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Greenhouse  
2006

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SENSITIVITY EVALUATION  
745 FOX STREET  
BRONX, NEW YORK

B2707L 11

05-4193

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## **LIST OF PERSONNEL**

William I. Roberts IV, R.P.A.	-	Principal Investigator, Lead Author
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## INTRODUCTION

This archaeological and historical sensitivity evaluation documents the potential prehistoric and historic sensitivity of the project area at 745 Fox Street, Borough of the Bronx, New York City, New York through field inspection and the review of archival, cartographic and published references. Recommendations regarding further documentation, archaeological testing or monitoring are also indicated. In order to provide a context for the evaluation of any resources within the subject parcel, this study provides a synthesis of published and unpublished documentation of prehistoric and historic resources within and around the project area.

This sensitivity evaluation is organized in the following manner: first, an overview of the geography and physical setting of the project area; second, a review of prehistoric findings in the vicinity of the project area; third, a discussion of the historic sensitivity of the project area; and finally, conclusions and recommendations.

The project area is located in the South Bronx, north of Southern Boulevard. It consists of Lot 11 on Block 2707. It is also known as 730 Beck Street and 990 East 156<sup>th</sup> Street. See Figures 1 and 2 for the location of the project area. The structure standing within the lot is known as the Patrolman P. Lynch Community Center. The project area is a part of the Longwood Historic District. This district was designated by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission on July 8, 1980. This district is also on the National and New York State Registers of Historic Places. The Longwood Historic District Designation Report indicates that the Lynch Community Center is the oldest building within the district, erected circa 1850 as a private residence. The construction date is suggested based on the building being in the Greek Revival style. It was part of a large estate owned by S. B. White during 1885. It was purchased by George Johnson at the turn of the twentieth century, who used it as a real estate office during the development of the surrounding neighborhood. After 1900, the structure was redesigned by W. C. Dickerson, builder of most of the historic district, and used as a clubhouse (Landmarks Preservation Commission 1980: 2, 10).

## **GEOGRAPHY AND PHYSICAL SETTING**

### **Project Area Inspection:**

The documentary researcher inspected the project area during May 2006. It consists of Lot 11 on Block 2707, a rectangular lot approximately 100 feet by 200 feet in size. It is bounded to the north by East 156<sup>th</sup> Street, to the east by Fox Street, to the west by Beck Street, and to the south by two other lots. A two story stucco covered structure sits near the middle of the lot at an angle to the street grid. This is the Patrolman Lynch Community Center. The area around the structure is paved with concrete. The lot is surrounded by a chain link fence. Plates 1 through 3 show the Patrolman Lynch community Center within the project area. Plate 1 shows the front or north side. Plate 2 shows both the north and west sides. The main structure and its extension on the south side are shown in Plate 3. The extension is to the left.

A geotechnical investigation of the project area was completed during 2004. This included the drilling of nine soil borings, and the excavation of three test pits. Bedrock was reached in all twelve cases. The depth to bedrock ranged from 2.3 to 9.0 feet. The bedrock consists of Manhattan Schist and gneiss. The soil overlying the bedrock consists of several feet of fill over brown to gray coarse to fine sand with 20 to 45% silt and 5 to 35% gravel. Beneath this is the decomposing bedrock (Chaplin 2004: 1-7). The fill deposit was found in seven of the borings and two of the test pits. It is usually about 1.5 to 1.8 feet thick, but was 7.5 feet thick in Test Pit 1. This location is adjacent to a standing structure with a stone foundation directly mortared on to the bedrock (Chaplin 2004: Appendices 1 & 2).

## PREHISTORIC SENSITIVITY

Research into prehistoric sites in the vicinity of the project area was undertaken at the offices of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. A search was made for all sites located in the borough of the Bronx within two miles of the project area.

A total of 13 prehistoric sites are known in the Bronx within two miles of the 745 Fox Street project area. The following table presents the sites beginning with the closest. The site numbers are taken from Eugene Bosch's assessment of prehistoric sensitivity within the Bronx (Bosch 1996).

Table 1: Prehistoric Sites near the Project Area

Site Number	Name	Type	Period	Distance	Direction
32		Burial		0.65 mi	WNW
33	(Drake Park)		Woodland	0.8 mi	SW
34	(Hunts Pt.)	Camp		0.8 mi	SE
35	(Bronx River)	Camp/Midden		0.9 mi	ENE
107	(Post Rd.)	Camp		0.9 mi	WNW
39	(Baretto Pt.)	Shell Pits & Habitation		1.1 mi	SE
40		Cave		1.1 mi	ESE
42	Longfellow Av.	Habitation	LW/Contact	1.1 mi	ESE
23	Bronx R. Av.	Midden/Camp	LA-LW	1.25 mi	NE
36		Camp		1.4 mi	ESE
29	Clason's Pt. IV	Camp/Midden	LW/Contact	1.6 mi	ESE
38	Hunts Pt.	Midden		1.7 mi	SE
41		Midden		1.7 mi	ESE

Nearly all of these sites were discovered during the early twentieth century or earlier. Sites 33, 34, 35, 38 and 107 were reported by Bolton in his 1922 publication *Indian Paths of the Great*

*Metropolis*. Former New York State Archaeologist Arthur C. Parker reported sites 23 and 29, relying on Skinner for the former and Bolton for the latter. Site 40 is taken from a 1913 report by Cook. Site 39 comes from Bolton's reprinted 1920 work *New York City in Indian Possession*. Sites 32, 36 and 42 are taken from Bronx historian McNamara's 1984 book on Bronx street names. Site 41 appears to be the only one reported recently by archaeologists. It was a shell midden buried under fill and is taken from a 1989 report by Historic Preservation Inc. These sites evidently represent occupations from the Late Archaic period through all phases of the Woodland period to the Contact period.

The project area lies between two former stream courses flowing into Long Island Sound (Bosch 1996: Fig.3b). This location was judged by Bosch to have moderate sensitivity to preserving evidence from prehistory (Ibid.: Fig. 4b). It is possible that the project area was utilized during prehistory. However, this location was developed as an estate during the early to mid nineteenth century and has seen considerable development and continuous occupation during the twentieth century. It would be very unlikely for any evidence of prehistoric use to survive undisturbed, should this location have been utilized.

## HISTORIC SENSITIVITY

The first European to purchase land now within the Bronx was Jonas Bronck, after whom the territory is now known. Bronck, of Swedish extraction, arrived from Holland during 1639 or 1640. He purchased approximately 500 acres located between the Harlem River and the Bronx River from the Indian Chiefs Ranachqua and Taekamuck. The Dutch West India Company had secured a grant of all the land between the North and Norwalk Rivers during 1640 (Morris 1886: 769).

At the beginning of this period, all of the future Bronx and Westchester Counties were administered by the Dutch as a part of New Netherlands. The English took over New Netherlands during September 1664. The colony was renamed New York, as was the settlement of New Amsterdam, and the territory around it became Yorkshire. The future Westchester County was a part of the North Riding of Yorkshire. This situation continued until November 1, 1683 when the colony of New York was divided into counties. Westchester County was one the original counties created (Griffin 1946 vol.1:177; Bolton 1848: xi). It included the project area.

