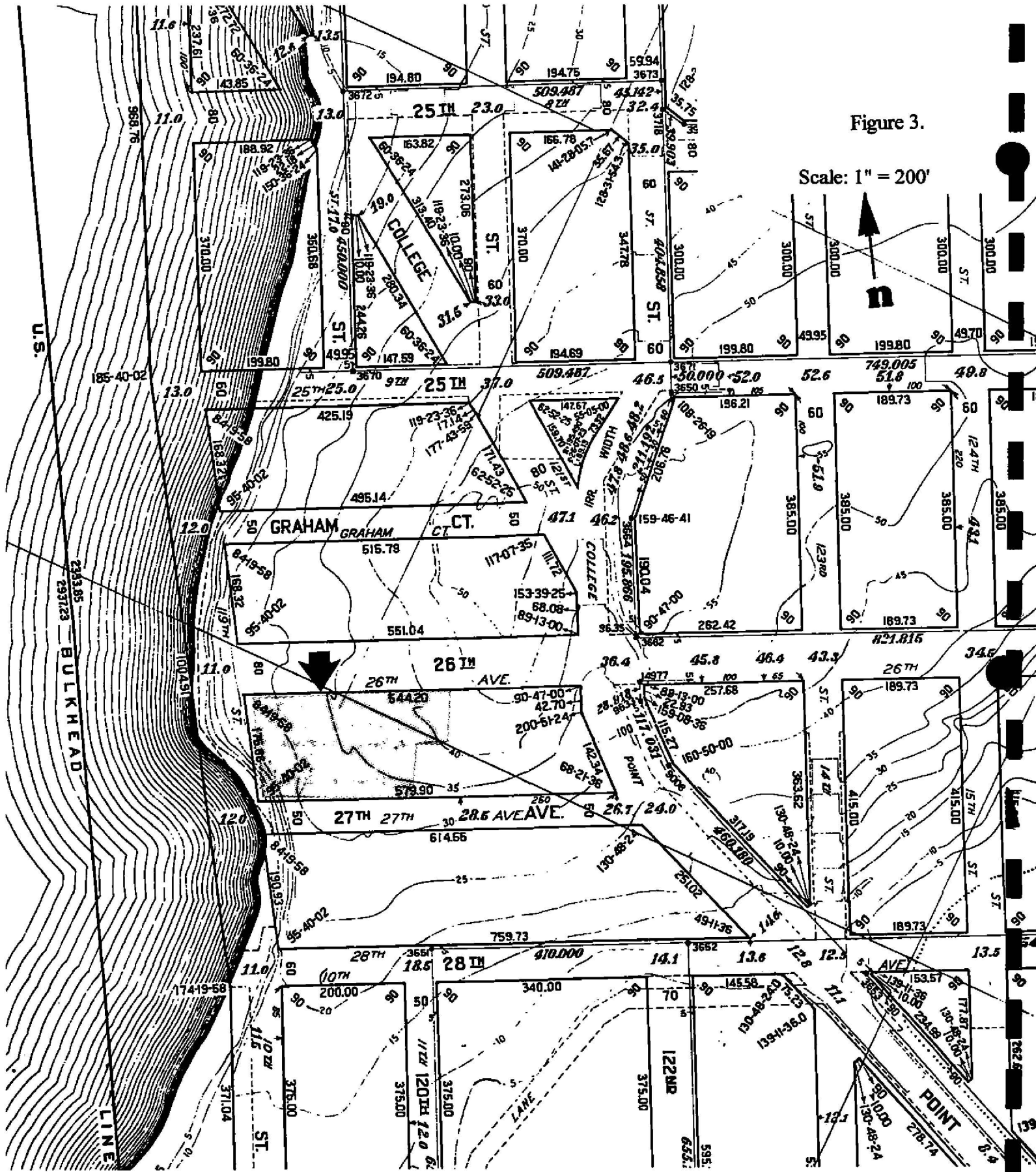
Figure 2.
 1955 Soil Boring Results.
 (Numbers 5 & 6 are under
 1-story building to be
 demolished.)



BORINGS MADE AT: 55 11/2TH ST. BETWEEN 2ND
 AVE & 27TH AVE. COLLEGE POINT, N.Y.
 FOR: JERALD SCHWARTZ
 504 WEST 38TH STREET, N.Y. CITY
 ARCH'T. TURANO-GARDNER ASSOC'S.
 35 WEST 53RD ST. N.Y. 19, N.Y.
 BORING SWEENEY & GRAY CO., Inc.
 CONT'R. 5-43 - 48th AVENUE
 LONG ISLAND CITY, N. Y.

