

**HISTORICAL**  
**PERSPECTIVES INC.**



**Phase IB Archaeological Field Investigation**  
**La Central, Bronxchester EAS**  
**Block 2294, Lot 43**  
**Westchester Avenue**  
**Bronx, New York**  
**06DME005X**  
**11DME011X**

**Phase IB Archaeological Field Investigation  
La Central, Bronxchester EAS  
Block 2294, Lot 43  
Westchester Avenue  
Bronx, New York  
06DME005X  
11DME011X**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A development proposal by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development and public and private project sponsors for Block Lot 43 within Block 2294 in the Bronx has necessitated a cultural resources review (Figure 1). The project site is located at 436-442 Westchester Avenue and is currently a paved parking lot (Photographs 1 and 2).

This location, along with neighboring Lot 60, was initially assessed by Celia Bergoffen in 2006. Her study concluded that portions of Lots 43 and 60 were potentially sensitive for precontact and/or historical archaeological resources. As a function of the CEQR process, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) reviewed and concurred with the documentary study's findings and requested field-testing for the identified portions of each lot if construction impacts were unavoidable (06DME005X).

In 2011, Historical Perspectives, Inc. (HPI) completed the necessary field investigations on Lot 60 in consultation with LPC. Six trenches were examined on Lot 60 but only an early 20<sup>th</sup> century water management enclosure was encountered and investigated. The excavation of the remaining trenches found modern structural demolition impacts from 3.6 meters below grade, extending well below the depths of potential resources. No further archaeological consideration was recommended for Lot 60 (HPI 2011). No archaeological field-testing was initiated in 2011 on Lot 43 due to the absence of below-grade impacts in project designs.

Subsequent to the 2011 field investigation, the location was reviewed a second time by LPC as ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORP./11DME011X. At this time, the design plans for Lot 43 have been revised as part of the current La Central, Bronxchester proposal.

Bergoffen's 2006 analysis identified a limited area in Lot 43 as sensitive for precontact resources. The approximately 10 foot x 120-foot former alleyway runs roughly north-south through the 436 Westchester Avenue parcel. According to Philip Habib and Associates (PHA), the new plans for Lot 43 entail below-grade impacts and the archaeological field-testing recommended earlier by LPC will now be undertaken by HPI as the project moves forward.

As per LPC Guidelines (2002), archaeological testing in New York City must be based on a detailed protocol established specifically for the sensitive land parcel and approved by LPC. In March 2014 HPI prepared a testing protocol that addressed Bergoffen's analysis and LPC's request. The protocol complies with the CEQR Technical Manual (Section 321.2 Determine Significance of Past Uses that May Remain). LPC reviewed and concurred with the protocol (5/2/2014).

During August 2014, field-testing at the La Central project site was completed. Two large trenches were excavated during the archaeological examination of the location of a former alley within Block 43. No evidence of an intact precontact horizon was observed in either of the two excavation trenches. The 20<sup>th</sup> century construction of the adjacent buildings clearly impacted any potential intact soils within the former alley. At this time, no further archaeological consideration is recommended for Lot 43.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

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## II. SUMMARY OF LOT DEVELOPMENT

Bergoffen's Documentary Study identified the earliest record of historical development within Lot 43 took place between 1860 and 1880 (Bergoffen 2006: 15). Maps indicate that a "wagon house" was built on the site within the portion of the lot identified as 440-442 Westchester Avenue. Research found that the "wagon house" was enlarged to extend the length (north-south) of the lot and made into a "vaudeville" theatre sometime between 1900-1907. A small alley was located immediately east of the theater. Further east (446-448 Westchester Avenue) a brick large structure, which had been constructed by 1907 and identified in 1921 as the site of "Teitlebaum & Co.", was present. Records indicate that alley between the theatre and "Teitlebaum & Co." building was never developed. As a result, Bergoffen found that the location of the former alley was sensitive for potential precontact cultural resources (Bergoffen 2006: 21).

Bergoffen's report noted the "relative paucity of well recorded prehistoric sites in the Bronx," an observation based in large part on Eugene Boesch's prehistoric settlement report for LPC (1996). Boesch's study on the borough stated that the Bronx is poorly documented archaeologically and, consequently, not well known or understood. Because the sensitive section of Lot 43 had no record of formal development, earlier occupation levels may have been protected by modern overburden.

