

**PUBLIC SCHOOL 66 (FORMERLY THE BROOKLYN HILLS SCHOOL, LATER THE OXFORD SCHOOL, NOW THE JACQUELINE KENNEDY ONASSIS SCHOOL)**

85-11 102<sup>nd</sup> Street (aka 85-01 to 85-19 102<sup>nd</sup> Street; 102-01 85<sup>th</sup> Road; 102-02 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue), Queens.  
Built, 1898; Harry S. Chambers, architect; Addition, 1905-6; C.B.J. Snyder, architect.

Landmark Site: Borough of Queens Tax Map Block 9183, Lot 1.

On December 16, 2008, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of Public School 66 (Formerly the Brooklyn Hills School, later the Oxford School, now the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School) (Item No. 3).<sup>1</sup> The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Nine people spoke in favor of designation, including New York City Councilmember Elect Elizabeth Crowley, Public School 66 Principal Phyllis Leinwand, and representatives of New York City State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr., the New York City School Construction Authority, the Society for the Architecture of the City, the Historic Districts Council, and the Richmond Hill Historical Society. Two others also spoke in favor of designation. The Commission read a letter in support of designation from Caroline Kennedy. The Commission also received several letters in support of designation from first grade students of the school. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.<sup>2</sup>

Summary

Originally constructed in 1898-9, Public School (P.S.) 66 is a remarkable survivor from a time when Richmond Hill, Queens, was transitioning from a rural farming community into a vibrant residential neighborhood. Three identical schools (two now demolished) were constructed in anticipation of an influx of residents, expected as a result of improvements in transportation, the subdivision of farmlands into lots for residential development, and the consolidation of Queens with Greater New York City that same year. Also known as the Brooklyn Hills School after the suburban development in which it was physically located, P.S. 66 formally opened its doors in 1902. Harry S. Chambers, Superintendent of School Buildings for the Union Free School District No. 7 of the Town of Jamaica, Queens, is credited with the design of the original school building. C.B.J. Snyder, Superintendent of School Buildings for the New York City Board of Education from 1890 to 1923, is noted as the architect of a 1905-6 addition.



The two-and-a-half and three-story red brick building is Victorian Eclectic in style. Many of its features are characteristic of the Romanesque Revival style and give the building a fortress-like appearance, including prominent round arches highlighting window openings and the main entrance, a flared base, and a distinctive six-story tower (restored in 2001). Elements of the Queen Anne style are also present in the building's large entablatures featuring elaborate rinceaux, its gabled dormers, and the steeply pitched roofs of the 1905-6 addition, which was harmoniously designed in the style of the main section. The tower, which originally contained a bell used to call school children from neighboring farms and developments, is distinguished by round arches, brick corbelling, large masonry columns, and foliate details. An ornamental panel above the main entranceway survives and features the name of the school.

Today, P.S. 66 has been renamed the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School in honor of the former First Lady's passion for literacy and for historic preservation and continues to serve in its original function as a grammar school. It remains one of Queens' most distinctive school structures.

## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

### Richmond Hill, Queens<sup>3</sup>

P.S. 66 is geographically located in east central Queens, just south of the verdant Forest Park in the neighborhood of Richmond Hill. The area was originally part of the town of Jamaica, one of the oldest and most historically significant areas of the borough. Jamaica was inhabited by a Native American tribe called the Jameco or Yamecah, a word meaning Beaver in Algonquin, when the first Europeans arrived there in 1655. They had come from neighboring Hempstead looking for more space to farm and in 1656 applied to Governor Stuyvesant for a patent to “purchase” 10 acres of land from the native tribe.<sup>4</sup> When the English took over in 1664, the town’s name was changed to Jamaica. Queens County (then including all of Nassau County) was chartered in 1683 as one of the ten counties of the colony of New York and official town patents were given to Jamaica, Newtown, and Flushing. A 1698 census of Queens County showed a total population of 3,366 white residents and 199 black residents.<sup>5</sup> While early records do indicate the existence of slaves in Jamaica, the town also had a free black population throughout its history.<sup>6</sup> Through the next century, the community of Jamaica served as the county seat and became a trading post where farmers from outlying areas brought their produce.

Incorporated as a village in 1814, Jamaica became a center of trade on Long Island. Early east-west roads, like King’s Highway, and the arrival of the first railroad, the fledgling Long Island Railroad (LIRR), in 1836, provided crucial links between Eastern Long Island and Manhattan.<sup>7</sup> Further transportation improvements following the Civil War, including a horse car line in 1866 and electric trolley in 1888, began to open up previously rural, inaccessible portions of the county. The area became ripe for urban development, much of which remained focused around Jamaica. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Jamaica evolved into a retreat for urban dwellers who patronized its numerous inns and saloons on weekend excursions and built large summer homes on its open land. The permanent population of Jamaica increased steadily throughout the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and eventually some of the nearby farms were subdivided for house lots.

While driving from his Wall Street office to his Lawrence, Long Island, summer home, Albon Platt Man, a wealthy lawyer from New York City, is said to have become enamored by a sunny slope in northwest Jamaica which dropped gently southward from Long Island’s terminal moraine ridge.<sup>8</sup> Man purchased the land in 1869, consisting of five farmsteads belonging to the Lefferts, Bergen, Welling, Robertson, and Hendrickson families, amounting to more than 400 acres.<sup>9</sup> He later acquired adjacent parcels to the north and to the east.<sup>10</sup> Man and his business partner, Edward Richmond, a landscape architect, envisioned the development of a rural community where workers could escape from the congestion of the industrial city to peaceful homes in picturesque settings.<sup>11</sup> They named the project Richmond Hill, most likely after the famed London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.

By the 1870s, 250 acres of Man’s original purchase had been transformed into lots suitable for private residences. Between 1868 and 1874, some 400 shade and ornamental trees were planted, and various streets, avenues, and drives were laid out around the most desirable portions of the property. A passenger depot at Richmond Hill was opened in 1868 by the South Side Railroad of Long Island.<sup>12</sup> A school and a church were erected, followed shortly by both small-scale cottages and more luxurious houses built by wealthy businessmen from Manhattan. The heart of the village was the main junction of Myrtle, Jamaica, and Lefferts Avenues, near the train depot and a small grocery store / post office.

Richmond Hill continued to grow in the decades that followed, as did the surrounding neighborhoods that were similarly being developed by real estate developers and syndicates. In 1895, the three separate hamlets of Richmond Hill, Morris Park, and Clarenceville were incorporated as the Village of Richmond Hill. The municipal independence of the village, however, was short-lived – just three years later Queens would become part of Greater New York City. Consolidation was favorably looked upon by developers, as extension of New York City’s water and sewers, rapid transit, and new bridges across the east river undoubtedly meant an increase in the region’s desirability.

### Brooklyn Hills<sup>13</sup>

In 1887, the Brooklyn Hills Improvement Company, a real estate syndicate, purchased roughly 160 acres of farmland within Richmond Hills.<sup>14</sup> The land was easily accessible at the junction of the Long Island Railroad on Atlantic Avenue, the Rockaway Beach Railroad, the Brooklyn Union Elevated Railroad, and a proposed subway route (later an elevated train, now the J). To help ready the land for residential development, the company graded streets, laid flagging and sidewalks, planted more than 1,000 trees, and connected water pipes to the mains of the Woodhaven Water Supply Company.<sup>15</sup> By 1895, the company had constructed about 150 houses and 20 stores within the development that had come to be known as Brooklyn Hills.<sup>16</sup> While the population of the neighborhood was cited as 200 residents by 1898, much of the land remained undeveloped at the turn of the century. This included “Plat No. 3,” a residential subdivision within Brooklyn Hills that consisted of roughly twelve blocks surrounding the newly constructed P.S. 66, located at Union Place (now 102<sup>nd</sup> Street) between Walnut Street (now 85<sup>th</sup> Road) and Tulip Street (now 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue) (*see Figure 18*).<sup>17</sup>

A lawsuit brought by the Brooklyn Hills Improvement Company against the New York and Rockaway Railroad Company in 1899 alleged that a contract to establish a station at Brooklyn Hills had been breached, and that failure of the railroad to build the station had damaged and hindered the company’s efforts to sell real estate in the area.<sup>18</sup> Ultimately the company was awarded only six cents in damages. The argument that the company had not been able to profit off its land was widely considered specious. A Brooklyn Hills station of the Rockaway Beach Branch of the Long Island Railroad had operated at Myrtle Avenue and Forest Park from about 1882 to 1911. Moreover, records indicate no problem with sales – as reported in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, by 1902 the company had sold nearly 600 building lots at prices ranging from \$2,500 to \$3,000 per acre.<sup>19</sup> The company had also profited in 1898 off the condemnation by the city of a hilly portion of the tract located north of Plat No. 3, which was to become part of Forest Park.<sup>20</sup> Development delays, specifically within Plat No. 3, more likely resulted from complications with the nearby Waterbury and Napier farms which, until 1905, prohibited the cutting of through streets and which therefore stood as a barrier between the subdivision and the rest of the village.<sup>21</sup> This impediment, however, was removed by the time of the 1905 auction of the 382 lots of Plat No. 3.<sup>22</sup> Real estate boosters prepared for the auction touted the tract’s location, bounded by a “beautiful range of hills” to the north (now part of Forest Park) slated to become “one of the most beautiful of New York City’s public parks.” Physical improvements were also touted, such as the widening of Union Place (now 102<sup>nd</sup> Street), the plat’s principal avenue, and the presence of the “large modern public school on its property,” referring, of course, to P.S. 66. The auction was apparently a success. The Brooklyn Hills Improvement Company was voluntarily dissolved on October 28, 1907.

