

STUYVESANT HEIGHTS
A GOOD NEIGHBORHOOD IN NEED OF HELP

A STUDY PREPARED FOR
CHURCH COMMUNITY SERVICES

Community Education Program
Planning Department
Pratt Institute
Brooklyn, New York

PRATT INSTITUTE BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11205

THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

April 6, 1965

Reverend Henri M. Deas, Chairman
Church Community Services Commission,
Bedford Y.M.C.A.
1121 Bedford Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11216

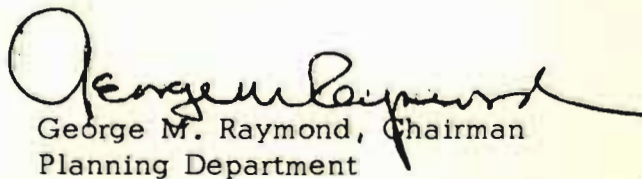
Dear Reverend Deas:

The report contained in this publication summarizes the findings and conclusions of the six-month study of the Stuyvesant Heights area which was undertaken by this Department's Community Education Program at the request of your organization. The report also sets forth several recommendations which, we hope, will assist you in your efforts to save some of the neighborhoods of Bedford-Stuyvesant which are still socially and physically sound from the deterioration which has engulfed adjoining areas.

The task that you are undertaking is of the greatest importance to the entire Bedford-Stuyvesant Community and to all those sections throughout the heart of New York City where the battle against deterioration and obsolescence is yet to be truly joined. For it is among the residents of the neighborhoods in which the downward trend can still be arrested, that the very effort to do so can best mobilize that loyalty to place and neighbors without which no rehabilitation and conservation program can succeed.

It is the hope of this Department that the findings and recommendations in this report will find wide application in many other neighborhoods with similar problems throughout the City.

Very truly yours,


George M. Raymond, Chairman
Planning Department

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Study Director: Professor George M. Raymond
Chairman, Planning Department

Field Director: Ronald Shiffman

Secretary: Irene Prager

Graphics: Charles Sioberg

Photographs: Builder Levy

Cover Photograph: Roger Richman

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STUYVESANT HEIGHTS

A Good Neighborhood in Need of Help

INTRODUCTION

Bedford-Stuyvesant* is an almost exclusively Negro community, containing upwards of 280,000 mostly low-income persons. With 91% of its buildings erected before 1939, the area contains some of the oldest structures in the entire city. By comparison, the city-wide average of buildings erected over 25 years ago stands at 80.3%, that for Brooklyn, at 85.6%. Even in Central Harlem, where 89.9% of all structures were erected before 1929, the average age of structures is less than that in Bedford-Stuyvesant.

The area is also plagued by the highest rate of overcrowding anywhere in the city. In Bedford-Stuyvesant, 22.2% of all occupied dwelling units are inhabited by 1.01 or more persons per room. By contrast, the rate of overcrowding in Central Harlem is only 20%, in Brooklyn as a whole, 12.9%, while throughout the city, only 12.3% of all units are so used.

The presence within this community of some of the city's most blighted and overcrowded areas is at least partly at the root of its many other well documented

*The boundaries of Bedford-Stuyvesant have been described differently by various groups which have attempted to define them. Generally, the name covers an expanding area, since it is usually employed to describe the geographical territory inhabited by the Negro community of Central Brooklyn. For purposes of this report, the Bedford-Stuyvesant Community shall be deemed to be the area bounded by Flushing Avenue, Broadway, Eastern Parkway, and Washington Avenue.

social and economic problems. No single approach to the solution of these problems can realistically be expected to produce lastingly meaningful results. The search among the great variety of approaches which have been suggested seems to have produced one relatively unanimous conclusion, namely that the ultimate solution depends upon the ability of the Community to identify and build upon, its strengths, and to use the resulting social structure in its effort to overcome its weaknesses.

One source of strength in the Community is the relative stability of a substantial proportion of its population. The pattern of residential mobility in Bedford-Stuyvesant is paradoxical since, while a large segment of its population is comprised of highly mobile newcomers, primarily from the rural south and Puerto Rico, another large segment of its population is comprised of a highly stable group of old settlers, who have lived in the area for a period of up to 40 years. This pattern is reflected to some degree in the fact that 15% of all residential structures in the Community are owner-occupied. While lower than the proportion of similar occupancy throughout the city (21%) or the Borough of Brooklyn (22.7%), the ratio of home ownership in Bedford-Stuyvesant is significantly higher than that in other Negro ghetto areas. For a long period, home ownership in this area of attached brownstone and brick homes lining pleasant tree-lined streets represented the fulfillment of many aspirations among the upwardly mobile families in the Central Harlem ghetto. Fortunately, many of these structures are still in good condition or are economically rehabilitable, particularly since, once put in good condition, they can furnish one- and two-family

moderate cost accommodations as near to and as accessible from, the center of Manhattan and Brooklyn as any other area.

One of the areas which fits this description is Stuyvesant Heights.* This area, located north of Fulton Park and the New York City Housing Authority's "Brevoort Houses" low-income public housing project, contains a cross-section of the housing types, housing conditions, and neighborhood characteristics of Bedford-Stuyvesant. However, while the area contains substantial pockets of blight, it has relatively little outright dilapidation, and its character is mostly set by consecutive blocks of tree-lined, solid, frequently owner-occupied brownstone buildings.

The area to the south and southwest (the so-called "Fulton Park Urban Renewal Study Area"), is presently under review by the New York City Planning Commission for possible designation as an area suitable for urban renewal. This area contains a very high degree of deterioration, and seems to have more than its share of the social and health problems usually found in the heart of Negro ghettos. While its renewal under public auspices and with public assistance is essential not only to its own welfare, but to that of surrounding areas as well, the impending activity has filled the leaders of adjoining neighborhoods

*For purposes of this report, this designation shall be deemed to apply only to the area which was covered by this study, even though adjoining areas to the west, and somewhat less so to the east, share most of its characteristics. The study area is bounded by Bainbridge Street on the south, Halsey Street on the north, Stuyvesant Avenue on the west, and Ralph Avenue on the east. It comprises 12 large city blocks, together with the frontages of the blocks directly across the street therefrom.

with considerable foreboding. They are aware of the tendency, in the case of other major urban renewal projects, of families being relocated to seek accommodations largely within one-half mile of their previous residence. The degree of apprehension with which these leaders view the future is conditioned by the weaknesses in the physical and social fabric of their own neighborhoods. In Stuyvesant Heights, these weaknesses are particularly evident in the fact that most of its north-south streets are lined almost solidly with deteriorated structures, and that some evidences of severe blight have begun to appear even along the east-west streets which, until recently, had managed to remain fairly immune to decay.

Fearing the consequences of the impending Fulton Park renewal program on the weakest links in their own largely middle-income neighborhood, and particularly the possible flight out of the area of potential leaders in the coming struggle for the up-grading of the entire Community, a group of Bedford-Stuyvesant ministers, working with the Y.M.C.A. and the New York City Mission Society, have become concerned with the preservation and enhancement of the area's still relatively sound residential neighborhoods. Under the name of Church Community Services, the group requested the Pratt Institute Planning Department to act as its consultant. The organization's objective in this effort was to demonstrate how a core city community can be conserved, rehabilitated, and renewed, by saving the best part of each neighborhood, and by giving the stable leadership of the community an incentive to remain and improve their housing at a cost below that which they would have to pay for equivalent accommodations

elsewhere. This goal, of course, coincides with the expressed goals of the Federal urban renewal program, and of the City's own recent reorientation away from exclusive emphasis on total clearance and toward the rehabilitation of such portions of its neighborhoods which can still be economically justified.