### III. FIELD METHODOLOGY/RESEARCH DESIGN

The objective of Phase IB field-testing is to (1) ascertain the presence/absence, type, extent and potential significance of archaeological deposits within the location deemed sensitive for precontact cultural resources in the Phase 1A report (Bergoffen 2006). According to the CEQR guidelines for cultural resources, the determination of potential significance of a project site is directly related to whether the identified resource type “is likely to contribute to current knowledge of the history of the period in question”. The determination of significance is largely dependent on the research issues that have been identified.

The preservation of Native American sites by “fill cover” is a research issue raised by Boesch (1996). He noted that traditional testing methods, e.g., shovel testing, might not be effective in establishing the presence or absence of archaeological remains in sites with a fill overmantle. Therefore, the proposed testing strategy for the project site relies on machine excavation for the removal of the fill overburden to the likely depths (ca. 2-5 feet) of potential precontact resources.

#### Archaeological Testing Tasks

The first field objective was to ascertain the integrity of the subsurface conditions and determine the presence or absence of an intact, buried precontact horizon. Due to the configuration of the former alley corridor, plans were established in the HPI protocol to combine machine-aided excavations and hand excavations (if necessary) within two linear trenches, each approximately 10 feet x 45 feet. Based on the historic maps, the alley corridor might have been narrower than 10 feet but the final size of the trenches was designed to accommodate safety regulations and afford sufficient exposure of the substrates. If the former foundation walls on either side of the alley were located, the alignment of the foundation walls would provide a guide for maximizing the trench exposure.

If during the excavation, the monitored machine cuts identified a buried precontact horizon soil, hand testing was planned to expose this stratum and determine if any cultural resources were still present. The exact number and configuration of the hand tested excavation units, estimated to be 1m x 1m, within the trenches was to depend upon the presence and extent of any intact buried horizons. If excavated, the Test trench locations and excavation units would be plotted on project plans for the technical report. Professional standards for excavation, screening through one-quarter inch wire mesh, recording of features and stratigraphy, labeling, mapping, and cataloging were applied. Photographs of the work in progress were taken.

If the archaeologists identified features that contain artifacts during the field investigation, the team would clean, stabilize, and inventory all cultural material removed from the field. An artifact catalog, recording the depth and location of each recovered artifact, would be created. Once the fieldwork is completed, HPI would produce a technical report documenting the findings. All archaeological field testing was designed in accordance with LPC’s *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in New York City, 2002*. Archaeologists meeting the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualifications Standards (48 FR 44716) and who are certified members of the Register of Professional Archaeologists (RPA) were placed in charge of the field investigations.

## IV. RESULTS OF INVESTIGATIONS

During August 2014, field-testing at the La Central project site was completed. As mentioned above, the testing plan called for the excavation of two trenches within a former alley located within Block 43. The goal of the field examination was to expose any buried intact precontact surfaces and/or buried cultural features. A visual inspection of the project site found that the entire ground surface was covered by asphalt as well as concrete in a few locations (Photographs 1 and 2). Machine-aided excavation removed surface pavement, as well as any fill layers containing 20<sup>th</sup> century debris in the locations of the archaeological test trenches. The field archaeologists directed the backhoe operator to remove only shallow increments of soil when nearing the location of a possible precontact buried ground surface.

Below is a summary of the results of field-testing completed by HPI.

### Trench 1

Although plans called for Trench 1 to be approximately 10 feet x 45 feet in size, the final area excavated was approximately 10 x 50 feet (4.6 x 15.25 meters). The north-south trench was located on the north side of lot 43 in the location of the former alley (Figure 2). A series of both compact and loose fill strata was identified beneath the asphalt and pavement bedding (Table 1; Photograph 3).

Table 1. Stratigraphy Noted in Trench 1 (Depths noted in Centimeters Below Surface [cmbs]).