### Public Education in Jamaica, Queens<sup>23</sup>

The present New York City public school system, fully supported and maintained by public funds, developed slowly from the initial establishment under the Dutch of elementary schools supported and jointly controlled by both the civil authorities and the Dutch Reformed Church. Under English rule, a system of private academies, similar to those in Britain, appeared in lieu of a public system. Through the 18<sup>th</sup> century, schools in Queens were rarely free and were primarily run by religious institutions.<sup>24</sup> It was not until after the American Revolution that New York State undertook the task of creating a public education system. During the period between the first meeting of the state legislature in 1777 and 1851, nearly 1,000 pieces of legislation concerning education were passed. In 1812, New York State adopted a common school system intended to provide free elementary education to all the residents of the state, to be funded through local taxes. In 1813, the town of Jamaica voted to receive its allotted quota of the state's school fund to put towards establishing common schools.<sup>25</sup>

"Union free school districts" were established during the 1853 session of legislature as a way for municipalities to combine two or more common schools for the purpose of making education available to children from a broader region. In addition to free admission, pupils within union free school districts were also entitled to free school materials, such as textbooks.<sup>26</sup> The Union Free School District No. 7 of the Town of Jamaica was founded in 1888 and encompassed Richmond Hill.<sup>27</sup> By 1890, 1,350 school children were enrolled within District No. 7, an increase of more than 30 percent in the two years since the district was established.<sup>28</sup>

Consolidation of the city in 1898 created the need for a unified public education system that would combine the numerous, independently-administered school districts of the borough, each with its own curricula, grade divisions and educational policies. The Borough School Boards and Central Board had been established in 1897 to begin centralized decision making, but in 1901 they were abolished and replaced by a newly reorganized Board of Education consisting of 46 Local School Board Districts and a central Executive Committee. The work of the new organization was affected by several recently implemented state and municipal efforts at reform, including the Compulsory Education Law of 1894 which mandated school attendance for all children until age 14, the School Reform Law of 1896 which mandated state support of secondary schools, and revision of the city charter in 1901. The laws substantially increased the number of children attending city schools, created new types of schools, and improved school accommodations. A temporary halt in funding for new buildings significantly slowed the construction of school facilities in most parts of the city for a year following consolidation. Although the moratorium led to further overcrowding in existing schools in Jamaica, as throughout the city, in the years that followed, millions of dollars were authorized for the construction of new facilities.

### History of P.S. 66<sup>29</sup>

Conditions in District No. 7, as throughout pre-consolidated New York City, were crowded as a result of the changes to state and municipal education laws. In July 1897, a resolution was presented before the local school board calling for \$100,000 to be raised via taxes and the sale of bonds, for the construction of additions to existing school structures and the purchase of land for the erection of a new school house within District No. 7.<sup>30</sup> Hoping to thwart further shortages in classroom space, and possibly anticipating the post-consolidation freeze in funding for new buildings, the board dramatically increased its proposal just one month later

with a call for three additional ten-room school houses. In total, the school board hoped to be able to accommodate 1,750 pupils.

On August 3, 1897, the school board passed a resolution to purchase three sites for the proposed school houses – Site No. 7, referred to in town records as the Broadway site, which would become Public School 64, Site No. 8, referred to as the Union Course site, which would become Public School 65, and Site No. 9, referred to as the Brooklyn Hills site, which would become P.S. 66. The parcel of 200 feet by 175 feet on which P.S. 66 would be constructed was purchased for \$7,000 from the widow of Thomas F. Hayes, a real estate agent who may have been associated with the Brooklyn Hills Improvement Company. Three identical plans were submitted for the buildings by Harry S. Chambers, the Superintendent of School Buildings and architect for District No. 7, and were accepted in the fall of 1897. In early December, however, a motion was made to reduce the size of the schools from ten rooms to eight rooms, as a result of contractor bids exceeding approximated building costs. New plans were summarily submitted and accepted. A carpenter by the name of Thomas J. Clarke was awarded the contract for construction of “Building No. 9” just one week later, with a winning bid of \$24,290.<sup>31</sup> Construction began in early 1898, and the school was officially designated as “Public School No. 66” on April 15, 1898. The building was completed on July 28, 1899.<sup>32</sup>

Upon completion, P.S. 66 contained eight classrooms serving the first through sixth grades, a library, and a principal’s office. Four classrooms were located on each of the first and second stories of the building, surrounding an octagonal lobby. The two-and-a-half story Victorian Eclectic-style building, consisting of bearing exterior and interior walls with floors framed with wood joists, was essentially square in plan. The primary entrance to the school, which was picturesquely sited within a verdant, undeveloped area of Brooklyn Hills, was located at the base of a six-story, projecting tower along the building’s west elevation. Many of the original school’s features are characteristic of the Romanesque Revival style and give the building a fortress-like appearance, including prominent round arches highlighting window openings and the main entrance, a flared base, and its distinctive tower. Elements of the Queen Anne style are also present in the design of the original school building, in its large entablatures featuring elaborate rinceaux, its gabled dormers, and a pair of paneled brick chimneys. The tower, which originally contained a bell used to call school children from neighboring farms and developments, is distinguished by round arches, brick corbelling, large masonry columns, and foliate ornamentation. An ornamental panel above the main entranceway featured foliate decoration and the name of the school.

Despite a very real need for classroom space throughout New York City at the turn of the century, most apparent in the fact that many schools were running classes part-time in order to accommodate demand, P.S. 66, like other schools constructed in Queens just prior to consolidation, did not immediately open. Due to a shortage in municipal funds, the unoccupied school had not been assigned a janitor and consequently began to deteriorate. In December 1899, the windows at P.S. 66 were reportedly broken by neighborhood children and the plumbing stripped by thieves. To prevent further vandalism, P.S. 66, as well as the still unoccupied P.S. 65, were boarded up. Notwithstanding the continued residential development of the borough, Queens was still largely considered a rural farming community at the turn of the century and the presence of unutilized schools structures did not go unnoticed. As reported in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* in 1900:

...While in Brooklyn and Manhattan there are thousands of children who cannot go to school because there is no room for them, [here] there is room for nearly two thousand with which the population of the village has not yet been blessed...<sup>33</sup>

The notion that the schools remained unopened due to a lack of demand, however, was a misconception. For several years, the children of Brooklyn Hills residents were forced to attend Public School 58 in nearby Ozone Park on a half-day schedule as they eagerly awaited transfer to the new school. The New York City Board of Estimate and Apportionment, however, had only allotted \$25,000 for janitors' wages for the entire borough of Queens for the 1900-1901 school year, a full \$15,000 less than the sum awarded the borough in the years prior to consolidation.<sup>34</sup> Similar reductions in appropriations were made for teachers' salaries, with reductions of 25% in early 1900 leading to a numerous teacher resignations. While P.S. 65 appears to have opened in time for the 1899-00 school year, relieving some of the crowding experienced by the school district, it is not surprising that under such financial strain, both P.S. 64 and P.S. 66 remained closed.

P.S. 66 finally opened its doors on April 14, 1902 and was referred to locally as the Brooklyn Hills School.<sup>35</sup> Neighborhood residents were transferred to the school by start of the new fall term. In early 1902, the school board petitioned the Board of Public Improvements to open nearby Orchard Avenue (now 86<sup>th</sup> Avenue) "to accommodate school children in getting to this school, as no street opens from the northeast to it."<sup>36</sup> By May of that year, attendance at the school had increased so rapidly that the services of two additional teachers were requested. Records from 1905 indicate that seven teachers and 278 students occupied the building.

Between 1900 and 1910, the city's population grew by nearly 39 percent, primarily a result of unprecedented levels of immigration. This growth naturally led to further increases in school enrollment and attendance throughout the city. To meet the latest increase in demand for classroom space, a three-story addition to the east of P.S. 66's original school building was constructed in 1905-6. The addition doubled the number of classrooms and included space for a kindergarten and an auditorium. The addition, which is attributed to C.B.J. Snyder, superintendent of School Buildings for the New York City Board of Education from 1890 to 1923, was harmoniously designed in the style of the main section. Consisting of brick bearing walls with floors supported by steel beams, the addition is roughly rectangular in plan. The addition features a pair of two-and-a-half story gabled wings that project northwards and southwards from a three-story, flat-roofed core. The addition is distinguished by steeply pitched slate roofs and ornamental brick corbelling at the wings and central core. According to Board of Education records, the addition was occupied on September 9, 1907.

#### Harry S. Chambers, Thomas J. Clarke and C.B.J. Snyder<sup>37</sup>

Little is known about Harry S. Chambers, to whom the design of P.S. 66 and the identical schools P.S. 64 and P.S. 65 (both demolished), are attributed. According to the Old Town Records for the Town of Jamaica, Chambers was appointed secretary of District No. 7 in July 1892. He was made Superintendent of School Buildings for the district in August 1897 and named architect for the district just one month later. During a December 1897 meeting of the school board, it was recorded that "Chambers Architects" would be paid a sum of \$4,046.85 as "fees for plans and supervision of proposed buildings No. 7, 8 & 9," which seems to confirm Chambers as the architect of the three school buildings. Further details about Chambers' life, education or career, however, have not been found.<sup>38</sup>

Thomas J. Clarke is noted in the Old Town Records for the Town of Jamaica as the winning bidder for construction of P.S. 66 and is therefore recognized as the builder.<sup>39</sup> Clarke is listed in both the 1898 and 1899 editions of Trow's Business Directory for the Borough of Queens as a carpenter living at 79 Patchen Avenue in Brooklyn Hills.