The Pratt Institute Planning Department, with the assistance of a financial grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, has conducted a series of intensive housing and environmental studies of the 12-block Stuyvesant Heights area, in order to assist the Church Community Services group to evolve a meaningful plan of action toward the achievement of its goal. The studies included:

1. A Rehabilitation Study - for purposes of analyzing structural conditions and outlining alternative courses of action towards the conservation and upgrading of the area, and of determining the most appropriate City, State, and Federal program which could be applied in the area; and
2. A Social Survey - for the purpose of determining family characteristics and incidence of home ownership, as well as of measuring family attitudes toward the neighborhood in which they live.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Population

The Stuyvesant Heights study area (see Map 2, "Study Area and Vicinity") is comprised of twelve square blocks and all contiguous block fronts. It contains about 2,900 dwelling units, housing approximately 8,600 people at a density of about 225 per acre. Given the predominantly low structures characterizing the area, this density is quite high, but even so it compares favorably with the density of 300 people or more per acre in some of the adjacent enumeration districts, which range as high as 332 people per acre.

Use of Land and Zoning

Except for strip commercial facilities, primarily marginal in character, which are located on the ground floor of residential structures along Reid, Patchen, and Ralph Avenues, the Stuyvesant Heights study area is almost exclusively residential (see Map 5, "Land Use"). The only commercial establishments along east-west streets are found at intersections. The area's only non-conforming, non-residential use is a coal and fuel company on MacDonough Street, between Reid and Stuyvesant Avenues. As it happens, this incompatible use is located in an area devoted primarily to residential, educational, and recreational uses. The building and the vacant property adjoining it are in deteriorating condition and constitute a distinctly blighting influence on the area.

The zoning of the area is R-6 Residence throughout, permitting the development of 90-100 dwelling units per acre. This permitted density is greatly in excess

of the existing density in the study area. The frontages along Patchen, Reid, and Ralph Avenues are zoned to permit commercial uses. (See Map 6, "Zoning").

Residential Building Types

The majority of the structures in the Stuyvesant Heights study area (83%) are brownstones converted to two- and three-family occupancy (see Map 4, "Building Types"). These structures, which are located along the east-west streets, are in fairly good condition. A limited number of these structures have been converted to boarding or rooming houses, but these are scattered throughout the area, and are not obviously detrimental to their surroundings.

The Stuyvesant Heights area also contains various types of multiple dwellings. These range from masonry old-law walkups to buildings converted to single room occupancy. Multiple family buildings (defined as buildings with four or more families) are located primarily on Patchen, Reid, and Ralph Avenues. In addition, there is a cluster of these types of structures on Bainbridge Street between Reid and Patchen Avenues, and on Halsey Street, between Patchen and Ralph Avenues. These are generally the older buildings in the area, owned by absentee landlords, and supplying housing of a distinctly lower quality than that in the remainder of the area.

Community Facilities

Public and quasi-public uses in and serving Stuyvesant Heights are presently inadequate in relation to the density of the area. The one public school located in the area, P.S. 262, is a K-6 Special Service School with a utilization rate of

112%. There are two other schools serving the area, J.H.S. 35, which is a 97% utilized, 7-9 Special Service School, and P.S. 21, a K-6 Special Service School with a utilization rate of 110%. A new 1,300 pupil, K-6 school (P.S. 5), is being constructed one block north and one block east of the study area. This school, which is an additional school rather than a replacement, will tend to alleviate overcrowding in the area.

In addition to the public schools, the area contains two parochial schools, one Catholic and one Hebrew. While the Catholic school does serve a few children who reside close by, those attending the Jewish school are all bussed into the area. The building which houses the Yeshiva was formerly a public school and was recently acquired for its present purpose.

Adjacent to the play area of P.S. 262, which has a small children's playground, there is an intensively used playground administered by the Department of Parks. This playground is equipped with basketball courts, a shower basin, and benches and tables. Another small children's playground equipped with benches and a shower basin is directly adjacent to Fulton Park. This park, which covers an area of under two acres, is the only park facility in the entire area. It is serviced by three permanent and one temporary maintenance employees, and only one temporary recreation employee. Residents have repeatedly contended that the park needs considerably more supervisory personnel. As evidence, they cite the fact that, in spite of its walks, benches, shelter, and comfort station, the park is never intensively used.

An after school community center, located at P.S. 35, one block west of the study area, serves junior high school students. The Nazerene Congregational Church, located at the intersection of McDonough and Patchen Avenues, also has a new recreation center which serves the area.

The Stuyvesant Heights study area contains seven churches, one of which is a store front church. In addition, the Holy Rosary Convent is located adjacent to its school building, on Bainbridge Street.

Vacant Land

The area is almost totally built up. The 10 vacant lots which are scattered throughout the twelve blocks are quite small. Six of these ten lots have an area of 2,500 square feet or less, two range between 2,500 and 5,000 square feet, and the largest two have an area of between 5,000 and 8,000 square feet.

Traffic and Transit

Reid, Patchen, and Ralph Avenues all carry two-way traffic. The amount of traffic utilizing these facilities is exceedingly high since the area is mid-way between Southern Brooklyn and Manhattan. (See Map 9, "Traffic Volumes"). Although traffic counts were not available for Patchen Avenue, field observation indicates that its traffic volumes are similar to that on Ralph Avenue. The only east-west street which functions as a secondary arterial is Halsey Street, which carries two-way traffic. All of these streets, and particularly those which carry two-way traffic, are badly over-loaded. By contrast, with the exception of Halsey Street, the east-west streets are used primarily to give

direct access to the abutting property and present no major traffic problems.

Public transportation appears to be adequate except when service is limited on weekends and holidays. The area is serviced by the Utica Avenue Express Station of the IND "A" Train. In addition, busses run east-west on Fulton and Halsey Streets, and north-south on Reid and Ralph Avenues. (See Map 8, "Transportation").

Condition of Housing

The results of the detailed rehabilitation survey (which included the inspection of the exterior of every structure in the study area and of the interior of over 60% thereof) revealed that 61% of all residence buildings still provide safe and adequate shelter, and contain only slight defects, if any. Almost all buildings, regardless of condition, were equipped with basic plumbing facilities. Only 10.5% were dilapidated to the point of rendering continual occupancy unsafe and a health hazard for their residents. The balance of 28.5% of all structures were found to be in deteriorating condition, where, as a result of inadequate maintenance, two or more conditions require corrective action beyond the scope of routine maintenance. (See Map 3, "Building Conditions"). Especially in need of attention are the buildings along the north-south streets that contain commercial facilities on the ground floor. The commercial establishments consist primarily of marginal luncheonettes, beauty parlors, fixit shops, cleaners, shoe shine-candy parlors, etc., housed in generally substandard buildings. A substantial number of stores in the area are vacant.

These buildings, which line all the north-south streets in the study area with the exception of Stuyvesant Avenue, pose the greatest problem to the community, in social as well as physical terms. They generally exhibit the following characteristics:

- 1) the highest degree of dilapidation;
- 2) the highest degree of overcrowding;
- 3) the highest incidence of narcotics addiction and other social problems;
- 4) the lowest percentage of owner occupied structures;
- 5) the highest incidence of families dependent upon public assistance.

It is interesting to note that residents of these structures were the most reluctant to take part in the family interviews which were conducted as part of the social survey.

The entire Stuyvesant Heights study area is clearly on the verge of sliding into total deterioration, and in need of early attention if this eventuality is to be prevented. With 39% of its over 1,200 buildings in dilapidated or deteriorating condition, the area qualifies for urban renewal treatment under current Federal regulations (which require that only 20% of all structures be deficient). It should be pointed out at the outset that the term "urban renewal", as used in relation to the Stuyvesant Heights study area, would contemplate predominantly rehabilitation and conservation activities, with clearance limited only to the dilapidated or otherwise unsalvageable structures.

Social Data

Throughout the study area, the ratio of home ownership is exceedingly high (see Table 1). Approximately 22.5% of the area's 1,177 residential structures are owner occupied, while the owners of 9.7% additional structures lived nearby (see Map 7, "Owner Occupied Housing"). These figures compare favorably with the over-all Bedford-Stuyvesant ratio of 15%, the Central Harlem average of 2%, the New York City average of 21%, and about equals the Brooklyn ratio of 22.7%. The Stuyvesant Heights ratio of home ownership is not only remarkable because of its central location, but also because it occurs in a ghetto area.

