

# Phase IA Documentary Study and Archaeological Assessment for 2510 Coney Island Avenue, Brooklyn, Kings County, New York, Block 7159, Lot 123



*Prepared for:*  
City of New York – Landmarks Preservation Commission  
and  
2510/18 C.I.A. LLC

*Prepared by:*  
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and  
Elissa Rutigliano

*Edited by:*  
Lisa Geiger, M.A., R.P.A.  
and  
Christopher Ricciardi, Ph.D., R.P.A.

November 17, 2020

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Chrysalis Archaeological Consultants, Inc (Chrysalis) was retained by 2510/18 C.I.A. LLC to undertake a Phase IA Documentary Research and Archaeological Assessment report for 2510 Coney Island Avenue, Brooklyn, Kings County, New York. The City of New York – Landmarks Preservation Commission (NYC LPC) determined that the project area, formed by Block 7159 Lot 123, has potential archaeological significance and recommended this survey. A key factor in the area’s potential archaeological sensitivity is the site’s possible association with the Dutch Reformed Church and Gravesend village. The purpose of this Phase IA is to determine if the project area has the potential to retain significant archaeological cultural resources.

The project area lies approximately 0.6 miles east of the historic village of Gravesend, settled in 1643. The project area appears to have occupied meadowland that remained undeveloped into the nineteenth century. In 1844, the Dutch Reformed Church of Gravesend purchased a lot encompassing the project area for construction of a parsonage. The parsonage and its outbuilding lay southwest of the project area. The project area was undeveloped until between 1920 and 1930, when a mix of residential and commercial buildings and a paved lot were constructed across the area. Environmental remediation in 2007 removed three underground storage tanks and revealed sandy subsoil in parts of the project area. Three of the early twentieth century buildings on site were razed between 2008 and 2009, and the project area was stripped and re-paved from 2011 to 2012.

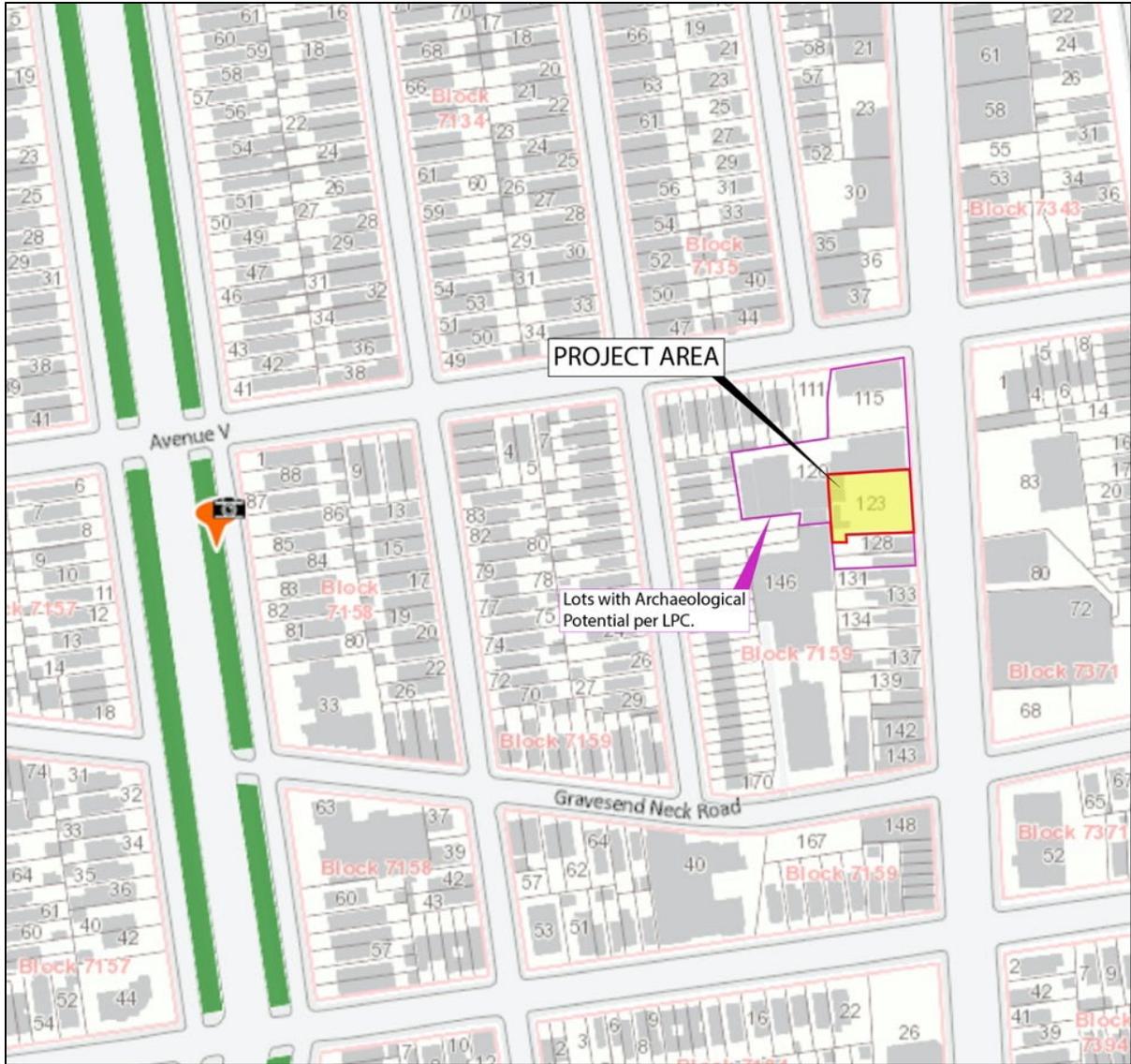
Prehistoric archaeological sensitivity is considered low based on the relatively sparse distribution of known prehistoric sites near the project area and the extensive disturbances to the entire project area from early twentieth century construction and twenty-first century modifications to Lot 123 and the surrounding lots. Historic archaeological sensitivity is also considered low based on the lack of documented historic development within the project area and the extensive disturbance to the project area from twentieth century construction and twenty-first century modification. No additional archaeological work is recommended.

All work for this study was conducted in accordance with the NYC LPC’s Guidelines for Archaeological Work in New York City (NYC LPC 2018) and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NY SHPO) guidelines (New York Archaeological Council [NYAC] 1994; 2000; 2002), which are subsequent to the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation’s “Protection of Historic and Cultural Properties” (36 CFR 800), the New York State Historic Preservation Act (SHPA), the (New York) State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), the (New York) City Environmental Quality Review Act (CEQRA).

Alyssa Loorya, Ph.D., R.P.A., and Elissa Rutigliano authored the report. It was edited by Lisa Geiger, M.A., R.P.A. and Christopher Ricciardi, Ph.D., R.P.A.



Map 1: Detail of USGS Coney Island, NY 7.5" Topographic Quad (USGS 2019).



Map 2: OASIS street map highlighting Project Area and additional lots cited as potentially archaeologically sensitive by NYC LPC (OASIS 2020).

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Block 7159, Lot 123 forms the entirety of the Area of Potential Effect (APE) and the basis for the client’s application to rezone the block. This lot is located on the west side of Coney Island Avenue south of Avenue V. The lot is 90’ wide fronting Coney Island Avenue, 100’ wide at the rear, and 120’ deep.

2510/18 C.I.A. LLC proposes to develop a mixed use commercial and residential structure across the lot (Figure 1). The 11-story structure will front Coney Island Avenue, with a 10’-4” easement to serve as a driveway on the south side and an 8’ easement on the north side of the proposed structure. A 20’ wide portion at the rear of the lot will remain undeveloped to serve as a commercial rear yard (Figure 2). The proposed cellar level will accommodate utilities and parking spaces (Figure 3).

An initial review by NYC LPC determined that the five lots cited in the rezoning application - including Lot 123 and the surrounding Lots 115, 120, 128, and 130 outside of the project impact area - have potential archaeological significance (NYC LPC 2020). While Lots 115, 120, 128, and 130 are cited in the rezoning application, only Lot 123 is within the project APE based on the extent of the proposed development. In consideration of this, the following report defines Block 7159, Lot 123 as the “project area” and APE. Lots 115, 120, 128, and 130 have contextual relevancy to the development of Block 7159, but they are not part of the proposed project APE as defined by current project plans.

**PROJECT INFORMATION**

Project Name	Phase IA Documentary Study and Archaeological Assessment for 2510 Coney Island Avenue, Brooklyn, Kings County, New York
Street Address	2510 Coney Island Avenue
Borough/Block/Lot	Block 7159, Lot 123
Applicant Name	2510/18 C.I.A. LLC
Principal Investigator	Alyssa Loorya, Ph.D., R.P.A.



Figure 1: Proposed construction rendering.



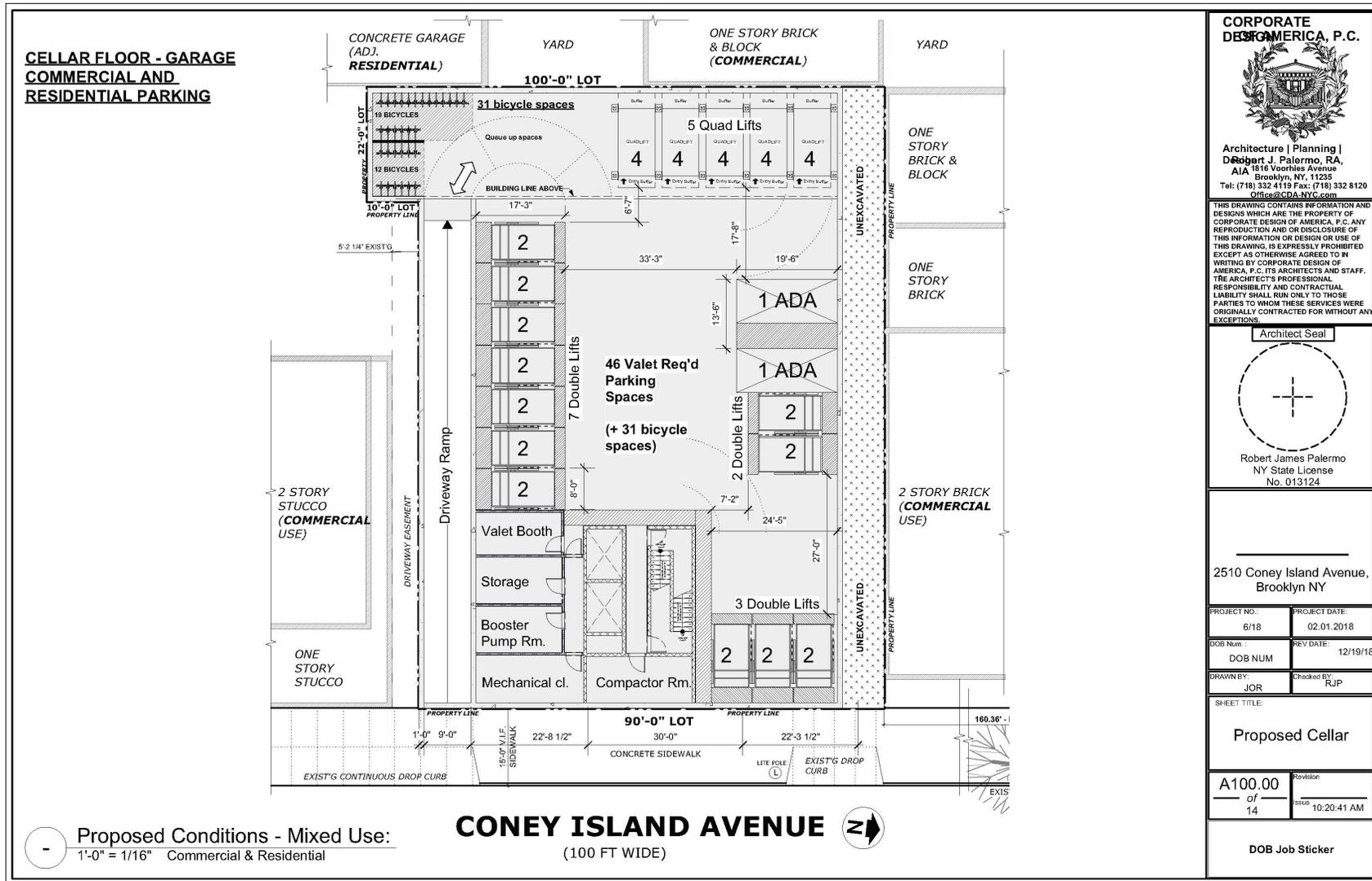


Figure 3: Proposed cellar level construction.

## **II. PROJECT METHODS**

Standard documentary research methodologies were utilized in gathering information for this study. This included a review of existing cultural resource reports within the repositories of the NYC LPC and NY SHPO via the NY CRIS GIS system. A review of historical maps and other documentary information from online and library/museum repositories was conducted to aid in determining the history and development of the project area. Repositories utilized included the New York Public Library, the Library of Congress, New York State Archives, Brooklyn Historical Society, and David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.

Both primary and secondary source documents were consulted. Primary source records included historic maps from 1674-1920, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps from 1930-1951, historic aerials from 1954-1966, historic Brooklyn will and deed records from 1795-1860, historic newspaper articles from 1908, United States and New York State census records and genealogical and biographical information available from online sources (e.g. New York City Register of Births/Deaths). Brooklyn will and deed records of the late eighteenth century were the earliest sources that could be located at the above repositories that detail land use in the project area. Other sources include histories and family genealogies covering the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries, published 1855-1915 (See Section VIII. References). Also incorporated is an assessment of information provided by the project developers of the proposed project plans and photography from an October 20, 2020 site visit.

It is noted that some records were not accessible due to city offices being closed due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, Brooklyn Land Conveyance Records from 1900 – 1950 were not available.

## **III. SYNTHESIS OF PREVIOUS WORK**

According to a search of reports filed with NYC LPC and the NY CRIS GIS system, there have been five previous archaeological assessments undertaken within a one-mile radius of the Project Area (Table 1).

In 1991 Historical Perspectives, Inc. was retained by the New York City School Construction Authority to conduct an archaeological sensitivity assessment for Block 7185 Lot 20. Although there was evidence that a pre-contact period population was present in the Brooklyn area, the APE would have been primarily a wetland, and thus was considered to have low prehistoric archaeological sensitivity. There was also no evidence in the project area for historical structures or occupation during the contact and post-contact period. No further field investigation or monitoring was recommended.

In 1998, Historical Perspectives, Inc. conducted an assessment of nine bridges in southeast Brooklyn, including the interchange with Coney Island Avenue and Ocean Avenue south of the current project area. The report recommended soil borings be conducted for the Nostrand Avenue Bridge because of prehistoric potential of elevated site near marine resources and recommended National Register status for the Mill Basin bridge, but it found lower lying areas to lack archaeological sensitivity.

