

17/m HP 2000

# **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES INC.**



**Greenwich Street Reconstruction  
Manhattan, New York**

**June 6, 2000 Archaeological Monitoring of Utility Excavation Trench**  
Excavation was called off in the morning because of heavy rains.

**June 7, 2000 Archaeological Monitoring of Utility Excavation Trench**

Block 140, Lot 15

Cloudy day with some late afternoon sun

2' (approximate) bucket on small excavator

Trench was excavated from North to South

Trench is approximately 2-3 bucket lengths across (8 feet)

Surface - Concrete sidewalk

Excavation within the area deemed sensitive (Lot 15) began at approximately 11 AM. Beneath the concrete sidewalk, a thin layer of gravel bedding (3-6") was exposed. A lens of very dark grayish brown silty sand (10YR 3/2) was found just beneath the gravel. Late twentieth century artifacts were noted in this location (Budweiser cans, modern water bottles, unidentified metal fragments, and a piece of a polyester sweater). The sidewalk and bedding appears to be less than 5 years old in this location. Beneath the sand is a mixed dark yellowish brown fill layer that extends to the bottom of the trench (c. 5' below grade). The fill contained a large amount of architectural debris, including a dressed stone footing, large foundation stones, pieces of wood, numerous whole bricks, and brick foundation fragments still mortared together. The bricks observed were not labeled or identified in any manner.

Along the western wall of the trench, approximately two feet from its northern end (and the northern boundary of Lot 15), a portion of a brick foundation was uncovered. Only a three foot section of the foundation was still *in situ*. The foundation was three bricks wide and continued deeper into the unexcavated area. A second section of a brick foundation was found *in situ* approximately 22 feet south of the first. It was also three bricks wide and extended below the bottom depth of the trench. No associated artifacts were found in the fill. The exposed walls may have been the remains of the foundation for a vault that once extended out under the sidewalk from one of the five- story buildings present on Lot 15 during the late nineteenth century.

A small intact section of the foundation of a former building was also exposed along the eastern edge of the trench, approximately 18 feet from the northern end of the trench. The

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collapsed wall, which was approximately 10 feet long, was tilted at a thirty degree angle into the trench. No associated artifacts were noted in the fill.

Approximately 28 feet south of the northern edge of Lot 15, the backhoe encountered a thick concrete block that was contained by plywood boards. The block extended almost across the entire trench and was approximately 3-4 feet deep. Only a very small section on the eastern side of the trench still contained fill with architectural debris. A hoe ram on the end of a large excavator was used to break apart the concrete. Notes and photographs were taken. Excavation was then halted for the day.

#### **June 8, 2000 Archaeological Monitoring of Utility Excavation Trench**

Block 140, Lot 15

Clear day

2' (approximate) bucket on small excavator

Trench was excavated from North to South

Trench is approximately 2-3 bucket lengths across (8 feet)

Surface - Concrete sidewalk

After breaking apart 4 feet of the concrete block exposed on June 7, three modern (1999) PVC communication pipes were encountered partially imbedded in the concrete near the surface. Rectangular metal plates were found in place above the pipes. The crew spent the day breaking apart and clearing the large concrete block. At the eastern edge, the fill, mixed with architectural debris, was still present.

#### **June 9, 2000 Archaeological Monitoring of Utility Excavation Trench**

Block 140, Lot 15

Clear day

The crew began working on installing the water line on Reade Street and the archaeologists were told that work would not continue on Greenwich Street until late in the following week.

#### **June 12, 2000 Archaeological Monitoring of Utility Excavation Trench**

The archaeologists were told by telephone that work would resume in the trench on Tuesday, June 13.

#### **June 13, 2000 Archaeological Monitoring of Utility Excavation Trench**

Block 140, Lot 15

Clear day

When the archaeologists returned to the site as arranged on June 12, it was revealed that the construction crew had cleared approximately 12-15 feet of the trench during the afternoon of

June 12th. The trench excavation had proceeded to the south where a small concrete box was encountered. The trench had also been widened to a width of approximately 10 feet. The end of the concrete block was found and most of the concrete in the trench removed. Two iron utility pipes, one at the surface and one, approximately 2 1/2 feet deep were exposed. These pipes were located approximately 45 feet from the northern edge Lot 15. On the western side of the trench a large section of a brick foundation, tilted at a slight angle, was revealed. A large round iron support column was also exposed *in situ*. These architectural elements likely belonged to the late nineteenth century building that once stood on Lot 15. The fragments recovered were probably part of another undocumented vault under the sidewalk. Notes and photographs were taken. No early features were recorded in this section of the trench.

The archaeologists left the site because the construction crew was scheduled to work for the rest of the day installing the main water pipe, building hookups, and a fire hydrant.

