

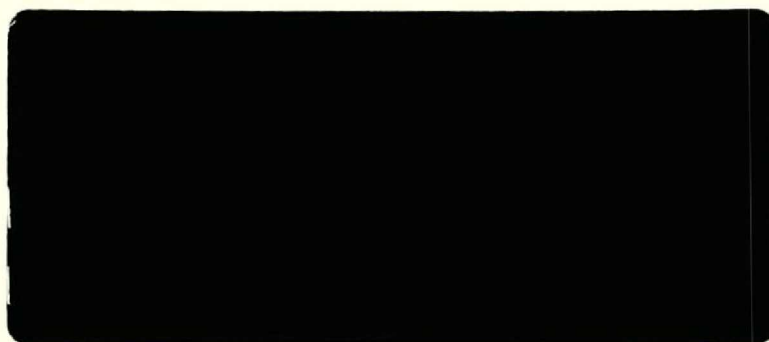
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PHASE 1A ARCHAEOLOGICAL/HISTORICAL
SENSITIVITY STUDY
LONGSTREET AVENUE REZONING PROJECT
BRONX, NEW YORK

CEQR # 89-082X

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Phase 1A Sensitivity Study is to document the potential prehistoric and historic sensitivity of the Longstreet Avenue Rezoning Project in the Bronx, New York through the review of existing archival, cartographic and published references. In order to provide a context for evaluating any identified resources within the parcel itself, this survey shall include a synthesis of published and unpublished prehistoric and historic resources in the immediate locality surrounding the project area.

PHYSICAL SETTING

The project area is located within a region of the Bronx known in the twentieth century as Edgewater Park. This region forms a promontory on the east side of the Throgs Neck Expressway. The northern shore of Edgewater Park faces Eastchester Bay, and its eastern shore fronts the Long Island Sound. The project area consists of a parallelogram 176.3 feet by 62.2 feet with the long axis running just west of North-South in the east-central part of Edgewater Park, to the north of Miles Avenue and approximately two city blocks west of the beach. Edgewater has the appearance of a fishing village with its small wooden houses and its narrow streets. The area is situated between the Throgs Neck Expressway and the Long Island Sound. See Figure 1 for the location of the project area.

PREHISTORIC SENSITIVITY

As part of the project evaluation process, this sensitivity study has surveyed published and unpublished resources in the files of the New York State Museum Division of Historical and Anthropological Services, the Research Branch of the New York Public Library, and the Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

A total of nine confirmed prehistoric sites are located within two miles of the project area. Four of these sites were reported by former New York State Archaeologist Arthur C. Parker, who described them as traces of occupation and shell middens, including one midden with occupation. Unfortunately, no description of artifacts recovered are included, so assignment of date ranges or cultural affiliations is not possible (Parker 1922). Judging from a subsequent description of the Morris Estate Site, it is probable that this site dates to the Woodland period (Kaeser 1963:13-21). All four sites are located close to fresh water courses that flow into the East River or Long Island Sound. Figure 2 for the location of these sites relative to the project area. See Table 1 designations D, F, G, and H for site numbers, references and brief descriptions.

Two of the nine prehistoric sites are located adjacent to one another forming a larger site complex. The Morris Estate and Schurz Sites, de-