Figure 3.

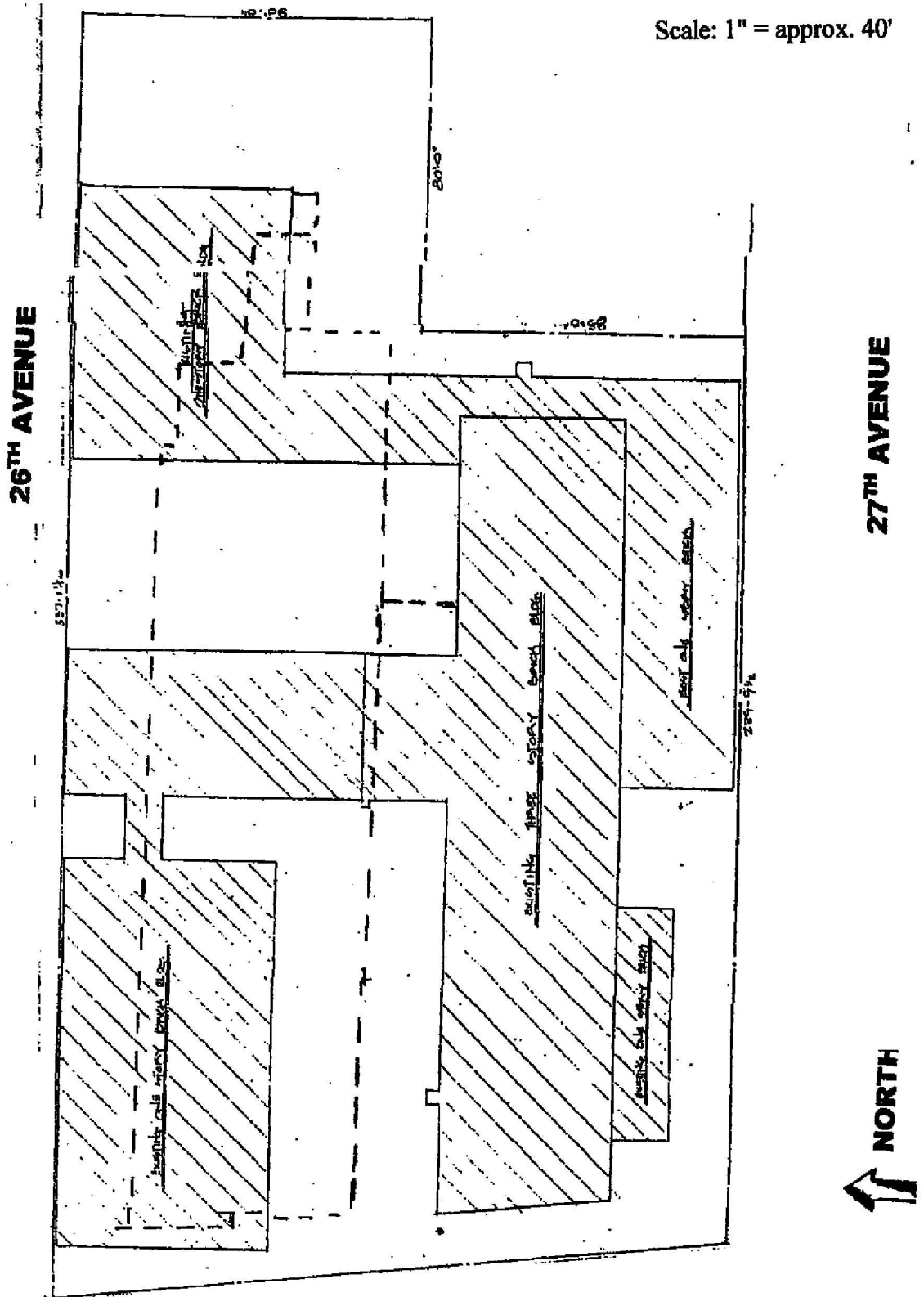
Scale: 1" = 200'



