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CEAR

STAGE 1A CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY  
OF 48 WEST 68TH STREET  
MANHATTAN, NEW YORK CITY

Prepared for  
Tufo & Zuccotti

by  
Historic Sites Research  
Princeton, New Jersey

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OCTOBER 1983

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## ABSTRACT OF FINDINGS

Background Research and visual reconnaissance has been conducted for a tract of land about 75 feet wide and 100 feet deep at 48 West 68th Street, which is now a parking lot on the south side of 68th Street roughly midway between Columbus Avenue and Central Park West in Manhattan. Research revealed no evidence of known prehistoric or historic archaeological resources at or near the study area. The land was a vacant hillcrest or slope, 200 feet or more away from the nearest stream, until Brownstone type structures were built there in 1893. They occupied the front (north) 60 or 65 feet of each lot, with cellars at a depth of 11 to 13 feet below surface. In 1959 the masonry structures were demolished and their cellars filled with building rubble to a depth below modern parking lot surface of 14 feet, as shown in soil borings. Below that is 3 to 5 feet of silty sand, to schist bedrock.

It is concluded that only a small rear portion of the three lots has not been deeply disturbed, about 60 feet by 30 feet total, and even in this area, late Victorian construction and landscaping and 1959 demolition have probably disturbed the surface. Background research and resultant predictive model suggests a very low probability that any cultural resources ever existed here, and subsequent construction-demolition history is such that even if resources had once existed, they would probably have been destroyed. It is concluded that no further archaeological research is necessary.

whose?

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## I. DESCRIPTION OF STUDY

### A. Purpose

The purpose of this study is "to ascertain the likelihood that the West 68th Street site may have historically significant artifacts" (letter of 17 Oct. 1983, Tufo & Zuccotti to Historic Sites Research). This is based on a predictive model developed by the Landmarks Preservation Commission of the City of New York to the effect that "Proximity to underground streams qualifies a site as a potentially valuable repository" for prehistoric artifacts or cultural data (letter of 17 Oct. 1983). By "underground stream" is understood a watercourse which was a surface stream before intensive urban development resulted in the grading down of hills, the filling of valleys and the channelization and confining of streams into buried storm sewers, rather than a stream which was naturally carried in an aquifer or underground channel. The predictive model specifies that locations within one block of such a former surficial and now buried stream course, where excavation will disturb soil which has apparently never been previously disturbed, may destroy evidence of prehistoric occupation.

This study was undertaken to examine the evidence for proximity of the study area to former watercourses and for its topographic condition prior to construction, in order to determine the extent to which this study area fits the predictive model. The study also examines the subsequent history of the study area, to assess the sequence of development, and the degree of disturbance caused by former construction.

This is  
not quite  
what  
we  
said

If there  
are  
layers  
upon layers  
of later  
material,  
this is  
a  
"disturbance"  
yet it  
is of

archaeological value -  
ex. Hanover Sq + Water St.

## B. Method

Background research was conducted at the New York Historical Society and at the Princeton University Library. Additional information used had been previously gathered at the New York Historical Society by Marcia Nelson of Tufo & Zuccotti, and this has been incorporated into the report. A site visit was made on 20 October 1983, at which time the study area was examined, photographs were taken to show current conditions, and other structures in the vicinity were noted, for indications of original ground level, typical late 19th century construction, and assessment of probability that undisturbed soil surfaces were preserved. Examples of the current condition are illustrated.

The background information was synthesized, and a sequence of development of the study area was created. This has been illustrated with a series of historic maps. The modern location was plotted on progressively earlier maps, to place the study area in its location before major landscape change occurred. Finally, based on an interpretation of this evidence, conclusions and recommendations have been made.

## II. DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA

### A. Modern Location and Condition (See Figure 1)

The study area is a parcel of land located on the south side of West 68th Street, approximately 75 feet wide and 100 feet 5 inches deep. The northwest corner is 262 feet 6 inches east of Columbus Avenue. The standard city block 800 feet long east-west by 201 feet wide north-south was divided along the middle with lots 100 feet 5 or 6 inches deep north-south and 25 feet wide east-west, separated from the avenues at the ends of the block by lots 100 feet deep east-west. Thus the study area represents the width of three house lots, starting 6 and 1/2 lots east of the corner lot, and extending 9 and 1/2 lots east of the corner lot (See Figure 11). This 75 by 100 foot parcel of land is now vacant, levelled to street level except for the rear 10 feet which slopes down about 5 feet, and is paved as a parking lot. It is currently described as "48 West 68th Street", but apparently covers space assigned to street numbers 46, 48 and 50 West 68th Street. Block and Lot numbers were Block 114, Lots 51 1/2 through 53 1/2, in 1883. The modern Block is No. 1120, with apparently lots 51 1/2, 52, and 53 covering the designated area.

The accompanying field photographs illustrate the current condition of the study area. It is surrounded on all sides by buildings (see Plate 1). The existing structure of the Jewish Association for Services to the Aged (JASA) stands to the east (see Plate 2), a five story apartment building of the 20th century date is to the west (see Plate 4), and taller buildings,

apparently residential, are to the rear (south, see Plate 1). Across 68th Street to the north are five story Brownstone type residential structures (i.e. four stories above a basement which is largely above ground) originally dating from the same 1890's era of urban development as the structures that once stood on the study area. Several of these late 19th century structures have been extensively altered (Plate 5).

The most significant feature of the surroundings of the study area is the difference in elevation between the back (south end) of the levelled parking lot of the study area and the back (north end) of the lots which abut it. The rear courtyards of the properties which run along the north side of 67th Street are completely dug out to a depth of 10 or 12 feet below the pavement in the parking lot (Plate 3). The same is true at the back of the existing JASA building, east of the rear of the study area. Thus the effect at the rear of the lot is that of standing on an elevated platform, looking down into courtyards and basement or cellar apartments to the southeast, south and southwest. These courtyard spaces are separated from the much higher elevation of the study area tract by revetment walls of brick or stone.





PLATE 1: View looking south into the parking lot ( 46, 48 and 50, West 68th Street). The lot has been graded and filled to the street level following demolition of three circa 1890 Brownstones (Oct. 20, 1983).

PHOTO PLATES

STAGE 1A  
CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY  
48 WEST 68th STREET  
MANHATTAN, N.Y.



PLATE 2: View of the east edge of lot toward JASA complex outline of previous structures is visible against the standing wall. View looks east. Oct. 20, 1983.

PHOTO PLATES

STAGE 1A  
CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY  
48 WEST 68th STREET  
MANHATTAN, N.Y.





PLATE 3: View into open courtyards of buildings abutting the south edge of the lot (iron fence line). The adjacent lots have been dug out. View looks west at the southwest corner of the lot. Oct. 20, 1983.

PHOTO PLATES

STAGE 1A  
CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY  
48 WEST 68th STREET  
MANHATTAN, N.Y.



