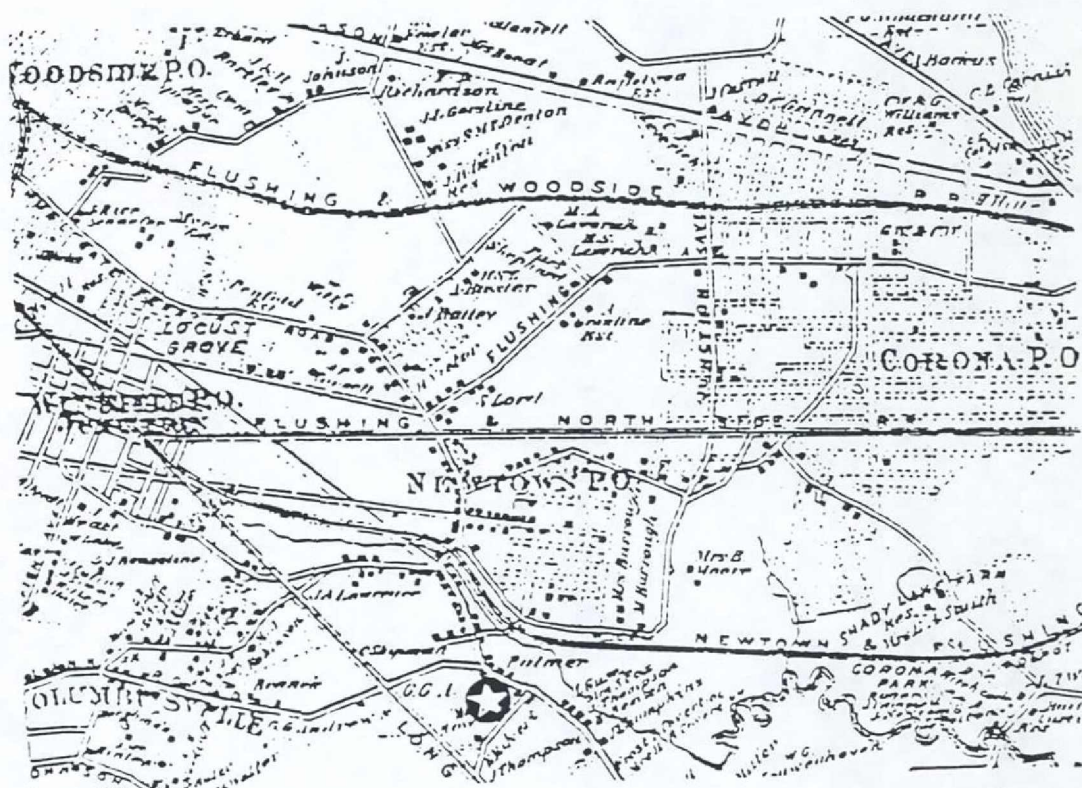


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CEQR

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DOCUMENTARY STUDY  
FOR THE ST. JOHNS QUEENS HOSPITAL  
PROPOSED PARKING GARAGE  
BLOCK 2860, LOTS 16 AND 25  
CEQR PROJECT NUMBER 89167Q



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## INTRODUCTION

This study is designed to fulfill the requirements for an archaeological documentary survey of Block 2860, Lots 16 and 25 in the Elmhurst section of the Borough of Queens, the City of New York. This site was flagged for study as CEQR project number 89167Q because it is situated within the Colonial village of Newtown and therefore has the potential to be a source of significant remains from the historic period. The site is also considered to be a possible place of prehistoric Amerind activity. The development project is a parking garage of five stories with basement which will cover virtually the entire project site.

This study consists of an examination, through maps and texts, of the history of the area of Block 2860 and its surrounding natural topography. In addition, the site was visited on two occasions in order to assess its present condition. The information has been analyzed to determine if additional archaeological testing should or should not be recommended. Such testing will be recommended if the site has the potential of yielding archaeological remains of significance. In the case of Block 2860, such potential has been established and further testing has been recommended.

Research for this study was conducted in the Map Division, the Manuscript Division and the General Research Collections of the New York Public Library, in the Queens Topographic Bureau in Kew Gardens and in the author's personal library. The author acknowledges with appreciation the assistance and sound advice provided by Dr. Joan Geismar, who kindly shared the results of her research on the early history of Queens.



## SITE DESCRIPTION

### Pre-Development Conditions

The site lies approximately five hundred feet to the southwest of the original line of Horse Brook, a generally eastwardly flowing tributary of Flushing Creek, a water course that drained to the north into Flushing Bay and thence into Long Island Sound. Although some early maps indicate a marshy area on either side of the brook (cf. Map 2; Figure 1), these maps show the wetland stopping to the northeast of Block 2860 or on the far side of the modern line of Queens Boulevard.

West and southwest of the site, the ground rose to the irregular hills of Newtown Heights (occasionally termed Nassau Heights), of which, as noted below, some manifestations are still visible today.

### Present Conditions

Site visits were conducted on April 27 and May 4, 1989.

The site is located at the corner of 58th Avenue<sup>1</sup> and Hoffman Drive<sup>2</sup>, across Hoffman Drive from St. Johns Queens Hospital (Figures 2 and 3). The site comprises Lots 25 and 16 of Block 2860 (formerly Block 44 or Block 1723, Lots 50 to 57; see Maps 9 and 10; Figure 4). Currently, there is only one building on the site, a two-story wood frame house that sits in Lot 25 at the northwest corner of the property (5800 or occasionally 5802 Hoffman Drive) (Figure 5). Otherwise, the site has been paved over with asphalt for use as a parking lot.

The borders of the site have been fenced to separate it from the adjacent playground and athletic field to the east, and from the privately owned lot to its south (2817 58th Avenue). Ailanthus trees and weeds grow along this border. With one exception, these are the only significant flora on the site: a mature deciduous tree is situated adjacent to the southwest corner of the house in Lot 25.

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1. 58th Avenue was formerly named Bowne Avenue, less frequently, and probably inaccurately, rendered as Brown Avenue. The road is also occasionally identified as Buskirk Road on some maps.

2. This street was formerly identified by a number of names, including Old Road and Trotting Course Lane.

The house (Figure 5) is an aluminum-sided wood-frame structure, its form suggesting an early twentieth century construction date, which conforms to its appearance on the 1902 Sanborn (Figure 12). The building consists of a two-story, approximately 22 (E-W) by 31 (N-S) foot, main structure with a single story, approximately 12 foot (N-S), extension on its south. This shed-like extension is divided into two portions; on the east its roof slopes down towards the east, while on the west, a smaller segment is flat-roofed and approximately three feet lower than its eastern neighbor. This configuration suggests three phases in the construction of the house: an initial phase when the primary structure was built, a second phase when the southeastern extension was added, and a final phase marked by the construction of the southwestern extension. The extension was in place by 1932 (Figure 13).

There is a basement under the primary section of the house. It extends approximately seven feet below grade. A staircase within the house provides access to the basement. Another stair, leading up from the southwest corner of the basement, has been sealed. Presumably, this stair provided access to the exterior and was closed when the south(western) extension to the house was constructed.



Neighboring houses on the project block and in its vicinity include buildings whose style suggests construction in the years between World Wars I and II. These single-family structures have basements and, in a number of cases, detached garages which are situated at the rears of the lots. Invariably, the building lots are only partially filled by the standing structures. In addition to these "early" buildings, a number of more recently constructed homes are present in the area. There are no conspicuously earlier or historic structures in the immediate vicinity of the project block.

There is only one other surface feature of note within the project area: south of the standing house, there is a gap in the asphalt pavement (Figure 6). This opening in the asphalt extends approximately 25 feet north-south and 10 feet east-west. The opening begins approximately six feet east of the southwest corner of the house. It reveals dark, sooty earth mixed with coal clinkers and pebbles. Approximately twelve feet south of the house, there is an approximately six (E-W) by three (N-S) foot extension to the opening in the asphalt. Three eight-inch diameter circular pilings have been positioned near this extension. Two are sited at the southern corners of the extension; the third is positioned along the western edge of the extension, approximately half way between the extension and the southern side of the house. There are no indications on the site or in the available documentary records to explain the function of the

opening in the asphalt or these pilings.

The area of the site and the land to its south (i.e. in the direction away from Queens Boulevard) was in earlier times identified as Newtown Heights (or Nassau Heights), and one of the hills of the old heights still crests near the vicinity of Seabury and 54th Avenues. The ground on the blocks immediately around the site rises towards the south, and at the nearby intersection of Seabury Avenue and 54th Road there is an approximately three foot drop, marked by a small series of concrete steps from the sidewalk south of the intersection to the avenue. This drop may reflect relatively recent attempts to adjust the formerly uneven terrain to the requirements of modern development. Along 58th Avenue, the ground rises only gradually between Hoffman Drive and Seabury Avenue, and it continues without significant change to Van Horn Avenue, the next block south from Seabury. At that point, it rises abruptly to the elevated roadbed of the Long Island Railroad. There is no way to determine from current surface indications whether this rise is natural or solely a product of the railroad's construction.

The project block itself is relatively level. The minor elevation rise in the ground observed as one moves south from Hoffman Drive is consistent with the change in elevation recorded on the 1909 contour plan in the Queens Topographical Bureau (Map 11). That plan notes an elevation on the northern side of Queens

Boulevard as +15 feet and a slight rise towards and along the project block (+20 feet at Hoffman Drive and +25 feet south of Seabury Avenue). Elevations of the current St. John's Queens Hospital survey of the block show site elevations at the Hoffman Drive side of the development site of +16.1 through +16.8 and a gradual rise of the site to +19.2 though +19.4 at the more southerly end of the project site (Figure 4). The relatively conformity of these elevations, allowing for normal variation in survey and recording techniques, does not indicate substantial landfilling or contour leveling of the site.



## PREHISTORY

Prehistoric occupation in the northeast, including the 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. - to the beginning of historic European 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 found along areas of low, swampy ground or in very high, protected areas (Ritchie 1980:7). 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 (Ritchie 1980:xviif. and map, pp. 4f.).

Paleo-Indian materials have not yet been discovered in Queens. In predicting the location of Paleo-Indian sites, it

must be remembered that the topography of Queens and its surrounding region have changed considerably since the beginning of the Neothermal period. 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 coast (Chesler 1982:20) serves as a reminder that the geography of the New York area has been altered considerably since antiquity, and that microhabitats such as the stream that flowed near to Block 2860 may have been radically different during the earlier periods of prehistory.

Although early atlases indicate the presence of a small stream, Horse Brook, only about 500 feet west of the proposed development site (Maps 1, 2 and 6; Figures 1, 7 and 8), it is thus doubtful that this stream in any detail reflects the Paleo-Indian topography of Queens. Considering the general scarcity of Paleo-Indian remains within New York City, the probability of such remains being present on the site is therefore extremely low.

The Early Archaic was characterized by small hunting camps. According to the Landmarks Preservation Commission's 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 (Baughner et al. 1982:10).

Finds from other portions of the U.S. Northeast indicate 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 (Baugher et al. 1982:10-11; Ritchie 1980:143). Block 2860, situated near a stream and marsh area that is connected by its parent stream to the sea would seem then in theory to have at least some potential for Late Archaic utilization.

Littoral areas and the zones along major inland water ways such as the Hudson are also known to have been settled during Transitional times. 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 (vide. Ritchie 1980:150-178 for the general characteristics and distribution of Transitional remains).

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 sta-



tions, are characteristic. Agriculture was practiced, although this development may date only to the end of the Late Woodland period, following the first contact with Europeans (Ceci 1982:2-36). 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, during the earlier phases of European settlement in the region, high hills near streams, rivers and agricultural fields, and fishing places were favored by the Indians for settlement. This would seem to favor the area of Newtown Heights as a place of Contact Period Amerind utilization.

At the time of European contact and Dutch settlement, Queens was inhabited by Munsee-speaking Delawarean Canarsee who occupied western Long Island and, probably, lower Manhattan. Historically documented Amerind settlements are known at various sites in Queens (c.f. Bolton 1975; Grumet 1981; Geismar 1987:9f.) (Figures 9 and 10), although none are recorded in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development site. This omission becomes more significant since the area of the site was settled by Europeans as early as 1652 and none of the early accounts of the settlement, as well as none of the land purchase treaties with the natives, notes the presence of pre-existing Amerind villages in

the area. It is noteworthy in this context, however, that the hunting grounds on the highlands to the south of the Colonists' village were excluded from the original treaty under which the lands of Newtown were purchased from the natives (White 1917:9). These lands comprise the heights immediately to the south and southwest of the proposed development site, and thus suggest that this was an area of at least some native activity during Contact Period times.

## HISTORIC PERIOD

The district of the proposed development site, called Elmhurst in the current Queens atlases, was known as Newtown from 1665 until the establishment of New York City at the end of the late nineteenth century. In earlier colonial times, it had been identified as Middleburg (1652 to 1663) and Hastings (1663 to 1665).

Although Queens and the area of the proposed development site had witnessed sporadic settlement during the earlier days of the Dutch colonization of New Netherlands (White 1917:9), the first significant establishment of Europeans came in 1642 with the granting by Director Willem Kieft of a patent to an Englishman, the Reverend Francis Doughty, and a group of his English followers (White 1917:9; Riker 1982:16-19; Geismar 1987:12). The Doughty patent granted 13,332 acres to the English settlers, a territory that included virtually all of what would eventually become Newtown.

The majority of the settlers, including their leader, were religious dissidents who had fled south from the more restrictive Puritan New England in order to enjoy the more liberal atmosphere of the Dutch colony. They were thus similar to the English

colonists, led by Lady Deborah Moody, who were to settle in Gravesend in Brooklyn a few years later, and their arrival reflects the deliberate policy of the Dutch in the New Netherlands around the year 1640 to encourage "foreign" settlement within the further reaches of their colony (van der Zee 1978:91f.; Riker 1982:16).

