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ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW  
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LANDMARKS PRESERVATION  
COMMISSION

# BLOCK 6108. NEW LOT 47.

WOODROW ROAD-MARCY AVENUE.  
BOROUGH OF STATEN ISLAND.  
RICHMOND COUNTY, NEW YORK.

96DCP023R

## STAGE 1A LITERATURE REVIEW AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC SENSITIVITY EVALUATION

Prepared For:

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

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May 1996

671

# **BLOCK 6108. NEW LOT 47.**

**WOODROW ROAD-MARCY AVENUE.  
BOROUGH OF STATEN ISLAND.  
RICHMOND COUNTY, NEW YORK.**

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- B. Maps & Figures
- C. Photographs
- D. Correspondence

# **PART 1A: LITERATURE SEARCH AND REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL**

**Affiliation:**           **City/Scape: Cultural Resource Consultants**  
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Brooklyn, New York 11215  
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**Date:**                    May 17, 1996

## **A. PROJECT INFORMATION**

Permit Application:

Permit Number:

Permit Type:

**Prepared by:**        Gail T. Guillet  
City/Scape: Cultural Resource Consultants  
726 Carroll Street, Brooklyn, NY 11215

### **Location of Proposed Action:**

The project area is located in Block 6108 in the Woodrow section of the Borough of Staten Island, Richmond County, New York. (Map 1 & 2) As presently defined, Block 6108 is bounded on the south by Woodrow Road, on the east by the proposed extension of Marcy Avenue, and to the north by a proposed extension of West Castor Place. (Fig. 1) To the west is Gilroy Street on the east side of which 6 dwellings have been built. (Photo 1) The project area was formerly identified as Lot 37, but has now been designated Lot 47. As described by the attorney for the owner of the parcel, the property is approximately 100' x 700'. At the present time, no structures are located within the project area. To the east of the project area is the Woodrow Methodist Church (a designated National Register property), an 18th century house that served as the parsonage for the church (also a National Register property) and a small cemetery. (Photo 2 & 3) To the north of the project area is the South Shore Golf Course (a public course that is part of the New York City park system) and recently constructed housing.

**Description of Undertaking:**

This report is being prepared as part of the preliminary investigation for this site. It has not yet been determined what the nature of the project will be, but a dense concentration of housing presently surrounds the site. (Fig. 2)

**Estimated Size of Impact Area:**

The project will impact will be approximately 100' by 700'.

**Description of Impact:**

Although the nature of the project has not yet been determined, it is assumed for the purposes of this report that the entire project area will be impacted.

**B: ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION****Topography:**

On a macro level the topography of the area in which the site is located is depicted as standing on a generally level area at approximately 100 feet above mean sea level. However, the site visit revealed a complex topography. On the south end of the project area (along Woodrow Road) and along the eastern edge of the property (facing what will be an extension of Marcy Avenue) an approximately 5' high berm has been created. (Photo 4) The source of the material for the berm is not immediately known, but, whatever its origin, it is man-made rather than a geological formation. The soil of the berms has been deposited on the site from elsewhere. While the berms themselves represent disturbed soils, it is probable that the areas beneath the berms (the historic ground level) are undisturbed. The berm obstructs views into the site; however, an examination of the interior of the site indicated that the southern third of the site is forested with white birch and other deciduous trees and is generally flat. (Photo 5) North of this forested area is a ponded/marshy area that extends some distance along the property line (identified by a low chain link fence). (Photo 6) This marshy area is drained by a ditch that flows northward along the western edge of the site. (Photo 7) To the north of the ponded area the land is again flat and covered by trees. As is the case in the southern section, this area also has a berm along the eastern edge. The topography of the northern section is also flat with a second ponded area in the northeastern corner. (Photo 8)

**Geology:**

In geological terms, the project area is located in the Atlantic Coastal Lowland Physiographic Province -- one of the two geophysical provinces represented on Staten Island, the other being the Piedmont Lowland. The Atlantic Coastal Lowland Physiographic Province is limited in New York State to Long Island and Staten

Island, the only other location in where the Atlantic Coastal Lowland Physiographic Province occurs within the State. (Thompson 1966: 34-35). The precise underlying geology of the project area has not been identified, but it would consist of an basement of undifferentiated rock dating to the Cretaceous period (about 100,000 years ago), overlain by the till composed of loose gravel, interlayered with silt and clay of various colors (including the red observed on the site). (Fig. 3 & 4 and Photo 9) The action of the glaciers that advanced and retreated over this landscape left deposits composed of unsorted glacial sediments and boulders that is characteristic of a ground moraine.

### **Soils:**

As with the geology, the underlying soils would be consistent with the types of materials associated with the glacial moraines topped by the recent soils composed of loams and organic materials (for example, leaf molds). The glacial soils include unconsolidated gravel, sand and clay deposits with occasional boulders. In general the tone of the soils on the site (as on all of the southern end of Staten Island) is reddish brown in hue, although clays and silt of white and gray are also encountered. As noted above, berms have been constructed on the southern and eastern edge of the project area – the nature of these soils is unknown, but it appears that they were brought to the site.

### **Drainage:**

Examination of historic maps and atlases indicates that the property was not crossed by any streams or associated with any swamp or wetland areas; however, an inspection of the property revealed that there are two ponded areas on the site. The larger of the two (located on the western edge of the property in the middle of the site) is drained by a ditch that flows northward. (see Photo 6) The smaller ponded area does not have an outlet and is probably intermittent. (see Photo 8) It is not entirely clear whether the marshy areas are part of the prehistoric/historic landscape (they do not appear on any of the historic maps or topographical surveys) or whether, perhaps, they have developed as the result of the development of the surrounding area. If they have formed as the result of recent alterations to the surrounding area, then they can not have served a prehistoric people as a source of water or other resources. If they are of ancient origin, then, of course, the marshy areas and small stream would have served as a source of water for themselves and other animals, or as a source of resources such as reeds, roots and tubers, small mammals, amphibians, and birds.

### **Vegetation:**

The forested areas on the site contain white birch and a variety of other deciduous trees. (see Photo 5) The areas associated with the marshy area and stream corridor were characterized by rushes and other wetland plant material. (Photo 10)

**Forest Zone:**

The project area lies within the Northern Hardwood Forest zone. Sugar maple, birch, beech and hemlock are the predominant trees in this type of forest.

**Man-Made Features and Alterations:**

At the present time there are no structures on the site and an examination of historic maps indicates that the site never contained structures of any kind. However, the berms are a man-made feature that indicates some disturbance along the southern and eastern edges of the site.

**C: DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH****1. Site Files****a. New York State Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)**

The project area is located within the Borough of Staten Island in New York City. Information concerning prehistoric and/or historic sites located on or in the vicinity of the project area was obtained from the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission rather than from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

**b. New York State Museum Archaeological Site Files**

The project area is located within New York City. Information concerning prehistoric sites located in the vicinity of the project area was obtained from the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission rather than from the New York State Museum Archaeological Site Files.

**c. New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission**

Correspondence is included in this report that indicates that the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) was consulted concerning the proposed project. The comments of the LPC indicate that the "review of archaeological sensitivity models and historic maps indicates that there is potential for the recovery of remains from Native American occupation on the project site." (Environmental Review dated 1-17-96). A copy of this document is included in Appendix D. In addition, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission files were examined for information on the project area and the land surrounding it by the consultant in May 1996.

### State Register

The project area is located less than a 1/4 of a mile west of the Woodrow Methodist Church and its parsonage (listed on the National Register of Historic Places 10-29-1982). (see Photo 2 & 3)

### National Register

The project area is located less than a 1/4 of a mile west of the Woodrow Methodist Church and its parsonage (listed on the National Register of Historic Places 10-29-1982). (see Photo 2 & 3)

### National Register eligible listing

At the present time, no structures identified as eligible for the National Register (but unlisted) are located in the vicinity of the project.

### State/National Register proposed

At the present time, no structures identified as eligible for the National Register (but unlisted) are located in the vicinity of the project.

## 2. References

### a. General Texts Consulted

- X Beauchamp, William  
1900 *Aboriginal Occupation of New York*. New York State Museum Bulletin No. 32. Albany, NY.
- X Boesch, Eugene  
1994 *Archaeological Evaluation and Sensitivity Assessment of Staten Island, new York*. Prepared for the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.
- X Funk, Robert E.  
1976 *Recent Contributions to Hudson Valley Prehistory*. New York State Museum Memoir 22. Albany, NY.
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X New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission  
1979 *A Guide to New York City Landmarks*. Browne & Co.: New York, NY

X Other (Bibliography located at end of Part 1A of document)

**b. Maps**

Map examined are included in list.

Taylor, George and Andrew Skinner

1781 *A Map of New York and Staten Island and Part of Long Island*. (NYPL Map Division)

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1845 *Map of New-York Bay and Harbor and the Environs*. Survey of the Coast of the United States. U. S. Coast Survey Map #369 - south. (NYPL Map Division)

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1890 *A Topographical Map of Staten Island*.

Davis, William T.

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1907 *Atlas of the Borough of Richmond, City of New York*. E. Belcher Hyde: Brooklyn, NY. vol. 2. Plate 26.

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1917 *Atlas of the City of New York, Borough of Richmond. Staten Island, New York*. Vol. 2. Wards 4 & 5. G. W. Bromley & Co.: New York, NY. Plate 40.

**United States Geological Survey**

1967 *Brooklyn, New York Quadrangle*. 7.5 Minute Series. Photorevised 1979.  
Scale: 24,000: 1.

**c. Site Specific Texts**

Leng, Charles W. and Edward C. Delavan, Jr.

1924 *A Condensed History of Staten Island*. Staten Island Edison Corp.: Staten Island, NY.

1930 *Staten Island and Its People. A History 1609-1929*. Lewis Historical Publishing Co.: New York, NY.

**3. Previous Surveys**

Cotz, JoAnn and Edward J. Lenik

1982 *Cultural Resource Sensitivity Study, Sharrott Estates Archaeological Project. Sandy Ground National Register District*. NCECR. Woodrose Associates, Yonkers, New York.

Cotz, JoAnn, Edward J. Lenik and Herbert Githens

1985 *Sharrott Estates Archaeological Project: Report on Mitigation Procedures in the Sandy Ground National Register District. Staten Island, New York*. NCECR. Woodrose Associates, Yonkers, New York.

Geismar, Ph.D., Joan H.

1985 *An Archaeological Assessment of the Muss Waterfront Housing Development Project, Prince's Bay, Staten Island, New York*. CECR #86-064R. AKRF, Inc.: New York, NY.

Hershkowitz, Leo

nd *Archaeological Impact Report, Huguenot Village Section 5, Block 6025, Lot 1, Block 6026, Lot 1 (Old Block 6050, 6055)*. CEQR 84-154R.

**4. Sensitivity Assessment/Site Prediction****Prehistoric Sensitivity**

Regional prehistory dates to the first human entry into the area approximately 12,000 years ago. This coincides with the retreat of the Wisconsin glacial advance. At this same time sea levels began to rise along the Atlantic coast inundating the continental shelf off Long Island and the Lower New York Bay. The precise timing of the retreat of the glacial ice and the rise in sea level is a matter of debate.

The earliest occupants of the northeastern United States, called Paleo-Indians by archaeologists, are identified by their distinctive lithic tradition of fluted projectile points. Later cultures occupying the area are broadly termed Archaic (9000 to 3000 BP) and Woodland (3000 BP to 1600 AD). Reliance on cultigens became an increasingly important part of cultural adaptations during the Woodland Period. A Transitional Phase between the Late Archaic and Woodland has been treated by some

scholars as a separate cultural period. The Transitional Phase is characterized by the use of soapstone utensils, whereas the Woodland Period is identified in part by the use of pottery. From the earliest years in the history of human occupation of North America it appears that Staten Island was heavily occupied, with a concentration of sites ranging from the Paleo-Indian through the Contact Period on the southwestern tip of the island .

Although prehistoric peoples would without doubt have ranged over all of Staten Island, archaeological investigations indicate that habitation sites were situated in proximity to water sources such as tidal creeks, substantial inland streams, and wetland areas. Because of the concentration of prehistoric sites in the immediate vicinity of the project area (see Sensitivity Analysis at end of Part 1A), it is considered to have a high potential to yield prehistoric cultural material.

### Historic Sensitivity

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission has indicated that the site has no architectural significance. While it has been identified as archaeologically significant, the focus is on the potential for the site to yield prehistoric cultural material rather than historic cultural material. An examination of 18th and 19th century maps of the area indicate that no structures been built within the project area. Based on the maps that show the area as wooded, it is likely that the project area was wood lot. No historic archaeological remains would be expected.