Richard Morris, a former Captain in Cromwell's army and of Welsh descent, purchased a plantation in the Bronx between 1665 and 1670. Morris had fled to Barbados from England after the restoration. Richard and his wife settled on their plantation. Their son Lewis, named after his uncle Colonel Lewis Morris, was born there in 1671. Richard and his wife died the following year. The young Lewis and the plantation were left in care of his uncle until he came of age. Colonel Lewis Morris died during 1691. Governor Benjamin Fletcher confirmed the grant to the younger Lewis Morris during 1697. Lewis became the Lord of the Manor of Morrisania at this time. He died during 1746, and the Manor passed to his son Lewis (Morris 1886: 778-782; Booth 1880: 288; Wilson 1892: 216-217). The project area was a part of the Manor of Morrisania.

Westchester County was provisionally divided into towns during 1783. This was confirmed on March 7, 1788 by act of the legislature. One of the 20 towns established was Morrisania, which included the project area. This situation lasted only until 1791 when Morrisania was annexed to the Town of Westchester. The project area remained in Westchester until 1846, when the territory of West Chester west of the Bronx River was taken off to form the Town of West Farms. A new Town of Morrisania was set off from West Farms during 1855, but it was smaller than the former Town of Morrisania. The project area remained in the Town of West Farms until 1874 when was annexed to the city of New York. It became a part of New York County at this time.

This situation continued until 1898 when the Borough of the Bronx was created, but it remained a part of New York County. Bronx County was created from land in New York County during 1914 (Renino 2003: 203-204). The project area remains a part of the Borough of the Bronx, New York City, and a part of Bronx County today.

#### Cartographic Evidence:

A series of maps depicting the project area and vicinity were examined as a part of this research. The earliest of these is the 1851 Sidney and Neff map. This map shows the project area labeled *C. Denison*. One structure is shown, presumably the house, with a road slightly further west. See Figure 3.

The 1858 "Map of Longwood Park Belonging to Charles Denison" drawn by Andrew Findlay is presented here as Figure 4. This map shows the main house lying to the south of *Lawn Park*. East of this are a group of out-buildings, and gardens. Further to the northeast is a large complex of barns or stables. The west central and northeastern parts of the estate are wooded, while the remainder consists of open fields. The western boundary is the *Road Leading From Leggett's Point*.

Figure 5 is taken from the 1867 Beers Atlas. This map shows the project area as the property of *C. Dennison*. One structure is shown. There is now a second road shown running east from the Road to Leggett's Point, and passing just north of the house.

The 1868 Beers Atlas is presented here in part as Figure 6. The project area is now labeled *S.B. White*. The house continues to be shown, now with two drives leading northwest and northeast, as shown on the 1858 Findlay map. The *Lawn Park* label used by Findlay also appears here. The proposed course of Southern Boulevard is shown south of the house.

The 1872 Beers Atlas is the source of Figure 7. This map shows essentially the same situation seen in 1868, with one exception. The label *Lawn Park* is no longer shown. The parcel is labeled *S. B. White 41 a*.

The 1892 Final Map of Section 3 shows the street grid as laid out, with the existing structures and roads. One can clearly see the structures of Longwood Park, as seen previously in Figure 5. The former Charles Denison Mansion lies just southwest of Craven Street, now East 156<sup>th</sup> Street. The other structures are shown to the north and northeast. See Figure 8.

The source of Figure 9 is the 1912 Hyde Atlas. The project area is shown at the northern end of Block 2707. One structure is shown, at an angle from the street grid. It is labeled *Longwood club* and has two stories and a basement. An extension has been constructed on the southeastern side. There are houses facing Beck Street, but the remainder of Block 2707 is vacant.

Figure 10 is taken from the 1915 Sanborn map. This map shows the project area just south of East 156<sup>th</sup> Street. One structure is shown, labeled *Unity Club and Bowling*. It lies at an angle from the street grid. The structure has two stories and a basement. There is an extension on the southeastern side, but it is smaller than that shown in 1912.

The 1921 Bromley Atlas is the source of Figure 11. This map shows only one structure within the project area, now labeled *Martinique Club*.

Figure 12 is taken from the 1951 Sanborn map. There are now two structures shown within the project area. The main structure is labeled *Juvenile House of Juvenile Serv. League*. Adjacent to Beck Street is a small one story *Play House* built of concrete blocks.

The 2006 Existing Plot Plan is presented here as Figure 13. The playhouse has been removed. The main structure remains, sitting at an angle near the center of the 100 by 200 foot lot.

The cartographic evidence clearly shows that the project area includes the former mansion of Charles Denison, later occupied by Samuel B. White. This is evidently the only surviving building from Longwood Park, the former Charles Denison Estate.

Information was then sought on Charles Denison and Samuel B. White. Very little was found in the histories of New York City and Westchester County on these two men. Morris mentions White in his discussion of the Town of Westchester. He confirms that White owned a country seat along the line of Southern Boulevard, and that it had belonged to his father-in-law Denison. Mr. Denison is described only as an old and respected merchant of New York. Mr. White had been president of Grocers' Bank in New York City, but had retired by 1886 (Morris 1886: 807). Nothing was found in French's 1925 work or Griffin's 1946 volume. Since so little information was obtained from the histories, the federal censuses and deed transactions were consulted. The deed evidence shows Charles Denison made two purchases of land then in the Town of Westchester. He purchased 47 acres from Benjamin McVickar and wife for \$20,000 on February 2, 1841 (Liber 93: 40), and an additional 33.2 acres from the executors of Thomas Leggett for \$2538 on June 23, 1846 (Liber 115:412). The executors of Charles Denison sold 71.18 acres

including the house and barn complex to Samuel B. White for \$85,000 on April 27, 1864 (Liber 532:351). Further research revealed that Benjamin McVickar obtained two parcels totaling approximately 100 acres from William H. Leggett for \$15,000 on July 1, 1835 (Liber 61:137). This evidence indicates that Denison owned the bulk of the Longwood Park estate from February 1841 until his death. Denison most likely had the mansion constructed shortly after his 1841 purchase of most of the land. This is consistent with the building being in the Greek Revival style. Denison's executors then sold it to White during April 1864. Denison died on April 4, 1863. An inventory of his estate completed on April 23, 1863 includes this date (Westchester Surrogate Court Document 1863:50). Denison's will was also proved on April 23, 1863 at the same court. This document tells us that his executor and executrix were his son and daughter, Charles Denison, Jr. and Lurana, wife of Samuel B. White. The will directs that his debts be paid out of the estate, sets up investments to pay his widow Gertrude \$1000 annually, leaves Gertrude the contents of the mansion and stables, and divides the remainder of the estate equally between Lurana White and Hellen M. Denison, the wife of Charles Denison, Jr. Longwood Park was to be sold. A classified advertisement for the sale of Longwood Park was placed in the New York Times on October 3, 1863. It is described as over 71 acres in cultivation, all enclosed in stone walls. Improvements include the dwelling, barns, a coach-house, ice-house, stables and a grapery. See Figure 14. Plate 4 provides a view of the former Charles Denison Mansion showing the rear or south side with the large porch. The deed evidence shows that White bought the property less than one year after it was advertised. He paid \$85,000 to his father-in-law's estate. One third of this went to his wife.