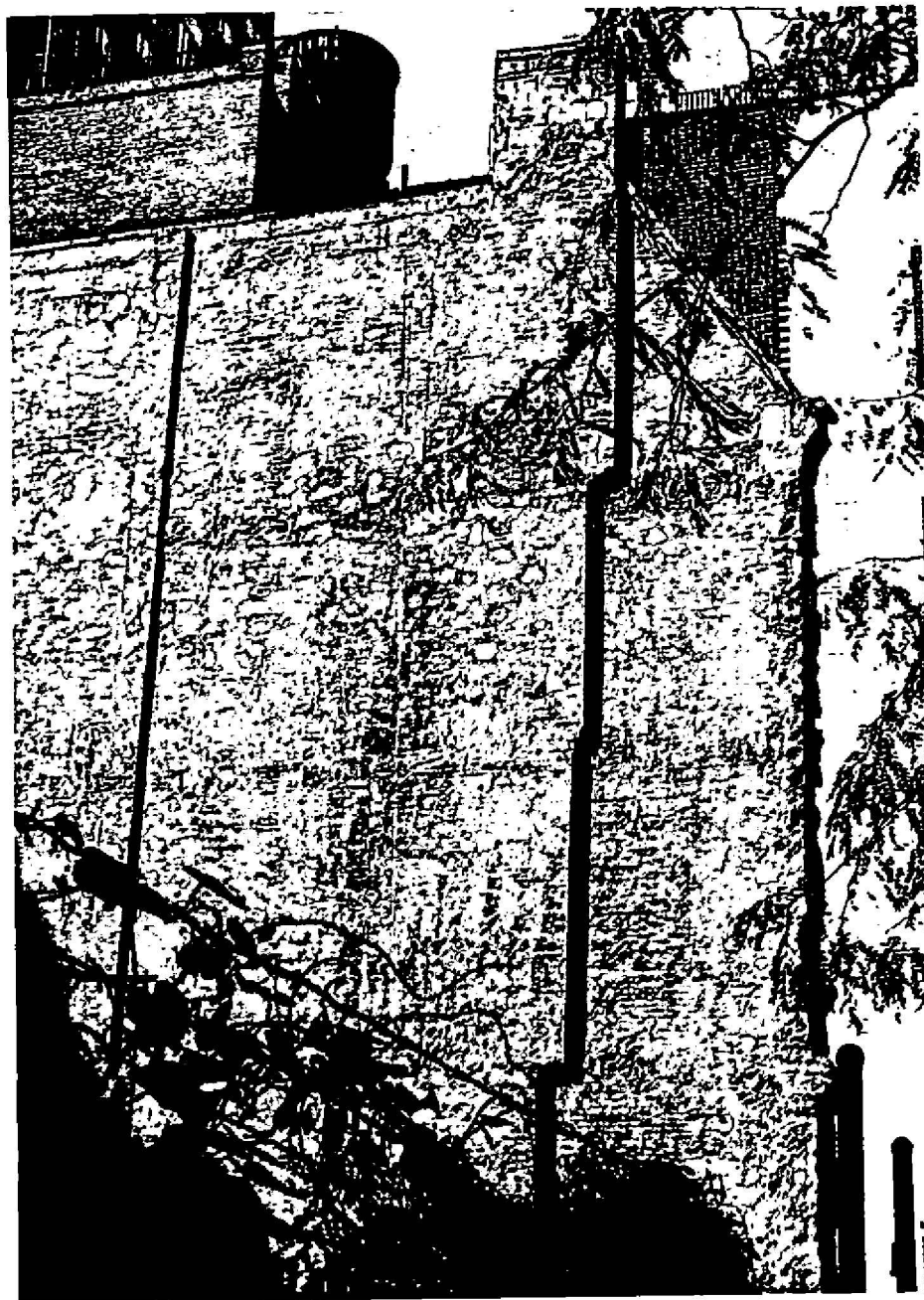


PLATE 4: View of west side of lot showing profile of removed Brownstone. Modern building extends several feet farther north to the edge of the sidewalk. View looks north. Oct. 20, 1983.

PHOTO PLATES

STAGE 1A  
CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY  
48 WEST 68th STREET  
MANHATTAN, N.Y.



**PLATE 5: View of typical Brownstones which face the lot from across West 68th Street. View looks north, Oct. 20, 1983.**

**PHOTO PLATES**

**STAGE 1A  
CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY  
48 WEST 68th STREET  
MANHATTAN, N.Y.**

## B. Topography and Subsurface Conditions

The lot is now level, except at the rear, where it slopes down. The slope starts about 10 feet north of the rear (south) property line, and slopes down about 5 feet. This sloped surface is paved with asphalt, like the levelled lot. Some volunteer trees have grown at the back of the lot. Surface elevation of the paved lot is between 81 and 82 feet, Manhattan Topographical Survey Datum.

Two soil borings were made at the site on 8 Nov. 1982 (Drawing No. 82R3882, Soil Mechanics Drilling Corp., and letter of 16 Nov. 1983 to Architects Design Group). These were placed 20 feet and 45 feet south of the north edge of the property, 10 feet from the east edge and 35 feet from the west edge, and penetrated 21 and 24 feet respectively. Both borings were in "Fill" to depths of 14 feet. The contents of the fill strata were described as "Silty Sand, Blacktop, Wire, Concrete, Cinder" and "Silty Sand, Brick, Concrete, Gravel". From 14 to 19 feet deep in the northernmost boring was "Brown Silty Sand", below which was Manhattan schist bedrock. The other boring contained "grey silty sand with a trace of gravel" from 14 feet to 17 feet, and then encountered schist. These borings demonstrate that two strata overlies bedrock in the northern half of the study area- rubble fill from demolition of late 19th century brick and masonry structures down to 14 feet, and then between 3 and 5 feet of Brown or Grey silty sand which lies directly on the schist. It is reasonable to infer that bedrock is at about the same depth (17 to 20 feet below surface) throughout the rear half of the study area also, with silty sand above it. The amount of rubble fill

above silty sand in the rear portion of the study area is not known from these borings, although the levelled surface of the lots, raised to approximately street surface level and then sloped down sharply at the rear, clearly was achieved by some degree of filling or spreading rubble debris.

### III. BACKGROUND RESEARCH

#### A. Archaeology

Most of the prehistoric archaeological information for Manhattan consists of finds exposed by construction excavations. The majority of these were noted during the late 19th and early part of the 20th century. No systematic survey has ever been made of the island. Bolton, writing in 1922, noted the presence of approximately 123 sites in the greater metropolitan area. Eight of which are on Manhattan Island proper, and these fall into three areas:

Area 1: A clustering of sites ranging from villages, shell middens, rock shelters and burials are located north of present day Sherman Avenue at the north end of the island. Several of these sites were investigated by Messrs. Calvin, Bolton and Skinner.

Area 2: The east shore of the Hudson from approximately 4000 feet south of the George Washington Bridge, to 1000 feet north of it.

Area 3: Several discrete sites along the west shore of the East River between the Triborough Bridge and the north end of Welfare Island. Three other large sites are located immediately east of Welfare Island in the County of Queens.

As is evident from the following map (Figure 2), the area surrounding the study area is devoid of sites or trails. Only two locations face the Hudson River side of central and lower Manhattan (numbers one and two on the map). Both of these were landing

*In Dr. Steven Grummet's book on Ind. Sites in NYC (1980, Mus. City of NY) there are other sites listed for the western side of Manhattan*

There were major settlements on the west side from S.W. Bridge up to the Harlem River, also west shore settlements in Greenwich Village

sites (i.e. locations where one could leave or approach the island from the Jersey shore). Settlements were located either on the Jersey Shore, or on the east side of the watershed ridge facing the East River, mostly along the East River waterfront.

