



Fort Independence Cultural Resource Survey

Report prepared for the
Fort Independence Park Neighborhood Association
Kingsbridge
Bronx, New York

Report Prepared by
Anthony W. Robins
Thompson & Columbus, Inc.

December 2011

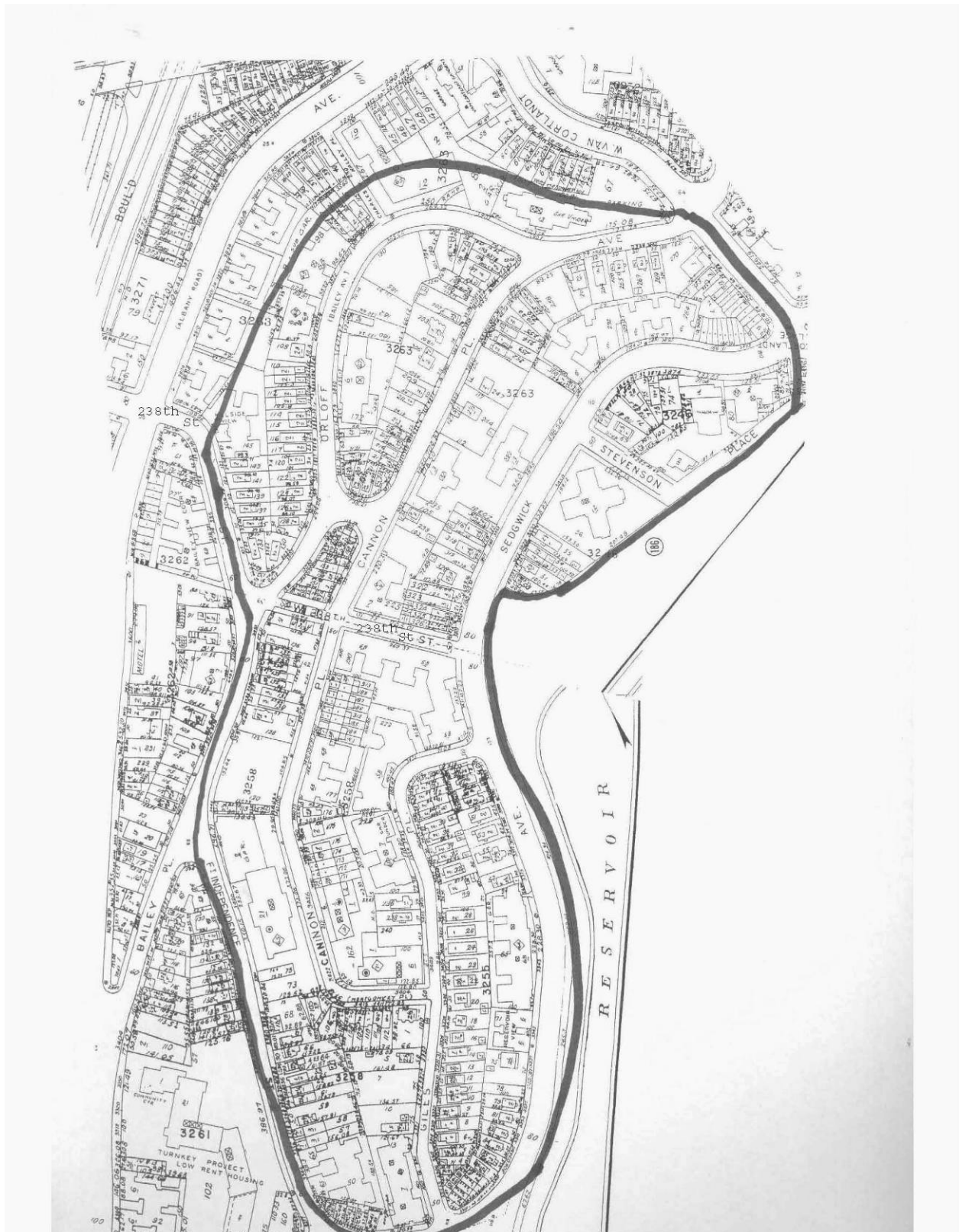
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a grant program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

2011
SURVEY STUDY AREA



INTRODUCTION

In October of 2011, the Fort Independence Park Neighborhood Association (FIPNA) received a Jeffe Preservation Fund grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to undertake a survey of the Fort Independence area in Kingsbridge, the Bronx.

The survey area covered eight blocks in the Fort Independence neighborhood (also known as Van Cortlandt Village) of the northwest Bronx, beginning two blocks south of Van Cortlandt Park and continuing three blocks further south, and starting at the western edge of the Jerome Park Reservoir along Sedgwick Avenue and extending two blocks west to Fort Independence Street. Streets in the survey area included Orloff Avenue, Van Cortlandt Avenue West, Cannon Place Sedgwick Avenue, Stevenson Place, West 238th Street, and Giles Place.

The area is almost entirely residential, including large apartment complexes surrounded by two- and three-story brick and frame one- and two-family houses. While one large housing complex within the district – the Sholem Aleichem houses – has been found individually eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the remaining portion of the area has been under growing pressure, as single-family houses have given way to large new apartment blocks, as along Orloff Avenue and Fort Independence Street.

Methodology

The Fort Independence Cultural Resource Survey was undertaken in the fall of 2011 by architectural historian Anthony W. Robins, an independent preservation consultant whose extensive experience includes 20 years on the staff of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, where he served as Deputy Director of Research and then Director of Survey. In those positions, he supervised research and survey efforts throughout the city. He had the assistance of Kristin Hart, President of the Fort Independence Park Neighborhood Association, who had undertaken much prior research as part of the Association's efforts at neighborhood documentation and preservation. Ms. Hart credits the late Arax Hogroian, of FIPNA, with the initial effort to create a historic district and tell the neighborhood's story, as well as Lynn Schwarz, and also Karen Argenti for her tireless research.