The Doughty group settled at Mespat (also spelled Mespachtes. Maspeth is a modern corruption. White 1917:2), near the head of Newtown Creek and considerably to the west of the proposed development site. The settlement was unfortunately timed; its establishment corresponded to the outbreak of Director Kieft's infamous Indian War, and in 1643, the year after its patent was granted, the settlement was attacked and destroyed, at which time a number of the settlers lost their lives. The survivors, including the Rev. Doughty, fled to the safety of the fortifications at Nieuw Amsterdam where they remained until the war ended in 1645.

Some of the original settlers returned to Mespat within a half year of the cessation of hostilities, but the colony never regained its initial vigor and the subsequent history of Newtown must be written from the perspective of a second English settlement which was established in 1652.

As for the Reverend Doughty, the dissenter who had fled

England in 1637 and subsequently been expelled from Massachusetts and Rhode Island prior to his arrival in New Netherlands, he proved as hard to get along with in Mespat as he had been in his previous homes. Following attempts to exercise dictatorial powers over his fellow colonists in New Netherlands, he antagonized Director Kieft sufficiently that the Director had him fined and briefly jailed in 1647. Doughty then quit Mespat and moved to Flushing where he continued to agitate against the government. In 1648/49, he left New Netherlands for the English Virginias, never to return to the north. An intriguing, if apparently difficult man, Doughty had been the first minister to preach in English on a regular basis within the Nieuw Amsterdam settlement. His daughter, Mary, retained title to his farm at Stephens Point on Flushing Bay after he left the Dutch colony. She had married the Dutch chronicler of New Netherlands, Adriaen van der Donck, in 1645, and the farm eventually passed from Mary and her husband to Thomas Stevenson and thence in 1737 to Abraham Rapelye, whose family retained title to the land into the mid-nineteenth century (White 1917:9; Riker 1982:20-24).

Following the collapse of the Mespat colony, "for years the hum of industry and the marks of civilization were confined to [Queens'] marine borders, while the interior maintained all the grandeur of a wild unbroken wilderness" (Riker 1982:24f.). Then, in 1652, a second group of Englishmen from New England settled in the area midway between the Kill of Mespat and Vlissingen (Flush-

ing), establishing a village centered at the site of the current Presbyterian church in Newtown (northwest of the proposed development site, at 54th Avenue between Queens Boulevard and Seabury Avenue, near the intersection of Queens Boulevard and Broadway). The village was called Middleburg (also Mittelburg, Middelburg, etc.) after a town in Holland that had granted sanctuary to the English religious dissenters before they emigrated to America (White 1917:9; Riker 1982:26).

The English colonists of Middleburg found the Dutch Director Peter Stuyvesant unwilling to reissue Kieft's 1642 patent, and so in order to confirm their claim to their homes, they arranged to purchase the rights to the land from the native inhabitants of western Long Island. A purchase grant dated April 12, 1656 gave the English rights to virtually all of the acreage of the Doughty patent with the exception of the hunting grounds on the heights to the south of the new settlement. Fifty-five Englishmen subscribed to the purchase which Northacker records was accomplished at a rate of one shilling per acre (Northacker 1927:19). Ten years later, on July 9, 1666, a second treaty conveyed the excluded hunting grounds to the English. This treaty was signed for the natives by their sachems Rowrowoseo (or Roewerowestcoe) and Pomwaukondoe (or Pamwakon). Payment for the land purchased under the second agreement was made in two installments: 55 Pounds on July 9 and another 21 Pounds/9 Shillings on July 13th. These purchases were eventually confirmed by the first two Eng-

lish governors of New York, Nicoll and Dongan (White 1917:9; Riker 1982: 41ff.; Geismar 1987:13).

In 1662-1663, after a long period of dissatisfaction with Director Stuyvesant's administration and immediately precipitated by Charles II's charter of Connecticut, which by granting to that colony rights to "islands adjacent" raised the prospect for Middleburg of union with a more sympathetic English colony, Middleburg was renamed Hastings. A declaration of loyalty to King Charles was signed on February 4, 1663 (Onderdonk 1865:5; Riker 1982:52-60). Two years later, following the establishment of English New York, the town added Bowery Bay and what would eventually become Long Island City to its territory. At the same time, it was renamed Newtown, the name it held until its incorporation into New York City in 1898 (White 1917:9). By 1683, the community had grown to include 90 male heads of families, with 1563 acres of occupied land and 100 swine, 464 sheep, 109 horses, 28 colts, 107 oxen, 340 cows and 360 calves (Riker 1982:102).

The next century was marked by quiet growth in the predominantly agricultural community, marred only by a persistent border dispute that smoldered between the English inhabitants of Newtown and their Dutch neighbors in Bushwick/Brooklyn to the south. The dispute was almost certainly intensified because of the ethnic divisions between the two districts, and on at least one occasion Dutch rioters from the south invaded the English territories to

their north. The Queens/Brooklyn border was finally fixed in 1769, ending this unpleasant minor chapter in the region's history (White 1917:11; Riker 1982:115, 139; Geismar 1987:13).

Various incidents are recorded as having taken place in Newtown and in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development site during the Revolutionary War. Soon after the Battle of Long Island, which was fought on August 28, 1776, the British General Sir William Howe made his headquarters in Newtown Village at the "Big House on the Bowery Bay Road" (Figure 11). The house was owned by Samuel Renne, a miller, who served as a Supervisor of Newtown for 23 successive years and who also was a Magistrate and Elder of the Presbyterian Church. The house, which was located at 70-74 Queens Boulevard, near the intersection of Queens Boulevard and 57th Avenue, two short-sided blocks or approximately 500 feet from the proposed development site, had been constructed by Renne in 1762. In 1784, when the house was being offered for sale by Richard Lawrence who had purchased it from Renne, the structure was described as having "eight rooms and fire-places, with an entry on each story, in suitable repair to receive any gentleman" (Onderdonk 1865:7).<sup>3</sup>

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3. The house was demolished in December 1939 by its then owner, D. Hovia, a Cuban tobacco planter, following failed attempts by the Queens borough government to acquire the property for use as a museum. Contemporary newspaper articles suggested that Hovia had decided to have the landmark structure razed in order to eliminate a heavy tax burden (L.I. Star 1939).



Following the Battle of Long Island, the British forces remained in the Newtown area until September 15th, when they began to cross to Manhattan in pursuit of the retreating Continental army. General Howe probably occupied the Big House until that time; it is certain that he was in residence on September 3, 1776 when he prepared his official report of the Battle of Long Island (Riker 1982:191). Howe was personally in command of the 23rd Regiment, The Royal Welsh Fusileers, and the heights behind his residence were occupied by his troops while he was in Newtown. No formal plan of the encampment is known to exist, so it cannot be determined whether the British camp extended to the proposed development site. Riker noted that traces of the British soldiers' huts were still visible in the vicinity of the Big House in the mid-nineteenth century (Riker 1982:191).

About a quarter of a mile from the Big House was another structure of historic significance. Near the modern southwest corner of Queens Boulevard and Grand Avenue stood the so-called "Corner House," built by Jonathan Fish (1680-1723) on the site of the community's earlier Presbyterian church (Northacker 1927:3). Fish, the ancestor of Hamilton Fish, the New York governor, Federal Senator and Secretary of State, was the owner of the land extending to the south and east of the building. Jonathan's son, Samuel, ran the Corner House as a tavern, and in the early eighteenth century it was an institution of major importance to the small Newtown community. It was Samuel Fish who in 1720 sold

the farm adjoining his property on the east to James Renne, a tailor by trade (Note that William O'Gorman attributed the sale to J. Morrell, rather than to Fish. See Appendix.). The Fish and Renne families remained close, and on Christmas eve 1761, James Renne's son, Samuel, and Samuel Fish's daughter, Mary, were married. The Big House that Samuel Renne built in 1762 became the new family's home (L.I. Star 1935). At the time of the Revolutionary War, the Corner House was owned by Abraham Rapelye. Like Renne's Big House, the Corner House was commandeered for use by British officers following the Battle of Long Island, in this case those of General Robertson's command. During the seven years of the British occupation of New York that followed Washington's retreat after his defeat on Long Island, the Big House and the Corner House became the focal points for the social life of Newtown and the surrounding countryside. The residents of the district, or at least those who had not fled the British occupation, were Tories, and the Corner House tavern became the gathering place and banqueting hall for the officers who were stationed in the Corner House and the Big House (White 1917:10; L.I. Star 1935).

During the winter of 1777-1778, a loyalist militia force under the command of General Oliver Delancy was stationed in Newtown. The militia was assigned the task of defending Long Island from concealed rebels, a charge that provided an excuse

for a number of confiscations and other abuses. Several of the officers were Newtown men, and for a time they occupied the huts behind the Big House that had been used by General Howe's forces in 1776. These huts were also used as a hospital for invalid soldiers (Riker 1982:201).

Following their defeat in the war, the British withdrew from Newtown in late 1783. The last troops to leave were Hessian mercenaries (Riker 1982:221). There had been a number of acts of vandalism directed against rebel owned properties during the occupation (including the vandalism of the then standing Presbyterian Church, from which the steeple was sawn off by loyalists fairly early in the war. The church was then turned into a prison. Not long after that it was demolished and timbers from the building were used to make huts for the soldiers behind Renne's place [Riker 1982:198; Northacker 1927:4]). With the British loss, many of the Tories of Newtown prudently decided to resettle in Canada, in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick (Onderdonk 1865:65; White 1917:10).

The community fared well in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. According to the 1790 census, most of the households were sufficiently prosperous to own at least a few slaves, and one household owned as many as thirteen servants at that time (White 1917:11). Samuel and Mary Renne sold the Big House and its adjacent property in 1784/1785, beginning a series

of transfers that continued with relative frequency into the mid-nineteenth century (see Appendix).

Newtown and the borough of Queens in general remained agricultural through the first half of the nineteenth century, and the industrialization of Queens did not begin until after the Civil War. In the early 1870's, the Steinway Piano Company opened factories in western Newtown, in the area today identified as Long Island City, and portions of today's Astoria became virtual company towns for the German-American piano company (Geismar 1987:16). Central Newtown, in the immediate area of the 1652 Middleburg, preserved its dispersed, rural settlement pattern until well into the second half of the nineteenth century, and the town could not be described as approaching true urban density until the years after World War I (see Maps 2 and 5 to 10; Figures 1, 8 and 12).

The specific developmental history of the project site and its surrounding block, Queens Block 2860, is complicated by the fact that the names of the surrounding streets have changed and the exact paths of the streets have been altered a number of times since the village of Newtown was founded. This sometimes makes it difficult to coordinate the data provided by the existing historical maps.

Thus, Queens Boulevard, the main thoroughfare in the area of

the proposed development site, is generally congruent with a pathway that has existed since the earliest days of the Colony. In 1902, however, Queens Boulevard was known as Hoffman Boulevard in the vicinity of the development site, while further to the northwest, beyond its intersection with Grand Avenue, Queens Boulevard was termed Thompson Avenue (cf. Map 9; Figure 12). Only eleven years earlier, the same road was termed Jamaica Road where it passed the proposed development site (Map 7). In 1902, Hoffman Drive, the street running along the north side of the proposed development site, was termed Old Road, while on the 1891 atlas, the road did not exist. This suggests that the course of Hoffman Boulevard/Jamaica Road was straightened to follow its current, Queens Boulevard, path sometime around the turn of the century. If this is correct, then the remains of houses depicted as being situated along the line of the old Colonial period course that eventually grew into Jamaica Road/Hoffman Boulevard/-Queens Boulevard should in fact be found along the line of today's Hoffman Drive rather than along the current line of Queens Boulevard, and thus, if preserved, would be on the development site. Other name changes critical for the history of the proposed development site are the shift in the name of the street that borders Block 2860 to its south, from Washington Avenue to Seabury Avenue, between 1902 and 1932 (Maps 9 and 14; Figure 12), and the renaming of Bowne (occasionally Browne) Place to 58th Avenue between 1909 and 1932 (Maps 10 and 14; Figure 13).

Riker's mid-nineteenth century map (Map 2; Figures 1 and 14) indicates that there were houses along both the north and south sides of Jamaica Road/Hoffman Boulevard at that time. Between Renne's Big House (indicated on the map by the name of its mid-nineteenth century owner, August Bretonniere, and located at the current intersection of Queens Boulevard and 57th Avenue) and the next road to the south (today's Woodhaven Boulevard), Riker notes that there were four houses. The one closest to Woodhaven Boulevard is assigned on the plan to Robt. Mack. In 1722, a Friends Meeting house was established on the corner occupied by Mack's house. The Meeting was moved in 1760 because its location was inconvenient for many of the Friends, who had tended to settle in English Kills to the west (Riker 1982:153, 254f.). The other structures between Mack's and Bretonniere's houses are not identified on Riker's plan. However, Riker does note that one of the houses between Bretonniere's and Mack's was occupied by Anthony Glene, who had served as a drummer in the New York garrison during the time of Governor Nicoll. Glene, who had married the widow of Samuel Sallis, died at age 60 in Newtown in 1691. Glene's eldest son died in 1704, having served as town clerk and as a church warden of the Jamaica parish. Glene's other two sons moved away from Newtown (Riker 1982:110). The spacing on Riker's plan is such that Glene's house or one of the other buildings between Bretonniere's and Mack's could have been situated on the proposed development site.

The 1854 map of the Newtown and North Hempstead Plank Road (Map 4; Figure 15) gives some of the same names that appear on Riker's 1852 map (J. Tompkins, M. Covert, R. Thompson), but other names, including those of Robt. Mack and A. Bretonniere, are not shared by the two maps. The 1854 map does however share two names with Wolverton's 1891 atlas (Map 7), and these names are critical for the history of the proposed development site. West of R. Thompson's holding, the 1854 map notes the Bullock Place, a highway (presumably the road that eventually grew into today's Woodhaven Boulevard), and then the properties of Mr. Abro, Jos. Robinson and E. Plane. Robinson and (F.) Plane are also included on Wolverton's 1891 map. At the time of Wolverton's map, Bowne Place did not extend as far as the line of Jamaica Road/Hoffman Boulevard/etc., but if the line of that roadway is followed to its intersection with the Boulevard, Bowne Place cuts along the property line dividing the Plane and Robinson holdings. Bowne Place eventually became 58th Avenue, the road that runs directly to the west of the proposed development site. Plane's house would thus have been situated to the road's west, and therefore the development site seems to be within the Robinson property as noted on the 1854 and 1891 maps. On the other hand, Bromley's 1909 atlas places the Robinson estate holdings immediately to the east of the proposed development site [Map 10], suggesting that the site was within the Plane property. The 1854 map indicates two residence-sized structures each within the Robinson and Plane holdings; the 1891 map indicates only one building on each prop-

erty. Portions of these structures or their out-buildings or associated features such as cisterns and privies could lie within the proposed development site.