Table 1

Owner Occupied Structures

Stuyvesant Heights Study Area
November-December, 1964

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage of Total</u>
Owner Occupied	266	22.5
Owner in Area	133	9.7
Absentee Ownership	<u>778</u>	<u>67.8</u>
Total Residential Structures	1,177	100.0

Source: Survey by Planning Department, Pratt Institute.

The social survey* covered 580 families, or one out of every five families living in the area. Of these, 309 interviews were not completed, either because of inability of interviewer to make contact with the selected family, despite repeated call-backs, or because not enough questions were adequately answered. Of the 271 families surveyed, 47.7% were homeowners, 49.6% were tenants, and only 2.7% were boarders or roomers. With two or three exceptions, all those interviewed were Negro, a fact which reflects the racial composition of the area.

An important index of social stability of an area is the length of residence of its inhabitants. The average length of residence of owners is 15.5 years with a range of from 1 month to 38 years. The average length of residence for tenants in this area is just under 4 years, with a range of from 4 months to 22 years. The figures for tenants vary from block to block, and they exhibit a high degree of correlation between length of residence and the physical condition of the block. The lower the percentage of deterioration and dilapidation, the longer the average length of residence for the tenant. In response to inquiries as to

*The social survey questionnaire was developed in conjunction with the Fulton Park Community Council, a local council of block associations, educational groups, civic organizations, merchants, and interested individuals, who joined together because of the possibility that the Fulton Park area will be designated for an Urban Renewal Project. One of the first activities of this group was to conduct a "self-study", in order to develop a basis for local recommendations regarding the renewal project. Since the Stuyvesant Heights study area is contiguous to the potential Fulton Park Renewal Project, and since many of the active members of the Fulton Park Community Council reside in the study area, it was felt that it would be beneficial to make the two surveys similar.

whether the interviewee planned to stay in the neighborhood or move away, approximately 7.5% indicated that they actively planned to move, and another 9% indicated that they may move. The average age of those heads of household who plan to move was 32.5 years (the age range of all interviewees was 20-67 years). Since the average age of all heads of households interviewed was 45.4 years, it appears that the younger families are the ones which tend to leave the community. Continued loss of this segment of the population with its potential interest in improved education and a more wholesome environment for their young children, is a major problem which must be stemmed, or at least counterbalanced by a corresponding in-migration, if the area's social structure is not to be irreparably damaged.

All indications are that the rate of deterioration has increased during the past few years, primarily along Patchen, Reid, and Halsey Avenues. Not unexpectedly, these are also the only streets through the area which still carry two-way traffic. According to the survey, 40% of those interviewed (both tenants and owners) felt that the neighborhood was worse now than when they first moved into the area, 43% felt that the neighborhood was the same and 16% said that it was better.

It is interesting to note that the majority of those who thought that the neighborhood had improved were predominantly elderly homeowners who have lived in the area an average of 19.5 years, ranging from 1 year to 48 years.

The 3.34-person average size of household found in the Stuyvesant Heights study area is almost identical with that of the entire Bedford-Stuyvesant community (3.3, according to the 1960 Census). By way of comparison, the Brooklyn

average in 1960 was 2.8, which almost equalled the City-wide figure of 2.7.

An attempt was made to secure data on the income of the study area residents, but the sample secured is insufficient as a basis for policy formulation. Of the 271 interviews which were completed in all other respects, only 120 were able to secure income data. In addition, 19 families reported that they depended on Social Security (2) on retirement income (7), on welfare (6), or were unemployed (4). (See Table 2). The results of the survey are especially suspect in that families living in the worst buildings were the most uncooperative. The figures given in Table 3, with respect to the 120 families that did volunteer income data, are offered only as a possible indication of the presence, in the area, of an economic strength, particularly among the homeowners, which might be adequate to meet the demands of a thorough rehabilitation program.

Table 2

Families Reporting Income

Stuyvesant Heights Study Area

Tenure	Completed Total Interviews	Total Report- ing Income	Percent Reporting
Tenants	136	65	47.6
Owner	127	51	40.0
Boarder	8	4	50.0
All	271	120	44.5

Source: Survey by Planning Department, Pratt Institute.

Table 3

Median Family Income

Stuyvesant Heights Study Area

<u>Tenure</u>	<u>Total No. Reporting</u>	<u>% of All Reporting Income</u>	<u>Median Income</u>
Tenant	65	54.2	\$5,135.00
Owner	51	42.5	7,675.00
Boarder	4	3.3	5,130.00
All	120	100.0	\$6,215.00

Source: Survey by Planning Department, Pratt Institute.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the increasing rate of deterioration, the Stuyvesant Heights study area has the potential to become one of the city's more attractive residential communities. The City's impending investment, with massive Federal and State aid, in the adjoining Fulton Park urban renewal project area could only be justified if it contributed to the creation there of a model low and middle-income community. The planning and execution of that project will take a number of years, probably not less than five, and possibly as many as eight to ten. Given a continuation of present trends, by the time the rebuilding and rehabilitation of that neighborhood is completed, the Stuyvesant Heights area may well exhibit most of the present characteristics of the Fulton Park area.

It is, therefore, quite obvious that the protection of neighborhoods whose condition is as sound as that of the Stuyvesant Height study area must be planned to take place coincidentally with the activities contemplated to be undertaken as part of the adjoining urban renewal project. The form of protection which the area needs is not of the kind which can be extended by an intensification of policing of its streets (although, judging by local residents' expressed concerns, quite a lot can and should be done in that direction as well). What the area needs is a maximum effort to conserve and up-grade all its still sound structures, to rehabilitate its deteriorating buildings, and to clear and redevelop those which are dilapidated or totally obsolete. The area also needs the provision, by the City, of such amenities as adequate schools, parks, and playgrounds, not inferior to those which its more upwardly mobile residents could reasonably

expect to find if they moved into newer, more outlying areas. And finally, the neighborhood also needs the full complement of services, such as adequate police protection or sanitation, which the City customarily extends to its better sections. To rehabilitate their homes, many of its residents will need the full range of financial aids available under the urban renewal program; and, in view of the relative helplessness of some of the more recent arrivals, the old, and the dependent, the area will also need the full focussing thereon of all social welfare programs which may become available under the City's constantly broadening anti-poverty program.

Failure on the City's part to extend this full range of assistance programs to an area on the verge of sliding into decay would constitute the kind of waste which the City itself has consistently deplored ever since the inception of its large scale slum clearance efforts. By the time that the Fulton Park slum is eradicated, it will have spilled over into the presently still eminently salvageable Stuyvesant Heights neighborhood. Consequently, in order to preserve the physical and social fabric of the study area from the total disintegration by which it is now threatened, we recommend as follows:

1. That the boundaries of the Fulton Park urban renewal area be expanded to include the Stuyvesant Heights area and such other contiguous areas (see Map 2, "Study Area and Vicinity") that would create a renewal effort of meaningful proportions.
2. That, as soon as possible following the designation of the area for urban renewal, the Housing and Redevelopment Board, utilizing Federal Survey

and Planning funds, establish at least two, and possibly as many as three or four, local service offices, to supervise local programs designed to avoid further deterioration during the planning stage, and to initiate at the earliest possible date actual execution activities (such as may be feasible under the early land acquisition procedure or in assisting private rehabilitation efforts).

