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**STAGE 1A ARCHEOLOGICAL/HISTORICAL SENSITIVITY EVALUATION
OF 1931 RICHMOND AVENUE
BOROUGH OF RICHMOND, NEW YORK**

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Materials on file at Greenhosue Consultants, compiled for other projects conducted in the Borough of Richmond were used in preparing this report. Credit is extended to the document research completed by Anna V. Farkas for previous projects.



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Archeological and Historical sensitivity study is to document the potential prehistoric and historic sensitivity of the 1931 Richmond Avenue Project through the review of existing archival, cartographic and published references and then to make recommendations regarding possible further testing. In order to provide a context for evaluating any identified resources within the parcel itself, this survey will provide a synthesis of published and unpublished prehistoric and historic resources in the immediate vicinity surrounding the project area.

The project area is located in western Staten Island, New York, in the vicinity of Bulls Head. The property consists of a roughly rectangular parcel located along the east side of Richmond Avenue. It is within Tax Block 2030 and consists of Lot 8. See Figure 1 for a map illustrating the location of the project area.

This study is organized in the following manner: first, a section describes the geography and physical setting of the project area; second, a section follows on the prehistoric sensitivity of the area; third, a review of the historic sensitivity of the area; and fourth, the conclusions and recommendations.

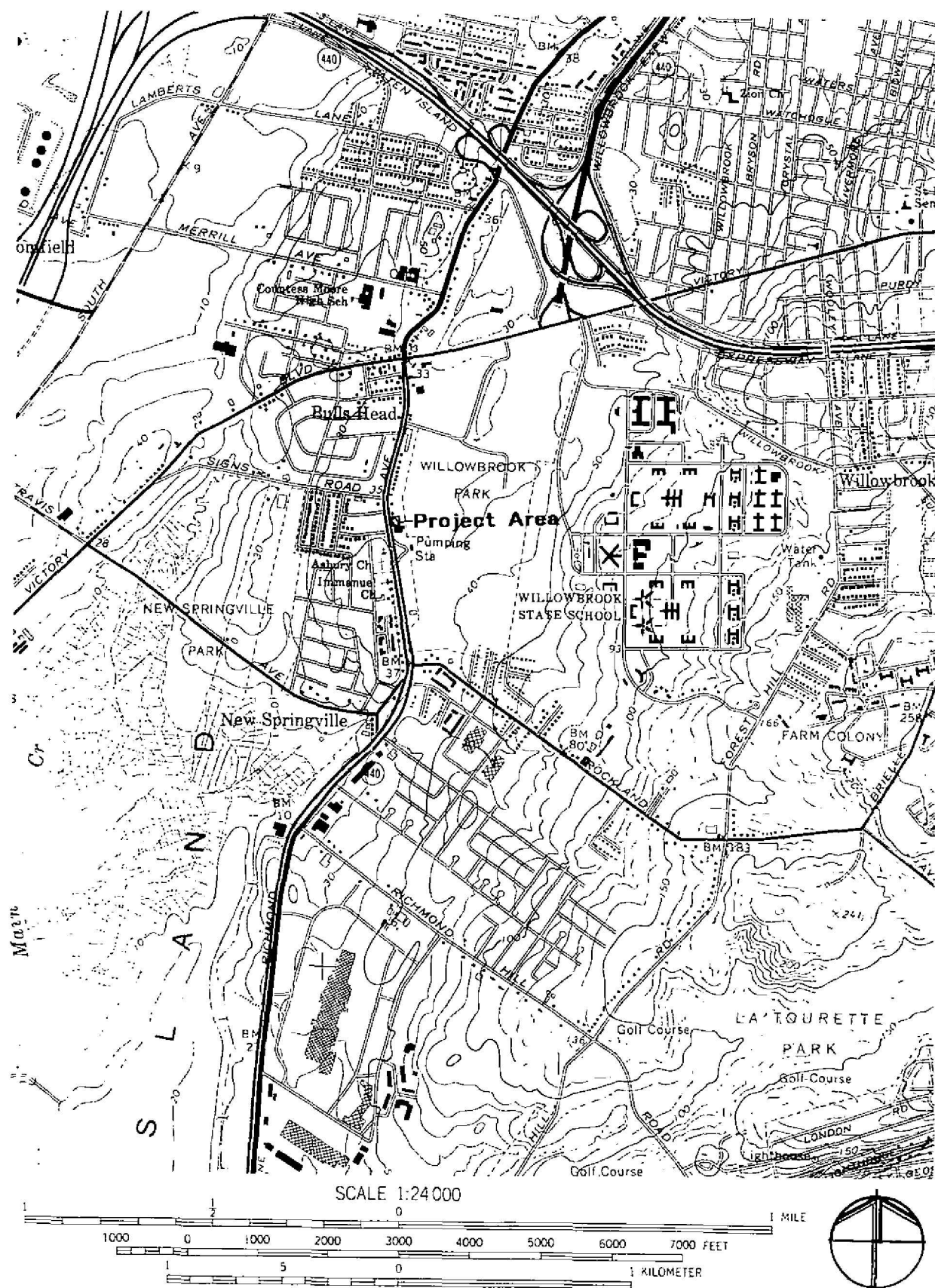


Figure 1

Project area location shown on portion of U.S.G.S. 7.5 Minute Series Arthur Kill N.Y.-N.J. Quadrangle, 1966, photorevised 1981.



GEOGRAPHY AND PHYSICAL SETTING

The project area is located in the Atlantic coastal Lowland Physiographic Province of New York State. There is only one other location in the state (Long Island) where this province occurs (Van Diver 1985:34). Geographically, Staten Island is part of New Jersey from which it is separated by the Kill Van Kull and the Staten Island Sound (Skinner 1909).

The geomorphology of Staten Island consists of landforms and deposits of glacial origin. The sediments were deposited by the Wisconsin Ice Sheet 55,000-10,000 years ago and generally consist of ground moraine, terminal moraine and outwash settlements (Jacobson 1980:5). The shoreline area in this portion of Staten Island is comprised of sandy embankments of beach and adjacent to and at times overlying the area's geologically earlier glacial deposits of Cretaceous formations of sand and clay (Weingartner 1967:41). Local glacial deposits may be overlaid by fill as well as beach, marsh, dune, swamp, and estuarine deposits (Jacobson 1980:5).

During April 2000 the Principal Investigator visited the 1931 Richmond Avenue project area. During this visit, a pedestrian survey was used to inspect the project area. Plates 1 and 2 provide views of the project area. There are no standing structures within the project area. The parcel is covered with grasses, some shrubs and a few fairly young trees. There are some small piles of soil and debris. A chain link fence surrounds most of the project area. South of the parcel is a one story market. North of the parcel is a two story office built recently. See Plate 1 for views of these structures.



PREHISTORIC SENSITIVITY

As part of the project evaluation process, the sensitivity study has surveyed published and unpublished resources in the Archives and Library of the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences (hereafter SIAS), the library of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, the files of the New York State Museum Division of Historical and Anthropological Services, the Research Branch of the New York Public Library, and the New York State Historic Preservation Office (NYSHPO). Most documented prehistoric archaeological work undertaken by both professional and avocational archaeologists has historically concentrated on the southwestern portion of Staten Island (Baughner 1985 personal communication). The problems of inadequate archaeological survey coverage particularly evident in the interior of the island may also be found in this location.