Charles B. J. Snyder (1860-1945), Superintendent of School Buildings for the New York City Board of Education from 1890 to 1923, is credited with the 1905-6 addition to P.S. 66. Snyder was the architect responsible for the planning, design, and construction of all new and expanded schools in the five boroughs following consolidation. Little is known of Snyder's background beyond his birth in Stillwater, N.Y., his attendance at Cooper Union, and his architectural study with William E. Bishop. He was first listed as an architect in New York City directories in 1886 and remained in practice until around 1936. A specialist in school design, Snyder was recognized as a national leader in this regard in a 1905 article in *American Architect & Building News*.<sup>40</sup> Snyder's achievements were particularly remarkable given the scale of new school construction in New York City. He is credited with the design of over 140 elementary schools, 10 junior high schools, and 20 high schools, as well as many additions and alterations throughout the course of his career.<sup>41</sup> Recognized for his inventiveness, with his designs and ideas widely published, he was also a member of the Society of Municipal Engineers, a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and president of the American Society of Heating and Ventilating Engineers.<sup>42</sup>

In his designs for new school structures, Snyder was generally well known for his embrace of a variety of architectural styles. His designs were considered inventive, handsome, and appropriately ornate to serve as civic monuments and community centers.<sup>43</sup> In planning his school designs, Snyder's primary concern was for the health and safety of the students, and he focused on fire protection, ventilation, lighting, and heating systems and classroom size. Snyder's long tenure as Superintendent of School Buildings resulted in the creation of a large body of distinguished New York City public school buildings. Snyder's schools formed architectural and community centerpieces for the neighborhoods in which they were built, and as a group, these surviving buildings constitute a series of monuments to New York City's tradition of investment in public education.

#### Subsequent History<sup>44</sup>

Much of Richmond Hill was still rural farmland at the time P.S. 66 was constructed. In June 1917, the Brooklyn-Manhattan Transit Corporation (BMT) opened an elevated station at 104<sup>th</sup> Street (known until 1966 as the 102<sup>nd</sup> Street station) of its elevated Jamaica Line train (now the J), which significantly improved access to the neighborhood. The population of Richmond Hill continued to grow, new residential subdivisions continued to develop, and commercial activity flourished. With no more open land to develop, some of Richmond Hill's 19<sup>th</sup>-century private homes were replaced by 20<sup>th</sup>-century apartment houses and a population of mostly German and Irish descent gave way to an influx of immigrants from Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia. Despite changes in the architectural landscape of the neighborhood, Richmond Hill has remained largely a low-rise neighborhood of two-family houses and apartment buildings.<sup>45</sup>

By all accounts, P.S. 66 fared well architecturally until 1967, when wood deterioration in the distinctive bell tower required removal of the belfry above the second story.<sup>46</sup> The Department of Education was unable to rebuild the tower at the time due to the fiscal crisis of the 1970s that affected all areas of New York City government. By the 1990s, the distinctive rinceaux that ornament the original school building were stuccoed over and the slate roof replaced with asphalt shingles (*see Figure 10*). A major exterior modernization in 2001, however, returned many of the details that had been removed or altered over the years and included construction of a new bell tower. In order to accommodate an ever-growing population,

a red trailer containing supplementary classroom space has been temporarily located towards the southwest corner of the site.<sup>47</sup>

In September 2003, P.S. 66 was renamed the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School in honor of the former First Lady's passion for literacy and for historic preservation.<sup>48</sup> Today, P.S. 66 continues to serve in its original function as a grammar school and remains one of Queens' most distinctive school structures.

### Description

P.S. 66 is situated towards the eastern boundary of a large, rectangular lot bounded by the gently sloped 102<sup>nd</sup> Street to the west, 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the north, 85<sup>th</sup> Road to the south, and a service driveway to the east. The site is presently surrounded by a non-original concrete curb that is topped by iron and chain-link fencing. Primary pedestrian entry to the site is located along 102<sup>nd</sup> Street, while secondary entries can be found along 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 85<sup>th</sup> Road, and also via the service driveway. The school building is set back from 102<sup>nd</sup> Street by a verdant lawn featuring large trees and other plantings.

The school structure is composed of various masses that, together, are roughly symmetrical in plan (*see Figure 12*). The two-and-a-half story, original portion of the school building, consisting of approximately the western two-thirds of the present structure, is essentially square in plan. An addition, consisting of a pair of two-and-a-half story gabled wings projecting northwards and southwards from a three-story, flat-roofed core, was joined to the east of the original school building in 1905-6 and is roughly rectangular in plan. The primary entrance to the structure is located at the base of a projecting fortress-like tower along the original school building's west elevation. Secondary entrances are located along each of the remaining elevations.

All elevations of the Victorian Eclectic-style school feature red-brick laid in a Common bond. Partially-exposed basement stories are visible at all elevations (except where noted) and are flared at the original school building, one of several design elements that gives the school a fortress-like appearance. Rectangular window openings (shorter at partially-exposed basement stories) featuring flush cast-stone lintels and projecting cast-stone sills are typical at each elevation of the structure (except where noted). At the original school building, the sills of the first and second stories, as well as the lintels of the first story, are continuous with flush cast-stone bands at all elevations (except where noted). All first and second-story window openings of the original school building and 1905-6 addition feature six-over-six double-hung wood sashes (except where noted), several of which are original (*see Alterations*). Basement window openings typically feature three-over-three double-hung wood sashes (except where noted).

### *Original School Building*

**West (102<sup>nd</sup> Street) elevation:** The primary, west elevation of P.S. 66 is composed of three sections. The two-bay wide central section projects forward (except where noted) and is principally defined by a six-story, fortress-like tower at the southern bay. Two round-arched openings featuring concentric brick arches with brick hood molding are located at the ground story of the central section (basement not exposed), consisting of a window opening containing paired typical sashes and a typical sill, topped by a fanlight with ornamental lead dividers, on the left, and the primary entrance, consisting of slightly recessed, wood double-doors (non-original), paneled wood reveals, and a matching fanlight, on the right. The primary entrance is raised slightly on a single granite step. The ground-story arches of the central section spring from a



molded cast-stone water table course, continuous on all sides of the projecting central section and beneath which are found recessed rectangular brick panels. A single, narrow typical window opening, which descends slightly into the water table course, is visible at the north-facing portion of the projecting central section at the first story. A decorative panel featuring foliate details and inscribed with the words “Public School” and “No. 66” is found above the primary entrance. A masonry and cast-stone balustrade tops the first story of the northern bay of the central section (including the north-facing portion). The two-story tall northern bay is recessed above the first story. At the second story, the northern bay features paired window openings topped by blind arches consisting of concentric brick courses, brick hood molding and a herringbone tympanum and featuring elaborate window surrounds with foliate details. An entablature consisting of a molded architrave, rinceau, and molded cornice, is found directly above the second-story window openings of the northern bay (*see Alterations*). A hipped section of the structure’s slate roof is visible above the entablature at the northern bay. A drain pipe is affixed to the north-facing portion of the central section.

The southern bay of the central section consists of the six-story tower. Above the primary entrance, the tower consists of two, narrow rectangular window openings featuring four-over-four double-hung wood sashes and flush, continuous cast-stone lintels and sills at the second story, three narrow round-arched window openings featuring two-over-two double-hung sashes with arched upper sashes, brick hood molding springing from molded brick corbels, and slightly projecting cast-stone sills connected by a flush cast-stone band at the third story, three blind rectangular windows with a continuous cast-stone sill supported on stepped brick corbelling above a paneled frieze (continuous on all visible sides of the tower) at the fourth story, three arched masonry openings featuring outsized Corinthian columns (half-columns at outer arches), a continuous rinceau, and a projecting cast-stone sill supported on stepped brick corbelling at the fifth-story and repeated at a shorter height (and without the frieze) at the sixth-story, and a diminutive molded cast-stone cornice at its crown. Similar to the fourth story, the sixth-story sill and corbelling is continuous on all visible sides of the tower. The south elevation of the tower features two, irregularly-sized and irregularly-spaced narrow typical window openings at the first and second stories (left window opening at first story descends slightly into the water table course) and a single window opening at the third story with details similar to that of the third story of the tower’s west elevation. The details of the fourth, fifth and sixth stories of the west elevation of the tower are repeated on the north, south and east elevations (east elevation not visible from street).

The two-and-a-half story north section of the west elevation is four bays wide and features a typical window opening at each bay of the partially-exposed basement, first, and second stories. A wide gable with cast-stone coping that culminates in a finial spans the width of the section. Two shorter typical window openings are set within the gable and feature six-over-six double-hung wood sashes, sills connected by a flush cast-stone band and another flush cast-stone band that serves as a lintel course. The substantial metal tympanum beneath the gable features elaborate foliate, garland and urn details. Paired, cylindrical pinnacles of differing height, featuring cast-stone corbels with foliate details and patterned cast-stone finials, flank the section (the left-most pinnacle is continuous with the north elevation). From a distance, a rectangular brick chimney featuring arched panels, brick banding, and masonry coping, is visible above the roofline (also visible from the north elevation).

Each of the three bays of the two-and-a-half story south section of the west elevation features a typical window opening at the partially-exposed basement, first, and second stories.

