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THE NEW YORK CITY
LONG RANGE SLUDGE MANAGEMENT PLAN

GENERIC

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT III

ZEREGA, BRONX

PRELIMINARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

66

HISTORICAL
PERSPECTIVES INC.



P.O. Box 331 Riverside, Connecticut 06878

THE NEW YORK CITY

LONG RANGE SLUDGE MANAGEMENT PLAN

GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT III

ZEREGA, BRONX

PRELIMINARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Prepared by:

Historical Perspectives, Inc.
P.O. Box 331
Riverside, CT 06878

Authors:

Betsy Kearns
Cece Kirkorian
Faline Schneiderman-Fox

Prepared for:

Allee King Rosen & Fleming, Inc.
117 East 29th Street
New York, New York 10016

June 1991

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PROPOSED ZEREGA SLUDGE MANAGEMENT FACILITY

NEW YORK CITY LONG RANGE SLUDGE MANAGEMENT PLAN (GEIS III)

INTRODUCTION: New York City has entered into a Consent Decree and Enforcement Agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to end ocean disposal of its sewage sludge. A Long Range Sludge Management Plan is being developed by the City as part of the agreement. The Plan calls for the development of multiple City sites where dewatered sludge can be processed into sludge product with beneficial reuse technologies.

This preliminary archaeological report is part of the Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS III) for the Long Range Plan. Research has included study of both old and current maps, historical accounts, guides to New York, a site file search and a May 2, 1991 visit to the area.

LOCATION: The Zerega site is located in the Castle Hill section of the Bronx, adjacent to Clason's Point but separated by the Pugsley Creek, and is bounded by Seward Avenue to the north, Westchester Creek to the east, Zerega Avenue to the west and Randall Avenue to the south (Figures 1, 2). The site occupies what is currently Block 3579, Lots 1 and 42 (Figure 3).

CURRENT CONDITION: The site lies on the west bank of the Westchester Creek. Surface elevation is approximately 5 feet above mean sea level (MSL), with the groundwater table approximately 0 to 3 feet above the MSL. A narrow tidal wetland covers the eastern border of the site along the Westchester Creek. Two soil borings taken in 1972 yielded evidence of a rather shallow layer of fill in the project site neighborhood (Stone & Webster Engineering, Inc.). The "misc. fill" was reported to depths of approximately 6'10" and 2' below current grade, overlying gray and dark gray organic silt, clay, and eventually gravel.

The site consists of two adjacent parcels. The north parcel is fenced and has a trailer on its northeast corner. Much of this area is overgrown with vegetation, with a portion recently used by a wood chip, leaves, and topsoil recycler (Photographs A, B). The south parcel has a trailer complex, an unpaved parking lot, and road salt is stored on-site by the New York City Department of Sanitation (Photographs C, D).

ASSESSMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE POTENTIAL

Prehistoric Overview: Archaeological research and early European contacts attest to the extensive Native American occupation of the Northeast, including the Bronx and the shores of the Long Island Sound. Evidence has shown that Native Americans were present in the New York area as far back as 12,000 years, with occupation spanning the PaleoIndian, Archaic, Transitional, and Woodland cultural periods. Research has suggested that prehistoric period habitation and procurement sites tended to be located on well-drained soil within close proximity to fresh water sources, often in naturally sheltered areas.

Prehistoric sites have been documented from nearby and within Castle Hill. An extensive literature review of the area by Historical Perspectives, Inc., in 1986 reports the following:

The earliest documented evidence for aboriginal habitation of the...area is the account of the 1614 trading voyage of Dutch explorer Adrian Block through Long Island Sound. Block reported a stockaded Indian village in the vicinity of what is now Castle Hill, near the intersection of Lacombe and Castle Hill Avenues (several blocks southwest of the Zerega Avenue site).

Castle Hill Park, at the point of Castle Hill peninsula, may be the locus where Block described meeting hostile Indians on his voyage up the East River. In a 1640 agreement with the Dutch government, the Siwanoy, an Indian group...claimed ownership of all lands along the East River as far west as Hell Gate. European records also report that the Weckquaesgeek Indians of Manhattan Island made annual visits to the Westchester area, of which the east Bronx was then a part. Local folklore has it that the last Indians to leave their east Bronx homeland camped in the mid-1800's at the Twin Sisters Rocks, a bedrock outcrop located between Seward and Randall Avenues and White Plains Road and Olmstead Avenue (several blocks west of the Zerega site).

Kearns and Kirkorian 1986:9.

According to Reginald Bolton's Indian Paths in the Great Metropolis, two major Indian trails once ran near the Zerega Avenue site. The first trail ran north-south along what is now Castle Hill Avenue to Castle Hill Park at the end of the peninsula, with an offshoot leading to a small rise on the Westchester creek either within or slightly south of the Zerega Avenue site. A second trail ran north-south on the other side of the Westchester Creek terminating directly across the creek from the Zerega site (Figure 4). Grunet's map of Indian place names in New York City also shows an unnamed trail running north-south through Castle Hill

to the East River (Figure 5). According to Grumet, the name Castle Hill was derived from the principle Indian settlement on Castle Neck, which was said to be the sight of an Indian Castle (Grumet 1981:13). Archaeological excavations have never located a palisaded village on Castle Hill Neck to substantiate this claim. Grumet concluded that archaeological remains from this potential palisaded village have been destroyed by historical development. Archaeological evidence does support prehistoric use of the surrounding area. In the early twentieth century, a shell midden was reported slightly south of the Zerega site (Bolton 1934:np). In addition, "the file catalog at the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, listed a shell heap located at the southern point of the Castle Hill peninsula, another site on "Castle Hill Neck," and a third locus at the foot of Castle Hill Avenue (Kearns and Kirkorian 1986:12). The site at the tip of Castle Hill peninsula was designated as a wampum factory, excavated by Alanson Skinner in the early twentieth century. Excavations produced shell, pottery, drills, tool fragments, and points representing the Early Archaic through Early Woodland periods (Ibid.:14). Parker reported a site bearing traces of occupation further north up the Westchester Creek in the vicinity of Quimby Avenue (New York State Museum, Prehistoric Site File 5327).

Additional archaeological research in the vicinity has further demonstrated the extensive prehistoric land use. At Clason's Point on the East River, southwest of the Zerega site, Skinner also excavated a Siwanoy Indian village in 1918, unearthing storage and refuse pits, potsherds, and tools dating to approximately A.D. 1300, the Late Woodland period. Sites of the resultant named Clasons Point phase in southern New York tend to be located "on the second rise of ground above high-water level on tidal inlets and they approximate an acre in extent." (Ritchie 1980:271). Located about five blocks west of the Zerega site, at the head of Pugsley's Creek and about one-quarter of a mile from the shore of Long Island Sound, a Late Archaic workshop was recently excavated (Cohn and Apuzzo 1988:5). Although there had been some disturbance by collectors, nineteenth century activity, and secondary tree growth, excavations produced 40 projectile points and numerous tools, 63 percent of which were made from grayish-black flints originating in the Mid-Hudson region.