The survey involved, first, a reconnaissance survey of the relatively small and compact area. A smaller area was determined to have the most cohesive character, and that area was photographed and researched. Research resources included Bronx Building Department docket books (microfilm version located at Avery Library at Columbia University) – which provided dates and architects for roughly 70% of the buildings in the proposed historic district (additional research in the Bronx Buildings Department will be required to determine the architects and dates of the remaining buildings) – and extensive on-line resources including real-estate coverage in the *New York Times* and other periodicals, as well as the *Real Estate Record and Guide*. Ms. Hart made available the results of extensive library research she had conducted, including histories of the Bronx, especially its Colonial period; material relating to Frederic Law Olmsted and his connection to the layout of the area's street patterns; and historic maps and other material. She also searched through materials available at the Bronx Historical Society. Also helpful was a study of several of the area's buildings in a Columbia University School of Preservation studio, "Reading Buildings, Fall 2009," conducted by Francois Bollack, Ward Dennis, and Andrew Dolkart; Professor Dolkart kindly made the studio report available to the author.

Summary of Findings

The result of the survey was the recommendation of a small Fort Independence Historic District, covering slightly more than half of the survey area. The boundaries are Orloff Avenue, with a portion of West 238th

Street adjoining it, Cannon Place and Giles Place. This area includes the neo-Tudor apartment complex known as Sholem Aleichem houses (Springsteen & Goldhammer, 1926); clusters of similarly styled neo-Tudor single-family houses on Giles Place (Benjamin Driesler, 1933 and 1936), Cannon Place (Solomon Pomeranz, 1932 and 1923, and Manoug Exerjian, 1925) and Orloff Avenue; a variety of single-family houses along the rest of Cannon Place (Matthew Del Gaudio 1915/1916) and Giles Place (Dwight James Baum 1922); and a group of twelve early “garden homes,” on Orloff Avenue and West 238th Street (Hoppin & Koen, 1922).

The survey also identified three buildings – Nos. 3826 and 3828 Sedgwick Avenue and No. 3868 Sedgwick Avenue – as potentially eligible for individual listing, but they will need to have the historic integrity of their interiors assessed before a formal eligibility determination can be made.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FORT INDEPENDENCE AREA OF KINGSBRIDGE: SUMMARY

The Fort Independence area has a history that in some ways is typical of the Bronx in general but in others is specific to the area. Like most of the Bronx, the neighborhood’s development can be traced back to early land grants and estates. Unlike most of the Bronx, Kingsbridge played an active role in the defense of New York City during the American Revolution, and was the site of a major fortification, “Fort Independence.” Like most of the West Bronx, the neighborhood sits on hilly terrain; unlike most of the Bronx, it maintains an early street plan, separate from the standard grid laid out over the rest of the borough, that reflects early plans by Frederick Law Olmsted. Like most of the West Bronx, the neighborhood has building stock divided between small single-family houses and five- and six-story apartment houses. Unlike most of the Bronx, it has a major, 15-building apartment complex from the mid-1920s built for working-class socialist immigrants devoted to the preservation of Yiddish culture.

REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY

The early Colonial and Revolutionary-War history of Kingsbridge is reflected in the names of its streets. Kingsbridge itself takes its name from a much-hated toll bridge – tolls taken by the King of England – that once connected Manhattan and the Bronx; that section of the Harlem River was filled in, roughly along contemporary West 225th Street (the waterway currently connecting the Harlem and Hudson rivers is the Harlem River Ship Canal). Fort Independence Street takes its name from the Revolutionary-era Fort; Cannon Place takes its name from the cannon and cannon balls found on the site of the fort much later in the neighborhood’s history; and Orloff Avenue is said to take its name from a corruption of Olaf, the first of the Van Cortlandt family to settle in the Bronx. Giles Place takes its name from the Giles estate and home (demolished) that later occupied the site of Fort Independence.

Fort Independence was built during the American Revolution as part of a series of fortifications erected to control the exit and entrance to New York from the mainland. It was built on the Montgomery farm on Tetard’s Hill. As described in the *Bulletin* of the New York State Archeological Association:¹

On May 25, 1775, after the news of Concord and Lexington, the Continental Congress in Philadelphia resolved:

“First, that a Post be immediately taken and fortified at or near King’s Bridge in the Colony of New York, and that the ground be chosen with a particular view to prevent communication between the City of New York and the country from being interrupted by land....”

¹ *New York State Archeological Association Bulletin*, No. 73, July 1978.

A committee was then appointed, headed by Captain (later Major General) Richard Montgomery...”to view the ground at or near King’s Bridge, and report this to Congress whether the ground near King’s Bridge will admit of making a fortification there that will be tenable.” ...On June 3, 1775, the Committee rendered its report suggesting that...redoubts be placed on Tippet’s Hill, on Tetard’s Hill located on a farm of 75 acres which Captain Montgomery had purchased in 1772.

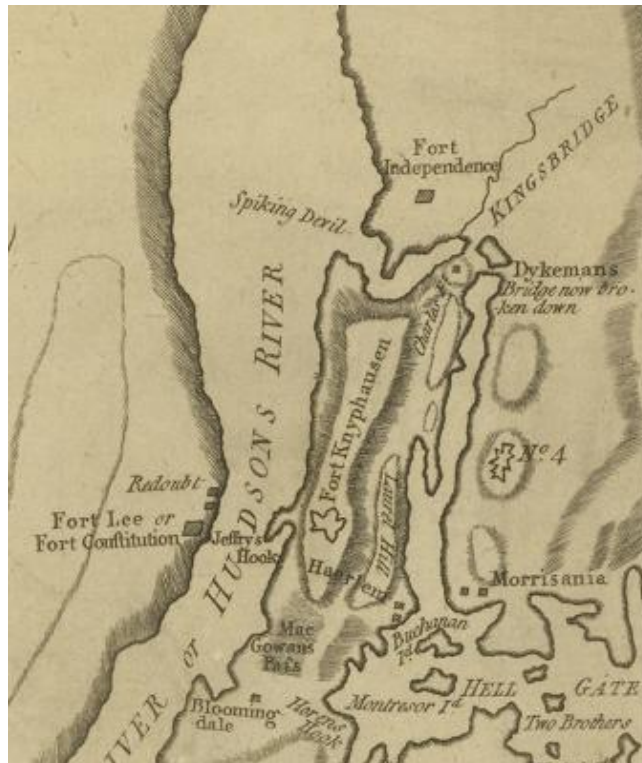
The British invasion in 1776 was followed by Washington’s retreat from New York. British General Howe found Fort Independence abandoned,

...because Colonel John Lasher, of the New York Militia, and the Fort’s commander, destroyed the barracks and led his troops to reinforce the Fort Washington garrison.