3. That included among the services to be made available in the said local site offices be (a) architectural, financial, and other advisory services to enable local residents to take the fullest advantage of all applicable City, State and Federal programs; and (b) the technical resources needed to coordinate the various City services and code enforcement activities which would have to become involved in any effort to achieve over-all rehabilitation of the area.
4. That the City be prepared to move decisively in an early program of spot clearance of dilapidated or otherwise unrehabitable structures, and that it mobilize all the subsidiary social welfare programs which may be needed to permit such action to proceed.
5. That the area's present R-6 zoning pattern (which permits as many as 90-100 dwelling units per acre) be re-evaluated, in order that the neighborhood's prime asset, which is so important to its residents, namely its attached low-rise brownstone character, be preserved.
6. That the City make a full study of all problems present in the area in order to allow the full complement of social welfare programs to be mobilized, probably under the aegis of the local office of the City's Anti-Poverty Board,

at the time when such services can be of greatest assistance not only in the rehabilitation of the families in need thereof, but also in facilitating the task of physical rehabilitation.

7. That, as soon as possible following designation, the Housing and Re-development Board develop a tentative over-all plan for the entire area, which, among other things, would:
- (a) Attempt to minimize through traffic along purely residential streets.
 - (b) Formulate a housing program closely geared to the needs of the residents of the area affected, and designed to achieve an optimum residential environment with maximum chance of long-range stability.
 - (c) Formulate such school construction program as may be needed to actually make available necessary new facilities at the time when the new housing will be ready for occupancy.
 - (d) Formulate a program of park and playground construction, and street rebuilding and landscaping, designed to fully realize the area's potential as an exceedingly desirable residential neighborhood.
 - (e) Formulate a program for the up-grading, if possible, or, if not, of replacement, of such neighborhood commercial facilities as may be needed to serve the future residents of the neighborhood.
 - (f) Analyze the need for, and formulate a program for the establishment of, such additional cultural, recreational, and other community facilities as may be needed throughout the broader area of which the renewal project will be a part.

8. That the Fulton Park--Stuyvesant Heights urban renewal program be considered as the first phase of a continuing and sustained renewal and rehabilitation effort for the entire Bedford-Stuyvesant Community, and that the necessary planning and programming activities be commenced forthwith.
9. That, in order to permit the City to move with flexibility and without loss of momentum from one activity to its logical sequel, the entire Bedford-Stuyvesant Community be designated by the City Planning Commission as an area suitable for urban renewal activities.

APPENDIX

Family Attitudes to Their Environment

The social survey included a number of questions designed to throw some light on the attitude of the Stuyvesant Heights families to their own neighborhood. The findings based on the most frequently expressed comments, are presented below with full awareness of their possible lack of universality.

Juvenile Delinquency ranks first among the problems listed by residents in the area, and the feelings concerning this problem are quite consistent throughout the neighborhood. Families that live nearest the schools and playgrounds indicate a greater awareness of the need for supervised playground and after-school programs.

Community Comments

- *"teenage rowdiness...boys run wild...all over the place"
- *"frequent beatings and robberies by gangs"
- *"parks should be locked at night...more supervised playgrounds needed"
- *"gambling near school...profanity"
- *"rough boys on corner"

Crime and Nuisance. Closely related to the Juvenile Delinquency problem and high on the list is the high incidence of crime in the area.

Community Comments:

- *"Robberies...Burglaries...poor police protection"
- *"People loiter in and around building"

*"Robberies, derelicts...area too congested"

*"dangerous at night...many holdups at night...light needed"

*"girl murdered next door"

*"disorderly people from other areas"

Liquor Stores. One of the most pervasive problems in the area is the frequent incidence of liquor stores and bars, which number close to a dozen, or one per block in the study area. The survey indicated a direct relationship between the incidence of derelicts and vagrants and the distance from the liquor stores and bars. The blighting effect of these establishments, both in physical and social terms, is quite evident.

Community Comments:

*"removal of bar on corner...needed"

*"Patchen Avenue bar should be closed"

*"drunks in area create problems"

*"too many bars on Putnam and Ralph Avenues...Reid Avenue"

*"too many teenagers who drink in area"

*"too many drunks in neighborhood..."

Overcrowding, density and mobility appeared to be a problem recognized by many, especially by those living near Halsey Street and Reid Avenue and the public schools.

Community Comments:

*"more children now on block than ever"

*"overpopulation of neighborhood"

*"too many children...too few schools...playgrounds"

*"undesirables moving into neighborhood...many people moving out...whites moving out...people from Harlem coming in...many people moving in from South...people moving in and out".

Reid Avenue was singled out by residents as posing one of the most serious problems for the area. Criticism was greatest in areas nearest to this north-south artery.

Community Comments:

*"bad traffic on Reid...Reid should be made into a one-way street... should be improved"

*"welfare building on Reid Avenue and Halsey Street"

*"rooming houses--improvements needed on Reid Avenue"

*"deterioration of Reid Avenue...major problem"

*"bus service bad on Reid Avenue"

*"too many bars on Reid Avenue...drunks on Reid Avenue"

*"Reid Avenue is terrible"

*"Reid Avenue...makes this an undesirable neighborhood"

*"crowds collect on Reid Avenue"

City Services generally were considered adequate, with approximately 85% of those interviewed, rating them from fair to good, and the remainder considering them inferior. There were no "excellent" appraisals. A number of people complained of sanitation services in the area but these complaints were not too widespread.

Inadequate Police Protection and the need for more effective action against illegal activities was a constant complaint throughout the area, and was one of the primary concerns of the residents.*

Transportation was generally considered adequate and was listed by many as one of the area's major assets. However, there were a number of complaints concerning the bus service on Reid, Ralph and Putnam Avenues.

*"better (bus) transportation needed... especially on weekends"

Traffic creates major problems along all the north-south streets and on Halsey Street. Halsey is a two-way street, with bus traffic, and is the only east-west street with a problem of this type. The other east-west streets are generally quiet. The majority of complaints center around (a) poor traffic regulation, and (b) heavily travelled two-way streets:

Community Comments:

*"too much traffic...child hit by car"

*"no traffic light on some streets...stop signs, traffic light needed"

*"Halsey...Reid...should be made one-way"

Other problems of major concern to local residents were:

*"inadequate and overcrowded educational facilities"

*"high priced and inferior goods"

*"welfare recipients"

*The recent murder of three butchers on Fulton Avenue caused the leaders of the Fulton Park Community Council to form a volunteer civilian patrol equipped with police dogs, and to suggest that, if the City's police cannot control the situation they will appeal to the Governor for help.

*"drug addiction"

*"high densities and overcrowding"

*"need for new housing to attract and keep middle-income families in the area (cooperatives were frequently mentioned as a desirable type of solution to this problem).

*"need for home improvement loans on easier terms than presently available"

*"need for street improvements and landscaping (i.e. benches, tables, and, above all, trees)

*"need for better shopping facilities"

APPENDIX B

Illustrations



Fig. 1 These multiple dwellings are located on Bainbridge Street, opposite the Brevoort Houses. They are excessively overcrowded and the interiors are in poor condition. The liquor store attracts many derelicts to the area. This type of structure may be suited for rehabilitation.



Fig. 2

These multiple dwellings are located on Bainbridge Street and Patchen Avenue across the street from the structures shown in Fig. 1. These structures are also excessively overcrowded, with the equivalent of 12 families living in 8 units. This type of structure may be suited for rehabilitation.



Fig. 3 These buildings, located on Halsey Street between Patchen and Ralph Avenues, are densely populated and are in extremely poor condition. Many indications are that, originally, these buildings were designed for 6 families, but each contains many families in excess of that number.



Fig. 4 Detail of Halsey Street tenements. The conditions shown in photograph were present during most of three months that were devoted to the survey of the area.



Fig. 5 Intersection at Halsey Street and Reid Avenue. Traffic at the intersection of these two-way streets tends to get quite congested, especially during rush hours and when deliveries are being made. In addition, both these streets are used as bus routes.



Fig. 6

Scattered throughout the area are several vacant properties which are poorly maintained and which, in addition to their blighting influence, are an attraction for derelicts and alcoholics.