Table 1 presents the results of our search for prehistoric sites in the vicinity of the Richmond and Independence Avenues project area. Included in the table are eight sites located two miles or less from the project area. The locations of these sites are presented on Figure 2 with letter code identifiers which correspond to those in Table 1.

Of the eight known occurrences of prehistoric occupation within two miles of the project area, none were excavated recently under controlled conditions. All but one represent the work of professional archaeologists early in this century. Two professional archaeologists are included: Skinner and Parker.

Alanson Skinner, one of the first professional archaeologists to work extensively on Staten Island, characterized the locations chosen by prehistoric populations as follows:

Throughout Staten Island, with very few exceptions, aboriginal sites are confined to the sandy spots (1912:90).

Arthur C. Parker was New York State Archaeologist during the 1920's and 1930's. Many of the sites he included in his summary of the prehistory of Staten Island were originally reported by Skinner.

The nearest prehistoric site found, designated **A** in Table 1 and Figure 2, was originally reported by Alanson Skinner. Parker repeats Skinner's information in his text, assigning it Parker number ACP-RICH-10. Site **A** is known as New Springville. Shells, burials, and an iron arrowhead were reported to Skinner (1909:10), so the date range must include the Contact period. Site **A** is located approximately 0.3 miles south southeast of the project area.

The Bull's Head site is designated **B** in Figure 2 and Table 1. This site 0.5 miles northwest of the project area, was reported by Parker who provides a brief description which suggests that burials were found here, but does not describe sufficiently the artifacts recovered so no evaluation of date range can be made (Parker 1922:681).

The Bloomfield site is designated **C** in Figure 2 and Table 1. This site was initially reported by Skinner, and is situated 1.1 miles northwest of the project area. His description of



artifacts recovered indicates a date range including the Woodland and Contact Periods, and possibly some Late Archaic material (Skinner 1909:9).

The next two sites found during our search into prehistoric sites in the vicinity of the 1931 Richmond Avenue project area are both near Chelsea. The first of these was reported by Skinner and is designated **D** on Figure 2 and Table 1. This burial site is known as the Chelsea Site lies, approximately, 1.5 miles west of the project area. The other site is unnamed and is designated **E** in Figure 2 and Table 1. It is known only from Parker's site distribution map where a symbol for a camp appears in this location (Parker 1922:Plate 211). It is 1.7 miles west of the project area.

Another site found in this search was also reported first by Alanson Skinner, and included in Parker's text on Richmond County. This site, designated **F** in Table 1 and Figure 2, is situated approximately 1.6 miles west of the project area and is known as Long Neck (Travis). The description includes shell middens and occupation, but since no artifacts are described, no date range can be estimated (Skinner 1909:9; Parker 1922:682).

The next site designated **G** in Table 1 and Figure 2 is a camp reported by Parker. Parker provides no descriptions of the artifacts recovered, so no date range can be offered. This camp is located approximately 1.8 miles southwest of the project area. Parker includes this site on his map of Richmond County (Parker 1922: Fig. 211).

The final prehistoric site found during this research designated **H** in Table 1 and Figure 2, is the Richmond Hill site reported to the New York State Museum. Since the museum provides no description of the artifacts recovered, no estimate of date range can be offered. No description of the type of site is provided. The Richmond Hill site is located approximately 1.9 miles south of the project area.

In terms of prehistoric sensitivity, the project impact area was evaluated from two points of view:

- 1) the proximity of known prehistoric sites in or near the project area; and
- 2) the presence of fresh water drainage courses in general, and particularly the identification of river or stream confluence situations where two or more drainages come together, providing access to both the water and food supplies of both systems.

This survey has documented the recorded or published locations of no less than eight sites within a two mile radius of the 1931 Richmond Avenue project area. Although sites have been identified in the general region of the proposed project impact area, none are known to exist within the project area itself. No evidence, positive or negative, based on previous survey work is available. It would be inappropriate, however, to characterize this region as without prehistoric sensitivity.



Corson's Brook formerly flowed just east of the project area. The brook would have been a reliable fresh water supply and would have attracted game. This makes the project area a possible location for a hunting camp. It is unlikely that evidence of such a camp would survive given the subsequent development of this location.

Table 1
Prehistoric Sites in the Vicinity of 1931 Richmond Avenue

Site Name	Site Number	Reference	Period(s)	Description
A. New Springville	NYSM 4600 ACP-RICH-10	Skinner 1909:10 Parker 1922:682	Contact	Shell Middens, Burials and Camp
B. Bull's Head	NYSM 4597 ACP-RICH-7 STD-BU	Skinner 1909:9 Parker 1922:681	?	Traces of Occupation
C. Bloomfield (Watchogue)	NYSM 4596 ACP-RICH-6 STD-BL	Parker 1922:681	Woodland Contact	Traces of Occupation
D. Chelsea	NYSM 746 STD-20-3	Skinner 1909:9	?	Burials
E.	NYSM 4627 ACP-RICH	Parker 1922:Pl.211	?	Camp
F. Long Neck (Travis)	NYSM 4598 ACP-RICH-8 STD-LN	Parker 1922:682 Skinner 1909: 9-10	?	Shell Middens and Occupation
G.	NYSM 4626 ACP-RICH	Parker 1922:Plate 211	?	Camp
H. Richmond Hill	NYSM 749	NYSM	?	?



HISTORIC SENSITIVITY

Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

Staten Island was evidently known as Aquehonga Manacknong by the bands of Lenape who inhabited it during the seventeenth century, although the variant, Eghquaons, is used in the earliest Dutch document (Grumet 1981:2). Other variations exist, but these two are found in seventeenth century documents.

In 1626 the island was bought from the natives by the Director of the Dutch West India Company. Michael Pauw was given a patent of Patroonship in 1630, but he relinquished it to the Dutch West India Company. The company sold the patent to David Peters de Vries who established the first permanent settlement of Europeans on the island in 1638. In 1640 an Indian War broke out which brought destruction to the settlement. The Dutch West India Company granted Cornelius Melyn all of Staten Island in 1641 except for the de Vries farm (Historical Records Survey 1942:XIV). Ten years later, Melyn granted Hendrick van Der Capellan a deed for one third of the island (ibid.:xv). Upon the death of Capellan in 1659, Melyn sold his interest to the company thus ending the Patroon system on Staten Island (ibid.:xvi).

The British assumed control of the colony of Nieuw Amsterdam from the Dutch West India Company in 1664. Governor Francis Lovelace made the final purchase of Staten Island from the Indians in 1670. The English made all of Staten Island into a single town with Nicholas Stillwell as the first constable. Lovelace set up two villages on the island, Old Dorp or Town and New Dorp, and granted patents to several people (Historical Records Survey 1942:xviii). Land surveys were initiated under Lovelace and completed under the governorship of Edmund Andros in 1677.

The next governor, Thomas Dongan, divided the colony of New York into counties with Staten Island designated as Richmond County. In March of 1688 Richmond County was partitioned into four towns, Castletown, Northfield, Southfield and Westfield (Bayles 1887:95). The project area lies within the old town of Northfield (ibid.:map facing 1).