In January 1777, under orders from Washington, General William Heath attempted an attack on Fort Independence. As recounted in the 1978 *Bulletin*:

The objectives were to try to force the British to bring some reinforcements back into the city, to help alleviate the pressure on other fronts, and, at the same time, to inflict as much damage as possible.

Heath’s attack, unfortunately, ended in disarray, earning Heath a reprimand from Washington (as chronicled in Henry Beebee Carrington’s *Washington the Soldier*).² Today’s Heath Avenue, leading to the neighborhood, takes its name from General Heath.

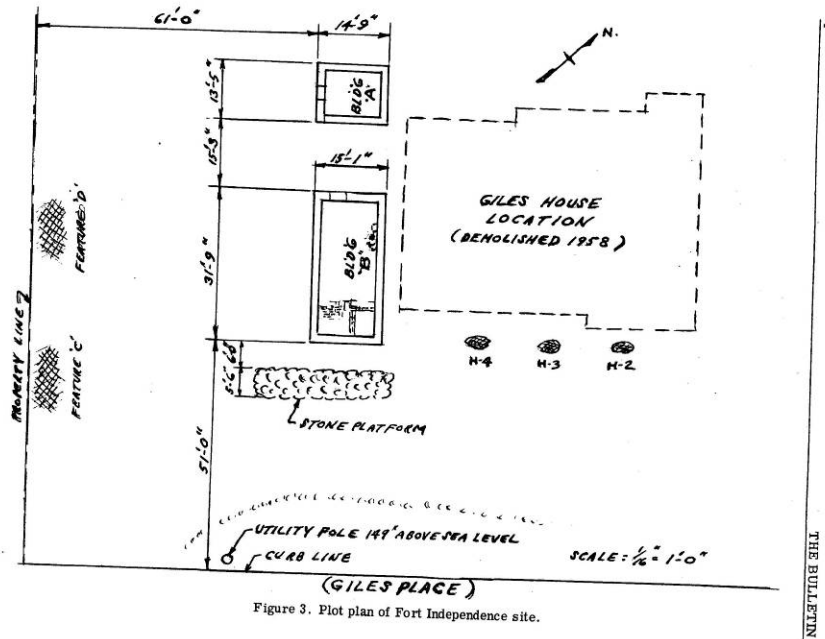


**1791 map showing Fort Independence
(New York Public Library)**

² Henry Beebee Carrington, *Washington the Soldier* (Boston 1898), pp. 157-158.

The British held the fort for three years.

On August 16, 1779, the British removed the guns from Fort Independence... The next day they demolished the magazine and on September 12th they abandoned the site.



Plot plan of Fort Independence site from the *Bulletin*

The plot plan of Fort Independence reproduced here shows the outline of the fort relative to the Giles mansion; that mansion was later replaced by Fort Independence Hall at 3435 Giles Place. The Fort thus lay roughly between Giles Place and Cannon Place, to the south of West 238th Street.

Though abandoned and apparently destroyed, Fort Independence was not completely obliterated; major relics were discovered on the site in 1915. As described by an eye-witness, Reginald Pelham Bolton, in his book, *Relics of the Revolution: The Story of the Discovery of the Buried Remains of Military Life in Forts and Camps on Manhattan Island*.³

Unfortunately for historical preservation, the sites of these forts upon the commanding eminences attracted the owners of the property in deciding on sites for their residences, and with few exceptions large houses were built on the forts, with ruinous regarding and destruction of their interesting form and character. In Independence the Giles family built a large house and but little trace of the ramparts of the fortification are left.

³ Reginald Pelham Bolton, *Relics of the Revolution: The Story of the Discovery of the Buried Remains of Military Life in Forts and Camps on Manhattan Island* (Reginald Pelham Bolton, Trustee of the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society, 1916).

One day in May, 1915, a party of boys led by Bradshaw Thurston, James Knowles, H.G. Somers, and others, resident in the vicinity, were fired with the idea of mimic warfare, and were engaged in constructing a small trench, at the head of Cannon Place, to the east of the site of Fort Independence, when their spades disturbed a cannon ball, soon succeeded by a number of other shot, until their work led them into a mass of about five hundred solid and hollow shot and bombs buried below the soil in a tangled and rusted heap.



From Bolton, *Relics of the Revolution*

These were being carried away by neighboring residents and visitors, when we arrived on the scene and aided in uncovering the deposit.

By the kindness of Mr. James P. Knowles and Mr. Charles H. Thurston, the latter of whom has since become one of our most interested aides, about half of the number discovered were set aside for museum purposes, and were removed in a wagon to Washington's Headquarters, for exhibition and preservation.

The deposit evidently consisted of materials hastily abandoned by the Pennsylvania Regiment, commanded by Colonel John Lasher, who on October 27, 1776, on receipt of orders from General Washington, destroyed the barracks and abandoned the fort and its equipment, in advance of the arrival of the Hessian army moving in from Westchester county, against Fort Washington and its exterior defenses.

The location of the find in the rear of the effort seems to indicate that the shots were thrown under some building or tumbled into a cess-pit, and were thereafter undiscovered by the Hessian and British occupants of the fort.