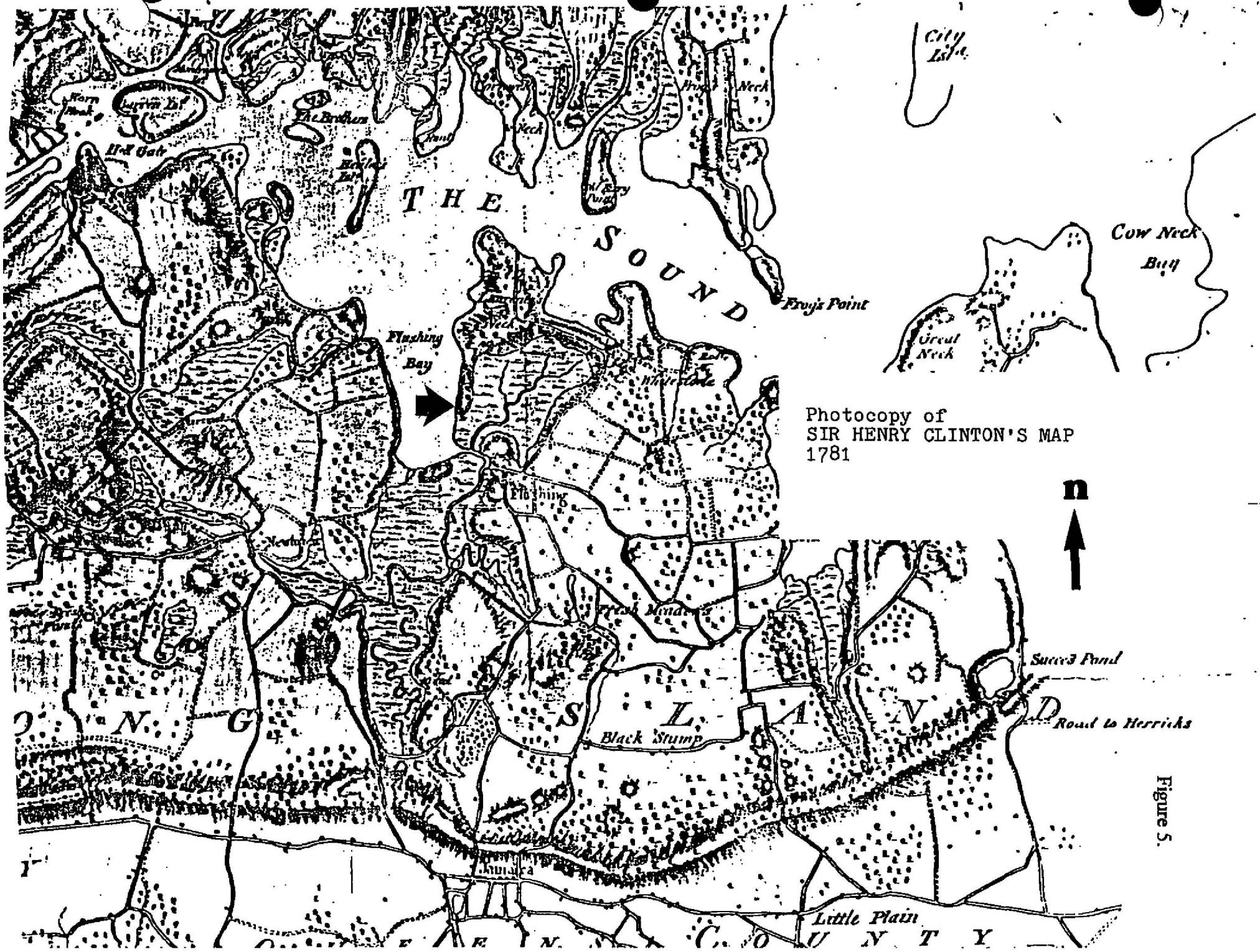
1916 Powell Map (Courtesy Topographical Bureau, Queens Borough President's Office)

Figure 4.

Scale: 1" = approx. 40'