The 1873 atlas prepared by Beers, Comstock and Cline (Map 6; Figure 8) similarly indicates a series of houses situated along Jamaica Road/Hoffman Boulevard/Queens Boulevard, although the map is not sufficiently detailed to provide additional data.

Queens was incorporated into the newly formed City of New York in 1898 and the core area of the village of Newtown became the Second Ward of the new borough.

By 1902, the present arrangement of streets and lots had been established (Map 9; Figure 12) although the current numbering system for the block and lots, as well as the modern names of the streets, had not yet been established. Thus today's Block 2860, Lots 16 and 25, were noted in 1902 as Block 44, Lots 50 to 57, while today's Hoffman Drive was Old Road and Seabury Avenue was Washington Avenue. Five structures were present within the proposed development site: a two story house in Lot 57 (today's 25) at the northwest corner of the site (this is the still-existing structure on the site), a two story stable and a one-story out-building at the southeast corner of the same lot, a one story frame structure along the west side of Lot 54 (more recently Lot 20 and today within Lot 16) and a two story frame structure



similarly positioned in the next lot to the south, Lot 53 (Lot 19, also within today's 16). Piped water had been brought to the area by this time.

Bromley's 1909 atlas (Map 10) records the same five structures, although the out-buildings along the southern side of Lot 57 (25) have a slightly different configuration. The atlas calls today's Hoffman Drive by the name Trotting Course Lane, a name reserved on other maps for the road following the course of the current Long Island Expressway to the south of the proposed development site. The atlas also shows the estate of J. Robinson immediately to the east of the proposed development site, or in the area today occupied by the playground that borders the site to its east.

By 1932, more structures had been built within the site (Map 14; Figure 13). The frame house remains within Lot 25 and the stable to its southeast has been converted into a garage. The second out-building previously located on the southern side of the lot is no longer present. Within today's Lot 16, a designation that subsumes earlier lots numbered 16 to 22, four new buildings have been added: a two story frame house and a detached one story garage are present in Lot 22, a detached one story garage has been added to the east of the house in Lot 20, and a two story brick house has been constructed along the west side of the original Lot 16, along the south side of today's expanded Lot

16.

The configuration of the block remained unchanged through World War II and the immediate post-war years (Map 15; Figure 16). Sometime after 1951 all but one of these structures were demolished and today, all of the structures except the frame house at the northwest corner of the site are gone.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is clear from the review of the historical documentary sources that the proposed development property has the potential for preserving archaeological remains of significance.

Its location near a fresh water source, on or adjacent to known hunting grounds of Contact Period Amerinds, suggests a possibility of native American remains, even though the site is not within a documented native settlement.

More critical, however, is the site's record during the early historic period. General Sir William Howe resided at the Big House on the Bowery Bay Road, two blocks away, following the Battle of Long Island in 1776, and the proposed development site may have fallen within the encampment area of Howe's army. The encampment was occupied throughout the war by British forces, troops of the loyalist militia and Hessian mercenaries. The huts of the encampment were also used as a military hospital. Archaeological remains from this encampment and from this critical period of American history would be of immense historical significance.

In the early nineteenth century, the area was returned to domestic use, and there is some evidence to suggest that private

houses, their out-buildings, and associated features such as cisterns and privies might be preserved within the site's boundaries. Archaeological remains from these structures and features would provide useful data, permitting the development of the early nineteenth century village of Newtown to be compared to parallel developments in rural Brooklyn (where the Christian Duryea house provides contemporaneous collections) and in the urban core areas of Manhattan.

Some houses were constructed on the site in relatively recent times (i.e. the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries), but these buildings cover considerably less than half of the site's surface. Thus, the site would still have the potential of preserving subsurface remains even if all of the known twentieth century structures had full basements. Moreover, it has been observed that there is only a partial basement under the one standing structure on the site, and it is highly unlikely that the twentieth century one story out-buildings (garages and a stable) within the property had subsurface basements. Thus, the presence of these structures in no way precludes the preservation of intact subsurface archaeological deposits.

Furthermore, the project site does not appear to be on land which has been filled or leveled, based on available topographic information, since the present elevations conform to the 1909 topographic plan and a late nineteenth-early twentieth century

house still stands on the site.

In light of the above data, it is recommended that some form of subsurface testing be conducted on the site prior to development. Because the historical data do not make any particular portion of the site more likely than another to hold significant remains (i.e. there is no reason to believe that the British encampment's huts would have been clustered along the road that ran to the site's north, rather than being spread evenly over the available land), a testing strategy will need to be developed that maximizes the subsurface exposure within the site area. Therefore, mechanical trial excavations are recommended.

A single backhoe trench, one excavation "spoon" wide, should be dug along the north-south axis of the property. This trench could be positioned to avoid the known twentieth century structures within the property, with the exception of the small shed/-garage along the south side of Lot 25, which the trench would intersect. This intersection would be deliberate and useful since it would permit an observation of the degree to which the twentieth century out-buildings on the property impacted on the subsurface remains. East-west spurs extending from the main trench in areas where there were no documented twentieth century structures would permit additional subsurface observation. There should be three such spurs in Lot 16 and two more spurs in Lot 25 in order to provide adequate coverage. Figure 17 denotes the

suggested line for the proposed archaeological sampling trench. In the event that the mechanical excavator encountered subsurface archaeological deposits (e.g. walls or other structural features, pits, artifact clusters), mechanical excavation should stop in the immediate area of the find/s in order to permit the significance of the encountered remains to be assessed. A set sample quantity of earth from the backhoe excavations should be sieved to guarantee the recovery of artifacts and related data.

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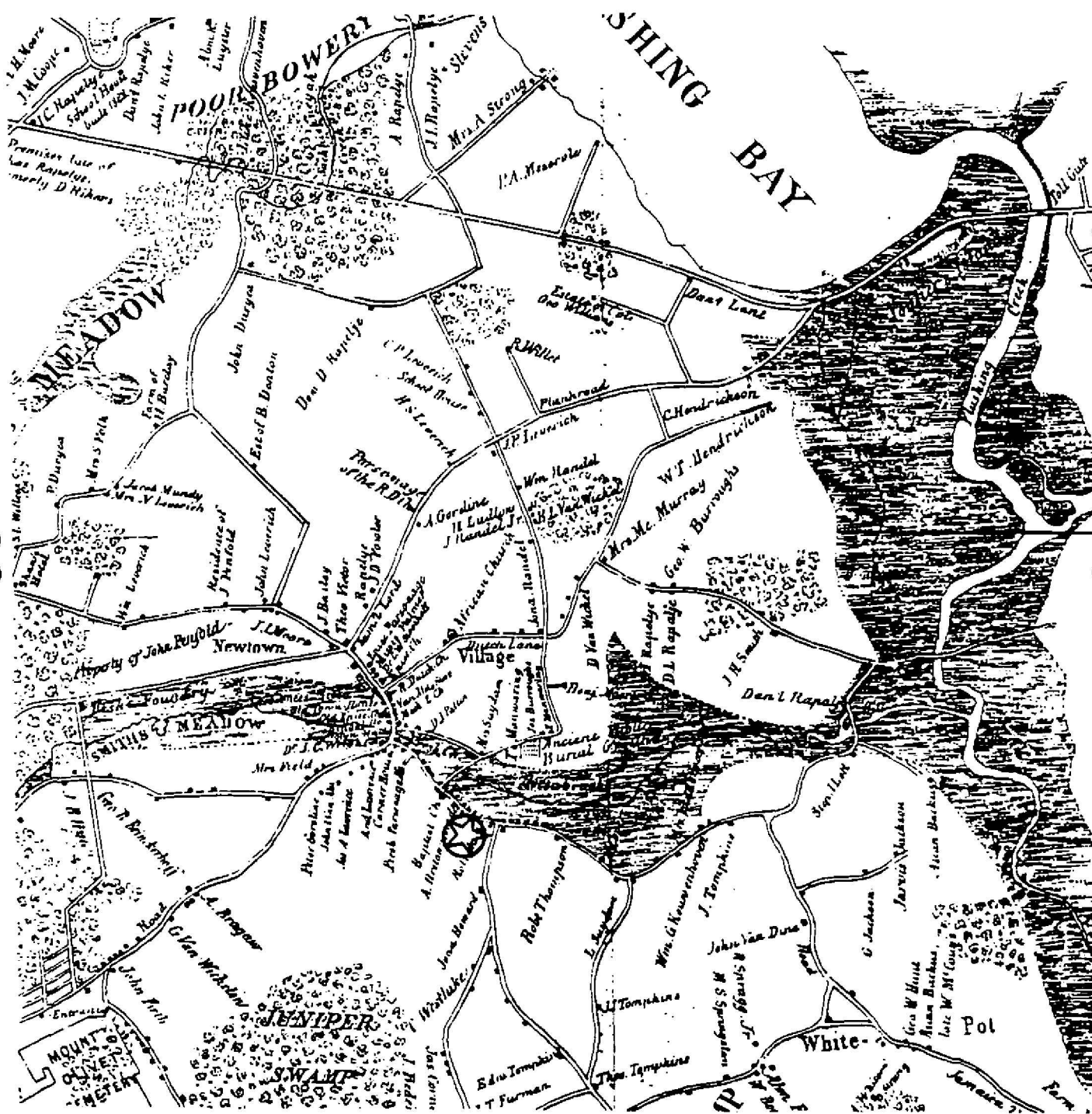
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Figure 1. Map of Newtown, Long Island, 1852 (Map 2).



(star equals approximate location of site)

Figure 2. Current Street Map Showing Site Location.



Figure 3. Current Plan of Site and Immediate Vicinity.

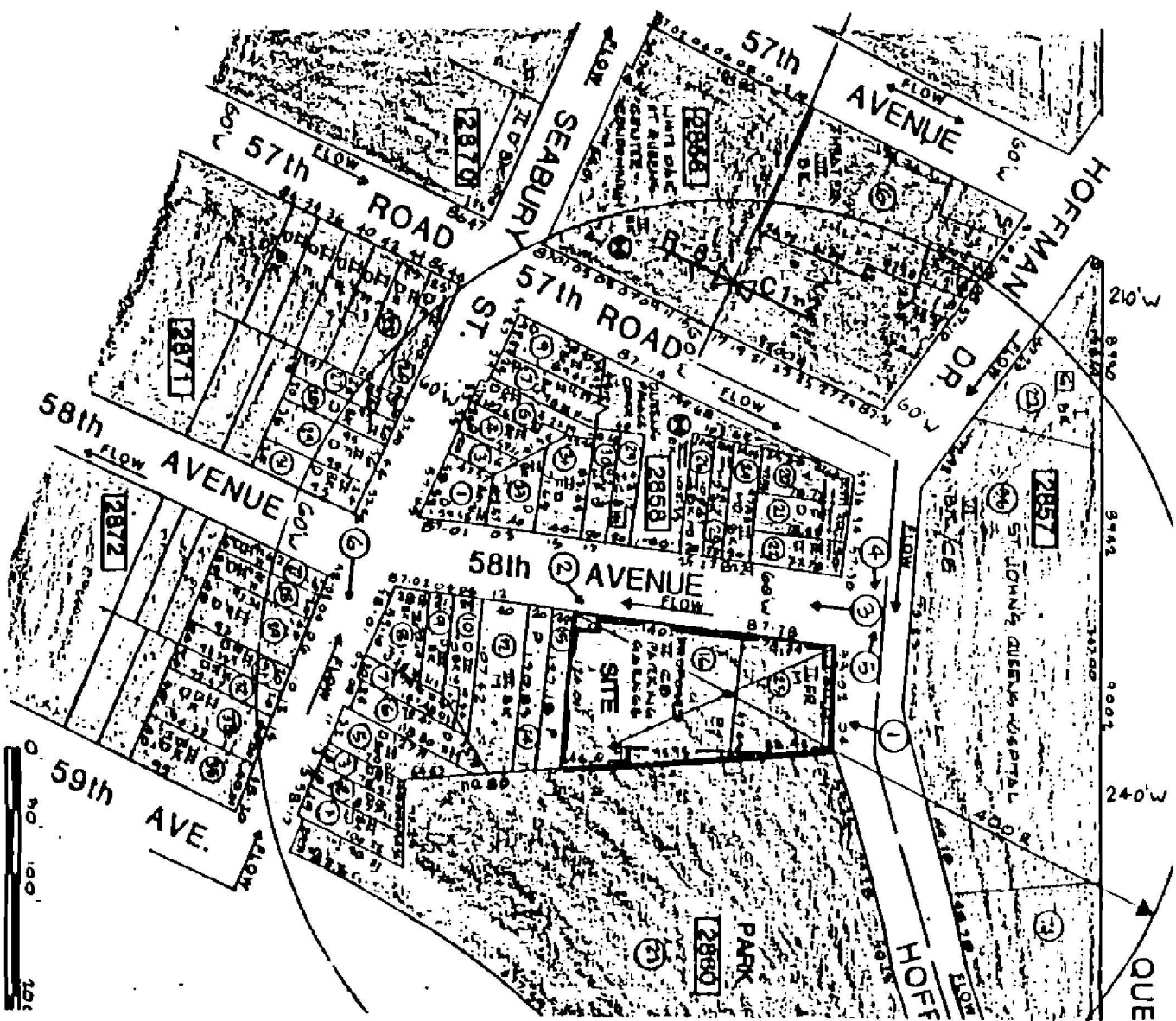


Figure 4. Detailed Plan of Development Site.