Following the discovery, a small park, called Fort Independence Park, was created nearby (though not on the actual site of the fort). In 1916, in a letter to the editor of the *New York Times*, Marion J. Terry wrote:⁴

Saturday, May 6, was the formal opening and dedication of Fort Independence Park - several acres on the summit of a hill adjacent to the Bronx Reservoir, near 238th Street. The unveiling of bronze memorial tablets on its granite gateposts made a fitting end for the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the General Society of the Daughters of the Revolution. One tablet reads as follows:

Fort Independence Park, Kingsbridge, and the heights adjacent, of the utmost importance to the communication between New York and the mainland, and to the security of the Hudson, were reconnoitered by Washington on horseback about June 16, 1776. By direction of the Commander in Chief the breastworks were thrown up for defense of the bridge, and an advanced work, subsequently called Fort Independence, was built beyond it on this spot, commanding Spuyten Duyvil Creek.

The other tablet reads:

In memory of the officers and soldiers of the Continental Army, who here served the cause of Liberty and Independence and as an inspiration to the youth of our nation, the City of New York has dedicated this park and the General Society, Daughters of the Revolution, has erected this tablet.

Another discovery, in 1926, was of two casualties from General Heath's unsuccessful attack on the fort. As described by Bill Twomey in *The Bronx in Bits and Pieces*:⁵

During the American Revolution the British had redoubts guarding the Albany Post Road. Fort Independence was among them and is now overlain by Giles Place. Hessian mercenaries manned this particular fort and one winter day in 1777 General William Heath saw fit to attack the post and in so doing lost two men.

One day in 1926 a Mr. Wilder from Giles Place was digging out some topsoil and came upon two skeletons. Reginald Pelham Bolton, who was considered an authority on local history, was called to the scene and after examining the remains and the debris found therewith, he determined that these were the two men killed in the 1777 skirmish.

The Washington Heights Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution had the two skeletons interred, as reported in *Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine*:⁶

On June 12, 1927, our Chapter erected in the churchyard of St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Westchester, a marker which shows the last resting place of two unknown patriots of the American Revolution.

Thirty years later, relics of the Fort were still being uncovered, as amateur archeologists took advantage of the demolition of the Giles mansion, for a new apartment building, to explore the site. As reported in the *New York Times* in 1958:⁷

⁴ Marion J. Terry, letter to the editor, *New York Times*, May 11, 1916, p. 10.

⁵ Bill Twomey, *The Bronx in Bits and Pieces* (Bloomington, IND, 2007).

⁶ *Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine*, Vol. 63, 1929, p. 227.

⁷ *New York Times*, July 18, 1958, p. 23.

Mementos of the Revolutionary War Days Are Uncovered in the Upper West Bronx

Five amateur archaeologists, who have been digging in the Bronx as avidly as though they were after pirate treasure, have turned up sections of a Revolutionary fort. With shovels, pickaxes, trowels, filters – and one day's hire of a bulldozer – they have followed an old British map in an area roughly bounded by Giles Place, Cannon Place and 238th Street. Since April they have uncovered walls between sixteen and nineteen inches thick that were part of the powder magazine and officers' quarters of Fort Independence.

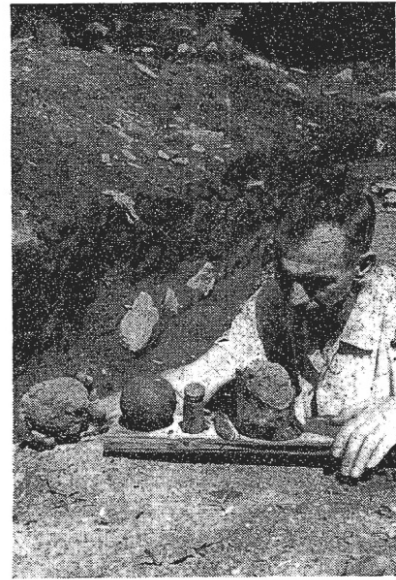
In addition, for their personal collections, the men have found six-pound cannon balls, musket balls about a half-inch in diameter that had been squared into ice, the remains of rockery and rum bottles, regimental button, metal tent pegs and old coins.

For the diggers...the work has been a race against the construction of an apartment house that is slated to replace a razed home that was on this site since about 1860.

Mementos of the Revolutionary War Days Are Uncovered in the Upper West Bronx



Harry N. Trowbridge, a member of New York City Archaeological Group, studies wall believed to have been part of storage vault of Fort Independence, which was built by Americans about 1776. The site is bounded by Cannon and Giles Places and 238th St.



Mr. Trowbridge shows some of the articles he and four associates dug up. From the left are two cannon balls, the neck of a bottle, a knife and the base of the bottle.

New York Times, July 18, 1958

It is unknown if any archeological resources remain to be uncovered from the Revolutionary period. However, according to the "Cultural Resource Assessment" in the CEQR for the "Proposed Croton Water Treatment Plant, Jerome Park Reservoir, Kingsbridge, Bronx, NY":⁸

The excavations for the reservoir literally razed and removed archaeologically sensitive land as far east as Jerome Avenue, obliterating the top 14' + of the prehistoric and historical landscape. However, to the south, north and west of the reservoir, undisturbed "pockets" of land now under fill may still be moderately sensitive for prehistoric and revolutionary war related archaeological

⁸ "Cultural Resource Assessment," CEQR, "Proposed Croton Water Treatment Plant, Jerome Park Reservoir, Kingsbridge, Bronx, NY" (CEQR No. 98 DEP027 - SEQR No. 98PRO056, by Betsy Kearns, SOPA, Cece Saunders Kirkorian, SOPA, Faline Schneiderman-Fox, SOPA).

resources. As recently as 1958 an archaeological excavation at the Giles home lot on Giles Place, west of the reservoir complex, found stone foundations from Fort Independence's living quarters, as well as evidence of campfire hearths, a refuse dump, and miscellaneous camp and military equipment. These Revolutionary War features and artifacts had been preserved underneath the backdirt from the excavation of the Giles' basement (Lopez 1978:1). Similar small pockets of undisturbed land may exist outside of the reservoir basin.