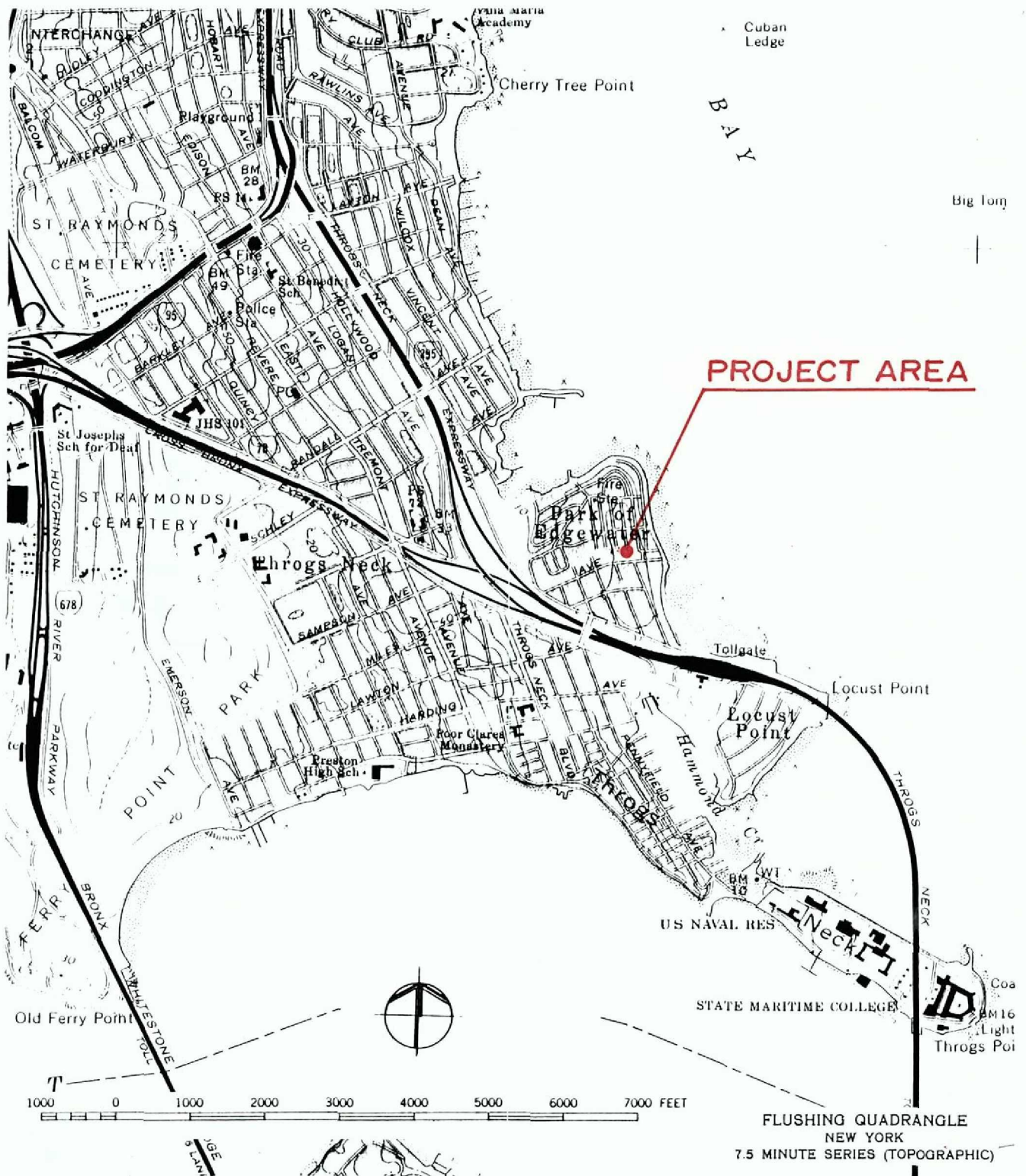


Figure 1

Location of the project area shown on U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute series, Flushing, N.Y. Quadrangle, 1966 (photorevised 1978).

TABLE 1: PREHISTORIC SITES IN THE VICINITY OF LONGSTREET AVENUE

<u>Site Name</u>	<u>NYSM#</u>	<u>Parker#</u>	<u>Other#</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Period(s)</u>	<u>Description</u>
A Adee Point	717		HAR 9-4	Bolton 1934:139-40 Lopez 1955:6		
B Weir Creek	714		HAR 6-4	Skinner 1919:51-74 Harrington 1909	Transitional to Contact	Midden, Camp, Burials
C Locust Point	718		HAR 10-4	Lopez 1955:6 Bolton 1934:139-40		Fishing camp
D	5325	ACP-BRNX		Parker 1922:Plate 147		Traces of Occupation
E Schurz	715		HAR 7-4	Lopez 1955:6-16 Bolton 1976:111-125	Transitional to Contact	Middle, Occupation, Burials
F Morris Estate	5326	ACP-BRNX		Kaeser 1963:13-21 Parker 1922:Plate 147	Early to Middle Woodland	Midden, Occupation
G "Weir Creek", Throggs Neck	2825	ACP-BRNX-3		Parker 1922:488		Village
H	5327	ACP-BRNX		Parker 1922:Plate 147		Traces of Occupation
I Old Ferry Point	716		HAR 8-4	Bolton 1975:81	Midden, Possible Burials	

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signated 'E' and 'F' in Figure 2 and Table 1, form such a site complex. This extensive occupation and burial site also included large middens. It dates to the Transitional through Contact periods based on descriptions of the artifacts recovered (Kaeser 1963:13-21; Lopez 1955:6-16).

The three closest sites to the Longstreet Avenue project area were all reported by the early twentieth century archaeologists, Alanson Skinner, M.R. Harrington and Reginald Pelham Bolton. The Adea Point site, designated 'A' in Figure 2 and Table 1, is the nearest known site at just over 0.1 miles to the northwest. It is situated on the south shore of an inlet that was fed by two streams (Bolton 1934:139-40; Lopez 1957:6). On the northwest coast of this inlet is the second closest site located approximately 0.5 miles northwest of the project area. This site is known as Weir Creek and is designated 'B' in Figure 2 and Table 1 (Skinner 1919:51-74). This brings up a conflict with information obtained from Parker's publication. The site designated 'G' in Figure 2 and Table 1 is also called "Weir Creek" in Parker's text (Parker 1922:488). Since site 'B' is adjacent to the location of this creek as shown on several maps and site 'G' is over a mile away, it appears likely that Parker attached the wrong name to the site he described. The actual Weir Creek site was investigated by M.R. Harrington and Alanson Skinner during the first two decades of this century. It is described as a deep and extensive midden with several burials and traces of seasonal encampments. Artifacts recovered included fishtail and triangular projectile points and numerous varieties of pottery. The pottery was identified by Carlyle Smith in his subsequent analysis of the artifacts from Weir Creek as including Bowmans Brook Stamped, Bowmans Brook Incised, Van Cortlandt Stamped, Clasons Point Stamped, and Eastern Incised varieties representing the East River style. The earlier Windsor style was also present, represented by Vinette Interior Cord-marked, Clearview Stamped, Windsor Brushed, Windsor Fabric Marked and Throgs Neck Simple Stamped varieties. A number of contact period artifacts including glass beads, clay pipe-stems, ceramics, glass bottles and brass projectile points were also identified (Smith 1950:165-66). The Weir Creek site therefore must date to a timespan including the Transitional, Woodland and Contact Periods. The third nearest site is known as the Locust Point site and is located approximately 0.6 miles to the southeast of the project area. This site, designated 'C' in Figure 2 and Table 1 is also known from reports by R.P. Bolton (1934, 1975). Bolton describes it as a fishing camp (1934:139).

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

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

This survey has documented the recorded or published location of nine prehistoric archaeological sites within two miles of the Longstreet Ave-

nue project area. None of the locations are within or immediately adjacent to portions of the project area. All these sites are near present or former stream courses. Evidence exists for a stream course in the vicinity of the project area along its west side. Since fresh water resources are indicated for this location, as well as access to the marine resources of the East River, it would appear that the project area is likely to preserve evidence of prehistoric occupation.

HISTORICAL SENSITIVITY

Seventeenth Century

Henry Hudson sailed along the western shore of the Bronx in 1609. Four years later Adrien Block explored the Long Island Sound in a ship called the Onrust (Restless), but no settlements were established at that time (Cooke 1913:3-8). It is not known exactly where Block landed, but he sailed past the headlands of Throgs Neck and Whitestone on the way to the Long Island Sound (Van Pelt 1898 I:7). Block returned to Holland with a map of his discoveries and the Dutch States General granted Block, along with some other merchants, a charter to form the New Netherland Company in 1614 (ibid.:7-8).