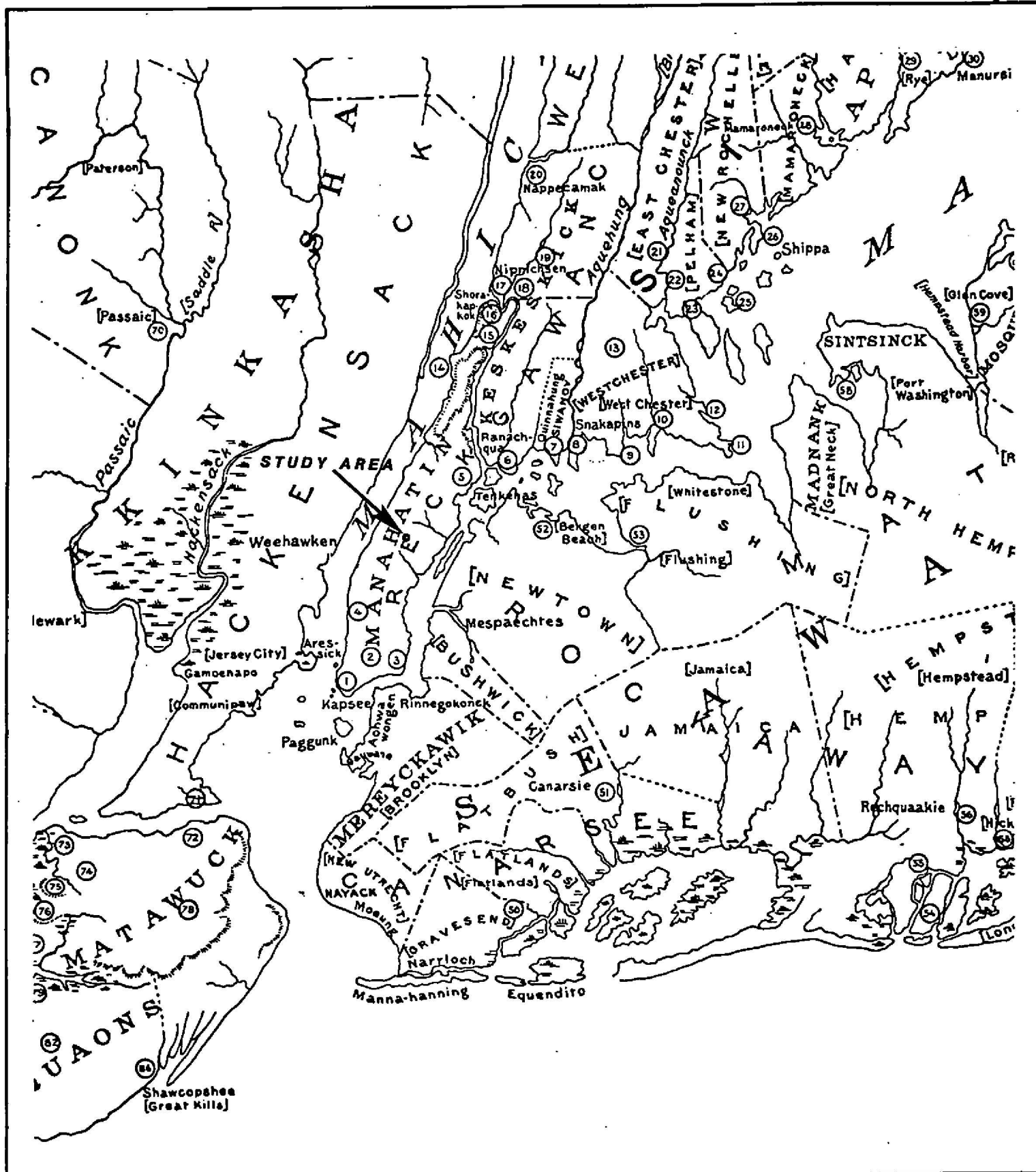
19th and 20th century records suggest that much of Manhattan Island was undesirable for aboriginal habitation. The few sites located by Calver, Bolton and Skinner were usually in sheltered or protected locations, and not subject to construction before their discovery. Landfilling and excavation occurring during the last 100 years makes it highly unlikely that any evidence of prehistoric land use would be preserved in the study area; even if the probability of the presence of sites was high.

this would protect sites!

This question is being re-examined by ethnohistorians. Geographically, there is no reason why the land would be desirable to the Dutch & not to the Indians. Europeans, <sup>in fact,</sup> usually settled on prime Indian land. In Manhattan, Gov Kieft planned to annihilate the Indian population and actually did so with great success.

Indians are beginning to believe that there was a much higher Indian pop. in NYC than previously acknowledged.

need citation!  
I don't think this is true  
I believe some people may have felt this - but I believe this is a misleading statement



**FIGURE 2** NEW YORK CITY AND VICINITY  
IN INDIAN POSSESSION

Bolton 1920

**STAGE 1A**  
CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY  
48 WEST 68th STREET  
MANHATTAN, N.Y.



## B. HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

### 1. Pre-1890

Evidence for the early historic period is largely based on 19th and early 20th century reconstructions, made during the period when urban development was obscuring the last vestiges of natural landscape. These secondary sources concur in showing no significant events or developments in or near the study area. During the 17th and 18th century, urban settlement was confined to the southern tip of Manhattan Island (Kouwenhoven 1953: 104-105). By the mid to late 18th century, various farms were scattered in desirable locations of what is now central and northern Manhattan. These were separated by extensive areas of undeveloped land.

The situation at the time of the American Revolution, and the movement of various detachments of troops, is shown in Figure 3. The area of farmland known as Bloomingdale was about one mile to the northwest of the study area. Bloomingdale Road, the predecessor of modern Broadway, ran in a northerly direction along the ridge or topographic divide which formed the watershed between the short streams that flowed west into the Hudson and the longer streams that flowed across the width of the island and drained into the East River, one and a half to two miles east of the divide. The only other north-south road was called the King's Bridge or Post Road, which in this part of the island ran along the alignment now followed by Third Avenue. There were some farmed fields shown along the Bloomingdale Road, the nearest

During 17th century  
New Amsterdam  
was not quite  
"urbanized"  
So what  
about  
Haarlem?  
what about  
the other  
Active  
17th  
18th  
Manhattan  
Settlements



being about one thousand feet away from the study area. A small stream had its source near these fields, and flowed southeast a total length of two miles to Kips bay on the East River. It passed within a few hundred feet to the southeast of the study area. No structures, farmsteads, fortifications, encampments, locations of military engagements or troop movements, or other events are recorded near the study area. Another reconstruction of topography at about the same historic period is useful because it shows the early 20th century street grid overlaid on the 18th century outline of the island (Figure 4). On this map 65th and 69th Streets are shown, as well as Central Park West and Columbus Avenues, allowing us to approximate the position of 68th Street and to locate the study area. Examination of Figure 3 (published in 1964) and Figure 4 (published in 1909) shows that they use the same stream alignments and other features. Both are probably derived from the mid 19th century topographic maps of Egbert Viele, themselves reconstructions based on 18th century surveys (see Figures 9 and 10).

An original source of data for New York City property is a collection of early 19th century property plans known as the "Maps of Farms" compiled in 1815. From its binder, this became known as the "Blue Book" and because of its use for later property purposes, it was carefully copied and published in 1868 (Figure 5). The city street grid which had been established to cover most of Manhattan on paper in 1807 (Kouwenhoven 1953: 110) is superimposed over the old property holdings. Most of the maps in The Blue Book show only tracts of land and ownership, although occasionally structures are shown. The map which covers the

study area shows that it belonged to Hyder Somerindyke, a member of a family which owned various tracts of land in the area, subdivisions of an earlier farm. The Somerindyke main house was on the west side of Broadway between West 75th and 76th Streets and was demolished in 1868 when the city acquired Bloomingdale Road and widened it (Lockwood 1976: 315). Also destroyed at that time was the Bloomingdale Reformed Dutch Church which had been built in 1816 and is shown in Figure 5. This map shows a stream, evidently flowing westward, three blocks (about 700 feet) south of the study area, and does not show the eastward flowing streams depicted on the historic reconstruction of topographic maps.

By the mid-19th century some of the older streams had been buried or disappeared, while others could still be traced. This situation is shown in 1855, shortly before the creation of Central Park began (Figure 6). The uniform street grid is shown covering the island, but it is clear from shading and stream lines that this existed only on paper in the central and northern part of the island. Less than a decade later the city map looks far more familiar, with Central Park already well under way (Figure 7). This map, published by M. Dripps, is partly based on the extremely detailed "Dripps Map" of 1851, which unfortunately is cut off north of 50th Street (Kouwenhoven 1953: 188). The Park, designed in 1857, was under major construction from 1857 to 1874 (Barlow et. al 1977). A view of the park, looking south shows the surrounding countryside in 1865 (Figure 8). Although the study area is shown only in small scale in the distance, and this is an artist's rendering of an imaginary birdseye view, it

is clear that the entire block bounded by Central Park West, Columbus, 68th and 66th Streets, was vacant at that time. A few residences were built along Central Park West, a few along 9th Avenue, but none in this block. The study area vicinity was either bare land, or spotted with broken stands of trees. A similar picture, looking to the north, can be seen in about the same time (Barlow et al. frontispiece) and a photograph of 1873 vividly shows the barren, rocky, tree-studded landscape along Central Park West (Lockwood 1976: 316).

Egbert Viele produced a number of topographic maps of Manhattan, starting in the late 1850's. Among the most comprehensive were his "Sanitary and Topographic Map" of 1865 (Figure 9) and the "Topographic Atlas of 1874" (Figure 10). Comparison of these two figures shows that they use the same base map, but that the "Sanitary and Topographic Map" emphasizes the location of streams and shows topography by the hachures, while the "Topographic Atlas" has these same features with the added feature of stream valley shading which actually obscures some of the stream alignments, and with outcropping of Manhattan schist bedrock shown, particularly on various hill tops. Taken together, these constitute a single document, in which careful examination by Viele of 18th century sources was used to create a reconstruction of the land surface that was undergoing rapid change. These two maps show the study area to be on the slope of a hillock or knoll, or near its crest, with a long ridge of bedrock running through the northeast part. A stream flows to the southeast, crossing the west end of the block containing the study area, but not coming closer than 200 feet to the study area itself. To

judge from the topography, this stream must have run in a narrow bed between rather steep and rocky slopes. Approximately under Columbus Avenue it was joined by another small stream, and together flowed across Central Park, feeding The Pond and on toward the East River.