Such pockets include a large empty lot on the west side of Cannon Place just south of West 238th Street. Just below it is a large retaining wall supporting Cannon Place; its large rough stones might have been first used in constructing Fort Independence. Further examination of the lot and the wall by an archeologist would be required to make such a determination.

It should also be noted that a 1996 archeological evaluation of the Bronx identified potential Native American artifacts, "possible Late Woodland component," in this area:

A small campsite containing shell deposits was located immediately south of the intersection of Sedgwick Avenue and Giles Street (Bolton 1922:116). In this area, the route of Sedgwick Avenue follows the route of the Contact Period Westchester Path (Bolton 1922:116).⁹

FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED AND THE STREET LAYOUT

Though the City of Greater New York, with five boroughs of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and the Bronx, didn't come into existence until 1898, New York City expanded from Manhattan into what is now the West Bronx in 1874. Called variously "North New York," "North Side" and "uptown," the West Bronx represented the next stage in the northward growth of the city along Manhattan Island, a logical continuation of the city across the Harlem River. Unlike the case of Brooklyn, Queens or Staten Island, with separate street systems having little or no connection to Manhattan's system, the Bronx continued Manhattan's street pattern, including Broadway, Third Avenue and Park Avenue. Eventually the Manhattan grid was extended – somewhat awkwardly – over the hilly West Bronx terrain, with numbered streets, beginning in the East 120s, and extending as far as East 133rd Street on the east and West 242nd Street on the west. Initially, however, there was an attempt to take a different route. Historian Evelyn Gonzalez, in *The Bronx*, chronicles the initial assignment – in the 1873 act creating the annexation of the West Bronx – of the Department of Parks to take charge of Bronx improvements.¹⁰

Considering it the best agency for the job, *the New York Times* lauded the 1873 annexation act for "very properly" keeping the Department of Parks in charge of improvements since "their engineers and surveyors are presumably best qualified to carry their own work to its natural termination."

As Gonzalez explains:

...in 1875, the Park Board's new president, William R. Martin, insisted that the Bronx be redrawn by Frederick Law Olmsted, the department's landscape architect and the designer of Central Park. Olmsted worked on maps for three years, submitting, revising, and designing anew in the face of objections from property owner and parks commissioners alike.

Olmsted initially fought the extension of the Manhattan grid into the newly annexed territory:

⁹ Eugene J. Boesch, *Bronx, Archaeological Evaluation and Sensitivity Assessment of the Prehistoric and Contact Period Aboriginal History of the Bronx*, New York (1996).

¹⁰ Evelyn Gonzalez, *The Bronx* (Columbia University Press, 2004), pp. 41 ff.

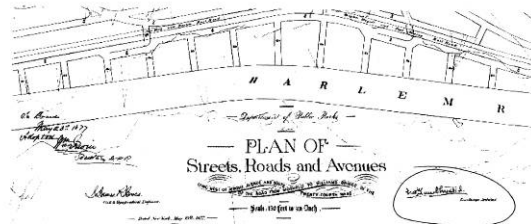
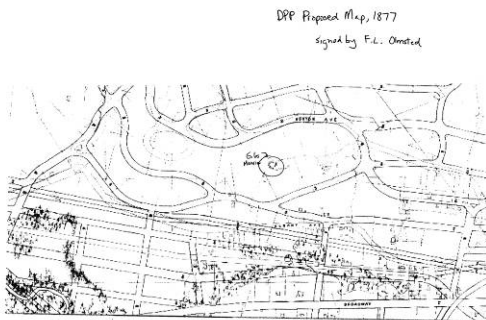
Olmsted had set out “distinct sections” of business, suburbs, and compact housing, interlaced with parks, connecting parkways, and local steam transit routes. In a series of maps and reports done with John James Roberson Croes, Olmsted argued against applying New York City’s rigid grid layout to the Bronx’s rugged terrain.... Olmsted and Croes tried...planning on a neighborhood scale. Their designs projected functionally discrete neighborhoods that, in the absence of zoning, were buffered from one another and from through traffic by a system of irregular streets, parkways, and transit lines.

The commitment to Olmsted’s design didn’t last:

Those who had favored overall planning, commissioners Martin and Stebbins, were replaced by political hacks who neither knew nor cared about urban planning or parks. The new Board of Park Commissioners discharged Olmsted in early 1878 and abolished his Bureau of Design and Superintendence. The Olmsted layouts remained, but between 1879 and 1890 the designs were reworked and revised so often that it was as if no overall plan had been done.

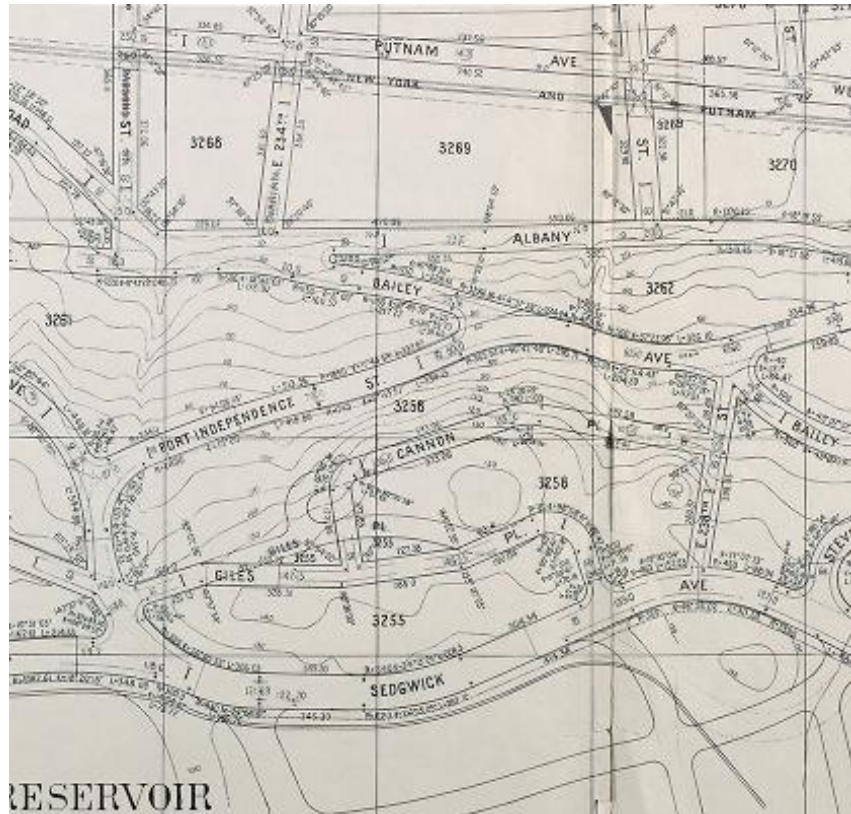
After 1890, authority to plan streets passed from the Parks Department to the Bronx Commissioner of Street Improvements.