Frederick Skene's 1907 Map of Staten Island, tentatively delineating Colonial land patents between 1668-1712, places the project area within unpatented land (see Figure 3). Land on the west side of present Richmond Avenue was granted to Jacob Pullian during 1686.

Staten Island remained under British control throughout the eighteenth century until the end of the Revolutionary War. Approximately 29,000 troops under British command landed on the island during July 1776. Despite this large number of men, there is no evidence that any were stationed within or adjacent to the project area. British officers occupied the Black Horse Tavern at Amboy and Richmond Roads, and Sir William Howe used the Rose and Crown Tavern as his headquarters (Mitchell 1976:27). Both taverns are some distance from the project area.

Late eighteenth century cartographic sources show that several farmsteads lined the northwest side of Richmond Road by the onset of the Revolutionary War (McMillen 1933;

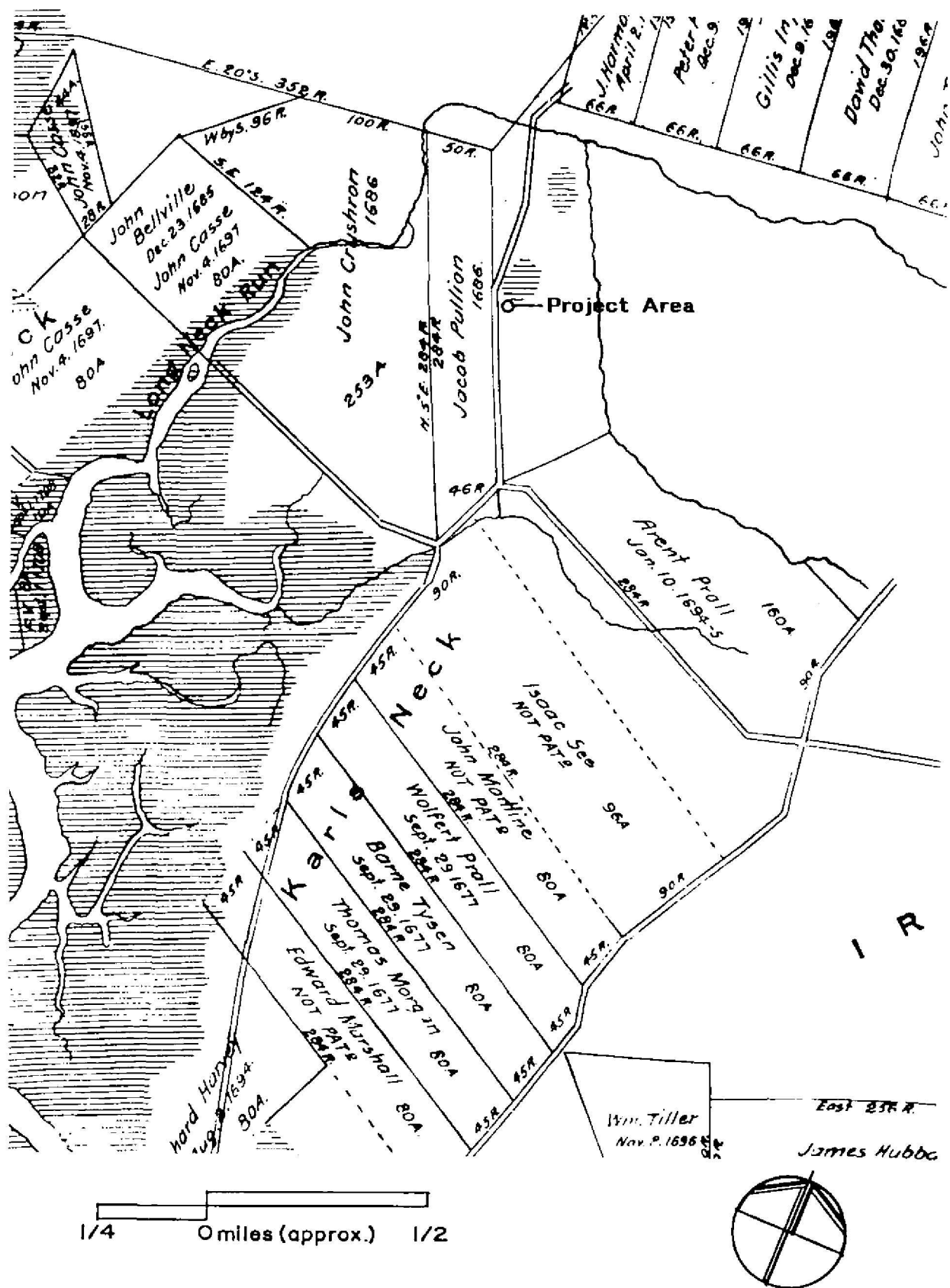


Figure 3 From Skene's 1907 Map of Staten Island, showing colonial land patents 1668-1712.



Plan (No. 31) du Anglo-Hessois dans Staten Island). Unfortunately, due to a certain degree of inaccuracy inherent in these early maps it is not possible to ascertain the project area's exact location on them. The 1931 Richmond Avenue project area appears as vacant land. To the north is one structure shown on the Plan (no. 31) du Anglo Hessois and McMillen's Map of Staten Island during the Revolution, 1755-1783. This structure is labelled "J. Starrs Jun". A portion of McMillen's map is provided here as Figure 4.

Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

The U.S. Coast Survey Charter of New York Harbor, surveyed 1836-1839 and published 1845, is the earliest available nineteenth century cartographic source. This map shows no structures in the vicinity of the project area. The project area appears to lie within a farm field. See Figure 5.

The next cartographic source presented here is the Butler map of 1853. This map shows that the project area is within vacant land which is not labelled as to owners or occupants (see Figure 6). A school is shown to the south.

The 1874 Beers Atlas, presented here as Figure 7, is the earliest cartographic source to show property lines and structure locations with a fair degree of reliability. The project area consists of part of the A.B. Decker farm. No structures are shown within the project area. The 1887 Beers Atlas presented here as Figure 8 shows that the property owner of the project area was S. Hatfield. No structures are shown within the project area (Beers 1887).

The next nineteenth century cartographic source, examined but not copied, is the 1898 Robinson Atlas. The only change evident since the 1887 Beers Atlas is a change in property ownership. The parcel is now owned by John J. Hatfield.

The 1907 Robinson Atlas was also examined but not copied. The project area remains vacant. It is part of a 9.44 acre parcel owned by Florence Hutton. Her house was to the north on Old Stone Road, now Richmond Avenue.

Figure 9 is taken from the 1911 Borough of Richmond Topographical Survey. The project area is vacant. Elevations range from about 27 to 31 feet above sea level. The high point is in the southwestern corner. The low point in the northeast is shown as marsh. The land slopes gently. Corson's Brook lies to the east. It has been channelized. Old Stone Road lies to the west.

The 1917 Sanborn map was examined but not copied. It also shows the parcel as vacant.

The 1917 Bromley Atlas is the source of Figure 10. This map shows that the land along Richmond Avenue has been divided into lots. The project area includes the southern two thirds of Lot 20. Corson's Brook lies to the east. To the south are the pumping station and a school.

