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Rezoning Application for Proposed Restaurant Expansion
46-11 Broadway
Block 724, Lot 4
Astoria, Queens

Preliminary Archaeological Review

CEQR No. 99 DCP 0452Q

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LANDMARKS PRESERVATION
COMMISSION

Report Prepared for:
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Lead Agency:
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March, 2000

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Introduction

This report is an element in a rezoning application (establishment of a C1-4 overlay within an R5 zone) that would permit the expansion of a restaurant located at 46-11 Broadway, Astoria, Queens. The restaurant and proposed expansion are within Block 724, Lot 4, a parcel with a depth of 100 feet and a 75-foot frontage on the north side of Broadway between 46th and 47th Streets (Figures 1 and 2, Plates 1-3). The application also includes establishment of surface parking on adjacent Lots 28 and 32.

In New York City, historic preservation requirements necessitate isolation of key areas of archeological sensitivity, those containing objects or structures of prehistoric or historic value, or locations, which provide new information about a period in history or prehistory. These criteria are utilized to determine eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, Part 60). New York State and the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) have adopted these criteria for evaluations of historic and prehistoric potential and significance (CEQR 1993: Section 120).

On September 28, 1999 the City of New York Landmarks Preservation Commission determined that no potentially significant architectural resources would be affected by the proposed action. However, the LPC recommended an archaeological documentary study for elements of the proposed project. Specifically, LPC found:

“...review of archaeological sensitivity models and historic maps indicates that there is potential for the recovery of remains from the village of Middletown circa 1800 on the project site. Accordingly, if the proposed action will result in sub-surface development in the rear yards of these lots then the Commission recommends that an archaeological documentary study be preformed to clarify these initial findings and provide the threshold for the next level of review, if such review is necessary (see CEQR Technical Manual 1993). (Environmental Review Form, CEQR No. 99 DCP 0452Q).”

Subsequent phone conversations between LPC staff and Nelly Bravo of Philip P. Agusta and Associates further clarified these findings. The existing restaurant structure extends to the rear line of Lot 4, obscuring the former rear yard of 46-11 Broadway. No additional subsurface disturbance will occur in this area. The proposed parking improvements on Lots 28 and 32 will not result in any subsurface disturbance; therefore, these areas do not require further archaeological assessment. However, under the most extensive development scenario single-story additions will be constructed on the lots on either side of the extant structure (formerly Lots 3 and 5, subsequently incorporated into Lot 4), resulting in extensive ground disturbance. Therefore, this assessment focuses on the archaeological potential of the 100' x 75' parcel currently designated as Lot 4.

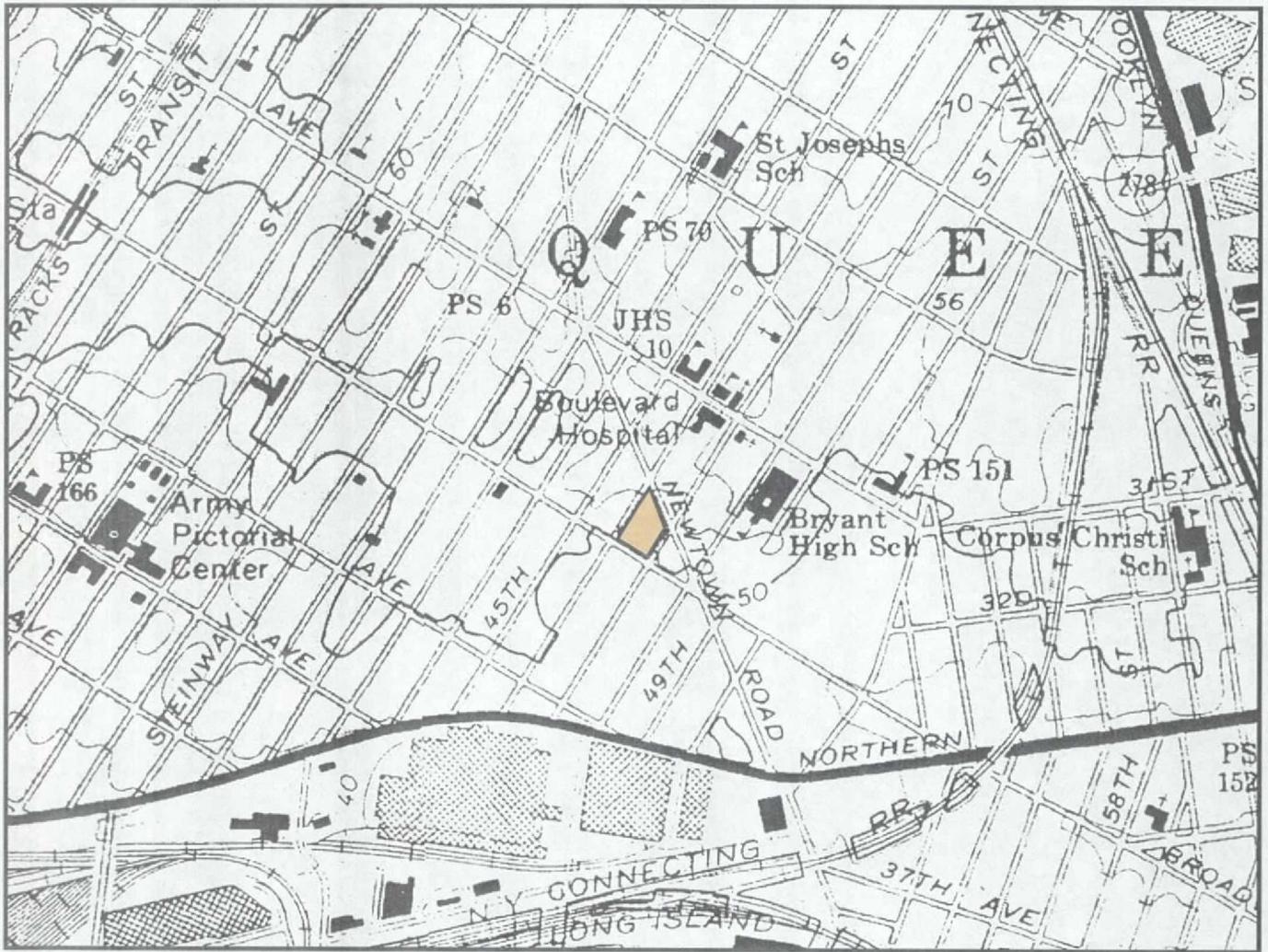


Figure 1. Project Location.
Source: USGS 1979 (scale 1"=1000')



Plate 1: View of Project Area looking northeast across Broadway. The two story structure in the center of photo (46-11 Broadway) is currently a restaurant. The gable-front frame building at the core of the restaurant complex was constructed between 1891 and 1898 (see Figures 8 and 9). The maximum proposed development would result in single story additions in the vacant lots on both sides of the current structure.