Although two structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places (the Woodrow Methodist Church and parsonage) are located less than a quarter of a mile from the project area, the construction of buildings in the area between these historic structures and the project area will prevent the development of the project area from impacting the historic buildings.

## **5. Recommendations**

### Prehistoric Sensitivity

Based on the archaeological sensitivity models of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission and documentary research, the project area is considered to contain the potential to yield prehistoric cultural material (see Sensitivity Analysis at the end of Part 1A). A Stage 1B Archaeological Investigation to determine the presence/absence of prehistoric cultural material is warranted for this site.

The presence of artificial berms on the site creates some difficulty in gaining access to areas that will be impacted by the development of this property. Because of this it is suggested that those areas that are available (excluding the areas covered by the berms) be intensively tested to identify any prehistoric remains that may be present.

### Historic Sensitivity

Based on research undertaken for this report which indicates that the project area never contained structures of any kind, it is the conclusion of the consultant that the project area contains an extremely low potential to yield any historic archaeological remains.

#### **6. Attachments**

- Topographic map (Appendix B: Map 1)
- Appendix A:  
Discussion of Prehistoric Sensitivity and History of the Area.
- Appendix B:  
Maps (Map 1 - 5)  
Figures (Fig. 1 - 4)
- Appendix C:  
Photographs
- Appendix D:  
LPC Environmental Review (dated January 31, 1996)

**End of Part 1A**

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES WITHIN ONE-HALF MILE OF THE PROJECT AREA

LPC Number	Name & Identification	Cultural Period	Most Recent References	Description (derived from Boesch, 1994)
1	Huguenot Site STD-H	M. Wdland	Geismar 1985b Pickman 1977	Site located on raised sandy ground adjacent to stream flowing into Arthur Kill; bulldozed for development; some remnant may remain.
2	Cutting site	Paleo-Indian- M. Wdland	Jacobson 1980 Silver 1984	First identified Paleo-Indian point from Staten Island from this site (c. 1917); additional Paleo points from 1950's; indications of Paleo occupation through Woodland; current conditions unknown.
4	Hammerstone Hill STD-6; 30 RIC-6-AJA	Woodland	Jacobson 1980	Quantities of lithic debitage and ceramics; destroyed by road construction.
5	Harik's Sandy Ground STD-SH	Archaic	Lavin 1980	Lithics indicate hunting & butchering on low, sandy knolls near West Shore Expressway; portions of site may be intact.
11	Wort Farm STD-2-3, STD-R-2, STD-R-3	Lt. Archaic- Lt. Wdland	Horowitz 1971	Site located near source of Tappen's Brook; apparently stratified site representing large camp occupied seasonally over long period of time; tools, traces of hearths; destroyed by development.
12	Rossville Campsite I	Woodland	SIAS Site Files	Recovered ceramics, FCR, lithic debitage and oyster shell; dated to Bowman's Brook period.

Stage 1A Documentary Study

Project located on New Lot 47, Block 6108, Staten Island, Richmond County, New York.

LPC Number	Name & Identification	Cultural Period	Most Recent References	Description (derived from Boesch, 1994)
13	Clay Pit Pond Road sites	Archaic-Wdland	Salwen, Boesch & Pickman 1986	Sites apparently located on sandy knolls.
21	Rossville Campsite II	Woodland	Parker 1922	Apparently located north of Rossville Campsite I.
43	Sharrott Estates	Late Wdland	Cotz & Lenik 1982 Lenik 1987	Small intermittent hunting camp occupied over long period of time; hypothesis that it served as satellite camp for Sandy Brook site.
44	Sandy Brook ACP-RICH-14, NYSM #4604	Lt. Archaic-Lt. Wdland	Lenik & Githens 1985 Yamin & Pickman 1986a	Located on west bank of Sandy Brook; described as "large prehistoric base camp."
92	Unnamed site	Prehistoric	NSASI 1896	No further information.
110	Benedict Creek Fresh Kills STD-BC	Prehistoric	SIAS Site Files	Scatter on banks of creek; area has been disturbed by construction.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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1900 *Aboriginal Occupation of New York*. New York State Museum Bulletin No. 32. Albany, NY.

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1994 *Archaeological Evaluation and Sensitivity Assessment of Staten Island, New York*. Prepared for the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

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1934 *Indian Life of Long Ago in the City of New York*. Joseph Graham: NY.

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1978 "Indians of Southern New England and Long Island: Late Period." *Handbook of North American Indians*. Edited by Bruce G. Trigger. v. 15. Smithsonian Institute: Washington, DC. p. 177 - 189.

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1966 *Journal of a Voyage to New York*. Great Americana Series. Readex Microprint Corporation. [Reprint of 1867 translation]

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# APPENDICES

## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

- Appendix A: Discussion of Prehistoric and Historic Component**
- Appendix B: Maps & Figures**
- Appendix C: Photographs**
- Appendix D: Correspondence**

**APPENDIX A**

**DISCUSSION OF PREHISTORIC AND  
HISTORIC COMPONENT**

## **DISCUSSION OF PREHISTORIC SENSITIVITY AND HISTORY OF THE PROJECT AREA**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The project area is located in Block 6108 in the Woodrow section of the Borough of Staten Island, Richmond County, New York. (Map 1 & 2) As presently defined, Block 6108 is bounded on the south by Woodrow Road, on the east by the proposed extension of Marcy Avenue, and to the north by a proposed extension of West Castor Place. (Fig. 1) To the west is Gilroy Street on the east side of which 6 dwellings have been built. The project area was formerly identified as Lot 37, but has now been designated Lot 47. As described by the attorney for the owner of the parcel, the property is approximately 100' x 700'. At the present time, no structures are located within the project area. To the east of the project area is the Woodrow Methodist Church (a designated National Register property), an 18th century house that served as the parsonage for the church (also a National Register property) and a small cemetery. To the north of the project area is the South Shore Golf Course (a public course that is part of the New York City park system) and recently constructed housing. (Fig. 2)

According to the document received from the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (dated January 17, 1996) the "review of archaeological sensitivity models and historic maps indicates that there is potential for the recovery of remains from Native American occupation on the project site." A copy of this document is included in Appendix D. In addition, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission files were examined for information on the project area and the land surrounding it by the consultant in May 1996.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING**

On a macro level the topography of the area in which the site is located is depicted as standing on a generally level area at approximately 100 feet above mean sea level. However, the site visit revealed a complex topography. On the south end of the project area (along Woodrow Road) and along the eastern edge of the property (facing what will be an extension of Marcy Avenue) an approximately 5' high berm has been created. The source of the material for the berm is not immediately known, but, whatever its origin, it is man-made rather than a geological formation. The soil of the berms has been deposited on the site from elsewhere. While the berms themselves represent disturbed soils, it is probable that the areas beneath the berms (the historic ground level) are undisturbed. The berm obstructs views into the site; however, an examination of the interior of the site indicated that the southern third of the site is forested with white birch and other deciduous trees and is generally flat. North of this forested area is a ponded/marshy area that extends some distance along the property line

(identified by a low chain link fence). This marshy area is drained by a small stream that flows northward along the western edge of the site. To the north of the ponded area the land is again flat and covered by trees. As is the case in the southern section, this area also has a berm along the eastern edge. The topography of the northern section is also flat with a second ponded area in the northeastern corner.

In geological terms, the project area is located in the Atlantic Coastal Lowland Physiographic Province – one of the two geophysical provinces represented on Staten Island, the other being the Piedmont Lowland. The Atlantic Coastal Lowland Physiographic Province is limited in New York State to Long Island and Staten Island, the only other location in where the Atlantic Coastal Lowland Physiographic Province occurs within the State. (Thompson 1966: 34-35). The precise underlying geology of the project area has not been identified, but it would consist of an basement of undifferentiated rock dating to the Cretaceous period (about 100,000 years ago), overlain by the till composed of loose gravel, interlayered with silt and clay of various colors (including the red observed on the site). (Fig. 3 & 4) The action of the glaciers that advanced and retreated over this landscape left deposits composed of unsorted glacial sediments and boulders that is characteristic of a ground moraine.

As with the geology, the underlying soils would be consistent with the types of materials associated with the glacial moraines topped by the recent soils composed of loams and organic materials (for example, leaf molds). The glacial soils include unconsolidated gravel, sand and clay deposits with occasional boulders. In general the tone of the soils on the site (as on all of the southern end of Staten Island) is reddish brown in hue, although clays and silt of white and gray are also encountered. As noted above, berms have been constructed on the southern and eastern edge of the project area – the nature of these soils is unknown, but it appears that they were brought to the site.

Examination of historic maps and atlases indicates that the property was not crossed by any streams or associated with any swamp or wetland areas; however, an inspection of the property revealed that there are two ponded areas on the site. The larger of the two (located on the western edge of the property in the middle of the site) is drained by a small stream that flows northward. The smaller ponded area does not have an outlet and is probably intermittent. It is not entirely clear whether the marshy areas are part of the prehistoric/historic landscape (they do not appear on any of the historic maps or topographical surveys) or whether, perhaps, they have developed as the result of the development of the surrounding area. If they have formed as the result of recent alterations to the surrounding area, then they can not have served a prehistoric people as a source of water or other resources. If they are of ancient origin, then, of course, the marshy areas and small stream would have served as a source of water for themselves and other animals, or as a source of resources such as reeds, roots and tubers, small mammals, amphibians, and birds.

The forested areas on the site contain white birch and a variety of other deciduous trees. The areas associated with the marshy area and stream corridor were characterized by rushes and other wetland plant material. The project area lies within the Northern Hardwood Forest zone. Sugar maple, birch, beech and hemlock are the predominant trees in this type of forest.

At the present time there are no structures on the site and an examination of historic maps indicates that the site never contained structures of any kind. However, the berms are a man-made feature that indicates some disturbance along the southern and eastern edges of the site.

## PREHISTORIC BACKGROUND

As the first native Americans, indeed the first humans, entered the region that is now Staten Island during the Paleo Indian period some 12,000 years ago, their logical route would be along the mighty river systems that were the "super-highways" of the times and along the open seacoast. At this time, with world-wide sea levels lower, Staten Island would have been part of the mainland. The Hudson River trench was located between modern Staten Island and New Jersey.

Not only humans, but the post Pleistocene mega fauna, the mammoth, the mastodon and the caribou that inhabited this tundra-like area would be logically drawn to these corridors. The glaciers reached their maximum extension in 18,000 B.C., covering most of Staten Island with a thick layer of ice. As the great ice sheets began to retreat from southern New England both the hunter, the Paleo Indian, and the hunted began to move into this region.

Research indicates that the post glacial landscape was tundra-like, the colonizing grasses, sedges and herbs supporting a variety of large and small game animals. Among the fauna were mastodon and mammoth (two mastodons have been found in central and southern Staten Island and three mammoths in nearby New Jersey (Boesch, 1994:9)), giant beaver, giant ground sloth, and horse, all of which became extinct, as well as the caribou, musk-ox and bison that persist to modern times.

Paleo-Indians, as these small bands of nomadic hunter-gatherers are called by archaeologists, appear to have entered the previously uninhabited northeast from the south and west. Their sites, identified primarily by characteristically fluted points, are found all over North America. It has traditionally been assumed that these nomadic peoples were strictly "big game" hunters; however that assumption has been called into question by the discovery of fish, bird, small mammal bones and some plant remains found in association with Paleo-Indian sites. It now seems that in addition to the large animals that comprised their principal food source, the Paleo-Indians also hunted small game and gathered a wide variety of plants to support their diet. Paleo-Indian sites are quite rare in the archaeological record, and have been found in association with major waterways such as the Hudson, and in quarry zones such as the Walkill Valley. Staten Island, however, has emerged as a major focus of Paleo-Indian activity. The most intense locus of Paleo-Indian activity is the area between Rossville and Tottenville. The sites here are characterized as high, well-drained spots overlooking the Arthur Kill (Boesch, 1994:9) The Port Mobil site is among the best known Paleo-Indian sites in the northeast. (Map 3) A number of other finds have been made to the south of this rich region, however they consist largely of surface finds of fluted points, collected in the absence of controlled excavation, and therefore subject to flaws in interpretation. Bearing in mind that the entire continental shelf was a vast tundra region, now

submerged beneath the Atlantic Ocean, and that several Paleo-Indian points have been recovered from the ocean floor, the lower coastal plain zone of Staten Island might be seen as an inland buffer between this vast coastal plain and the higher lands of the New Jersey Piedmont.