The Bronx' first European settler was Jonas Bronck, who arrived from Hoorn, Holland in 1639 with his friend, Jochem Pietersen Kuyter (Cook 1913:9). Bronck made his home in an area which became Old Morrisania (ibid.). He built a stone house, a barn, and some tobacco houses for himself as well as two buildings for his servants and field workers, whom he brought with him from Holland along with this family (ibid.). Bronck was killed in an Indian uprising in 1643. His widow sold his property to Jacob Jans Stoll (Van Pelt 1898 II:497; Cook 1913:10). Kuyter, Bronck's friend, owned land near the Harlem River at a place called Zegendaal (Bliss Vale) (Van Pelt 1898 II:496).

In 1643 John Throckmorton, a Baptist, arrived from Rhode Island and settled at Vredeland (Land of Peace), the Dutch name for the eastern part of the Bronx (Bolton 1881 II:265). He was attracted to the area by the promise of religious toleration (ibid.). Director-General Kieft of the Dutch West India Company granted Throckmorton some land which later was renamed Throckmorton's Neck (ibid.). Throckmorton's property was south of Eastchester Neck and west of Eastchester Bay and the Long Island Sound (ibid.). The name Throckmorton's Neck eventually became corrupted to Throgs Neck. The project area is included within Throckmorton's property. In 1652 Augustine Hermans bought Throckmorton's land and sold a portion of it to Thomas Hunt (Leggett and Hatfield 1913 XLIV:237).

New Amsterdam passed from Dutch to English rule in 1664. Governor Nicolls declared the Duke of York proprietor of New York (Griffin 1946 I:177). The area, which included present-day New York City, was called Yorkshire. Yorkshire was divided into "Ridings" (East, West and North) with Westchester and what was to become the Bronx included within the North Riding (ibid.). The North Riding also included part of what is now Queens County (Griffin 1946 I:177). Westchester became a county in 1683

(Van Pelt 1898 II:493). Westchester County was divided into townships. Large manorial estates composed most of Westchester County but the township of Westchester, which included present-day Bronx and the project area, was outside of the manorial system (Shonnard and Spooner 1900 I:227). The township of Westchester had a patent from the governor and, because it was one of the earliest and most populous English settlements in New York north of the Harlem River, it was given borough status (ibid.:227-229). Borough status, which was granted by a royal charter, meant that the town had a municipal corporation with certain rights such as self-government (ibid.). By the close of the seventeenth century the township of Westchester was an important and flourishing community.

Eighteenth Century

Westchester County's population grew in the early eighteenth century. According to the census, there were 1,946 people in 1703, 2,815 by 1712, and 4,409 in 1723 (Shonnard and Spooner 1900 I:226). The densest population was in the township of Westchester. With a population of 572, it was the most populous in the county. The project area is within the township of Westchester.

One of the Throgs Neck families frequently mentioned in sources is Ferris. Jonathan Ferris of Throgs Neck left "all of his houses and lands to John Ferris," his youngest nephew in 1753 (Pelletreau 1898:128). The will also mentions legacies to his sisters and to his brother, Peter (dated April 25, 1753 and proved May 21, 1753). In another will James Ferris, also of Throgs Neck, left his wife, Charity, the "use of a third of his farm on Throgs Neck" (ibid.:358). His sons, James and David, received the remaining property on Throgs Neck (dated February 4, 1780 and proved June 11, 1783). There was a delegate to the Continental Congress by the name of James Ferris, but there is no evidence from the sources that it was the same individual noted in the will (Wray 1942:61). There is also no evidence that any of the Ferris property included the project area.

Jacob Hunt of Throgs Neck left one-third of his estate to his wife, Phebe (Pelletreau 1898:156). Information on the location of Hunt's property was not given by sources.

The wills do not give enough detailed information on the location of the property of the people mentioned. It cannot be determined if any of their property is included the project area. In general, Throgs Neck does include the project area.

Throgs Neck was the site of activity during the American Revolution (Hufeland 1926). Four thousand British soldiers landed in a cove not far from what was to be C.P. Huntington Place (Hufeland 1926:111). Wray (1942:65) says "on October 12, the British army, in a great fleet of boats, came up the East River and landed on Throgg's Neck, one detachment in about 90 boats in the morning, the other in about 50 boats in the afternoon." Washington's secretary, Tench Tigrman, wrote a letter dated October 13, 1776 in which he stated, "I was attending his Excellency who was obliged to ride up to Westchester upon the alarm of the enemy landing



at Frogs Point" (ibid.). Tigman goes on in his letter to say that "the grounds leading from Frogs Point towards our post at Kingsbridge are as defensible as they can be wished" (ibid.). Frogs Point was a name used at that time with reference to Throgs Neck (ibid.:64).

The troops formed themselves into regiments and crossed over the Throgs Neck Road. The spot at which the British made their landing was about three-quarters of a mile to the southwest of the project area (ibid.:102). On October 12, 1776 the British General Howe's headquarters was about 1.5 miles north of the project area.

On July 22, 1781 the Americans visited Throgs Neck to explore the area with the hope of finding an appropriate place from which to cross to Long Island (ibid.:397-399). Washington and Rechambeau were in charge of the American troops at Throgs Neck.

Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

Four issues will be considered with respect to the history of Throgs Neck during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. First are the political changes which brought Throgs Neck and the project area under new jurisdictions. A second issue is a discussion of families living in and near the project area during the nineteenth century. The third issue concerns three historic structures that are mentioned in conjunction with local families. The last issue is the socio-economic changes that occurred in the twentieth century.