In 2000, Greenhouse Consultants, Inc. prepared an archaeological sensitivity assessment of the Old Gravesend Cemetery to determine whether graves might extend beyond the established cemetery fence line, as the fence was to be replaced in the future. A general history of the site was performed using materials from the New York Public Library, the Gravesend Historical Society, and Offices of the Borough of Brooklyn. The assessment concluded that in situ graves could extend past the fence of the Gravesend Neck Road frontage and the eastern portion of the Village Road South frontage. Testing of this area before any construction work was recommended.

In 2002, a report chronicling the archaeological testing and subsequent construction monitoring of the Gravesend Cemetery fence replacement was prepared by Alyssa Loorya, M.A., R.P.A. Archaeological hand excavation was performed in two areas of the cemetery before the new fence's installation, followed by monitoring. The archaeological excavation revealed no evidence of burials in either area. Both the excavation and monitoring at the Old Gravesend Cemetery revealed a significant disturbance along the perimeter of the cemetery. No culturally relevant material was recovered during excavation or monitoring.

In 2019, Historical Perspectives, Inc. assessed numerous green planting areas proposed in five areas of Brooklyn and Queens, including approximately one mile northwest of the current project area. This area was found to have low sensitivity for prehistoric resources based on the landscape and relatively few surrounding documented prehistoric materials, and it was found sensitive for mid-nineteenth and twentieth century residential materials based on map documented structures.

Table 1: Archaeological assessments conducted within a 1-mile radius of the project area.

YEAR	TITLE/SITE	AUTHOR	NUMBER	CONCLUSIONS
1991	Phase 1A Archaeological Assessment, NYC School Construction Authority – PS 721K, Gravesend, Brooklyn, New York	Historical Perspectives, Inc.	LPC # 1069	The APE was deemed as having insufficient evidence of prehistoric use as it was primarily a wetland and would have been an uncondusive environment for a prehistoric campsite. There was also no evidence of structures or general use of the area during the historic period.
1998	Stage 1A Cultural Resources Assessment Belt Parkway Bridges Project, Brooklyn, NY. 97DOT006K	Historical Perspectives, Inc.	LPC# 874	Assessment of nine bridges in southeast Brooklyn. Recommended soil borings for Nostrand Avenue Bridge because of prehistoric potential of elevated site near marine resources.
2000	Documentary Study of the Old Gravesend Cemetery, Borough of Brooklyn, Kings County, New York	Greenhouse Consultants, Inc.	LPC # 211	The study found that evidence of prehistoric residence and activity was unlikely to be found in Old Gravesend Cemetery, due to development and modern use of the land. There was some possibility that in situ graves

YEAR	TITLE/SITE	AUTHOR	NUMBER	CONCLUSIONS
				extended beyond the fence-line of the cemetery. Archaeological testing of the Gravesend Neck Road frontage and the eastern 110 feet of the Village Road South frontage prior to construction work was recommended.
2002	Phase IB Archaeological Testing at the Gravesend Historic Cemetery, Brooklyn, New York	Chrysalis Archaeological Consultants, Inc.	LPC # 250	As a fence was being replaced around a documented cemetery, archaeological excavation and monitoring was deemed necessary by LPC. Most of the ground was deemed disturbed, and no culturally significant artifacts were revealed, nor was there evidence of in situ burials in the excavated and monitored areas.
2019	Phase IA Archaeological Resources Assessment GOSR Green Infrastructure Assessment and Implementation Project Kings & Queens Counties, New York	Historical Perspectives, Inc.	NYC DEP / 12DEP054Y OPRHP #18PR05554	Installation of green areas nearly one mile northwest of current project area. Area was found to have low sensitivity for prehistoric resources based on the landscape and relatively few surrounding documented prehistoric materials. The area was found sensitive for mid-nineteenth and twentieth century residential materials.

The subject property was also the site of 2007 Environmental Site Assessment and Remediation undertaken by HydroEnvironmental Solutions, Inc. (HES). Remediation work was conducted for two hydraulic tanks and an underground storage tank below a vehicle service garage at the western rear of Lot 123 (HES 2007a, HES 2007b). Remediation work identified a “dry well” at the southwest portion of the property, but this was considered associated with the autobody shop on site due to surface drainage ports and the presence of tetrachloroethene, a common element of metal degreasers and vehicle brake cleaners (HES 2008). Excavation for remediation and collection of 10 soil samples reached depths from 6’ to 10’ below ground surface and exposed sandy matrices without an apparent A horizon based on soil data and photographs collected.

## IV. CONTEXT AND RESEARCH DESIGN

### HISTORIC ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

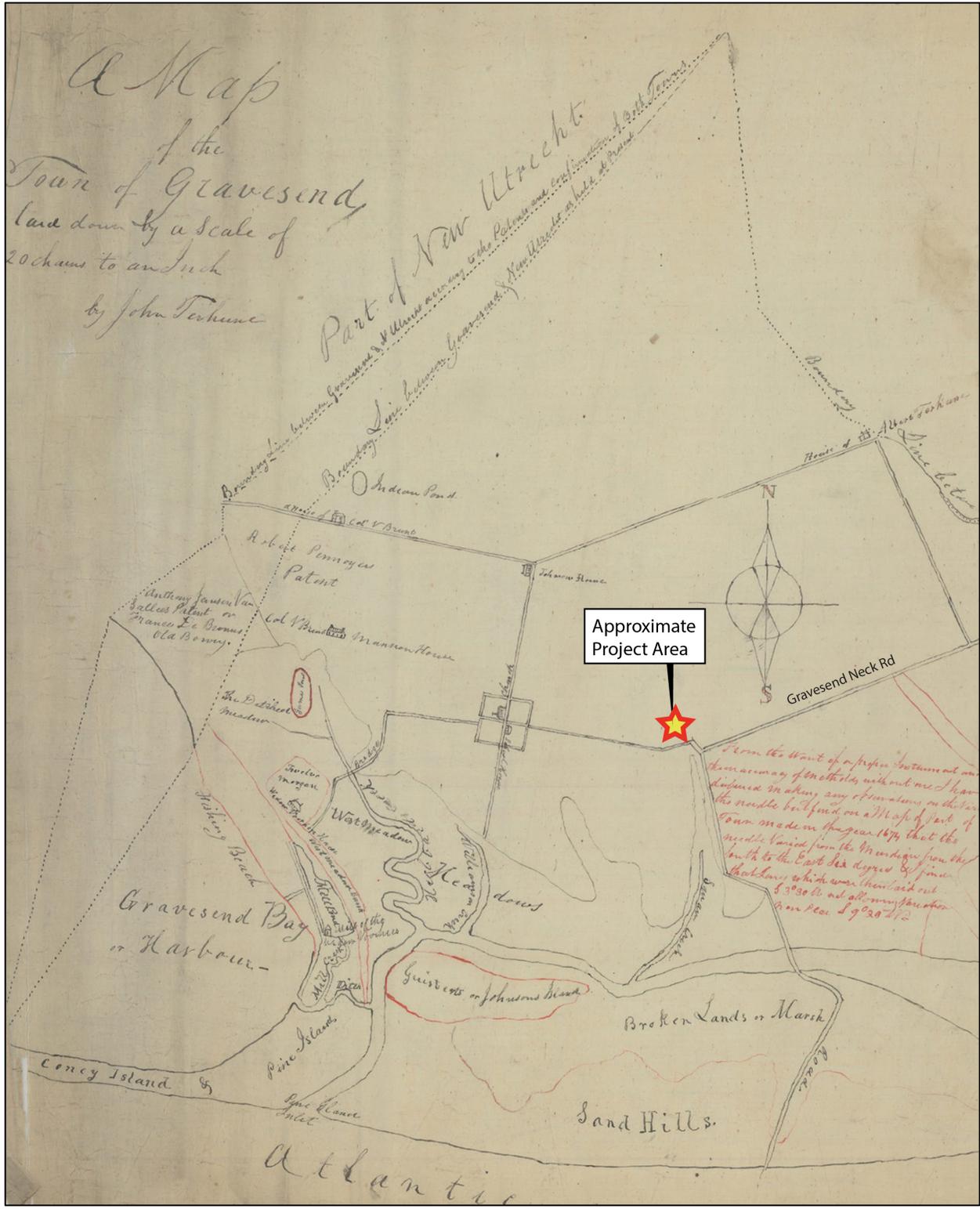
The project area is in western Long Island. Long Island comprises two spines of glacial moraine, with a broad, sandy outwash plain beyond. These moraines consist of gravel and loose rock left behind during the two most recent pulses of Wisconsin glaciation 21,000 years ago. The northern moraine, which directly abuts the North Shore of Long Island at points, is known as the Harbor Hill moraine. The more southerly moraine, known as the Ronkonkoma moraine, forms the "backbone" of Long Island; it runs primarily through the center of Long Island. The land to the south of this moraine, including the project area, is the outwash plain of the last glacier (Schuberth 1968; Eisenberg 1978; Campanella 2019).

An assessment of historic maps indicates the landscape surrounding the project area was highly modified in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The project area is located in the footprint of the historic town of Gravesend in the southern part of Kings County. The town occupied a triangular area, with its base resting upon the Atlantic Ocean in the south and its apex adjoining the Town of Flatbush in the north. Located ten miles from Manhattan, the area of Gravesend is bounded to the west by New Utrecht, the east by Flatlands, and the south by Coney Island and the sea (Map 1).

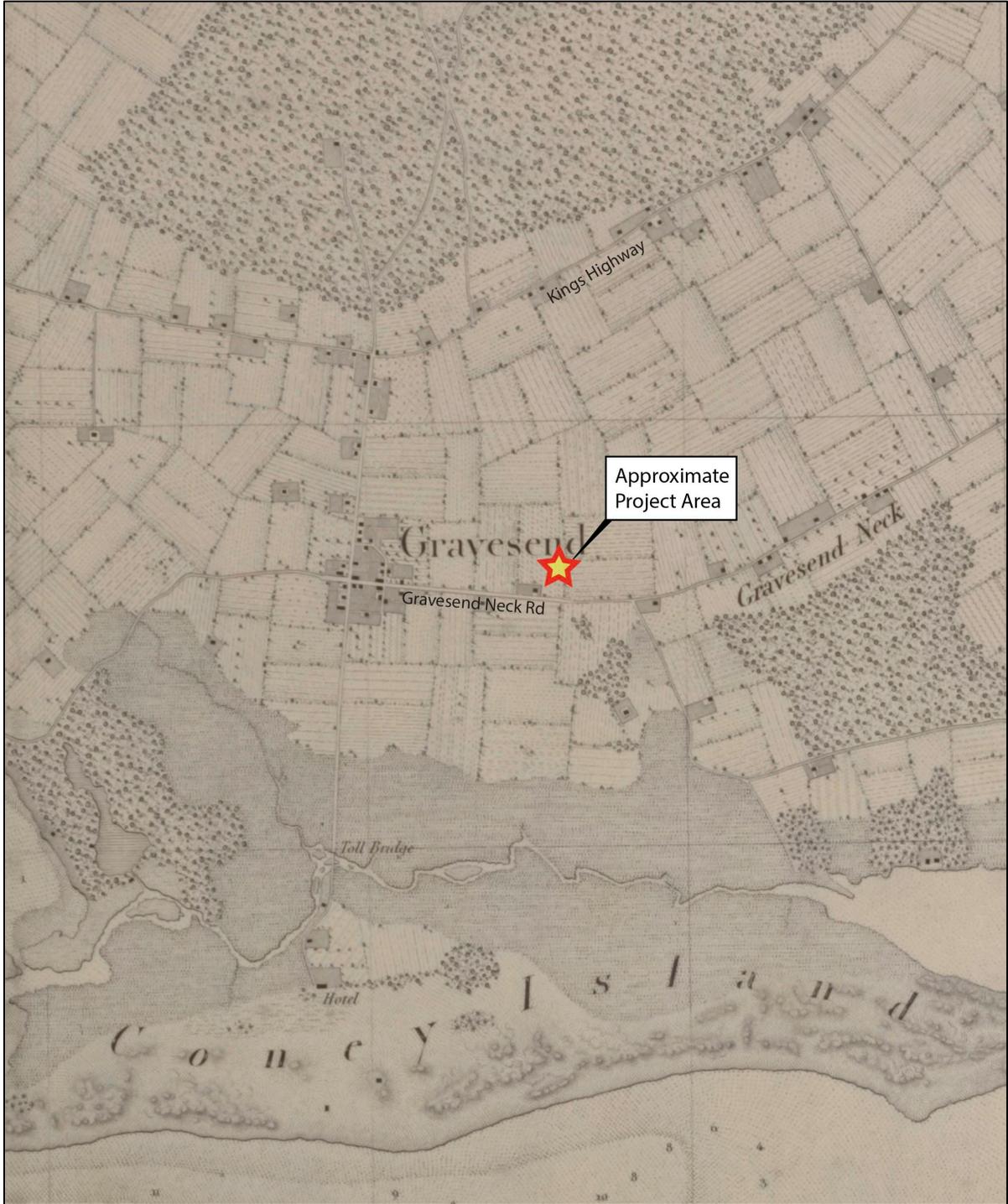
Before extensive alteration of the landscape during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a gently sloping plain extended south of the moraine to the ridge of hills forming the Brooklyn mainland and several barrier islands. Coney Island, due south of the project area, is one of these barrier islands. Jamaica Bay, southeast of the project area, is formed of several barrier islands. Separating these barrier islands and the mainland of western Long Island was a vast expanse of tidal marsh. Near the project area, the tidal marsh connected to Coney Island Creek and its tributaries. The closest tributary to the project area was Squam Creek, an offshoot of Coney Island Creek.

Squam Creek is referenced in Reginald Bolton's description of the region as being in the western part of Gravesend Neck, east of the project area (Bolton 1922:231) (Map 3). The City of New York filled in Squam Creek before 1935 (New York State - Supreme Court Appellate Division—Second Department, May 1938, V. 5439:588).

The topography of the project area during the middle of the nineteenth-century was essentially flat, with elevations less than 10' above sea level (asl). The project area was dominated by large, open fields of cleared or cultivated upland. South of the project area, beginning roughly near Avenue X/Avenue Y and extending south to Coney Island Creek, the area was comprised entirely of meadow and marshland. Gravesend Neck Road's layout had been established as little more than a wagon path, between the main village square in Gravesend and Sheepshead Bay Road. The land comprising the project area had not yet been developed. The closest building was situated southeast of the project area at the southeast corner of the junction formed by Gravesend Neck Road and Sheepshead Bay Road. The second closest building was located west of the project area along Gravesend Neck Road, closer to the main village square (Map 4) (See Section V for detailed information).



Map 3: Detail of 1674 “A map of the town of Gravesend” showing Squam Creek, with nineteenth century annotations (Terhune 1674)



Map 4: Detail of 1681 coastal map, with the project area east of the developed Gravesend core (Hassler 1681).