The Archaic period in Staten Island is better represented than the Paleo-Indian. It is divided into four stages: the Early Archaic, the Middle Archaic; the Late Archaic and the Terminal Archaic. In many important respects, the nature of life in the Archaic period was little different from the nomadic lives lived by the Paleo-Indians; however, during the time span of the Archaic significant changes in the environment occurred. The tundra-like landscape began to give way, first to spruce forest and then to a forest composed of various conifers, hemlocks and hardwoods. As the hardwood forests advanced northward, a new ecosystem became available, an ecosystem that provided a range of nuts (in particular the acorn), grasses and tubers that supported both the smaller game of the Archaic period and the human population as well.

Population growth is inferred for this time period as sites increase in density and versatility. The Late Archaic period is well represented on Staten Island. The period lasted from roughly 4000 B.C. to 1700 B.C., a time during which the Copper and Bronze Ages and the construction of the great Pyramids of Giza were all taking place in the Old World (Snow, 1980:187). Archaic sites on Staten Island include the Hollowell, Old Place, Charleston Beach, Ward's Point, Travis, Richmond Hill, Chemical Lane, Harik's Sandy Ground, Pottery Farm, Bowman's Brook and a number of others.

The people of this time followed a life-way called the "Mast Forest Tradition", an adaptation that focused on the processing of a broad range of nuts and plant foods that supplemented the hunting of the white tail deer and other small game. Ritchie says "seeds, nuts, berries, roots (and) dried meat . . ." were processed with a variety of grinding implements, with the main focus being acorn meal (Ritchie 1969a:62). Sites are not large, but they are numerous.

A number of excavations have yielded evidence of small houses based on a spiral plan, with overlapping walls creating the entryway. Few burial sites have been excavated, but it is suggested that cremation was the preferred mortuary practice for these people (Snow, 1980:231). On Staten Island, Long Island and along the southern coast of New England, shell middens associated with the consumption of coastal and riverine shellfish are abundant. The overall profile of these Late Archaic people, then, is of a group of nomadic hunter-gatherers organized in relatively small groups with an extremely flexible adaptation to a varied landscape.

The Archaic period in Staten Island is followed by the Transitional Stage. Chief among the general characteristics that separate the Transitional Stage from the earlier period is the use of stone vessels. With soapstone being the usual raw material, these vessels were extremely heavy, and were later replaced by pottery vessels of various types. The Transitional period is identified by the highly distinctive Orient Fishtail projectile point, by the use of soapstone vessels, whose raw materials were most probably quarried in Rhode Island and in Bristol, Connecticut, by distinctive burials and by the intense exploitation of shellfish.

Boesch indicates that a radically different broad-bladed projectile point type arrived in Staten Island at this time (probably the "Susquehanna Broad" tradition). Transitional sites have been found at the Pottery Farm, Ward's Point, Old Place and the Travis site. Orient Fish Tail points have been recovered along the beach at Kreischerville (Boesch, 1994:12)

The Woodland Stage, like the Archaic is divided into several substages, including the early Woodland Stage, the Middle Woodland Stage, and the Late Woodland Stage. Sites used by Woodland groups tend to be away from the major waterways and are frequently located on inland streams. In later periods there is some indication of the presence of palisaded villages. Around these sites, on the alluvial plains of nearby streams, the Indian fields were located. Horticulture, although practiced in other parts of North America at an earlier date, does not appear in this area until c. 1000 A.D. The changeover to cultivation of a variety of domesticates, among them maize, beans, gourds, sumpweed and sunflower, created a marked change in the pattern of land use and settlement. With the advent of sedentary or semi-sedentary occupations, the character of sites changed.

By the time the Europeans arrived the dominant indigenous groups inhabiting Staten Island were the Lenape/Delaware, Munsee speakers who had migrated into the area during the Late Woodland. The Munsee are a sub-group of the very extensive Algonquian cultural and linguistic group.

Population figures are difficult to calculate due to the lightening speed with which European diseases wiped out the indigenous population. Snow states that "There are almost no data on which to base a population estimate for the middle and lower Connecticut and central Long Island population". This assessment would be equally true of Staten Island. With the coming of first the Dutch, then the British settler, the indigenous population of New England decreased to its current negligible size.

An assessment of the broader ecological setting in the general region of the project area indicates that substantial streams and wetlands exist in the area. As the subsistence patterns of the indigenous inhabitants of the northeastern United States have become clearer to modern archaeologists, it has become increasingly accepted that not only the streams, but the associated tidal marshes, wetlands and their fringes were intensively exploited as one of the richest subsistence zones available. Wetlands and abundant streams provided aquatic life such as the fish, frogs, shellfish, water insects and water flora. Avian resources in the form of the birds that were themselves attracted to the teeming life of the wetlands abounded, as did the large game species that watered in these spots. The mosaic of food sources available to the inhabitants of the project area would have been quite rich.

In terms of the greater archaeological context, the project area rests in the center of a dense locus of prehistoric activity. Within one-half mile of the project area are the Huguenot Site (a Middle Woodlands site located on raised sandy ground adjacent to a stream flowing into the Arthur Kill), the Cutting Site (a multi-component site with dates ranging from Paleo-Indian through Middle Woodland), the Hammerstone Hill Site (a Woodland site that yielded quantities of debitage and ceramics), Harik's Sandy Ground Site (an Archaic site interpreted as a hunting and butchering station), the Wort Farm Site (a Late Archaic through Late Woodland site located near the source of Tappen's Brook that has been interpreted as a large

camp occupied over a long period of time), the Rossville Campsite I and II (two Woodland sites dated to the Bowman's Brook period), the Clay Pit Pond Road Sites (a group of sites dating from the Archaic through the Woodland that are located on a series of sandy knolls), the Sandy Brook Site (a Late Archaic through Late Woodland site on the west bank of Sandy Brook that has been described as a "large prehistoric base camp"), the Sharrott Estates Site (a Late Woodland site interpreted as a small intermittent hunting camp that may have been a satellite site for the Sandy Brook base camp), a small unnamed site (NSASI 1896) and the Benedict Creek Fresh Kill Site (a site of undetermined date located on the banks of the creek) (see Sensitivity Analysis at the end of Part 1A).

There are more than 20 prehistoric sites (Boesch, 1994) within the radius of one mile from the project area, but for purposes of this report we limited our discussion to those within a one-half mile area. (Map 3) Even limited ourselves, as can be seen from the above, sites are numerous with virtually all prehistoric phases up to the contact period are represented. The ecological richness of this landscape in addition to the proximity of known archaeological sites indicated that the project area (Block 6108/Lot 46) possesses a high (Boesch) potential to yield prehistoric cultural resources. In particular, the investigation of the project area may yield information that would shed additional light on the following issues:

- subsistence patterns of Native America peoples;
- daily life of the Native American peoples inhabiting the area from Paleo-Indian through the Contact Period;
- land use patterns of the Native American peoples inhabiting the area from Paleo-Indian through the Contact Period;
- and artifacts that might link the area to known Contact Period tribes that lived on Staten Island.

To cite one possibility: the Sandy Brook site (LPC #44), located on the west bank of Sandy Brook to the south and east of Bloomingdale Road, has been described as a "large prehistoric base camp", while the prehistoric site (LPC #43) identified at Sharrott Estates (immediately west of Bloomingdale Road) has been interpreted as a small intermittent hunting camp that may have served as a satellite camp for the larger Sandy Brook site. The project area is located somewhat further away from the Sandy Brook site than the Sharrott Estates site, but it is within easy walking distance and may have the potential to also contain evidence of a hunting or still hunting camp. It is of interest that despite the heavy concentration of sites in the area of Woodrow Road no sites have been identified nearer to the project area than the Wort Farm site (LPC #11) which is interpreted as a large seasonal camp site (as opposed to the Sandy Brook base camp) that was reused over a long period of time. Given that there were historically several small ponds just to the north of the project area which would have provided fresh water and resources for Native American peoples, it is likely that the only reason sites have not been identified on the South Shore Golf Course (for example) is that they have not been sought. Based on present condition on the site, the presence of a hunting or still hunting camp might be postulated. An archaeological investigation of the project area reveal the presence/absence of such a site or sites and has the potential to increase our

understanding of the environmental factors that determined the occurrence of sites in upland area on Staten Island.

## HISTORY OF THE AREA

The history of Staten Island began with the early settlements of the Dutch, who were followed by the English and joined by the French Huguenots. Woodrow Road (forming the southern boundary of the project area) appears on the earliest maps of the area, having been established along the dividing line between a series of long, narrow farm lots that were in some cases granted as patent and in other cases not. (Map 4) Despite the presence of the road and the early sale of the land in the vicinity of the project area, it appears that settlement did not take place until the later years of the 18th century. In 1781 there was only one dwelling on Woodrow Road. It was located on the northwest corner at the intersection of Huguenot Avenue. With the exception of this house and the Woodrow Methodist Church and its associated parsonage (built in 1787), little development took place on the north side of Woodrow Road. A map showing the patents and land ownership in the Colonial period indicates that the project area itself appears to fall within the boundaries of two lots belonging to the Cresson family (probably the eastern most lot belonging to Josiah Cresson). (Map 5) By the early 19th century Woodrow was identified a community on the maps – through little business activity appears to have taken place here (only one store is noted). Other names found in old records include the Johnsons, Merserauls, Slaughts, Wynants (Winant) and Parlies.

The New York State Census of 1855 identified Westfield as containing well-drained sandy soil that was producing wheat, rye, oats, barley, corn, potatoes and apples (New York State Census 1855: unpagged), as well as specialized crops such as strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, watercress and mint (New York State Census 1875: 5, 7). Maps from the mid-19th century show a series of dwellings and open fields located on the south side of the road, but the north side of the road remained woodland. Although oystering and various manufacturing enterprises were important on the south end of Staten Island and commercial centers existed at Rossville and at the intersection of Woodrow Road and Bloomingdale Road, it is likely that along Woodrow Road agriculture was the major pursuit.

The earliest map examined that includes the project area is the 1781 *A Map of New York and Staten Island and Part of Long Island* by George Taylor and Andrew Skinner. On this map Woodrow Road is shown as a straight line. The area to the north of the highway is wooded. The only structure shown along this portion of the highway is a house on the southeast corner of Woodrow Road and Huguenot Avenue.

By 1845, when the United States Coast Survey produced a *Map of New-York Bay and Harbor and the Environs*, several structures have been built along the section of Woodrow Road between Huguenot Avenue and the road to Rossville. The Methodist Church and parsonage are shown, but not identified. The only other structures on the north side of the highway are at the intersection of Huguenot and Woodrow and at the intersection of the road to Rossville and Woodrow. A number of dwellings had been built on the south side of the highway. There are no structures of any kind within the project area.

James Butler published a *Map of Staten Island or Richmond County, New York* in 1853. This map indicates that there were now a number of buildings on the north side of Woodrow Road between Huguenot Avenue and the road to Rossville. Beginning at Huguenot Avenue there were three houses on small lots, followed by a store and a house owned by a person later identified as Captain Isaac Cole. The Methodist Church and parsonage were to the west of the Cole property. Further along the road -- but outside the project area -- were three dwellings whose owners are not identified. This is the only map on which any structures are located at any point along the north side of Woodrow Road except for those already noted. Finally, at the intersection of Woodrow Road and the road to Rossville was a house owned by P. Pollion. Although it is not possible to determine with certainty whether Butler's placement of a number of dwellings on the north side of Woodrow Road was conjectural, the fact that no other maps shows any buildings in the same area suggests the possibility that the map was in error.

In 1859 the only dwellings along Woodrow Road were the residence of B. LaForge at the intersection of the road to Rossville and Woodrow Road and the Methodist Church and parsonage. H. F. Walling's *Map of Staten Island, Richmond County, New York* does not include the Cole property or the dwelling formerly located at the intersection of Woodrow Road and Huguenot Avenue. The names of the owners on the south side of the highway between Huguenot Avenue and the road to Rossville from east to west were: S. Brewer, M. Winant, W. Kelsey, A. Eddy, and R. Edwards.

As was the case with earlier maps, the c. 1866 *Colton's Map of Staten Island, Richmond County, State of New York* indicates the only structures shown on the north side of Woodrow Road in the vicinity of the project area were the Methodist Church and parsonage. All the dwellings are on the south side of the road. There is no indication of any store or other commercial enterprise. No streams or ponds are shown in the vicinity of the project area.

The J. B. Beer's 1887 *Atlas of Staten Island, Richmond County, New York* includes property lines -- making it possible to locate the project area. The Methodist Church and parsonage are identified. Immediately to the west was a 97 acre parcel owned by H. W. Decker. H. W. Decker also owned the adjacent 101 acre parcel. The project area is located immediately west of the dotted line that marks the boundary between these two parcels.