Olmsted’s layout survives in just a few parts of the Bronx, including the Fort Independence area. A Parks Department map of 1877, with Olmsted’s name on it, shows today’s street layout.



Parks Department map, dated 1877 and signed by Olmsted

An 1892 map shows how the layout of the streets in the Fort Independence area reflects the dramatic topography of this part of the West Bronx:



**1892 map showing street layout compared to topography
(New York Public Library)**

The steep hills of the West Bronx resulted in a number of streets laid out as stone staircases, not unlike the stone steps of medieval European hill towns. The block of West 238th Street between Orloff Avenue and Cannon Place is a particularly picturesque version. FIPNA recently received a grant from the Citizens Committee for New York City to restore and landscape the street.



West 238th Street stone staircase connecting Orloff Avenue with Cannon Place

TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT

The development of the Bronx was tied closely – as was typical for New York City – to the arrival of mass transit.¹¹ At the time of annexation of the West Bronx in 1874, transportation options were limited to service offered by the New York & Harlem Railroad, which, while available since 1841, required a transfer to a horse-drawn line for northern parts of the area. By 1885, after much lobbying by local groups of property and business owners, the Suburban Rapid Transit Company began operating what became the Third Avenue “El” (elevated train). And beginning in the early 20th century, the IRT subway connected the Bronx with Manhattan.

The Fort Independence area developed thanks to two major transit routes: the Putnam Railroad, and the Broadway IRT local subway (today the No.1). According to Stephen Jenkins’s 1912 book, *The Story of the Bronx*, the New York, Westchester, and Putnam Railroad Company began service in the spring of 1881, and as of 1912:¹²

The Putnam road has opened up High Bridge, Morris Dock, Morris Heights, University Heights, Kingsbridge, and Van Cortlandt Park.

The Putnam line passed directly by the Fort Independence area, with a station at Van Cortlandt Park (its ruins still exist in the Park).

Meanwhile, the city’s first subway line, the Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT), which had opened in 1904 as far as Broadway at West 145th Street in Manhattan, quickly extended into the West Bronx, opening stations at Broadway and 225th and 231st streets in 1907, and at Broadway and 238th Street in 1908; the latter station is just a ten-minute walk from Fort Independence.¹³

These transit connections made possible the subdivision of two major estates in what is now Fort Independence: the Van Cortlandt estate and the Giles estate.

THE VAN CORTLANDT ESTATE AND THE GILES ESTATE

The Giles estate, belonging to William Ogden Giles, a vestryman at the St. James P.E. Church in Fordham, occupied part of the former Montgomery farm. The Giles mansion, which survived until 1957, stood roughly on the site of Fort Independence. It was replaced by Fort Independence Hall, the apartment building at 3435 Giles Place.

Giles Place, according to John McNamara’s *History in Asphalt: The Origins of Bronx Street and Place Names*, “is part of the original driveway leading to the Giles mansion.”¹⁴

¹¹ Information in this paragraph is based in part on the New York Landmarks Preservation Commission’s recent designation report for the Grand Concourse Historic District (LP-2403, researched by Jennifer Most).

¹² Stephen Jenkins, *The Story of the Bronx* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1912).

¹³ Station openings: www.nycsubway.org.

¹⁴ John McNamara, *History in Asphalt: The Origins of Bronx Street and Place Names*, Bronx County Historical Society, 1996, p.103.



Giles Estate (New York Public Library)

The Giles property was auctioned in June, 1901. As advertised in the *New York Times*:¹⁵

William M. Ryan, Auct'r, will sell at auction at the New York Real Estate Salesroom, 111 Broadway, at 12 o'clock noon, Monday, June 3, 1901, 56 choice lots of the Giles property at Kingsbridge Heights, 24th Ward, Borough of Bronx, situated on Sedgwick Av., Fort Independence St., Cannon Place, and Giles Place, at the Terminus of Rapid Transit.

High and commanding ground, surrounded by handsome private residences and villa sites, adjoining Van Cortlandt Park; magnificent views; churches, schools, clubs, &c.; convenient to King's Bridge Station; trains at all hours to New York City, connecting with 6th and 9th Av. "L" Roads; also trolley cars on Jerome Av. with right of transfer over all lines of the Bronx.

Sedgwick Av. and Giles Place have sewer, water, gas, electric light, and are regulated, graded, curbed, and flagged.

Fort independence St. has water, gas, electric light, and is regulated, graded, curbed, and flagged.

60 per cent. may remain on bond and mortgage at 5 per cent.