Level	Depths	Description
1	0-7 cmbs	Asphalt
2	7-11 cmbs	Gravel Bedding
3	11-220 cmbs	Mixed modern 20 <sup>th</sup> century fill 10YR 4/3 sandy silt mixed with 10YR 5/6 silty sand
4	220-295 cmbs	Mixed modern 20 <sup>th</sup> century fill 10YR 4/2 silt mixed with 10YR 5/6 silty sand

The trench was excavated by machine under the supervision of the HPI archaeologists and the mixed fill strata identified in Trench 1 were found to contain a significant amount of architectural demolition debris; in particular numerous embossed bricks were noted (Photograph 4). The variety of architectural debris within the mixed fill layers included the aforementioned bricks, metal and ceramic pipe fragments, concrete fragments, thick Styrofoam, tar paper, reinforced glass, phone wires, steel I beam fragments, plastic sheeting, and a long section of a green garden hose.

Research on historic bricks used during late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century construction in the New York City area is an evolving area of study as material from archeological sites and from various manufacturers are collated. Although the present testing protocol was designed to ascertain the presence or absence of precontact materials, the recovery of a significant number of historic bricks as part of this project affords the opportunity to add site-specific data to this growing area of study.

The Hudson River Valley, often referred to as the brickmaking capital of the world, furnished the majority of the raw materials needed for the construction of numerous buildings in New York City. As the population of the City grew, the corresponding growth in the number of industrial, commercial and residential buildings assured the rapid growth of the brick industry. In fact, by the turn of the 20th century, one hundred thirty brick manufacturers employed seven to eight thousand workers (Hutton 2003). The final Hudson River Valley brick manufacturer closed in 2003, terminating an industry that provided a vast amount of the construction materials utilized for many of the structures in New York City. As mentioned above, bricks and brick fragments were noted throughout the trench, several with specific makers marks. A sampling of these bricks is included in Table 2, followed by a brief summary of the Hudson River Valley brick companies represented on the site.

Table 2. Identified Brick Marks

<b>BRICK MARK</b>	<b>COMPANY</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
ATLAS	Atlas Brick Co.	Hudson
BROCKWAY	Brockway Brick Co.	Fishkill Landing
HUTTON	The Hutton Brick Co.	Kingston
LYNCH	Lynch Brothers Brick Co.	East Kingston
N BROS	Nicholson Brothers	Dutchess Junction
ROSE	Rose Brick Co.	Roseton (near Newburgh)
SS B Co.	Sutton & Suderly Brick Co.	Coeymans
ZZZ	Ziegler Bros.	Coeymans

The Atlas Building and Material Works was listed in a 1910 directory; it was one of several that were located in Hudson, New York just after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Not much is known about the fate of this company, which appears to have closed before the end of the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Edwin Brockway, who had previously owned a smaller brickyard in Haverstraw, founded the Brockway Brick Company in East Fishkill in 1899. The Brockway family eventually built a small community, with a school and company store, around the East Fishkill complex, which was finally abandoned in 1999 (Yasinsac 2014).

The Hutton and Cordts Brick Company was located in Kingston and is one of the older brickmaking establishments represented in the collection from the La Central Site. Founded in 1865 by William Hutton and John H. Cordts, the company quickly established connections to the rapidly growing New York City brick market. Hutton was a silent partner, focusing on his nearby lumber company, until Cordts' death in 1890. From 1890 until 1965 the company was known as the Hutton Brick Company.

The brick identified with the name Lynch was manufactured by Patrick Lynch and his brother John. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, first Patrick and then both brothers worked for Daniel DeNoyelles in Haverstraw from 1887 to 1896. The Lynch Brothers operated this yard in 1903. In 1910, O'Brien and Lynch operated Yard #11 and John Lynch worked Yard #22. In *Within These Gates* Daniel deNoyelles lists the Lynch Brothers operating 5 machines in "the Kingston district" in 1910.

Between the mid 1840s until 1930 several brickyards operated in the small community of Dutchess Junction. This industrial enclave had been established in the area where the Newburgh, Dutchess and Connecticut Railroad intersected with the Hudson River Railroad. One of the companies that operated around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the Nicholson Brothers Brick Yard. Little detail could be found regarding the closure date for this company.