The Vermeule & Bien 1890 *Topographical Map of Staten Island* is very detailed and provides a good deal of information, including elevations, stream locations, and the names of the streets in the vicinity of the project area. Woodrow Road and Huguenot Avenue are named, and the road to Rossville is identified as York Avenue. No structures are shown on this map, but the peculiar curvature of Woodrow Road permits one to identify the location of the project area. In 1890 the project area was shown as wooded and at an elevation of 121 feet above mean sea level.

The 1907 Robinson and Pidgeon *Atlas of the Borough of Richmond, City of New York* published by E. Belcher Hyde also includes property lines -- again making it possible to locate the project area. The church land is identified. Immediately to the west was an 85.07 acre parcel owned by Franklin Post. Franklin Post also owned the adjacent 89.13 acre parcel.

The project area is located immediately west of the dotted line that marks the boundary between these two parcels. No structures are shown on this map. However, as early as 1907 this area of Staten Island was beginning to experience development pressures. The land on the southeastern corner at the intersection of Huguenot and Woodrow Road was owned by The Realty Business Corporation, and other land in the area had been subdivided (at least on paper) into a series of small lots.

The final map examined was the George W. and Walter S. Bromley 1917 *Atlas of the City of New York, Borough of Richmond, Staten Island, New York*. This map shows the further "suburbanization" of the area. Woodrow Park Realty owned the land that became the South Shore Golf Course. The Realty Business Corporation still owned the land at the southeastern corner of the intersection of Huguenot and Woodrow Road. No building appears to have taken place on either parcel. Capt. Isaac Cole owned the property immediately east of the Methodist Church property. Lena Post owned the 39 acres parcel immediately to the west. Along the boundary line between the Post property and the land now owned by Francis M. Jenckes a street identified as Mayflower Avenue has been penciled in -- this street corresponds with the proposed extension of Marcy Avenue. To the north of the project area a series of small ponds are shown. At least one of these ponds is drained by a small stream. None of these bodies of water are within the project area. No structures are shown within the project area.

At the present time, the land surrounding the project area has experienced substantial development. A number of houses have been built whose rear lots abut the western boundary of the project area. To the east new development has also taken place -- and along the northern portion of the eastern boundary of the project area Marcy Avenue exists as a paved street. Marcy Avenue does not at the present time extend through to connect with Woodrow Road -- the route of the street has, however, been cleared preparatory to construction.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### Prehistoric Sensitivity

There are more than 20 prehistoric sites (Boesch, 1994) within the radius of one mile from the project area, but for purposes of this report we limited our discussion to those within a one-half mile area. Even limited ourselves, as can be seen from the above, sites are numerous with virtually all prehistoric phases up to the contact period are represented. The ecological richness of this landscape in addition to the proximity of known archaeological sites indicated that the project area (Block 6108/Lot 46) possesses a high potential to yield prehistoric cultural resources. In particular, the investigation of the project area may yield information that would shed additional light on the following issues:

- subsistence patterns of Native America peoples;
- daily life of the Native American peoples inhabiting the area from Paleo-Indian through the Contact Period;

- land use patterns of the Native American peoples inhabiting the area from Paleo-Indian through the Contact Period;
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### **Historic Sensitivity**

Based on research undertaken for this report which indicates that the project area was formerly woodland and never contained structures of any kind, it is the conclusion of the consultant that the project area contains an extremely low potential to yield any historic archaeological remains.

**APPENDIX B**

**MAPS & FIGURES**

## **STAGE 1A LITERATURE REVIEW**

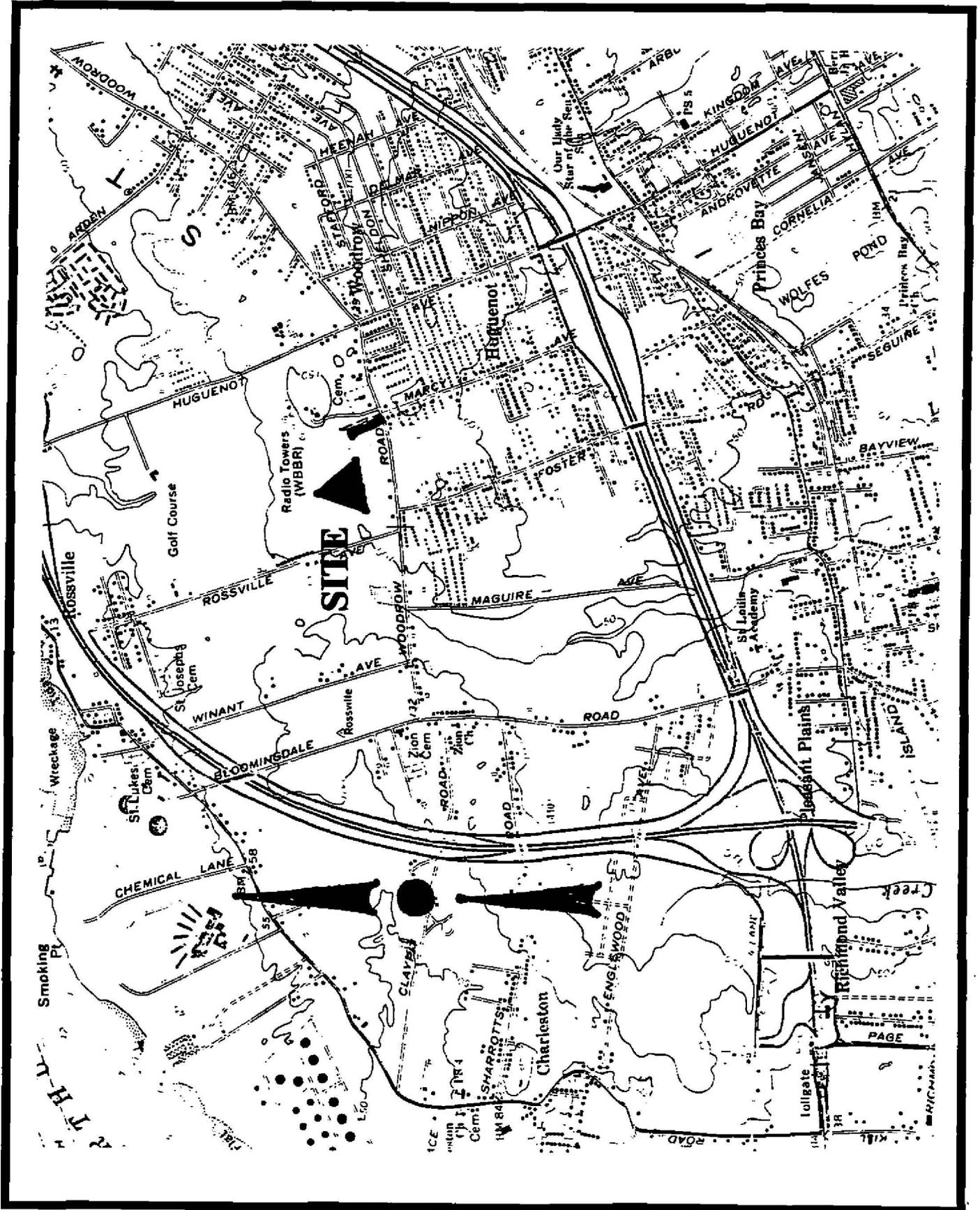
### **MAPS**

- Map 1            Location Map. USGS Brooklyn Quadrangle. Taken 1967. Revised 1979.
- Map 2            Site Map. (Derived from Hagstrom's Atlas of the Five Boroughs).
- Map 3            Archaeological Sites Map (USGS Brooklyn Quadrangle. Taken 1967. Revised 1979)
- Map 4            Detail from McMillan's 1775-1783 Map. (McMillen 1933) (Fig. 11 from Geismar, 1985)
- Map 5            Detail of Map of Staten Island showing Colonial Land Patents 1668 to 1712. (Fig. 5 from Cotz/Lenick, 1982)