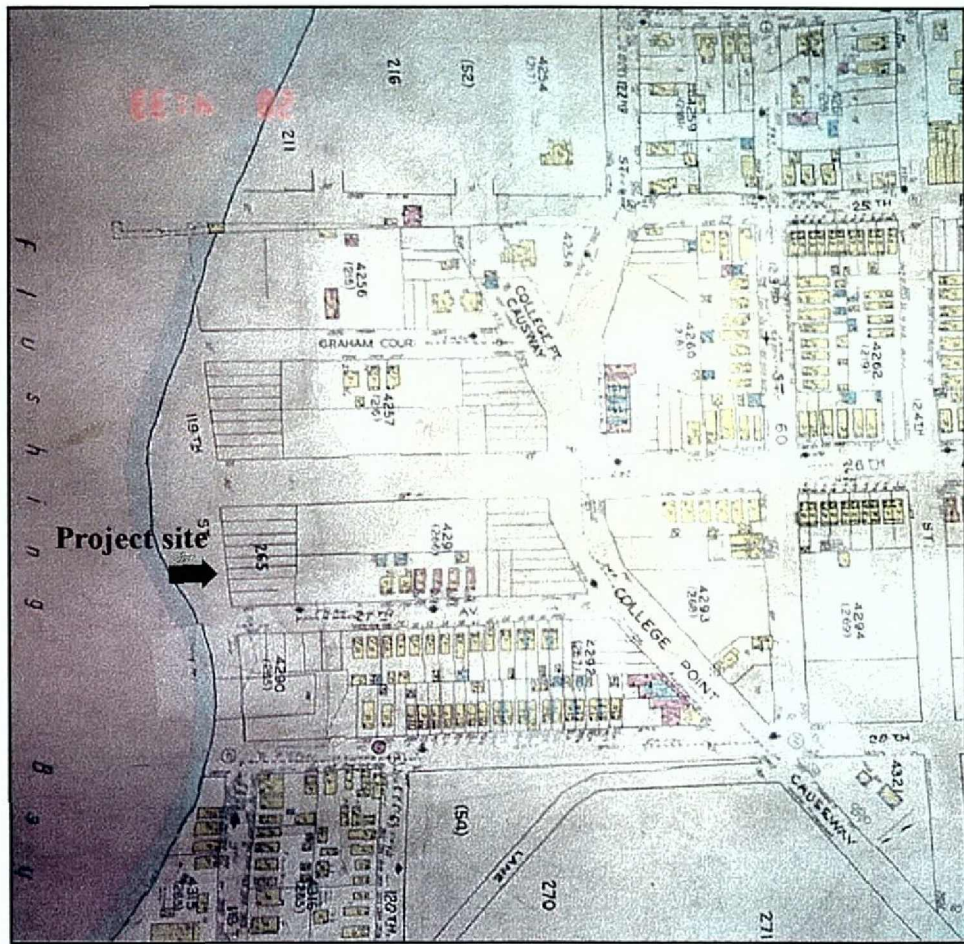
Outline of New Structure Superimposed on Existing Building (courtesy of Wall & Associates)



Photocopy of
SIR HENRY CLINTON'S MAP
1781

Figure 5.

Figure 7.