The Van Cortland estate was the property of the Van Cortlandt family, dating back to Colonial times. The family had its roots in Russia, via the Netherlands. As summarized in Harry Cook's *The Borough of the Bronx, 1639-1913*:¹⁶

Oloff Stevenson Van Cortlandt, the founder of the family in America, came to New Amsterdam in the same vessel with Kieft, on March 28, 1638, as an officer in the service of the West India Company. He was a lineal descendant of the Dukes of Courland in Russia. When deprived of the duchy of Courland, his ancestors emigrated to Holland. The family name was Stevens, or Stevenson, van (from) Courland, and they adopted the latter as a surname, the true orthography in

¹⁵ *New York Times*, June 2, 1901, p. 16.

¹⁶ Harry Cook, *The Borough of the Bronx, 1639-1913* (published by the author, 1913).

Dutch being Kortelandt, signifying "short-land."...He then became a merchant and brewer, and rose to the position of being one of the richest men in New Amsterdam. In 1654, he was appointed Burgomaster (mayor) of New Amsterdam, which office he held almost without interruption until 1664, when the Dutch colony was surrendered to the British.

Eventually the Van Cortlandts acquired a huge tract in what are now the Bronx and the city of Yonkers. A portion of that estate survives in today's Van Cortlandt Park, but the original property extended south of the park. In the early 20th century the family sold those parts of the estate. A series of sales in 1912 disposed of the property in what the *New York Times* described as a "scramble to buy furthest uptown":¹⁷

Crowd of Bidders Turns Sale of Van Cortlandt Estate Into a Country Picnic.

New York saw the last of the famous Van Cortlandt estate yesterday, when the remaining part of the 50,000-acre farm, acquired by the Van Cortlandt's by royal grant and by purchase from the Indians, went under the auction hammer, to be divided up into building lots. ... Purchasers and those attracted by curiosity came with their luncheon baskets, and the grounds resembled more the gathering place of a party of picnickers than the rallying point for bidders at a real estate sale.

Not in years has New York seen so large a sale of property in one tract as that which was held yesterday.... This tract, between Van Cortland Park on the north and the Jerome Park reservoir on the south, was the last section retained by the heirs of the Van Cortlandt estate.

Instead of broad expanses of farm land, as in earlier days, the property presented yesterday all the characteristics of an undeveloped city tract ready for improvement. Roads have been cut through it and graded, and the Subway runs directly by the property.

...Joseph P. Day, who was auctioneer, said that never in his experience had he faced so many persons at a real estate sale... It was estimated that 2,500 persons stayed from the beginning to the end of the sale. The sale was held beneath a large circus tent.



Poster announcing the Van Cortlandt Estate auction of June 8, 1912

¹⁷ *New York Times*, June 9, 1912 p. 6.

POPULATION GROWTH; SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION

During the first three decades of the 20th century, the Bronx saw major new residential construction. As described in 1927 in the four-volume *The Bronx and Its People: A History, 1609-1927*:¹⁸

...by 1920 The Bronx had reached the half million mark [in population], was close to a million five years later... It is to be recalled that large as was the population of The Bronx in 1920, it only amounted to twenty-seven people to the acre. It has, indeed, room for all the overflow from Manhattan.

...Within recent years great apartment houses approximating hotels in their general architecture and lavishness of finish have been built in the more favorable sections in The Bronx, as well as in Manhattan. While very few individual residences are built in Manhattan, family houses still form a very large proportion of the residential building in The Bronx. Many small houses of bungalow or New England type are being erected; and in these all the skill of modern building construction is used to provide adequate and attractive facilities within a limited space. The duplex or two-family house, is a comparatively recent development, as is the cooperatively owned apartment, or cooperative community of small houses with central heating plant. In the better sections many large residences have been built in recent years.

Kingsbridge in particular benefited from early improvements. As described in *The Real Estate Record and Guide* in 1912 (4/12/1912 p. 739):¹⁹

...the old historical Kingsbridge section of the Bronx... derived its name from the bridge that crossed the Harlem River, the only means of access other than ferry boats to upper New York State in colonial times. The whole section since then has been built up with private homes.... If this building improvement continues at its present rate, the section promises to be one of the most flourishing parts of the northern borough before the advent of 1913.

...Kingsbridge has probably been the most fortunate district in the Bronx in receiving improvements during the past five years, among them being the new grade crossings along the line of the Putnam Division of the New York Central Lines at 225th, 230th and 231st streets. The old grades of these streets have been raised on an average of twenty feet, the spans over the tracks being of steel on concrete retaining walls and the road beds of concrete paved with asphalt blocks. Practically all of the streets will be paved with the same style of blocks, except where the grades will not permit. ...There are many proposed improvements that will be pushed through before the end of the coming summer.

The new residents of the streets of Fort Independence tended to be of modest income. An advertisement for a house on Cannon Place in 1918 described it as “especially adapted for people of refinement of moderate means.”²⁰ Residents tended to be immigrants, at first Irish, followed by Eastern European Jews. According to *The New York Irish*:²¹

¹⁸ James L. Wells, Louis F. Haffen, and Josiah A. Briggs, *The Bronx and Its People: A History, 1609-1927* (The Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., NY, 1927).

¹⁹ *Real Estate Record and Guide*, April 12, 1912 p. 739.

²⁰ *New York Times*, August 21, 1918, p. 14.

²¹ Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher, editors, *The New York Irish* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 400.

Irish had been settling in the Bronx from the 1830s when construction projects like the Croton Water Aqueduct, several railroad systems, and then the “El” linked the mainland with Manhattan. The most significant boost to Irish growth in the Bronx was the arrival of the subway in 1904 [sic] and its subsequent extensions, which spurred the construction of lower-income housing in the borough. By 1914 the South Bronx [Mott Haven, Melrose, Morrisania], Highbridge, Fordham, and Kingsbridge were known as Irish areas.

The Jewish population arrived in Fort Independence in the 1920s, with construction of the Sholem Aleichem Houses (see below), populated by working class Jews relocating from the Lower East Side. This population mix remained largely in place through the 1950s and 1960s. More recently, members of other ethnic groups have moved into the neighborhood.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER OF THE STREETS

The earliest surviving buildings in the area date to the ‘teens of the 20th century, while the bulk date from the 1920s and 1930s. Several new apartment buildings were constructed in the 1950s and 1960s, predominantly on Sedgwick Avenue; more recently, there has been much redevelopment along Orloff Avenue.