A site file search at the New York State Museum found no sites within the project parcel, but several within close proximity. The closest #5327, was an Arthur C. Parker site on the east banks of the Westchester Creek, imprecisely located several blocks north of the Zerega site (See Appendix A). The Parker site is shown on his published map of Bronx County as simply "traces of occupation" (Parker 1920:plate 147). A site file search at the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation produced similar results, with no sites actually reported for the project area (See Appendix B).

Historical Overview: Nearby Hunt's Point, Clason's Point, Screvin's Neck, and Throg's Neck are large peninsulas of low, salt meadowland jutting into the East River, separated by small rivers, bays and streams, like Westchester and Pugsley Creek. The north-south running rivers (ie. the Bronx River to the west of the Zerega site) and streams (such as Westchester Creek) acted as natural boundaries in the establishment of distinct towns within the borough.

The first official purchase of lands from Native Americans in the Bronx area took place in 1639 by the Dutch West Indian Company, when they purchased a tract called Keskeskeck. Two years later Jonas Bronck became the first recorded European settler in the borough area. In 1643 Thomas Cornell brought a parcel of land from Native Americans, then known as Cornell's Neck and now known as Clason's Point (French 1860:706). A scattered village of 1,000 residents, named Oostourp or Westchester, was established at the head of the Westchester Creek by 1653 (French 1860:706). However, the village eventually disbanded. At the end of the Dutch period, the site was part of Vriedelandt, and during the English Colonial period, the area was known for farming and fruit growing.

During the Revolution, a bridge over Westchester Creek at East Tremont Avenue, north of the Zerega site, was a strategic crossing point and is now referred to as the "Lexington of Westchester." Here, "General Howe made an unsuccessful attempt to cut off Washington's troops on October 12, 1776, by landing troops at Throg's Neck. When the British marched toward the bridge, however, the Americans ripped up the old plank crossing and opened a heavy fire" (WPA 1982:547). This maneuver thwarted Howe's plans who was then forced to land further north at Rodman's neck.

Clason's Point and Castle Hill eventually passed into the hands of the Willett family who sold it in 1793 to Isaac Clason (WPA 1982:544). In the mid-nineteenth century, Augustus diZerega purchased a 114 acre estate on Ferris Point, and the area became known as Zeregor's Point. At that time, the majority of the land in the project parcel was marshland or land under water (Figure 6). Castle Hill was part of Westchester County for quite some time, with estates and farmlands comprising the landscape until the mid-nineteenth century when the Harlem and Hudson River railroads were built, and population quickly grew.

With expanding transportation networks and bountiful jobs, Irish immigrants were quick to move in after 1840. They were soon followed by Germans, Italians, and Russian and Polish Jews. Between 1850 and 1860, the population in the borough had tripled. By 1898, the area was officially designated as the Borough of the Bronx, and in 1914 it became a separate county. The year 1904 brought the first subway line to the Bronx, spurring an additional real estate boom. By 1910, relatively inexpensive real estate and the construction boom helped to boost the population of the Bronx

to 430,000 (WPA 1982:514). The majority of building in the Bronx is attributed to the twentieth century, when 92 percent of the houses were built.

Between 1910 and 1935, much of Clason's Point was a popular shore recreation resort. In the 1930s, the settlements along the Bronx River and nearby creeks were said to resemble the coastal towns of New England (WPA 1982:542). The neighborhoods were generally composed of single and multi-family houses, with minor commercial, industrial, and institutional establishments. In 1940 the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company constructed red brick high-rise tenements, with other housing projects following shortly thereafter. Hospital facilities were built on marshlands which fed the Westchester Creek. The project site remained submerged through at least the middle of the twentieth century (Figure 7).

Castle Hill was also known as a recreation area in the early twentieth century. Swimming at a private pool on Norton Avenue was a popular summer pastime, as was watching midget auto races held nearby, at Zerega and Lafayette Avenues, in the 1920s and 1930s (Willensky and White 1988:539). The exact location of the racetrack site is unknown, but was probably several blocks west of the project site. In 1921 there was no fill in the project area (Figure 8), nor had anything changed by 1929. The next available map dated to 1961 which showed the whole parcel had been filled but remained vacant. There was no substantial construction on the project site during the 1960s and 1970s. The current Sanborn map (Figure 3) shows the original western shoreline of the Westchester Creek, outlining those few areas which actually possess fast land. The majority of the parcel is mid-to-late twentieth century landfill. The fast land is a very narrow strip of land, approximately 25 to 50 feet wide, paralleling the Creek and also the tip of the northwest corner of the project site.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: While the research has shown that the Castle Hill area in general has a high sensitivity for prehistoric cultural remains, the majority of the project site was land under water until the middle of the twentieth century. The few areas that were fast-land prior to historical filling were so small that they would have been unable to support a Native American habitation (See Figure 3). There is also no evidence that any historical structures or waterfront features were ever present at this site. In conclusion, this site has no sensitivity for archaeological remains since it is predominantly landfill, and no further investigations are recommended.

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MAPS AND ATLASES

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Philadelphia.

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U.S.G.S.