#### **June 17, 2000 Archaeological Monitoring of Utility Excavation Trench**

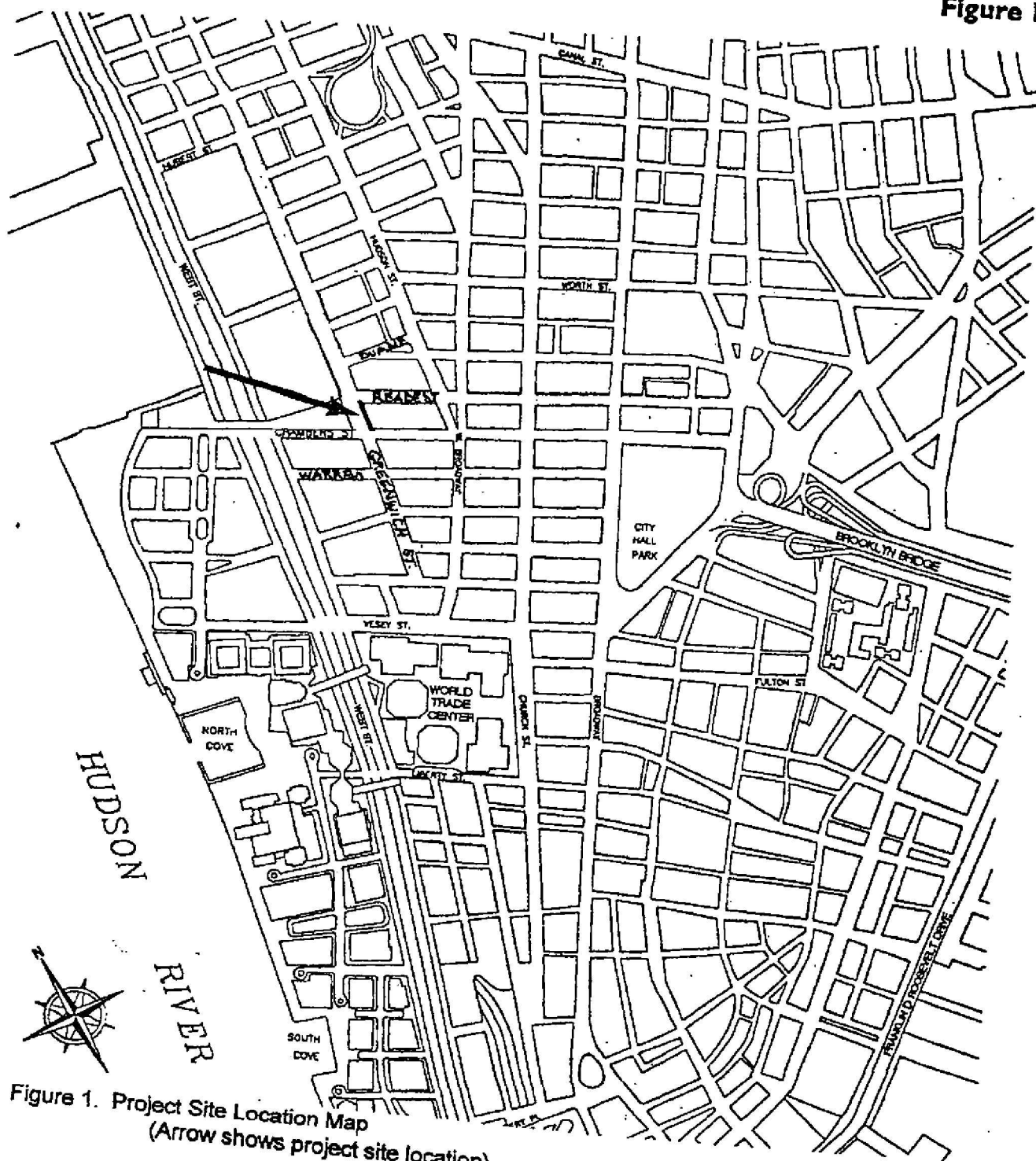
Block 140, Lot 15

Clear day

The new hydrant was completely installed and tarred in (i.e., trench was refilled south to hydrant). Remains of the large concrete block were still visible along the west side of the trench. The block varies in depth from about 3 to 4 feet. Excavation began at 11 AM, approximately 10 feet south of the new hydrant, and continued the remaining 17-20 feet to the Chambers Street curb. Beneath the sidewalk, which was laid on the gravel bedding, the same fairly clean light brown fill, with red bricks and brick fragments, was encountered. Although excavation was halted at about 5 1/2 feet below the sidewalk, it was clear that the fill continued. Deep disturbance continued as far as the Chamber Street curb from the demolition and filling of the collapsed late nineteenth century brick foundation. The foundation remains were visible along the east side of the trench to the Chambers Street building line, about 10 feet north of the streetbed. Modern garbage (coffee cup lids, Pepsi can, etc.) noted in the trench, had been deposited in the fill during previous utility line installation in this location. Two parallel metal telephone line conduits (about 4" diameter, running SW to NE) were encountered. One foot to the south, a 4" metal electrical conduit (possibly related to the corner traffic/street light) running parallel to the other pipes was also exposed. The three pipes begin about 10 feet north of Chambers Street along the west side of the trench, and hit the east wall of the trench about 5 feet further north. They each are located 2 to 2 1/2 feet below the sidewalk surface.