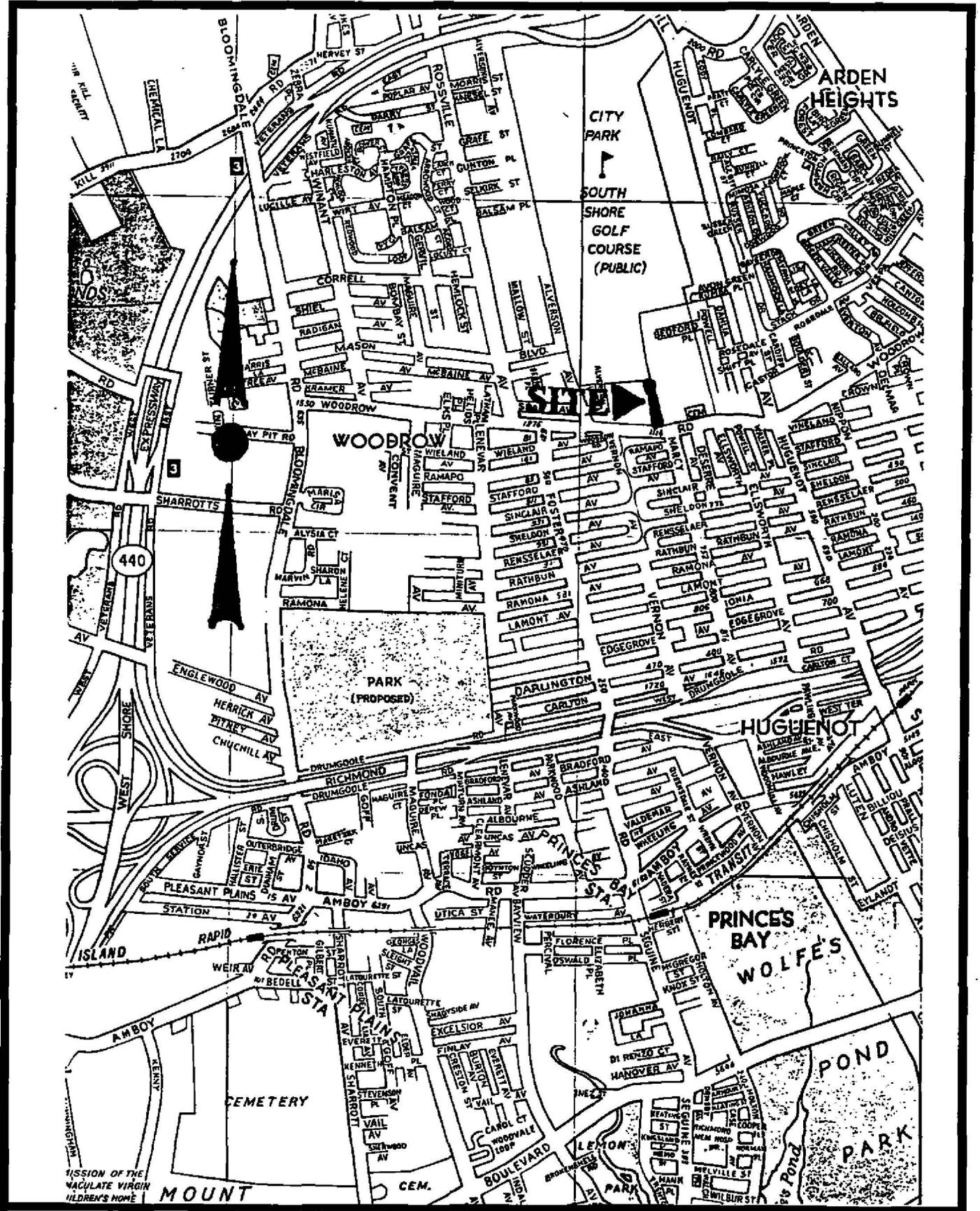
### **FIGURES**

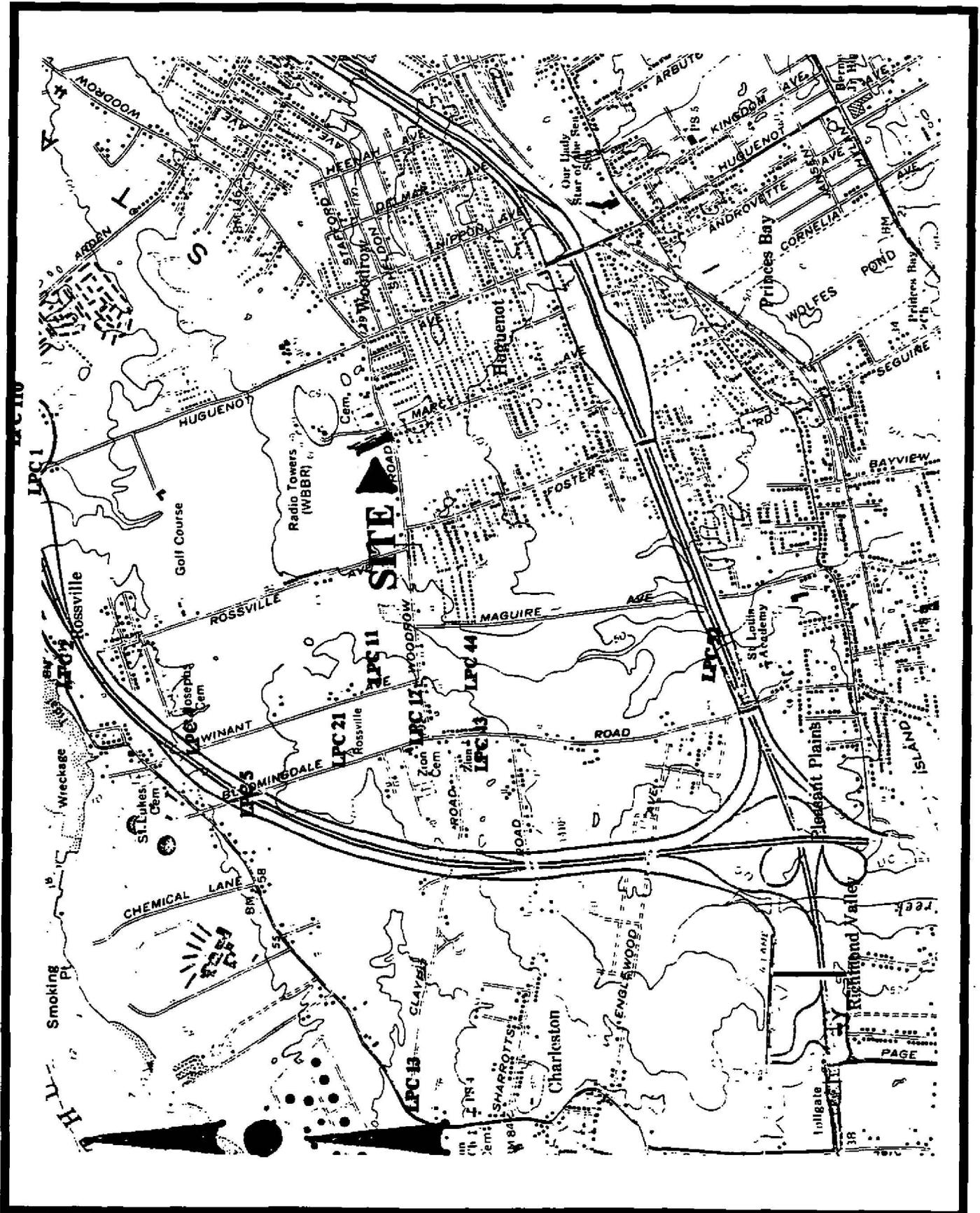
- Fig. 1            Schematic showing Site and Proposed Extension of Marcy Avenue and West Castor Place.
- Fig. 2            Schematic of Site in Context of Surrounding Development.
- Fig. 3            Subsurface Geology of Staten Island. (Perlmutter and Arnow 1953) (Fig. 5 from Geismar 1985)
- Fig. 4            Surface Geology of Staten Island. (Perlmutter and Arnow 1953) (Fig. 5 from Geismar 1985)

Map 1: Location Map. USGS Brooklyn Quadrangle. (Scale: 1:24,000) Marcy Ave. extension is dashed line. New Lot 47, Block 6108, Borough of Staten Island, Richmond County, New York.



Map 2: Site Map. (derived from Hagstrom's *New York City Five Borough Atlas*) (Scale: 2" = 1000 meters)  
 New Lot 47, Block 6108, Borough of Staten Island, Richmond County, New York.





Map 4: Detail from McMillan's 1775-1783 Map (McMillan 1933) (Fig. 11 from Geismar, 1985) (No scale)  
 New Lot 47, Block 6108, Borough of Staten Island, Richmond County, New York.

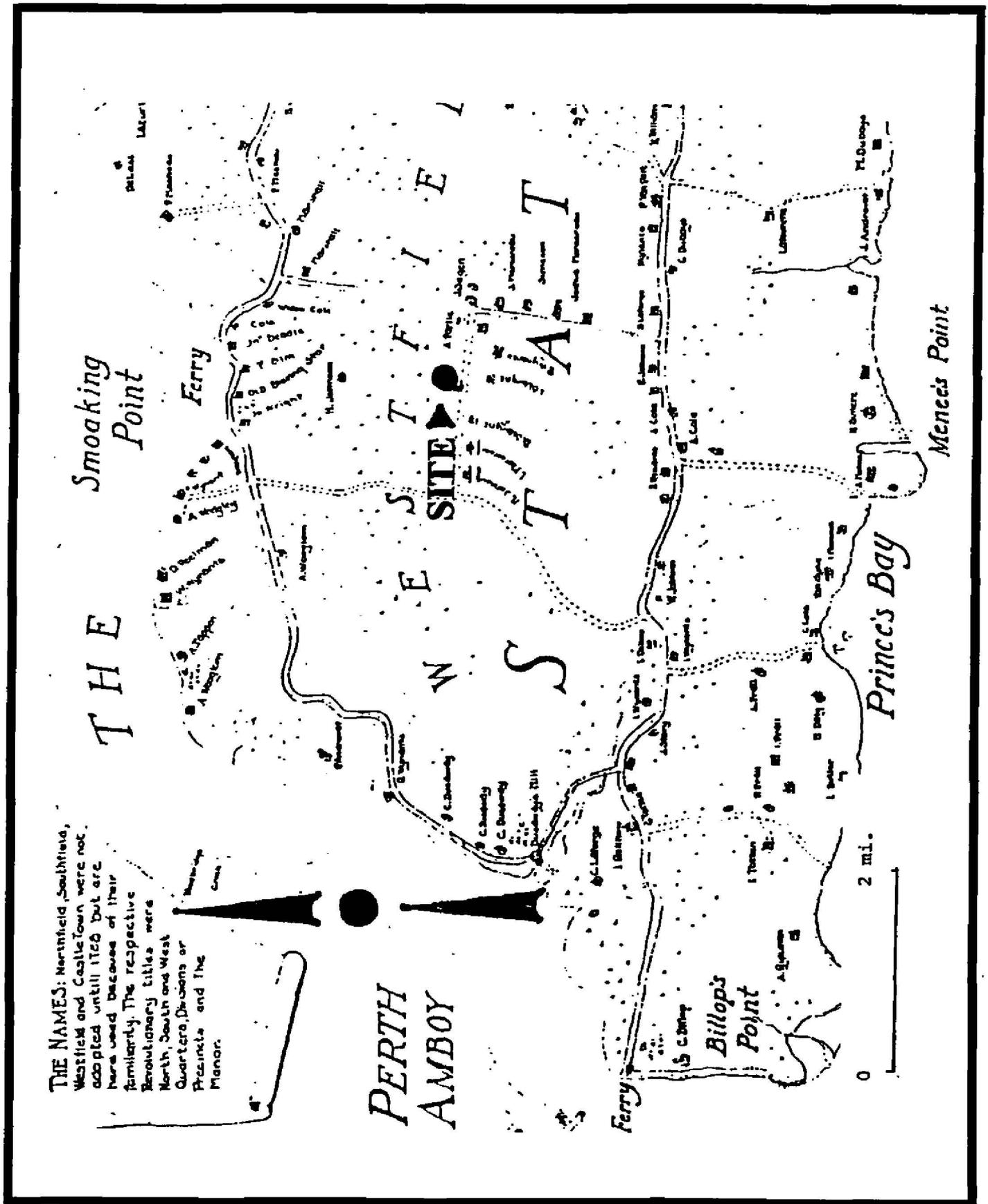




Fig. 1: Schematic showing Site & Proposed Extension of Marcy Avenue & West Castor Place. (No Scale)  
 New Lot 47, Block 6108, Borough of Staten Island, Richmond County, New York.

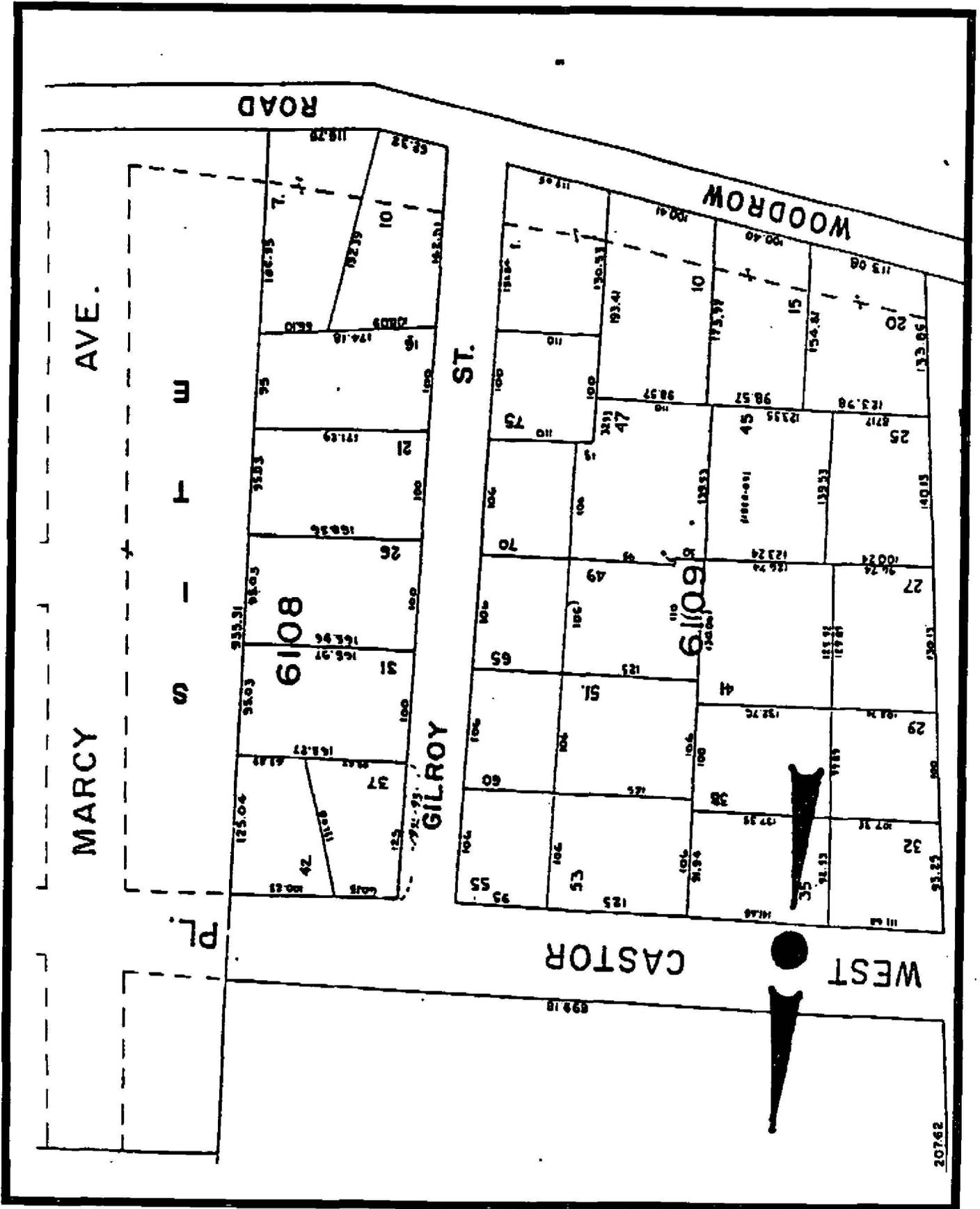




Fig. 3: Subsurface Geology of Staten Island. (Perlmutter & Arnow, 1953). (Fig. 5 from Geismar, 1985)  
 New Lot 47. Block 6108. Borough of Staten Island. Richmond County, New York.