Expansion of urban development on the Upper West Side was slower than equivalent growth east of Central Park, largely due to lack of public transportation. Bloomingdale Road had been acquired by the city in 1868, renamed "The Boulevarde" and widened and improved. In 1899 this was renamed Broadway. Even after the 9th Avenue Elevated Railroad was opened in 1880, the area was so large and so undeveloped that builders tended to continue developing the Upper East Side, where the character of the neighborhoods and classes of housing could be safely predicted. In the early 1880's, more than half the east-west streets between West 59th and West 125th had not even been opened, and the north-south avenues were still largely unimproved dirt roads. At first, construction on the West Side was clustered near the stations of the 9th Avenue "El", at West 72nd, 81st, 93rd and 104th Streets (Lockwood 1976: 313-317).

Several forces combined to create the West side urban development which led to construction of Brownstone type structures on the study area in the early 1890's. The huge success of "The Dakota" apartments at 72nd to 73rd Street on Central Park West showed that the area could be both fashionable and more profitable for shrewd developers like Edward Clark, who built it, than any row of mansions (Kouwenhoven 1953: 444, Lockwood 1976:

317). The period was one of economic expansion, creating a demand for middle class housing as urban population grew, improvements made the "El" an increasingly popular means of urban travel, and Central Park was now a fully developed recreation area, which enhanced land values near it (Barlow et al. 1977). By the later 1880's, a major real estate and construction boom was underway. A description published in the New York Times in 1886 gives a clear picture of what the landscape that included the study area had been, and what was happening to it:

The west side of the city presents just now a scene of building activity such as was never before witnessed in that section.... The huge masses of rock which formerly met the eye, usually crowned by a rickety shanty and a browsing goat, are being blasted out of existence. Streets are being graded, and thousands of carpenters and masons are engaged in rearing substantial buildings where a year ago nothing was to be seen but market gardens or barren rocky fields (Lockwood 1976: 317).

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During this period detailed maps were made showing properties and structures in the vicinity of the study area. Such a map for 1883 has been reproduced as Figure 11. This clearly illustrates the arrangements of properties on the block, with even lines of lots 25 feet wide and "100.5" feet deep shown. A few structures existed facing 8th and 9th Avenues, and on the lots near those ends of the block, but none of these were on the study area. At that time all structures in the area were of wood frame construction, indicating that they were the first generation of urban housing in the area, probably built immediately after the opening of the "El" in 1880, and soon to be replaced by more substantial buildings. By 1885, masonry structures had begun to replace the frame structures, with brownstones built on the first

six lots going east from 9 Avenue, but the study area was still vacant (Perris & Brown 1885: Vol. 6, Plate 117). The same situation evidently existed as late as 1891 (Robinson & Pidgeon 1890: Vol. 1, Plate 22, Corrections to 1891).

## 2. Post 1890

The first time any structures appear on the study area lots is in 1894, when new masonry structures are shown from numbers 46 to 62 West 68th Street (Bromley 1894: Plate 25). There were still a few small frame buildings at that time. Since the Atlas of 1890, updated to 1891, showed the land vacant, it is concluded that a row of masonry structures was built by a developer along the south side of West 68th Street between 1891 and 1894. Additional masonry buildings were added to the area during the 1890's, so that by the turn of the century the block containing the study area and the facing block were solidly filled with masonry buildings, either all brick, or faced with the familiar Brownstone (Bromley 1897: Vol. 3, Plate 25, 1898: Vol. 3, Plate 4, 1904: Vol. 3, Plate 25).

The buildings erected during this period of rapid development were put up in sets or rows, with little or no variation. On the block containing the study area, street Numbers 16, 18, 20, and 32 through 48 followed one pattern, numbers 24 through 30 had stone fronts and a different configuration in the rear yards, and numbers 50 through 74 all extended deeper toward their rear property lines (Bromley 1902: Vol. 3, Plate 25). Most of these buildings had a set-back of several feet from the sidewalk to allow for stoops, or entrances to the (raised) first floor doors

and the basement doors. The effect of this set-back can still be seen in the "ghost outlines" of demolished buildings that formerly stood in the study area, where preserved masonry lines are set in from the front (sidewalk) lines of adjacent more modern structures (see Plates 2 and 4). Examination of preserved structures of the period across West 68th Street shows that they often had one or more floors of bay windows extending to the sidewalk line, but had inset or set-back entrances. With 20th century "modernization", some of these structures have been remodelled to fill out all available space (see Plate 5).

During the 1930's and 1940's various alterations were made to the masonry structures in this area. An example of such modernization is preserved in "before" and "after" pictures for a building one block away from the study area in 1939 (New York Historical Society, Graphic Collection File: 69th Street). Typically, changes at this time consisted of "squaring out" the older structures, and removing all ornamentation, to produce a plain box-like appearance.

No major changes occurred at the study area in the ensuing six decades, although there is evidence that at least one of the buildings was converted to rooms or small apartments. In 1959 a fire damaged or destroyed one or more structures, and Demolition Permits were obtained for three structures which stood on the study area (Permits nos. 424 and 459, dated 23 June 1959, City of New York Department of Housing and Buildings).

At that time the structures were described as 20 feet wide by 60 feet deep (Nos. 46 and 48 West 68th Street) and 19 feet wide by 65 feet deep (No. 50 West 68th Street). All three were 4 story rooming houses containing 12 rooms each. The attached "Plot Diagrams" depict the 4 story buildings as each having a 2 story rear wing or extension which ran into the back yard (see Figure 12). Each building had a set-back of several feet, so the front 63 to 65 feet of each lot was occupied by buildings.