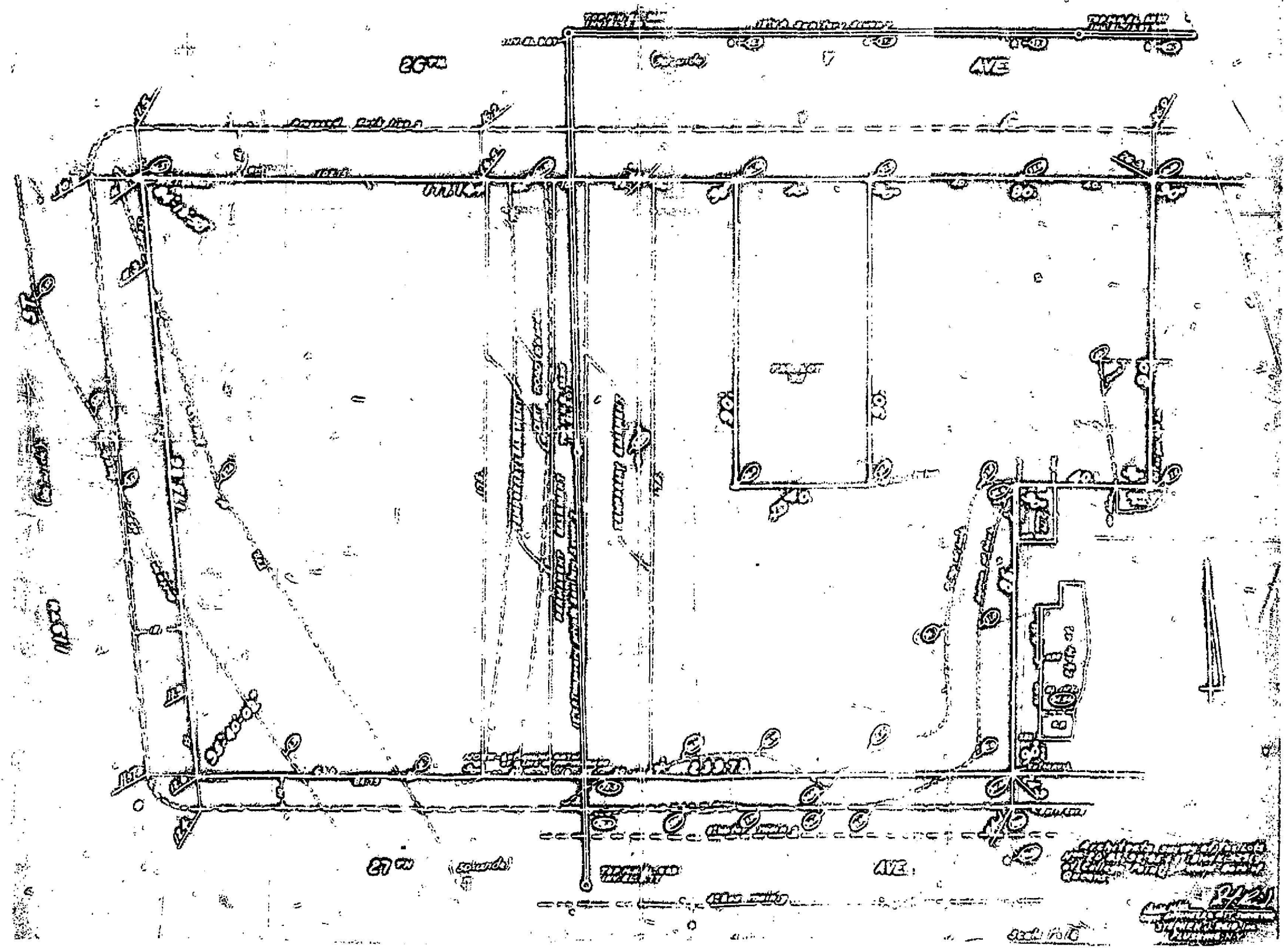


Sanborn Insurance Map, 1916 updated to 1942

Project site is undeveloped. Layers of pasted-on corrections apply to houses on that block and block to south, not to project site.

Figure 8.

NOTE: Figures in map are actual elevations.
Dashed lines are legal grades.



1955 Plot Map Done for
Construction of Original
Nursing Home.

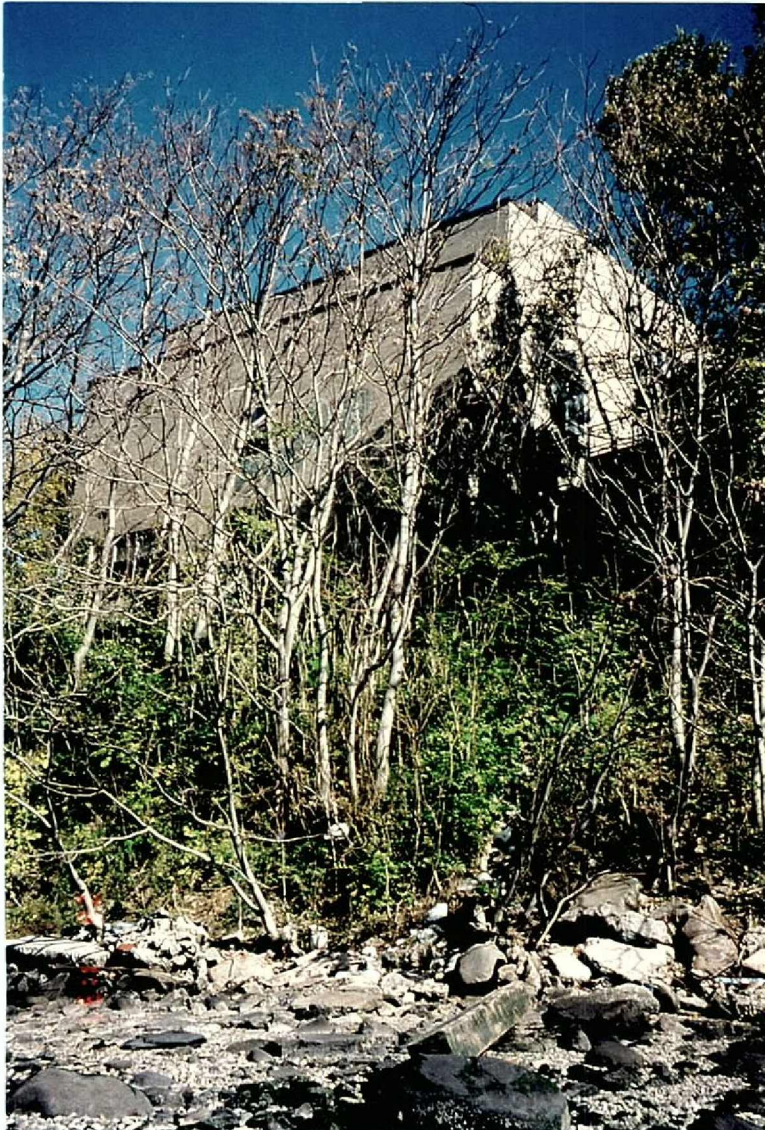
(Courtesy of Allen H.
Feinberg Associates.)

PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph A.

Main Entrance to Waterview
Nursing Care Center (facing
north across 27th Avenue).



Photograph B.

West end of Nursing Care
Center (facing northeast from
the edge of Flushing Bay).



Photograph C. North side of Nursing Care Center. Building in background is to be razed, proposed new building to be set back 20' and cover patio (facing east along 26th Avenue).



Photograph D. North side of Nursing Care Center. Proposed structure to cover one story building, right. Parking area to remain (facing southwest from 26th Avenue).

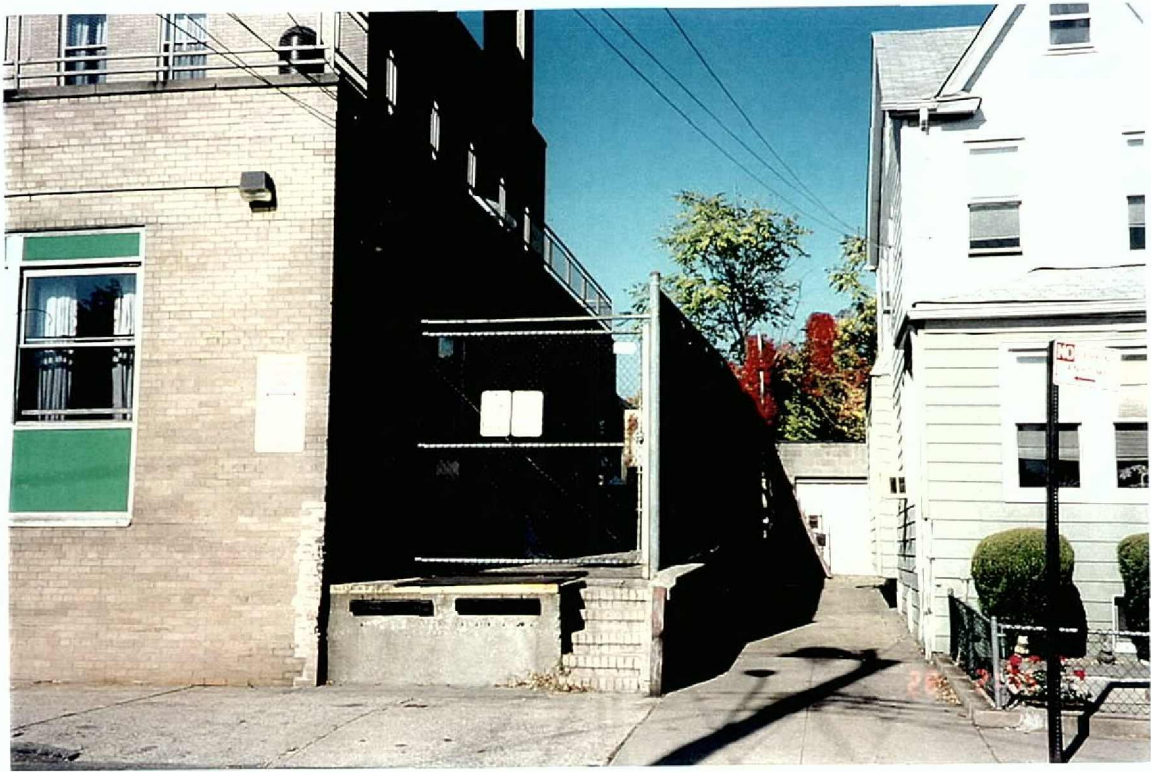
Photograph E.