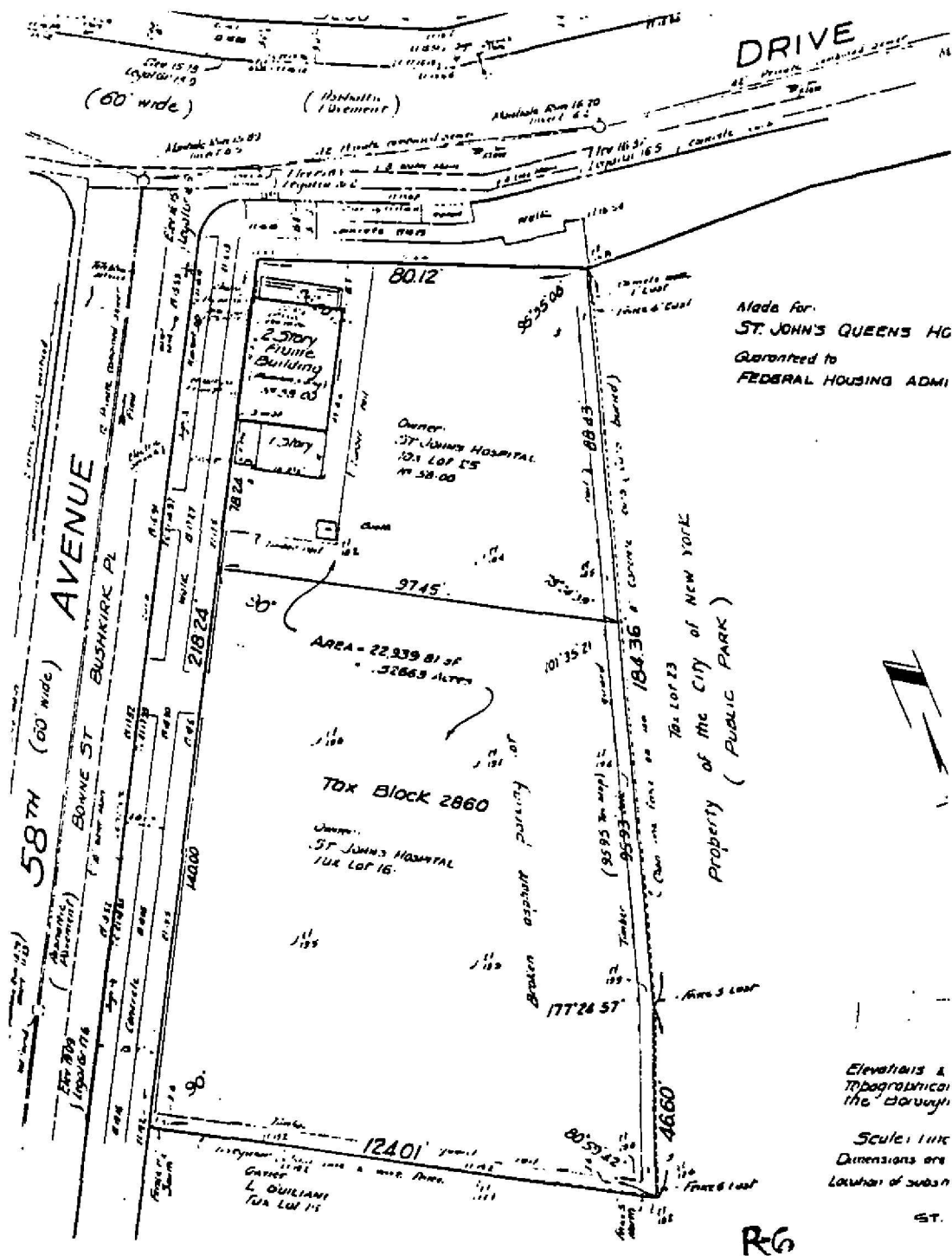




Figure 5A. General View of Development Site from North.



Figure 5B. Frame House in Lot 25, Viewed from Northeast.

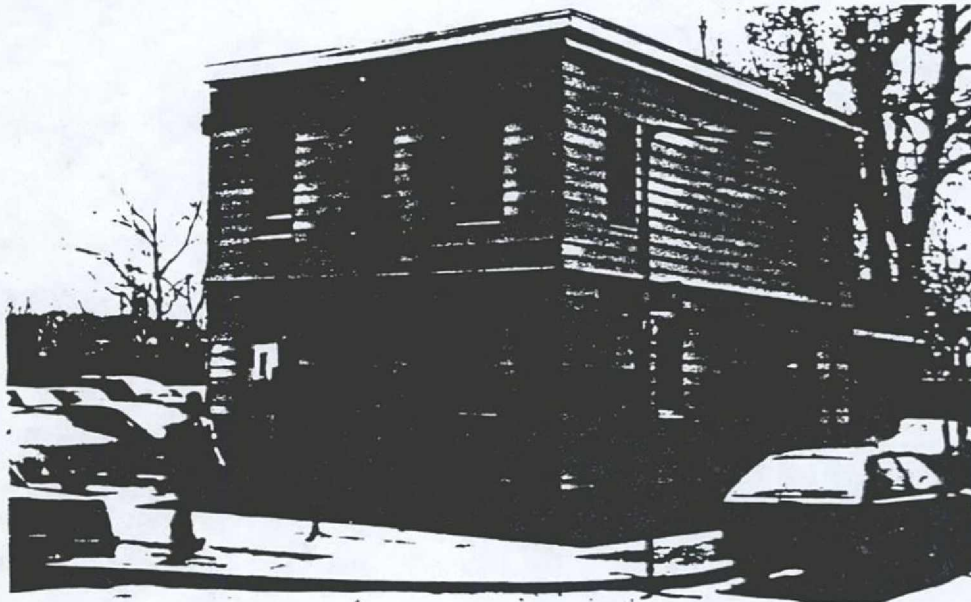


Figure 6. Wood Pilings and Gap in Asphalt at Rear of House,  
Viewed from Southwest.





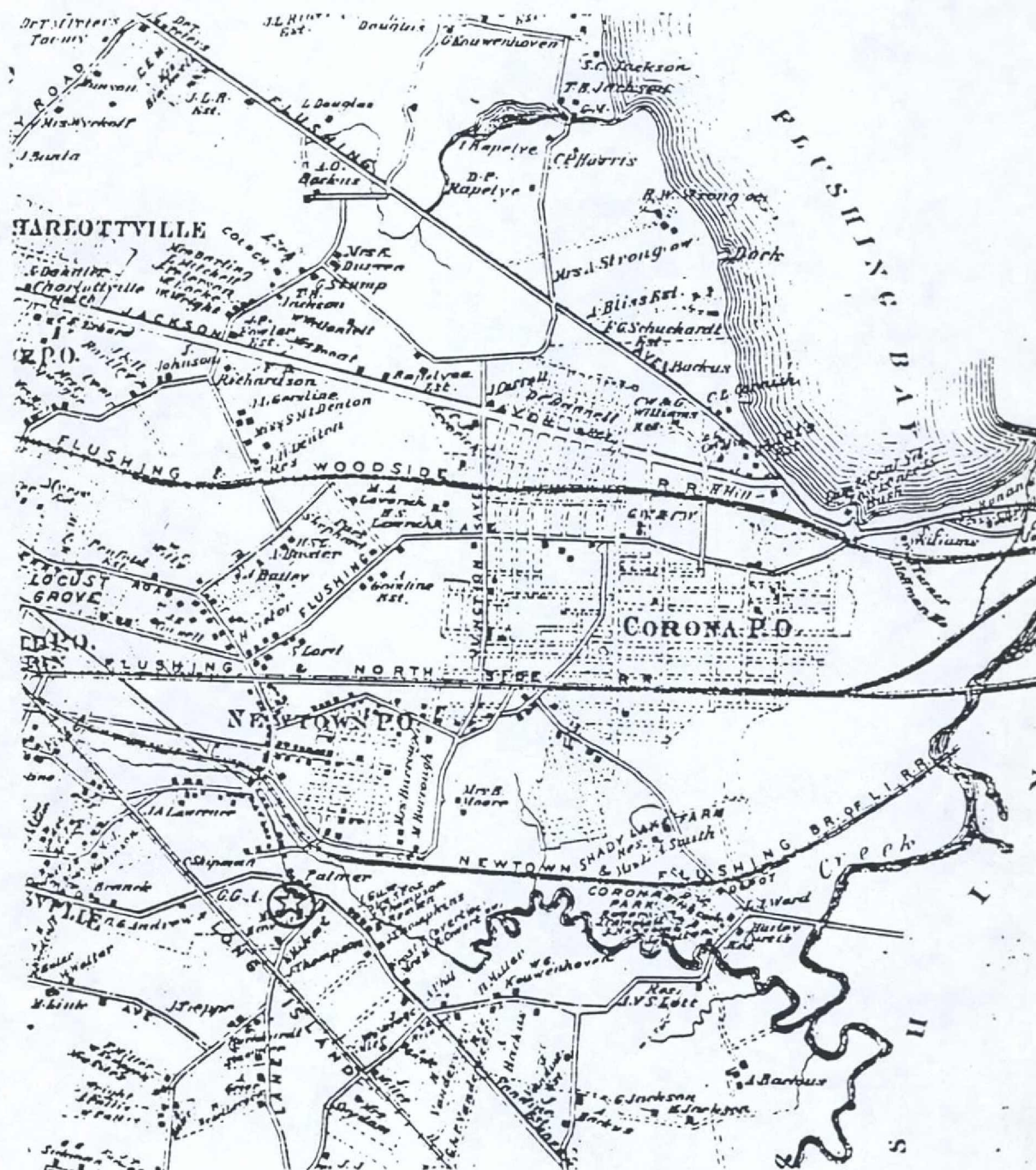
Figure 7. Revolutionary War Map (Map 1).



(star equals approximate location of site)



Figure 8. 1873 Atlas (Map 6).



(star equals approximate location of site)









Figure 11. The Big House on the Bowery Bay Road, L.I. Star 1939.

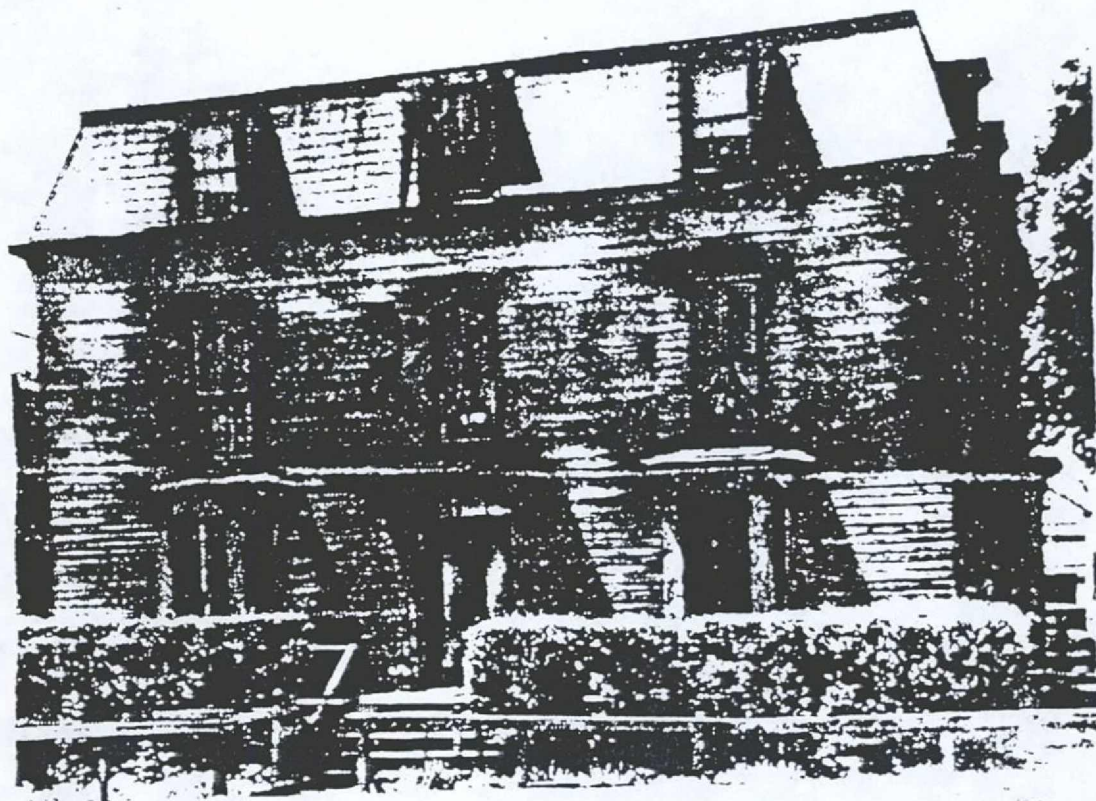


Figure 12. 1902 Atlas (Map 9).