The Rose Brick Company was one of the largest and most prolific in the Hudson River Valley. The Rose Brick Yards comprised several manufacturing sites into one of the largest brickmaking plants in the Hudson River Valley by 1905. The Rose Brick Company was manufacturing over 75,000,000 bricks a year during the first decade of the 20th century. In fact, during those years, the Rose Brick Company not only provided the materials for construction, they also provided the brick, used for creating numerous walking paths in Central Park, Prospect Park, and other smaller parks all over New York City (Brick Collecting 2011; Hudson-River-Brick-Industry 2011).

Some of the bricks in the collection were from companies located further north on the Hudson River. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the brickyards of the upper Hudson Valley were just as prolific as those further south. Coeymans, located in Albany County, was once the site of over a dozen brickyards, including the Sutton & Suderly Brick Co. and the Ziegler Bros. John Sutton and Conrad Suderly founded the Sutton & Suderly Brick Company in 1885. This company was the location of one of the most dramatic events in the Hudson River brickmaking history in 1906 when the workers from numerous brick companies demanded a 10-hour workday and an increase in pay (Rinaldi and Yasinsac 2006). Thousands of workers went on strike and several companies, including the Sutton & Suderly Brick Company, hired migrant workers to keep production going. The strikers marched to each of the yards that were still working and forced the temporary workers away. When they reached the Sutton & Suderly Brick yard, the management, led by Conrad Suderly, took up arms to keep the strikers out. The subsequent firefight and loss of the yard to the strikers, led the Governor to order the State Militia to Coeymans to restore order. The militia disbanded the strikers, arrested the ringleaders, and the companies went back to work.

The bricks that were recovered during the excavation of Trench 1 offer a microcosm of the many different brick manufacturers who provided the materials to build the majority of the buildings in New York City.

At the north end of the trench two unidentified brick piers were exposed (Feature 1) and photographed (Photograph 5). The piers were discovered at a depth of approximately 2.3 feet (71 cmbs). The piers were adjacent to a large concrete pier associated with the adjacent rail corridor. It is possible that the brick piers were at one time associated with supports for the adjacent transportation corridor.

The review of historic maps indicates that elevation of the project site is only minimally different throughout the historic period to present (approximately 15-20 feet ASL). The surface of Trench 1 is currently 17 feet ASL and excavation halted at approximately 9 – 9.4 feet below the surface (275-285 cmbs) (Photograph 6). No evidence of the undisturbed alley or potential precontact strata were identified in Trench 1. Testing indicated that this location had been extensively

impacted during the demolition of the buildings on either side of the former alley. A deep excavation section was completed in the center of the trench that extended to a depth of almost 10 feet (295) cmbs to confirm that the soils were impacted by the 20<sup>th</sup> century building construction and demolition to greater depths in this location.

## Trench 2

Although plans called for Trench 2 to be approximately 10 x 45 feet in size, the final area excavated was approximately 15 x 50 feet (4.6 x 15.25 meters), as during excavation the trench was extended to the west. The north-south trench was located on the north side of Lot 43 in the location of the former alley (see Figure 2; Photograph 2). A series of both compact and loose fill strata was identified beneath the asphalt and pavement bedding (Table 3; Photograph 7).

Table 3. Stratigraphy Noted in Trench 2.

Level	Depths	Description
1	0—8 cmbs	Asphalt
2	8-36 cmbs	Gravelly Sand
3	36-49 cmbs	Mixed modern 20 <sup>th</sup> century fill 10YR 4/3 sandy silt mixed with 10YR 5/6 silty sand
4	49-56 cmbs	Mixed modern 20 <sup>th</sup> century fill 10YR 4/2 silt mixed with 10YR 5/6 silty sand
5	56-72 cmbs	Fill 10YR 4/6 sandy loam with scattered stones
6	72-150 cmbs	Mixed 10YR 4/3 sandy loam with 10YR 4/6 sand and 10YR 5/4 clayey loam (redeposited soil). Traces of brick fragments.
7	150-163 cmbs	10YR 2/1 mixed silty sand with macadam fragments
8	163-188 cmbs	10YR 4/6 clayey loam (redeposited soil) mixed with pipe fragments and artifacts in the location of utility trench
9	188-290 cmbs	10YR 4/6 clayey loam (redeposited and disturbed soil) mixed with scattered brick and mortar fragments

The trench was excavated by machine under the supervision of the HPI archaeologists. The team encountered the stone foundation wall (Feature 2) of a former building near the eastern side of the trench (Photograph 8). To the east of the wall was the filled basement of a large structure, likely the “Teitlebaum & Co.” building depicted on 20<sup>th</sup> century maps. The stone wall was approximately 2 feet (60 cm) in width and extended the length of the trench.