1891 Harlem Quad. United States Geological Survey, New York.

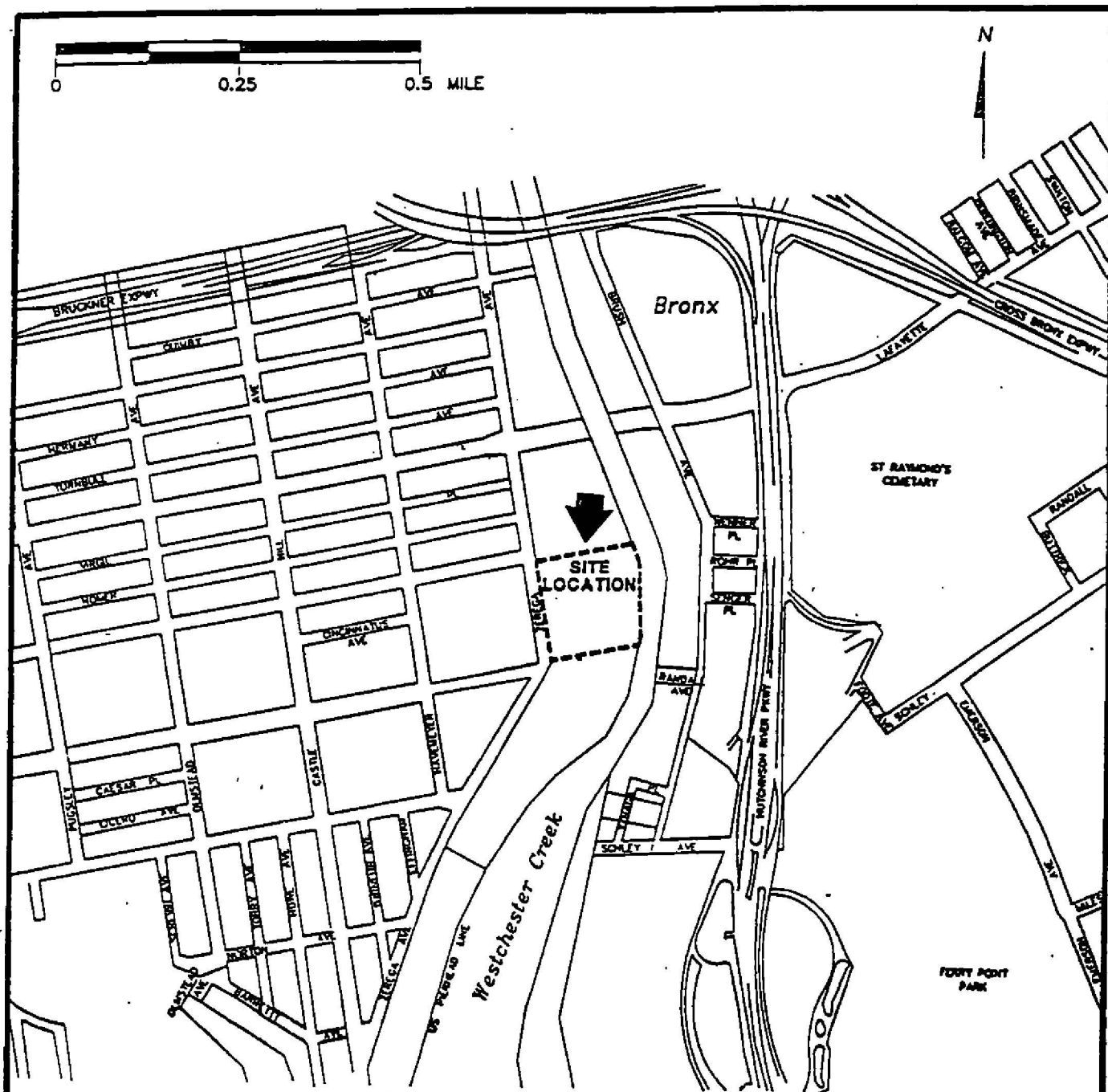
1903 Harlem Quad. United States Geological Survey, New York.