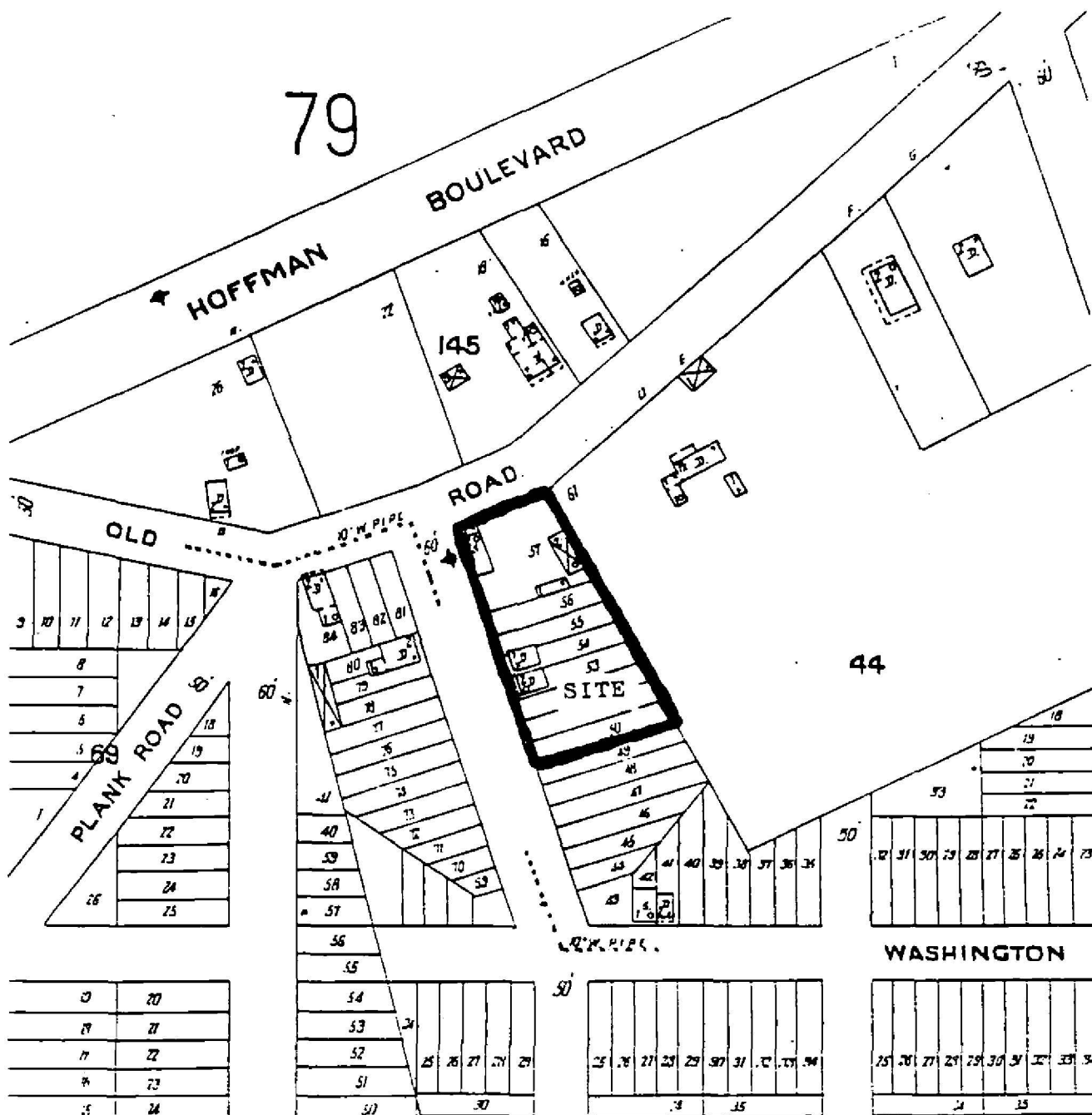
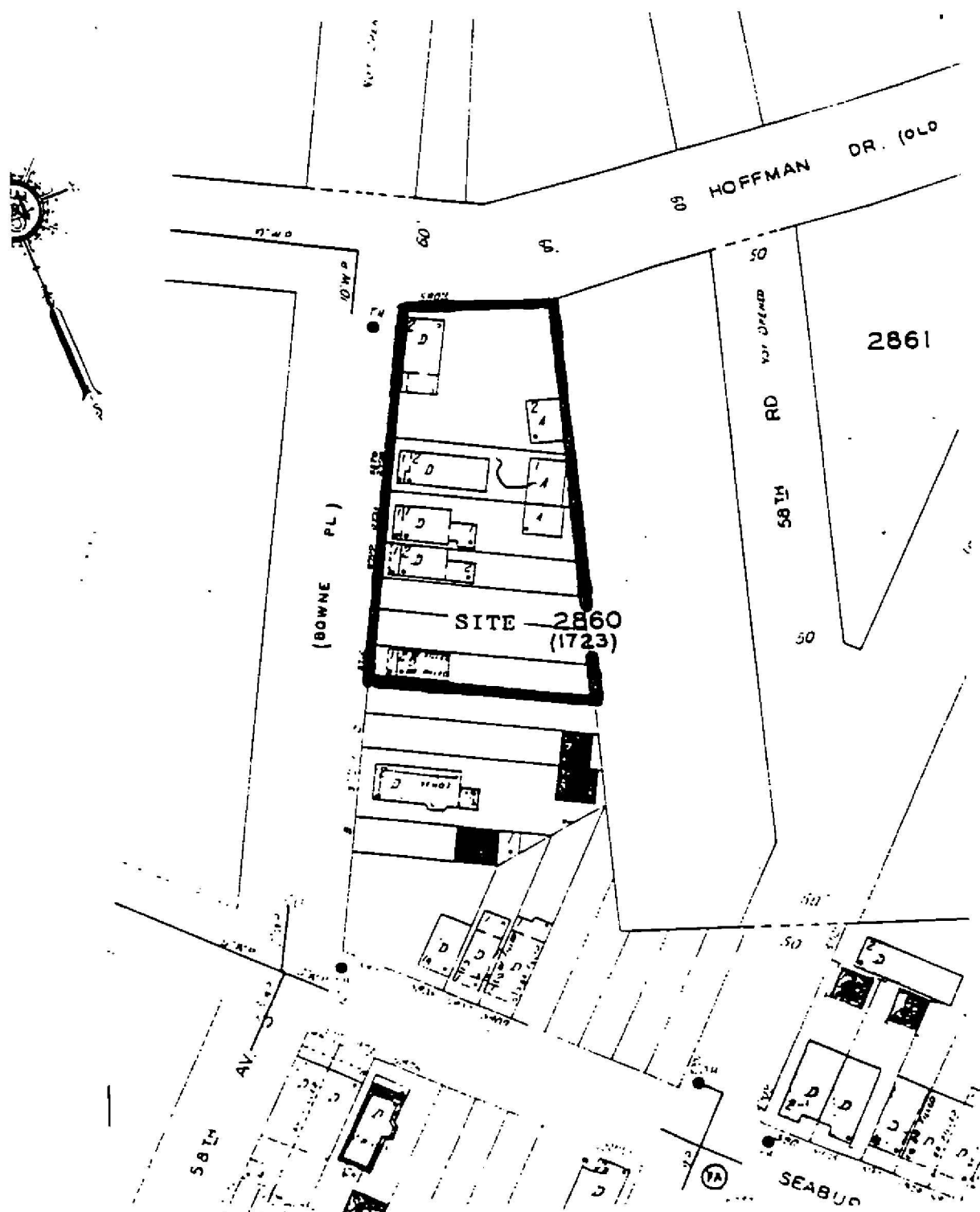


Figure 13. 1932 Atlas (Map 13).







# NEWTOWN & NORTH HEMPSTEAD

Scale of

VILLAGE

## PLANK ROAD

Dated Flushing, June 5<sup>th</sup> 1854

Surveyed by Nelson & Co. 1854

William G. Kowenhoven

J. Tompkins

See Chap. 780 Laws of 1852

Figure 15. Old Road Map 1854 (Map 4).

Figure 16. 1951 Atlas (Map 14).

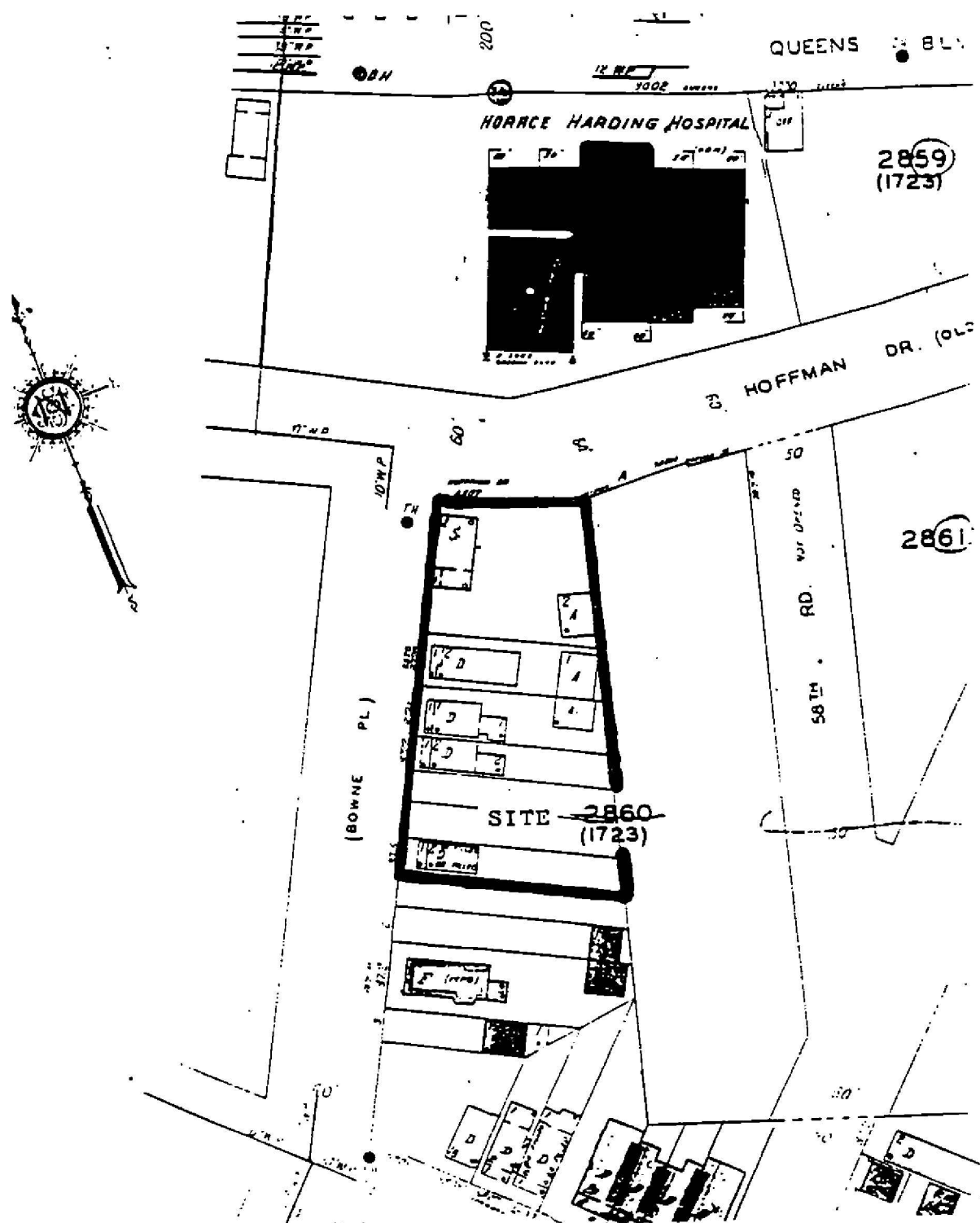
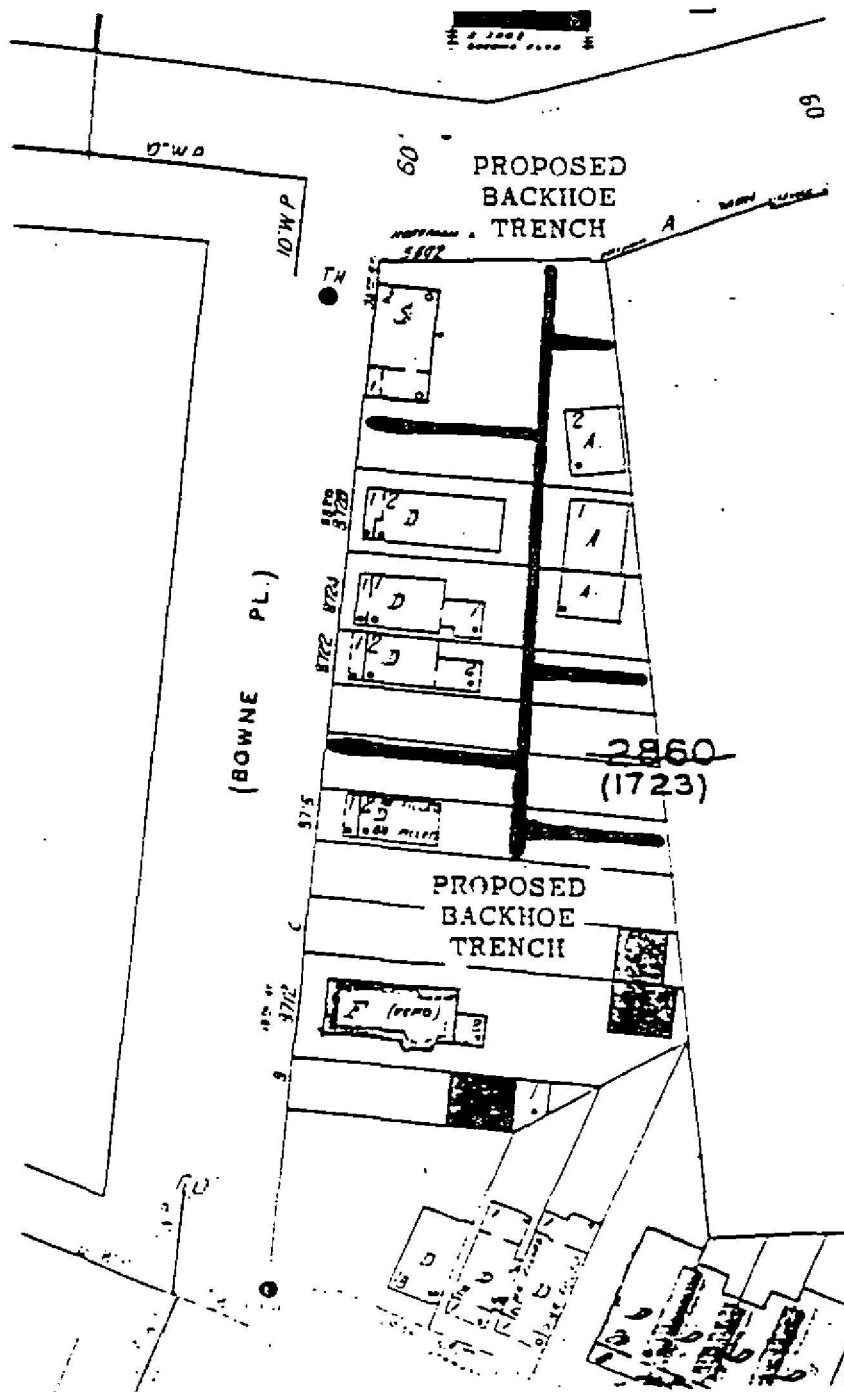


Figure 17. Proposed Location of Backhoe Test.