Excavation then concentrated on the western portion of the test trench where multiple fill and mixed soil strata were noted. The original 10-foot wide trench was extended 5 feet to the west to expose more of the area to the west of the wall (Feature 2). Although Trench 2 did not contain the same degree of architectural debris observed in Trench 1, there was still a substantial amount of architectural material in the upper layers. The variety of architectural debris within the fill

included bricks, metal and ceramic pipe fragments, concrete fragments, reinforced glass, and unidentified metal fragments.

At approximately 1.8 feet (56 cmbs) in depth, the team noted a stratum of sand with scattered stones. It is possible that this was once a former surface of the alley, likely during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The stones were not tightly packed cobbles, but instead were loosely placed in the sand to perhaps provide some type of stable surface or they were introduced to control drainage in the alley between the two large buildings. No specific date could be ascertained for when this stratum was introduced, or if, the stone/sand layer was actually utilized as a surface. The number of stones dwindled as the sand layer extended to the south and completely disappeared at the southern end of Trench 2, specifically the southernmost 10 feet (3 meters), where the team noted a significant increase in the fill that contained considerable architectural demolition materials, similar to the soils observed in Trench 1.

The strata below the sandy stone layer in the rest of the trench were comprised of soils that appeared to be a mix of what was likely redeposited B-horizon and fill. At a depth of approximately 5 feet (155 cmbs) the archaeologists noted remnants of macadam within Level 6. The majority of the macadam fragments were concentrated at the northernmost end of the trench, near Westchester Avenue, although there were small fragments noted throughout the trench at this elevation. The presence of macadam fragments at the northern end of the lot might indicate that when the alley was excavated during construction, the location was used to dump excess materials from an episode where Westchester Avenue was paved.

Fragments of a ceramic utility pipe were noted at a depth of 6.1 feet (188 cmbs) in the west wall of the trench. A handful of large fragments of white soft paste porcelain (5) and yellowware (2) were collected from around the location of a former pipe. This collection of fragments was the only domestic material observed in either of the trenches excavated. Although the fragments do not mend, it is clear that they were from two vessels (a porcelain tureen lid and yellowware bowl).

No evidence of an undisturbed precontact horizon was identified in Trench 2 and excavation halted at approximately 8.9 feet below the surface (275 cmbs) in the majority of the trench (Photograph 9). A deep test was also conducted in this trench to 9.5 feet (290 cmbs), and the mixed strata was still present, well below the depths of potential intact precontact soils. In addition, the wall at the eastern edge of the alley continued well past the depth of the excavation. In summary, it appears that the majority of the alley soils were disturbed during the initial construction of this significant foundation wall and again at times when utilities were introduced and when the surrounding buildings were finally demolished. The remaining mixed soils present are the combination of the former undisturbed alley soils redeposited with architectural construction debris to shore up the alley.

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Two large trenches were excavated during the archaeological examination of the location of a former alley within the La Central project site in the Bronx. During the field examination the proposed sizes of the test trenches were expanded slightly to ensure the maximum safe coverage of the narrow alley. Testing confirmed the presence of a significant fill and/or the building construction and demolition strata in this location above and around the former 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings. The archaeologists working on the project site discovered two features during the field investigation, both dating to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The northernmost portion of the sensitive location, within Trench 2, was the only area where part of the stone foundation (Feature 2) for the eastern building remained in place. The narrow alley had clearly been significantly impacted by the construction of the large buildings with substantial foundation walls and basements on either side. The depth of disturbance within the alley indicates that the soils had likely been altered, or more likely excavated and refilled, during the construction and/or extensive demolition of the large buildings on either side of the alley.

No evidence of an intact precontact horizon was observed in either of the two excavation trenches. The 20<sup>th</sup> century construction of the adjacent buildings clearly impacted any former or potential intact soils within the former alley. At this time, no further archaeological consideration is recommended for Lot 43.