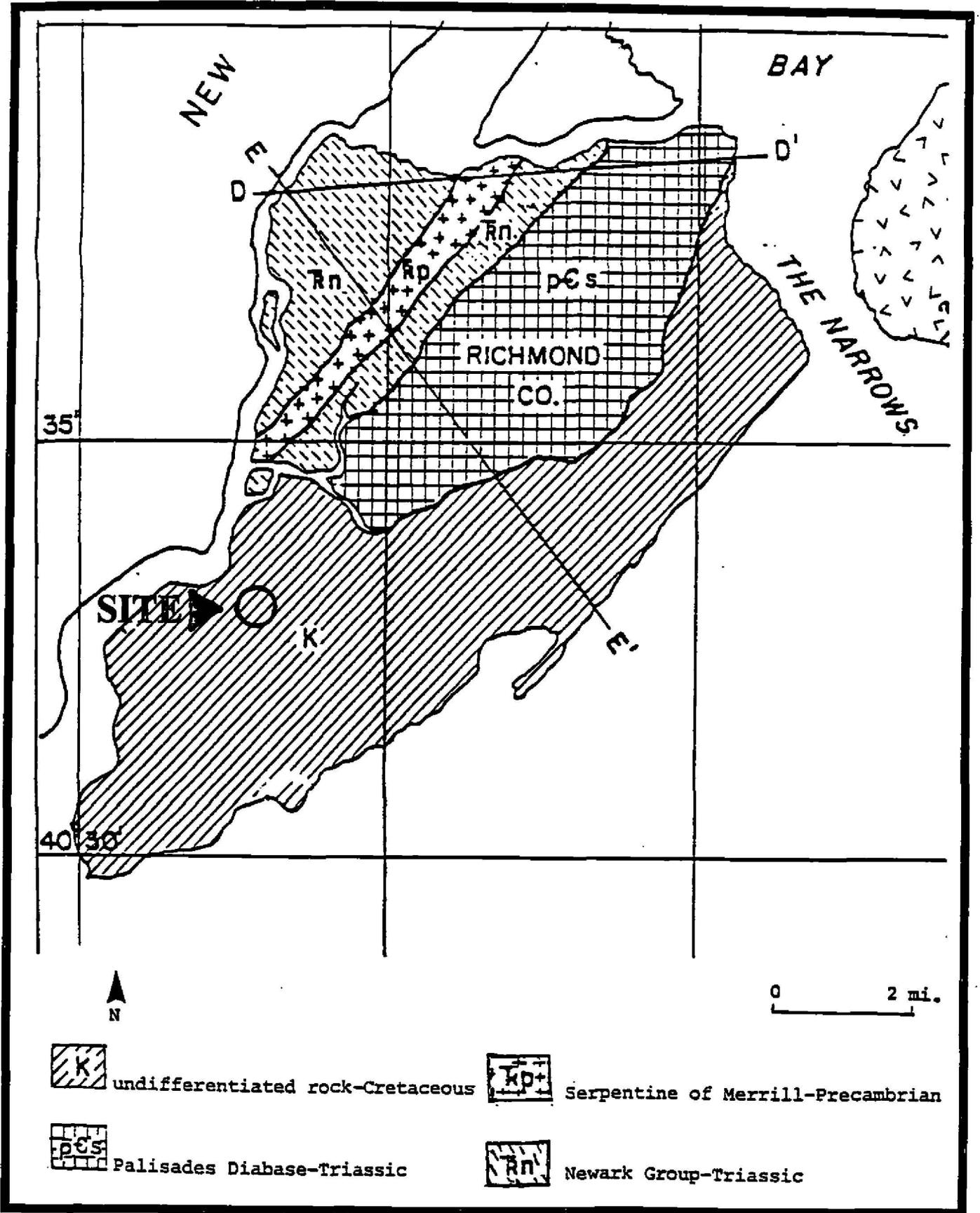
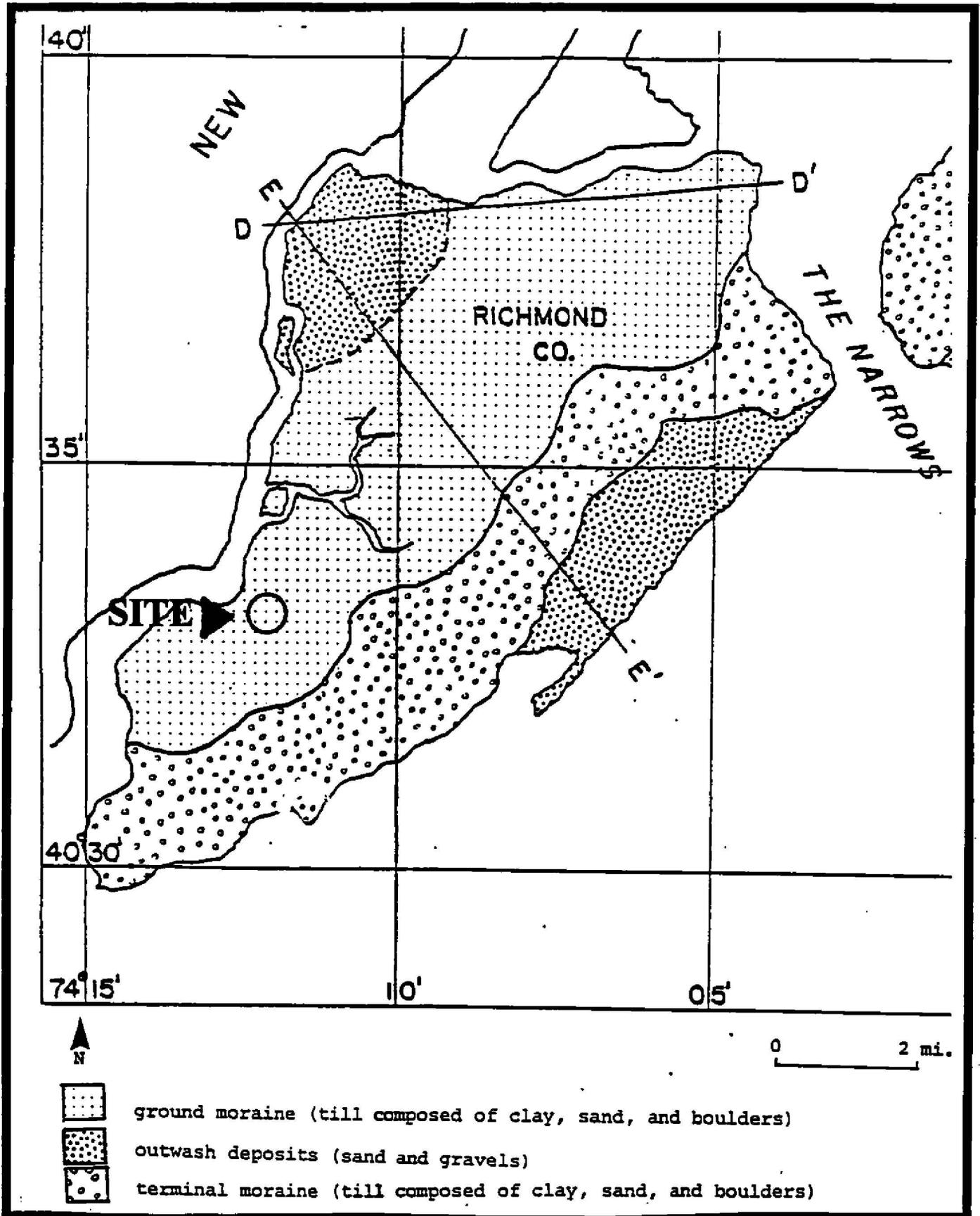


Fig. 4: Surface Geology of Staten Island. (Perlmutter & Arnow, 1953). (Fig. 4 from Geismar, 1985)  
New Lot 47. Block 6108. Borough of Staten Island. Richmond County, New York.



**APPENDIX C**

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

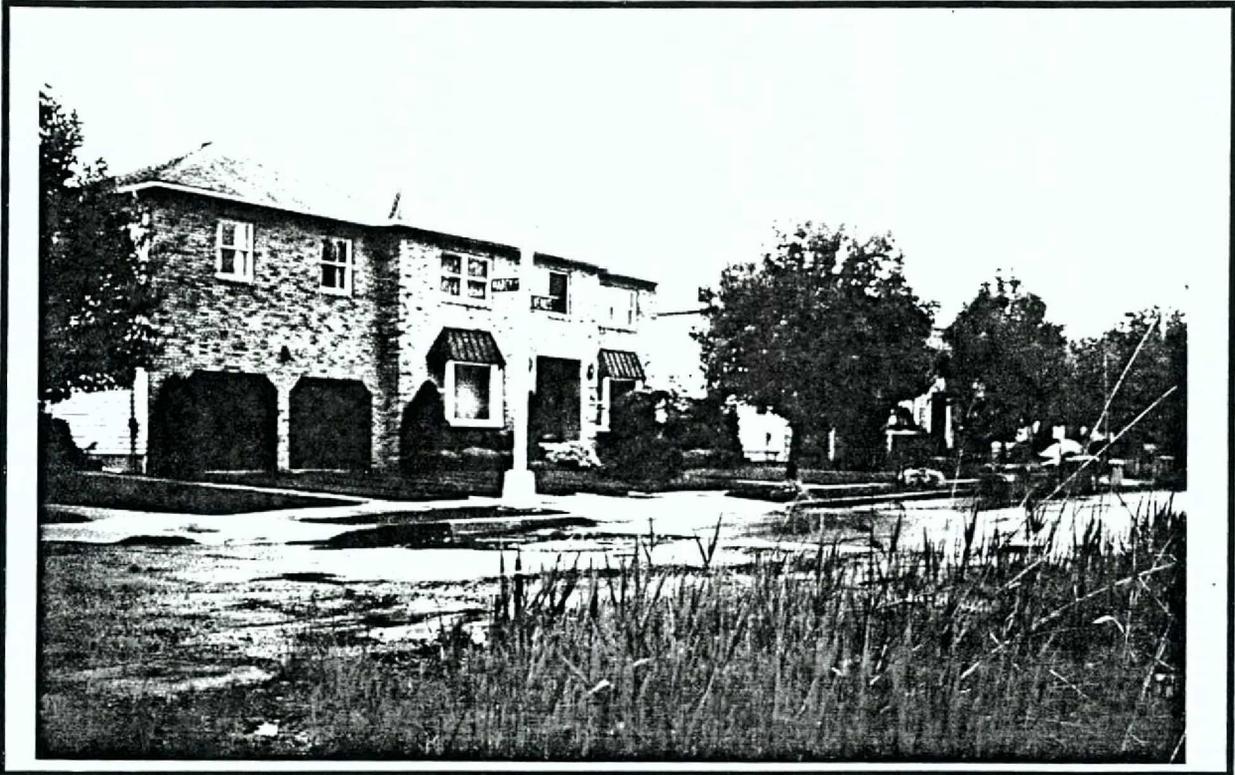


Photo 1: View of house at northwestern edge of project area.