An entablature consisting of a molded architrave, rinceau, and molded cornice, is found directly above the second-story window openings, matches that of the northern bay of the central section, and is continuous with the south elevation. A gabled dormer featuring cast-stone coping that culminates in a finial contains two rectangular window openings featuring two-over-two double-hung wood sashes and typical sills. The dormer pierces the cornice of this section and is flanked by cylindrical brick pinnacles with patterned cast-stone finials. A flush cast-stone band serves as a lintel course for the dormer windows. The metal tympanum beneath the gable features elaborate foliate details. A drain pipe that is affixed to the south-facing elevation of the tower at its top pierces the cornice of the section and continues towards the ground affixed to it. From a distance, a cross-hipped section of the structure's slate roof is visible above the entablature. One of the structure's two rectangular brick chimneys featuring arched panels, brick banding, and masonry coping, is visible above the roofline (also visible from the south elevation).

**South (85<sup>th</sup> Road) elevation:** The south elevation consists of two sections. The two-bay east section of the south elevation is recessed from the four-bay west section. At the partially-exposed basement, first, and second stories, the west section of the south elevation features single typical window openings at each of the first two bays and two typical window openings at each of the third and fourth bays (a single header course is found beneath the typical sills of the partially-exposed basement windows). A dormer matching that of the south section of the west elevation is centered above the west section. At the partially-exposed basement, first, and second stories, the east section features a single typical window opening at the western bay and three typical window openings at the eastern bay. An additional bay is visible at the east-facing elevation between the two sections and features a single narrow typical window opening containing four-over-four double hung wood sashes at each of the first and second stories and a non-original door opening with typical cast-stone lintel raised on one concrete step at an exposed basement level (door is accessed via non-original, below-grade concrete stairway surrounded by a concrete curb with metal handrail) (*see Alterations*). An entablature matching that of the west elevation is found above the second-story window openings of the east, west, and east-facing sections of the south elevation, and is continuous from the west elevation. A cross-hipped section of the structure's slate roof is visible above the entablature, as is one of the structure's two rectangular brick chimneys featuring arched panels, brick banding, and masonry coping (also visible from the west elevation). A drain pipe that is affixed towards the right side of the east section pierces the cornice as it runs to the ground. Additional drain pipes are affixed towards the left edge of both the east and west sections.

**North (85<sup>th</sup> Avenue) elevation:** The north elevation is the same as the south elevation, except where noted. Unlike the south elevation, the west section of the north elevation features two typical window openings at each bay of the partially-exposed basement, first, and second stories, and there is no header course beneath the sills of the partially-exposed basement window openings of the east section. Although there is no opening at the partially-exposed basement story of the west-facing elevation between the sections, there is a non-original door opening at the right side of the third bay of the east section at the basement level (door is accessed via non-original, below-grade concrete stairway surrounded by a concrete curb with metal handrail) (*see Alterations*). The window openings of the left side of the fourth bay of the east section at the first and second stories have been altered into door openings to accommodate a fire escape (*see Alterations*). A multi-level, cross-hipped section of the structure's slate roof is visible above the entablature at this elevation, as is one of the structure's two rectangular brick chimneys featuring arched brick panels, brick banding, and masonry coping (also visible, at a distance, from the west elevation). In lieu of the

smaller dormer present at the south elevation, a large, gabled dormer rises from the roof at the east section, about two-thirds of the way back. The dormer contains a single rectangular window opening with a molded window surround and three-over-three double-hung wood sashes. The metal face of the dormer features radiating sunburst and foliate details. Unlike the south elevation, only one drain pipe is affixed to the north elevation, at the west section.

#### *1905-6 Addition*

**West elevation:** The west elevation consists primarily of the west elevations of a pair of two-and-a-half story wings that project from a central, three-story, flat-roofed core (because the core abuts the slightly shorter original school building to the west, only a small portion of its western elevation is visible). Few details adorn the west elevations of the north and south wings. The west elevation of the south wing does not feature any openings, and although a typical lintel and sill are present at the partially-exposed basement story, any window opening that may have been present here has been seamlessly bricked in. The west elevation of the north wing features a short, wide rectangular window opening with a typical lintel and sill at the partially-exposed basement story that has been filled-in with a non-original metal panel. A portion of the west elevations of both the north and south wings is taken up by a projecting one-story pavilion which features brick corbelling, a large, flush masonry band, and masonry coping, all of which wrap to each pavilion's south elevation (the pavilions may not be original to the 1905-6 addition, *see 1905-6 Addition, South (85<sup>th</sup> Road) elevation*). Brick corbelling caps both the north and south wings and terminates at the outer edge of each wing at a stylized brick buttress featuring a cast-stone corbel and capital (the buttresses are shared with the north and south elevations of the wings). A pitched slate roof is visible above each wing. The visible portion of the west elevation of the central core features a projecting brick band and parapet with brick corbelling and masonry coping, all of which are continuous with the north, south and east elevations of the core. A rectangular brick chimney is partially visible above the roofline of the flat-roofed core. Drain pipes are affixed to the west elevations of both the north and south wings and a pipe vent is visible along the roof of the south wing.

**South (85<sup>th</sup> Road) elevation:** The south elevation is principally defined by the gabled, three-bay wide, two-and-a-half story tall, projecting south wing. A single bay of three-story central core, flush with the original school building, is visible to the west of the south wing. Each of the bays of the south wing features a typical window opening at the first and second stories. At the partially-exposed basement story, only the outer bays feature a typical window opening. A single, shorter typical window opening is found within the gable of the south wing. Stylized brick buttresses featuring cast-stone corbels and capitals flank the gable (the buttresses are shared with the east and west elevations of the wing) and are continuous with cast-stone coping which culminates in a finial. The single bay of the central core, to the west of the south wing, features a typical window opening at the second story and a narrow typical window opening at the third story. The first story is taken up by the projecting one-story pavilion, which overhangs the original school building slightly and which features brick corbelling, a large, flush masonry band, and masonry coping, all of which wrap to the pavilion's west elevation. The masonry band serves as a lintel course for a wide door opening that pierces the brick corbelling. The door opening is raised on a wide concrete step that extends beyond the opening and contains a deeply recessed non-original metal door and solid metal side panel. The pavilion may not be original to the 1905-6 addition, as it obscures most of what appears to have been a typical window opening at the first story of this bay, presently only partially visible above the pavilion. Portions of the

brick band and parapet with brick corbelling and masonry coping of the central core are visible above the gabled roof of the south wing, all of which are continuous with the north, east and west elevations of the core. A brick buttress-like element is located above the west slope of the gabled roof of the south wing at the central core.

**North (85<sup>th</sup> Avenue) elevation:** The north elevation is a mirror image of the south elevation, except where noted. Unlike the south elevation, only the west-most bay of the partially-exposed basement story of the north wing features a window opening. At the projecting pavilion, a shorter typical window opening that pierces the brick corbelling, whose lintel is integrated with the masonry band, and which contains two-over-two double-hung wood sashes, is located to the right of the door opening. To the west of the north wing, two bays of the central core are visible, both recessed slightly from the original school building. The eastern bay of the central core is the same as the north elevation, while the western bay features a short, narrow typical window opening containing two-over-two double hung wood sashes, offset in height at each of the first, second and third stories.

**East elevation:** The east elevation is comprised of three sections consisting, like the west elevation, of two wings projecting from a central core. The east elevations of the north and south wings are the same as the west elevations of the wings, except where noted. Unlike at the west elevation, the north and south wings are flush with the central core. Additionally, at the south wing, the window opening of the partially-exposed basement story is not filled in and, in lieu of a sill, abuts a raised concrete planting bed (*see Related Landmark Site*). The north wing does not feature any window openings, lintels or sills. Neither the north nor the south wing is obscured by a pavilion.

The three-story tall central core features two bays, each containing three typical window openings at the first, second and third stories. At the partially-exposed basement story, a single typical window opening is present at the first bay which, in lieu of a sill, abuts a raised concrete planting bed (*see Related Landmark Site*). At the second bay of the partially-exposed basement story, an additional three window openings are found and consist of a short typical window opening containing three-over-three double-hung wood sashes to the north, a typical, full-height window opening at center, and a filled-in typical window opening to the south that has been altered to accommodate a basement door opening below and three, square louvered vents above (door is accessed via a below-grade masonry and brick stairway surrounded by masonry curbing and a metal fence with gate). A one-story pavilion projects from the central core at the first bay of the partially-exposed basement story and may not be original to the 1905-6 addition as it obscures part of the rightmost window opening of the first bay of the central core at the first story. The pavilion features projecting brick banding separated by a large masonry band, and masonry coping, all of which wrap to the pavilion's north and south elevations. The east elevation of the pavilion features two typical lintels where typical window openings appear to have been bricked in. A square metal panel with a hinged door is set within the south elevation of the pavilion. At the third story of the central core, a projecting brick band runs continuous with the lintels of the third-story fenestration and is also continuous with the north, south and west elevations of the core. The central core also features brick corbelling and masonry coping at the parapet which, too, is continuous with the other elevations of the core. At the partially-exposed basement story, a small length of masonry or concrete base trim stretches from the right side of the central core to the north wing. A large number of drain pipes, pipe vents, and through-wall vents are affixed to all three sections of the east elevation, several of which may be original.

### *Related Landmark Site*

The verdant lawn featuring large trees and other plantings that line the western edge of the lot on which P.S. 66 is situated creates a picturesque setting for the structure, which was once surrounded on all sides by such greenery. Presently, this lawn is separated from the school building by a concrete path and by a planting bed that lines the north section of the west elevation of the original structure. Another planting bed, raised above grade and set within a concrete retaining wall, lines the east elevation of the south wing of the 1905-6 addition. In addition to these planting spaces, two additional trees (one very young) can be found on the southern portion of the site towards the eastern lot line, protected by low concrete curbs. A non-original, one-story red trailer containing additional classroom space is temporarily located towards the southwest corner of the site and is surrounded by non-original chain-link fencing. Additionally, two non-original wood benches are located along the south elevation of the 1905-6 addition, just in front of the projecting south wing. A non-original fence separates the southern portion of the site into two separate play areas. At present, the landmark site is primarily paved with concrete (non-original). As part of a mayoral initiative, however, the concrete areas are being reconstructed to include, among other things, a playground in the area south of the school building, and a painted track, basketball hoop, chess tables, and additional trees, in the area to the north.