Plate 2. View of the western portion of the Project Area (formerly Lot 5) looking northeast from Broadway. This lot currently has asphalt paving and serves as a parking lot for the restaurant. The restaurant (46-11 Broadway) is visible on the right side of photo. Historical research indicates that no structures have ever been constructed within the former boundaries of Lot 5.



Plate 3. View of the eastern portion of the Project Area (formerly Lot 3) looking southwest toward Broadway. This lot currently has asphalt paving and serves as parking lot for the restaurant. The restaurant (46-11 Broadway) is visible on the right side of photo. Historical research indicates that a small frame structure existed on the rear of this property circa 1891 (see Figure 8); this structure was demolished prior to 1898 (see Figure 9). By 1936 a frame store was present on the front of the property and a garage had been constructed on the rear portion of the lot (see Figure 11).

Project Area History

Maspeth, the first European settlement within what is now the Borough of Queens, was established on the East River in 1642. The following year the settlement was attacked by Indians and was soon abandoned. In 1652 another settlement, originally named Middleburgh and later renamed Hastings, was established at a safer inland location. This settlement was informally called “the new town” to distinguish it from Maspeth. The appellation was formalized with the adoption of the English system of towns and counties in 1683, which divided western Queens County into the towns of Newtown (which includes the present project area), Flushing and Jamaica (Jackson 1995; Munsell 1882; Riker 1852).

In 1935 the Queens Topographical Bureau used historic maps, modern base maps, and individual deeds to compile a connected draught map depicting land ownership in Queens in c. 1800 (Powell 1935). The present project area is located a short distance south of Ridge Road and west of Newtown Road in the vicinity of the crossroads settlement of Middletown (Figure 3). Documentation accompanying this map indicates that the project area is located in the northern portion of the 90-acre tract conveyed by Thomas Alsop and his wife Catherine to Daniel Townsend on May 17, 1806. According to this deed, the property was bounded on the north by the “road to Suydams Mill” [Ridge Road] and on the east by the “road from Newtown to Hell Gate Ferry [Newtown Road] (Queens County Deeds, Liber 219, Page 335). A small-scale map in an 1829 New York State atlas also depicts the village of Middletown and the alignments of these two roads (Burr 1829).

Development to the west of the project area was enhanced by the incorporation of the village of Astoria in 1839. The village was established on the East River by fur merchant Stephan A Halsey, who hoped to attract investors and wealthy residents by naming the development in honor of the German-born fur trade and real estate magnate John Jacob Astor (1763-1848). Although the present project area is located outside of the corporate limits of the village, it has subsequently retained the identity as being part of Astoria. Despite extensive residential development in the nucleus of Astoria, the project vicinity retained its rural character into the third quarter of the nineteenth century (Walling 1859). An 1852 map again depicts the alignments of Ridge Road and Newtown Road as well as the crossroads village of Middletown (Figure 4). Five structures are depicted on the south side of Ridge Road in the project vicinity, indicating that the northern portion of the 90-acre Townsend tract had been subdivided. No watercourses or other topographic features are depicted in or near the project area.

Three related developments—the construction of the Steinway plant and village, the incorporation of Long Island City, and the establishment of the “German Settlement,”—combined to spur residential development in the project vicinity during the 1870s. The firm of Steinway and Sons was established in Manhattan in 1853 by German-born Henry Steinweg. In 1860 the firm established a large piano factory at 53rd Street and 4th Avenue. In order to accommodate expanding production, William Steinway assembled a tract of 400 acres