Charles Denison was found in the United States Censuses for 1850 and 1860. He could not be found in the 1830 or 1840 indices for Westchester County. Charles Denison was 60 years old during 1850. He was born in Connecticut. He is listed as President of a Bank with an estate worth \$150,000. His wife was Gertrude was born in New York and is listed as 50 years old. Also in the household were Edward Kelly, a thirty year old coachman born in Ireland, and Mary Littlewood 25 years old and also born in Ireland. She was evidently a household servant. The 1860 United States Census shows Charles Denison as 70 years old, a merchant, and born in Connecticut. He now owns real estate worth \$200,000 and has \$100,000 of personal estate. Gertrude is now 70 years old and born in New York. Also listed is Samuel B. White, a banker worth \$30,000 born in New York. His age is omitted. Three others born in Ireland are listed: James McKenna 30 years old, Cath. Gatty 27 years old, and Cath. Hanly 45 years old. Gatty is listed as a Domestic, but no occupations are given for McKenna and Hanly. Presumably, they were also servants.



Samuel B. White was found in the 1870 United States Census. He is 57 years old and was born in New York. He is listed as a Bank Cashier with real estate worth \$70,000 and a personal estate of \$12,000. His wife, enumerated only as Mrs. S. B., was 56 years old born in New York and keeping house. They have three children living with them, all born in New York: C.D. aged 23, Edward aged 21 and Helen D. aged 14. Also present is G. Denison aged 80, her nurse, a cook a gardener and four other servants. See Plate 5 for a view of the Samuel B. White Mansion.

An article was found in the *New York Times* on October 18, 1903 which publicized the sale of the homes built by George Johnson. It notes the fact that the homes were built on rock. It also mentions the Longwood Club, which was in the former Charles Denison mansion. Facilities included a bowling alley, billiard and reading rooms (*New York Times* October 18, 1903: 24). See Plate 6 for a view of the Longwood Club.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The above research has documented that the 745 Fox Street project area in the Bronx contains the standing Charles Denison Mansion, now called the Patrolman Lynch Community Center. This structure, probably built during the early 1840s, was later the Samuel B. White Mansion. It is evidently the only surviving structure from Longwood Park, the Charles Denison estate. It is now the oldest structure within the Longwood Park Historic District.

Present plans call for reuse of the original structure. This will require the removal of the early twentieth century extension on its south side, thus exposing the original south wall of the structure. This should provide considerable evidence of how and where the porch was attached. Excavation will probably also be needed along the eastern and western sides of the building. The geotechnical investigation indicates that there is generally about 1.5 to 2.0 feet of fill surrounding the structure. Beneath the fill is subsoil or bedrock. This fill may contain deposits related to the Denison and White occupations. Parts of the fill way well be disturbed by the early twentieth century construction of the adjacent apartment buildings.

It is the recommendation of the Principal Investigator that this demolition and excavation be monitored by a professional archaeologist so that any details of the structure revealed are recorded, and any artifacts associated with the Denison or White families are recovered. The monitoring is specific only to the excavation and exposure of the original southern wall, and the eastern and western sides of the current building. A professional archaeologist would be present to document and photograph the original back wall during demolition. Monitoring by a professional archaeologist during excavation along the eastern and western sides of the structure would be specific only to those areas until sterile subsoil or bedrock is encountered by excavators. As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, it is estimate that the depth of fill ranges from 1.5 to 2.0 feet. An archaeologist is not needed to be present for the other phases of construction.

Although the project area lies within two miles of thirteen known prehistoric sites, only one of these was discovered recently, and that site was buried under deep fill. This location has seen considerable development during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and is not buried under fill. This development would almost certainly have disturbed or destroyed any possible prehistoric deposits in the project area.

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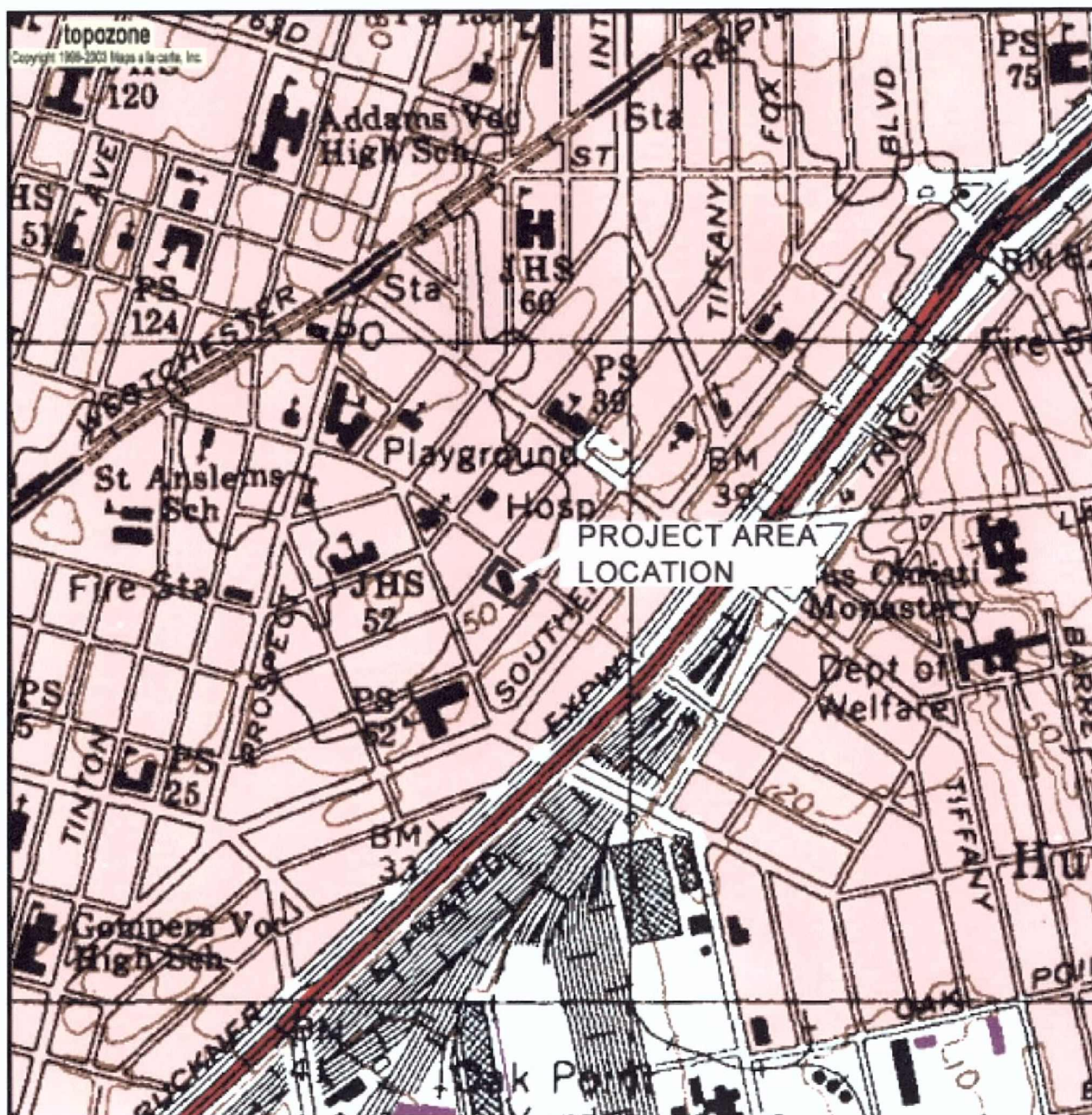
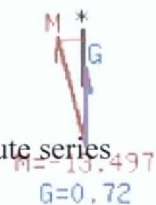


Figure 1 Location of the project area shown on portion of the USGS 7.5 minute series Central Park, N.Y. quadrangle.