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

Reid Avenue. The first floors of the structures on Reid Avenue, as are also those on Patchen and Ralph Avenues, are devoted to commercial uses. These are generally marginal and in poor condition. Many of the food shops and candy stores are popular meeting places for teenagers living in and around the area.



Fig. 9



Fig. 10 One of the major problems is the over-abundance of bars and liquor stores in the area. In addition to being a blighting influence on the surrounding area, this factor is believed to contribute heavily to the social and economic problems of the community.



Fig. 11 Bar and Grill on the corner opposite P.S. 262, on Reid Avenue. A rather unhappy juxtaposition of uses.



Fig. 12 Throughout the area there are well maintained brownstone structures, a limited number of which have been converted for multi-family use and/or rooming houses. These buildings are on Stuyvesant Street, the only north-south street which is not lined with stores.



Fig. 13 The Stuyvesant Heights area has the highest concentration of block associations in Bedford-Stuyvesant. The sign shown in the photograph, as well as the quality of the buildings, are the trademarks of these associations.



Fig. 14

Scattered throughout the area are buildings which have recently been renovated. The family surveys indicate that if a better financial climate existed in the area, more rehabilitation probably would take place.



Fig. 15 A little help along a street like this can go a long way toward preserving it from decay.
Bainbridge Street and Reid Avenue.

APPENDIX C

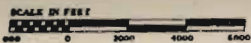
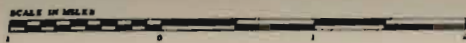
Maps



BEDFORD-STUYVESANT RENEWAL PROGRAM
STUYVESANT-HEIGHTS STUDY
PREPARED BY: PLANNING DEPARTMENT, PRATT INSTITUTE
AT THE REQUEST OF: CHURCH COMMUNITY SERVICES




LOCATION 1

BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN

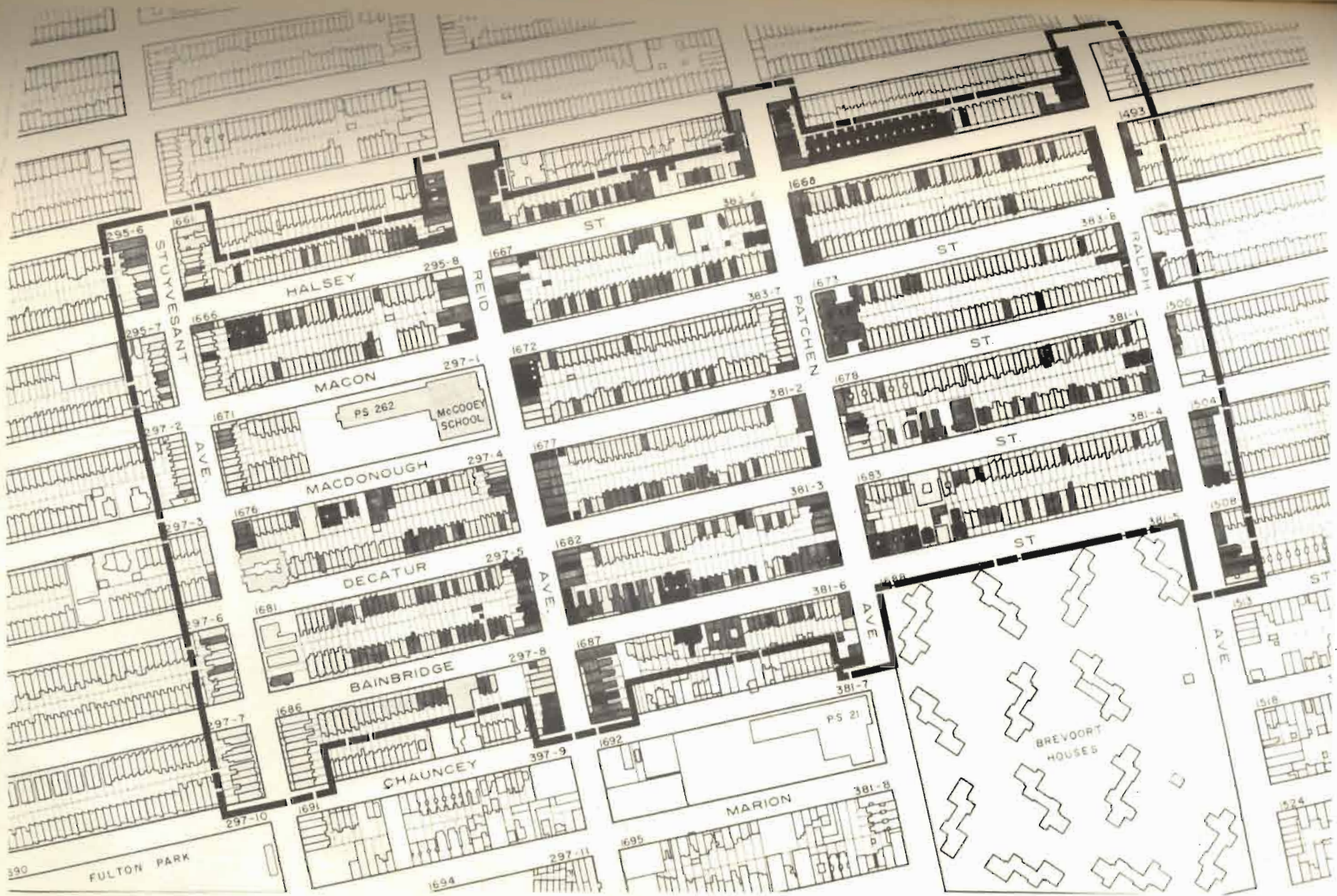


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LEGEND

-  STUYVESANT HEIGHTS STUDY AREA
-  EUSTON PARK URBAN RENEWAL STUDY AREA
Presently in Predevelopment stage
-  CHILDRENS MUSEUM OF NEW YORK PROJECT
Presently in Predevelopment stage

**STUDY AREA
 & VICINITY**



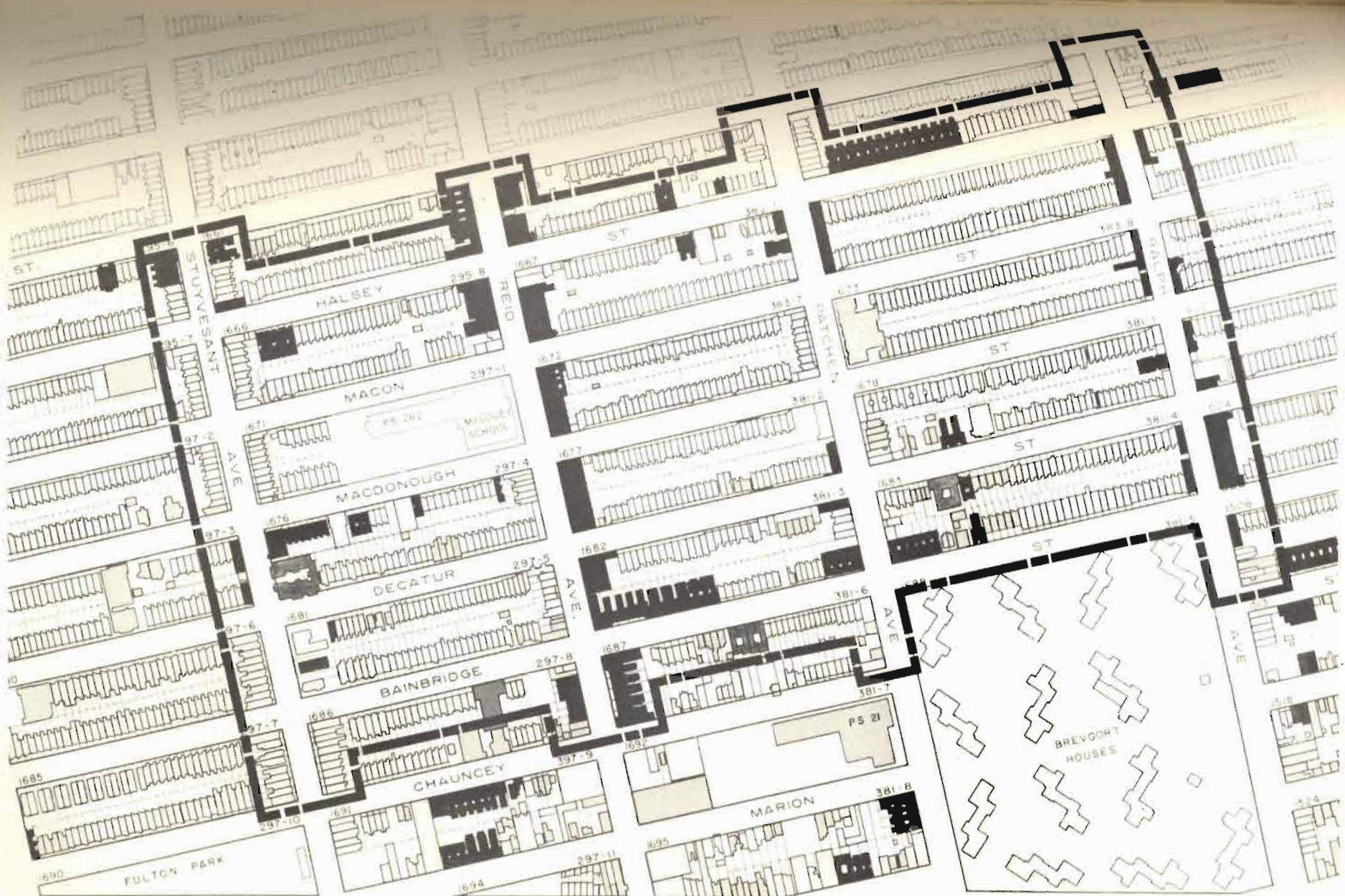
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LEGEND
 SOUND
 DETERIORATING
 DILAPIDATED
 Source: Field Survey