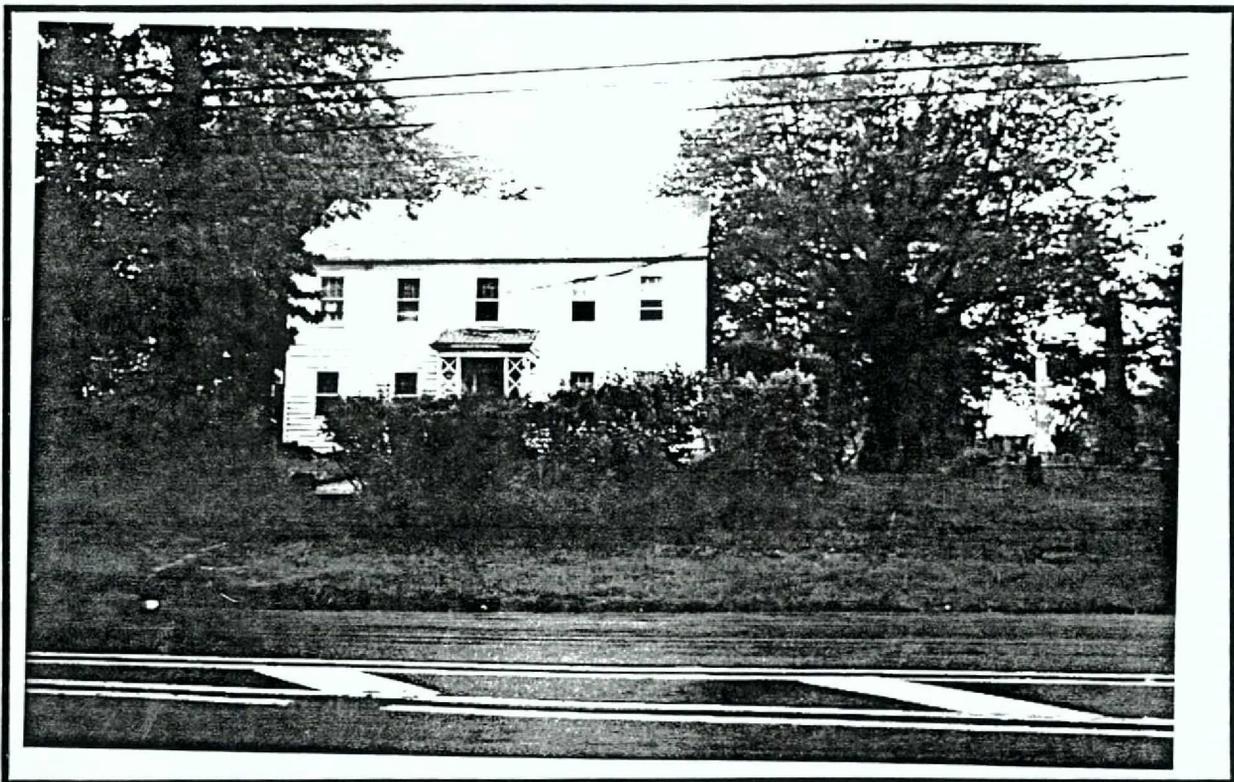
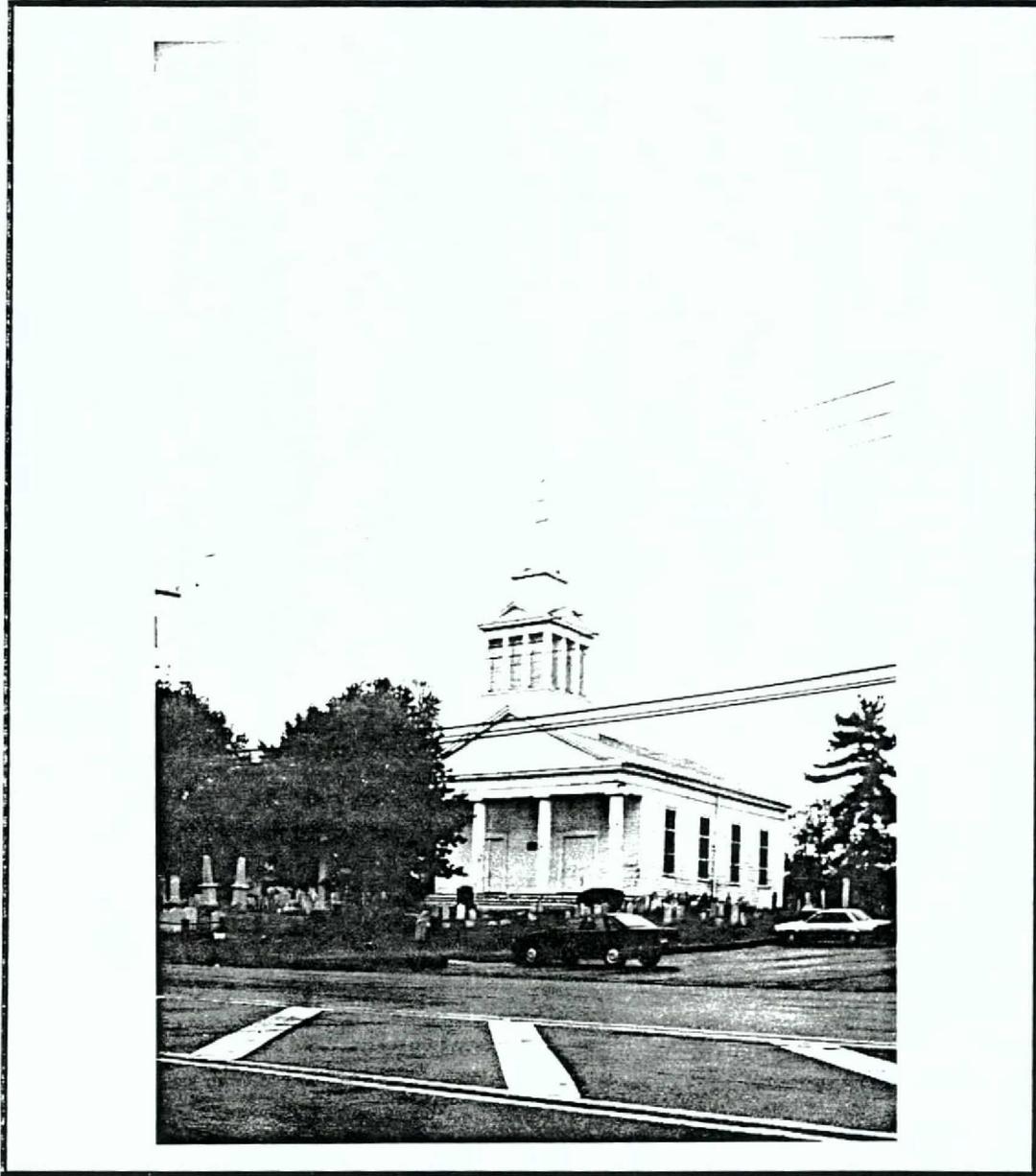


Photo 2: Parsonage of the Woodrow Methodist Church to east of project area.



**Photo 3:** Woodrow Methodist Church. National Register listing October 29, 1982. This was the first Methodist Church on Staten Island. The original building dated to 1787. It is presumed that the parsonage which stands to the west of the church was built at the same time. The present building was constructed in 1842 in the classic Greek Revival style. The oversized belfry is a later addition.



Photo 4: View looking south toward Woodrow Road. Note berm within the project area.

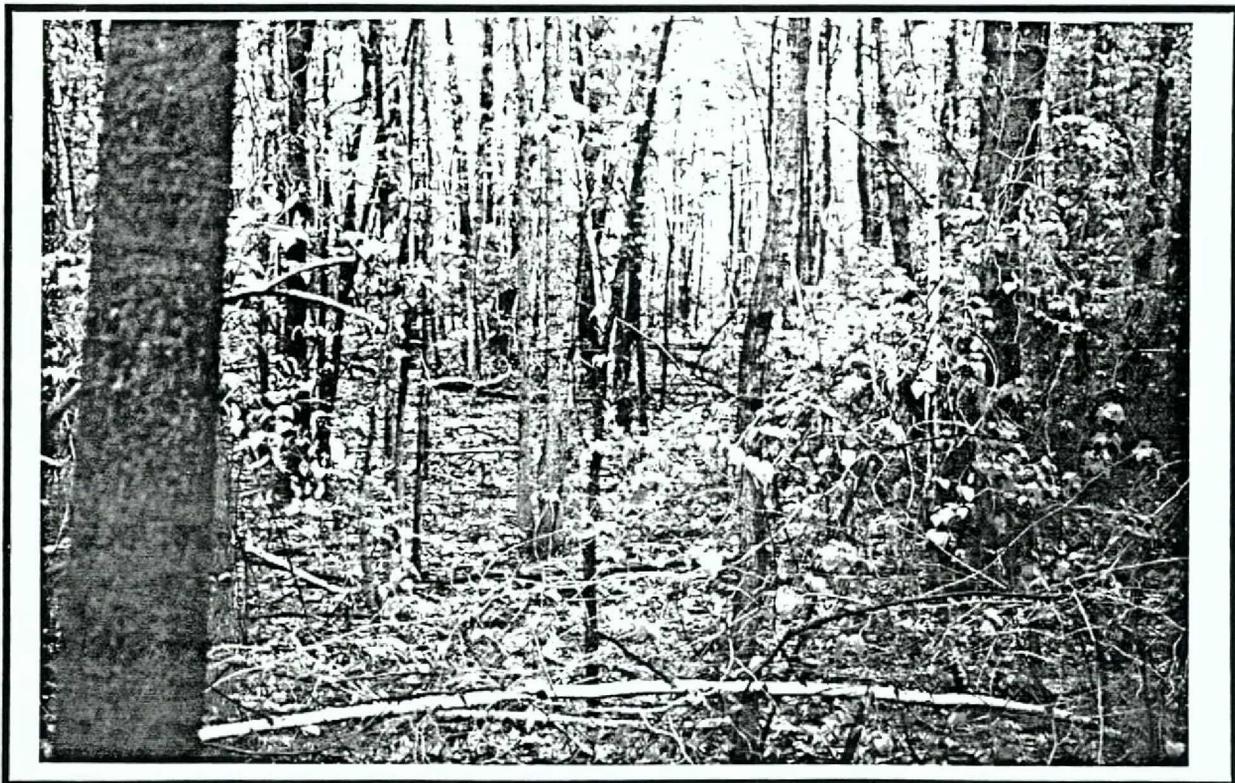


Photo 5: Forest floor within the project area is historic ground level.

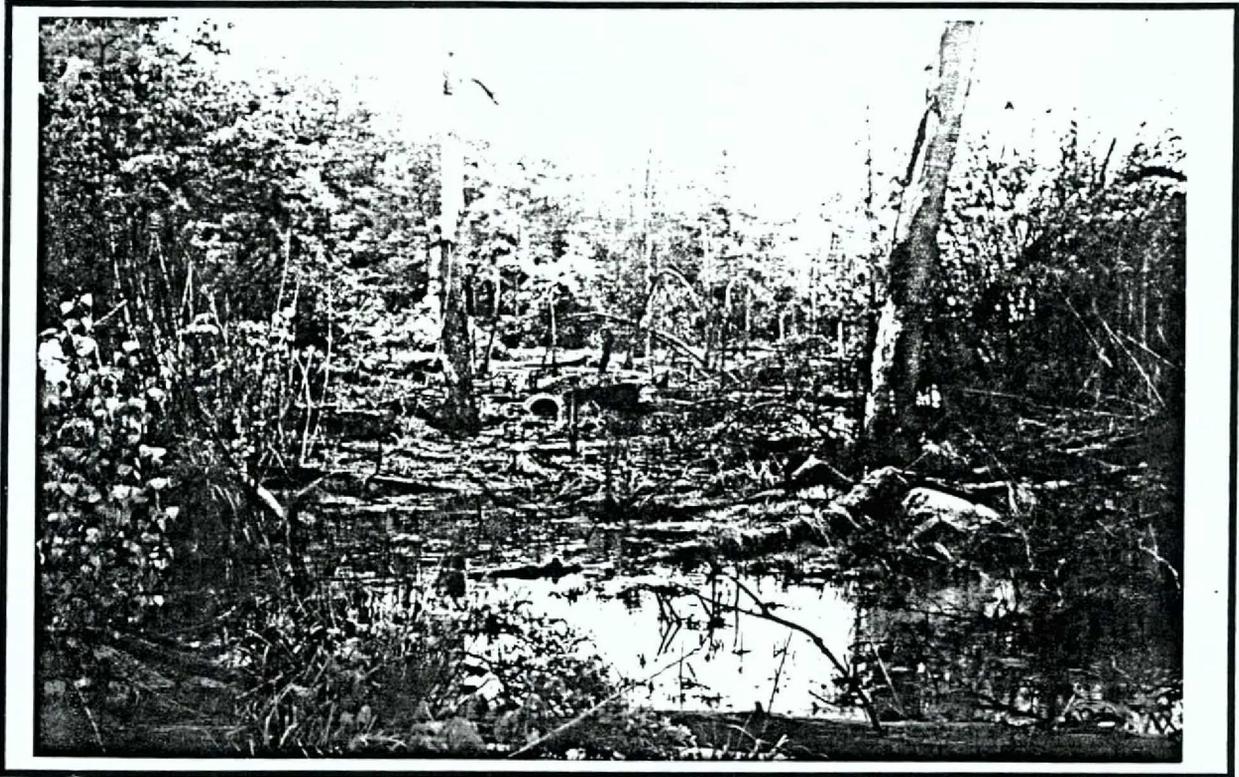


Photo 6: Marshy area near western boundary in the project area.