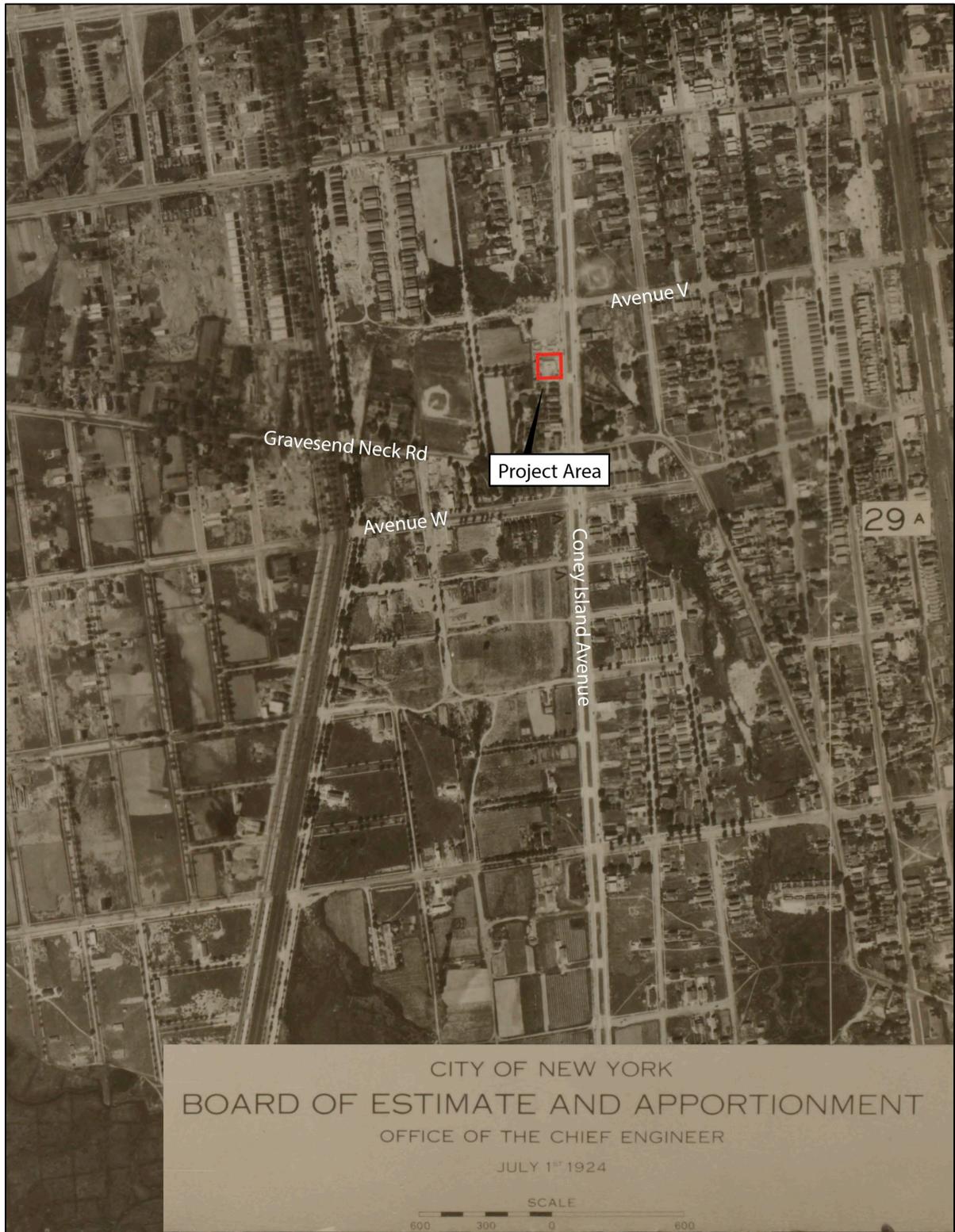


Figure 4: 1924 aerial photography (City of New York – Board of Estimate and Apportionment).

A 1924 aerial image of the area shows Gravesend on the precipice of urbanization. The project area had transformed into a light industrial landscape. The surrounding development, remnants of marshland to the south of the project area, and the present-day roadways bordering the project area are depicted. Several buildings had been constructed on Block 7159 outside the project area (Figure 4). Section V covers the regional and project area history and details development of the APE.

## **CURRENT CONDITIONS**

The project area is currently developed within a highly urbanized area of Brooklyn's Gravesend neighborhood, named after the historic town. The area immediately surrounding the project area contains a mix of predominantly commercial and mixed-use structures, including neighborhood retail, light industrial use, and residential. Coney Island Avenue – a heavily trafficked north/south roadway – forms the project area's eastern boundary and is the principal thoroughfare in the area. In the immediate surrounding area, Avenue V is predominantly commercial and mixed-use in nature (residential/commercial retail) with mostly 1-2 story buildings containing ground floor neighborhood retail. Side streets such as East 8<sup>th</sup> Street (to the west) and East 12<sup>th</sup> Street (to the east) are mainly residential.

The project area APE, Lot 123, consists of a new and used car lot, an automobile repair facility with four service bays, three commercial offices and a residential apartment. A site visit conducted October 20, 2020 found the majority of the lot covered by an asphalt paved parking area (Images 1-2). The front area of the site consists of an approximately 3,000 square foot vacant residential/commercial building next to the asphalt paved area. The rear portion of the site consists of a four-bay automobile repair garage. According to the Environmental Site Assessment, the interior service garage contained two underground hydraulic oil tanks, a sump/open pit at the entrance area of the service bays to act as a collection area for liquids spilled during automobile maintenance and repair, and a 550-gallon underground storage tank was noted beneath the left front service bay; these underground structures were removed in 2007 (HES 2007a, HES 2007b, HES 2008).

The area surrounding the APE is dedicated to commercial-office buildings and use. Lot 115, situated at the southwest corner formed by the intersection of Avenue V and Coney Island Avenue, is occupied by a Chase Bank building. Lot 120, fronting Coney Island Avenue, is occupied by a two-story brick industrial building. It is adjoined southerly by Lot 123 (the project area), a paved car-lot. Lot 128, fronting Coney Island Avenue, is occupied by a one-story concrete commercial building. Lot 130, fronting Coney Island Avenue, is occupied by a one-story commercial-retail building.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soil Survey identifies 87.5% of the project area as UoA – Urban land, outwash (Table 2) (USDA 2020). This soil type is typical of human-modified landscapes. The entire project area contains 0% to 3% slopes, which reflects the relatively flat terrain. Soil sampling undertaken by HES identified medium to coarse brown sand across the rear portion of Lot 123 during storage tank remediation work (HES 2008).

Table 2: USDA Soil Survey for the project area.

MAP UNIT SYMBOL	MAP UNIT NAME	ACRES IN AOI	PERCENT OF AOI
UFA	Urban land-Flatbush complex, 0 to 3 percent slopes	0.0	1.1%
UmA	Urban land, tidal marsh substratum, 0 to 3 percent slopes	0.1	11.3%
UoA	Urban land, outwash substratum, 0 to 3 percent slopes	1.1	87.5%



Image 1: Project APE, Lot 123, facing southwest.



Image 2: Project APE, Lot 123, facing northwest.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

This Phase IA documentary study has been designed to determine the history of the project area and its potential to contain significant archaeological resources. Among these are potential Native American (prehistoric) and/or historic resources. Historic period resources were specifically cited by the NYC LPC as a possible archaeological concern (NYC LPC 2020).

While the client has applied for rezoning of Lots 115, 120, 123, 128, and 130, project plans limit proposed construction to Lot 123. NYC LPC highlighted Lot 123 as well as the surrounding Lots 115, 120, 128 and 130 as potentially archaeologically sensitive. This report investigates Lot 123 as the project area and APE, based on the limits of disturbance from proposed development plans. Research considers Lots 115, 120, 128, and 130 contextually in the historic development of Block 7159, with special consideration of the general project area's relation to Gravesend and to the Dutch Reform Church and its ensuing modern development.

## V. DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH RESULTS

### PRE-CONTACT PERIOD

The prehistoric era covers the period from North America's first human occupation until contact with European settlers. The date of the first human occupation of North America is the subject of much dispute; however, there is evidence of human presence in the northeastern United States since approximately 15,000 B.P. following the Laurentide Ice Sheet retreat, which covered the area during the Late Wisconsin Glaciation (Kraft 1986).

Prehistoric occupation in North America is divided into three significant cultural periods: Paleo-Indian (circa 13,000 – 10,000 B.P.), Archaic (circa 10,000 – 3000 B.P.), and Woodland (circa 3000 B.P. – A.D. 1600), marked by changes in climate and the archaeological record.

Western Long Island's earliest inhabitants were small bands of organized and highly mobile hunter-gatherers. They did not establish permanent settlements but moved seasonally according to resource availability. Paleo-Indian sites reflect temporary occupation at elevated locations (offering optimal vantage opportunity for hunting) or alongside streams and rivers. Their subsistence economy would have been comprised of Pleistocene megafauna, small game, nuts, berries, and vegetal foods (Fletcher & Kintz 1979:12). Rivers, lakes, salt marshes, and other coastal environments were utilized for the abundant fish, shellfish, fowl, plant life, and other aquatic resources that could be easily procured there (Fagan 2005). Because of the need for mobility, Paleo-Indian tools and other material culture were not overly complicated or extensive, which leads to the ephemeral nature of Paleo sites in the archaeological record.

Later human occupation of western Long Island during the Archaic period, which evolved from that of a hunter-gatherer economy, was indicative of "specialized adaptations" of individuals to their environment (Fletcher & Kintz 1979:12). During the Archaic, settlement patterns remained semi-mobile as the available resources shifted throughout the year, but there was a trend towards increasingly more extended amounts of time spent in one location as water sources stabilized. Groups established base camps and moved periodically throughout a more limited territory as resources became available (McManamon et al. 2009). On western Long Island, Archaic peoples utilized a mix of forest and marine resources during the Early Archaic period. Larger prehistoric populations characterized the Late Archaic period (4000-1000 B.P.) with markedly more complex forms of settlement activity and trade relations. Late Archaic sites on western Long Island reflect seasonal occupation of hunting and butchering camps, fishing sites, and wild food collection stations (Fletcher & Kintz 1979:12-13).

The introduction of agriculture, the appearance of permanent settlements, the introduction and advancement of ceramic technology, and the prevalence of more elaborate and diverse tools typically mark the Woodland Period's onset. The advent of horticultural activities and the domestication of plants and animals was a critical factor in enabling groups to settle in one place and develop into more complex societies (Bolton 1922, Furman 1875). The Woodland populations of Long Island centered their subsistence activities around the cultivation of maize, beans, and squash; and the exploitation of marine-based resources (Fletcher & Kintz 1979:12).

The later part of the Woodland period saw complex prehistoric societies; these groups represent the first peoples that early European settlers would have encountered during their explorations to the area (Ritchie & Funk 1971). At the time of contact, Brooklyn was principally inhabited by the Canarsee, the Nayak, the Keshaechquereren, the Maereck, and the Rockaway Native American tribes. These Native American groups occupied long-term villages and seasonal camps throughout Brooklyn and western Long Island (Bull & Giordano 2007:12).

#### *PREHISTORIC CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT AREA*

Archaeological investigations of Native American sites throughout western Long Island have revealed a prehistoric settlement pattern organized around fresh-water resources, arranged proximate to tidal creeks, tidal marshes, stream banks, estuaries, and wetland areas. These locations were most likely utilized as hunting areas and collection stations for plant-based food resources. South Brooklyn was thus an ideal location for habitation.

Before the arrival of European settlers, south Brooklyn was the home of the Munsee-speaking Canarsee Native American people. The Canarsee cultivated planting fields in northern Gravesend near Indian Pond, near Avenue P and West 11<sup>th</sup> Street, and fished and clammed in Gravesend Bay's waters (Roberts et al. 2000:3). The shoreline was dominated by one longhouse, known as the settlement *Wichquawanck*, near the terminus of present-day Bay Parkway (Harris 2009:3; Roberts et al. 2000:3).

Gravesend village would be settled upon what was known to the Canarsee as *Massabarkem*, meaning “land at the many waters.” The *Massabarkem* tract extended as far east as the western part of Gravesend Neck near East 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Homecrest Avenue (Bolton 1922:163-164, 237). The eastern part of Gravesend Neck, between the now-filled Squam Creek and Shellbank Creek, was reportedly dubbed *Narrioch*, meaning “a neck land” or “a point of land” (Bolton 1922:164, 231).

Two Canarsee pathways were located in the area that would later form the original settlement of Gravesend. One led from the *Mechawanienk* trail (now roughly followed by Kings Highway) to the shores at Coney Island, generally following McDonald Avenue's path. The second path led from the shores to the main villages, like Shanscomacoke, in the east, and was the predecessor to Gravesend Neck Road (Harris 2009:3; Campanella 2019:44).

A review of the NY CRIS GIS identified two prehistoric sites just outside of a one-mile radius of the project area. Arthur C. Parker identified both during his tenure as New York State archaeologist. Just over a mile southeast of the project area near Sheepshead Bay, Parker recorded traces of shell middens and shell heaps as New York State Museum site #7877. Over a mile east of the project area and bound west by East 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Parker recorded a burial site – consisting of at least twelve burials, oyster beds, and pre-contact ceramics – as New York State Museum Site #3608. Parker made no estimate of date range or cultural affiliation for either site.

## **CONTACT PERIOD**

The first recorded European exploration near the project area occurred in 1524, when Florentine explorer Giovanni da Verrazzano and a crew of fifty sailed into New York's harbor (Brevoort 1873:177; Ieradi 2001:10). In 1609, Henry Hudson landed at Coney Island. Hudson, an English explorer, was commissioned by the Dutch East India Company to chart a new course for Asia via the Arctic Ocean. He and his crew encountered Brooklyn's native inhabitants, most likely the Canarsee, and generally described them as being civil during their interactions. Hudson's brief visit to Brooklyn launched several consequent expeditions to the New World sponsored by the Dutch East India Company and its later iteration, the Dutch West India Company (Ieradi 2001:8-11).

The Dutch West India Company initiated the settlement of the New Netherland colony in 1624 with the establishment of Fort Amsterdam on the southern tip of Manhattan. In 1626 the Company appointed Peter Minuit as Director-General of the colony. That same year, Minuit purchased from Native American proprietors the island of Manhattan and named New Amsterdam as the colony's capital. Ten years later, Dutch colonists ventured into the greater New Netherland colony and began settling farms on western Long Island outside the city proper. Dutch exploration and settlement of western Long Island continued into the early seventeenth century. Six townships were settled under Dutch administration in present-day Kings County: Amersfoort (Flatlands), Breuckelen (Brooklyn), Boswyck (Bushwick), Gravenzande (Gravesend), Midwout (Flatbush), and New Utrecht. The first settlement, Amersfoort (Flatlands), dates to 1636. The remaining townships were established over the next two decades (Stiles 1867: 29).

## **HISTORIC PERIOD**

Gravesend was one of the six townships established in the seventeenth century that occupied present-day Kings County, settled in 1643. The town was founded by Lady Deborah Moody, an affluent and progressive Englishwoman who arrived in North America in the spring of 1640 (Stockwell 1884:2).

Moody settled first in Massachusetts, where she was brought in front of the Quarterly Court in December 1642 for vocalizing her dissent to infant baptism. She was consequently excommunicated from the Congregational Church (Van Buskirk 1905:8). Half a year later, in June of 1643, Lady Moody and a small band of Anabaptists left Massachusetts for the Dutch colony of New Netherland.