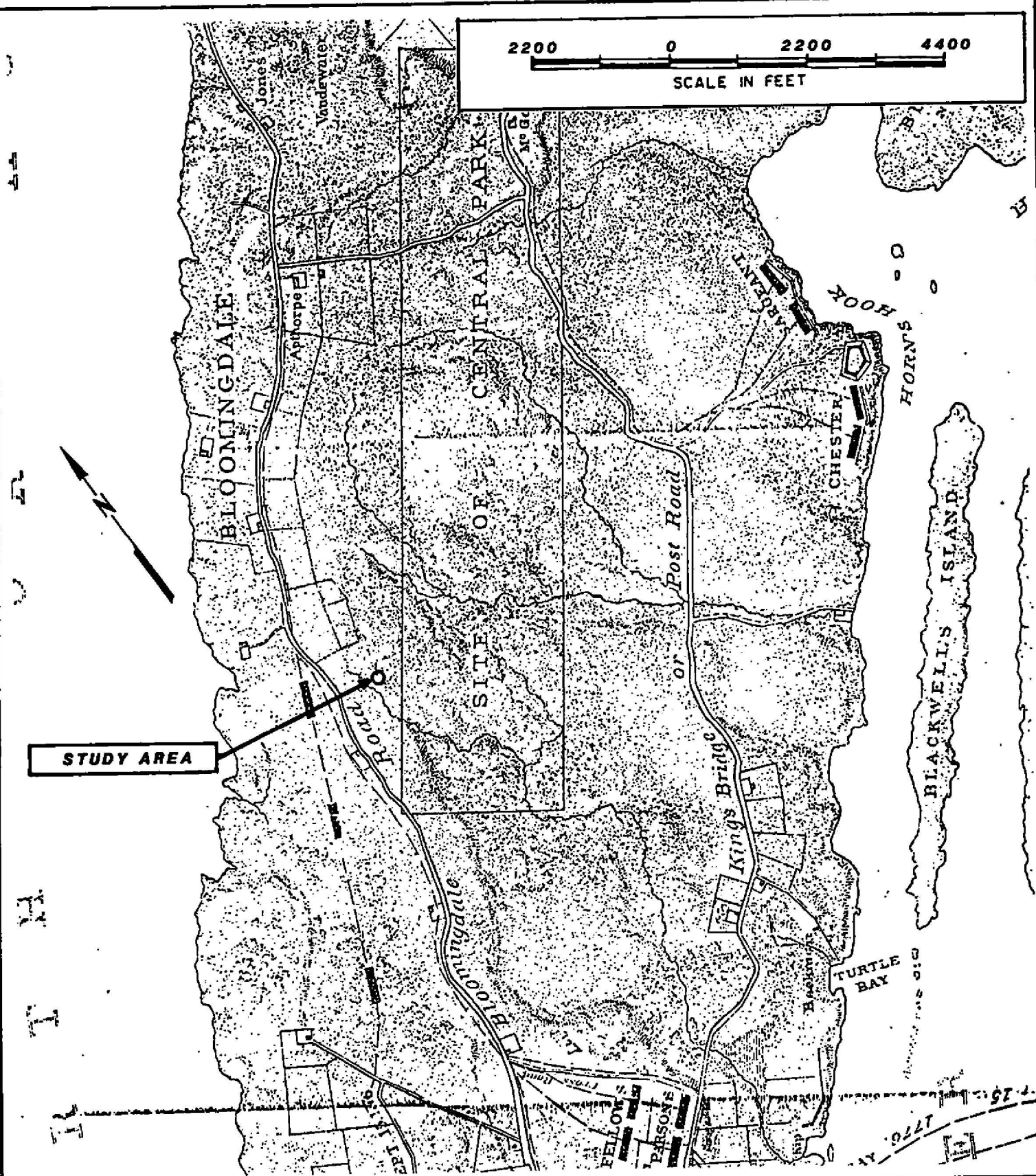
The standard design of the late 19th century buildings in this vicinity includes a "1st Floor" which is raised above ground level, a "Basement Apartment" the floor of which is about 1 1/2 feet below ground (i.e. sidewalk) level, and below that a "Cellar" which is 9 1/2 feet deep, for "Boiler Room , Storage, Incinerator Room, Utilities" (Altered Building Form No. 1566, 10 January 1961, and Certificate of Occupancy No. 55427 9 March 1962, Altered Building Form No. 932/62 19 Aug 1964, all for 54-58 West 68th Street). This constitutes a total depth of 11 feet below surface to which should be added the thickness of cellar floor slab and prepared base, and of cellar ceiling, so that 12 to 13 feet deep for disturbance seems to be normal. It is assumed that this extends the length of the main block of each building, but without on-site inspection of various unaltered buildings of this area and period, it is not known if the cellars also continued under the rear wing.

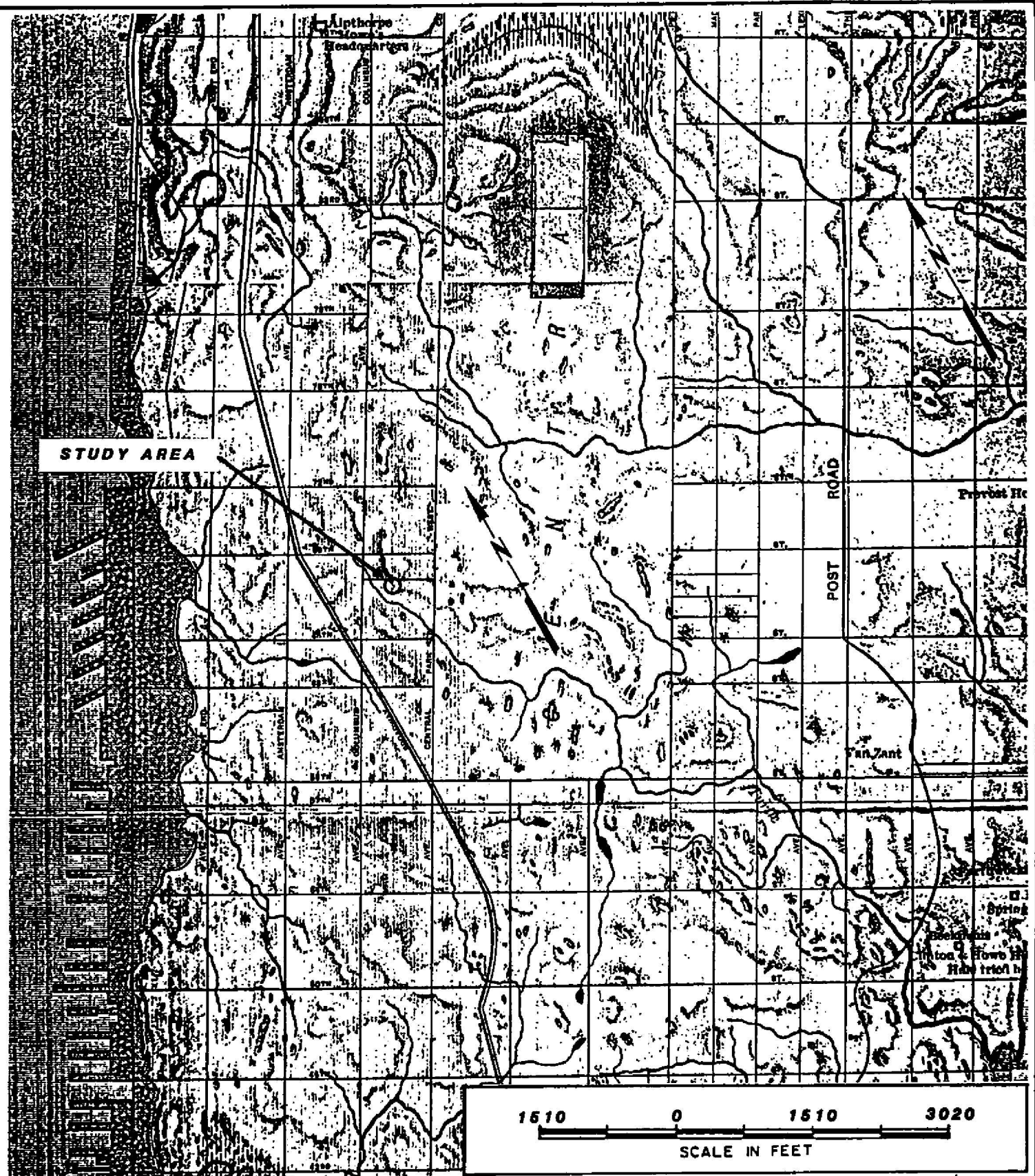
The demolition permits for the structures on the study area superceded any Certificates of Occupancy, so there is no direct documentation for the size of the cellars under the buildings in the study area. However, a local resident provided information



from observing the demolition and back-filling, during which the rubble debris from the buildings was pushed into the cellars (Letter of 14 October 1983, Tufo & Zuccotti to Landmarks Preservation Commission).

This confirms that the structures in the study area had typical cellars to a depth of at least 11 feet and possibly 13 feet. The evidence of the soil borings (see Section II.B) also confirms this, with rubble fill found to 14 feet below surface. The additional one or two feet is probably caused by a slightly raised surface level on the lot, which is paved over the rubble.