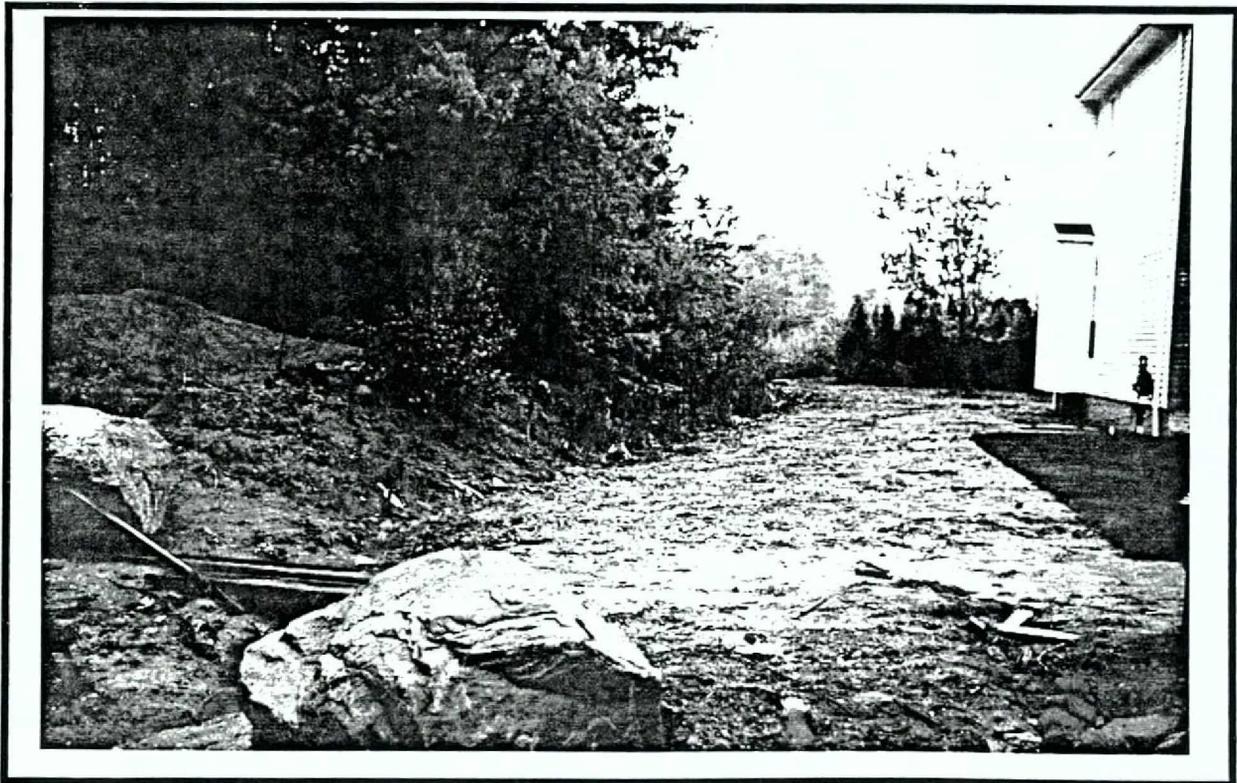


Photo 7: Ditch draining larger marshy area within the project area.

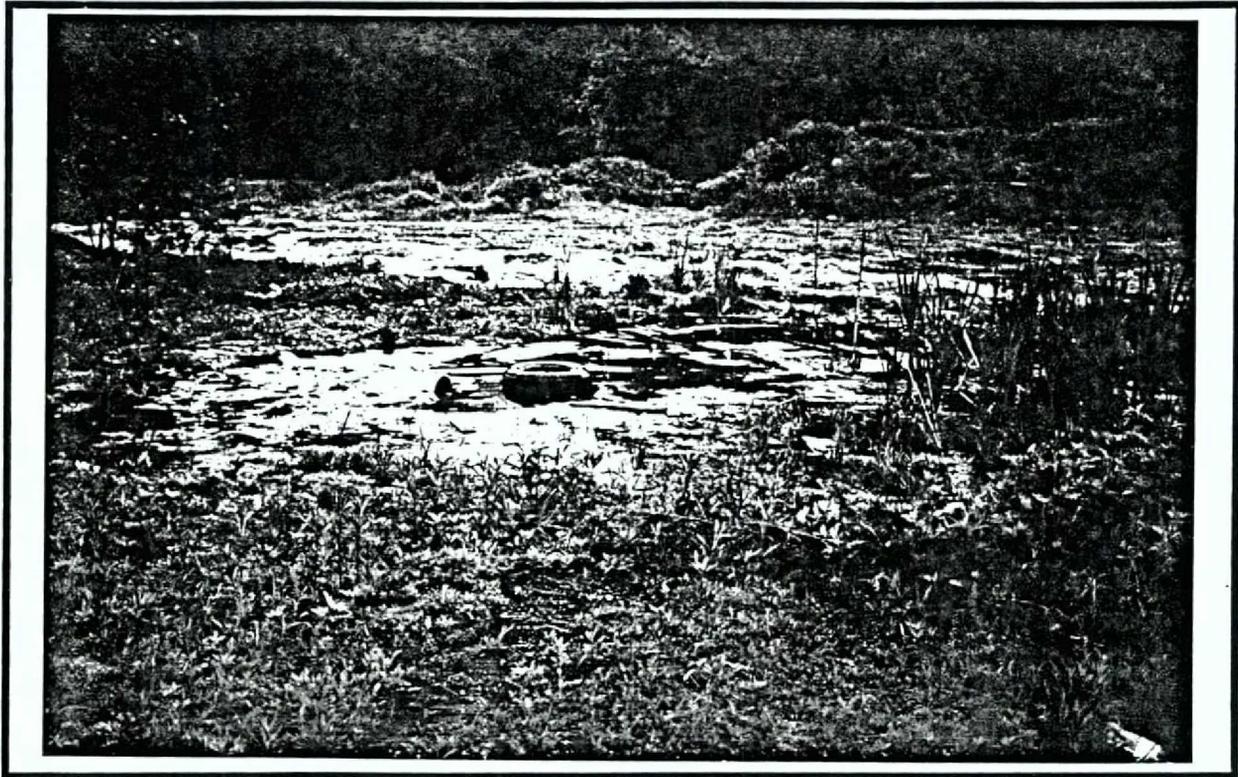


Photo 8: Small ponded area in northeastern corner of site.

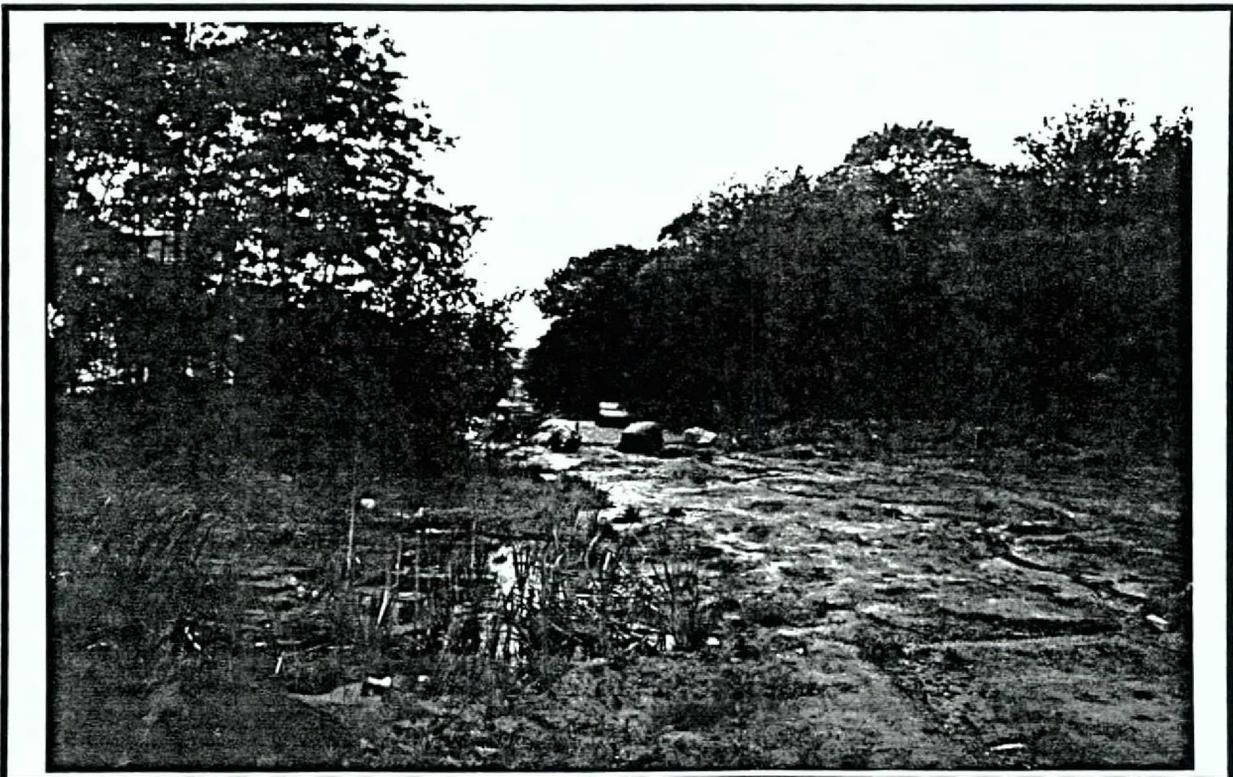
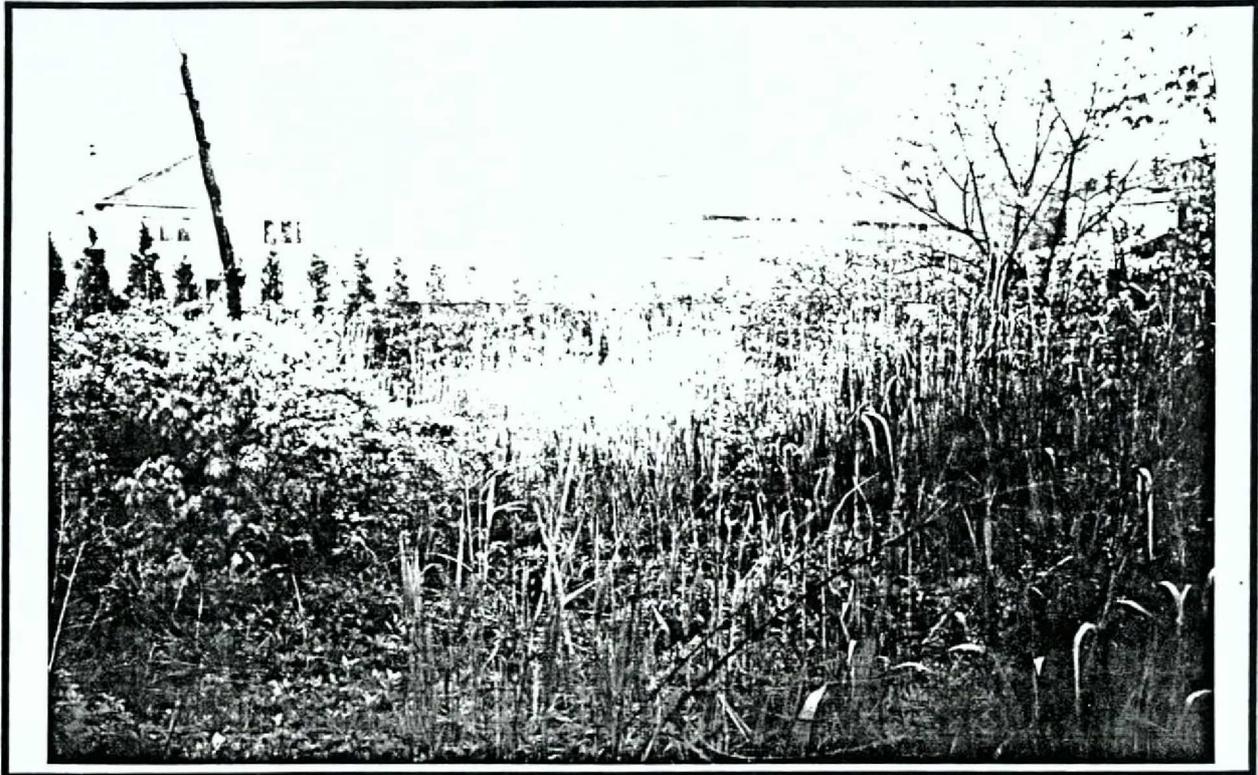


Photo 9: Note soil color on extension of West Castor Place at north edge of project area.



**Photo 10:** Wetland vegetation along western boundary of project area. View to houses along Gilroy Street.

**APPENDIX D**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

AG

THE CITY OF NEW YORK LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
100 Old Slip, New York, NY 10005 (212) 487-6800

# ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

DCP/96DCP023R  
PROJECT NUMBER

01/17/96  
DATE RECEIVED

## PROJECT

B6110 L18: MARCY AVE DOS TEXT CHANGE

- No architectural significance
- No archaeological significance
- Designated New York City Landmark or Within Designated Historic Districts
- Listed on National Register of Historic Places
- Appears to be eligible for National Register Listing and/or New York City Landmark Designation
- May be archaeologically significant; requesting additional materials

DEPT OF CITY PLANNING  
 RECEIVED  
 96 FEB - 9 PM 1:47  
 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW UNIT

## COMMENTS

LPC review of archaeological sensitivity models and historic maps indicates that there is potential for the recovery of remains from Native American occupation on the project site. Accordingly, the Commission recommends that an archaeological documentary study be performed for this site to clarify these initial findings and provide the threshold for the next level of review, if such review is necessary (see CEQR Technical Manual 1993).

*Chia Saubrey*  
SIGNATURE

01/31/96  
DATE