For numerous colonists who could not find peace in New England, the neighboring Dutch colony of New Netherland offered a religious refuge (Bolton 1881:243). In New England, non-conformists to the Church of England were labeled heretics and dissenters. Inquisition was made into these individuals' private lives, and their beliefs could be criminal offenses (Stockwell 1884:2). Alternatively, the Dutch had a liberal attitude toward religious acceptance, which prevailed into policy as they established regional colonies (Bolton 1855:xiii, Campanella 2019:42). As a result, small pockets of English settlements cropped up across Dutch-owned territories. These were often made up of emigrants of various religious denominations and political dissidents from the New England colonies. These groups, whose varying faiths had left them subject to religious

persecution in the New England colonies, looked to the Dutch-ruled New Netherland as a place where they could exercise their religious principles (Jenkins 1912:251).

Lady Moody relocated to New Amsterdam, to a small settlement of English exiles that had been carved out along the East River called Deutel Bay (Stockwell 1884:2). Here she and her associates met Lieutenant Nicholas Stillwell, a Surrey-born tobacco planter who arrived in New Amsterdam in 1638 (Kearns et al. 1991:8). Banding together, Stillwell and Lady Moody endeavored to find a more permanent settlement for themselves and their associates within the colony.

This decision was well received by the Dutch administration, which was eager to establish the colony beyond the capital city. For years, the Dutch administration had been strategizing ways to attract new settlers to the outlying area (Campanella 2019:42). To incentivize settlement, the Dutch West India Company had instituted a policy in 1638 that offered land to all potential colonists, which they could hold in free “allodial proprietorship” in return for its cultivation (Bailey 1949:36). The Company then authorized Director-General Willem Kieft to purchase land from Native American proprietors. By 1639, Kieft had ambitiously acquired almost all of western Long Island in the present-day Kings County for the Dutch West India Company – their holdings extended from Rockaway Bay to the Great South Bay in Fire Island (Stiles 1867, Kent 1900).

In 1643, with the promise of a future settlement on the horizon, Kieft invited Lady Moody to select a site from the Company’s portfolio. She chose a tract along the westerly end of Long Island (Stilwell 1878:93). Escalating tensions between Native American groups and the European community, spurred by Kieft and the Dutch administration’s provocations, left settlers on western Long Island vulnerable to the resulting raids and attacks. As a result, the western end of Long Island became unsafe for colonization, and Lady Moody’s first attempt to settle the area was delayed. On December 19<sup>th</sup>, 1645, Kieft issued a patent for the land to Lady Moody for “land about the westernmost part of Long Island,” encompassing the present-day neighborhoods of Gravesend, Coney Island, Bensonhurst, Brighton Beach, Manhattan Beach, and Midwood (Van Buskirk 1905:9; Harris 2009:3). The patent issued on December 19<sup>th</sup>, 1645 by Kieft to Lady Moody and her associates described the boundaries of the land as being situated about the westernmost part of Long Island, bound southerly by the main ocean and northerly at a point aligned to Indian Pond, and westerly by Coney Island creek and the plantations of Van Salee and Pennoyer, and easterly by Gerritsen’s basin (Thompson 1839:438-439). Kieft named the settlement *Gravenzande* for the city in Holland along the river Maas (Stilwell 1878: 93-94).

The English settlers were not be the first to occupy the area. The western end of Long Island was home to scattered bouweries and individual plantations, each cultivated independently. Anthony Jansen van Salee was the first to settle the Gravesend area with his wife Grietje Reyniers (Campanella 2019:44). Van Salee was a Cartagena-born pirate who lived in North Africa and Holland before taking refuge in New Amsterdam circa 1630 (Stilwell 1878:213; Campanella 2019:44). In 1639, Kieft encouraged the renegade couple to remove from the capital city and leased to Van Salee roughly two-hundred acres along Gravesend Bay, between Coney Island and New Utrecht (Thompson 1839:438; Harris 2009:3).

There are two other individuals on record, independent of Lady Moody and her company, who were granted land in the Gravesend area during the years 1643-1645. On May 24th, 1644, Kieft issued a patent to Guisbert Op-Dyck for eighty-eight acres comprising Coney Island (Thompson 1839:438). On November 29th, 1645, Robert Pennoyer became the third person to hold an individual patent for land in Gravesend. Pennoyer purchased over 180 acres from the Company for a farm between the plantations of Van Salee and Lady Moody (Stockwell 1884:5). Despite some local European farm ownership, Gravesend was among the first developed towns in western Long Island in the late seventeenth century (Maps 5 and 6).



Map 5: Detail of 1680 coastal chart, with Gravesend west of the project area (Seller & De Wit 1680).



Map 6: Detail of 1681 map of New England (Flamsted 1681).

## TOWN OF GRAVESEND

*Gravenzande* was the first English settlement within present-day Kings County under Dutch rule (Roberts et al. 2000:5). Its charter is noteworthy as the first in New Netherland to be written in the English language and the first in the New World to name a woman as patentee (Stockwell 1884:5). Furthermore, the *Gravenzande* settlement was one of the earliest in the colony to have the privileges of religious freedom and the right to self-government written into its charter (Harris 2009:3; Campanella 2019:44).

Unlike the other Dutch settled towns within Kings County, *Gravenzande* was the only town in the region laid out according to a plan. By the spring of 1646 the center of the town, the village, was plotted out as a sixteen-acre square situated at the crossroads formed by Gravesend Avenue, now McDonald Avenue and the east-west Gravesend Neck Road. This location is approximately 0.6 miles west of the project area. The initial layout created four quadrants, each four acres in size. The perimeters of each four-acre quadrant were subdivided into ten house lots, and the center of each quadrant was left open and undeveloped as common land (Figure 5). This resulted in forty house-lots, one for each of the original forty patentees<sup>1</sup> (Stockwell 1884:5).

The gridded, four-square layout ensured the village would be easily defensible. A palisade surrounded the village square for protection from increasing attacks waged by Native Americans, wolves, and wild animals. Beyond the palisade, the land was laid out to create forty triangular-shaped farm lots that radiated out from the central square. Each settler of *Gravenzande* was entitled to a house lot and its corresponding farm lot (Stilwell 1878:142; Kearns et al. 1988:21).

The common ground within the main village was dually utilized for the safekeeping of livestock and public services. The magistrate, or town clerk's office, occupied an interior lot within the southeast quadrant; and the town burial ground was established in the southwest quadrant (Stockwell 1884:27) (Figure 6). As the settlement continued to evolve, an interior lot within each respective quadrant was dedicated to a public institution (Stilwell 1878:143).

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<sup>1</sup> Gale Harris and Benjamin M. Stillwell alternatively state that there were thirty-nine settlers (Stilwell 1878:142; Harris 2009:3)

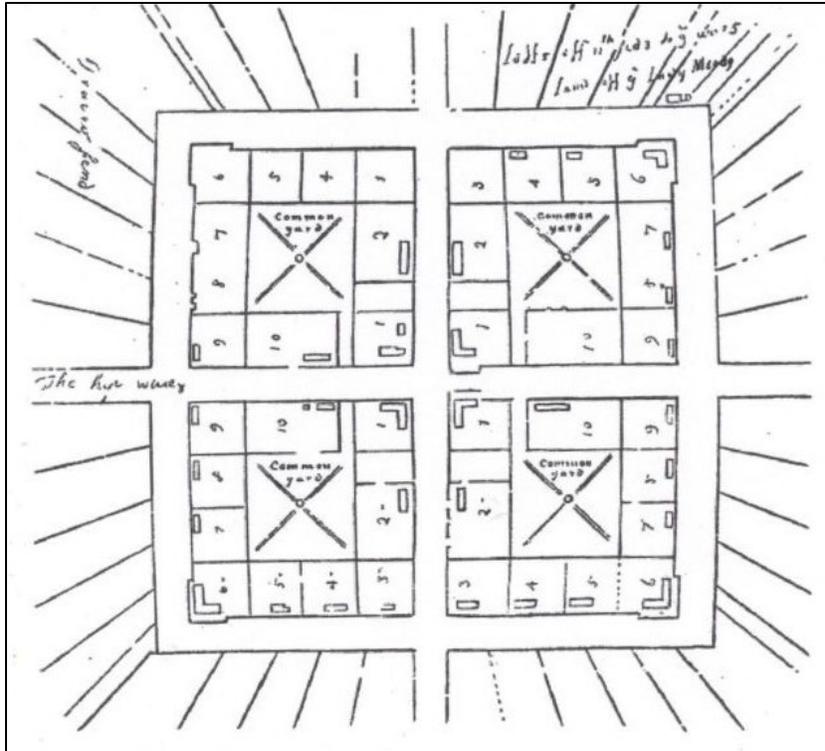


Figure 5: A copy of the original town plan for *Gravenzande* surveyed in 1645, reprinted in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1908 (*Brooklyn Daily Eagle* 1908).

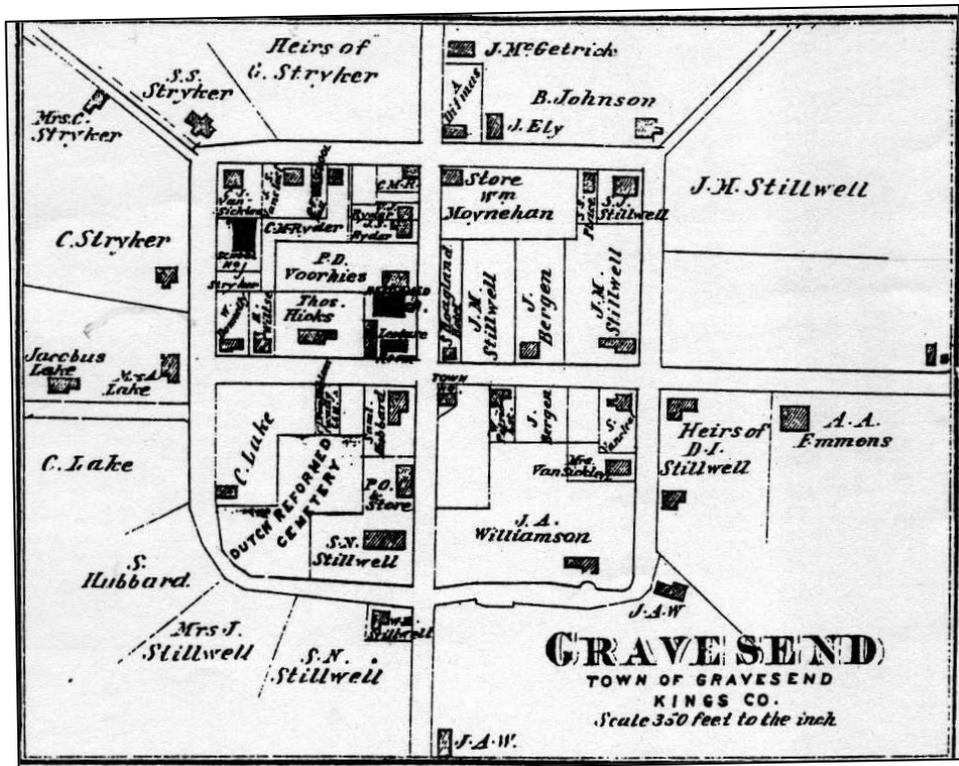


Figure 6: The Gravesend village square with town cemetery in the southwest quadrant, the town hall in the southeast quadrant, and some farm lines intact (Beers 1873).

The first town meeting on record occurred in 1646. That same year, the village organized the political body in Kieft's charter and appointed three justices and schout, or law enforcement administrator, to the town court. In 1650, the town agreed that a public record of all burials, marriages, and births in *Gravenzande* should be kept (Stockwell 1884:10). In keeping to the nature of religious freedom that the town had been founded on, these events were recognized as transactional rather than ceremonial (Stilwell 1878:145). In 1651, magistrates were elected, and provisions for regulating their role and governance were put in place (Stockwell 1884:9).

The villagers in *Gravenzande* also sought to strengthen their relationship and their title to the land with Native Americans residing in the area. On November 1st, 1650, at the town court, the Native sachems Johosietum, Airemakamus, Aeramarka, and Assanched renegotiated Lady Moody's patent, which they called *Massabarkem*<sup>2</sup> (Stilwell 1878:159-160). Four years later, on May 7th, 1654, the villagers of *Gravenzande* made additional purchases from the Canarsee for land east and south of the village square on both Coney Island and Gravesend Neck (Thompson 1839:440-441; Kearns 1991:9). Three years later, in 1657, these lands were divided amongst the thirty-eight freeholders (Stockwell 1884:9).

For nearly a decade, *Gravenzande* prospered under the Dutch administration that granted them civil and religious liberty via the town charter, privileges which had not been extended to any of the Dutch settlements. The village also held a close relationship with then-Director General Peter Stuyvesant, perhaps allowing settlers to enjoy a greater measure of freedom than could be found elsewhere (Stilwell 1878:146). However, by the mid-1650s, civil unrest disrupted *Gravenzande*, as the Quaker religion found a stronghold there. Several settlers were targeted for their affiliation. Furthermore, *Gravenzande* residents were still primarily English. As the Dutch and English governments were on the precipice of war, the colonists of *Gravenzande* found themselves divided in their loyalty to the New Netherland Council, as many had a hard time turning against their own (Stilwell 1878:170, 191).

In 1664, as a result of the Second Dutch-Anglo War, control of the entire New Netherlands colony was transferred from the Dutch to the British. In an endeavor to restructure the colony according to the 1665 English Duke's Laws, the First General Assembly implemented a territorial partition of Long Island into three sections, called Ridings (Armbruster 1912:27). The village of *Gravenzande* was anglicized to Gravesend and placed within the West Riding. In 1667, the English-speaking Gravesend was designated as the shire town for the West Riding, and a Sessions House was built in the northwest quadrant of the village square to accommodate its new role (Stilwell 1892:9). In August 1668, Governor Richard Nicolls confirmed Gravesend under English rule and patented the town. In July 1670, Governor Francis Lovelace issued an additional patent for Gravesend, which expanded and clearly defined the town's boundaries to include Coney Island (Thompson 1839:443).

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<sup>2</sup> The contract between the villagers of Gravenzande and the Native American proprietors reads, "[this] land called by the Indians Massabarkem, now possessed by the English, and formerly purchased and paid for, to the then-proprietor Cippolinks..." indicates that the land in the Gravenzande charter had been previously purchased by the villagers at an earlier date (Stilwell 1878: 159-160). They renegotiated the payment of the land, which the villagers of Gravenzande purchased for "2 guns, 15 ells of cloth, 3 fathoms of wampum, 1 kettle, 2 hatchets, 2 hoes, 3 knives, 1 long cloth coat, 1 pair of scissors, 2 combs, 1 sword, and 30 blankets" (Stilwell 1878: 159-160).

In 1675, the first census was taken in Gravesend. The town, which consisted of 932 acres of upland and meadow, was home to 30 households; 91 horses, mares and colts; 107 cattle; and 967 oxen, cows, and sheep (Stockwell 1884: 14). In 1683 the Provincial Assembly discontinued the Ridings system and restructured Long Island into three counties - Kings, Queens, and Suffolk, with Gravesend part of Kings County (Armbruster 1914:18). The census of that year shows 32 (taxed) persons (i.e. households) in Gravesend, which consisted of 1,356 acres (Stockwell 1884: 14).