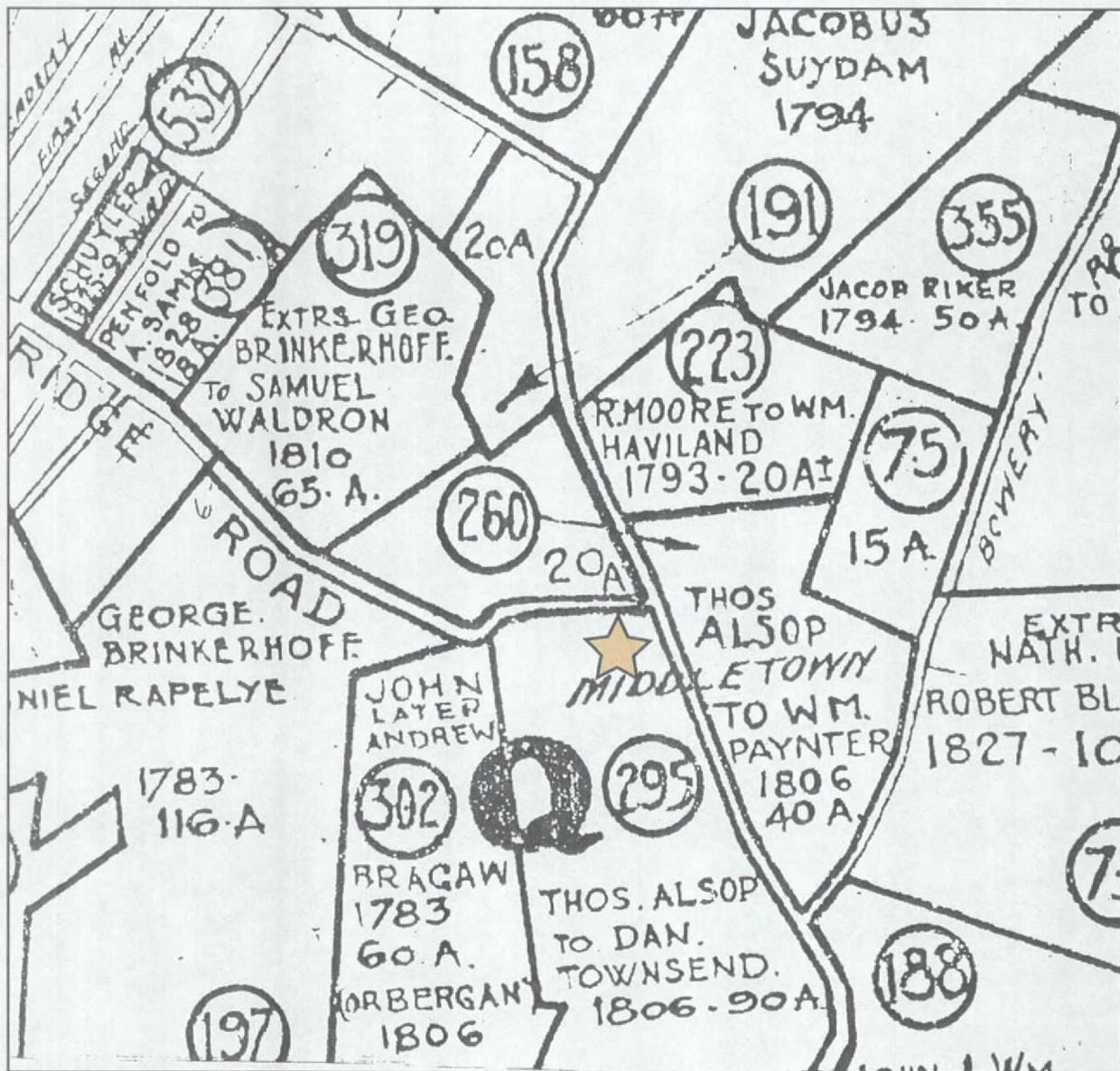


Figure 3. Project Vicinity Land Ownership, circa 1800.
 Source: Powell 1935 (scale 1"=1000')

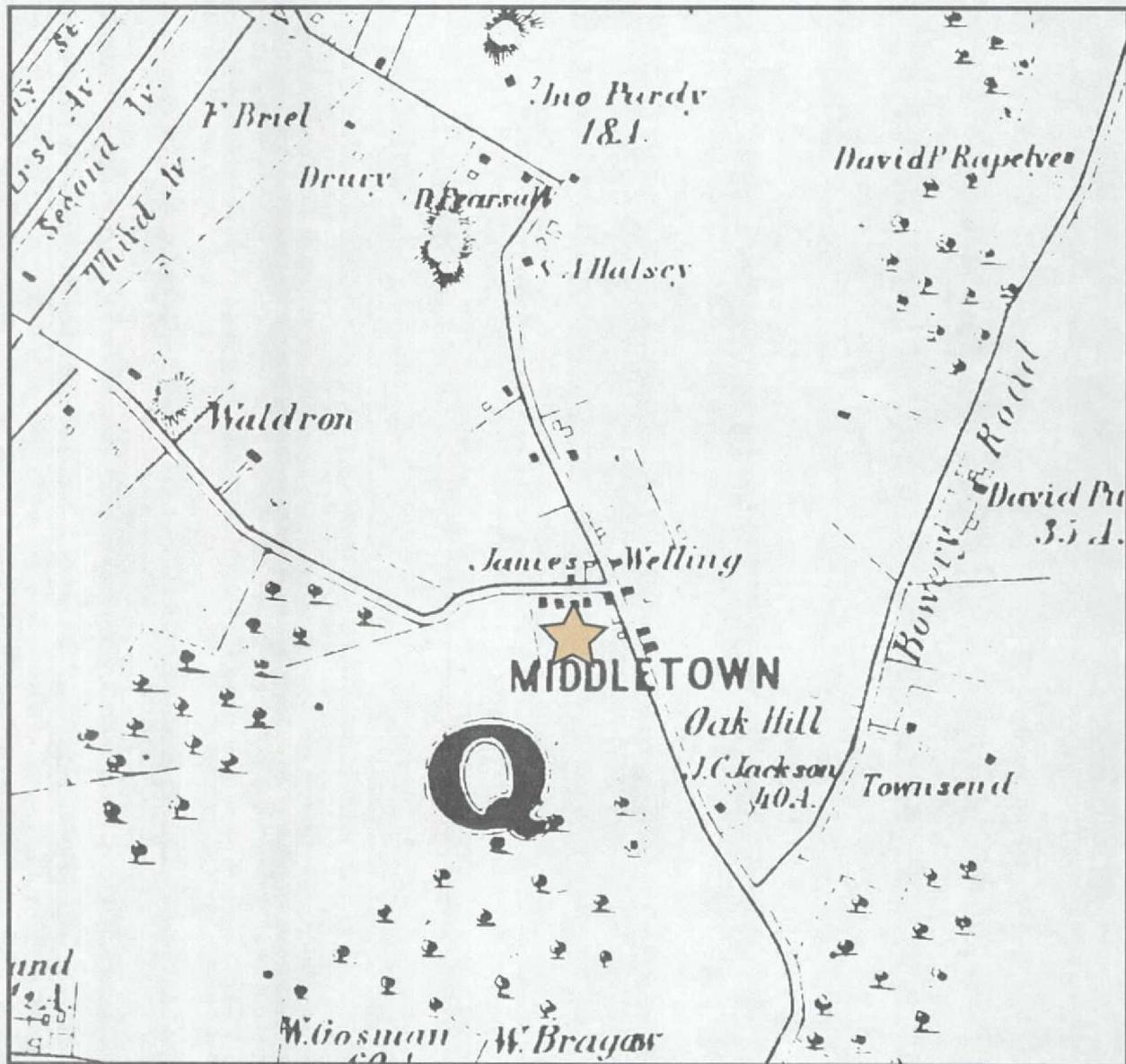


Figure 4. Project Vicinity, 1852.
Source: Dripps 1852 (scale 1"=1000')

along the northwestern shore of Queens in 1870-73 (Kelsey 1896; Seyfried 1984). A large factory and workers' village—complete with church, library, kindergarten, and public trolley—were constructed on this tract during the 1870s (Figure 5). The municipality of Long Island City was incorporated May 4, 1870, encompassing the neighborhoods of: Hunter's Point, Astoria, Ravenswood, Steinway, and Sunnyside. The present project area became part of the Fourth Ward of Long Island City (Nadel 1990; Seyfried 1983; 1984).

The "German Settlement" had its origins in the 1868 decision of the German United Cabinet Makers Association (headquartered on Grand Street, Manhattan) to purchase one or more farms in upper Astoria for subdivision into housing lots for members (Anonymous 1936). The following year the association purchased four farms located between present-day 35th and 50th Streets, including the present project area. This development was greeted warmly in the local press. The "Astoria News" column of *The Long Island City Star and Newtown Advertiser* for January 29, 1869 noted:

We might also notice the sale of the Waldron Farm of 61 acres to a German Cabinet makers [sic] association of New York, who intend to form a Colony, which will tend to build up that portion of our village. We trust soon to see some enterprising manufacturers locate among us, which will tend greatly to create a flow of money through our village, making our home trade protected and enable our citizens to become independent of New York for the greater part of their commodities.

On September 24, 1869 the "Astoria News" column noted the intention of the German Association of Cabinet Makers to "open and lay out new streets and avenues" during the upcoming spring season, adding that "Broadway will be extended through the center of the place." The column indicated that some 440 Germans were poised to take possession of lots at the beginning of March, 1870.