Appendix: Ownership of the Big House on the Bowery Bay Road

Data filed in Historical File Number 1485, Queens Topographical Bureau, Kew Gardens, NY. Compiled by William O'Gorman.

25 Feb. 1720: 18 acres on "Maine Rode" conveyed from J. Morrell to James Renne, tailor.

17624: Big House constructed by Samuel Renne.

13 July 1784 & 1 March 1784: Samuel and Mary Renne sell to William and Thomas Lawrence 50 acres to east of land of Samuel Fish plus 5 acres of meadow and 9 acres of woodland.

28 December 1784: 64 acres and house with eight rooms and a "large body of pipe clay, suitable for the China factory" available for sale. Owned by Richard Lawrence, formerly owned by Samuel Renne.

24 February 1793 (Liber F-246): J. Hallett sells to William Deone.

1805 (I-148): Estate of Deone sells to John Greenwood.

1807 (K-232): Greenwood to Benjamin Hunt.

n.d. (N-20-24): Hunt to Henry Aldworth.

n.d. (N-191): Mortgage foreclosure: Hunt vs. Aldworth et al. Sold to Mary Stewart.

1819 (Q-513): Stewart to Evan Johnson.

n.d. (U-155): Johnson to Lewis Angerene.

n.d. (BB-401): Angerene to August Bretonniere.

24 September 1853 (110-295): Bretonniere to Wallace Caldwell.

18655: House remodelled.

---

4. Data not included in the O'Gorman compilation.

5. House remodelled by replacement of original French roof with double hip roof. Colonial windows over entrance removed. Data from Historical File Numbers 152 and 1485, not part of the O'Gorman compilation.

18726: House owned by J. Glover, physician.

1873-18917: Big House owned by R. Arnoldi, a harnessmaker. His daughter married an undertaker named Henry Skelton.

December 19398: House razed by owner, D. Hovia.

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6. Date from Historical File Number 1485, not part of the O'Gorman compilation.

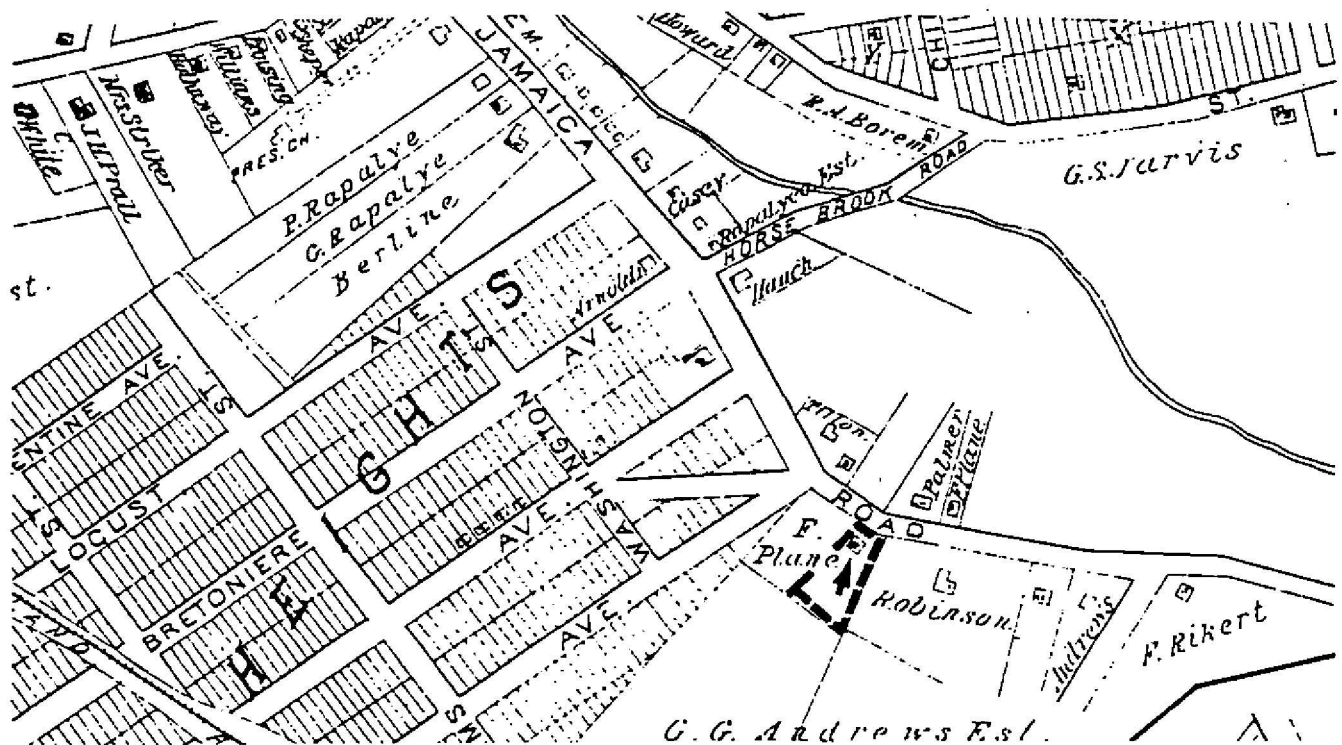
7. Data filed in Historical File 1485, but not part of the O'Gorman compilation.

8. Long Island Star, December 14, 1939. Data not included in the O'Gorman compilation.



# 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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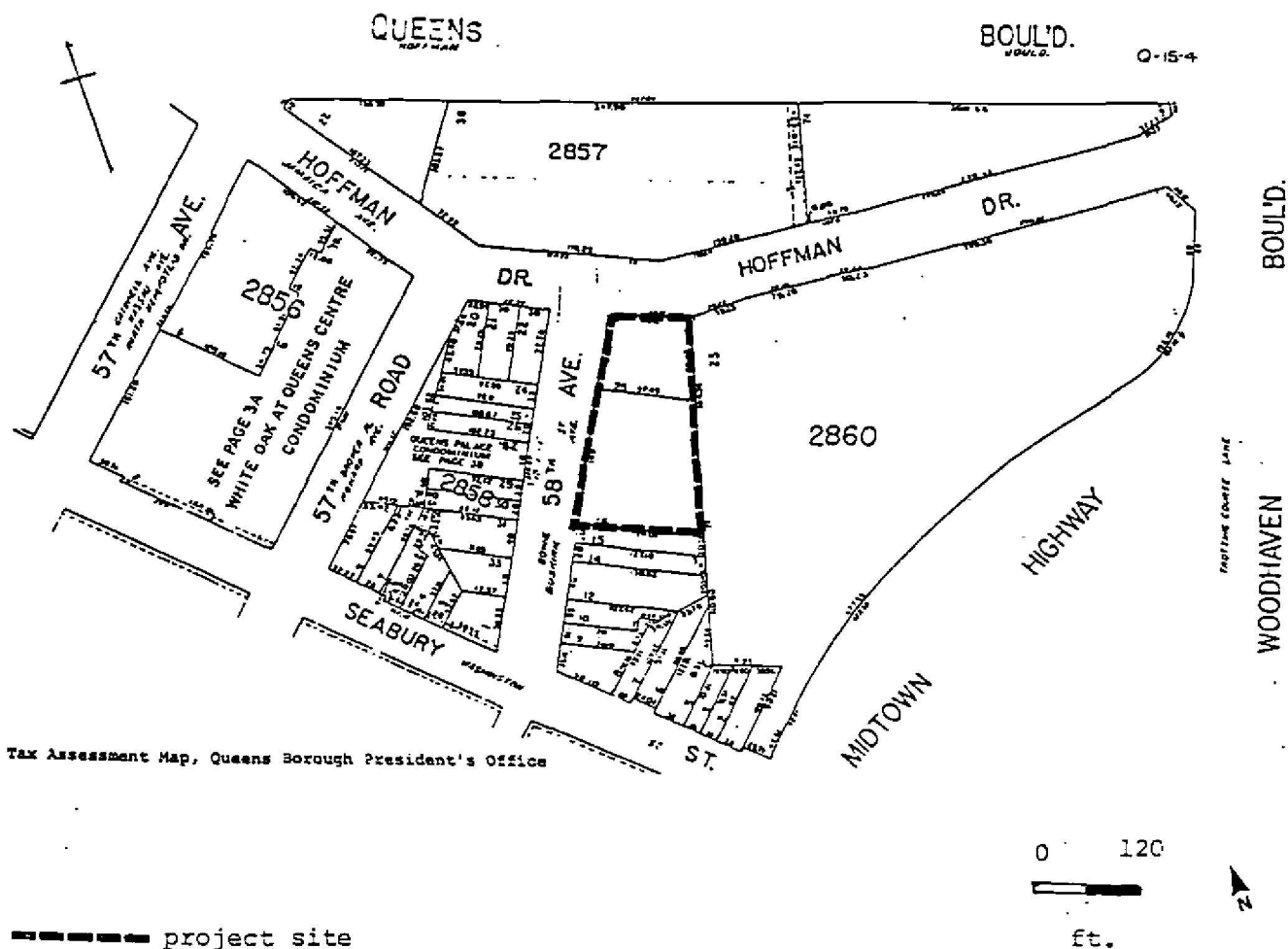
Graphics: J. Geismar & S. Spritzer

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).

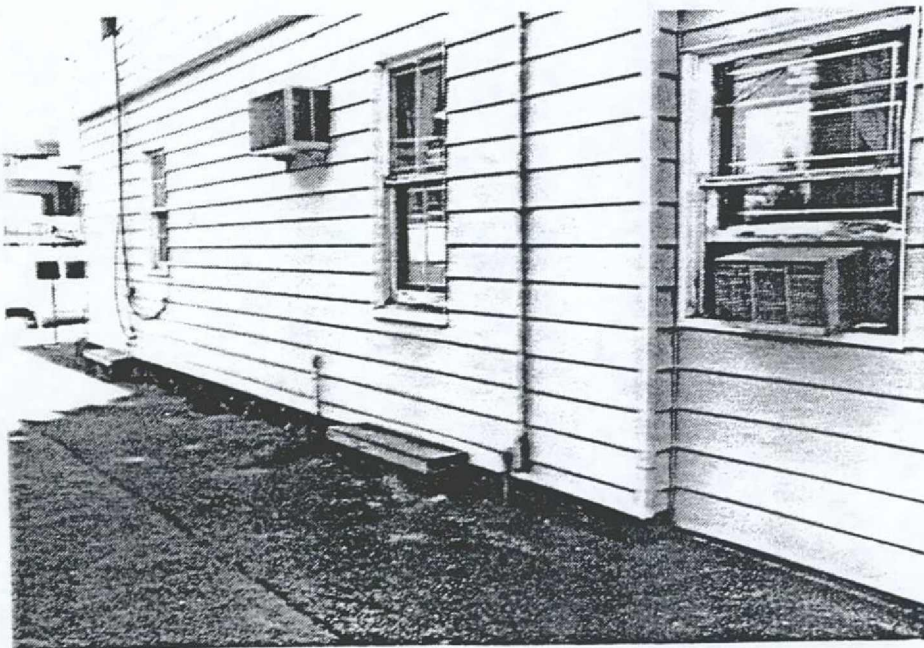
Item 3 of the above-referenced correspondence indicates the need for revision to the documentary study prepared for the site's owner by Key Perspectives, Inc., dated May 15, 1989. Among the concerns raised in Dr. Baugher's comments are the resolution of the issue of field testing on the site and corrections 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.



Tax Assessment Map, Queens Borough President's Office

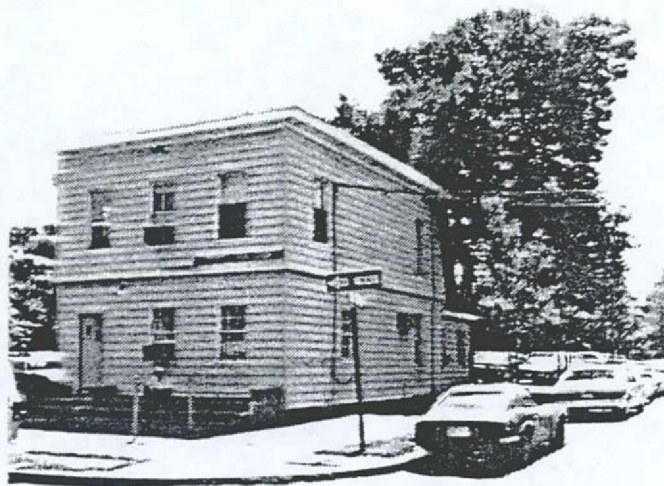


**2** 58-02 Hoffman Dr., formerly a store and two apartments, located on the northwest corner of the project site. Note cars in parking lot surrounding structure on two sides. View from the corner of Hoffman Dr. and 58th Avenue looking south. (Geismar 8/90)

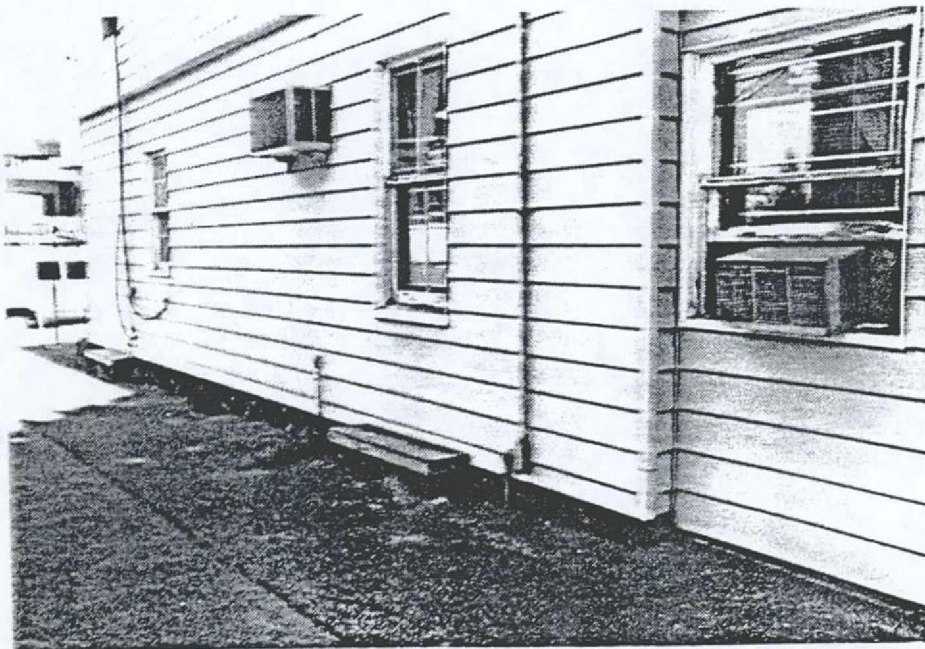


**3** Western side 58-02 Hoffman Dr. Originally of frame construction, the building now has aluminum siding and serves as offices for St. John's Hospital located across Hoffman Dr. View from the corner of Hoffman Dr. and 58th Ave. looking northeast. (Geismar 3/90)





**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 3/90)

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.