The restructuring of government led to Gravesend being replaced as the county seat in Kings County, and in 1685 the Court of Sessions was moved to the town of Flatbush (Harris 2009:4). By the close of the seventeenth century, Gravesend retained its rural character. In 1698, the total population was 210 persons, including 124 children, 63 adult men and women, 17 slaves, and 6 apprentices (Stockwell 1884:14).

Gravesend continued to develop throughout the eighteenth century as a farming and fishing village. In 1706 a town landing was built along the shores of Gravesend to accommodate travel into Manhattan and the southern shores of Long Island. In 1728 the first public school opened in the northwest quadrant of the village square; this building was repurposed after 1788 into a town hall, whipping post, public stocks, and other communal uses into the nineteenth century (Harris 2009:4, Stockwell 1884:19-20). By 1738, Gravesend was home to 268 adult white men, 218 women and children, and 50 persons of color; Kings County as a whole had only 2,348 residents at this time (Stockwell 1884:14).

In 1776, the Revolution came to Gravesend. On August 22nd, a company of British forces, Chasseurs, and Hessian grenadiers landed upon the shores of Gravesend Bay within a mile of the village square. They were followed three days later by two brigades of Hessian soldiers under Lieutenant General de Heister. After a brief encampment on the property of Gravesend resident Joost Stillwell, the British forces marched through the village towards the town of Flatbush. Gravesend and the rest of Kings County was occupied by the British after the defeat at the Battle of Long Island. Loyalist supporters and Tories heckled Gravesend residents, pillaged from their farms, and got into altercations with local Patriot soldiers and sympathizers (Stockwell 1884:21).

In 1788, Kings County and Gravesend town were recognized by the laws of the newly established State of New York. Only 58 (taxed) persons and 65 slaves were living in the town at that time, which encompassed 2,211 acres. The following year, 42 (taxed) real estate owners lived in Gravesend and held a collective 3,079 acres amongst them. In 1790, the total population residing in Gravesend was 426. Among them were 42 freeholders worth £100, 46 freeholders worth £20, 4 tenants, 160 men, 134 women, 131 slaves, and 5 freed persons of color (Stockwell 1884:14; Harris 2009:4).

The farms thrived, but Gravesend had little growth or development into the nineteenth century. In 1810, Gravesend was home to 520 persons. In 1823, the Coney Island Bridge and Railroad Company connected Gravesend to the beach, and the first hotel opened on Coney Island in 1829. By 1835, the number of people residing in Gravesend had increased to 695 persons, and nearly fifteen years later, in 1849, the Coney Island Plank Road opened along what is now Coney Island Avenue (Stockwell 1884:15; Kearns et al. 1991:10). Gravesend managed to retain its rural

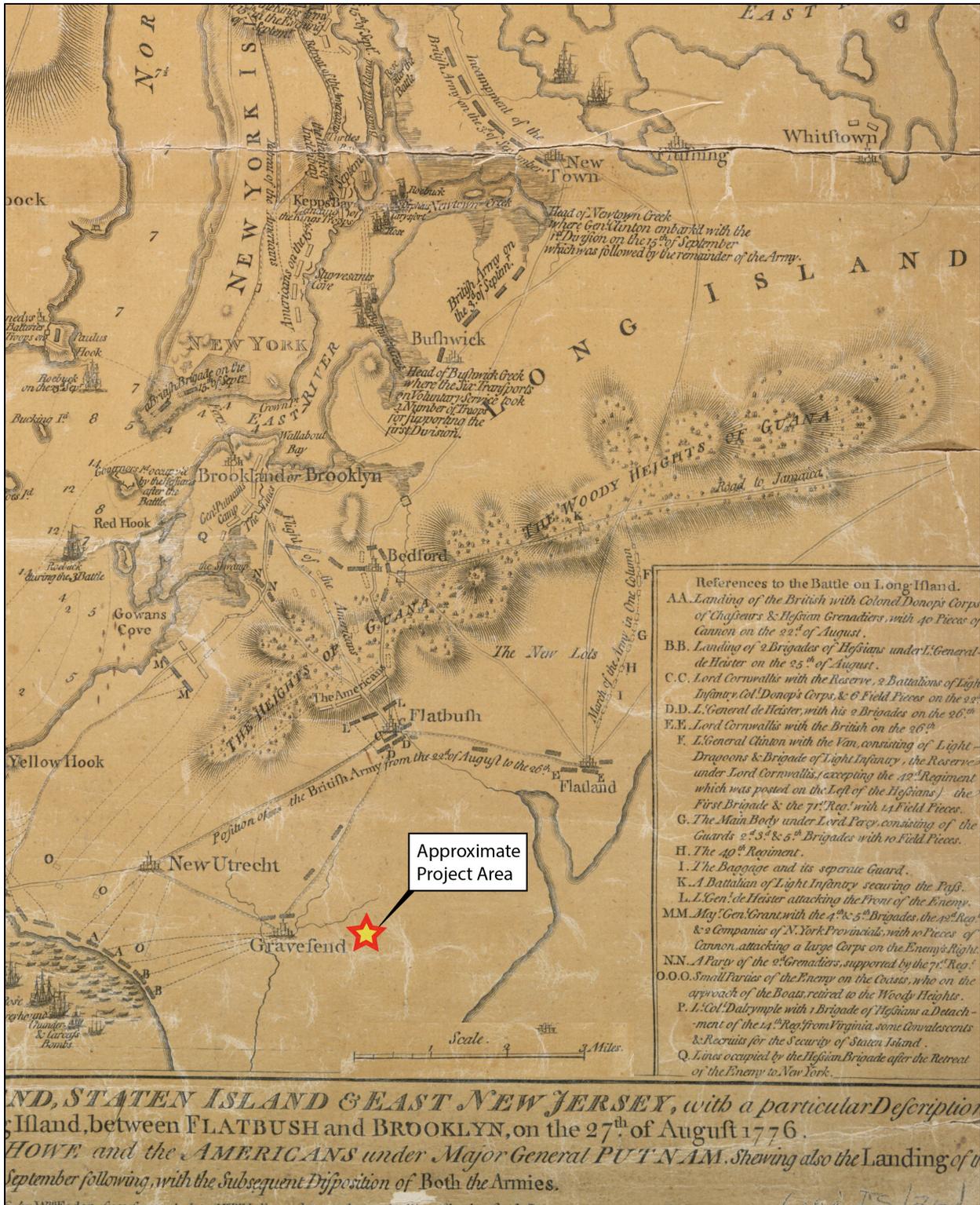
character. It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century when Coney Island began to develop as a resort and the five-cent trolley line opened along Coney Island Plank Road that Gravesend began to experience a wave of development.

Roadways, railroads, hotels, and racetracks sprung up around Gravesend. In 1868 the railroad began servicing Coney Island, and the Prospect Park Fair Grounds were built on the foundations of two Gravesend farmsteads. The Park grounds included a clubhouse, hotel, and one-mile racecourse. In 1874, a second racecourse was built near Parkville that spanned forty acres. That same year, Ocean Parkway opened. Ocean Avenue opened in 1876, and less than a decade later, the Coney Island Plank Road was widened to become Coney Island Avenue. Gravesend was rapidly urbanizing, with transportation a catalyst that sparked an influx of new residents, many of whom were immigrants of German or Irish descent. In 1880, Gravesend's total population had risen to more than 3,500 persons (Stockwell 1884:15; Kearns et al. 1991:10-11; Harris 2009:6).

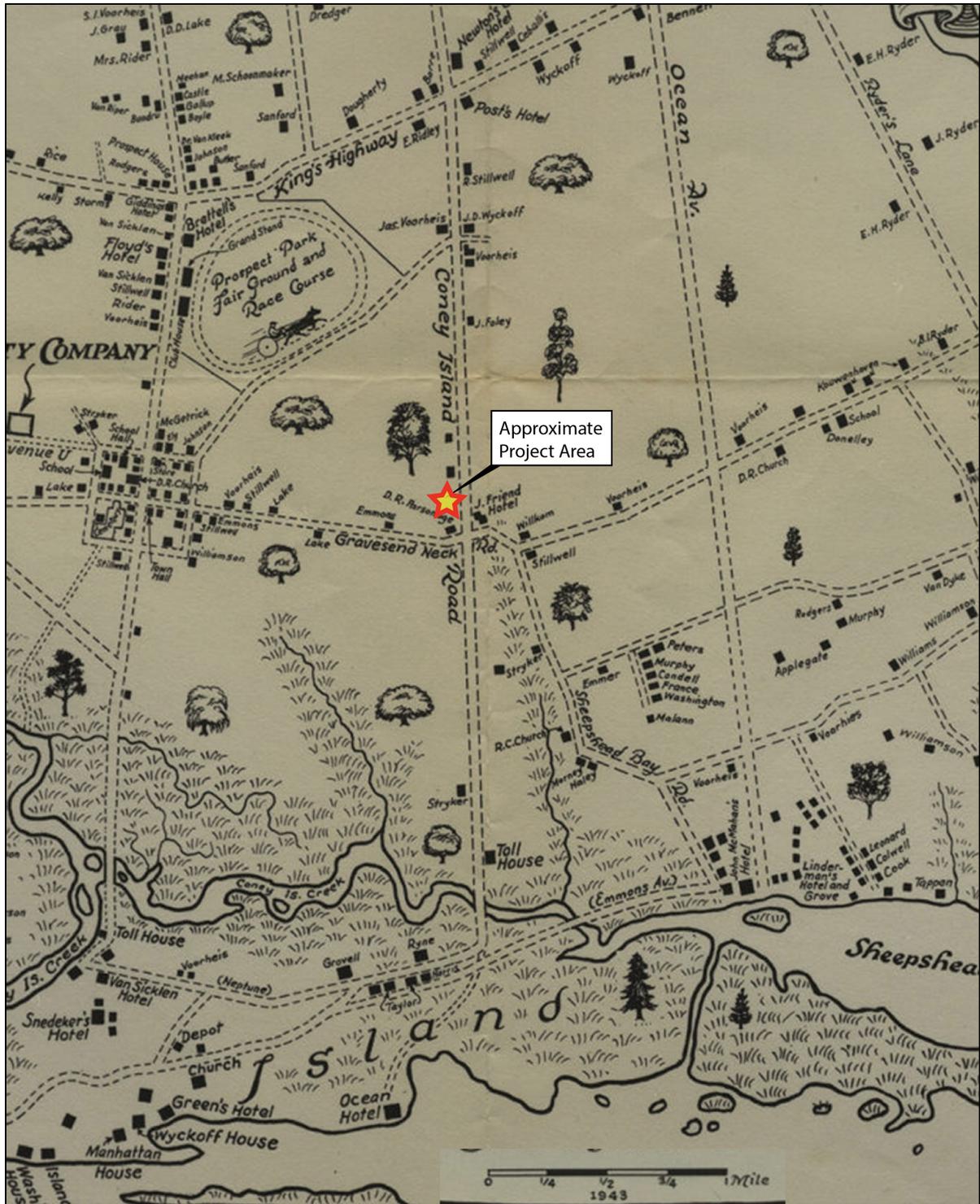
Gravesend remained an independent town until the turn of the twentieth century when the rise of urban New York led to the proposal to incorporate Kings and Queens Counties into the Greater City of New York. In 1894, Gravesend was annexed by the City of Brooklyn (Armbruster 1914:18; Campanella 2019:57). The Greater City of New York was incorporated in 1898.

#### **HISTORIC LAND USE OF THE APE**

The project area is located near the vicinity of the original English settlement of *Gravenzande*, approximately 0.6 miles east of the village square (Maps 7-9). Historic maps indicate the project APE was associated with the Reformed Dutch Church in Gravesend, as part of the historic block containing the church parsonage house (Map 10). As detailed below, Reformed Dutch Church services were practiced in Gravesend at least as early as 1660, the town erected a Reformed Dutch Church in 1762, and land for a parsonage was purchased in the general project area in 1844. The church parsonage and one documented outbuilding were located south of the project area.



Map 7: Detail of 1776 plan of New York Island (Faden 1776).



Map 8: Detail of project area east of the village of Gravesend as it was in 1870, based on historic maps and surveys (Nelson 1943).



Map 9: Detail of 1873 Long Island atlas (Beers 1873).



### *REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH OF GRAVESEND*

From the outset of settlement, the town of Gravenzande had made an intentional decision not to reserve a plot in the village square for use as a church or organized place of worship, as the original patentees had suffered, in one form or another, from religious intolerance and sought to make the settlement a refuge for religious freedom. In a 1657 report of the churches in New Netherland, Dominies Megapolensis and Drisius reported that the settlers in Gravesend did not hold services but instead held informal meetings in their homes (Stilwell 1878:144; Stockwell 1884:23). Encouraged by Lady Moody, who had been stripped of her civil rights in both England and New England for her religious beliefs, the town had no formal religion (Van Buskirk 1905:29).

Quakerism was the first religion in Gravesend to have a popular following. In 1657, Robert Hodgson, a Quaker preacher, held the earliest Christian service in the community before being arrested by Director General Stuyvesant; it is suggested that the first Quaker meeting in America was held in June of that year at Lady Moody's house (Van Buskirk 1905:9). By 1660, Gravesend had become known an important center of Quakerism in the New World (Campanella 2019:52). In 1671, a Quaker service was held at the Gravesend Sessions House, the first religious service in Gravesend to be held in a town building. The following summer, at least three Quaker meetings were held in the town (Van Buskirk 1905:9; Campanella 2019:52-53).

Though Quakerism spread in some Gravesend households, Dutch families living in the town rejected it. These families had slowly trickled into Gravesend from neighboring areas and settled their farms in the village. A handful of Gravesend settlers, mostly of Dutch descent, contributed to the salary of a Reformed Dutch Church pastor who preached in the neighboring villages, but they had no dedicated preacher within the town itself. In 1660, various Gravesend residents collectively petitioned Stuyvesant for a pastor who could minister to those who wished to practice their faith, describing the English villagers and their lifestyle as "licentious" (Stilwell 1892:8; Harris 2009:4).

A cultural shift toward Dutch values occurred within Gravesend following the seventeenth century that would change its religious landscape. By the end of the century, in 1698, Dutch families comprised one-third of the thirty-four households. Over time, as intermarriage between Dutch and English families became more common, Dutch culture and values continued to take hold. In 1714, regular ministerial service from a Dutch Church pastor was secured, held at the town Sessions House. In 1762, Martinus Schoonmaker, a young Reverend in his late twenties, organized the Gravesend constituency, consisting of twenty-one members, and erected a new church building (Van Buskirk 1905:16).