In 1846 an act was passed by the New York State Legislature dividing the township of Westchester (Scharf and Morris 1886 I:809). The lands west of the Bronx River became the township of West Farms and everything to the east of the river remained within the township of Westchester. West Farms was annexed by New York City in 1874 and was known as the Annexed District (Wells et al. 1927 I:23). Throgs Neck and the project area, situated to the east of the Bronx River, stayed within the township of Westchester. In 1894 a referendum was presented to the townships of Westchester, Eastchester, Pelham, and to Mount Vernon to decide whether or not they should be annexed to New York City (ibid.). The township of Westchester voted against annexation, but the township was a minority. As a result of the referendum, the territory east of the Bronx River, including Westchester township, was annexed to New York City in 1895 (ibid.). The new addition to the city formed a part of its Twenty-fourth Ward. The Greater New York charter went into force in 1898 and the entire annexed area north of the Harlem River became the Borough of the Bronx (ibid.). The borough received county status in 1914 (Davis 1914:5). Westchester township, including Throgs Neck and the project area, passed into the jurisdiction of New York City in 1895. In 1898 Throgs Neck was officially part of the Bronx.

Adee is a name that appears close to the project area on F.W. Beers map (1868) and on Dripps' map (1853) (see Figures 4 and 3). The property of G.T. Adee is shown immediately north of the project area with two structures indicated on it. There was a George Timpson Adee who owned a Tudor style mansion built in 1856 (Raynoff 1984:1; McNamara, personal

communication, April 25, 1989). Adee, who was originally from Albany, lived in the mansion and had three sons (McNamara, personal communication, April 25, 1989). One or two of Adee's three sons were lawyers. One of the structures indicated on Beers' map (1868) at the northern end of Adee's property is relatively large and could be the location of the mansion (Figure 4). Eventually the Adee family left as a result of high taxes, but the groundskeeper remained in the area and rented out bungalows (McNamara, personal communication, April 25, 1989). The Adee property was purchased by the Shaw family, whose descendants stayed in the vicinity until 1988 (ibid.).

A physician by the name of Wright Post was associated with Throgs Neck early in the nineteenth century (McNamara 1969:n.p.). Post became Chief Surgeon at New York Hospital, a position which he held for thirty-five years (ibid.). He owned both an estate and a farm on Throgs Neck. In 1827 Dr. Post sold his estate to John David Wolf (ibid.). J.D. Wolf appears on Beers' map (1868) to the northwest of the project area, fairly close to Weir Creek (Figure 4). Two structures are indicated on Wolf's property (ibid.). Post's farm, which faced the East River, was leased by his brother (McNamara 1969:n.p.).

The piece of land immediately south of the project area is shown as Wright's Island on Dripps' map (1853) as well as on Beers' (1868) (Figures 3 and 4). The sources do not indicate whether or not the name is connected with Wright Post or with J.T. Wright, whose name appears on Beers' map (Figure 4). The term "island" is a misnomer since none of the sources give any evidence that the area was ever separated from the mainland.

Beers' map (1868) shows both a J.T. Wright and a Capt. J.T. Wright to the immediate south of the project area (Figure 4). Buildings are indicated on both properties.

Three other names mentioned in conjunction within the project area or in the vicinity are Fox, Newbold, and Pennyfield. Beers' map (1868) shows a S.M. Fox within the approximate location of the project area. The property contains one building and, like the other pieces of property in the vicinity, it has a small road or path. Gopsil's Westchester County Directory lists a Samuel Fox as a farmer in Westchester (Gopsil and Costa 1866:201). Dripps' map (1853) shows the name of Newbold to the immediate south of the project area (Figure 3). There are two structures and a path shown on the property all of which could be within the project area (ibid.). The sources do not offer any further information about this individual or family. To the northwest of the project area was the Pennyfield property with two structures indicated (ibid.). There is no information in the sources on the Pennyfields, but today there is a Pennyfield Avenue to the west of the project area.

On the East End of Pennyfield Avenue there is another historic structure, Fort Schuyler (Bronx Historical Society n.d.:2). Erected in the 1830s, it served to defend New York harbor. Later it became the home of the Maritime College of the State University. Fort Schuyler appears on the