**FIGURE 4**

**1783**

*"Manhattan Island at the Close of the Revolution"*

**Townsend MacCoun**

**1909 N.Y.**

**STAGE 1A**

**CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY**

**48 WEST 68th STREET**

**MANHATTAN, N.Y.**





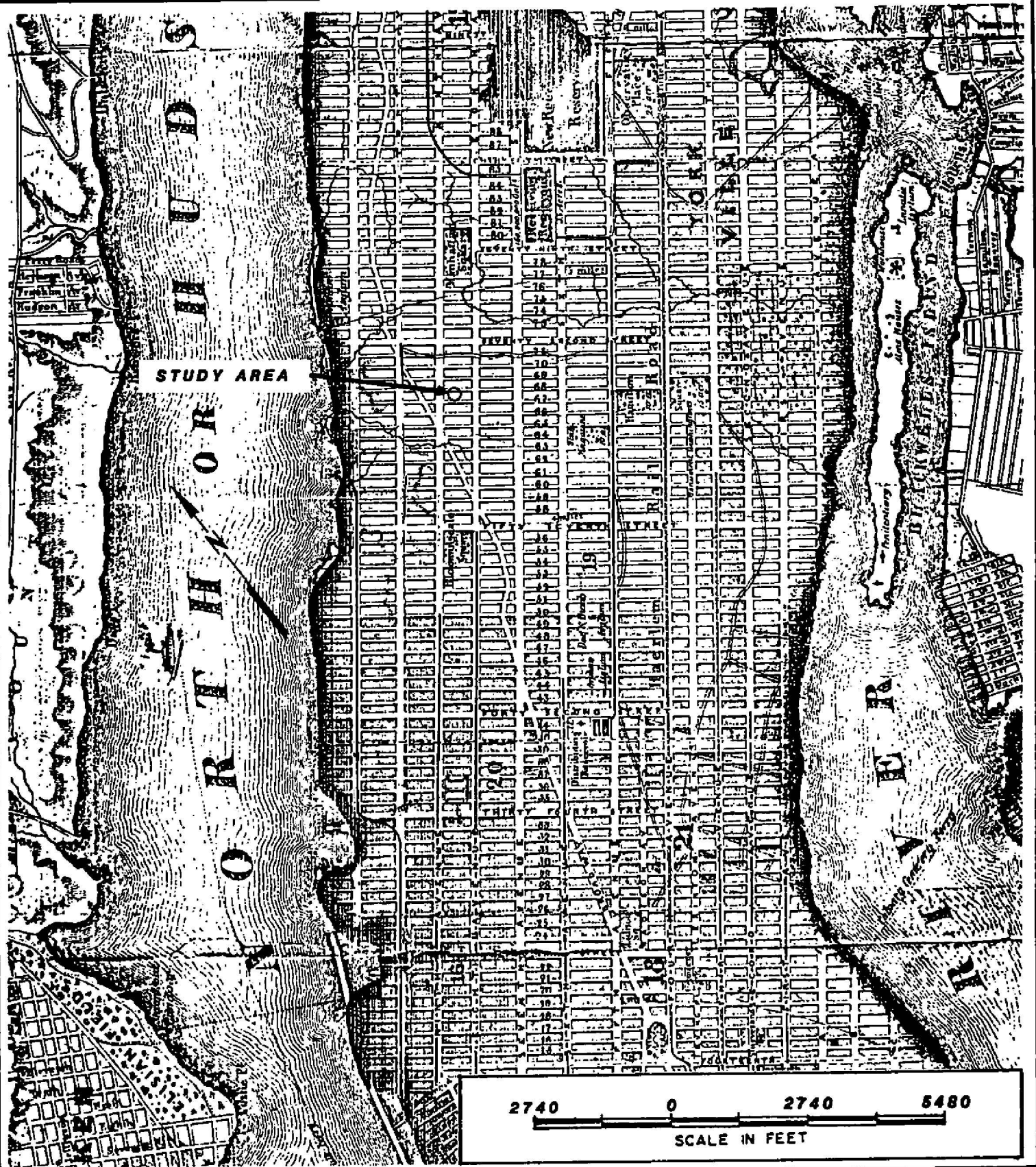


FIGURE 6

1855

"New York City & County Map"

Charles Magnus

STAGE 1A

CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY

48 WEST 68TH STREET

MANHATTAN, N.Y.



FIGURE 7

1864

"New York City & County"

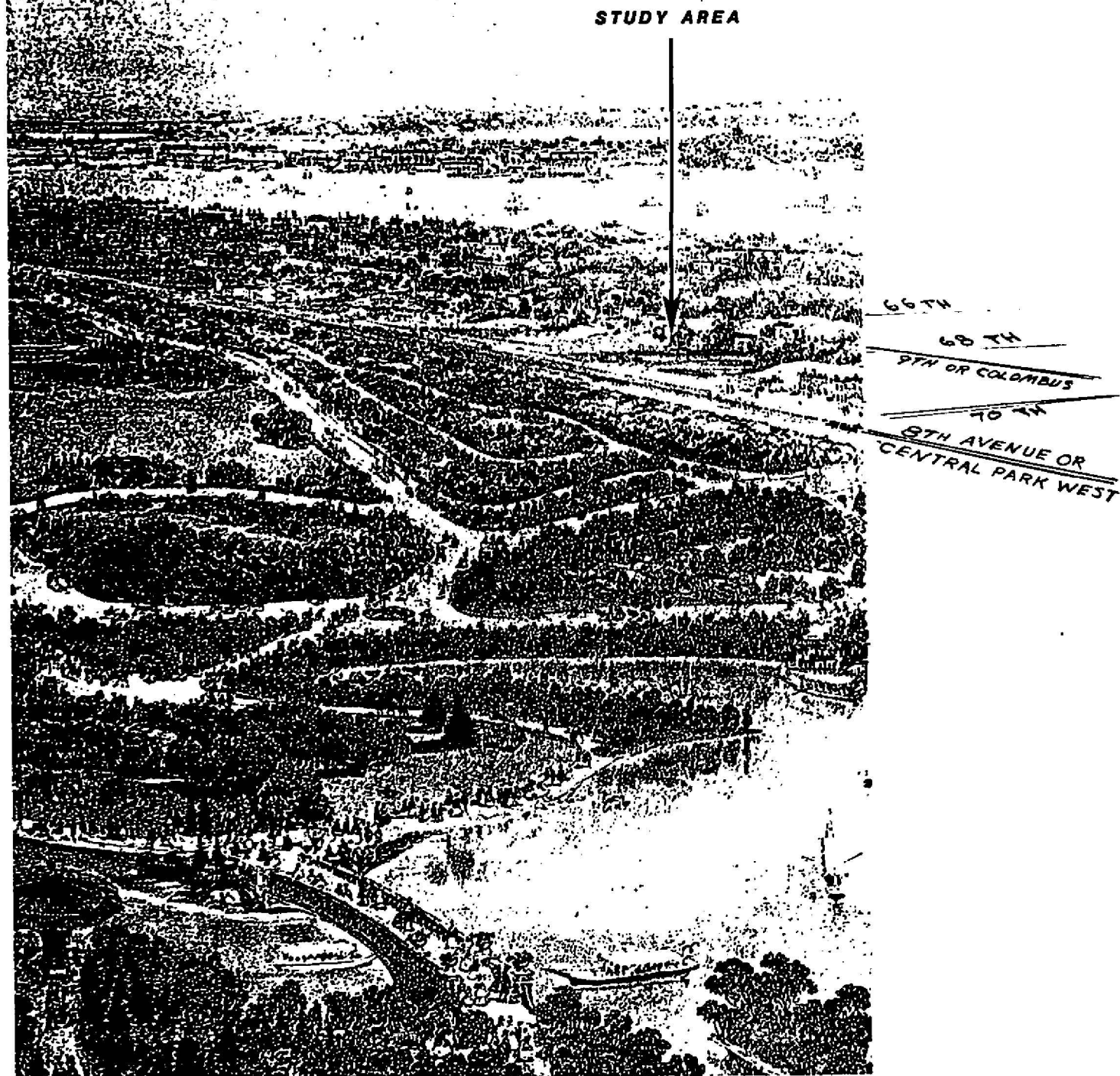
M. Dripps

STAGE 1A

CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY

48 WEST 68th STREET

MANHATTAN, N.Y.