Beck St  
Project Area  
156th St  
Fox St



© 2006 Navteq  
Image © 2006 Sanborn

© 2006 Google

Pointer 40°48'54.47" N 73°53'56.45" W elev 43 ft

Streaming ||||| 100%

Eye alt 678 ft

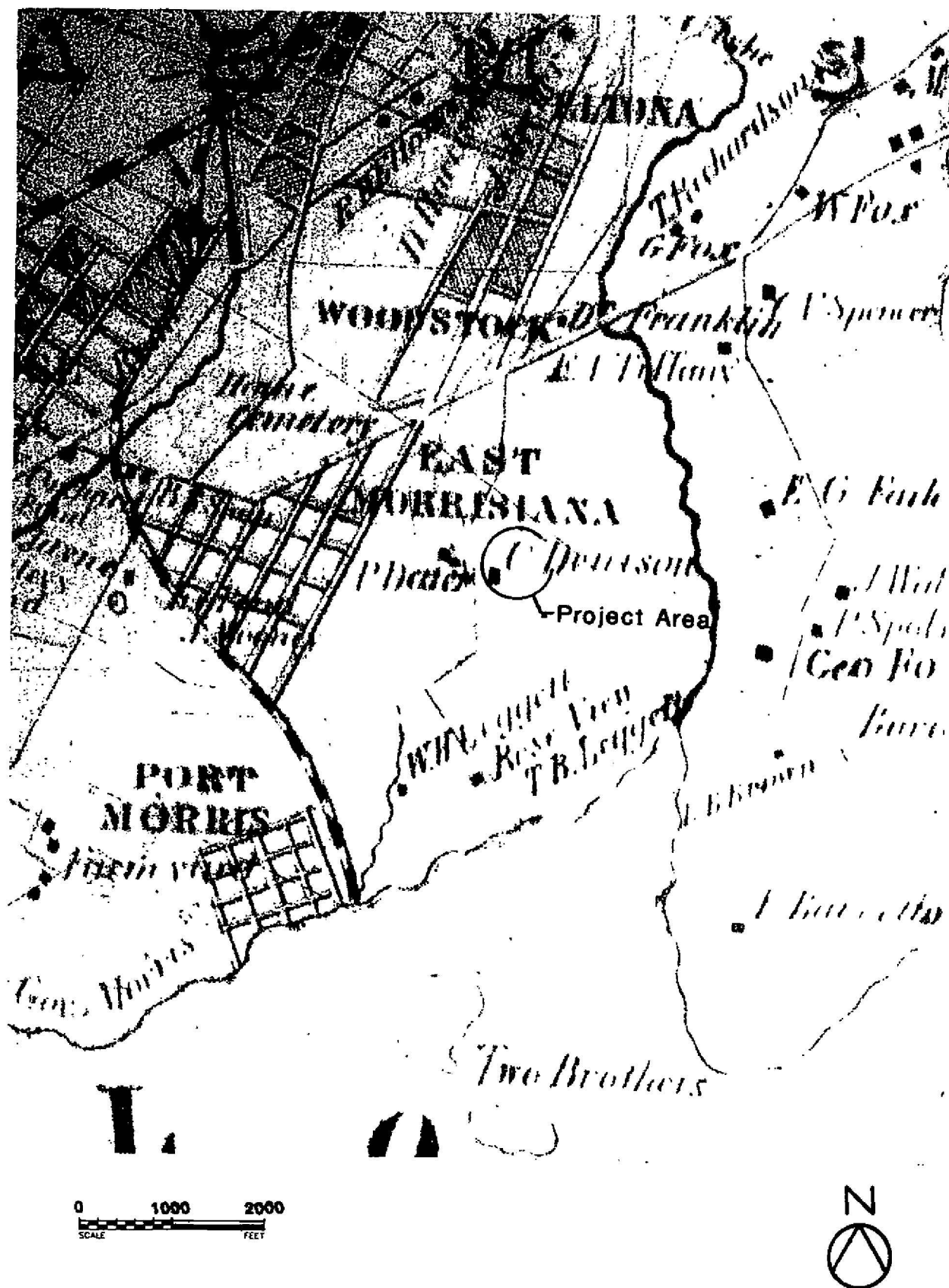


Figure 3 From the 1851 Sidney & Neff map.





MAP  
OF  
**LONGWOOD PARK**  
BELONGING TO  
**Charles Denison**  
SITUATED IN THE TOWN OF  
**WEST FARMS**  
COUNTY OF  
**WESTCHESTER**  
N.Y.

Lot 1 of 1 Block, 21 Village St. and N.Y.

*Verify this to be a true copy, on a reduced scale, of an original map made by me dated April 21<sup>st</sup> 1858 from an actual survey of the land, as impressions and enclosed by substantial fences. I have at the date of this certificate examined the above claims and find them substantially the same as shown on the map, as per annex.*  
Noted April 25<sup>th</sup> 1864  
Hickman F. S. Long, Surveyor in

*Filed in Westchester County  
Recorder Office May 14, 1864  
Lester D. Maxwell  
Regis.*