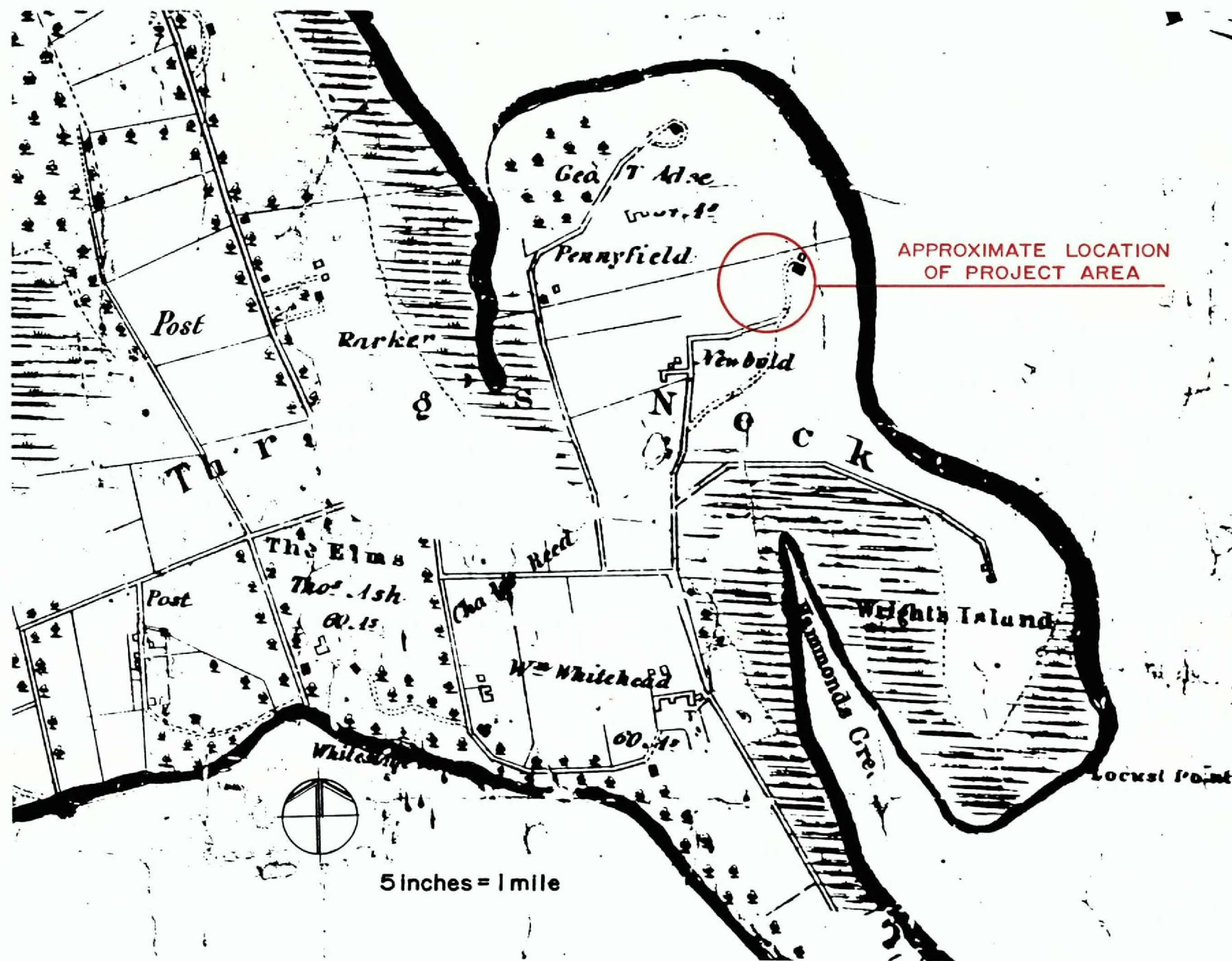


Figure 3

From Dripps' 1853 Map of the Southern Part of Westchester County.

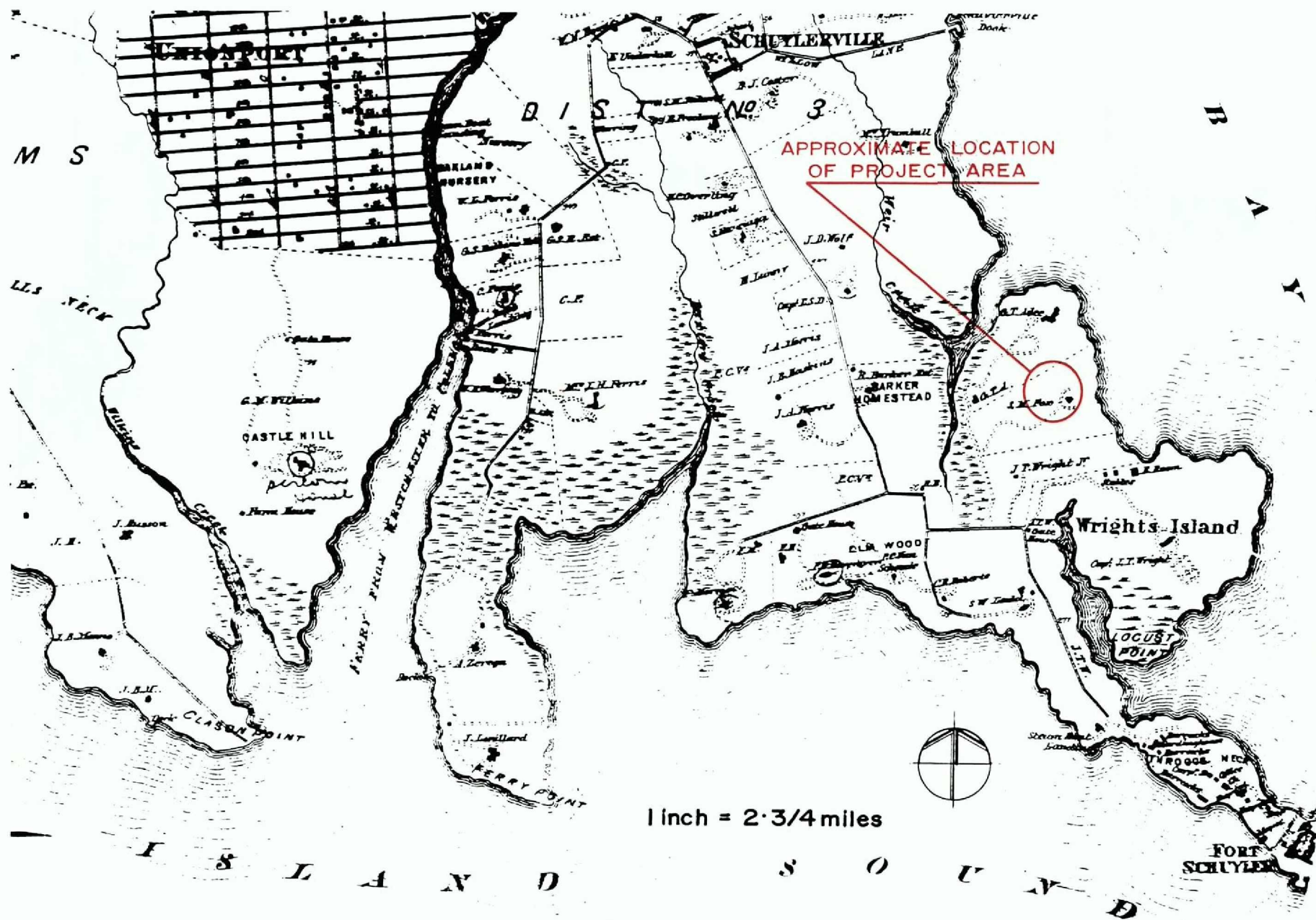


Figure 4 From Beers' 1868 Atlas of New York and Vicinity.