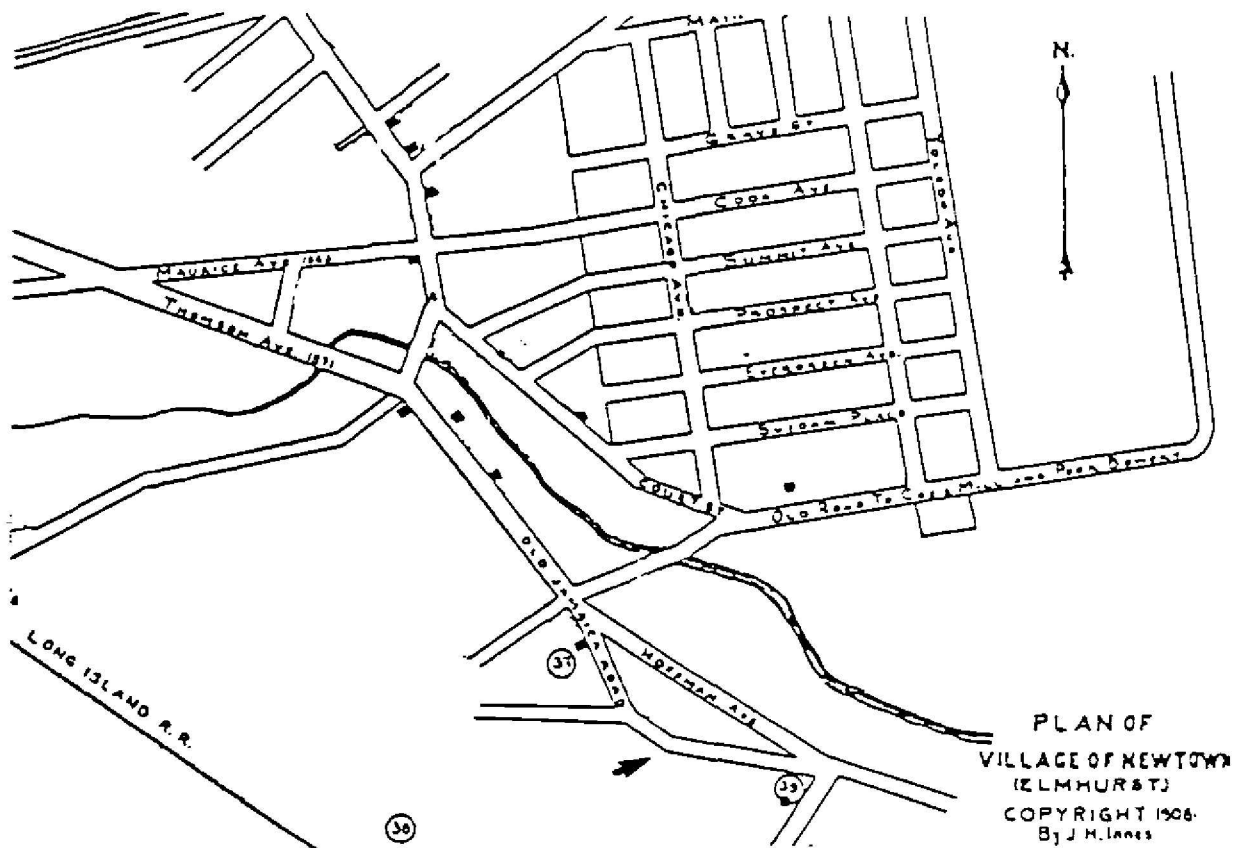
Four major issues are addressed here: how was the site used or developed during the Revolutionary War period; what was its ownership and occupation history, particularly in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries; what topographical or structural changes have occurred on the site; and, 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:



no scale

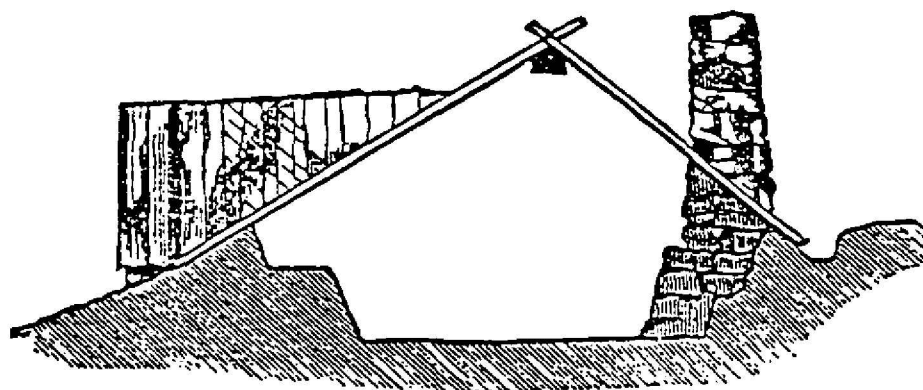
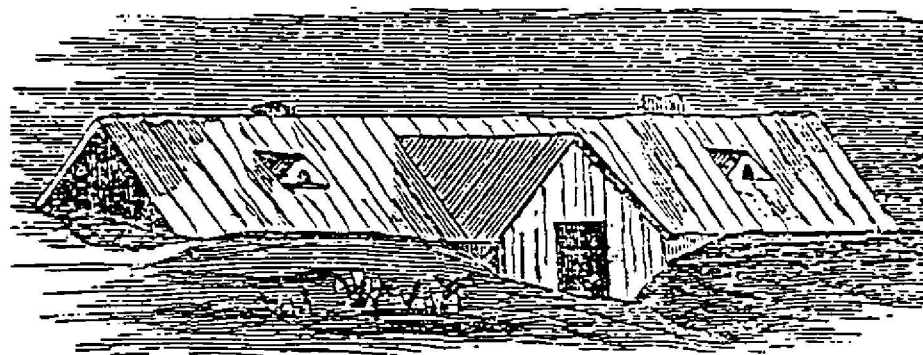
- ③⑦ Samuel Renne (Brettoniere) House
- ③⑧ site of encampment, 23rd Regiment/Royal Welsh Fusiliers
- ③⑨ Quaker Meeting House c. 1722 until 1844; later, Robt. Mack
- ➔ project site area



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 Blackwenn (LIC)	From: Adam & Anna Gardner (LIC) 10 ac.	LD 867:103
5/2/1891	Michael Keppler (LIC)	From: Julius Blackwenn (Blackwenn) for $\pi$ 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 c. 1936-?	John L. Weiss H. Goldman	From: Christian C. Schou; Lots 113-116. From: (?)	LD 2931:302
7/8/1946	Frank Hadala	From: John L. Weiss; Lots 113-116.	LD 5231:328
11/17/1949	Assoc. Medical Properties Inc.	From: Carrie Bailback; 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

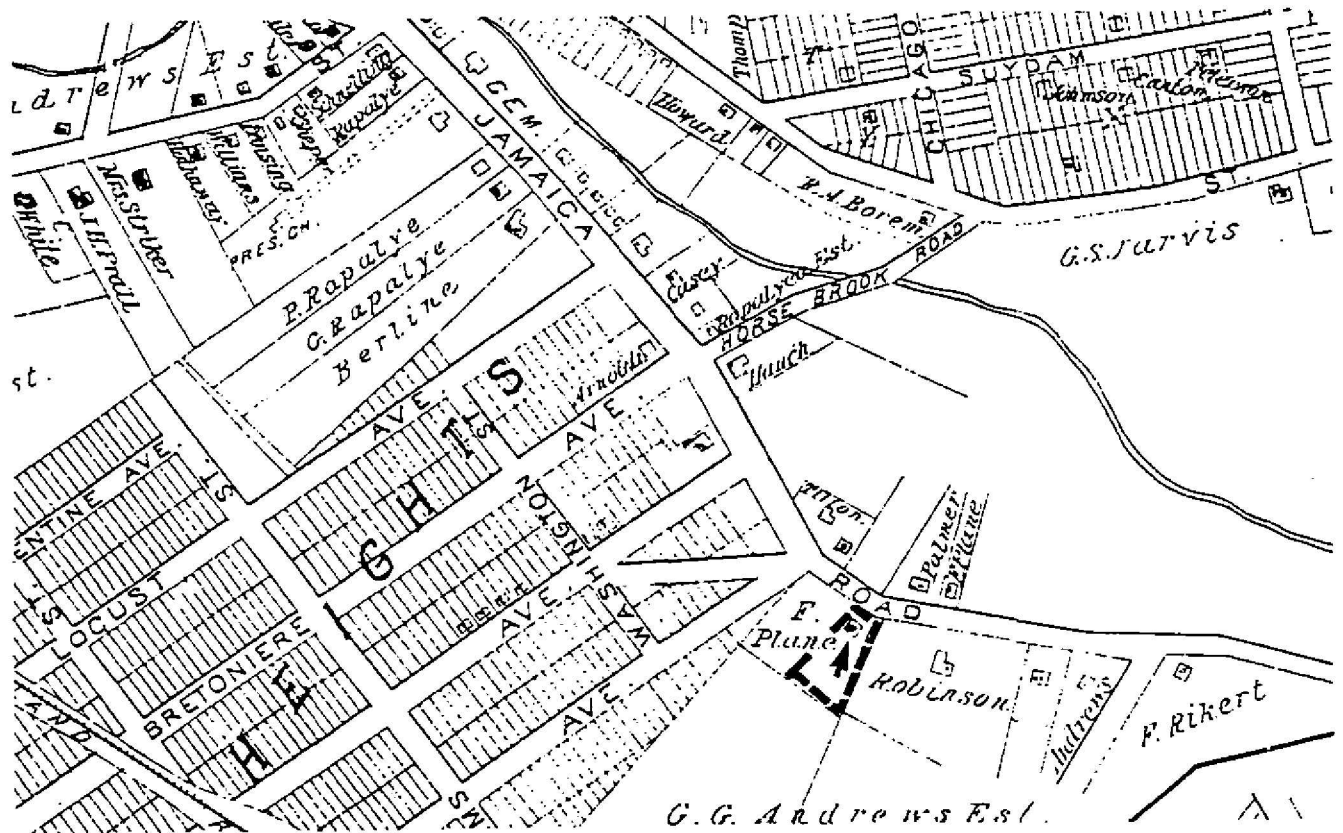
Table 1. ST. JOHN'S GARAGE SITE (58th Avenue and Hoffman Drive, Elmhurst, Queens, New York)--Ownership History

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).



--- project site (approx.)

➔ Plain house south of Old Road (Hoffman Dr.)



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)

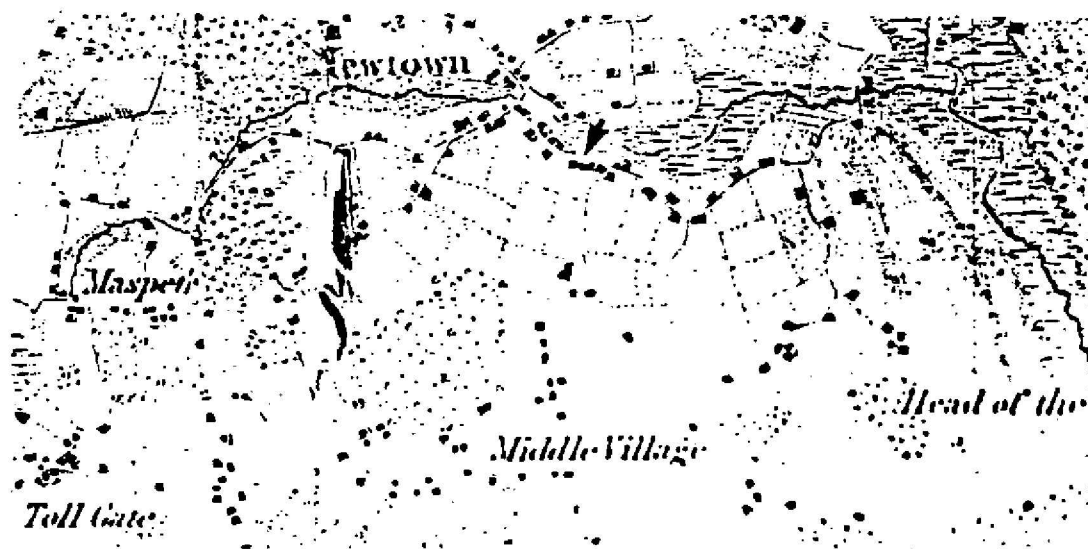


10 Rear of above houses, probably taken from 58th Ave. February, 1924. This view is looking east toward Woodhaven Blvd. The Robinson house is on the left. Note flatness of the terrain which is now a playground just east of the site. (Armbruster Photo, NYPL New York Views 1135:C12)