Primary entry to the landmark site, located along 102<sup>nd</sup> Street, consists of a non-original ADA accessible concrete ramp with metal hand rails. An additional non-original access ramp with metal handrails is located at the northwest corner of the site. To the east of the 1905-6 addition, at the back of the school building, runs the concrete service driveway. This driveway is accessible via 85<sup>th</sup> Road and slopes sharply upwards to meet 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue, where it terminates at a non-original chain-link gate. A service ramp runs alongside the projecting north wing at the north elevation of the 1905-6 addition and leads to the service driveway. This ramp is presently surrounded by non-original chain-link fencing. The service driveway is lined by a concrete retaining wall topped with non-original fencing to its left, south of the central core. Two non-original concrete staircases with metal hand rails, one each along 85<sup>th</sup> Road and 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue, provide additional entry to the site and are surrounded by non-original fencing.

### *Alterations*

While the windows of P.S. 66 are largely non-original, the replacement windows were apparently selected to maintain the integrity of the exterior facade and feature multi-paned, double-hung wood sashes similar to the building's original windows (several of the non-classroom windows of the west elevation of the original school building are original and have not been replaced; it is not known when the non-original windows were installed). None of the school's doors are original. The doors of the primary entrance were replaced with new paneled wood double-doors in 2009, while the remaining secondary entrances feature non-original metal doors. The fire escape affixed to the east section of the north elevation of the original school building is not-original. Although it is unclear when the fire escape was put in place (not present in c. 1939 tax photograph), its installation required the enlargement of the leftmost window openings of the fourth bay of this section at the first and second stories in order to accommodate new door openings and metal doors. Although the original window lintels were retained, the remaining portions of the window openings not occupied by the doors have been filled in with metal panels. The three pavilions that extend from the various elevations of the 1905-6 addition are not thought to be original. Although it is not known when they might have been constructed, the pavilions do appear in the c. 1939 tax photograph of the school. An element that appears to

be a large cornice at the central core of the 1905-6 addition looks to be present in the c. 1939 tax photograph, but has since been removed. It is not known when the concrete curb that surrounds the site was installed or when the areas to the north and south of the school were paved with concrete, but both conditions are present in the c. 1939 tax photograph.

Non-original signage is affixed to the central section of the west elevation of the original school building. A number of non-original security lights, school bells, speakers, conduit, and electrical boxes are affixed to the various elevations of both the original school building and the 1905-6 addition. Non-original window guards are present at all windows of the first, second, third, and partially-exposed basement stories at all elevations and at the fanlights of the central section of the west elevation of the original school building, but are not present at dormer or gable windows. The small length of masonry or concrete base trim at the east elevation of the 1905-6 addition is painted red. A concrete platform has been built up along the east elevation of the 1905-6 addition at the central core and north wing, which extends from the projecting pavilion and is continuous with the ramp that runs alongside the north elevation of the north wing. It is not known whether the through-wall vent beneath the rightmost window of the south section of the west elevation of the original school building is original, nor if any of the through-vents on the east elevation of the 1905-6 addition are original. Similarly, it is not known if the various drain pipes affixed to the east elevation of the 1905-6 addition are original, although the drain pipes affixed to the other elevations are thought to be original.

A major exterior modernization project that took place in 2001 under the leadership of the architectural firm Montoya-Rodriguez Architects, PC returned many original details to the school building that had been removed or altered over the intervening years. The metal entablatures, including the rinceaux, present at the north, south and west elevations of the original school building, had been covered with stucco (*see Figure 10*), but were replaced as part of this project. The firm also restored much of the bell tower, which had been removed above the second story in 1967 due to wood deterioration. Although the present tower is not an exact replica of the original, a large number of details, including the numerous brick and masonry arches, continuous brick corbelling, and open belfry, are evocative of, and, in fact, very similar to the original design (*see Figures 13 & 14*). As part of the scope of work, finials were returned to the pinnacles of the west elevation of the original school building, failing cast-stone details and rusted sections of decorative metal were replaced in kind, several windows of the 1905-6 addition that had been previously enclosed with face brick were filled-in with matching brick, and asphalt shingles that had been introduced to the roof in the 1980s were replaced with more appropriate slate shingles. The project also undertook the stripping of non-original paint layers from all exterior brick, cast-stone, masonry, and metal details, and the repointing of all existing brickwork (including chimneys) and masonry. Window openings at the partially-exposed basement story of the east-facing section of the south elevation of the original school building and at the rightmost opening of the third bay of the east section of the north elevation of the original school building were enlarged into door openings and below-grade access staircases were installed as part of the project.

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## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> The Commission previously held a public hearing on this building on August 11, 1981 (LP-1256); the Commission later made a “No Action Motion” on September 18, 1990.

<sup>2</sup> New York City Councilmember Elizabeth Crowley again spoke in favor of designation immediately preceding the Commission’s designation vote at the Public Meeting on January 12, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Information in this section taken from the following sources: “Attractive Homes Near Brooklyn,” *New York Times* (April 14, 1895) 20; Carl Ballenas and Nancy Cataldi with the Richmond Hill Historical Society, *Images of America: Richmond Hill* (New York: Arcadia Publishing, 2002) 7, 11; Jeff Gottlieb, “History of Jamaica,” (n.d.) in the clippings file of the Long Island Division, Queens Library; “Jamaica,” in *The Encyclopedia of New York*, Kenneth T. Jackson, ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 610-611; Bernadette Keenan, *Public School 66, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (New York: National Park Service, 2003); Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), *Jamaica High School (LP-2316)* (New York: City of New York, 2009), prepared by Virginia Kurshan; LPC, *(Former) Jamaica Savings Bank (LP-2109)* (New York: City of New York, 2009), prepared by Elisa Urbanelli, Marjorie Pearson, and Michael D. Caratzas; LPC, *Richmond Hill Republican Club (LP-2126)* (New York: City of New York, 2007), prepared by Isabel Hill (Consultant); Barry Lewis, *Kew Gardens: Urban Village in the Big City* (Kew Gardens, New York: Kew Gardens Council for Recreation and the Arts, 1999); “Long Island Railroad History Website,” (2009), <http://www.lirrhistory.com>; “A Brief History of Queens,” *Official History Page of the Queens Borough President’s Office* (2009), <http://www.queensbp.org/>; *Report of the Public Service Commission for the First District of the State of New York for the Year Ended December 31, 1910, Vol. II* (Albany: JB Lyon Co. State Printers, 1912).

<sup>4</sup> The Native American system of land tenure was that of “occupancy for the needs of a group,” such that any sales the Europeans deemed outright transfers of property were to the Native Americans closer to leases or joint tenancy contracts. Reginald Pelham Bolton, *New York City in Indian Possession*, 2nd ed. (New York: Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, 1920; reprint 1975), 7, 14-15. A further patent in 1660 extended and incorporated the settlement under the Dutch name Rusdorp, meaning resting place. The town’s original boundaries can be approximated today by Jamaica Avenue on the north, Linden Boulevard on the south, the Van Wyck Expressway on the west and Farmers Boulevard on the east. LPC, *Jamaica High School (LP-2316)*, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Gottlieb.

<sup>6</sup> One of Jamaica’s most well-know black residents was Wilson Rantus, born in 1807. He owned his own farm and invested in other residential properties in the town. Well-educated, he started a school for black children and became involved in the effort (along with other black men from Queens such as Samuel V. Berry from Jamaica and Henry Amberman of Flushing) to achieve the right to vote for black citizens. LPC, *Jamaica High School (LP-2316)*, 2.

<sup>7</sup> King’s Highway was renamed the Brooklyn and Jamaica Turnpike in 1908. It survives today as Fulton Street within Brooklyn and Jamaica Avenue within Queens.

<sup>8</sup> Long Island is topographically defined by an elevated “backbone,” a terminal moraine that stretches from east to west which was formed during the last ice age more than 10,000 years ago. Jamaica is situated on the flat plain of southern Long Island just south of the terminal moraine.

<sup>9</sup> The farmlands had been in the hands of each of the families for several generations, since their initial acquisition from the original Native American inhabitants. The Lefferts family of Brooklyn is known to have owned a large number of slaves; it is not known, however, if any slaves were owned at the family’s Queens estate. It has also not been determined whether the other families from whom Man bought land were slave owners.

<sup>10</sup> The Man tract in 1869 ran between present-day Jamaica and Metropolitan Avenues, from approximately 104<sup>th</sup> Street to 123<sup>rd</sup> Street, near the farming village of Clarenceville (established in 1853). Man later acquired additional land north of Metropolitan Avenue, as well as east of 123<sup>rd</sup> Street. Lewis, 8.

<sup>11</sup> As a landscape architect, Richmond was likely aware of the garden city movement which was influencing urban planners in the United States and abroad in this era. Following Richmond’s sudden death c. 1869, Man was able to carry out his vision with the help of a new business partner, Oliver Fowler. Lewis, 9, 10.

<sup>12</sup> The Richmond Hill station at 111<sup>th</sup> Street (known as the Clarenceville Station until 1871) was built in 1868 by the South Side Rail Road of Long Island, which survived for several years before being acquired by the LIRR. The Richmond Hill station remained in service on the Montauk Branch of the LIRR until 1998. *Long Island Railroad History*, <http://www.lirrhistory.com/>.