1966 Flushing Quad. United States Geological Survey,
Washington, D.C.



FIGURE 1

1966 U.S.G.S. TOPOGRAPHIC MAP, FLUSHING, N.Y. QUADRANGLE



**New York City Department
of Environmental Protection**

SLUDGE MANAGEMENT PLAN

**Generalized Land Use
Bronx Site 5
Zerega**

Base Map Provided
By Stone and Webster

FIGURE 2

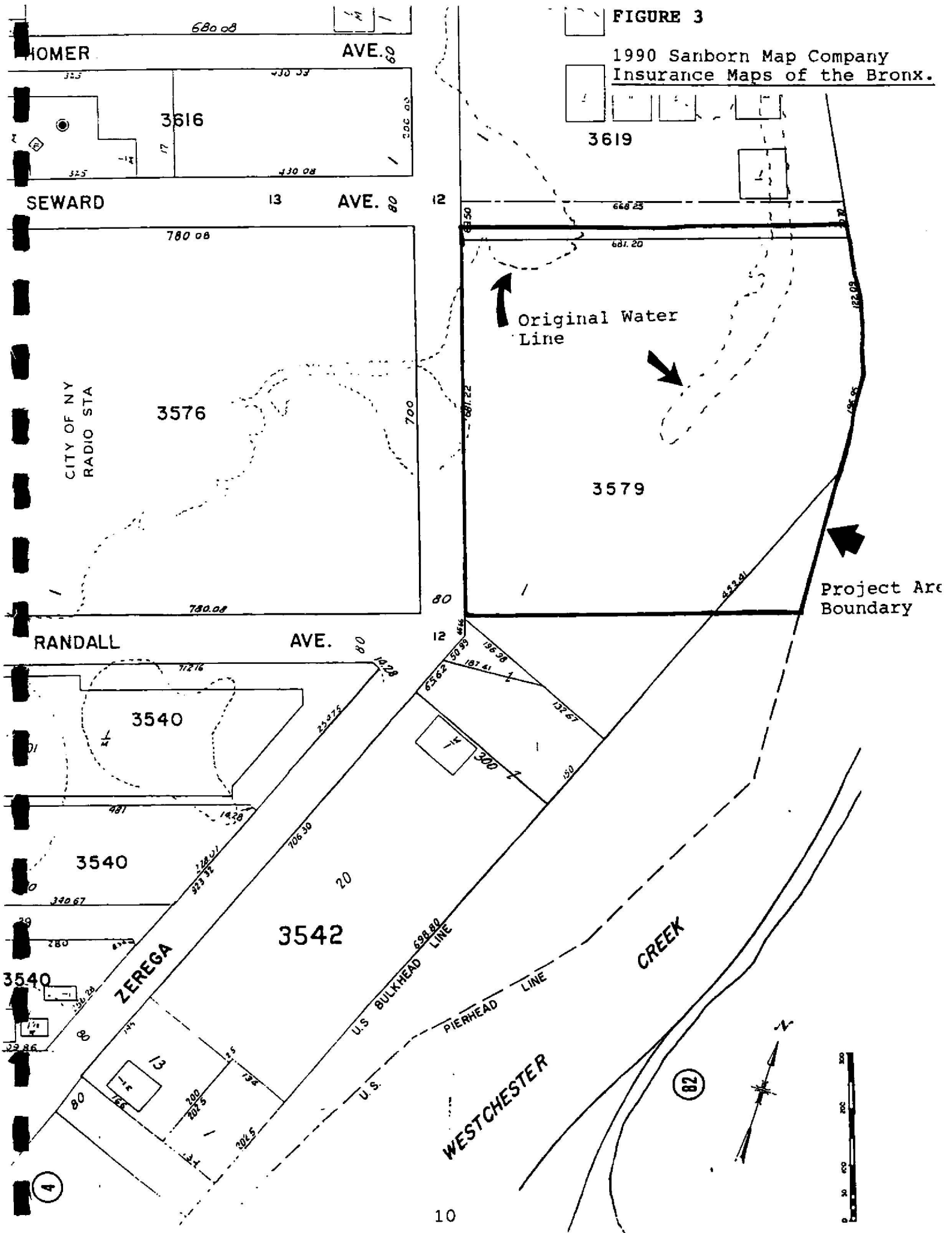


FIGURE 3

1990 Sanborn Map Company