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



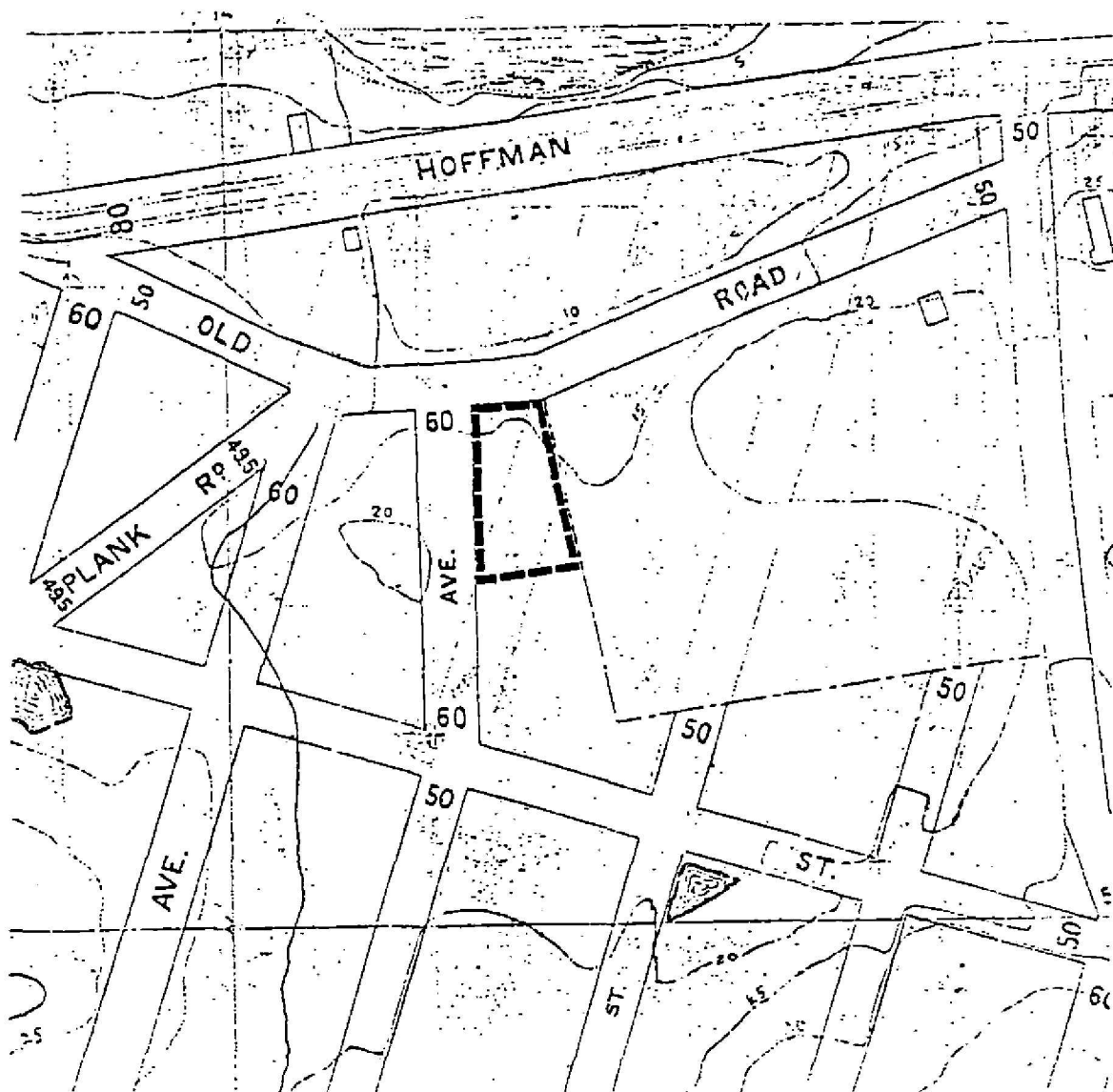
Note: structure to left of site area is the Renne/Brettoniere house at what is now 57th Ave. and Queens Blvd; to the right is the Quaker Meeting house, later the Robert Mack property adjacent to Trotting Course Lane (Woodhaven Blvd).

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.

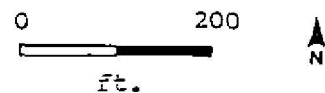
### 3. TOPOGRAPHICAL CHANGES AND CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

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

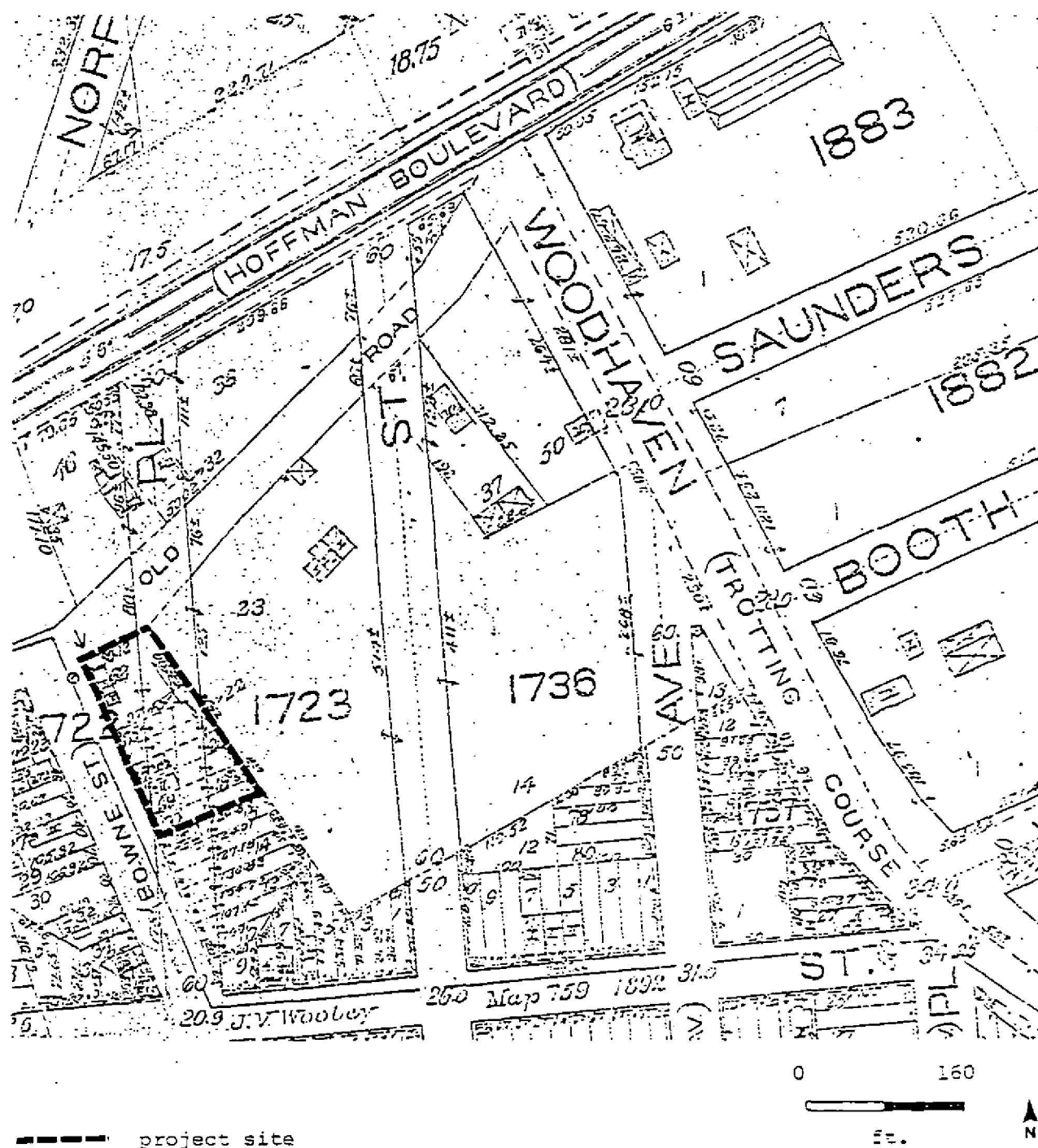


there would also be outbuildings and yard features associated with either structure, such as barns or sheds, privies, and wells or cisterns.

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).



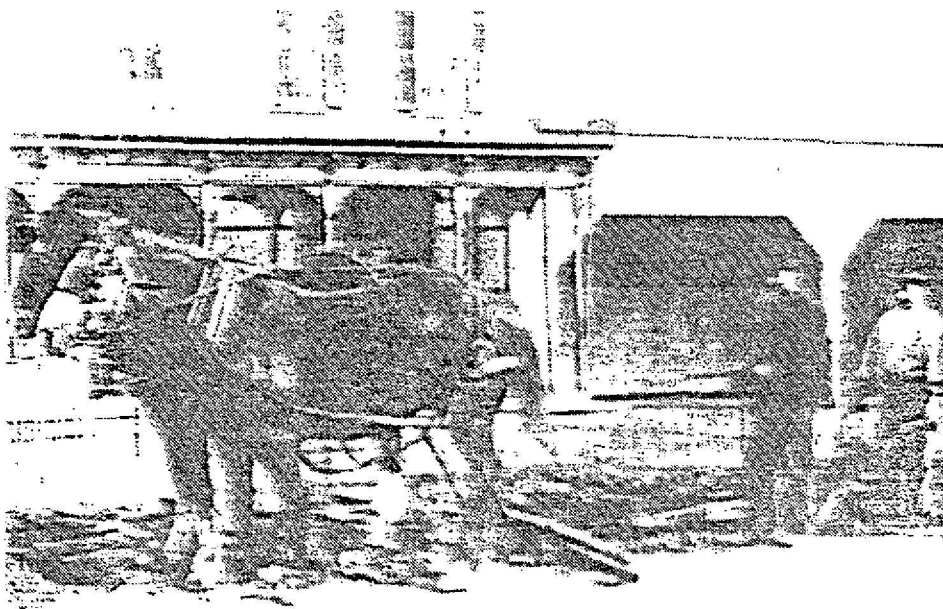


As noted in the 1989 report, between 1891 and 1932, six structures, now demolished, were also constructed on 58th Avenue; these included four houses and two garages. Although these properties, too, may harbor intact privies and yard features, the information from these later structures does not warrant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

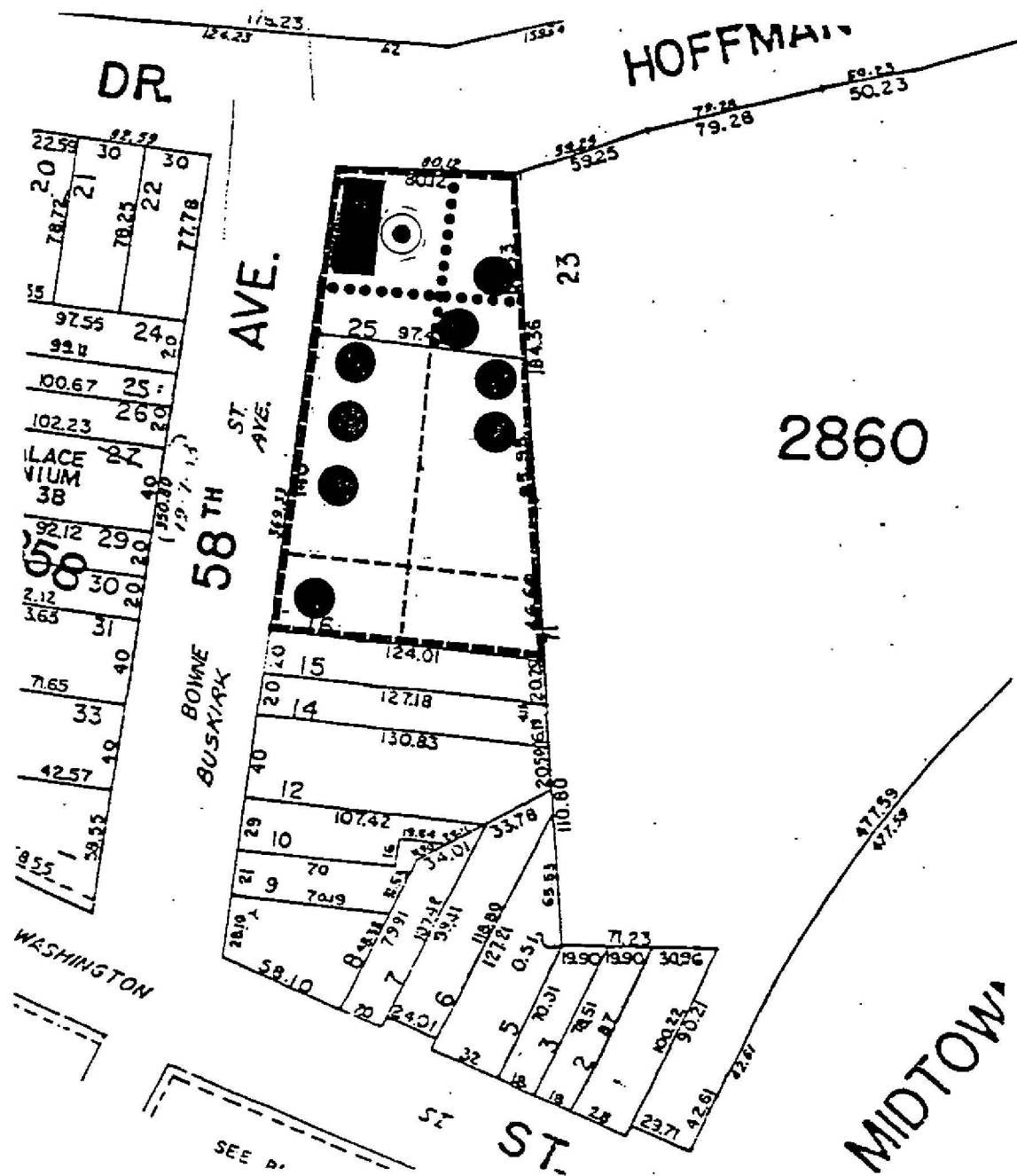


17 "Starting construction [for] first Queens Blvd. sewer." Notation on back of photo says "Geo. Heckmann's Halfway House, Elmhurst, West of Woodhaven Blvd." (Photographer and date unidentified. Courtesy of Queensborough Public Library, Long Island Collection; copied by Geismar 3/90)

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)

0 200

ft.



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