Bronx Topographical map (1897) at the southern end of Throgs Neck, southwest of the project area (Figure 5).

Because Throgs Neck was a rural area which was also on the water, it attracted vacationers throughout the nineteenth century (City Planning Commission 1969:110). During the early years of the twentieth century the area retained its rural character. There were farms in Edgewater, the name used during the twentieth century for the part of Throgs Neck in the immediate project area vicinity, as late as 1918 (Twomey 1987:13). In the early 1900s, after 1912, boy scouts and other campers erected tent cities near the shore. During the 1920s and 1930s vacationers lodged in bungalow colonies (Raynoff 1984:1).

Demographic changes occurred in the 1920s due to the construction of the IRT subway (City Planning Commission 1969:110). Permanent residents were drawn to the area in larger numbers than ever before. Most of the families settling in Edgewater were of Irish, Scandinavian, German, and Italian backgrounds (ibid.). Bromley's map (1927) shows a street plan of the area during the 1920s when Edgewater was becoming more urban in character. Several structures are shown within the project area.

After World War II there was a great increase in residential building and the population of the area peaked in the 1950s (City Planning Commission 1969:110). Hagstrom's map (1944) shows a street plan of the region at the beginning of the post-World War II population boom (Figure 7). This plan was evidently never fully realized as it shows Longstreet Avenue extending through the project area. This portion of the street was officially mapped but evidently never completed. Today the population is composed of Europeans, including those of Hispanic origin.

Two Sanborn maps (1930 and the 1951 revision of the 1930 map) offer the most detailed picture of the project area during the mid-twentieth century. Both depict the locality as residential with small cottages.

Sanborn's 1930 map shows that the project area primarily contained small dwellings or cottages (one family) within the mapped course of Longstreet Avenue to the immediate north of Miles Avenue (see Figure 8). Miles Avenue was also known as Green Avenue at one time, and Longstreet Avenue (the section running north from Miles) was a paper street. On the 1930 map the immediate vicinity of the project area is designated as "Pennyfield Camp." Considering the recreational character of the area, it might have been used for scouting or picnicking before the cottages were constructed. Many of the cottages might have served as summer or recreational residences. One larger structure is shown encroaching on the western side of the paper Longstreet Avenue as well as a tool shed in the northwestern corner of the designated street.

The 1951 revised map shows no change in the project area over the twenty-year period (see Figure 9). The buildings in and around the project area are the same except for two structures that were shown to the immediate

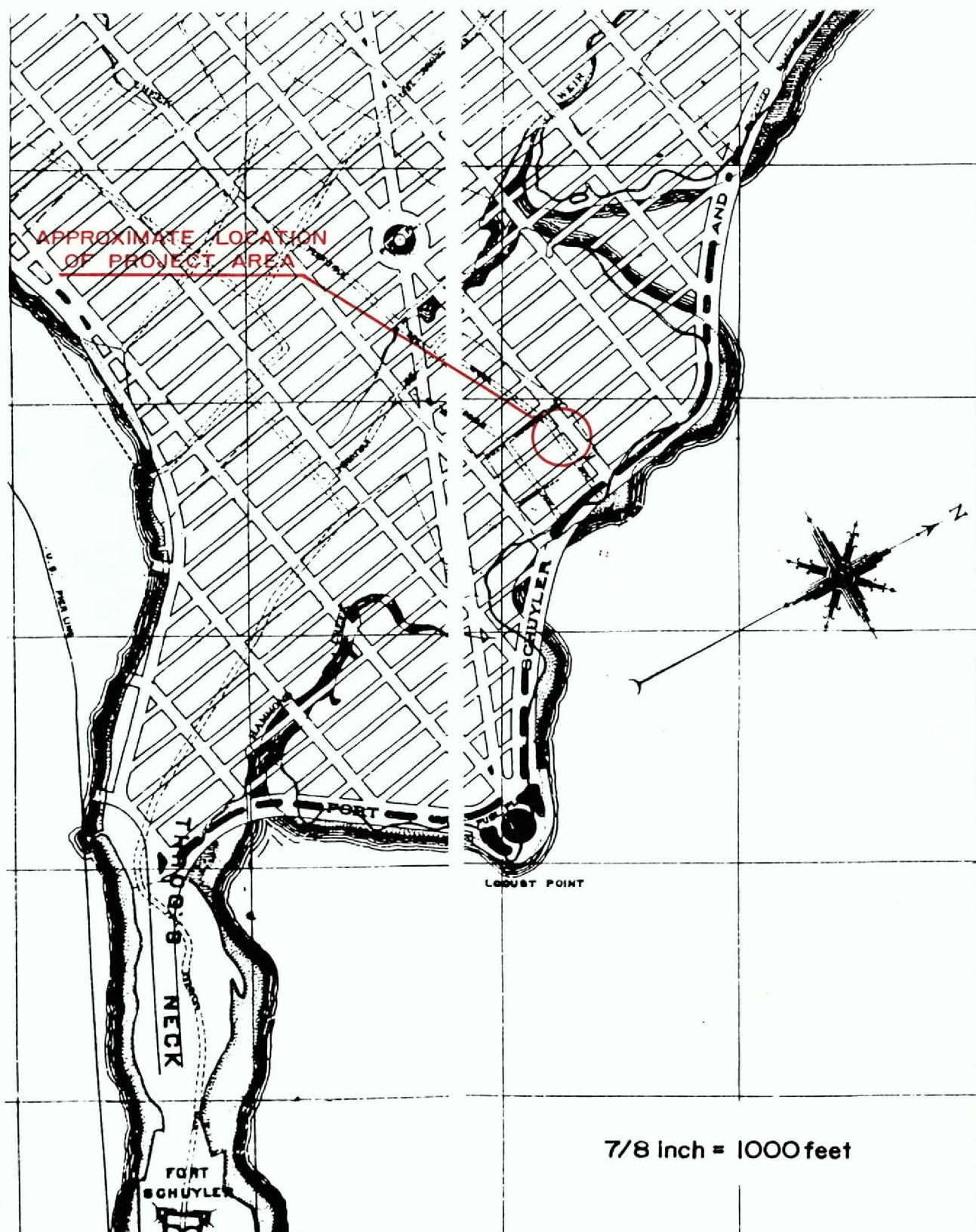


Figure 5

From Bronx Topographical Bureau 1897, Bronx, New York City.