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<sup>13</sup> Information in this section taken from the following sources: “A New Improvement Company,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (December 9, 1887) 5; “A New Village,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (December 21, 1888) 6; “Attractive Homes Near Brooklyn,” *New York Times* (April 14, 1895) 20; “Brooklyn Hills Improvement Company, Plat No. 3,” (c. 1905) auction pamphlet with map at the Long Island Division, Queens Library; “Dissolution Notices” *New York Times* (November 15, 1907) 13; “Map of 382 Lots Situated in the 4<sup>th</sup> Ward, Borough of Queens, City of New York,” (c. 1905) auction pamphlet with map and other information at the Long Island Division, Queens Library; “Queens Jury Awarded Six Cents Damages,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (June 20, 1902) 7; “Richmond Hill, Borough of Queens,” (1902) map at the Long Island Division, Queens Library; “Suing to Recover \$250,000,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (June 2, 1899) 18; *Trow’s Business and Residential Directory in the Borough of Queens, City of New York* (New York: Trow Directory, Printing & Bookbinding Co., 1898, 1899 and 1901).

<sup>14</sup> The Brooklyn Hills Improvement Company was incorporated in 1887 with the objective of erecting buildings, laying out and subdividing lands into building or villa plots, and to improve and sell the same. “A New Improvement...,” 5.

<sup>15</sup> The Village of Woodhaven bordered Richmond Hill to the east and was more substantial in size.

<sup>16</sup> Over time, smaller suburban developments like Brooklyn Hills were incorporated as part of larger villages like Richmond Hill and Woodhaven. While their names have been largely lost to history, those of the larger towns and villages have endured as the names of neighborhoods within the present-day borough of Queens.

<sup>17</sup> *Trow’s...* (1898), 5.

<sup>18</sup> While the railroad denied the existence of any such contract, a planned station was written about in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* in an 1888 article, around the time the company purchased the tract of land. “A New Village...,” 6.

<sup>19</sup> The company had also recently sold another 20 to 30 acres of its land for \$100,000 to the Jamaica Heights Improvement Company. “Queens Jury...,” 7.

<sup>20</sup> The company was charged in 1898 with having participated in a plot to cheat Kings County in the purchase of lands for Forest Park. The claim was that three men employed by the Commissioner of Parks to secure land for Forest Park had direct business interests in the companies that made the sales (including the Brooklyn Hills Improvement Company) and therefore directly profited from them. The company denied the charges. “Big Profit in Park Land,” *New York Times* (October 14, 1898) 12; “Davidson Defends Squier,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (October 16, 1898) 4.

<sup>21</sup> “Map of 382 Lots...”

<sup>22</sup> The lots within the subdivision measured approximately 125 feet deep by 40 feet wide.

<sup>23</sup> Information in this section taken from the following sources: LPC, *(Former) Public School 64 (LP-2189)* (New York: City of New York, 2006), prepared by Virginia Kurshan; LPC, *Flushing High School (LP-1798)* (New York: City of New York, 1991), prepared by James T. Dillon; New York State Department of Public Instruction, *38<sup>th</sup> Annual Report of the State Superintendent for the School Year 1893* (New York: State Printer, 1904); Archie Emerson Palmer, *The New York Public School: Being a History of Free Education in the City of New York* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1905) 260-1, 292-3, 361; Town of Jamaica, New York, “Annual Report,” *Minute Books (1879-1889)*, *School District No. 7, Jamaica, Queens* (August 6, 1888) 114; (December 3, 1888) 121; (December 29, 1888) 125; (July 29, 1890) 203, in the Old Town Records Collection at the New York City Municipal Archives; Town of Jamaica, New York, “Trustee Report,” *Account Book, School District No. 7, Jamaica, Queens* (1887), in the Old Town Records Collection at the New York City Municipal Archives.

<sup>24</sup> Palmer, 260.

<sup>25</sup> Palmer, 261. School segregation existed in the borough of Queens during the 19<sup>th</sup> century with at least two schools designated specifically for non-white children – one each in Flushing and Jamaica. Towards the end of the century, an incident took place where a family in Jamaica refused to send children to the segregated school. Other families quickly followed, making it impossible for the district to comply with the compulsory education laws. Despite a suit brought against the schools, the Court of Appeals initially upheld establishment of the segregated schools. In 1900, upon an initiative by then Governor Theodore Roosevelt, the separate schools systems were abolished. Palmer, 292-3.

<sup>26</sup> Palmer, 361.

<sup>27</sup> The school district was sometimes also referred to as the Union Free School District No. 7, Woodhaven. The village of Woodhaven comprised a substantial portion of the school district.

<sup>28</sup> Town of Jamaica, New York, “Annual Report...,” (1888), 114; (1890) 203.



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<sup>29</sup> Information in this section is taken from the following sources: "A New School Closes," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (June 16, 1901) 58; Keenan; "Lacks Teachers and Janitor," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (September 15, 1901) 44; LPC, (*Former*) *Public School 64*, 4; "More Teachers Also Wanted," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (May 9, 1902) 9; "New from Queensborough," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (February 24, 1899) 11; "New School at Brooklyn Hills," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (May 27, 1902) 8; "New Schools Going to Ruin," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (December 27, 1899) 7; New York City Board of Education, *Annual Financial Statistical Report, School Photographs (1906-08)* (New York: New York City, 1908) at the New York City Municipal Archives; New York City Board of Education, Building History Card (Series 762) at the New York City Municipal Archives; "Opening of the Schools," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (September 9, 1901) 9; "Queens Teachers Resign," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (February 7, 1900) 7; "School Houses Being Guttled," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (January 15, 1900) 7; "School Houses Robbed," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (December 16, 1901) 8; Town of Jamaica, New York, "Annual Report," *Minute Books (1879-1889), School District No. 7, Jamaica, Queens* (June 20, 1895) ; (July 2, 1897) 171; (October 7, 1897) 201; (December 3, 1897) 215-218, in the Old Town Records Collection at the New York City Municipal Archives; "Useless School Buildings," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (October 22, 1900) 7; "Woodhaven Has More School Room than Children to Fill It," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (May 13, 1900) 26.

<sup>30</sup> By the end of the year, the money raised via bonds would so far exceed the money required for construction of the three schools that it was determined a tax would no longer be necessary.

<sup>31</sup> New York City Board of Education records indicate that the total cost of site acquisition, building construction (of the original school building and 1905-6 addition) and of the contents of the school amounted to \$139,284.58.

<sup>32</sup> Contracts entered into before February 1, 1898 for new school buildings were honored after consolidation.

<sup>33</sup> "Woodhaven Has....," 26.

<sup>34</sup> This reduction was despite numerous large school houses having been completed since that time and despite the fact that janitors in larger school buildings now had to be licensed engineers and pass civil service examinations, thereby adding to the cost of their salaries.

<sup>35</sup> P.S. 66 was renamed the Oxford School in 1916, although it is not known why. It is also not known when it lost this moniker.

<sup>36</sup> "More Teachers....," 9.

<sup>37</sup> Information in this section is taken from the following sources: LPC, (*Former*) *Public School 64 (LP-2189)*; LPC, *Jamaica High School (LP-2316)*; Town of Jamaica, New York, "Annual Report," *Minute Books (1879-1889), School District No. 7, Jamaica, Queens* (July 22, 1892) 78; (August 3, 1897) 187; (September 7, 1897) 195; (December 10, 1897) 221-2, in the Old Town Records Collection at the New York City Municipal Archives; *Trow's Business and Residential Directory in the Borough of Queens, City of New York* (New York: Trow Directory, Printing & Bookbinding Co., 1898 and 1899).

<sup>38</sup> *Trow's Directory* lists a clerk named H.S. Chambers at a home on Union Avenue near Grafton Avenue in the town of Woodhaven in 1898 and 1899, but it is unclear if this is the same person.

<sup>39</sup> Each of the school buildings was constructed by a different builder. The contract for School No. 7 (later P.S. 64) was awarded to Raines and Masher, while School No. 8 (later P.S. 65) was awarded to Alexander Brown. Town of Jamaica (December 10, 1897) 221.

<sup>40</sup> "Excellent Character of Mr. Snyder's Work," *American Architect & Building News* (July 29, 1905) 33 as cited in LPC, (*Former*) *Public School 64*, 4.

<sup>41</sup> The following schools designed by Snyder are designated New York City Landmarks: Public School 67 (High School of the Performing Arts) (1893-94), 120 West 46th Street, Manhattan; Public School 27 (1895-97), 519 St. Ann's Avenue, the Bronx; Public School 166 (1897-99), 132 West 89th Street, Manhattan; Public School 167 (later 31) (1897-99), 425 Grand Concourse, the Bronx; Morris High School auditorium interior (1900-04), East 166th Street and Boston Road, the Bronx; Wadleigh High School for Girls (1901-02), 215 West 114th Street, Manhattan; Curtis High School (1902-04, 1922, 1925), 105 Hamilton Avenue, Staten Island; (former) Public School 65 (1904-6), 605 East 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Manhattan; Public School 91 addition (1905), 1257 Ogden Avenue, the Bronx; Stuyvesant High School (1905-07), 345 East 15th Street, Manhattan; Boys' High School additions (c. 1905-12), 832 Marcy Avenue, Brooklyn; Westfield Township District School No. 7 addition (1906-07), 4210 Arthur Kill Road, Staten Island; Girls' High School addition (1912), 475 Nostrand Avenue, Brooklyn; Public School 72 annex (1912-13), 1674 Lexington Avenue,

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Manhattan; Flushing High School (1912-15), 35-01 Union Street, Queens; Erasmus Hall High School (1905-06, 1909-11), 899-925 Flatbush Avenue, Brooklyn; Newtown High School (1920-21) 48-01 90<sup>th</sup> Street, Queens.