BUILDING CONDITIONS

SCALE



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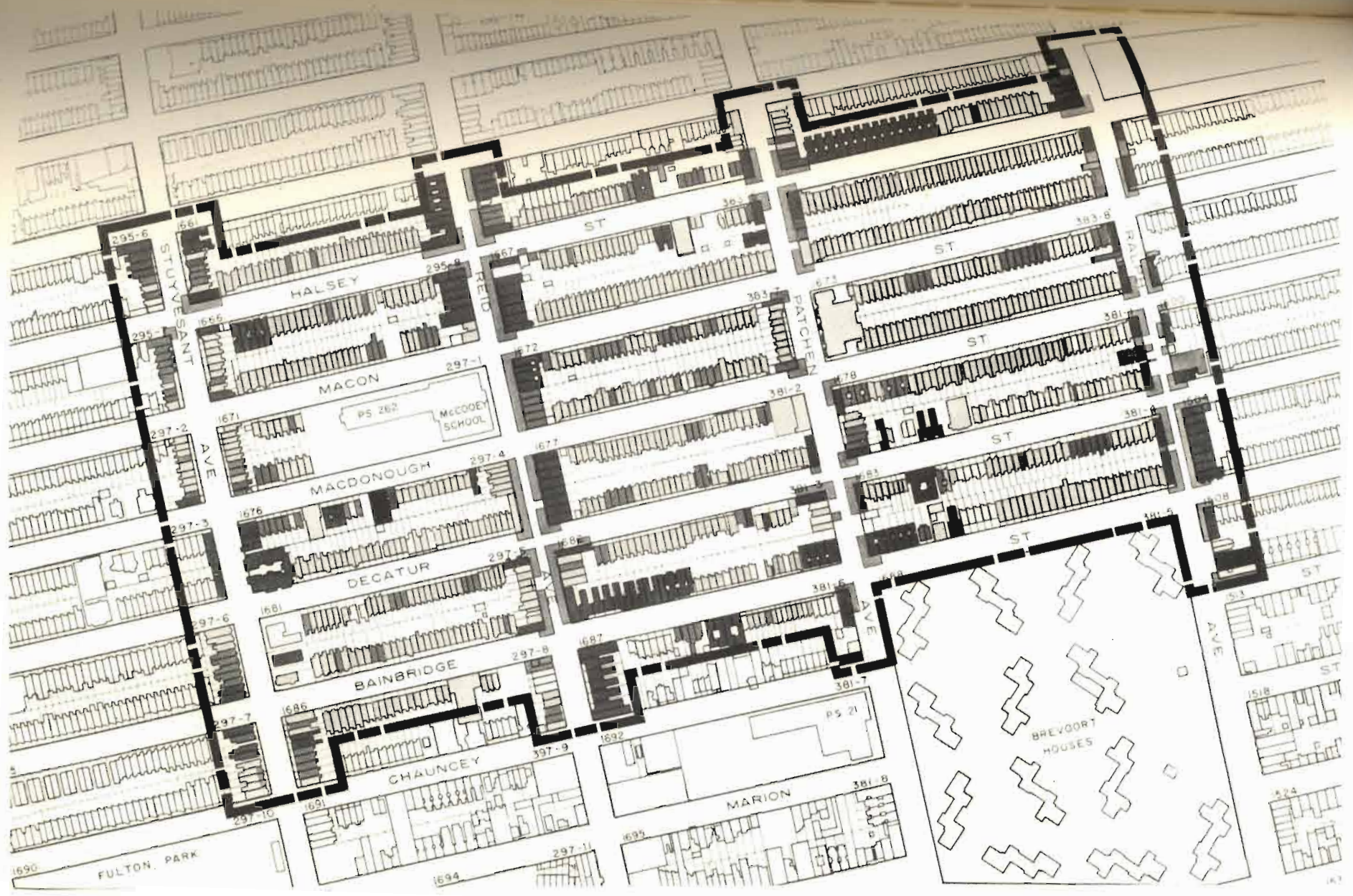
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LEGEND

	MAJOR VEHICULAR WAY		NEW LAW ELEV. SIGN
	NEW LAW WALKWAY		MULTIPLE DWELLING
	MAJOR		FOUR STOREY OR MORE
	FRAME		TWO - THREE STOREY
			ONE STOREY