Figure 7

From Hagstrom's 1944 Bronx Borough, New York City.

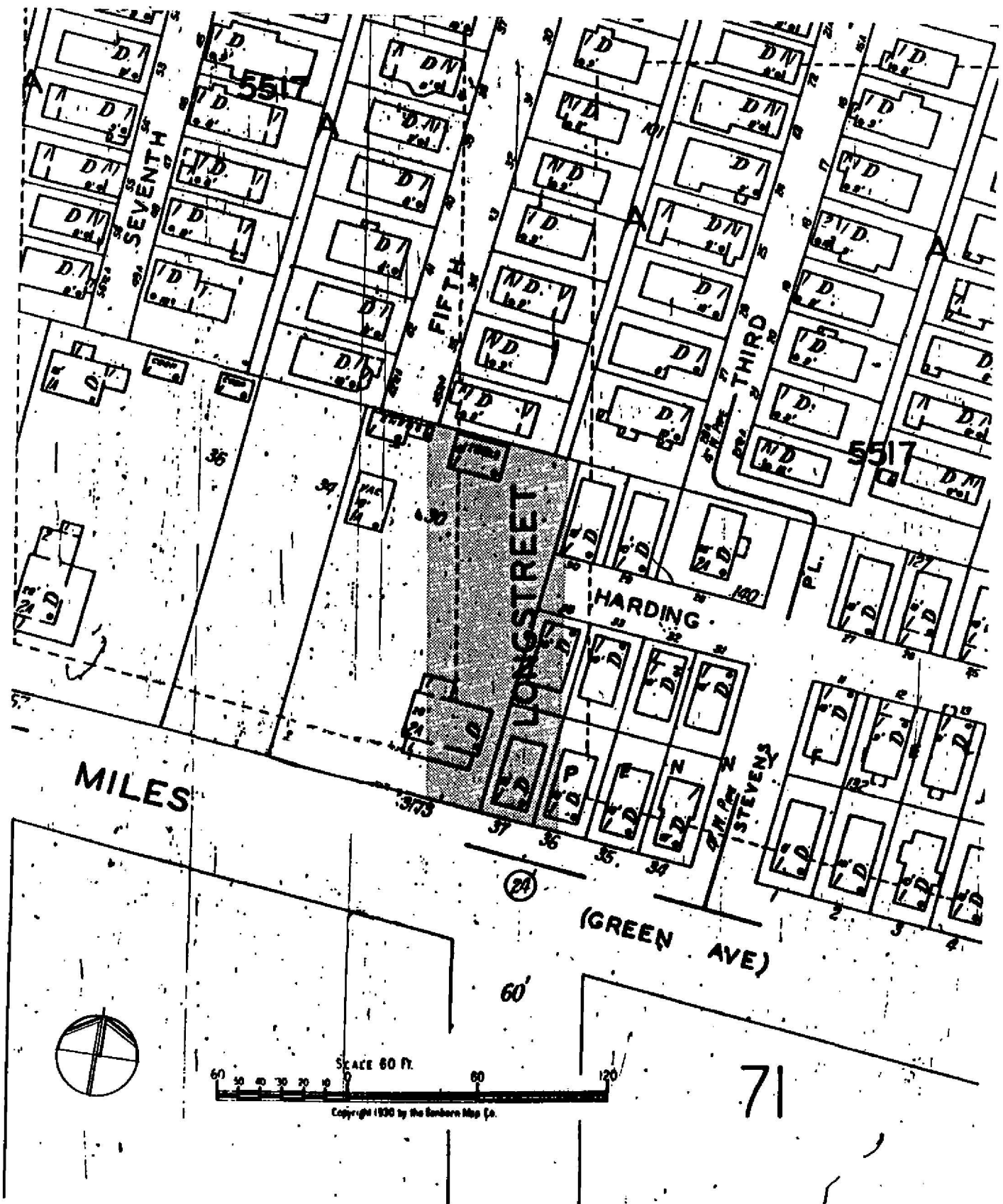


Figure 8

From Sanborn's 1930 Atlas of the Borough of The Bronx, New York.