<sup>42</sup> LPC, *(Former) Public School 64*, 5.

<sup>43</sup> It was widely felt that a beautiful school in New York's crowded neighborhoods would help build moral character and also help acculturate the numerous immigrants who came from so many varied cultures. LPC, *(Former) Public School 64*, 5.

<sup>44</sup> Information in this section is taken from the following sources: Keenan; LPC, *Richmond Hill Republican Club (LP-2126)*; Montoya+Rodriguez Architects & Planners, "South & North Elevations (Drawing No.: A-204)," (December 4, 2000), drawing prepared for the P.S. 66 Queens Exterior Modernization project; Montoya+Rodriguez Architects & Planners, "West & East Elevations (Drawing No.: A-203)," (December 4, 2000), drawing prepared for the P.S. 66 Queens Exterior Modernization project.

<sup>45</sup> LPC, *Richmond Hill Republican Club (LP-2126)*, 2.

<sup>46</sup> The original bell from the tower was placed in storage in 1929, but has since disappeared. Keenan, 2.

<sup>47</sup> Changes in the use of interior spaces have also taken place since the original school building and 1905-6 addition were first opened. The auditorium of 1905-6 addition, for example, has been transformed into a multi-purpose room serving as a gymnasium and line-up area. The interior of P.S. 66 is not part of this designation.

<sup>48</sup> A ceremony was conducted at the school in March 2004. The late Mrs. Onassis's daughter, Caroline Kennedy, was in attendance.

## FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that Public School 66 (Formerly the Brooklyn Hills School, later the Oxford School, now the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School) has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, Public School 66 (Formerly the Brooklyn Hills School, later the Oxford School, now the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School) was originally constructed in 1898 and is a remarkable survivor from a time when Richmond Hill, Queens, was transitioning from a rural farming community into a vibrant residential neighborhood; that the school was one of three identical schools (two now demolished) constructed in anticipation of an influx of residents expected as a result of improvements in transportation, the subdivision of farmlands into lots for residential development, and the consolidation of Queens with Greater New York City that same year; that the school was named the Brooklyn Hills School after the suburban development in which it was physically located; that the school formally opened its doors in 1901; that Harry S. Chambers, Superintendent of School Buildings for the Union Free School District No. 7 of the Town of Jamaica, Queens, is credited with the design of the original school building; that C.B.J. Snyder, Superintendent of School Buildings for the New York City Board of Education from 1890-1923, is noted as the architect of a 1905-6 addition; that the two-and-a-half and three-story red brick building is Victorian Eclectic in style; that many of its features are characteristic of the Romanesque Revival style and give the building a fortress-like appearance, including prominent round arches, a flared base, and distinctive six-story tower; that elements of the Queen Anne style are also present in the building's large entablatures featuring elaborate rinceaux, gabled dormers, and the steeply pitched roofs of the 1905-6 addition; that the 1905-6 addition was harmoniously designed in the style of the main section; that the tower, which originally contained a bell used to call school children from neighboring farms and developments, is distinguished by round arches, brick corbelling, large masonry columns, and foliate details; that an ornamental panel above the main entranceway survives and features the name of the school; that P.S. 66 has been renamed the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School in honor of the former First Lady's passion for literacy and for historic preservation; that the school continues to serve in its original function as a grammar school; and that it remains one of Queens' most distinctive school structures.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark Public School 66 (Formerly the Brooklyn Hills School, later the Oxford School, now the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School), 85-11 102nd Street (aka 85-01 to 85-19 102nd Street; 102-01 85th Road; 102-02 85th Avenue), Borough of Queens, and designates Queens Tax Map Block 9183, Lot 1 as its Landmark Site.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair  
Pablo E. Vengoechea, Vice-Chair

Stephen F. Byrns, Joan Gerner, Christopher Moore, Margery Perlmutter, Elizabeth Ryan,  
Roberta Washington, Commissioners





Figure 1 – Public School 66 (formerly the Brooklyn Hills School, later the Oxford School, now the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School) 85-11 102<sup>nd</sup> Street (aka 85-01 to 85-19 102<sup>nd</sup> Street; 102-01 85<sup>th</sup> Road; 102-02 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue), Borough of Queens. Tax Map Block 9183, Lot 1  
(West Elevation, Facing 102<sup>nd</sup> Street)

*Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010*





Figure 2 – Public School 66, North Elevation  
 Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Figure 3 – Public School 66, South Elevation  
 Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008





Figure 4 – Public School 66, East Elevation  
*Photo: Jennifer L. Most, 2009*



Figure 5 – Public School 66, Front Yard at West Elevation  
*Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008*





Figure 6 – Public School 66, Tower  
(South Elevation)

*Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008*



Figures 7 & 8 – Public School 66, Dormers  
(South Elevation, top; West Elevation, bottom)

*Photo: Jennifer L. Most, 2009 (top)*

*Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010 (bottom)*

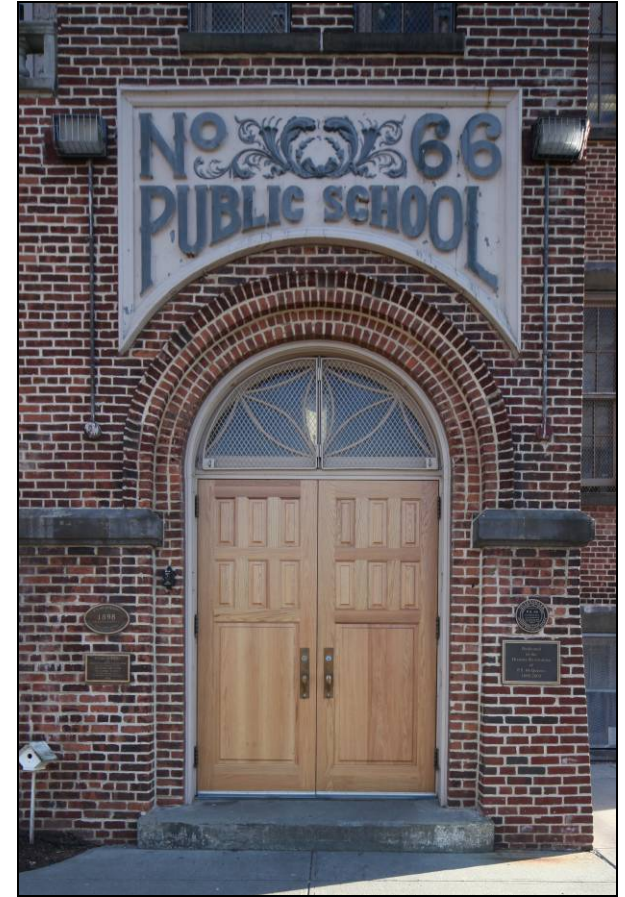


Figure 9 – Public School 66, Primary Entry  
(West Elevation)

*Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010*



Figure 10 – West Elevations Detail, c. 1994

*Source: Research Department Files*



Figure 11 – West Elevation Detail, 2008

*Photo: Jennifer L. Most, 2008*

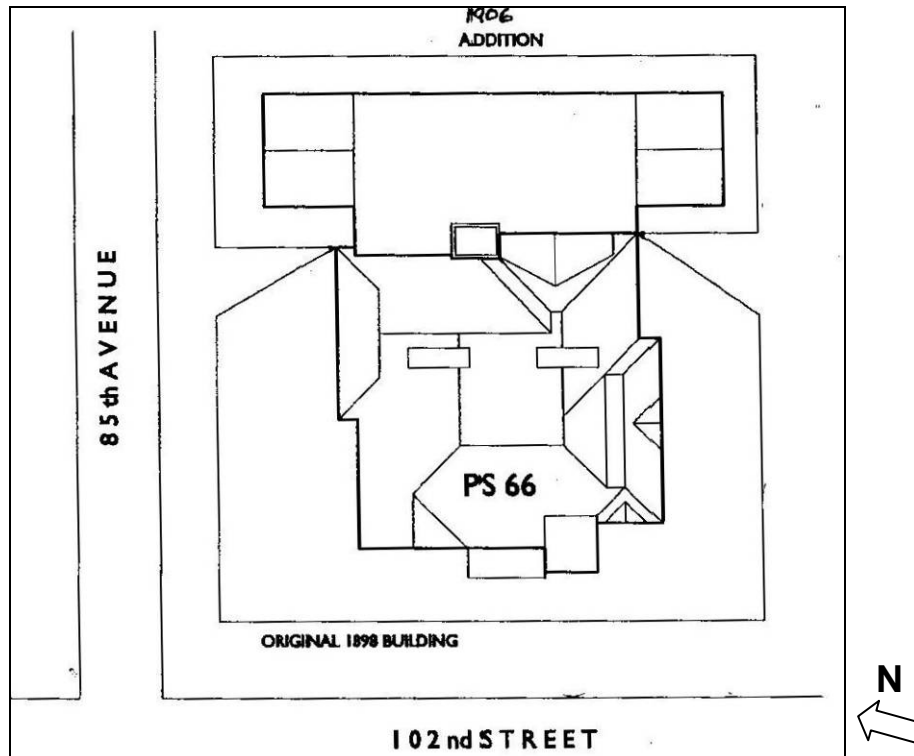


Figure 12 – Public School 66, Site Plan

*Drawing: Montoya-Rodriguez Architects, P.C., 2000*

*Source: Public School 66, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2003*