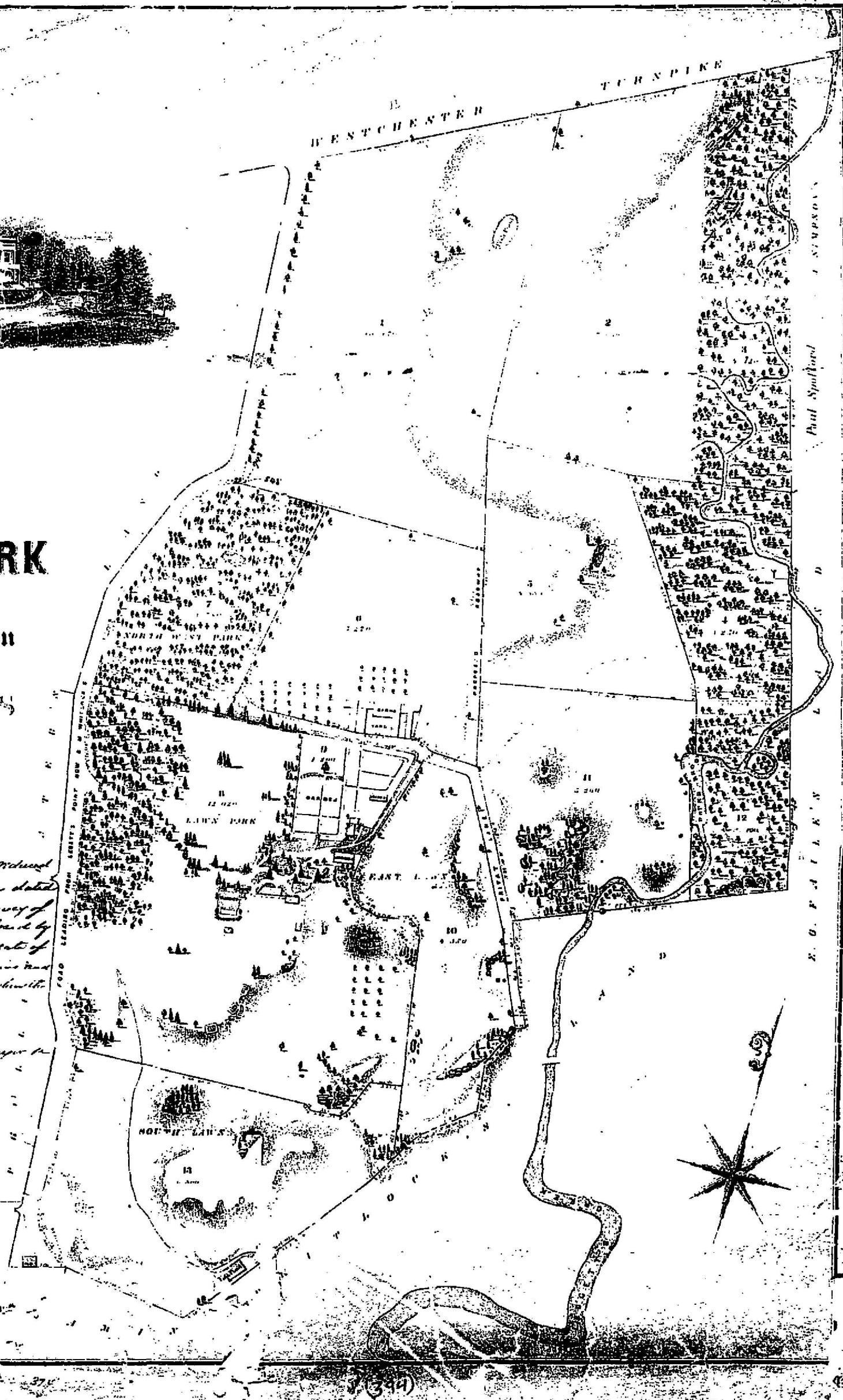


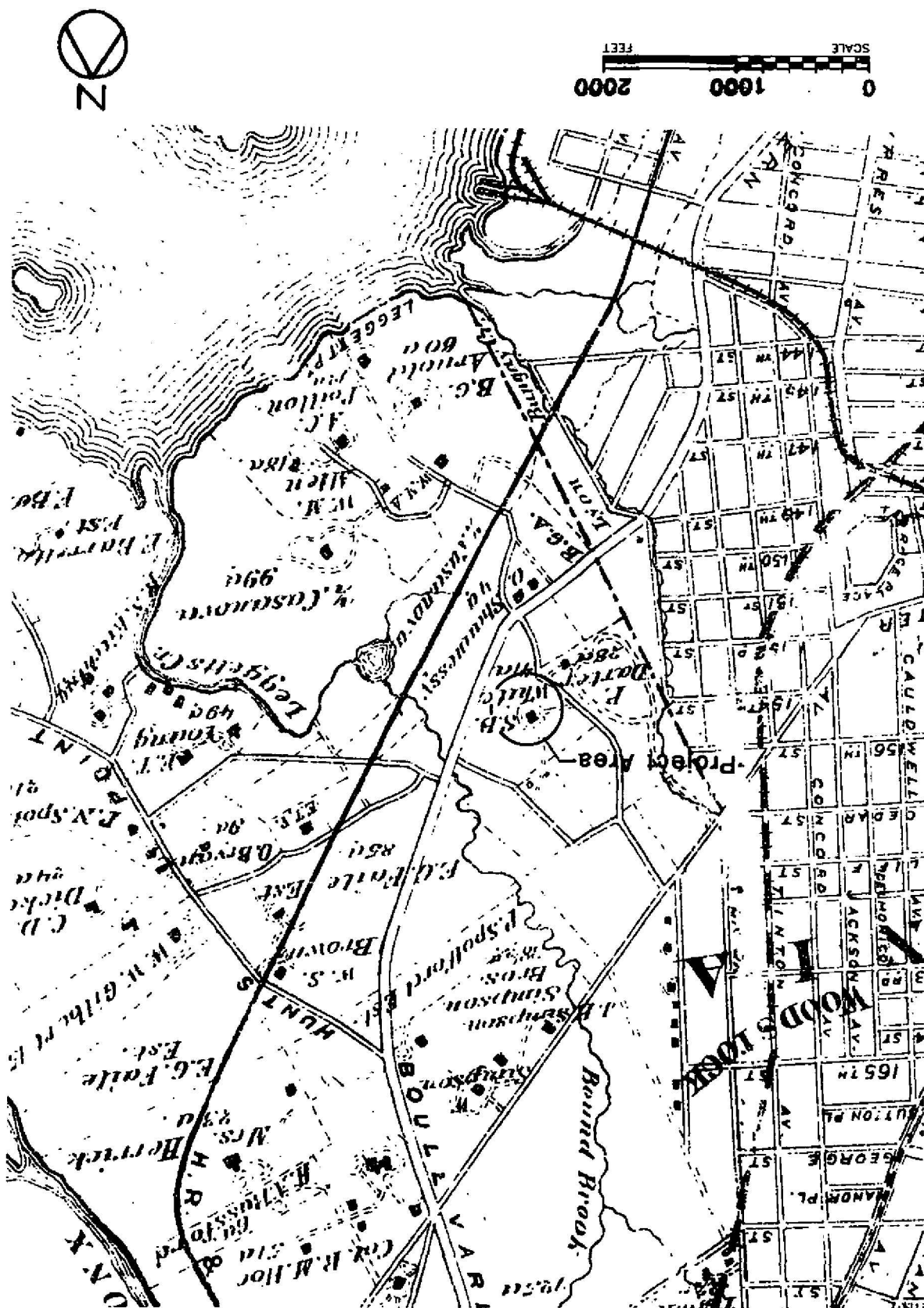
Figure 4 Findlay's "Map of Longwood Park" April 1858.



Figure 5 From the 1867 Beers Atlas.



A horizontal scale bar with a black and white checkered pattern. It is labeled 'SCALE' at the top right and 'FEET' at the top left. Numerical markings are present at 0, 1000, and 2000 feet.