On October 26, 1869 the German Association of Cabinet Makers was granted permission "to open and grade Broadway from its head at 4th Avenue to the old Newtown road." This project extended Broadway an additional fifteen blocks, including the present project area. By November, all of the Waldron Farm lots had been sold and the "Astoria News" column concluded "There bids fair to be a flood of German settlers in Newtown during the next few years . . ." ("Astoria News" *The Long Island City Star and Newtown Advertiser* November 11, 1869). By June, 1870 six buildings had been completed at unspecified locations within the German Settlement ("Astoria News" *The Long Island City Star and Newtown Advertiser* November 11, 1869). In 1870 Schützen Park was constructed at the southeast corner of Broadway and Steinway Street (five blocks west of the present project area). This park remained an important community center, particularly for German Americans) for over half a century (Seyfried 1984). On May 19, 1871 *The Long Island City Star* announced the upcoming auction of nearly 500 building lots belonging to the "German Cabinet Makers Co-operative Building Association of New York," to be held at Schutzen Park. The correspondent described the "sturdy

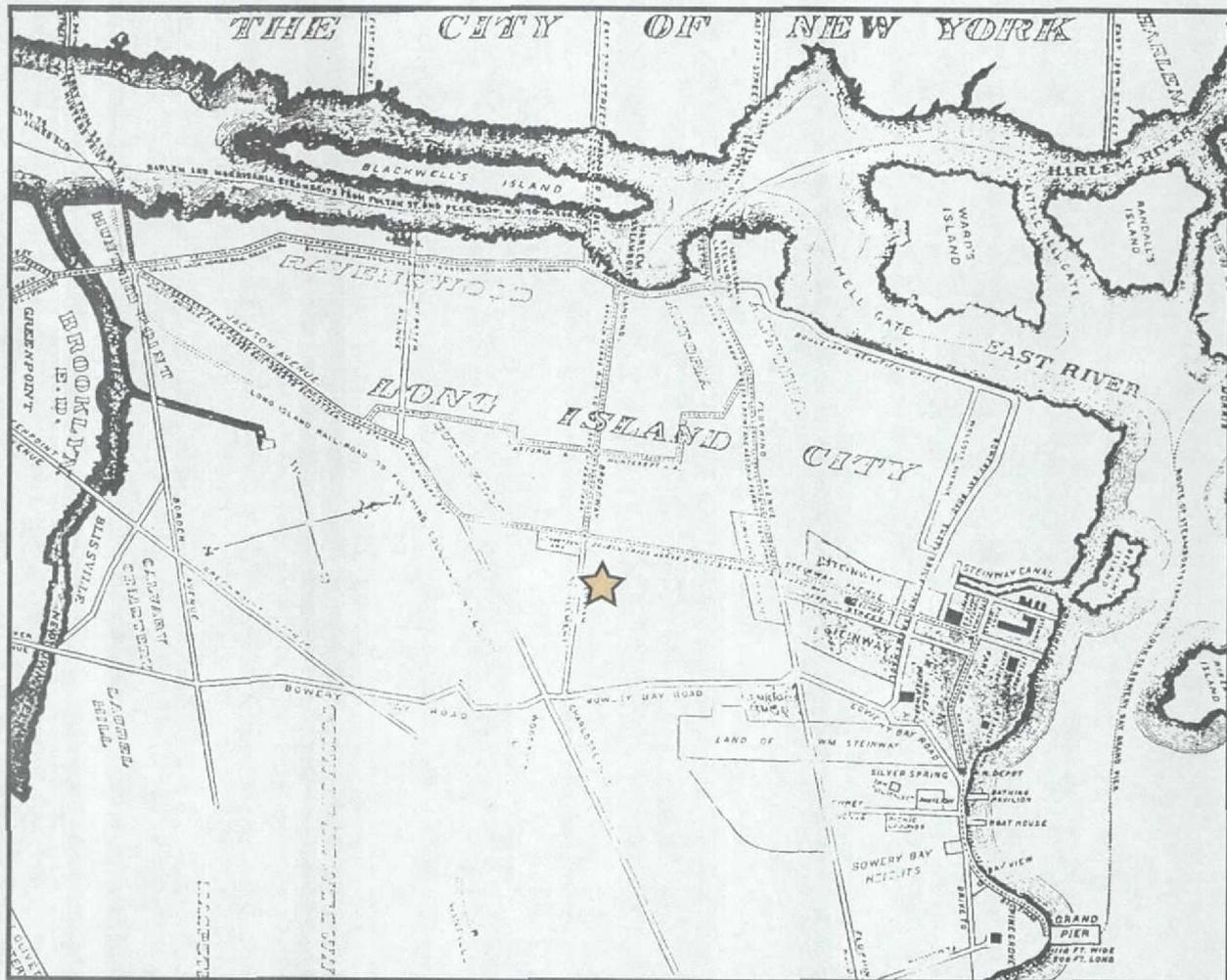


Figure 5. Location of Steinway Complex.
Source: Kelsey 1896 (not to scale)

and industrious German settlers” as “the most welcome class of citizens flowing into our new city.” The purchases required only 25 percent down payment, with the remaining payments over a three-year period, making the lots available to “mechanics, workingmen” and others of modest means.

The deeds for the project area properties all refer to an 1873 subdivision plat entitled: “Map of 362 Lots of Ground Situate in the Fourth Ward of Long Island City, Queens County” (Figure 6). The Trustees of the Long Island City Land Company are listed as “H. Feldman, C.A. Bruggemann, M. Lutz, & C. Anfenger” (Long Island Land Company 1873). The present project area is comprised of Lot 336 (later Lot 3 of Block 724), Lot 337 (later Lot 4, location of restaurant at 46-11 Broadway), and Lot 338 (later Lot 5). Although the present project area is definitely located within the area acquired by the German Cabinet Makers Co-operative Building Association of New York, the relationship, if any, between the Association and the Long Island City Land Company is currently unknown. The 1873 map indicates the alignment of Ridge Road as “old road” and the earlier building lots directly associated with Newtown Road and Ridge Road are discernable north of the newly subdivided building lots. Therefore, the 1873 map clearly indicates that the present project area is located south of the crossroads settlement of Middletown. Although the alignment of Broadway was almost certainly established by this time, subsequent maps (Figures 7-9) indicate that the cross streets were not actually open at this time. In addition to showing the present project area within the tract of the Cabinet Makers Association, an 1874 map also indicates conflicting conceptions about the street grid in the project area. Notice that the Long Island City Land Company plat (Figure 6) corresponds with the overall street grid established for Long Island City.