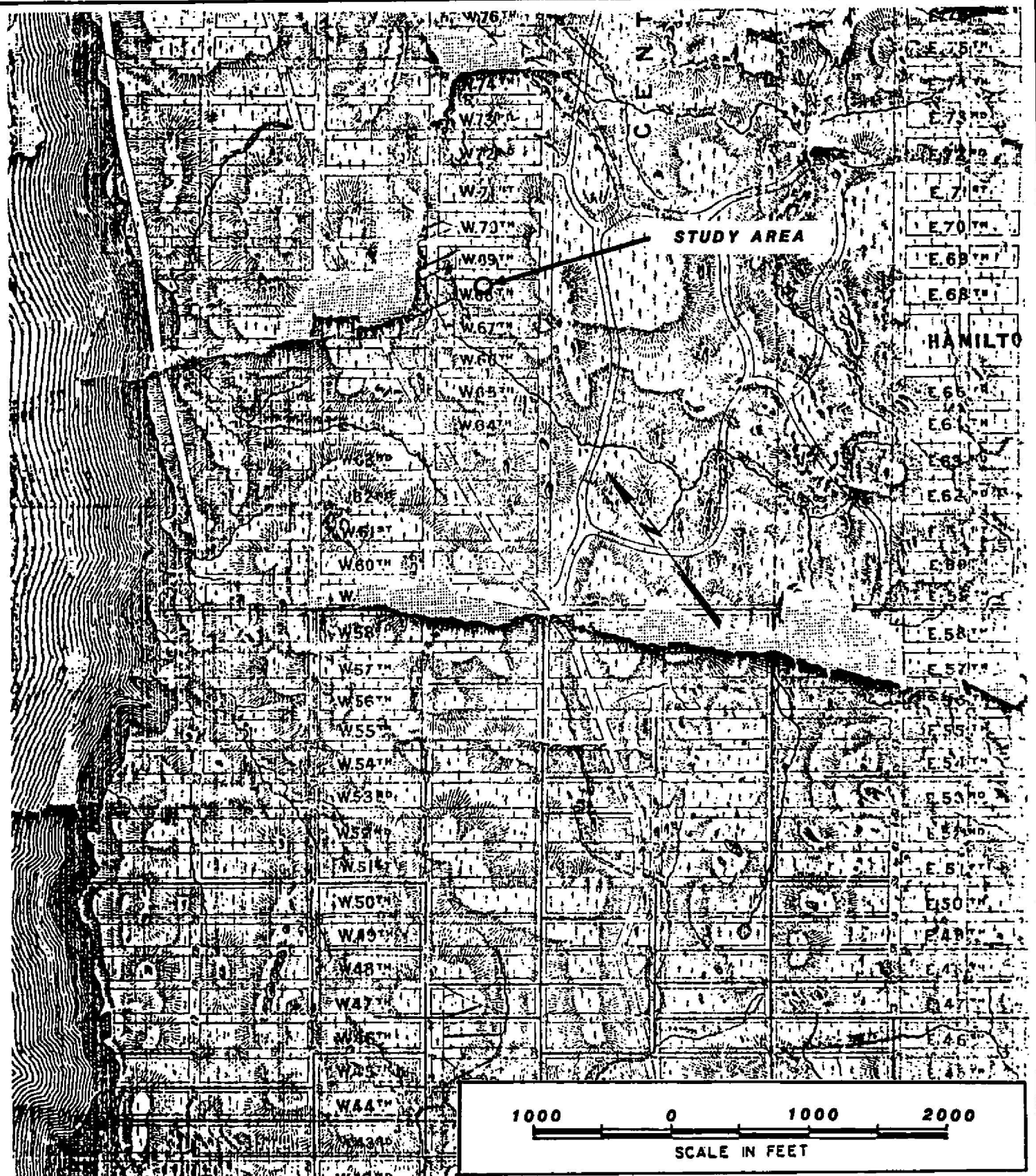
**FIGURE 8**

*part of CENTRAL PARK AND NEW YORK CITY 1865*

*John Bachmann, Del. J. Blen, Lith.*

**STAGE 1A**  
**CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY**  
**48 WEST 68th STREET**  
**MANHATTAN, N.Y.**