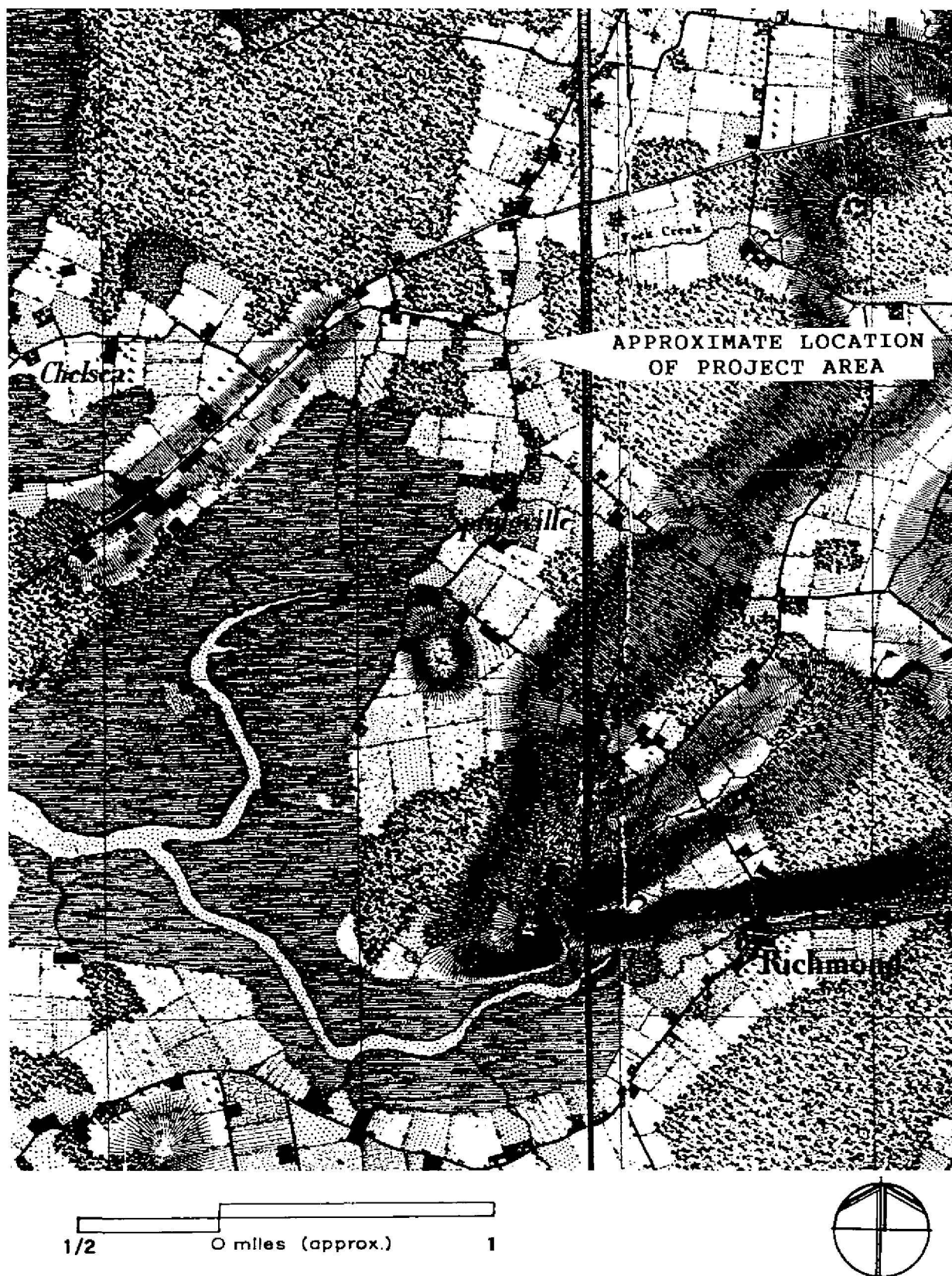


Figure 5 From the 1836-1839 U.S. Coast Survey, published 1845.

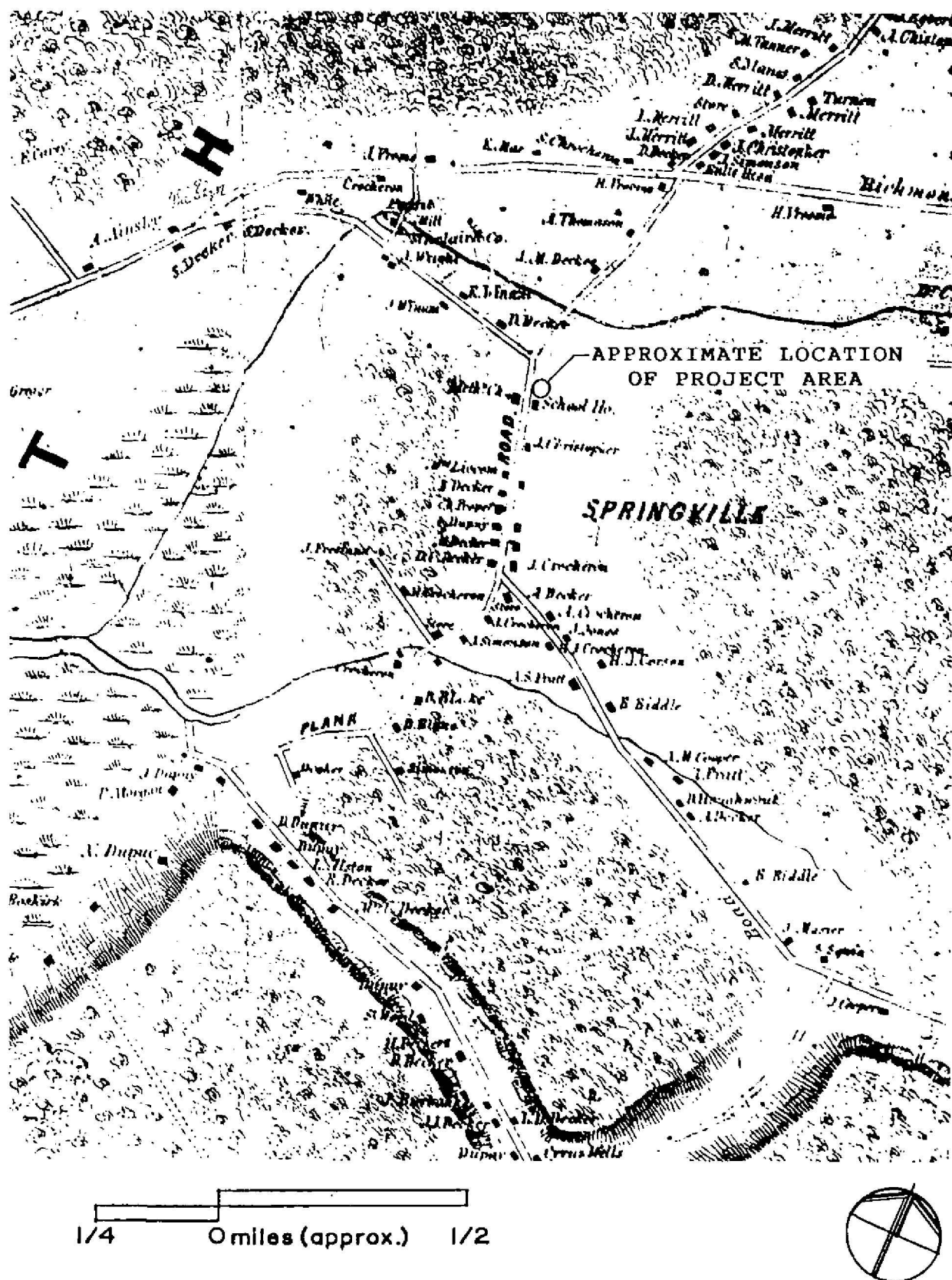


Figure 6 From the 1853 Butler map.