By 1790, Dutch families comprised more than two-thirds of the town's total population, and the Reformed Dutch Church building in Gravesend was the first building in the town constructed particularly for ecclesiastical purposes (Van Buskirk 1905:10-16; Harris 2009:4). In 1832, Reverend Isaac P. Labagh accepted the pastorate at the Reformed Dutch Church in Gravesend and became the first minister to dedicate his service solely to the town. Figure 7 depicts Reformed Dutch Church holdings in Gravesend's town core, approximately 0.6 miles west of the project area, including three church locations in relation to the town cemetery to the southwest.

Rev. Isaac P. Labagh was succeeded in 1843 by his cousin, Reverend Abraham I. Labagh (Van Buskirk 1905:19). Rev. Abraham Labagh was a young pastor who settled at the Reformed Dutch Church of St. Thomas in the West Indies after graduating from the New Brunswick Seminary in 1826 (Stillwell 1892:28). Abraham's arrival in Gravesend prompted the need for a parsonage, or a house which the church provides for members of the clergy. On September 21, 1844, the Consistory appointed a committee to secure a desirable site for the parsonage and oversee its building. One week later, the Committee put forth a proposal to acquire two-acres of salable land as the future site for the parsonage (Stockwell 1884:26). They purchased the property, encompassing the general project area, from John I. Lake and his wife, Ann.

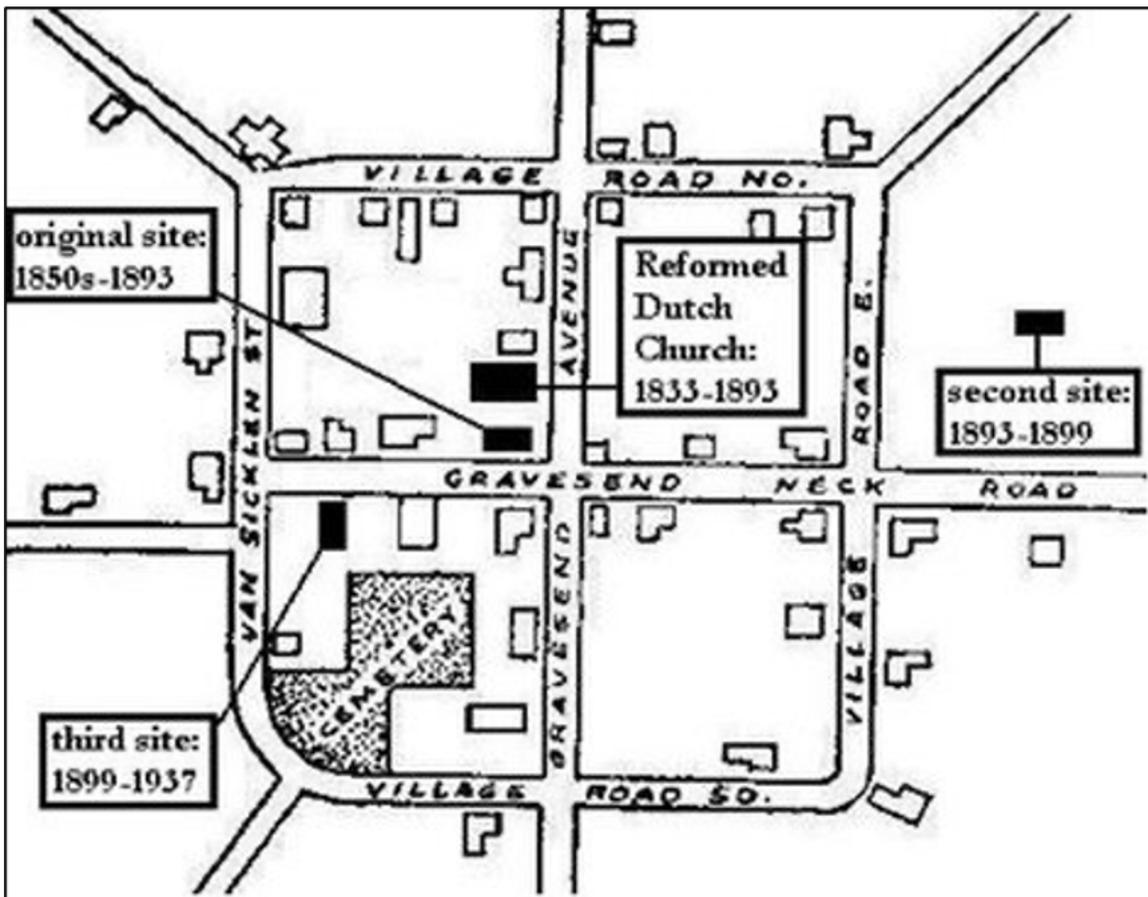


Figure 7: The village square, 0.6 miles west of the project area, highlighting the locations of the Reformed Dutch Church and its holdings in Gravesend (Ditta 2009).

### *PROJECT AREA – LOT 123*

The earliest identified general project area property owner was Dirck Lake, the grandfather of John I. Lake. Dirck's great-grandparents were John Lake (Jan Leake) and Ann Spicer, one of the first patentees of *Gravenzande*. Dirck's grandfather, John Lake II. was a prominent member and Elder of the Reformed Dutch Church at Gravesend and Captain of the 'Foot Company at Gravesend' militia.

Dirck Lake was born circa 1727 as the second eldest son of Daniel J. Lake and Elizabeth Van Sutphen. He married Maria Voorhies in January 1748 at the Dutch Reformed Church in Flatbush. They had seven children, and their youngest sons, Derrick and John, remained in Gravesend into adulthood. The family was active in the Dutch Reformed Church. Dirck was a Communicant of the Church in 1763, and Maria was a Communicant in 1766. Dirck later served as an Elder between 1787 and 1789 and as Deacon between 1771 and 1773. Dirck had been a lifelong Gravesend resident when he devised his will in April 1795. He bequeathed his entire estate to Maria while she lived, or until she remarried. After this, the estate would transfer to their sons, John and Derrick (Brooklyn - Wills Liber 1, 305).

Dirck and Maria's son, John Lake, was born circa 1760 and married Elizabeth Bennum. On July 20, 1809, John was residing in Gravesend when he wrote his will directing that his estate be divided equally between his wife and any heirs they might have. John died on August 4, 1824, and his will was proven October 14, 1826 (Wills Liber 3, 149). It appears that during John's lifetime, some informal arrangement was made with his brother, Derrick, for how they would divide their late father's estate between them. Nearly one year after John's death, Derrick attempted to make this arrangement public record. Derrick released his claim to that part of his father's estate that John owned to John's widow, Elizabeth, and their two children. Included among the properties mentioned in the release were thirty acres on the south side of Gravesend Neck Road, which seems to have been John Lake's homestead property, and four acres on the north side of Gravesend Neck Road and bound westerly by the land of Johannes Emmons, encompassing the general project area (Brooklyn - Deeds Liber 737, 254).

John Lake's estate was divided into three equal shares between his widow and his children, John I. and Maria Lake. John Lake's widow conveyed her one-third share of her late husband's estate to her son, John I. Elizabeth had passed by the spring of the following year, and on May 1, 1833, Maria conveyed the one-third of her inheritance to her brother, John I. (Deeds Liber 732, 54).

John I. Lake was born April 4, 1812 and baptized at the Reformed Dutch Church at Gravesend. In December 1832 he married Ann Stillwell, a descendant of one of the town's original patentees, Lieutenant Nicholas Stillwell. John made his living in Gravesend as a farmer, and the family had two daughters. John I. and Ann were both actively involved in church life, serving as Communicants in 1840 and part of a committee that selected the first Sunday school site. John I. served four two-year terms as an Elder. In 1855, two Irish boys in their twenties and an Irish couple in their mid-forties lived with the Lake family and worked as servants (New York State Census Records 1855). In 1860, two Irish women in their twenties and one elderly Irish man filled the positions (United States Census Records 1860). John I. was widowed by 1880. His daughter, Agnes, remained in Gravesend and lived with her father.

On November 25, 1844, John I. and Ann conveyed to the Trustees of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of Gravesend the western part of the four-acre parcel of land on the north side of Gravesend Neck Road which John I. had inherited from the estate of his father for the use of a Church parsonage. The conveyance was for two acres of upland and “thirty-eight and one-half perches of bog meadow”, suggesting the area was not develop with farm buildings (Deeds Liber 125, 385). The property encompassed the entire eastern half of present-day Block 7159 between Avenue V and Gravesend Neck Road (Figure 8). That same day, the Lakes conveyed the eastern part of the parcel – consisting of two acres, three roods, and eighteen perches – to Reverend Abraham I. Labagh, then pastor of the Reformed Dutch Church (Deeds Liber 207, 196). Fifteen years later, on March 21st, 1859, Labagh and his wife, Eliza, conveyed half an acre of the ground to the Trustees of the Church for the Coney Island Plank Road, which ran vertically between the two properties (Deeds Liber 497, 351) (Table 3).

Table 3: Deed Conveyances for lands making up the project area.

GRANTORS	GRANTEES	DATE WRITTEN	DATE RECORDED OR PROBATED	LIBER, PAGE
Dirck Lake	John Lake, Derrick Lake	April – 1795	November 3, 1800	Wills V. 1, p.305
John Lake	Elizabeth Bennum	July 20, 1809	October 14, 1826	Wills V. 3, p.149
Derrick Lake	Elizabeth Bennum	May 15, 1827	No record	Reference: Deeds V. 737, p.254
Elizabeth Bennum	John I. Lake	June 16, 1832	May 1, 1833	Reference: Deeds V. 732, p.54
Mariah Nichols and husband, Walter	John I. Lake	May 1, 1833	December 1, 1866	Deeds V. 732, p.54
John I. Lake and wife, Ann	Abraham I. Labagh	November 25, 1844	December 18, 1849	Deeds V. 207, p.196
John I. Lake and wife, Ann	Trustees of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of Gravesend	November 25, 1844	December 18, 1849	Deeds V. 125, p.385
Abraham J. Labagh and wife, Eliza S.	Trustees of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of Gravesend	March 21, 1859	April 6, 1859	Deeds V. 497, p.351
Joanna Stillwell, Jacques I. Stillwell, Maria Ellen Stillwell, John W. Stillwell	John I. Lake	October 13, 1860	January 9, 1867	Deeds V. 737, p.254

After thus securing the Reformed Dutch Church parsonage site in 1844, the church Committee hired carpenters Lawrence and Jacobus Ryder to construct the parsonage building. That year, they built a wooden two-story house with a basement and an outlying wooden shed on the southwest corner of the property, adjacent to Gravesend Neck Road (Stockwell 1884:26). This alignment would place the parsonage southwest of the general project area and APE.

In 1905, Reverend P. V. Van Buskirk described the parsonage house as “plain, unpretentious, but commodious and comfortable, and still stands a monument to the memories of those dear men who constructed it” (Van Buskirk 1905:21). The parsonage first appears on Frederick W. Beers 1873 map, noted as “DRC Pars”, and located fronting Gravesend Neck Road, south of the project area. This is the earliest map found to depict a building in the vicinity (see Map 9, above). The entire lot bordering Coney Island Road and Gravesend Neck Road is labelled as “Parsonage of Reformed Dutch Church of Gravesend” on the 1877 *Map of land Lena & Elizabeth Stillwell at Gravesend*, although this map does not depict the actual parsonage building (see Map 10, above).

The first map to show any detail of the property is Robinson 1890. This depicts two structures on the church property, a main parsonage house fronting Gravesend Neck Road and a support structure to the north (Map 11). The Hyde 1899 shows the same formation (Map 12). Neither of the structures lies within the project area, which remains depicted as undeveloped land.