An 1891 map of the Fourth Ward of Long Island City depicts the surviving Middletown Village lots and structures as well as scattered buildings constructed on the recently subdivided residential lots (Figure 8). By this time, two adjoining frame structures had been constructed on the rear portion of Lots 1 and 2 (to the east of the project area) and a small frame building appears on the rear of Lot 3. No structures are located on Lots 4 and 5.

With the consolidation of greater New York City on January 1, 1898, Long Island City became the First Ward of the Borough of Queens (Chamber of Commerce of the Borough of Queens 1920: 122-3). The earliest available fire insurance map indicates that the small frame building on the rear of Lot 3 had been demolished by 1898 (Figure 9). The 2 _-story gable-front frame building that comprises the core of the present restaurant structure is depicted of this map for the first time. The structures located within the depicted alignments of Titus Street (16th Avenue, present-day 46th Street) and Oakley Street (17th Avenue, present-day 47th Street) clearly indicate that these streets existed only on paper in this area. Several of the earlier Middletown Village structures are still extant and the alignment of Ridge Road is still depicted.

By 1915 16th and 17th Avenues had been opened to traffic by moving or demolishing the structures that had previously been shown within these alignments (Figure 10). The depiction of

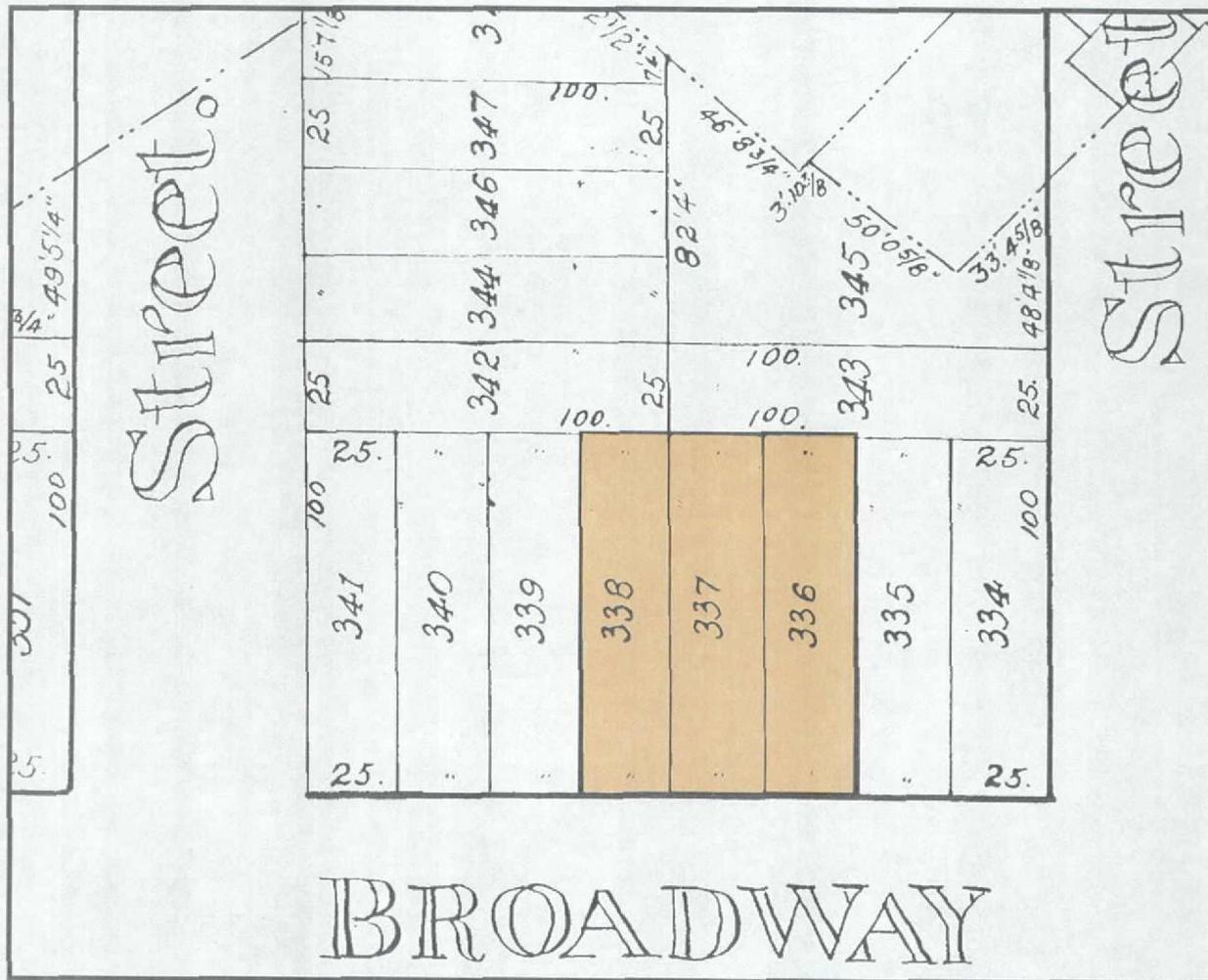


Figure 6. Residential Subdivision of Project Vicinity, 1873.
 Source: Long Island Land Company 1873 (scale 1"=50')