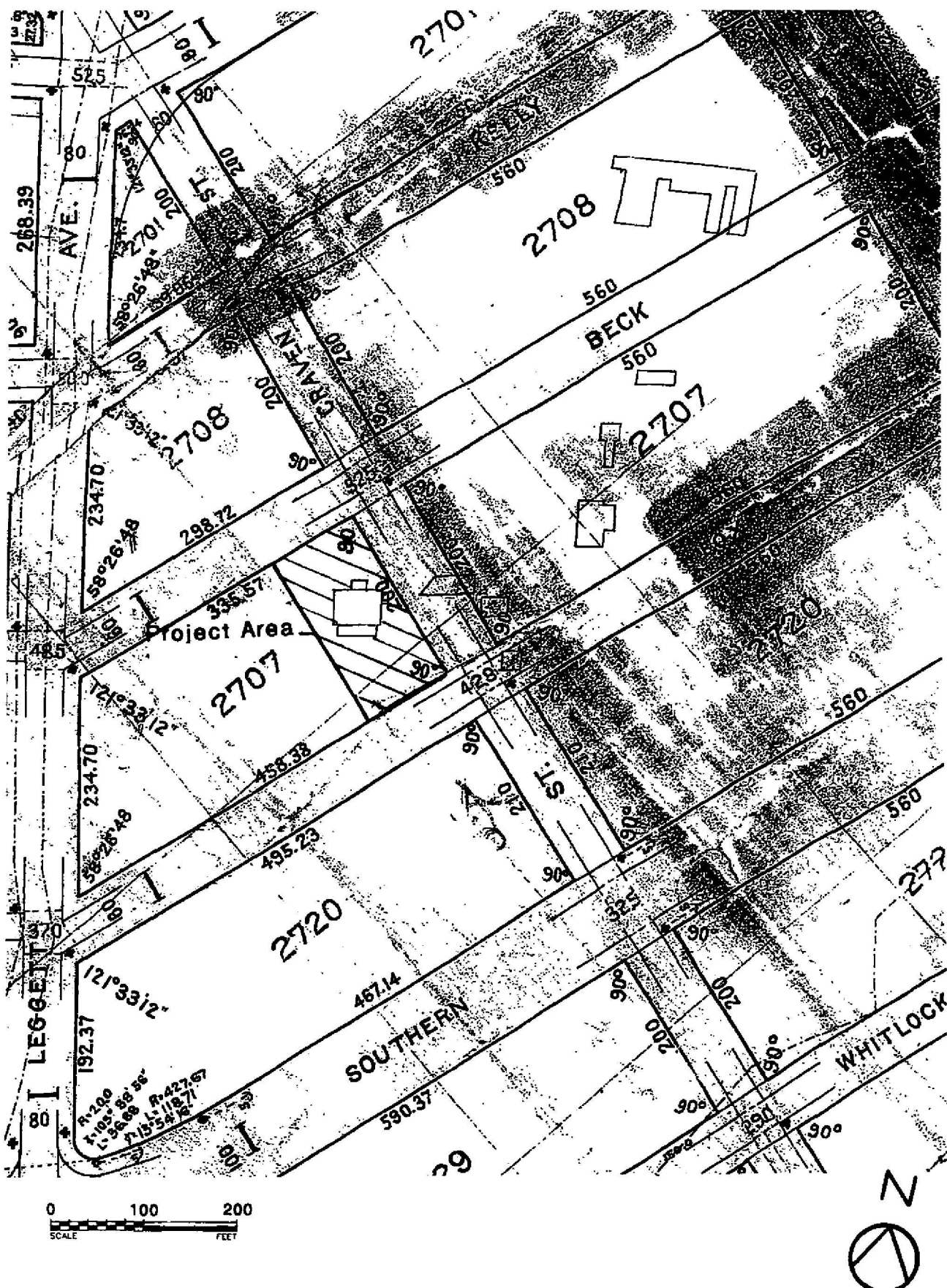
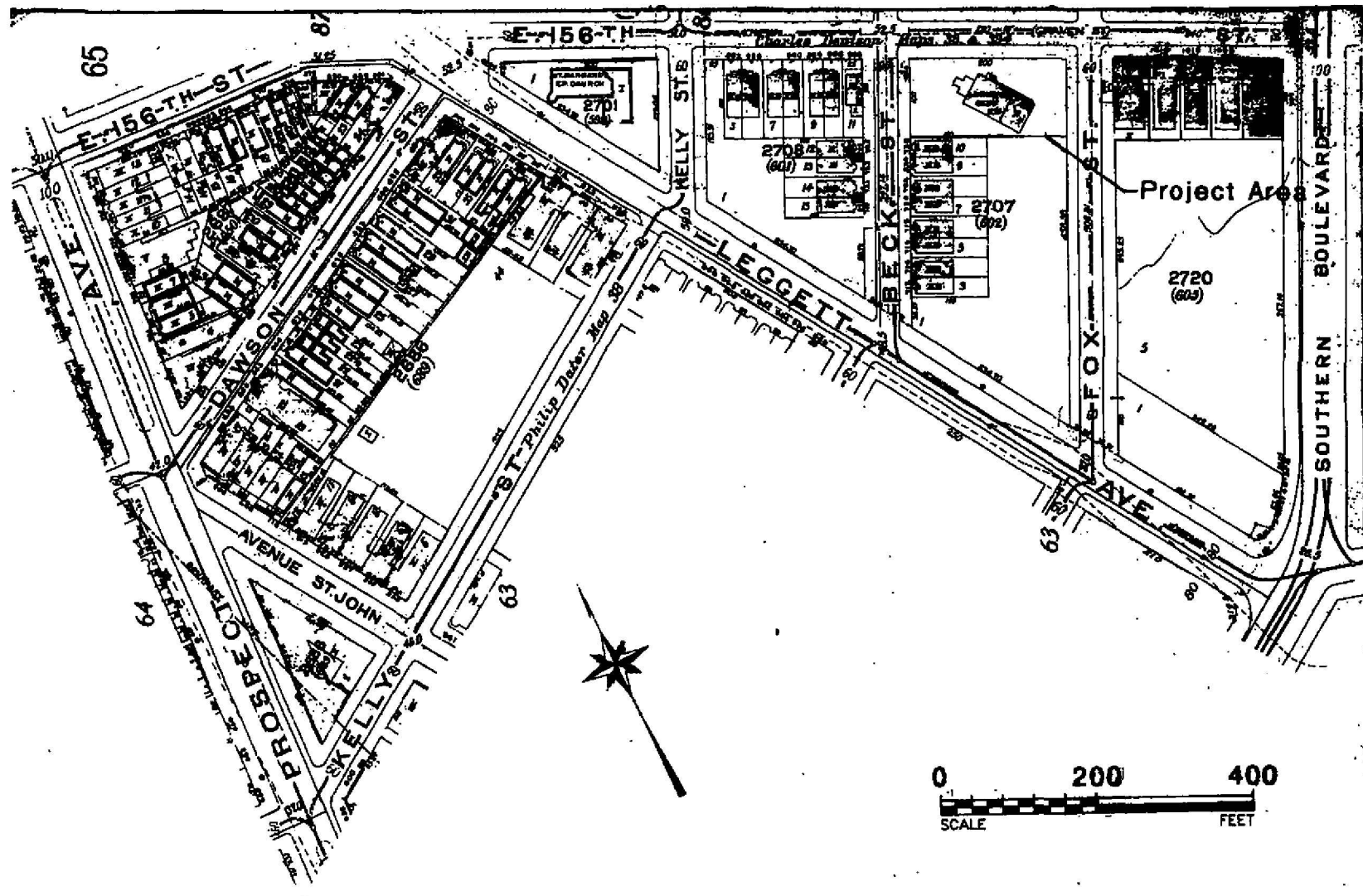


Figure 8 From the 1892 Final map of Section 3 by Risse *et al.*

Figure 9 From the 1912 Hyde Atlas.