## VI. REFERENCES

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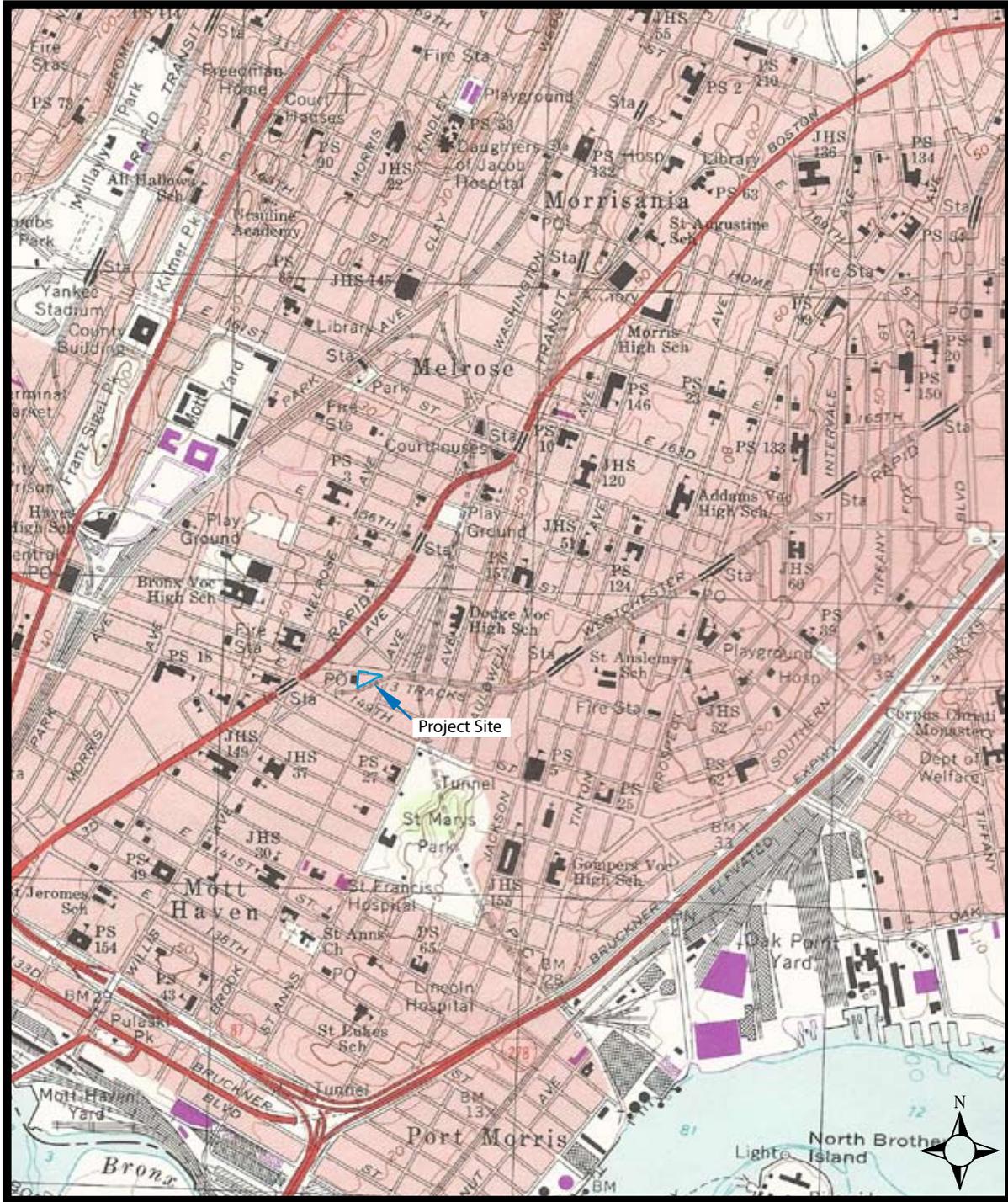
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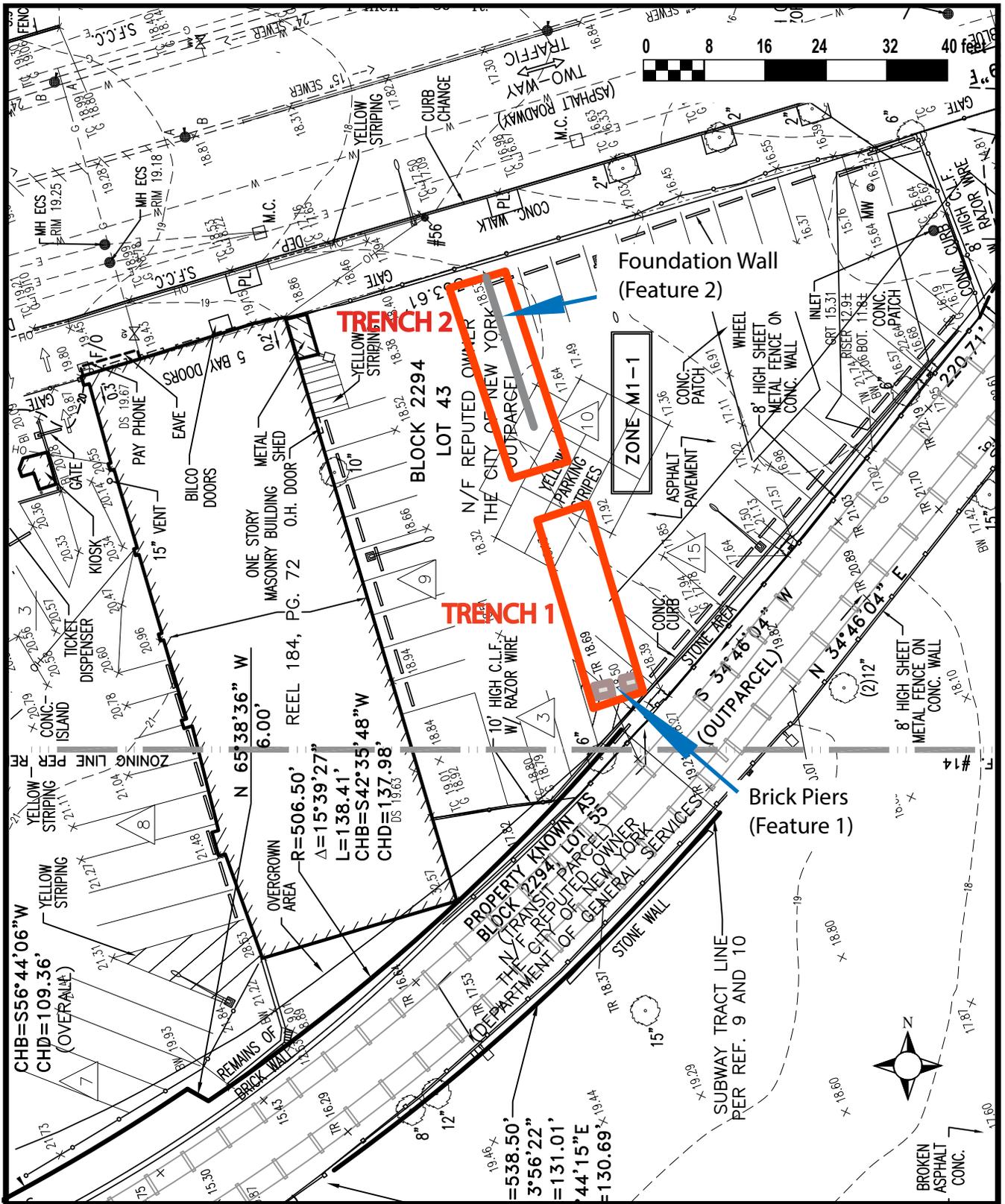
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Phase IB Archaeological Field Investigation  
La Central, Bronxchester EAS  
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FIGURE 1. Project site on USGS, 7.5' Topographical Map, Central Park, NY, Quadrangle, USGS 2013.