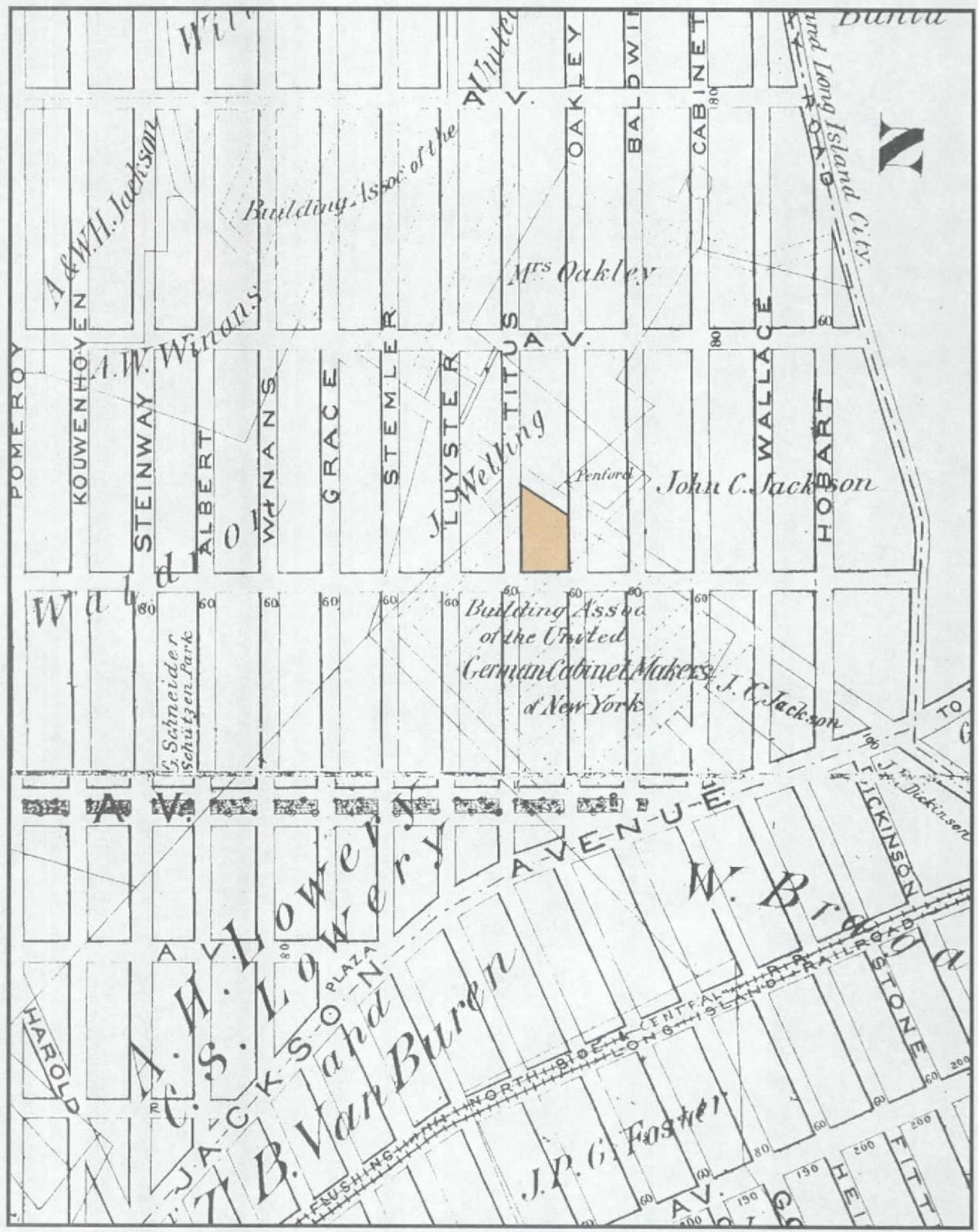


Figure 7. Project Vicinity, 1874.
 Source: Dripps 1874 (scale 1"=800')



Figure 8. Project Vicinity, 1891.
 Source: Wolverton 1891 (scale 1"=200')

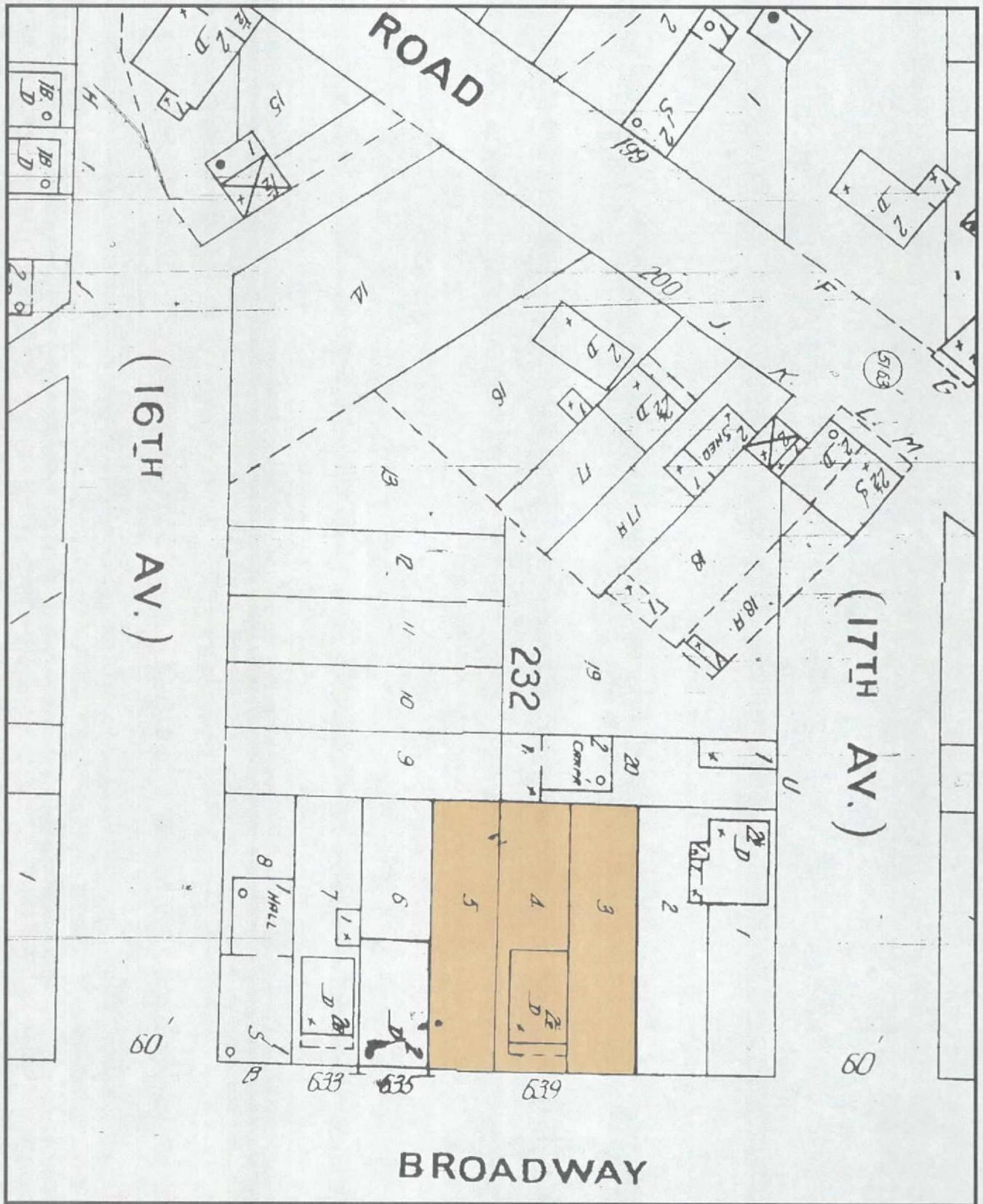


Figure 9. Project Area, 1898.
 Source: Sanborn Map Company 1898 (scale 1"=50')



Figure 10. Project Area, 1915.
 Source: Sanborn Map Company 1915 (scale 1"=50')

the frame structure on Lot 4 remains unchanged and no structures are shown on Lots 3 and 5. The earliest transaction recorded in the block index for Tax Block 724 (previously Land Block 1063), Lot 4 is a deed dated February 25, 1921 from James Long and his wife Catherine to Albert Erdmann and his wife Flora for a consideration of \$100.00 (Queens County Deeds Liber 2332, Page 173). Similarly, the earliest transaction recorded in the block index for Lot 3 is a deed dated May 26, 1924 from George Hipp and his wife Marie to James Armistead, again for a consideration of \$100.00 (Queens County Deeds Liber 2635, Page 115).