156TH

990

Project Area

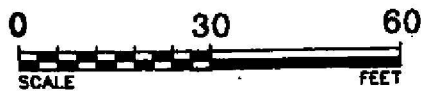
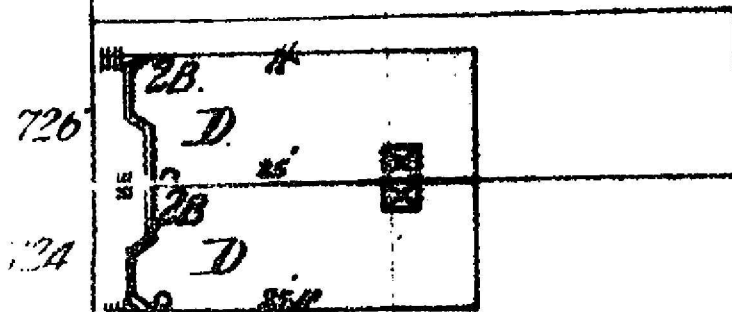
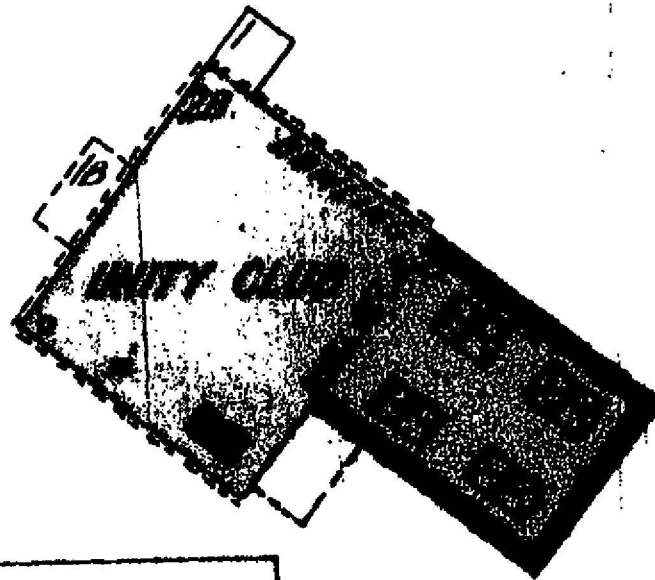


Figure 10

From the 1915 Sanborn map.

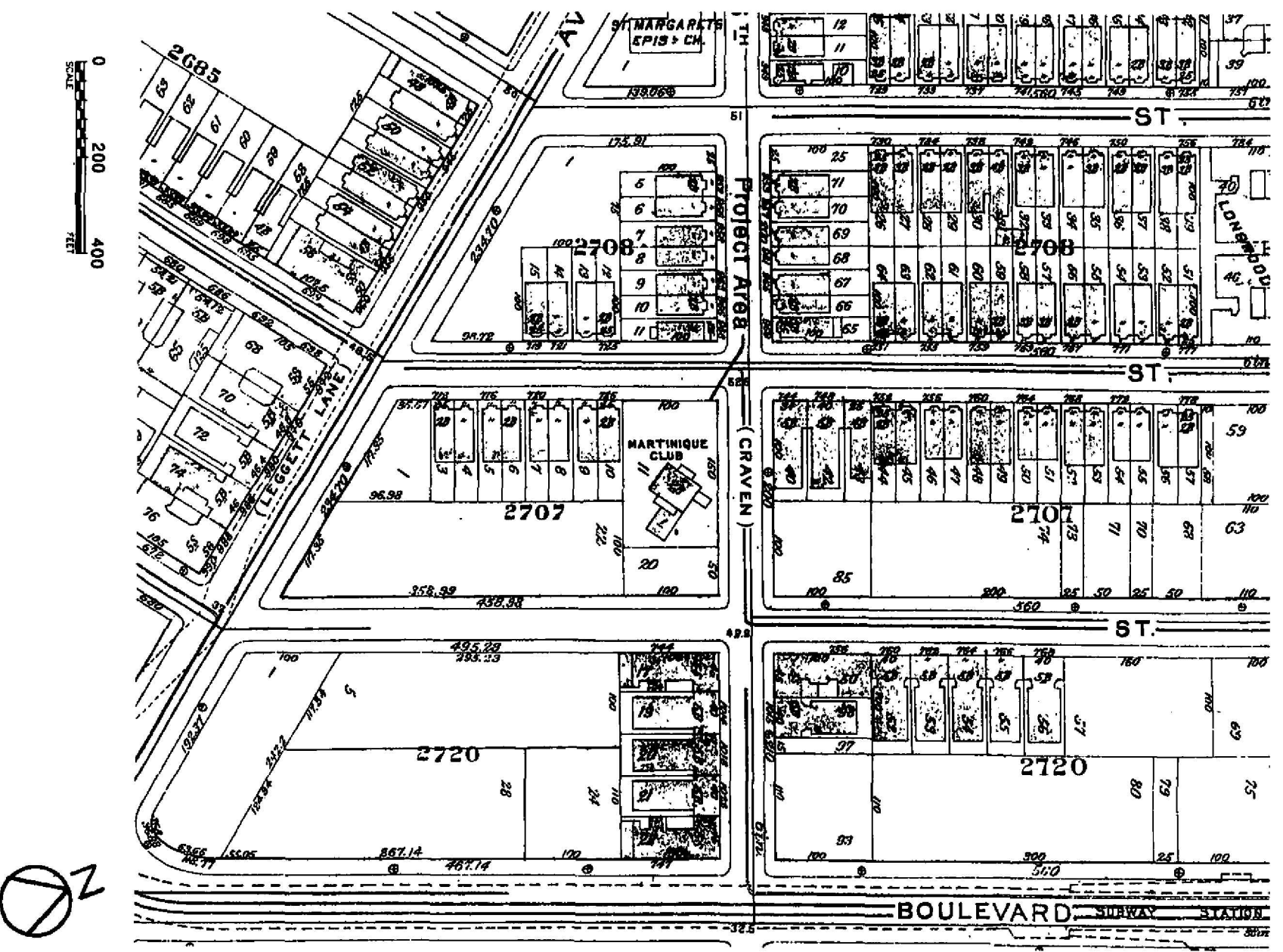


Figure 11

From the 1921 Bromley Atlas.