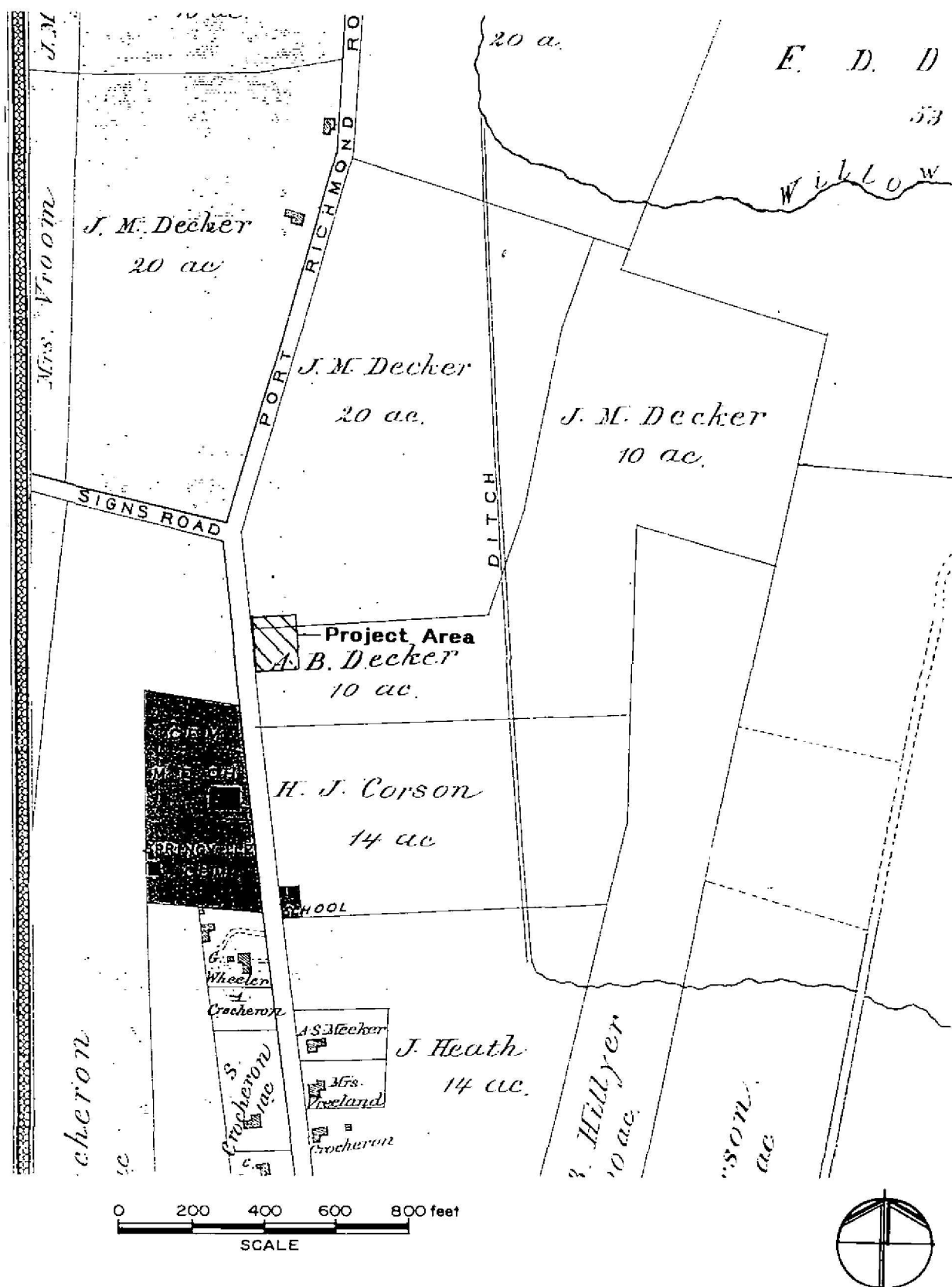


Figure 7 From the 1874 Beers Atlas.



Figure 8 From the 1887 Beers Atlas.