BUILDING TYPES

SCALE



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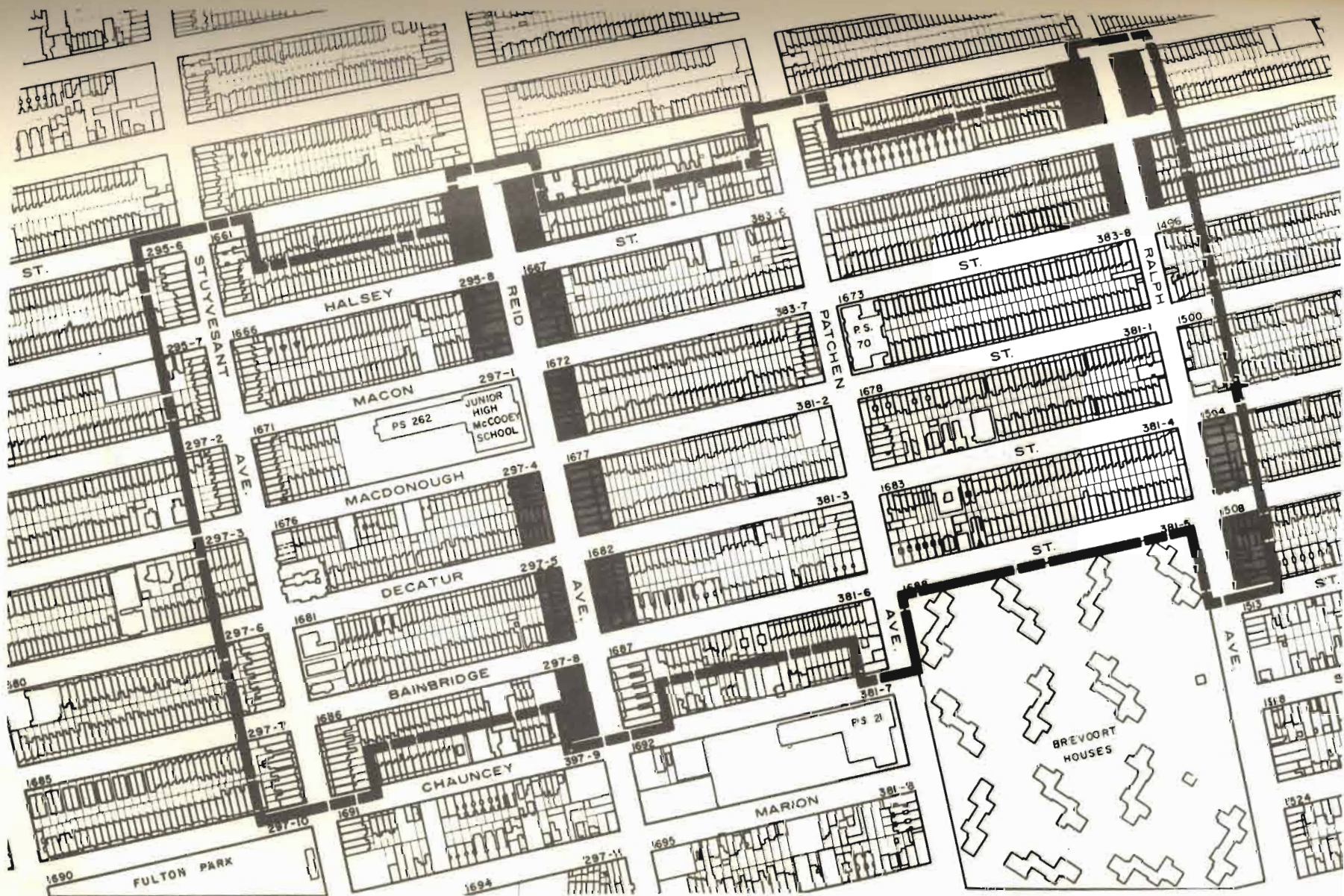
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LEGEND

	SINGLE FAMILY		INDUSTRIAL
	THREE & FOUR FAMILY		PUBLIC SQUARE
	WORKING-CLASS		OTHER PUBLIC
	APARTMENT		RECREATION
	COMMERCIAL		SUB-PUBLIC
			VAULT

LAND USE

SCALE



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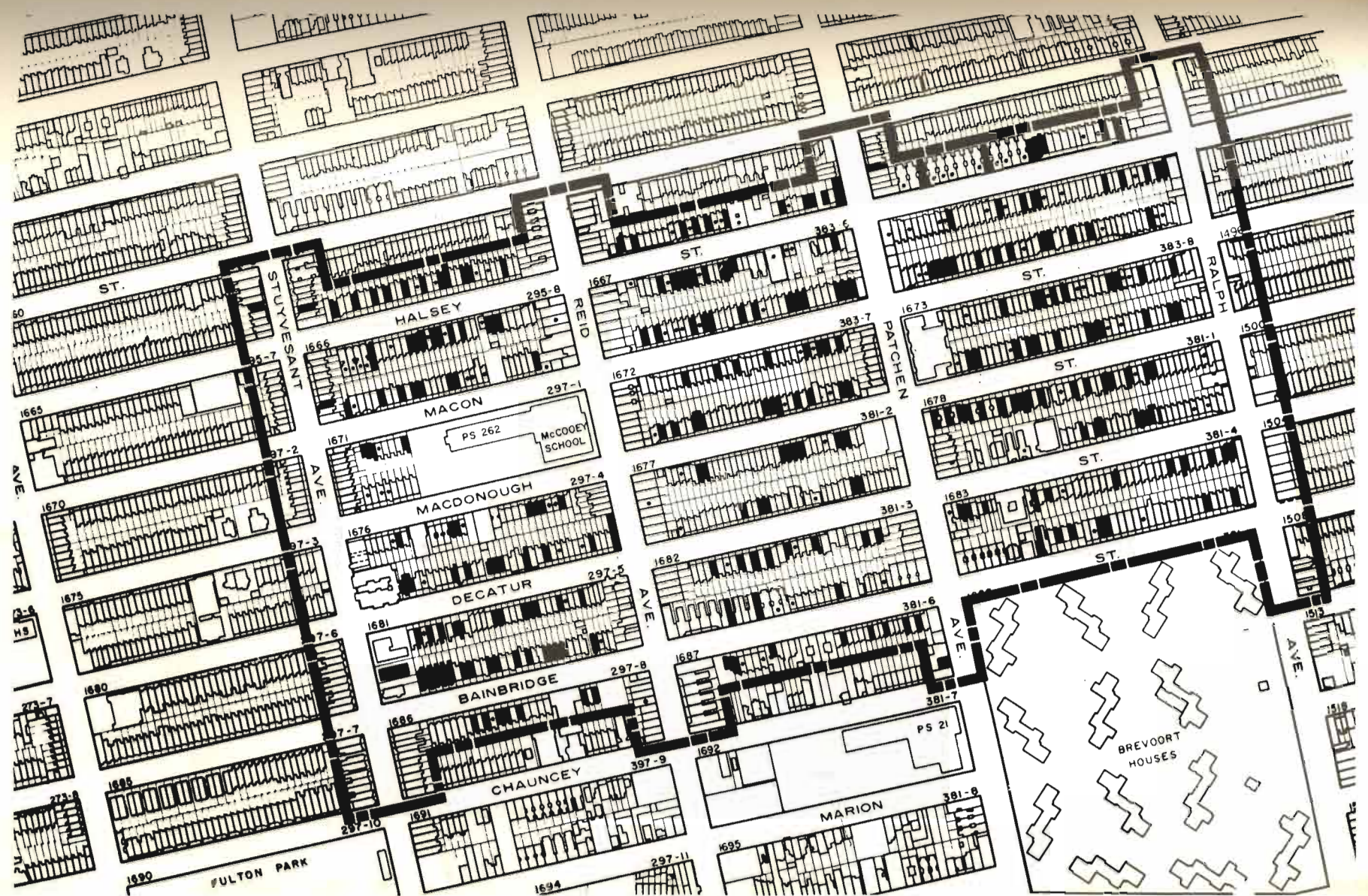
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ZONING