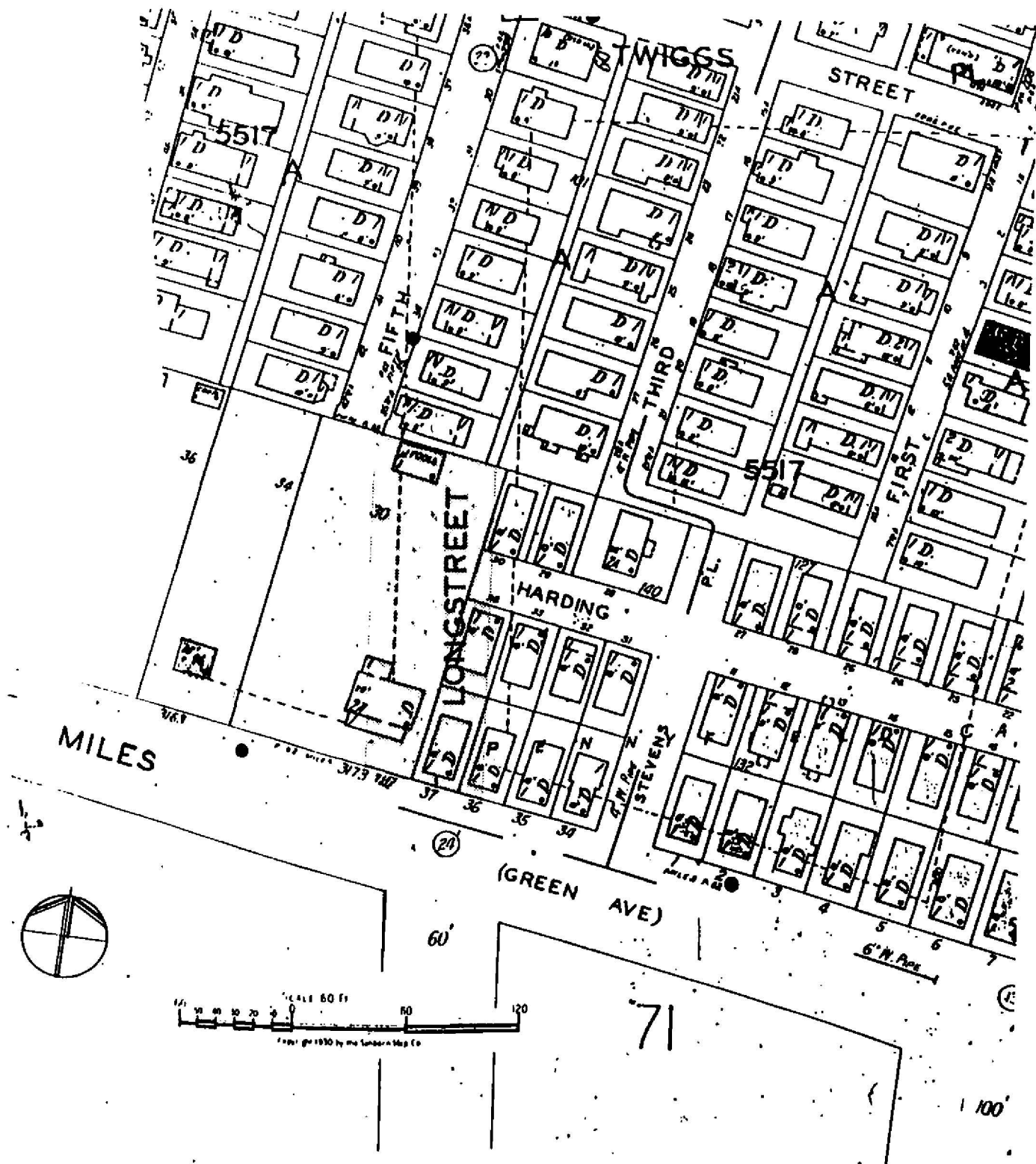


Figure 9

From Sanborn's 1930, Revised 1951, Atlas of the Borough of The Bronx, New York.

northwest of the project area on the 1930 map. They do not appear on the 1951 revision. Two small attached structures designated as sheds and one building labeled "VAC" were removed sometime between 1930 and 1951. Longstreet Avenue north of Miles (Green) Avenue is still shown as a paper street on the 1951 revision, and it remains such at present. The local name of Pennyfield Camp continued to be used. Part or all of five one story dwellings, part of one larger two story dwelling and one tool shed are shown within the project area.

It may be concluded that the project area and its general vicinity changed very little between 1930 and 1950. The area remained residential with its rows of small houses, and the streets did not undergo any alterations.

The present situation of the project area is depicted on a Title Survey and Grades Map of 1 June 1981. This map evidently shows somewhat different boundaries for the mapped but not constructed Longstreet Avenue, as compared to the two Sanborn Maps (Figures 8 and 9). The mapped street is still shown as a parallelogram but it is shifted approximately fourteen feet to the west on the Title Survey and Grades Map. The only structures depicted within the project area are two one-story frame dwellings. The larger two-story dwelling and the tool shed are not shown and therefore must have been demolished.

In conclusion Throgs Neck has had a long history of settlement. The area kept its rural character throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For a long time it attracted large landowners, farmers, and vacationers. It changed political jurisdictions a number of times throughout its history. There was military activity in the vicinity during the American Revolution. Since the 1920s the Edgewater section of Throgs Neck has become an urbanized neighborhood with permanent residents. Various structures were built within the project area during the first three decades of the twentieth century. These structures impacted over half of the project area.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The above text has documented that the Longstreet Avenue Rezoning project area potentially may preserve archaeological evidence from the prehistoric period. This location is considered sensitive to the preservation of prehistoric remains because it is topographically similar to several locations of documented prehistoric sites. Nine such sites exist within a two mile radius, and nearly all are on or near the shore of Long Island Sound or the East River near fresh water streams, a description which characterizes the Longstreet Avenue project area. Although no prehistoric artifacts have been reported from this specific project area, it is our opinion that its' topographic location/conditions would have been conducive to the use and/or occupation of the project area during prehistory, particularly in the Woodland and Transitional Periods. The primary

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type of site expected here would be shell middens or temporary/seasonal camps.

It is also our conclusion that the project area is probably not sensitive to the preservation of historic archaeological evidence. Although the 1853 Dripps and 1868 Beers maps show structures in the vicinity of the project area, no evidence was found that indicated that these structures were within the project parcel. Parts of at least two structures are presently within the boundaries of the project area, but there are no indications that these buildings date prior to this century. These structures and two others that have since been demolished have disturbed about sixty percent of the project parcel.

We recommend that a Phase IB archaeological survey be undertaken within the portions of the project area which have not been disturbed by the twentieth century structures and therefore may preserve archaeological resources. The purpose of this testing will be to determine the presence or absence of any prehistoric site(s) that potentially may be preserved below the surface here. We recommend that a program of subsurface testing prior to construction be undertaken for this forty percent of the Longstreet Avenue project area. As impacts from the construction or related activities are planned for virtually the entire project area, the testing will include all surviving areas of sensitivity. This will be done primarily to test these portions of the tract for the presence of aboriginal occupation, given the existence of nine prehistoric sites within two miles of the project area.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Local History and Genealogical Division, the Map Room, and the Photocopy Service of the New York Public Library; John McNamara of the Bronx Historical Society, the New-York Historical Society, the New York State Museum and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

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