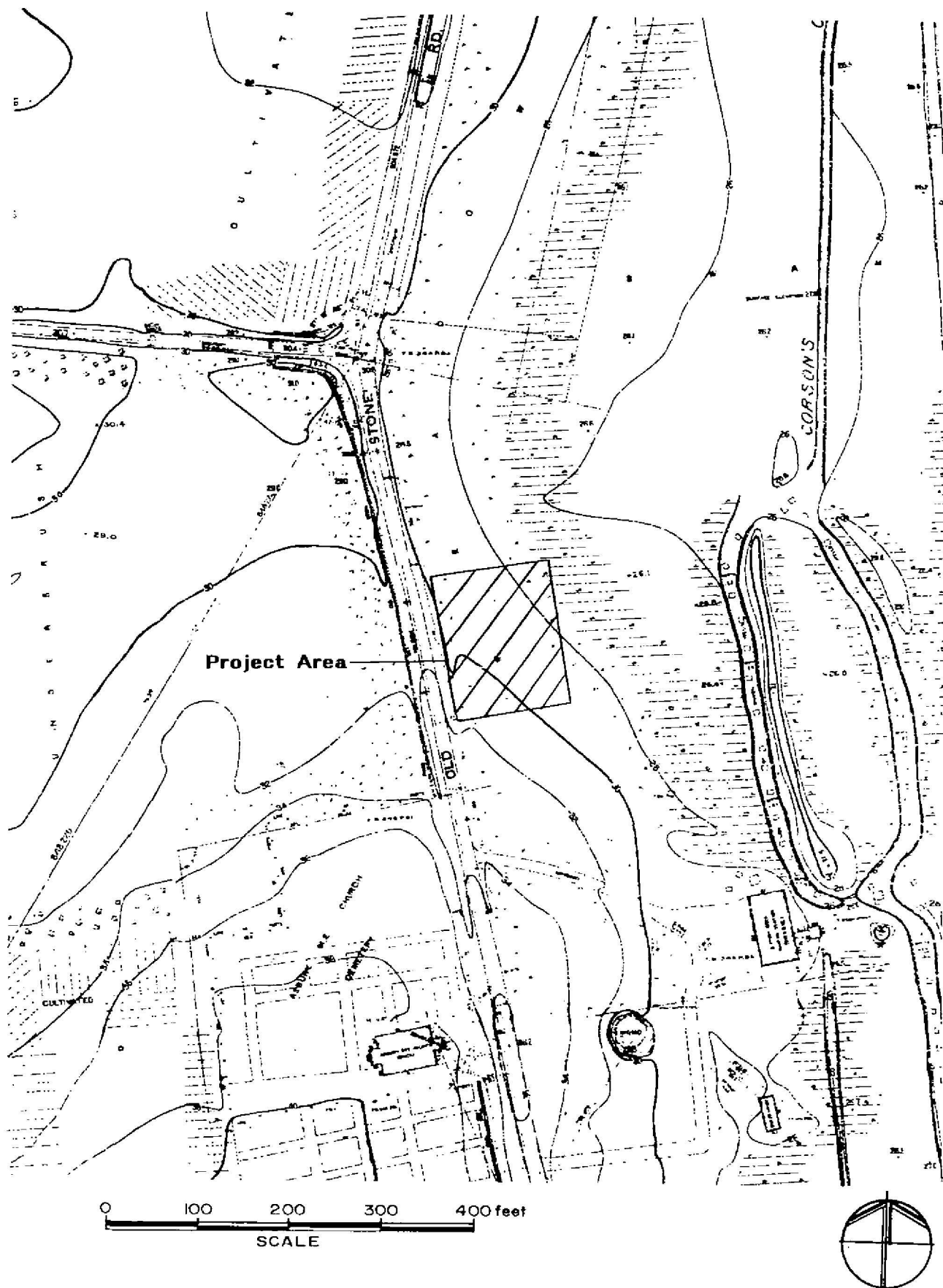


Figure 9 From the 1911 Borough of Richmond Topographical Survey Sheet 37.

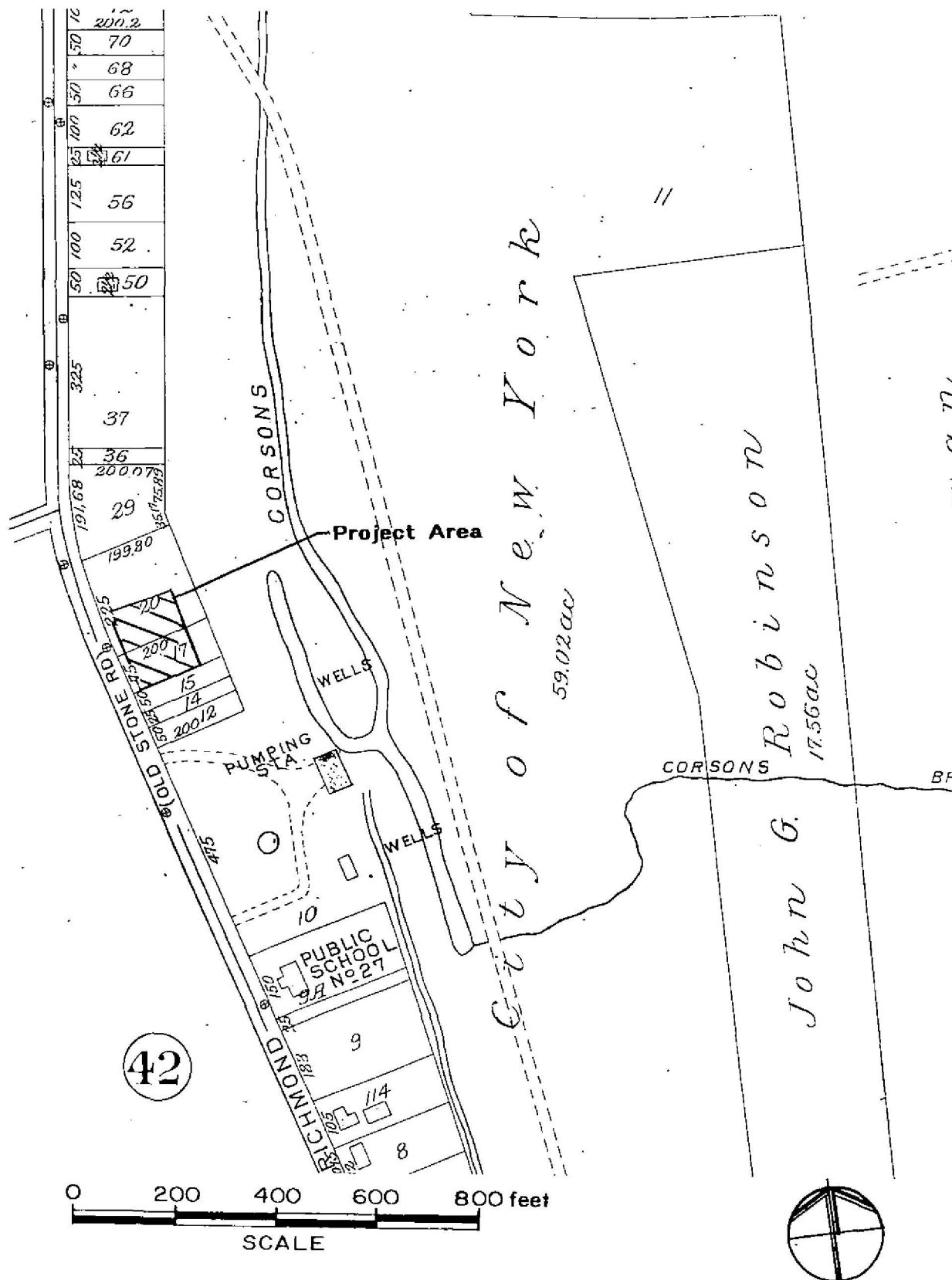


Figure 10 From the 1917 Bromley Atlas.



Figure 11 is taken from the 1917 Sanborn map updated to 1926. This is the earliest map to show structures within the project area. A one and one half story frame dwelling with a small rear extension has been built near the side of Richmond Avenue. A small one story frame shed is in the northeastern corner of the lot.

The 1937 Sanborn map shows the house within the project area as two stories. The small shed has been removed and replaced with a garage which is larger than the house. It is labelled "Auto Repair". See figure 12.

The 1937 Sanborn map updated to 1951 continues to show the same two story dwelling and one story garage seen in the 1937 map.

Figure 13 is taken from the 1990 REDI-Sanborn map. The project area is vacant. It is labelled "Nursery".