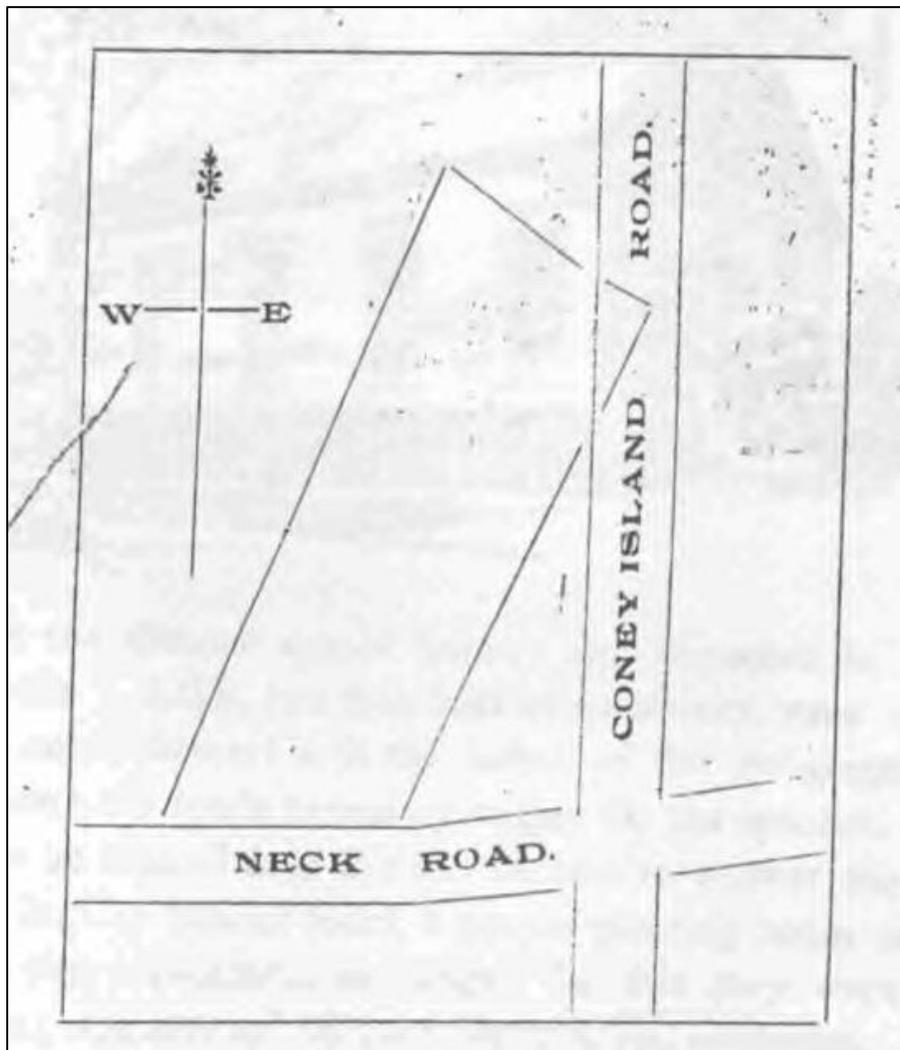
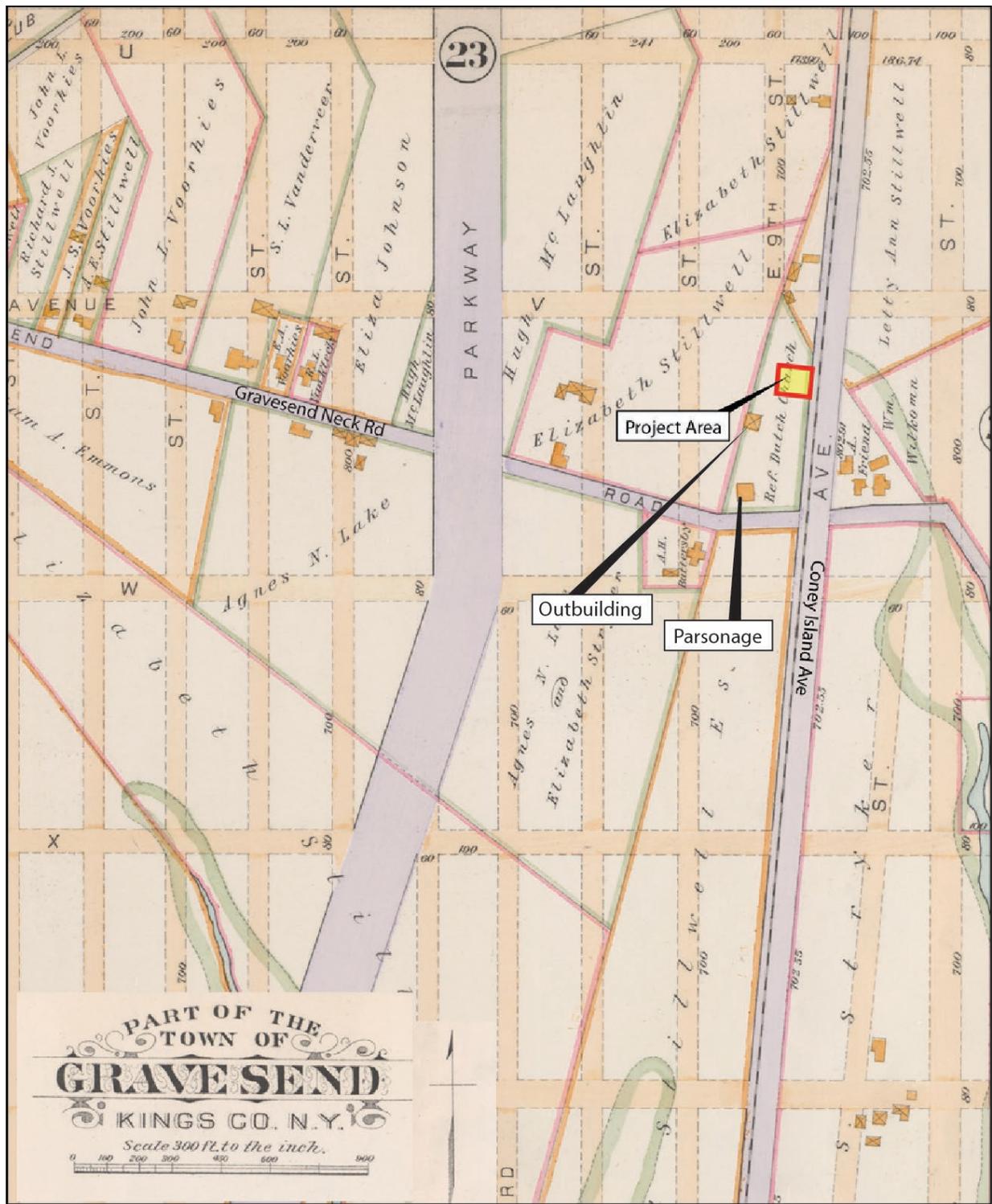
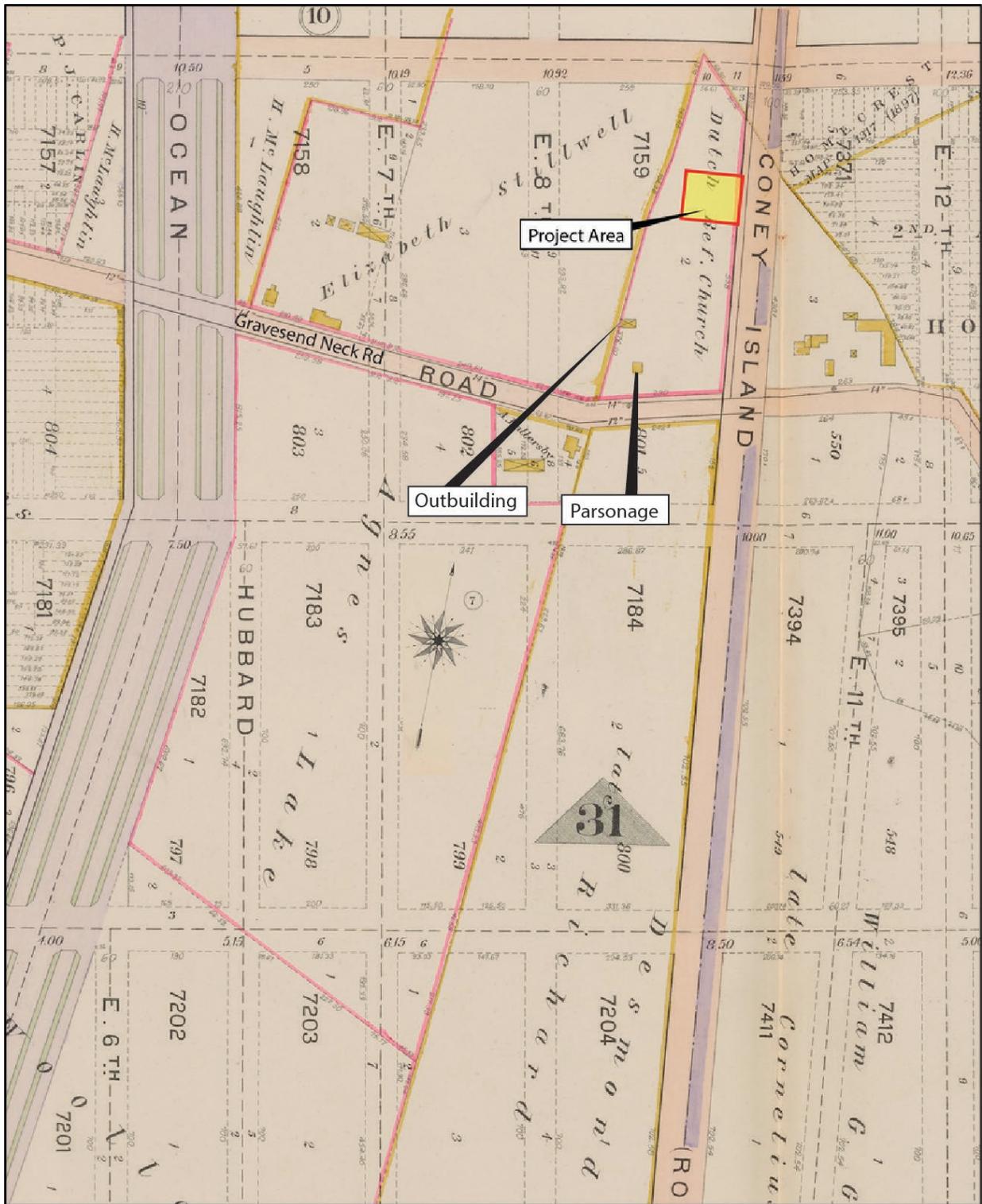


Figure 8: A 1892 sketch by William H. Stillwell of the Reformed Dutch Church parsonage property (Stillwell 1892:29).



Map 11: Part of Plate 22 from an 1890 atlas of Kings County, showing the project area undeveloped northeast of the parsonage and its outbuilding (Robinson 1890).



Map 12: Part of Plate No. 9 in 1899 atlas of the Brooklyn Borough, showing the project area undeveloped northeast of the parsonage and its outbuilding (Hyde 1899).

The property would serve as the parsonage for the Reformed Dutch Church of Gravesend for the remainder of the nineteenth century. It was the private residence for those who accepted the call to the Church's pastorate – and its location, which was removed from the Church, would have ensured privacy. Religious ceremonies were held within the church itself; Sunday school, prayer meetings, and Consistorial meetings were held in the Church basement (Stillwell 1892:30).

Labagh and his wife, Eliza, were the first persons to move into the parsonage house. They utilized the remaining property for farming and gardening (Van Buskirk 1905:21). Unaccustomed to the harsh New York winters, the Labaghs would travel south each winter, during which time Reverend R. D. Van Kleek would occupy the pulpit. It is unknown whether he resided in the parsonage house during his winters at Gravesend.

Labagh resigned from the pastorate in 1859 and was succeeded by Reverend Maurice G. Hansen, a graduate of the New Brunswick Seminary and Rutgers College. He served the Church in Gravesend until the winter of 1871. On January 1, 1872, Reverend Austin P. Stockwell took the position. The Massachusetts-born Stockwell was held in high esteem by the people of Gravesend. It is unclear whether Reverend Hansen or Reverend Stockwell took their residence at the parsonage house in Gravesend.

The property remained relatively unchanged while in possession of the Church. William Stillwell wrote in 1892 that the two original buildings comprising the parsonage “stand to-day as left by [the builders] at its completion, neither addition nor alteration having subsequently been found necessary” (Stillwell 1892:29). Soon after, the streets surrounding the property began to change – Hyde's 1899 map of the area is the first to show infrastructure changes. A 14” water main had been installed running south along the western half of Coney Island Avenue and terminating at the intersection with Gravesend Neck Road, where it then runs east-west along the northern half of Gravesend Neck Road. It paralleled a 12” water main that had been installed running east-west along the southern half of the road (Map 12).

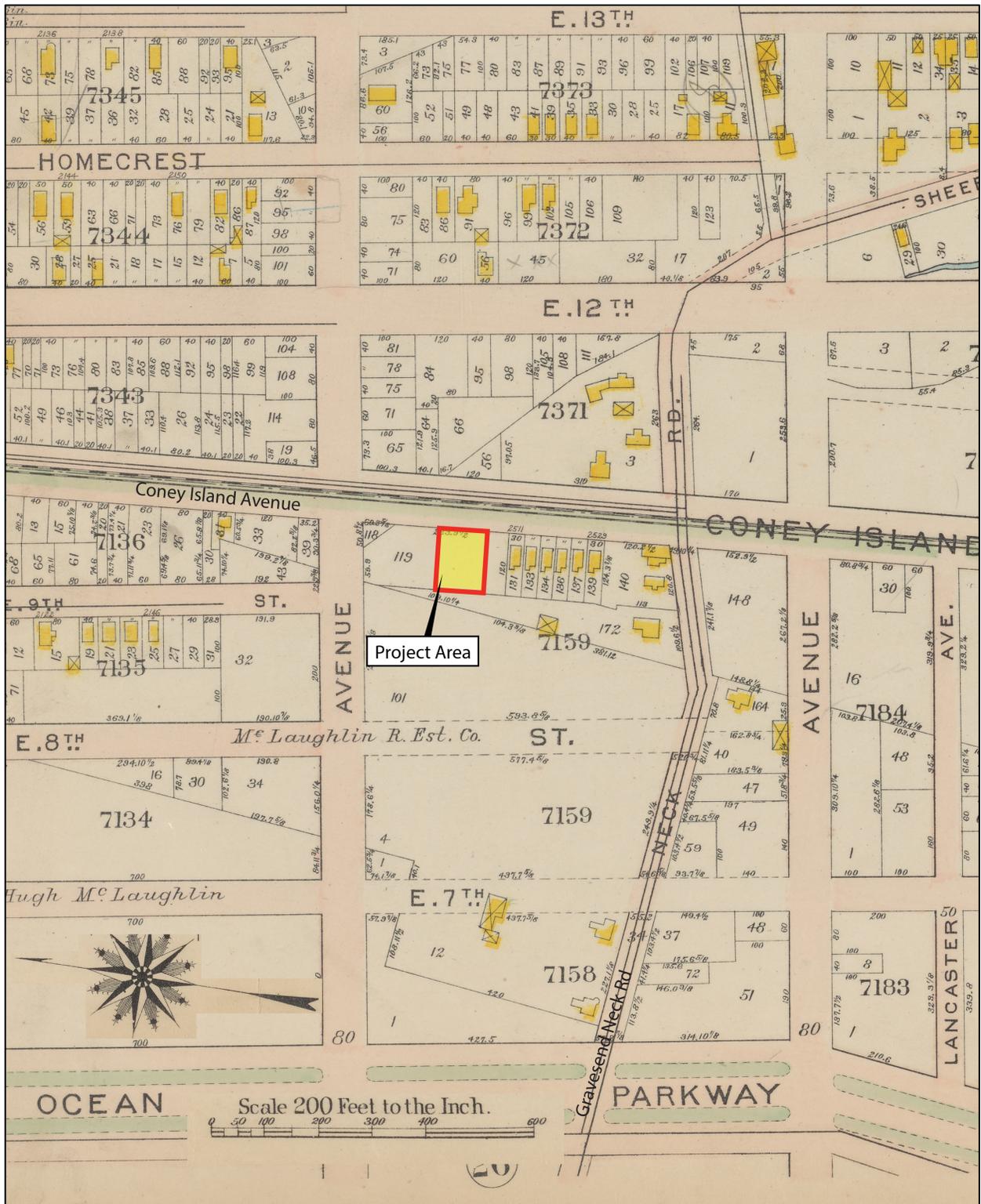
The Dutch Reformed Church sold the parsonage property on December 29, 1900 in order to consolidate church operations to a single site (Van Buskirk 1905:25). The property was sold for \$9,000, and the funds were applied to the benefit of the Church and its congregation and to erecting a new parsonage house adjacent to the Church.

Property records from 1900 – 1950 were not available for review. A review of historic maps from this period indicates the area was subdivided in the early 1900s, but the project area remained undeveloped into the 1920s. The project area is undeveloped, but the former parsonage house building is still standing on the 1907 Bromley and 1907 and 1920 Hyde Atlases (Maps 13-15). By 1907, the former triangular-shaped Dutch Reformed Church lot had been divided into smaller lots and parcels. The project area is shown as “119,” and it is depicted as empty. The closest construction or development begins south of Lot 131, beyond which the area was subdivided into six lots and developed with residential structures fronting Coney Island Avenue. The project APE is still undeveloped in 1920.

The 1930 Sanborn map shows the lots south of historic Lot 119 encompassing the project area had been subdivided, with two long structures fronting Coney Island Avenue and a rear structure added to the southern portion of the APE (Map 16). Lot 115 to the north had been developed with a cement facility. The three structures within the APE are still in place in the 1951 Sanborn map, with no additional development to the project APE or general surrounding area beyond a new, smaller structure at Lot 115 to the north (Map 17).