Insurance Maps of the Bronx.

3619

Original Water
Line

3579

Project Area
Boundary

3540

3540

3542

CREEK

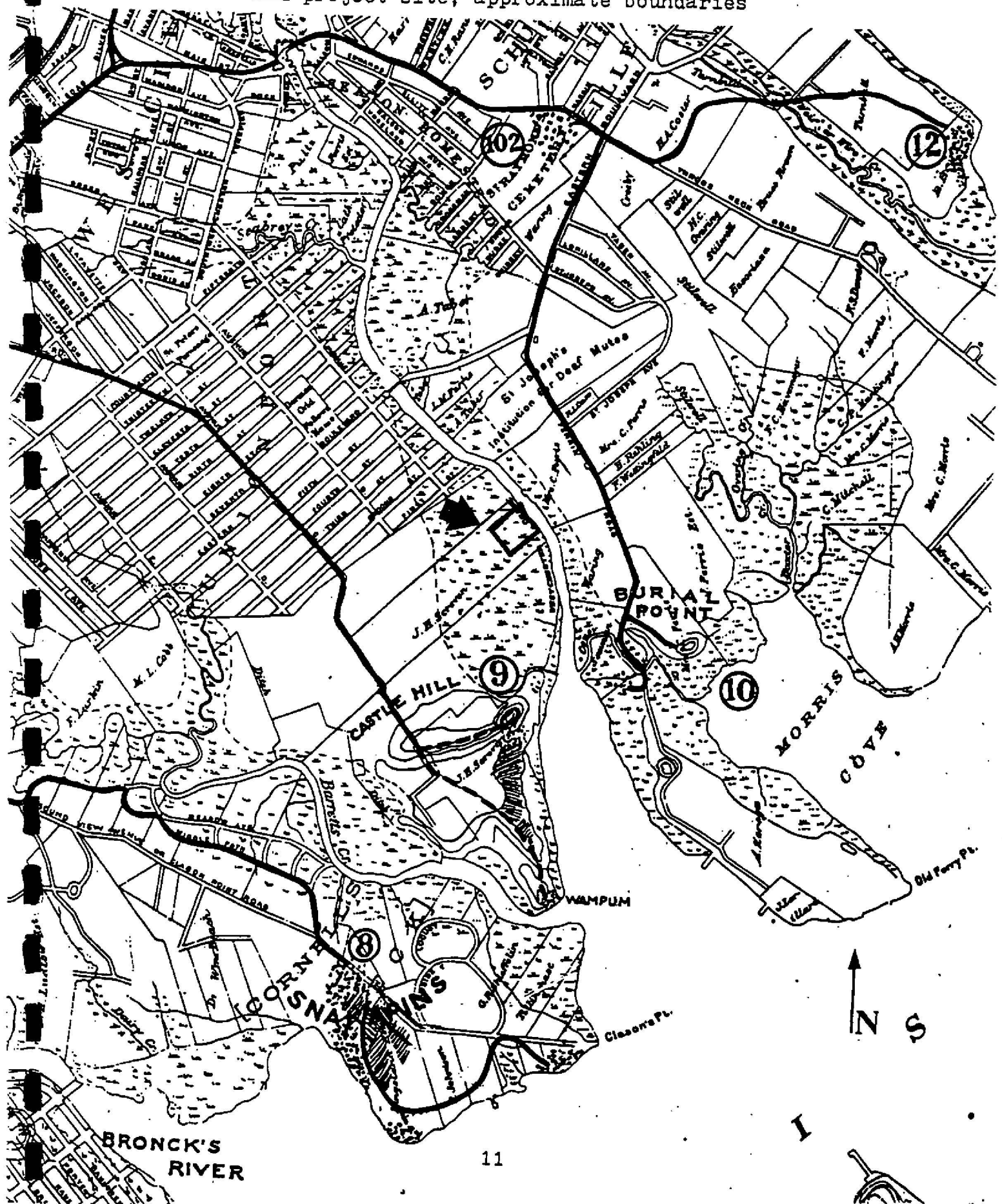
WESTCHESTER

82

Photocopied from
Bolton, 1922: Map VII, D

Figure 4

— project site, approximate boundaries



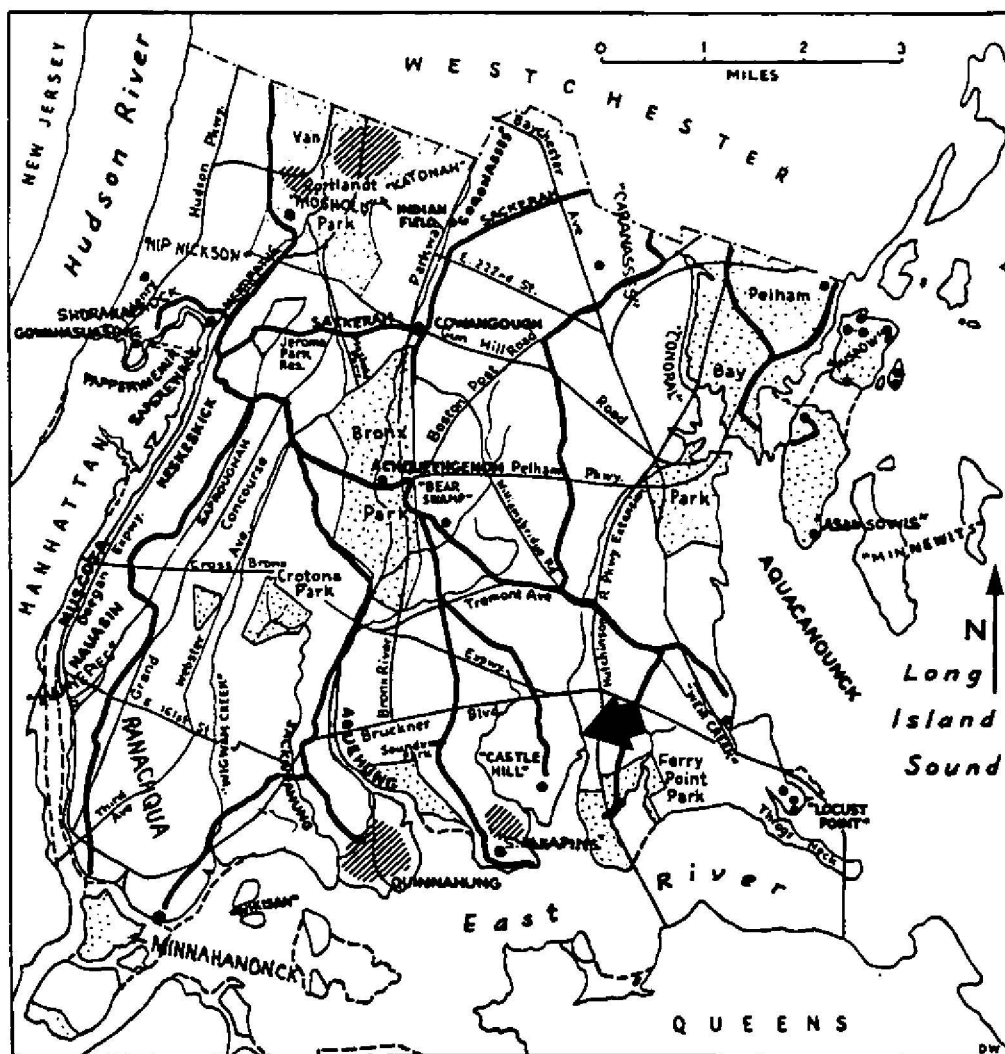


FIGURE 5

From Grumet 1981 Native American Place Names in New York City. p.69.