“Caves” Associated with Estate of Captain John Graham.

(View is probably facing southeast from edge of Flushing Bay across 26th Avenue toward six houses shown on Sanborn 1916-1942 map, Figure 7. Project site is at right of houses)



Caption reads: Near 26th Ave., College Point, are old tunnels used by slave smugglers in the 1830s. Later, abolitionists learned smugglers' techniques and tunnels became part of Underground Railroad. (Courtesy Long Island Division, Queens Borough Public Library.)



Photograph F. Southeast Corner of Nursing Care Center, showing 1955 structure with stories added in 1965, which will remain, and residence on right (facing north from 27th Avenue).



Photograph G. Southwest Corner of Nursing Care Center, constructed c. 1965, and Flushing Bay beyond trees (facing west toward dead end of 27th Avenue).

APPENDIX 1.

Native American Sites in the Area

**KEY TO MAP OF NATIVE AMERICAN SITES
WITHIN ONE MILE OF THE PROJECT SITE**

(See page 9 for more complete descriptions.)

- A. Four habitation sites clustered around the mouth of a creek called "Sackhickneyah," which originated near Newtown, Queens and flowed northwest through Trains Meadow, emptying into Flushing Bay (Grumet 1981:48).
- B. The Grantville Site, Division for Historic Preservation of New York State Parks and Recreation # A081-01-0133, excavated in the 1930s by Solecki. Components included a pre-ceramic phase, as well as Bowman's Brook and Classons Point.
- C. New York State Museum #4542 is a camp site reported by Arthur C. Parker.
- D. New York State Museum # 4540 is a burial site reported by Arthur C. Parker.
- E. The Graham Court site #94, now known as New York State Museum site #719, is only one street north of the project site. Excavated by Carlyle Smith, it was both a village and a burial site, including a dog burial. The whole ceramic vessel with stamping and cord-marking found there dates it to the Woodland Period.
- F. New York State Museum site #4527. Discovered in 1861, it was a prehistoric village site with burials (HPI 1986) found on the E. Platt Stratton Estate while excavating for foundation of Knickerbocker Hall (listed in Parker 1920).
- G. Indian trail approximately following the route of Northern Boulevard.
- H. Wilkins site (see page 9).