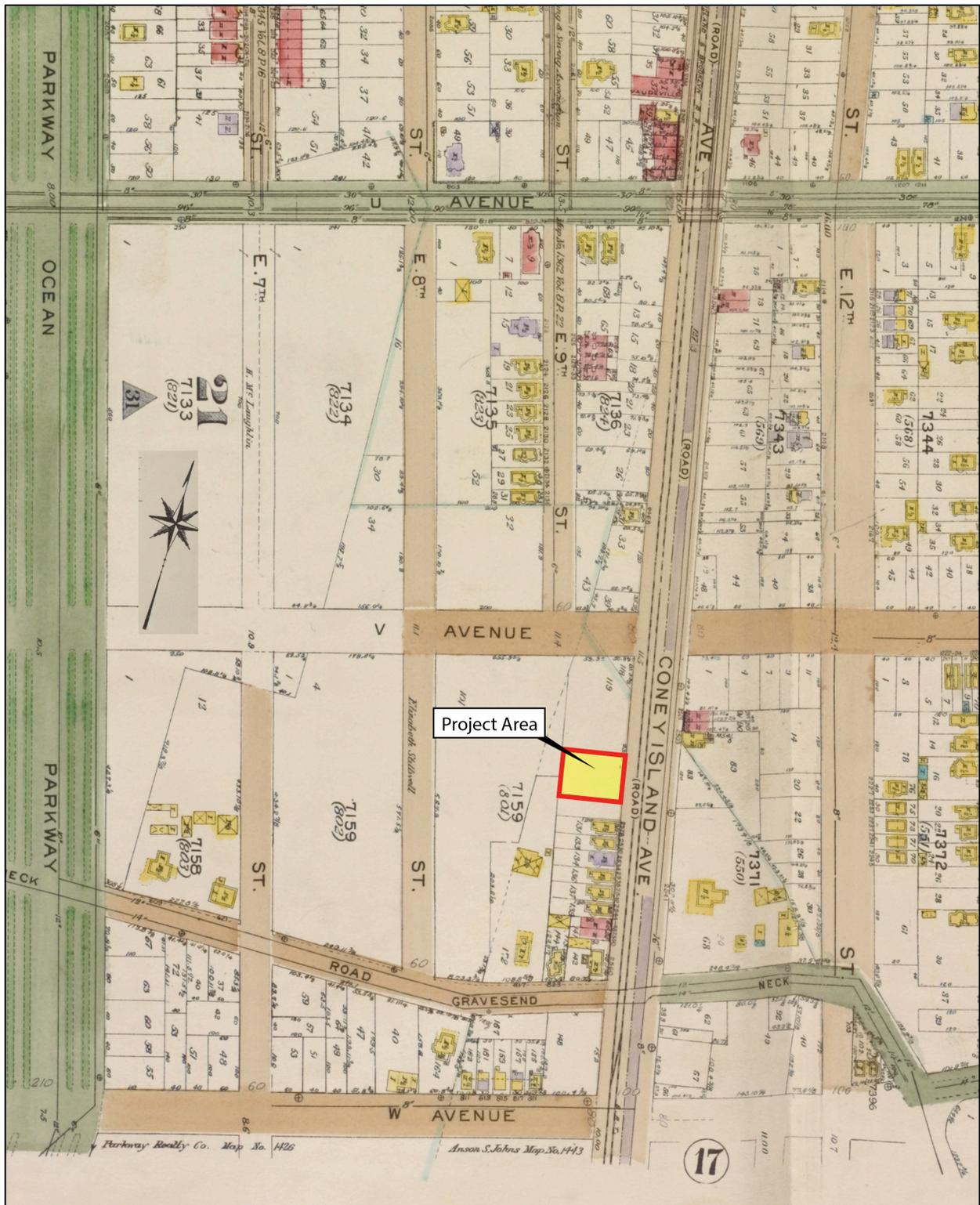
Historic aerial images show that the project area remained developed with these structures into the mid-twentieth century. In 1954 the project area continues to house two long structures on the south side of the APE and a line of structures at the western property rear. The central portion of the block, including Lot 120, was cleared except for two older buildings that may correspond to the parsonage, and Lot 115 to the north and Lot 128 to the south populated with smaller, presumably residential, structures (Figure 9). By 1966, the project area remains the same, but the open area at the center of the block had been filled by three large structures (Figure 10). Lot 123 was separated from the irregularly shaped Lot 120 around this time.

Satellite images and aerial photography from the 1990s and 2000s indicate that the majority of the project APE remained a paved car lot into the twenty-first century. The two long structures at the south side of the project area that first appeared in 1930 were razed from 2008-2009, and the entire Lot 123 project area except for one extant western rear structure was stripped, cleared, and repaved from 2011-2012 (Google Earth 2020).

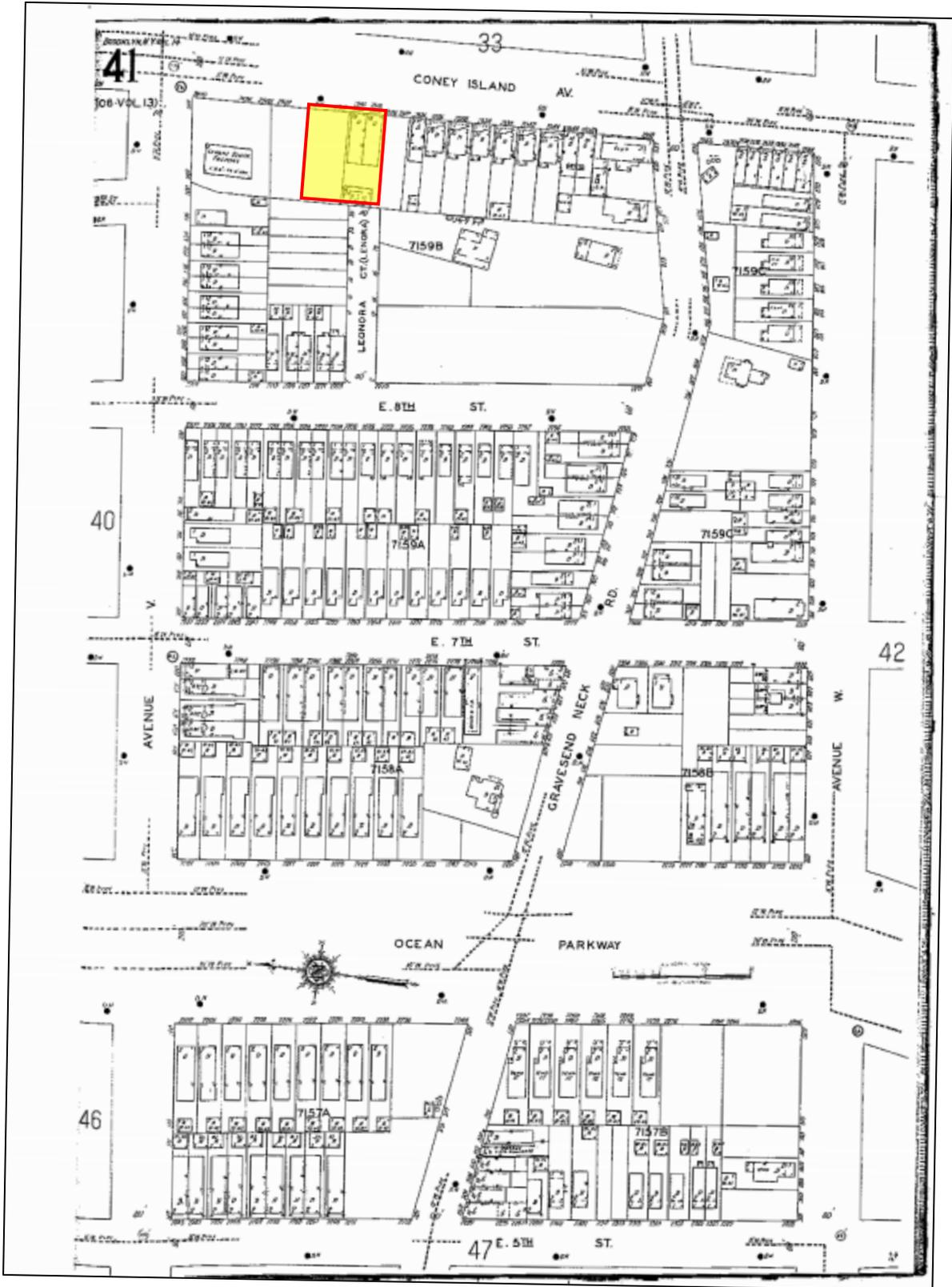


Map 13: Part of Plate 27 in a 1907 atlas of the Borough of Brooklyn (Bromley 1907).

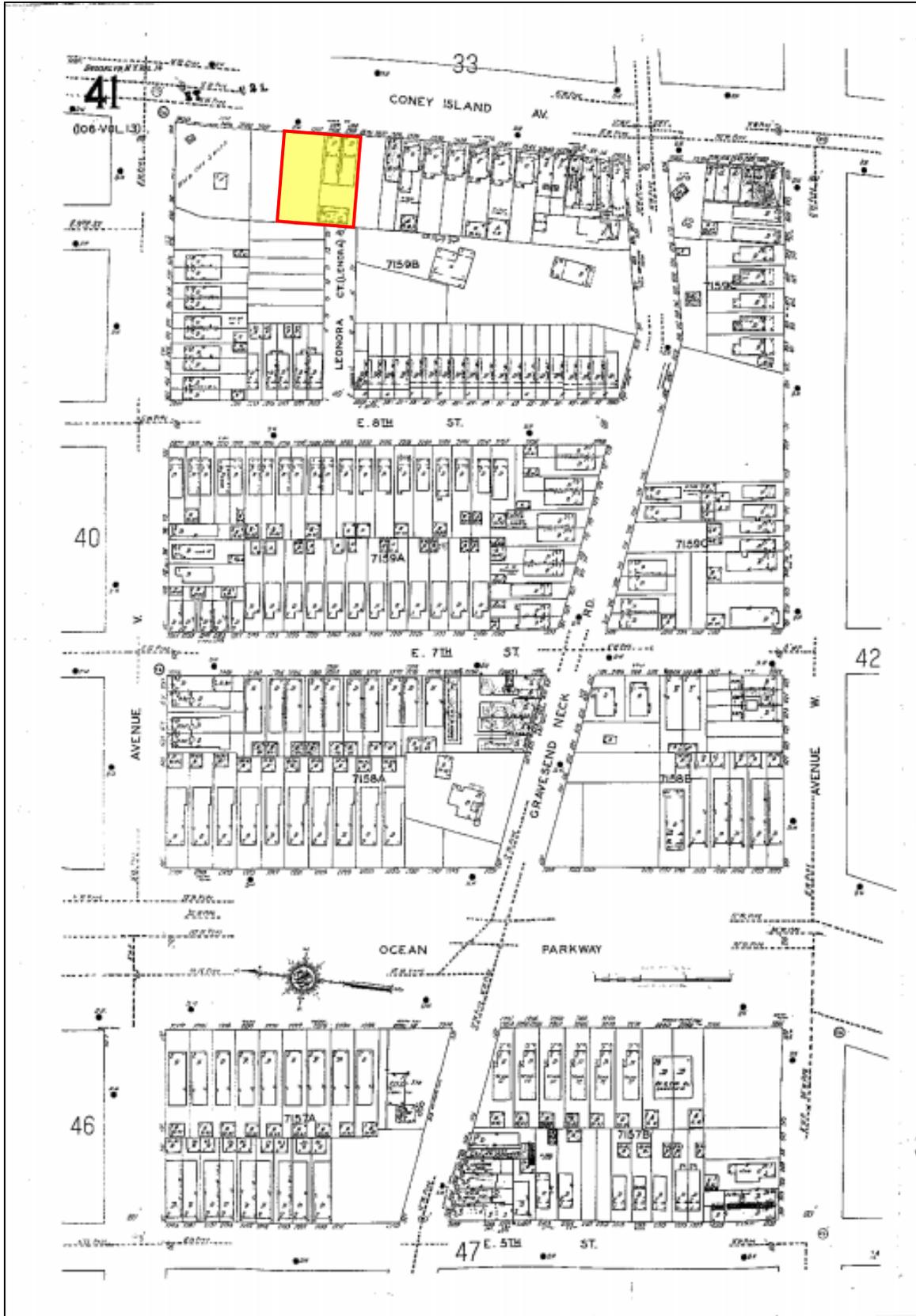




Map 15: Part of Plate No. 9 in a 1920 atlas of the Borough of Brooklyn (Hyde 1920).



Map 16: Detail of 1930 Sanborn map (Sanborn 1930).



Map 17: Detail of 1951 Sanborn map (Sanborn 1951).



Figure 9: Detail of 1954 USDA aerial image, depicting project area as partially developed (USDA 1954).



Figure 10: Detail of 1966 USDA aerial image, depicting project area as partially developed (USDA 1966).

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

The project area APE includes Block 7159 Lot 123. Prehistoric sites have been documented just over one mile from the project area, although heightened prehistoric sensitivity in this portion of southeastern Brooklyn has generally been confined to areas of higher elevation overlooking marine resource access points. The project area's elevation appears to have been relatively flat when first documented in the Contact Period, with access to tidelands and Coney Island Creek approximately 0.5 miles to the south and Squam Creek approximately 0.7 miles to the west. These waterways were filled by the 1930s.

While this region of southern Brooklyn was developed in 1643 as the town of Gravesend, the well-documented village core lay approximately 0.6 miles to the west of the APE, at the intersection of modern Village Road East and Gravesend Neck Road. The wider area surrounding Gravesend village, including the general project area, was divided into farm plots and used as agricultural land. The general project area was on farmland owned by Dirck and Maria Lake at least as early as 1795. The Lake or Spicer families likely controlled this land from Gravesend's seventeenth-century founding, but records do not clearly define their ownership boundaries before this time. The Lake family conveyed land including the project area to the Trustees of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of Gravesend in 1844 for construction of a parsonage built that same year. However, maps indicate the parsonage and its single documented outbuilding lay southwest of the general project area, which remained undeveloped into the twentieth century.

The project area's first documented development was construction of three structures on the property's south and western sides between 1920 and 1930. A fourth western, rear structure appears to have been added to the lot by 1954. The lot remained paved around these structures through the twentieth century. In 2007, environmental remediation at the western rear of the APE included excavation to collect soil samples and to remove two underground hydraulic fluid tanks and an underground petroleum storage tank, with impacts up to 10' below ground surface (HES 2008) (Map X). From 2008-2009, the two southern structures and one western structure in the project APE were razed. The entire Lot 123 project APE except for an extant western rear structure was stripped, cleared, and re-paved from 2011-2012 (Google Earth 2020).

Prehistoric sensitivity is low, as construction has extended over the entire project area in the form of multiple structures, a paved car lot across the unbuilt areas, subsurface storage tanks, and twenty-first century stripping and re-paving. These activities have likely impacted soils beyond the depth of deposition of prehistoric materials. Excavation from 2007 remediation work indicated the western portion of the APE is underlain by sandy subsoils or fill soils.

Historic sensitivity is also low, as there is no documented historic development at the project area before 1920-1930 construction of three structures at the south and west sides of the APE. These structures were all razed from 2008-2009. Construction and demolition of these buildings, installation of the now-remediated sump and underground storage tank, and paving and re-paving the unbuilt portions of the lot likely impacted the project area soils beyond the depth of deposition of any historic archaeological materials that might have been related to less documented types of land use, such as agricultural use.



Map 18: Areas of Concern (AOCs) with extent and depth of excavation from 2008 environmental remediation within project area (HES 2008).

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Prehistoric and historic archaeological sensitivity for the project area is low based on the extent of modern impacts to the area soils from construction across the project APE and the lack of documented historic site development within the APE. Given this assessment, no further archaeological work is recommended for the current project.

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