The connections between the project area and Manhattan were enhanced with the completion of the Independent Subway System (IND) Broadway Line, constructed through the project area as far as the Roosevelt Avenue/Jackson Heights Station in August, 1933 (Cudahy 1995: 95). The 46th Street IND Subway Station is located within a block of the project area. In June, 1940 the IND was merged with the Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) and Brooklyn-Manhattan Transit (BMT) systems to form the unified New York City subway system.

By 1936 two structures had been constructed on Lot 3: a single-story store is depicted on the front of the lot while a single-story garage is shown on the rear of the lot (Figure 11). The depiction of the Lot 4 house remains unchanged; however, a single story garage appears on the rear of the lot for the first time. No structures are depicted on Lot 5. The 1950 Sanborn map (Figure 12) continues to depict the store and garage on lot 3. A large addition is depicted on the rear of the house on Lot 4 and no structures are depicted on Lot 5.

During the 1950s Lots 3, 4 and 5 were unified for the first time since the 1873 subdivision when Emilia Naccarato purchased Lot 5 from the City of New York on April 27, 1956 for a consideration of \$5,550.00 (Queens County Deeds, citing Board of Estimate, City of New York, by resolution adopted November 17, 1955, Calendar 111-A). It is quite possible that no permanent structures have ever been constructed on Lot 5. None of the available maps depict a structure on this location and it appears that the City held the lot from an early date, probably in lieu of unpaid taxes. Emilia Naccarato apparently consolidated the three lots in support of the growing restaurant business. Lot 5 may have been purchased to provide for parking or future expansion.

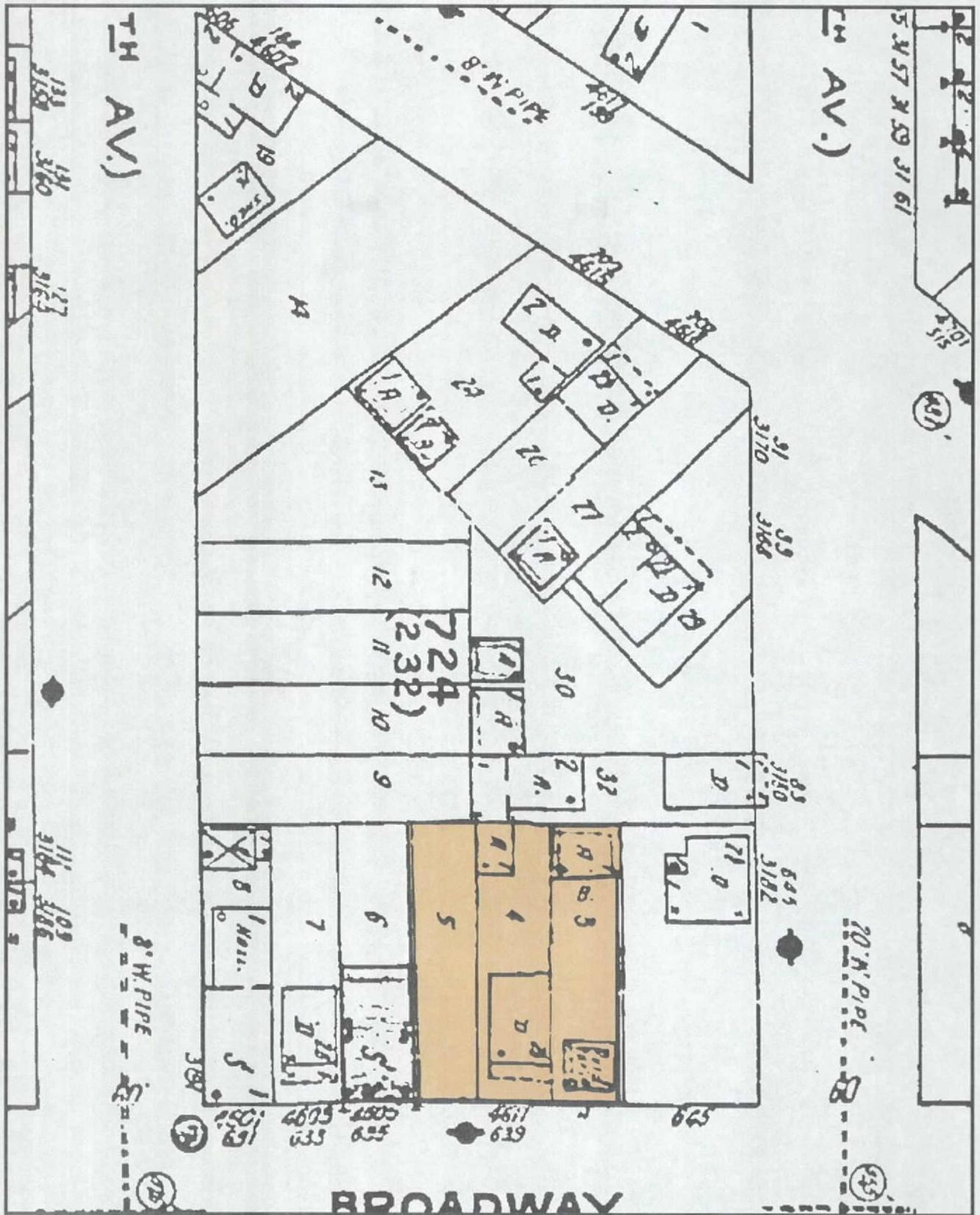


Figure 11. Project Area, 1936.
 Source: Sanborn Map Company 1936 (scale 1"=50')