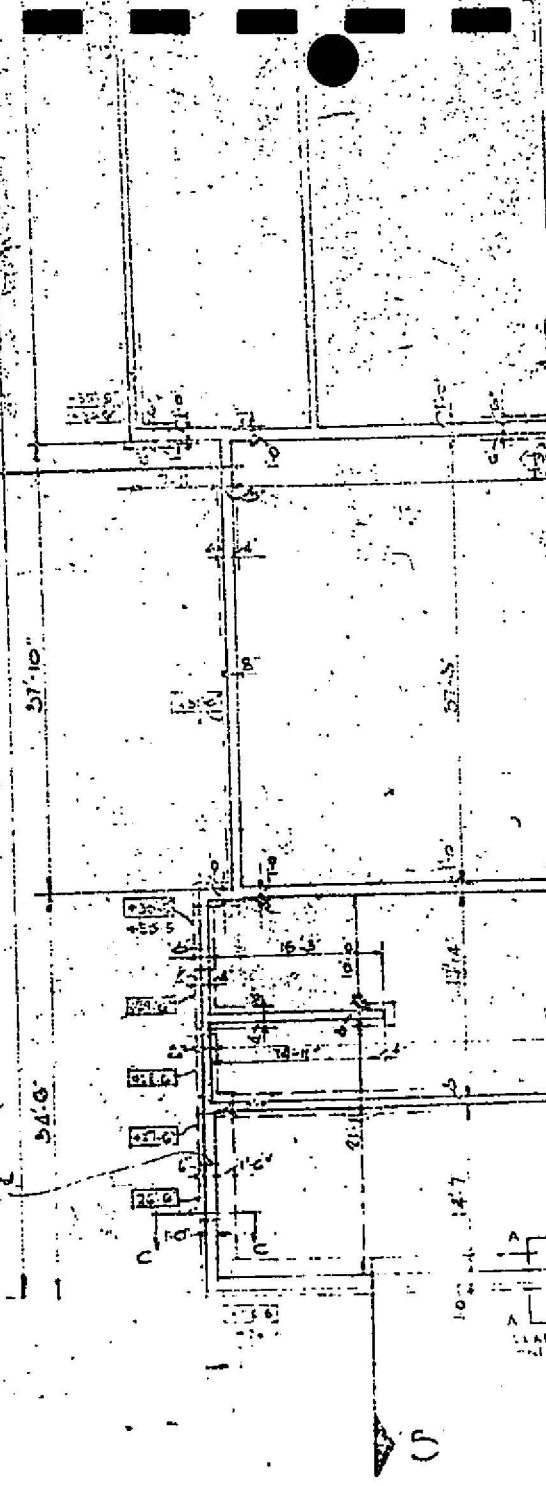
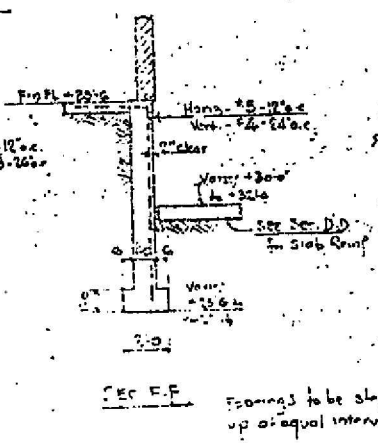
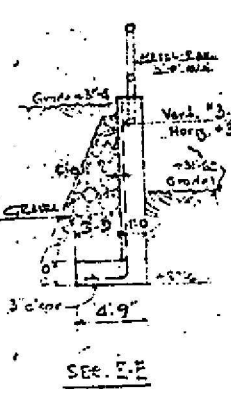
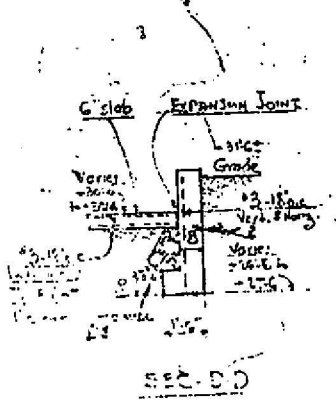
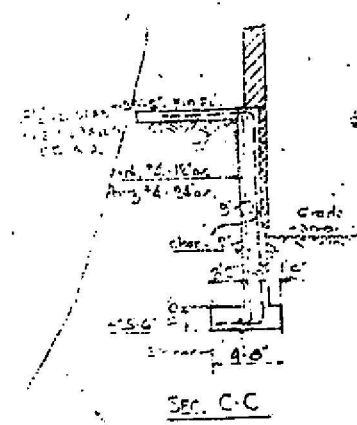
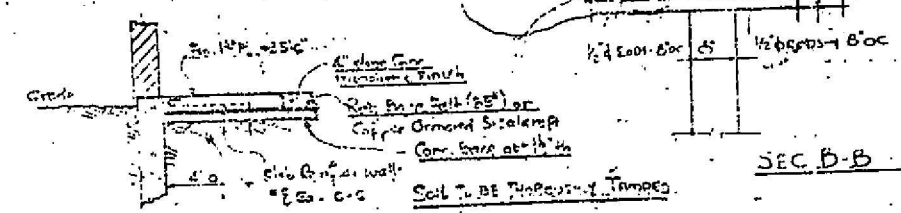
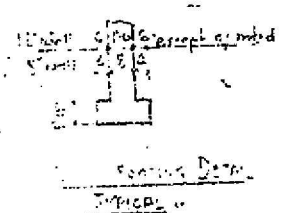
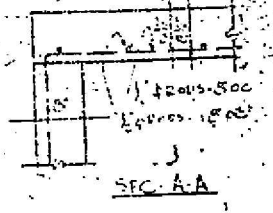
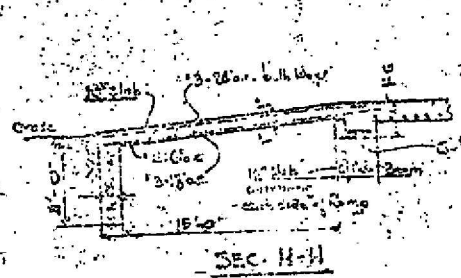
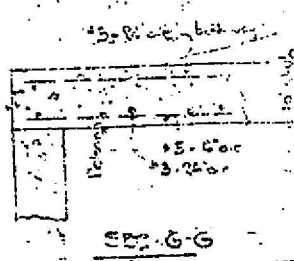
APPENDIX 2.

Construction Plans for Footings

1955

Turano-Gardner, Architects

(Courtesy of Allen H. Feinberg, R.A.)



Footing to be stepped up at equal intervals