Phase 1B Archaeological Field Investigation  
 La Central, Bronxchester EAS  
 Block 2294, Lot 24  
 Westchester Avenue, Bronx, New York



FIGURE 2. Project site showing Location of Test Trenches.



Photograph 1. Location of Trench 1 Prior to the Field Excavation.



Photograph 2. Location of Trench 2 Prior to the Field Excavation.



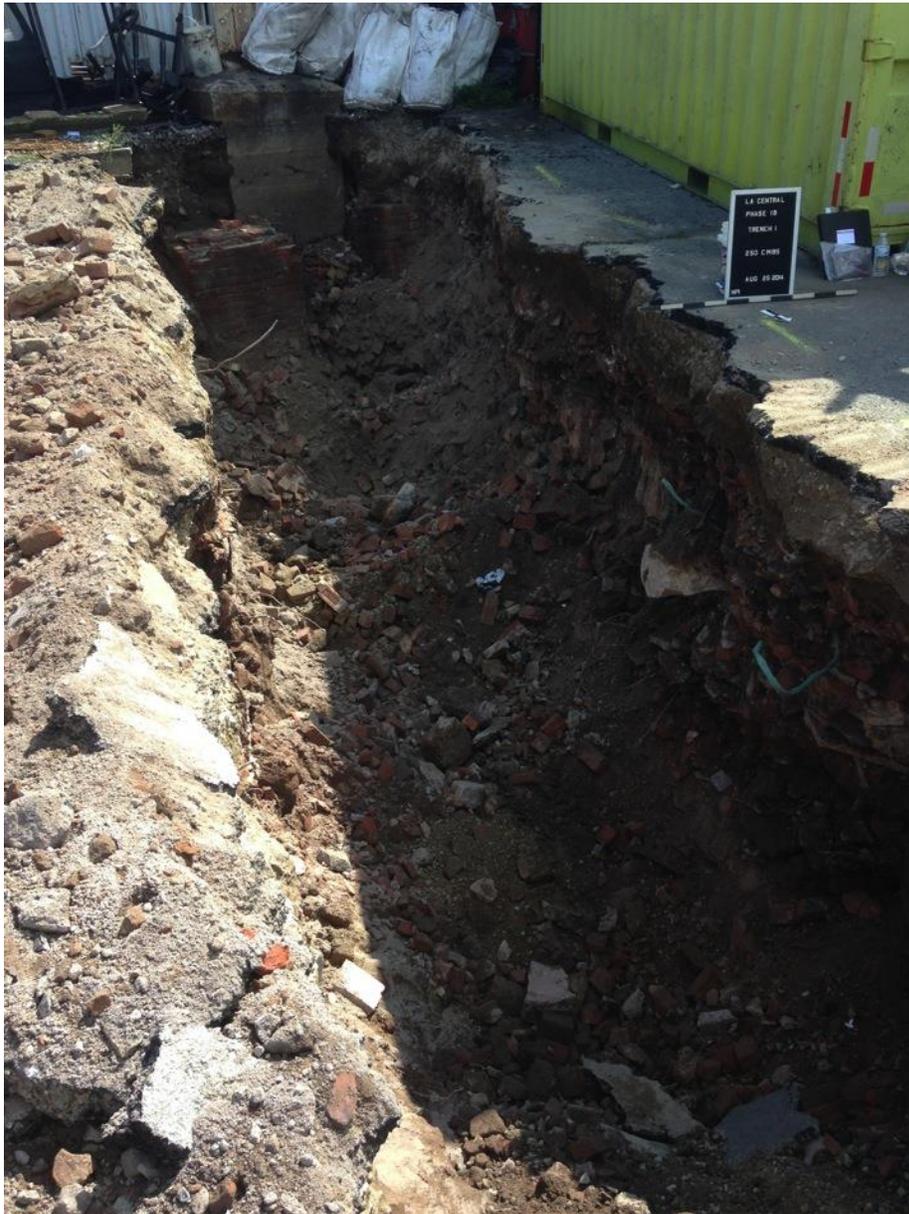
Photograph 3. Trench 1, Fill Strata.



Photograph 4. Trench 1, Brick Rubble from Fill.



Photograph 5. Trench 1, Exposed Piers, Feature 1.



Photograph 6. Overview of Trench 1.



Photograph 7. Fill Strata and Redeposited Subsoil in Trench 2.



Photograph 8. Trench 2, Feature 2, Foundation Wall.



Photograph 9. Overview of Trench 2.