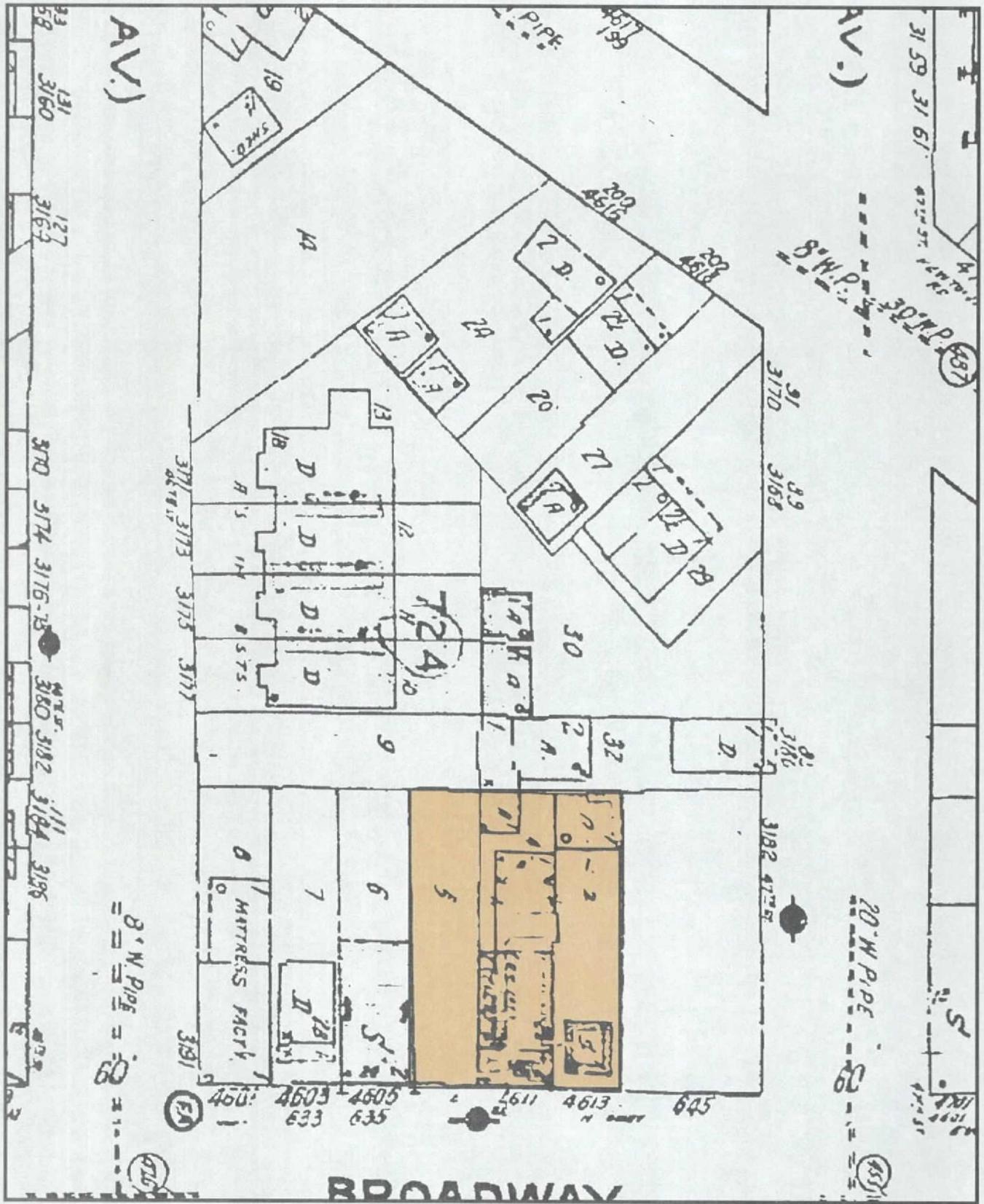


Figure 12. Project Area, 1950.
 Source: Sanborn Map Company 1950 (scale 1"=50')

Archaeological Assessment

The archaeological assessment of the project area is based upon extensive background research, including review of similar projects conducted in the project vicinity (e.g. Kearns and Kirkorian 1990). In addition, a field visit and interview with the current owners of the property was conducted on February 7, 2000. This assessment addresses five related issues that bear on the potential archeological significance of the property. These are as follows:

- Middletown Village
The proximity of the project area to the Crossroads village of Middletown was the primary reason this project was flagged for additional analysis. However, documentary and cartographic analysis demonstrates that the project area is located to the south and west of the village nucleus associated with the intersection of Ridge and Newtown Roads. The lots and buildings of the village can readily be differentiated from the 1873 subdivision within which the project area is located (see especially Figures 6, 8, and 9). Accordingly, no additional archeological work is warranted.
- Circa 1891 Building on Lot 3
An 1891 map (Figure 8) depicts a small frame building on the rear of Lot 3. The placement and orientation of this structure indicates that it is not associated with the village of Middletown; rather, it postdates the 1873 subdivision of the property. This building was demolished prior to 1898. A single-story garage was subsequently constructed at this location. The relatively recent construction date, the lack of direct association with the village of Middletown, and the subsequent disturbance caused by construction and demolition of the garage indicate that this area has minimal archaeological potential.
- Circa 1936 Store on Lot 3
Between 1915 and 1936 a single-story frame store was constructed on the front of Lot 3. Since this construction post-dates the establishment of sewer service in this area, there is negligible potential for finding associated shaft features such as wells or privies. This area therefore has negligible archaeological potential.
- Lot 4
The entire extent of the original Lot 4 is now covered by the restaurant complex and no additional ground disturbance is anticipated in this area. Therefore there are no archaeological concerns.

- Lot 5

Documentary and cartographic analysis conducted to date indicate that no permanent structures have been constructed in this property. The lot was purchased from the City of New York in 1956 when the three original building lots were combined for the first time to form the present 100' by 75' parcel designated as Lot 4. If true, this finding could have both positive and negative implications for archaeological potential. If, indeed, no structures have been constructed on this property any prehistoric and early historic archaeological deposits would probably still be intact. However, the absence of documented historic occupation negates the potential for encountering rear yard features such as wells, privies and cellars. On balance, the fact that this area is outside of the nucleus of the Village of Middletown and is not near any documented watercourses or wetland areas indicates that it has negligible archaeological potential. Therefore, no further assessment is recommended.

Summary and Recommendations

Comprehensive evaluations of the study area indicate that the property that is designated for impact does not meet criteria for National Register (NRHP) eligibility for archeological sensitivity. The present impact area does not contain objects or structures of prehistoric or historic value and will not provide new information about a period in history or prehistory, in accordance with cultural resources guidelines adopted by federal, New York State or New York City regulatory agencies. It is therefore recommended that no further archaeological assessment is required. Clearance should be granted for the proposed project to proceed.

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