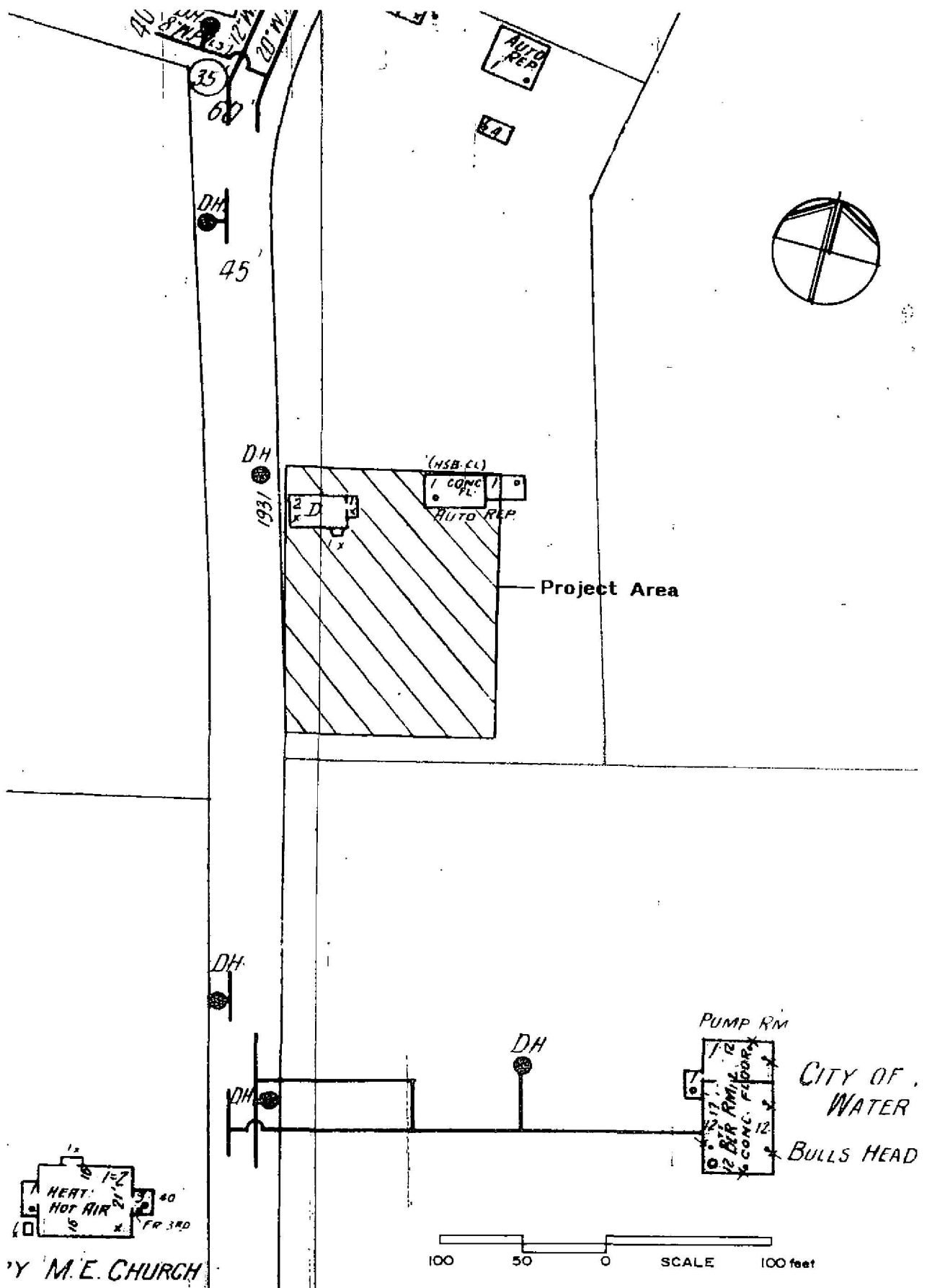


Figure 12 From the 1937 Sanborn maps.

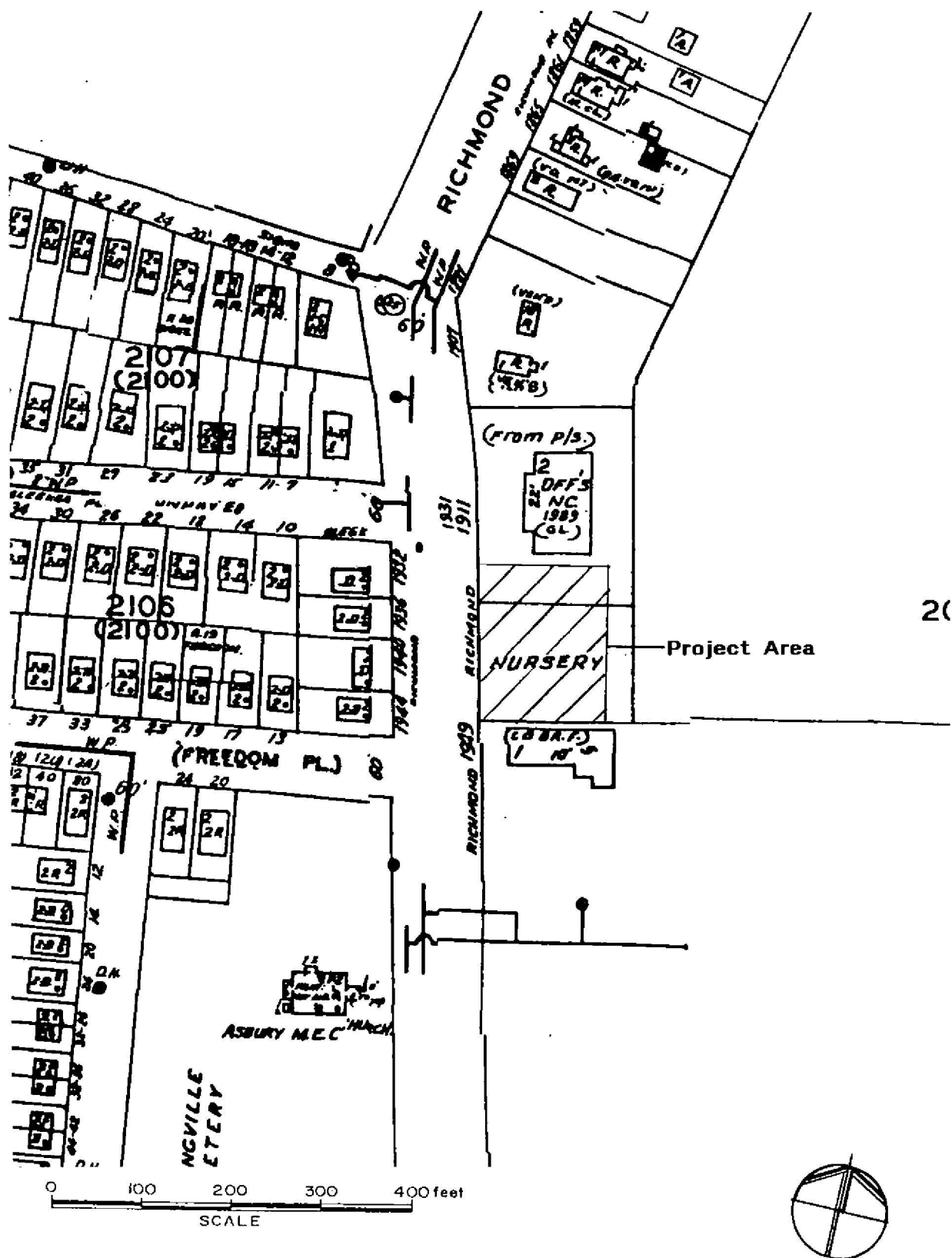


Figure 13 From the 1990 REDI-Sanborn atlas.



RESULTS

The section on prehistoric sensitivity indicates that the project area may have been used during prehistory, but there is very little chance of finding undisturbed remains. It lies within two miles of eight known prehistoric sites. Corson's Brook formerly flowed to the east. The brook would have supplied fresh water and attracted game, making the project area a possible location for a hunting camp. Any evidence of prehistoric use of this land would probably have been disturbed or destroyed during the twentieth century.