Figure 13 – Public School 66, Borough of Queens (c. 1906-08)

*Source: School Photographs Part II, Annual Financial Statistical Report (1906-08)*

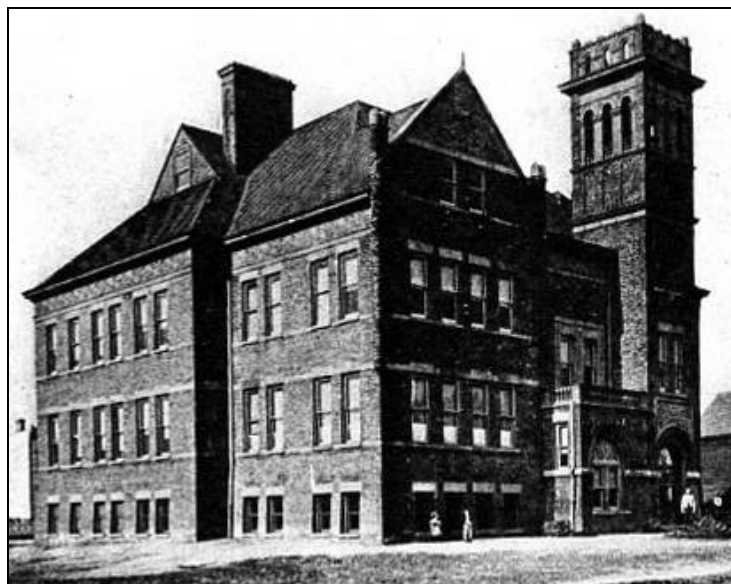
*Published by: The New York City Board of Education; Courtesy of: The New York City Municipal Archives*



Figure 14 – Public School 66, View from 102<sup>nd</sup> Street

*Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010*





Figures 15 & 16 – Public School 64 (demolished, left) and Public School 65 (demolished, right), Borough of Queens (c. 1906-08)

*Source: School Photographs Part II, Annual Financial Statistical Report (1906-08)*

*Published by: The New York City Board of Education; Courtesy of: The New York City Municipal Archives*



Public School No. 66. 102 St., and 85 Rd. Richmond Hill, L. I. N. Y.

Figure 17 – Post Card Rendering of Public School 66 (date unknown)

*Courtesy of: Richmond Hill Historical Society*



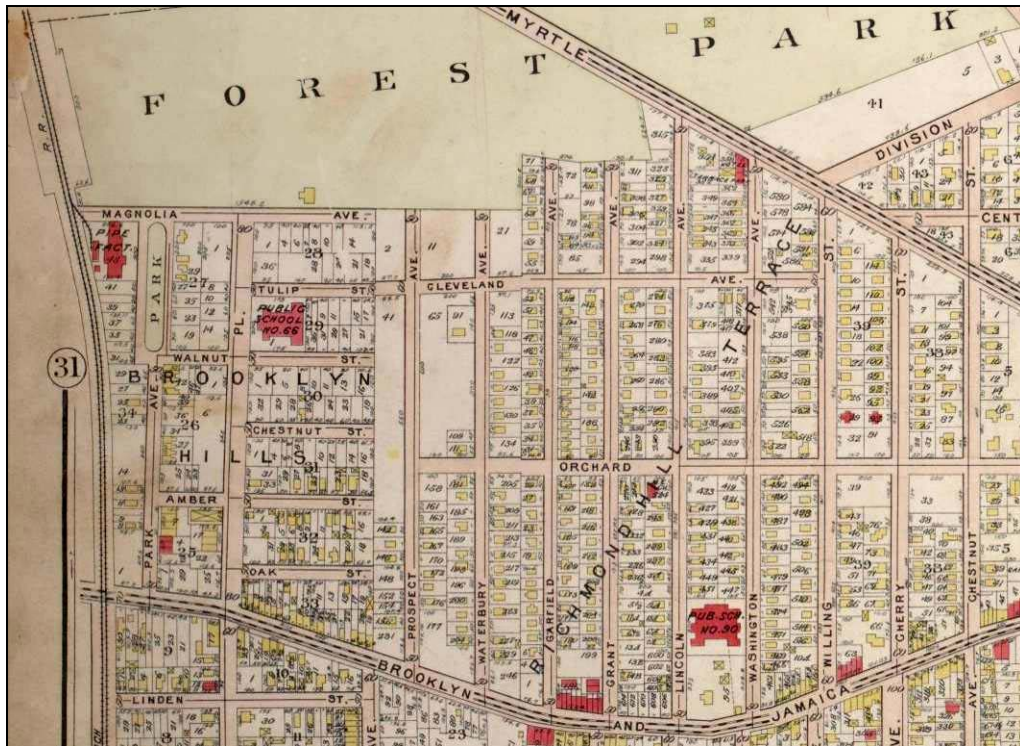


Figure 18 – Part of the Borough of Queens, Jamaica, Ward 4 (Plate 32, in part)

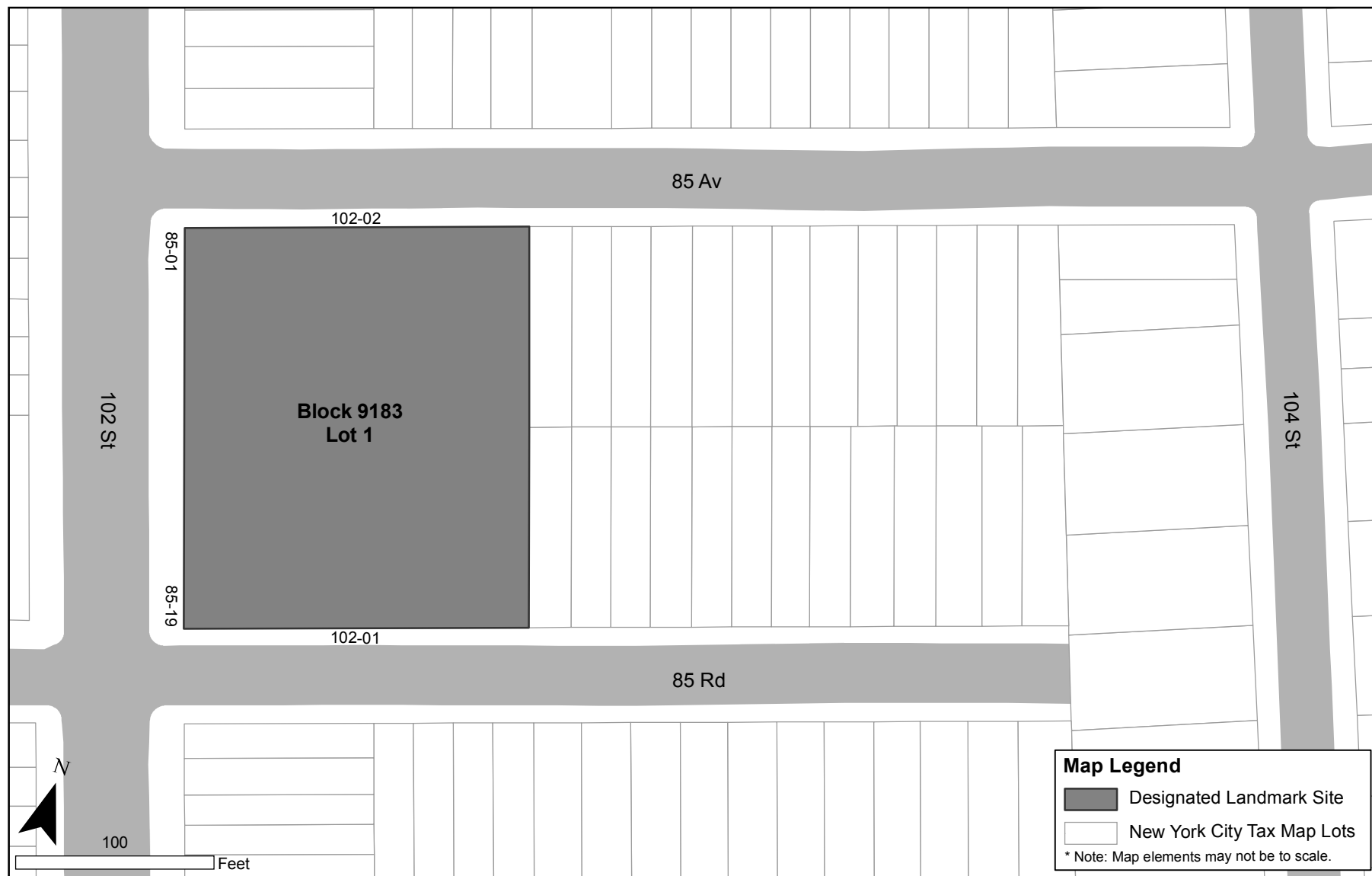
Source: *Atlas of the City of New York, Borough of Queens*; Published by: G.W. Bromley & Co. (1909)

Courtesy of: The New York Public Library (Image ID: 1516378)



Figure 19 – Richmond Hill, Borough of Queens (detail of a larger drawing)

Courtesy of: The Long Island Division, Queens Library



PUBLIC SCHOOL 66 (FORMERLY THE BROOKLYN HILLS SCHOOL, LATER THE OXFORD SCHOOL, NOW THE JACQUELINE KENNEDY ONASSIS SCHOOL) (LP-2317), 85-11 102 Street (aka 85-01 to 85-19 102 Street; 102-01 85 Road; 102-02 85 Avenue). Borough of Queens, Tax Map Block 9183, Lot 1.

Designated: January 12, 2010