■ COMMERCIAL
 ■ RESIDENTIAL
 □ UNDEVELOPED

SCALE

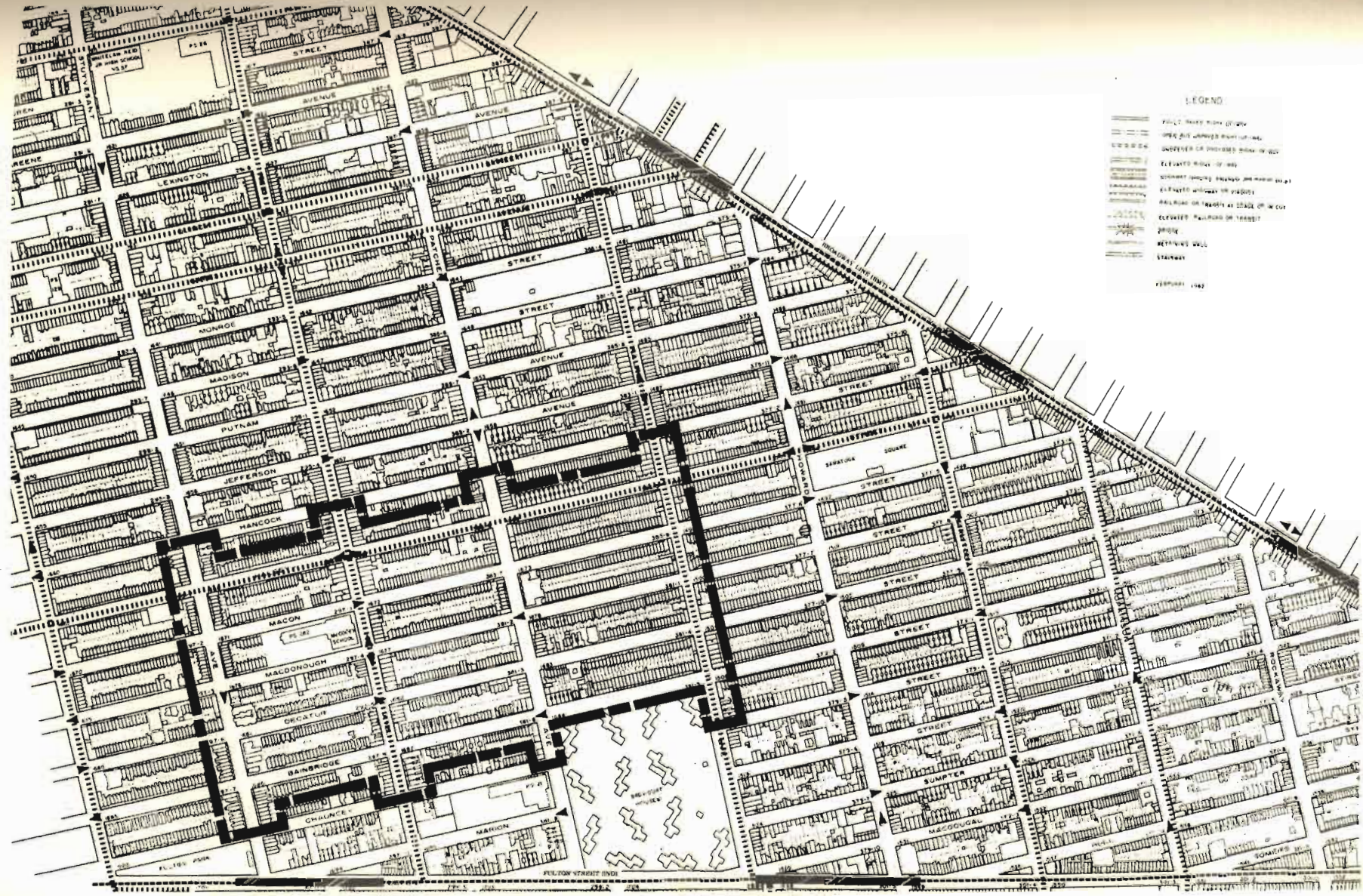


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LEGEND
 ■ OWNER OCC. BY IND. STRUCTURE
 ◻ OWNER RESIDES IN AREA
 ◻ OWNER RESIDES ELSEWHERE

OWNER OCCUPANCY

SCALE 1" = 100'



LEGEND

- FULLY PAVED HIGHWAY
- OPEN AND UNPAVED HIGHWAY
- UNPAVED OR UNPAVED DRIVEWAY
- ELEVATED RAILROAD
- STREET LIGHTING
- ELEVATED HIGHWAY OR VIADUCT
- RAILROAD TRACKS AT GRADE OR IN CUT
- ELEVATED RAILROAD OR TUNNEL
- BRIDGE
- RETAINING WALL
- STAIRWAY

FEBRUARY 1962

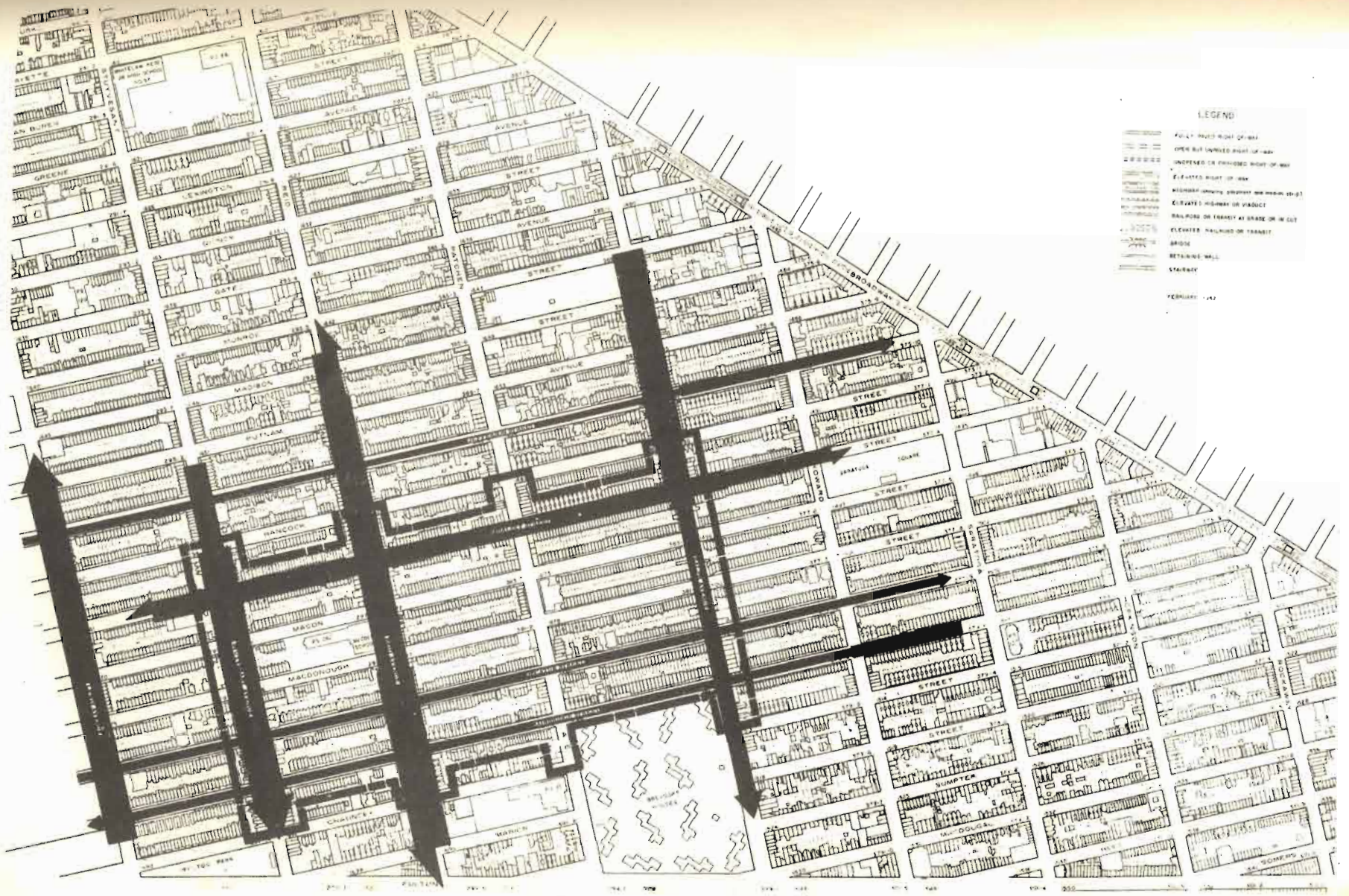


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TRAFFIC & TRANSPORTATION

LEGEND

- TRAFFIC ROUTE
- SUBWAY STATION



LEGEND

- FULL TRUCK ROUTE OF WAY
- OPEN BUT UNPAVED ROAD OF WAY
- IMPROVED OR FINISHED ROAD OF WAY
- ELEVATED ROAD OF WAY
- HIGHWAY UNDER CONSTRUCTION
- ELEVATED HIGHWAY OR VIADUCT
- RAILROAD OR TRAMWAY AT GRADE OR IN CUT
- ELEVATED RAILROAD OR TRAMWAY
- BRIDGE
- RETAINING WALL
- STAIRWAY

FEBRUARY 1947

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TRAFFIC VOLUMES



Source: Traffic Department of New York City