**FIGURE 9**

**1885**

**"Sanitary & Topographical Map of the City  
& Island of New York"**

**Council of Hygiene and Public Health**

**Egbert L. Viele**

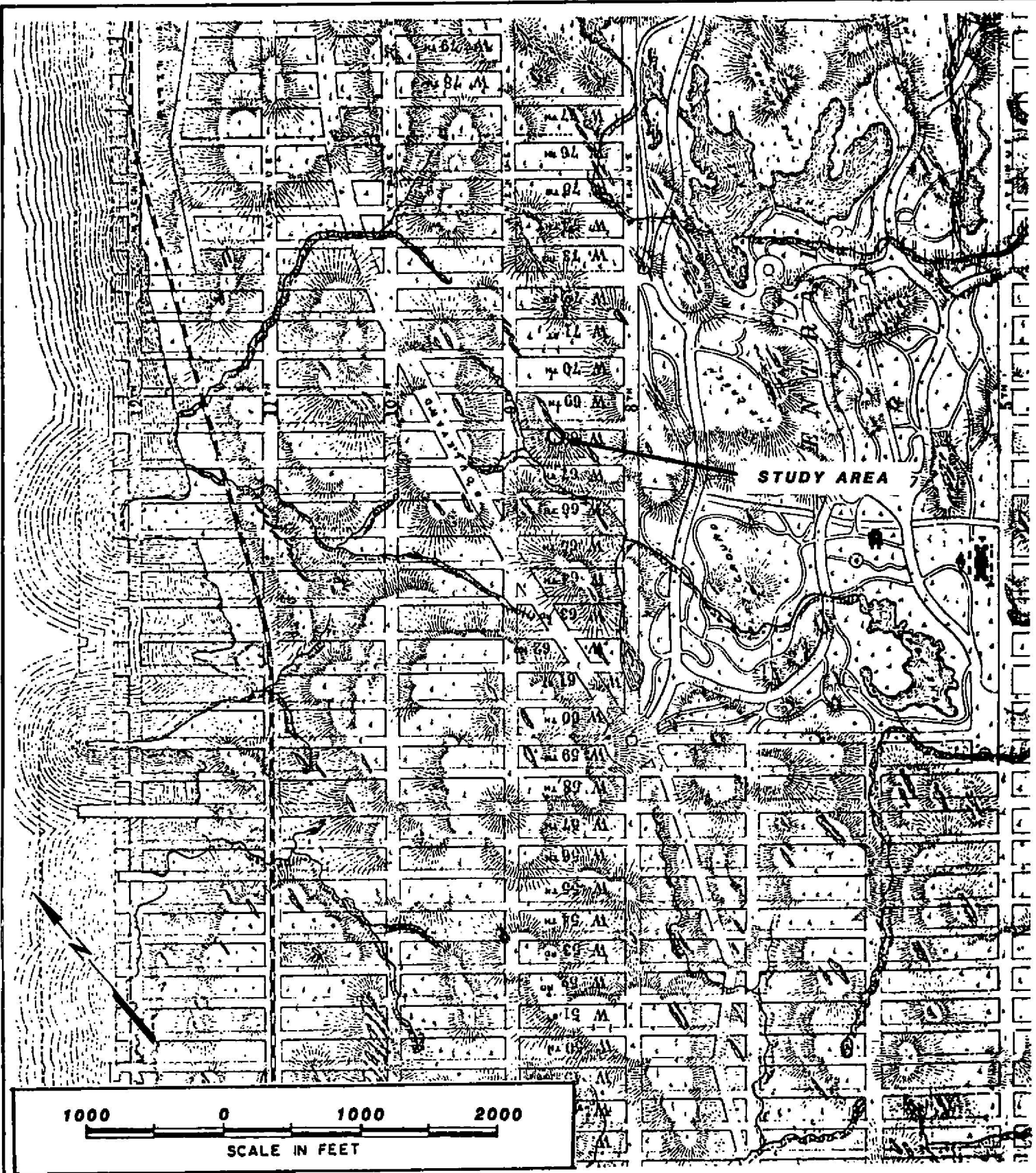
**STAGE 1A**

**CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY**

**48 WEST 68th STREET**

**MANHATTAN, N.Y.**





**FIGURE 10**

**1874**

**"Topographic Atlas of the City of New York"**

**Egbert L. Viele**

**N.Y.**

**STAGE 1A**

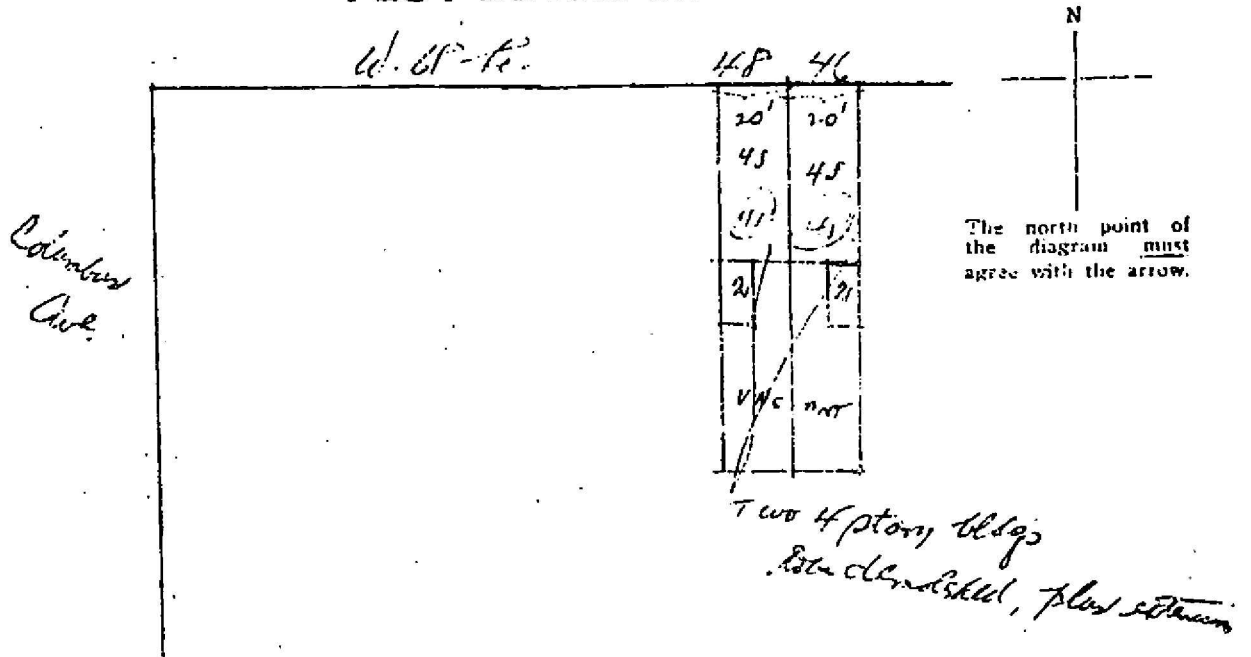
**CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY**

**48 WEST 68TH STREET**

**MANHATTAN, N.Y.**



# PLOT DIAGRAM



# PLOT DIAGRAM

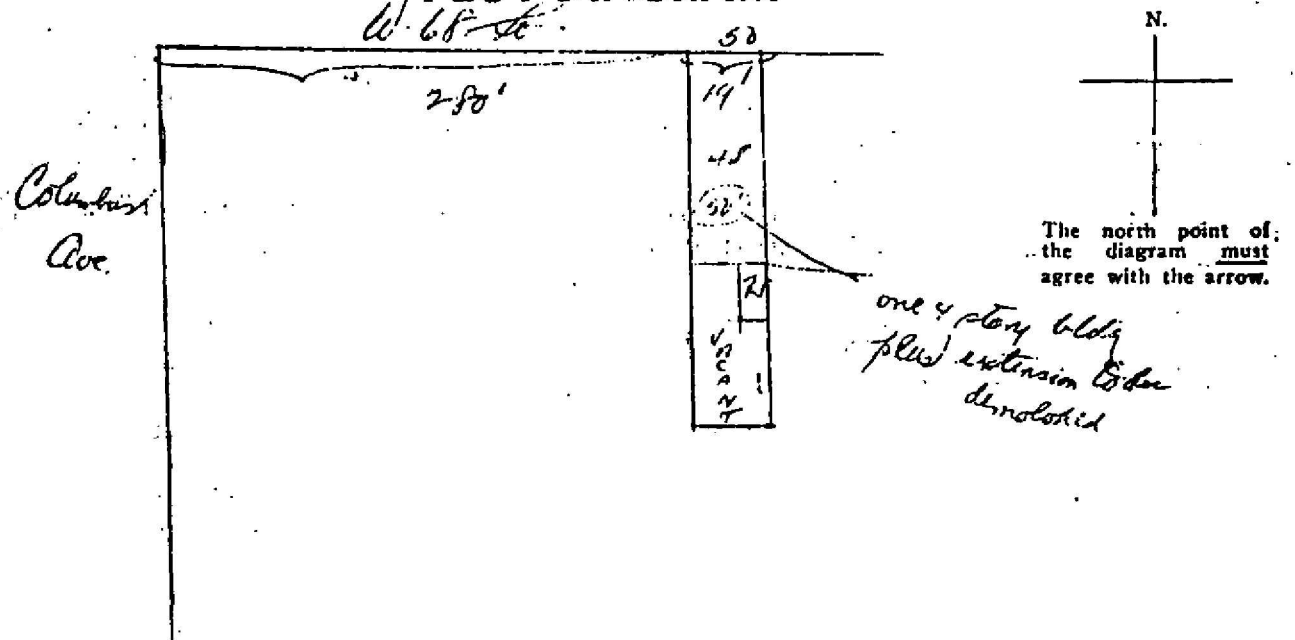


FIGURE 12

CITY OF NEW YORK  
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND BUILDINGS  
DEMOLITION PERMIT PLOT DIAGRAMS

Permits No. 424 and 455

23 June 1959

STAGE 1A  
CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY  
48 WEST 88th STREET  
MANHATTAN, N.Y.

This point, = lack of sites, is regarded as a very weak case since there wasn't a major survey of the island. In other parts of the US archaeologists have found numerous sites in areas where previously no sites had been recorded

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Summary of Findings

A cultural resource reconnaissance conducted for the study area at 48 West 68th Street has shown that no prehistoric archaeological sites were known at, or anywhere near, the area in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when Calver, Bolton and Skinner were locating, and recording sites in the metropolitan area. The predictive model for likely prehistoric site based on LPC's or Lamabeel's? the location of former stream courses does not indicate that this study area has a high potential for prehistoric habitation. This is further supported by the lack of sites associated with the western side of central and southern Manhattan Island. Nineteenth century maps which reconstruct pre-urban topography show an eastward flowing stream to the southwest of the study area, but show different specific distances, from 200 or 300 feet to more than 600 feet. They all agree that the study area was not near an area of major stream confluences or ponds, and not near a stream source or springs. Reconstruction of surface topography at that time is more difficult, but indications are that this was on or near a rocky outcrop of Manhattan schist, on a rough hill slope or crest. None of these conditions are conducive to a likelihood of prehistoric occupation.

Historic uses of the area are equally lacking. No early farms are known here, and the study area did not feature in the military activities of the American Revolution. As late as the 1860's and '70's the area is shown on maps and views as rough, vacant land. By the 1880's property lots in the general vicinity

There is no info. that they were testing in or near this area - however, K+L seem to imply that testing was done

were being developed for frame residences, and in the early 1890's brownstone townhouses were constructed throughout this neighborhood including the study area tract. Construction of these buildings can be shown to have disturbed the front (north) two thirds or three quarters of the lots to a depth which would have penetrated a number of feet below any original soil surface, and thus would have destroyed any possible evidence of earlier uses.

It is not possible on the basis of a Cultural Resource Reconnaissance without subsurface excavation to determine what conditions exist under the pavement ; however, all indicators are that there has been considerable disturbance and that it is extremely unlikely that original soil surfaces remain. The entire rear area is about 75 feet long east-west by from 35 to 40 feet north- south, and construction of the 1890's brownstone building foundations, plus excavation of all neighboring spaces and construction of retention walls to a depth of 10 to 12 feet below parking lot surface, reduces this area on all sides, so that an area of no more than 60 feet by 30 feet is potentially preserved. Landscaping, and typical construction in the area (areaways, lightwells, basement and cellar entrances) are likely to have reduced this even further.

## B. Recommendations

Background research indicates a low probability of prehistoric or historic occupation in this particular area, and subsequent ground disturbance. Only a narrow piece of land, perhaps 60 feet long east-west and 30 feet wide north-south may contain undisturbed soil. Even in this area, it is likely that the actual surface has been disturbed. Therefore, it is considered highly unlikely that any archaeological resources exist here.

On this basis, there is no compelling reason to conduct subsurface tests, which would involve considerable cost for mechanical excavation and probably for shoring unstable rubble fill. No significant cultural resources can be anticipated here which would justify the effort involved. We do not recommend that any archaeological subsurface tests be made in the study area at 48 West 68th Street.

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