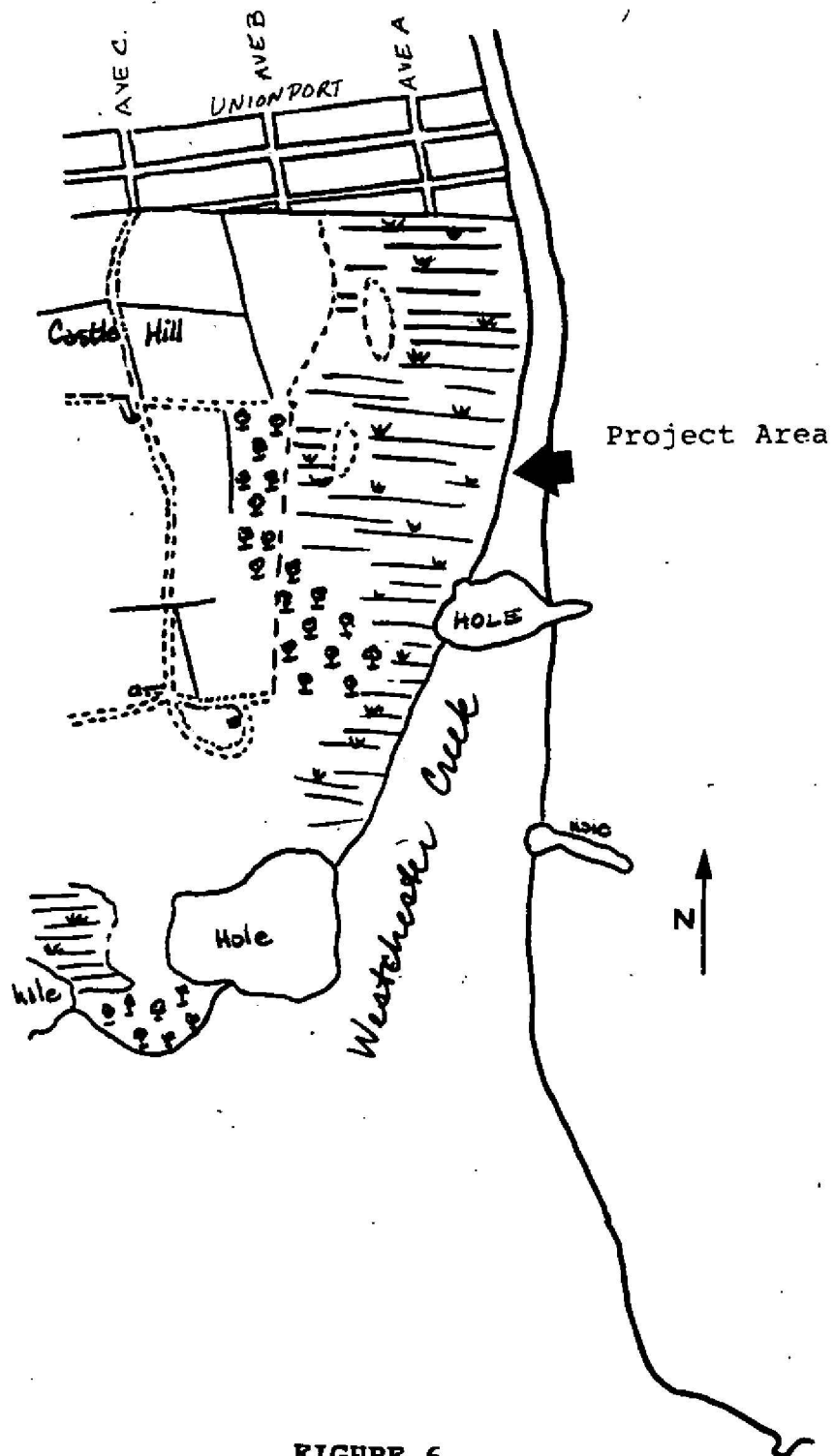


FIGURE 6

M. Dripps Map of the Southern Part of
Westchester County, New York.

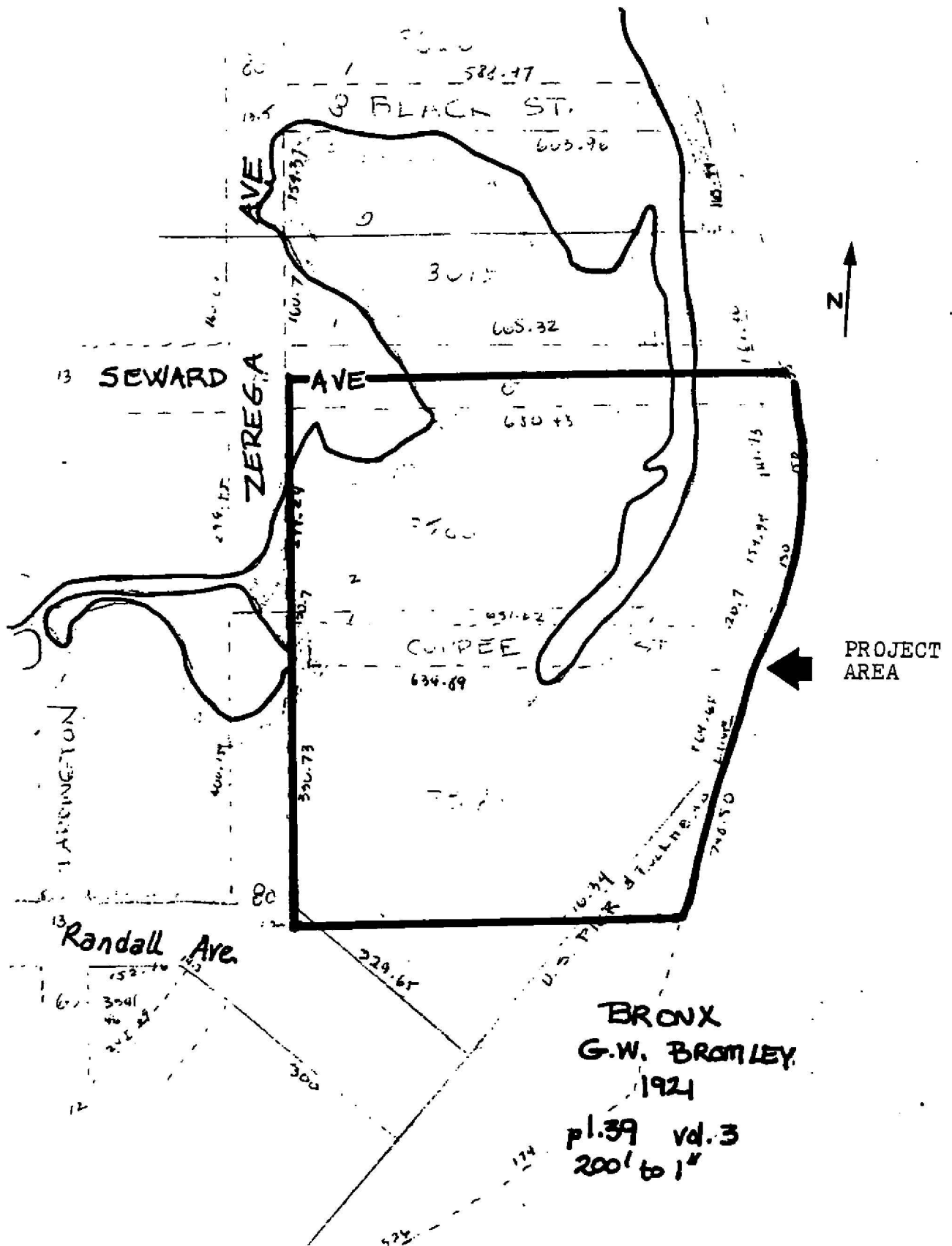
Scale: 5" = 1 mile



FIGURE 7

1903 U.S.G.S. Topographic Map, Harlem Quad

FIGURE 8





A. Facing East from intersection of Seward and Zerega Avenues



B. Facing East from intersection of Seward and Zerega Avenues



C. Facing South from intersection of Randall and Zerega Avenues



D. Facing Northeast from intersection of Randall and Zerega Avenues. Note DOT salt piles to left.

APPENDIX

- A. New York State Museum
Correspondence
- B. New York State Office
of Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation
Correspondence

PROJECT :

NEW YORK STATE MUSEUM: OFFICE OF THE STATE ARCHEOLOGIST
PREHISTORIC SITE FILE: FILE USE REQUEST FORM
PROJECT SCREENING FILE

NAME Cice Kirkorian
ADDRESS P.O. Box 331 Riverside CT. 06878
AC PHONE # 203 698-1147
AGENCY/COMPANY/INSTITUTION REPRESENTED Historical Perspectives

The screening file gives site locations within generalized .5 mile circles.

PURPOSE OF REQUEST: (Identify the proposed project and contractor, indicate the nature of the work, depth and extent of ground disturbance)

Sludge III Project

EVENTUAL DISTRIBUTION OF DATA: (Specify range of data use and distribution, publication, reproduction, etc.).

Client, municipality & other agency

REQUESTED APPOINTMENT:

1st Choice _____ 2nd Choice _____
date time (or any) date time (or any)
(Appointments are on the hour between 9 a.m. and 12 noon on Wednesday of each week. Mail this request at least two weeks in advance of the appointment date. You will be notified by mail of your appointment date and time).

U.S.G.S. 7.5' MAPS REQUESTED: (indicate 15' maps)

Attaching _____

FOR THE FOLLOWING attach the project map, site data list and self-addressed envelope to this request. Responses will be mailed or provided on the following day.

The following site(s) may be within or adjacent to the project area. If so, please provide the location of:
SITE #. 7.5' MAP

none

X Please provide a sensitivity rating for the attached project area.

I understand that the information provided is to be used solely for the preparation of an environmental impact statement as required by State or Federal law.

Beri Blair

(Signature)

(Date)

New York State Museum Prehistoric Archaeological Site Files

EVALUATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SENSITIVITY FOR PREHISTORIC (INDIAN) SITES

Examination of the data suggests that the location indicated has the following sensitivity rating:

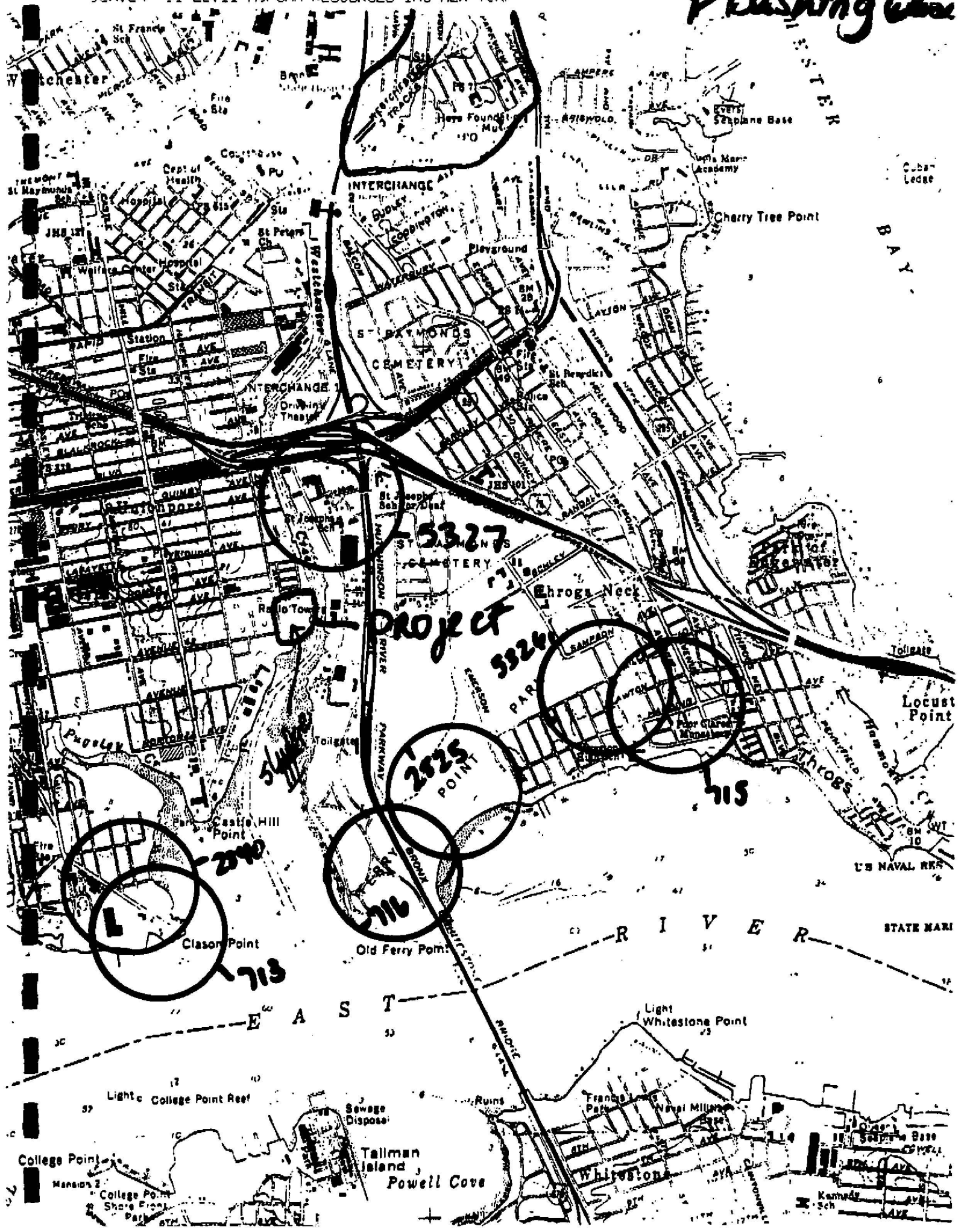
- ☐ HIGHER THAN AVERAGE PROBABILITY OF PRODUCING PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA.
- ☐ AVERAGE PROBABILITY OF PRODUCING PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA.
- ☐ LOWER THAN AVERAGE PROBABILITY OF PRODUCING PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA.
- ☐ MIXED PROBABILITY OF PRODUCING PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA.

The reasons for this finding are given below:

- ☐ A RECORDED SITE IS INDICATED IN OR IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO THE LOCATION AND WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE IT COULD BE IMPACTED BY CONSTRUCTION.
- ☒ A RECORDED SITE IS INDICATED SOME DISTANCE AWAY BUT DUE TO THE MARGIN OF ERROR IN THE LOCATION DATA IT IS POSSIBLE THE SITE ACTUALLY EXISTS IN OR IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO THE LOCATION.
- ☒ THE TERRAIN IN THE LOCATION IS SIMILAR TO TERRAIN IN THE GENERAL VICINITY WHERE RECORDED ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES ARE INDICATED.
- ☒ THE PHYSIOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOCATION SUGGEST A HIGH PROBABILITY OF PREHISTORIC OCCUPATION OR USE.
- ☐ THE PHYSIOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOCATION SUGGEST A MEDIUM PROBABILITY OF PREHISTORIC OCCUPATION OR USE.
- ☐ THE PHYSIOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOCATION ARE SUCH AS SUGGEST A LOW PROBABILITY OF PREHISTORIC OCCUPATION OR USE.
- ☐ EVIDENCE OF CULTURAL OR NATURAL DESTRUCTIVE IMPACTS SUGGESTS A LOSS OF ORIGINAL CULTURAL DEPOSITS IN THIS LOCATION.
- ☐ THE PHYSIOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOCATION ARE MIXED, A HIGHER THAN AVERAGE PROBABILITY OF PREHISTORIC OCCUPATION OR USE IS SUGGESTED FOR AREAS IN THE VICINITY OF EITHER PRESENT OR PREEXISTING BODIES OF WATER, WATERWAYS, OR SWAMPS. A HIGHER THAN AVERAGE PROBABILITY IS ALSO SUGGESTED FOR ROCK FACES WHICH AFFORD SHELTER. DISTINCTIVE HILLS OR LOW RIDGES HAVE AN AVERAGE PROBABILITY OF USE AS A BURYING GROUND. LOW PROBABILITY IS SUGGESTED FOR AREAS OF EROSIONAL STEEP SLOPE.
- ☒ PROBABILITY RATING IS BASED ON THE ASSUMED PRESENCE OF INTACT ORIGINAL DEPOSITS, POSSIBILITY UNDER FILL, IN THE AREA. IF NEAR WATER OR IF DEEPLY BURIED, MATERIALS MAY OCCUR SUBMERGED BELOW THE WATER TABLE.
- ☐ INFORMATION ON SITES NOT RECORDED IN THE N.Y.S. MUSEUM FILES MAY BE AVAILABLE IN A REGIONAL INVENTORY MAINTAINED AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATION(S).

COMMENTS:

Flushing Ave



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE FILE SEARCH
NEW YORK STATE MUSEUM
CULTURAL EDUCATION CENTER
ALBANY, NEW YORK

OTHER # SITE #'S	SITE NAME	TIME PERIOD	SITE TYPE	SOURCE OF DATA	15' QUAD NAME	7.5' QUAD NAME	REPORTER NAME	PROJECT NAME OR #
713 HAR 5-4	CLASON'S Point	—	—	old Flushing quad	—	—	—	—
715 HAR 7-4	Schurz site	—	midden	site data file # 715	"extensive shoreline midden"	multi component	—	—
716 HAR 8-4	Old Ferry Pt	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
2825								
2840								
5326	ACP Brnx		traces					
5327	ACP Brnx		traces					

Flushing

SITE FILE SEARCH RESULTS

conducted by LS

date 6/5

Project Sludge III

Village _____ Town _____

County Queens

New York State Museum

Prehistoric archeological sites 7

(list on back)

Site sensitivity requested ✓

Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Archeological sites 1

Building/Structure forms —

National Register listing —

Previous Surveys ✓

New York State Museum sites:

NYSM#	other#	Name	time per.	type	source of data	project	quad
713	Hare 5-4	Clasons Point			old Plushung quad		
715	Hare 2-4	Schurz Site		midden	"extensive shoreline midden" multi component		
716	Hare 8-8	Old Perry Point					
2825	ACO Bony-3			shell midden	Parker		
2840	ACO Bony-19			shell midden	Parker		
5326	ACP Bony			traces of occupation			
5327	ACP Bony			traces of occupation			

Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Archeological Sites:

① ACO 01-0057

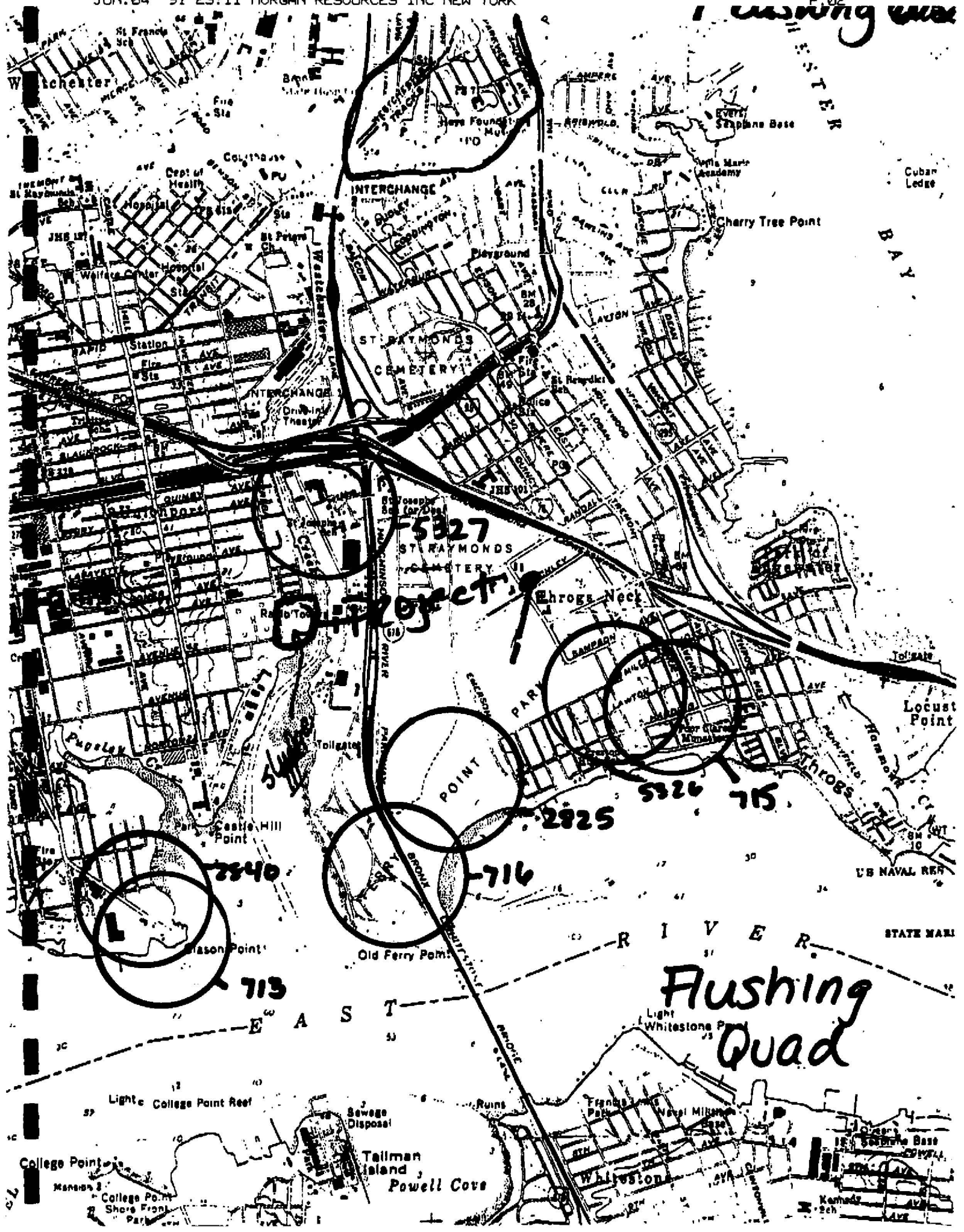
Building/Structure Forms:

National Register Listings:

listed

listed

Previous Surveys:



ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE INVENTORY FORM

DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
NEW YORK STATE PARKS AND RECREATION
ALBANY, NEW YORK

518-474-0479

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

UNIQUE SITE NO. A005-01-0057

QUAD. _____

SERIES _____

NEG. NO. _____

REPORTED BY: Anna Browning

YOUR ADDRESS: 2 Corbett Place TELEPHONE: AN 1-6612

Metropolitan Chapter NYSAA

ORGANIZATION (if any): Suffolk Co. Indian & Archaeological Museum, P.O. Box 126, Northport, N.Y.

DATE: Feb. 18, 1977

SITE NAME: Throgs Neck Site or Schleg Avenue Shellheap

COUNTY: Bronx TOWN/CITY: New York VILLAGE: _____

LOCATION: Schleg and Clarence Avenues

PRESENT OWNER: _____

OWNER'S ADDRESS: _____

DESCRIPTION, CONDITION, EVIDENCE OF SITE:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> STANDING RUINS | <input type="checkbox"/> CELLAR HOLE WITH WALLS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SURFACE TRACES VISIBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> WALLS WITHOUT CELLAR HOLE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> UNDER CULTIVATION | <input type="checkbox"/> EROSION <input type="checkbox"/> UNDERWATER |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NO VISIBLE EVIDENCE | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____ |

COLLECTION OF MATERIAL FROM SITE:

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SURFACE HUNTING | BY WHOM <u>unknown</u> | DATE _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TESTING | BY WHOM _____ | DATE _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCAVATION | BY WHOM <u>Harrington</u> | DATE <u>1900</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NONE | <u>Skinner</u> | <u>1918</u> |

PRESENT REPOSITORY OF MATERIALS: Amer. Museum of Natural History
and Museum of the American Indian

PREHISTORIC CULTURAL AFFILIATION OR DATE: woodland & transitional

9. HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION OF SITE:

Explanation of Aboriginal Sites at Throgs Neck & Clason's Pt. Skinner 1919

Archaeology of Coastal New York Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, Volume 43 Part 2 1950

10. POSSIBILITY OF SITE DESTRUCTION OR DISTURBANCE:

probably destroyed

11. REMARKS:

12. MAP LOCATION

7 1/2 MINUTE SERIES QUAD. NAME: Flushing, N.Y.

15 MINUTE SERIES QUAD. NAME: _____

U.S.G.S. COORDINATES: _____

D.O.T. COORDINATES: (if known) _____

ATTACH SKETCH, TRACING OR COPY OF MAP

SOURCE OF MAP:

13. PHOTOGRAPHS (optional)

(ATTACH)