The section on historic sensitivity shows that prior to circa 1926 the project area was vacant land. During the late nineteenth century it was part of a farm owned by the Decker and Hatfield families. By 1907 it is the property of Florence Hutton. Between 1917 and 1926 a house and shed are built on the property. This is after the installation of water lines under Richmond Avenue. The shed is replaced by a larger garage prior to 1937. These structures were demolished between 1951 and 1990. Most of the parcel then becomes a tree nursery. The property is presently vacant. The twentieth century construction and demolition of the structures would have disturbed or destroyed any earlier deposits under or near the buildings. The subsequent use as a nursery would have further disturbed any surviving deposits.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report has documented that the 1931 Richmond Avenue project area may have been utilized during the prehistoric period. However, the 20th century development of this location has probably disturbed or destroyed any prehistoric remains.

The report has also documented that the project area was not developed until after 1917. Although Richmond Avenue follows the course of an old road, this location was evidently used only for agriculture during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A house and shed were built on the parcel by 1926. The shed was replaced by a garage prior to 1937. The house and garage were demolished by 1990 and land became a tree nursery. This twentieth century development would be unlikely to have left significant archaeological deposits but would have disturbed any earlier ones.

It is our conclusion that archaeological testing of 1931 Richmond Avenue is not necessary. No further work is recommended.

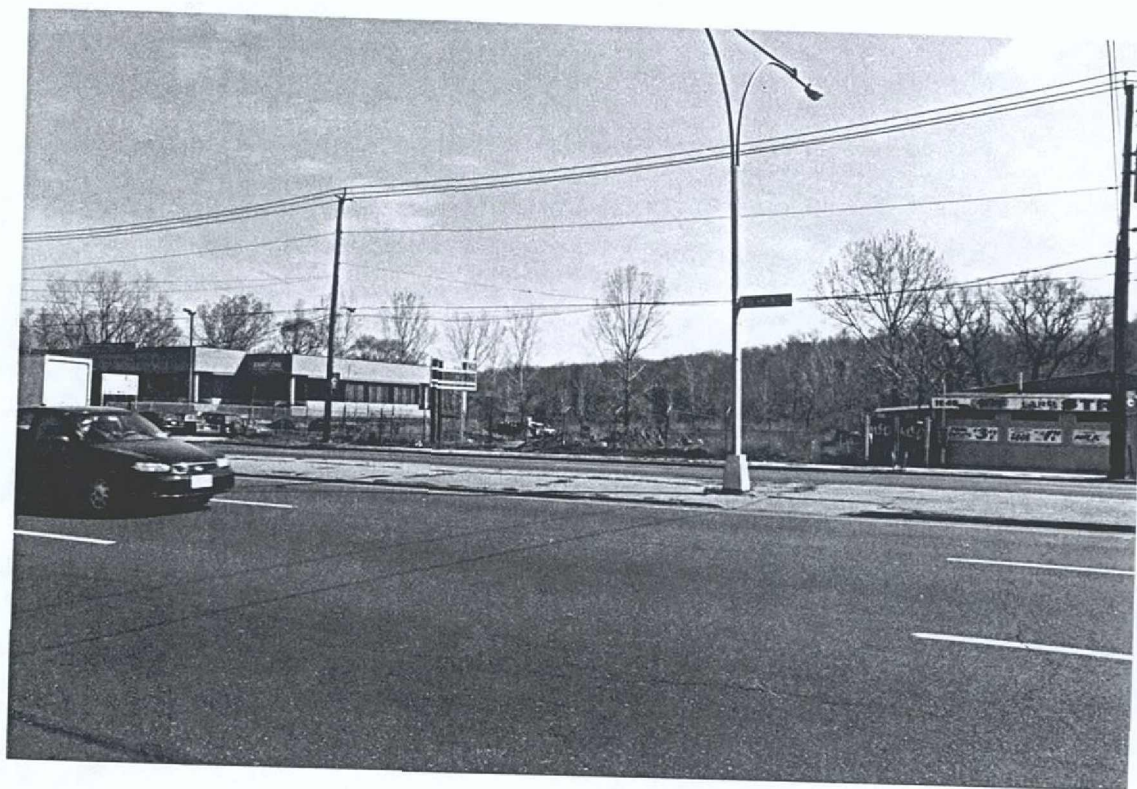


Plate 1 View of the project area looking east from across Richmond Avenue.

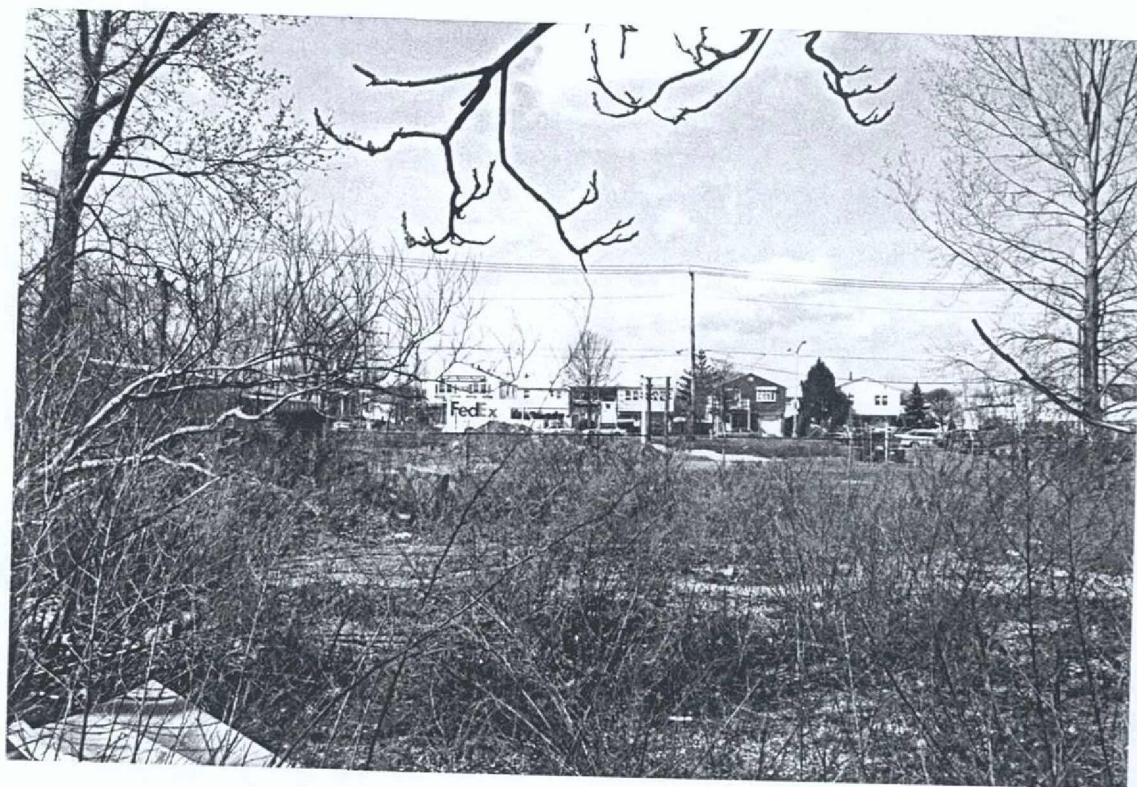


Plate 2 View of the project area looking west with Richmond Avenue in the background.



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