Emerging from the west wall of the trench, 9-10 feet north of Chambers (running partially beneath electrical/telephone conduits) was the storm sewer main. The main runs northwest to southeast between the corner catch basins on Greenwich and Chambers. The diameter of this pipe is approximately 12", and the top of the pipe was approximately 4 feet below the sidewalk surface. A denser concentration of gravel, brick fragments and late twentieth century garbage was noted in the fill above the main (coffee cups, a sandal, caution tape, etc.). The fill continued below the main, but not in the location of the collapsed foundation. No further utility lines or soil changes were encountered between the storm sewer line and the curb.

In conclusion, no historical features or significant artifact concentrations were observed during excavation. In addition, there was no evidence of an early intact ground surface in the location of Block 140, Lot 15. Instead, several documented and undocumented utility pipes and building vaults, as well as the undocumented large concrete block, were encountered during the excavation. The utility installations were made after the area had been disturbed and filled when the nineteenth century buildings were demolished. Excavation was halted once the trench reached the depth of approximately 5-5 1/2 feet and the water main was installed.



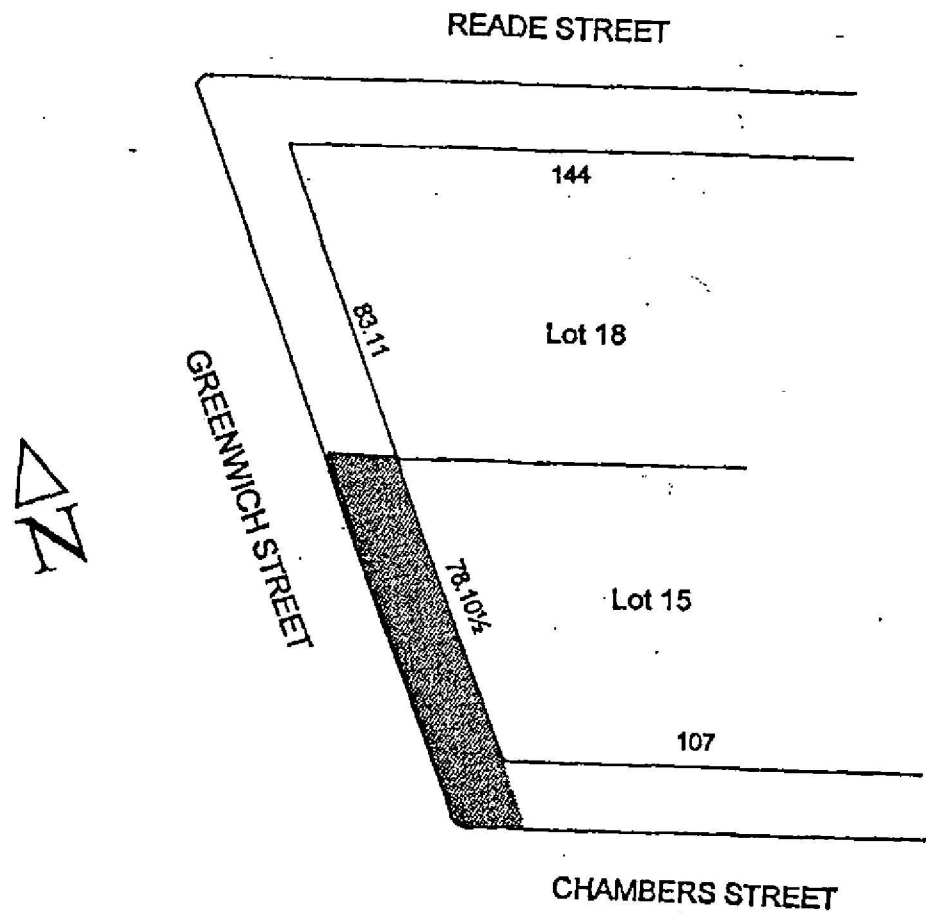



Figure 14. Map Showing Area of Potential Archaeological Sensitivity  
(Base map: 1989 Sanborn. Scale: 1 inch = 40 feet)

 - Shading indicates area of potential archaeological sensitivity