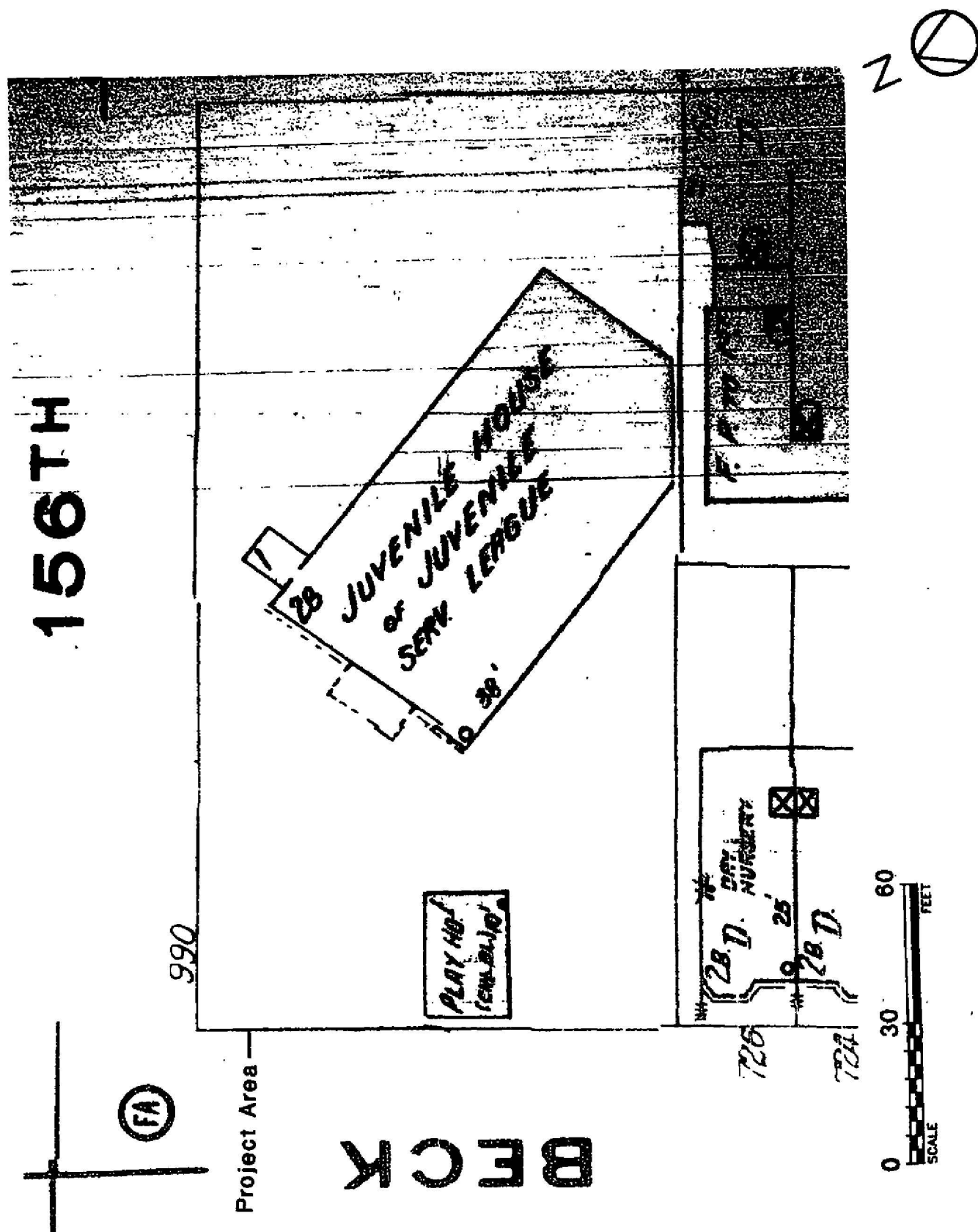


Figure 12 From the 1951 Sanborn map.

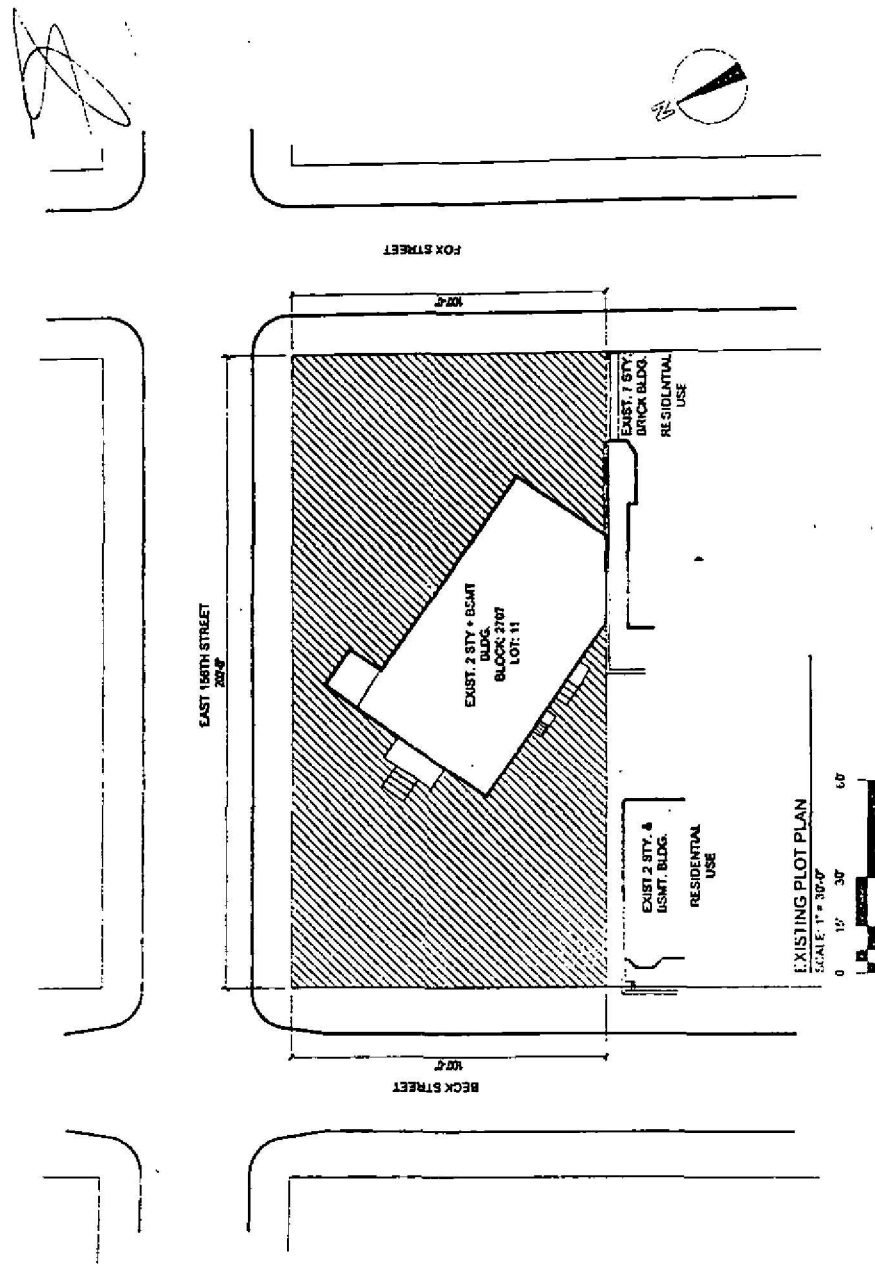


Figure 13 2006 Existing Plot Plan.

**FOR SALE, BY ORDER OF EXECU-  
TORS**—Longwood Park, the late residence of Charles  
Denison, deceased, situate in the township of West Farms,  
Westchester County, east of the river turnpike, and in full  
view of the East River and Fushing Bay, less than two  
miles from Harlem Bridge, and only half a mile from  
3d-av. Railroad extension, with improvements, consisting  
of dwelling, barns, coach-house, ice-house, stables and  
grapery. The grounds (over 71 acres) are in the highest  
state of cultivation and inclosed in superior stone walls.  
It is capable of being divided into numerous villa sites  
for suburban residences, for which it is admirably calcu-  
lated. It will be sold on accommodating terms. Its close  
vicinity to New-York island enhances its value as an in-  
vestment; or for public charitable institutions, its salu-  
brious atmosphere makes it very desirable. A map of the  
property, and other particulars, will be found at the office  
of E. H. LUDLOW & CO., No. 3 Pine-st., or CHARLES  
DENISON, No. 84 Dey-st.



Plate 1

View of the project area looking south from the intersection of Beck and East 156<sup>th</sup> Streets.





Plate 2      View of the north and west sides of the former Charles Denison Mansion.



Plate 3

View of the east side of the former Charles Denison Mansion with the extension to the left.





Plate 4

View of the rear of the Charles Denison Mansion, showing the porch.





Plate 5

View of the Samuel B. White Mansion during 1897 looking northeast.





Plate 6

View of the front of the Longwood Club looking south.