Early houses, 1915-1916



3494 to 3480 Cannon Place

The earliest houses in the district are two groups forming a row on the east side of Cannon Place south of West 238th Street, one group (Nos. 3480 to 3486) built in 1915 and the other (Nos. 3488 to 3494) in 1916. All eight were designed by Matthew W. Del Gaudio (c.1889-1960), a Bronx-based architect who, according to his obituary,²² served as the president of the New York Society of Architects and the New York State Association of Architects, as well as a director of the AIA. A graduate of Cooper Union, he received the Cooper Union Alumni Association Gano Dun Medal for Professional Achievement in 1958. His row of houses on Cannon Place takes advantage of the sloping terrain, raising each house above a

²² *New York Times*, September 18, 1960, p. 85.

garage for unimpeded dramatic views to the west. The earlier group is red brick with diamond-shaped ornament, and simple wooden porches; the later group is similar, but in lighter-colored brick.

The advertisement of 1918 cited above²³ appears to refer to one of these groups of four houses, “Located on Cannon Place, near West 238th St., three blocks from Broadway-238th St. Subway Station.” The ad describes them as “four beautiful cottages” and

Especially adapted for people of refinement of moderate means. All improvements; stone, brick, hollow tile and stucco construction. Seven rooms and bath, laundry basement; garage; large veranda. Each room has direct light, commanding beautiful view from Dunwoodie Golf Club to Washington Heights. Approved by architects and builders; best type of design and accommodation.

“Garden Houses” on Orloff Avenue, 1922

In 1922, the *New York Times*²⁴ carried an advertisement announcing “New Garden Houses with Garages – in New York City,” built by Thomas T. Hopper, Co, and designed by the firm of Hoppin & Koen, architects of the former New York City Police Headquarters Building in Little Italy (listed on the National Register, 90NR00643).

Display Ad 628 -- No Title
New York Times (1857-1922): Nov 26, 1922
The Great Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2027) with Index (1851-1993)

READY FOR OCCUPANCY

New Garden Houses

with Garages - in New York City



An attractive group of twelve white stucco houses with green roofs, now being built at 238th Street and 239th Avenue, near Broadway (adjoining Golf Course at Van Cortlandt Park). Your choice of six, seven or nine rooms.

\$10,000 to \$19,000, Tax Exempt

Closer to Broadway and Lexington Avenue subways, and Putnam R.R. Station. All conveniences, including heat, electric light, glass enclosed porch, tile baths and hardwood floors. Designed by Hoppin & Koen, architects. Title policy furnished free to each purchaser. Send for descriptive folder T.

EUGENE L. LARKIN, Selling Agent
291 Broadway, N. Y. Telephone WOrld 1166
3485 Cannon Place, Bronx, N. Y. Telephone KIngbridge 3508

THOMAS T. HOPPER CO., Owners and Builders 101 Park Avenue, N. Y.

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Ad, *New York Times*



Original appearance on West 238th Street (NYPL)

²³ *New York Times*, August 21, 1918, p. 14.

²⁴ *New York Times*, November 26, 1922, p. 126.

The ad described the group as “An attractive group of twelve white stucco houses with green roofs...now being built at 238th Street and Orloff Avenue, near Broadway (adjoining Golf Course at Van Cortlandt Park). Your choice of six, seven or nine rooms.” It described their proximity to mass transit routes: “Close to Broadway and Lexington Avenue subways, and Putnam R.R. Station,” and listed “all conveniences, including heat, electric light, glass enclosed porch, tile baths and hardwood floors.”

In style, these “New Garden Houses” reflect the contemporary interest in the “English Cottage.” In 1916, the *Architectural Record* illustrated “The Country House of Ormond G. Smith, Esq. Oyster Bay, L.I.” also by Hoppin & Koen.²⁵ The house was designed, according to the author, as “a symmetrical Georgian residence which forms, with its dependencies of garage, overseer’s house and workmen’s cottages, a little community....” The “superintendent’s cottage,” illustrated in the article, is similar in form and detail to the Orloff Avenue houses, notably the roof, chimneys, and placement of windows and doors.



SUPERINTENDENT'S COTTAGE—COUNTRY PLACE OF ORMOND G. SMITH, ESQ., OYSTER BAY, L. I.
Hoppin & Koen, Architects.



Architectural Record, 1916

Six of these houses stand on Orloff Avenue, and six on West 238th Street. Those on Orloff are largely intact, retaining much of their original stucco. Those on West 238th Street maintain their original shape and outline, but have all been refaced.

Sholem Aleichem Houses, 1926-27

By far the largest single component of the proposed historic district is the Sholem Aleichem Houses (Springsteen & Goldhammer, 1926-27), also known as the Yiddish Cooperative Heimgesellschaft. A complex of 15 five-story walk-up buildings, comprising 229 apartments, Sholem Aleichem Houses faces onto four streets (its formal addresses are: 3605 Sedgwick Avenue, 68 West 238th Street, 3470 Cannon Place, and 3451 Giles Place).

²⁵ DeWitt H. Fessenden, “The Country House of Ormond G. Smith, Esq., Oyster Bay, L.I., Hoppin & Koen, Architects,” *Architectural Record*, Vol. 40, 1916, pp. 115 ff.



(Source: www.bronxcourtyard.com)



(Source: www.bronxcourtyard.com)

Sholem Aleichem Houses was the second of what historian Richard Plunz calls “a number of interesting experiments with cooperative workers’ housing built by labor and other organizations” encouraged by the “political climate of the 1920s.”²⁶ Amalgamated Houses, another 1920's era experimental workers' coop just to the north of the survey area, still operates as a thriving limited-equity cooperative. While some made use of available government subsidies, others, including the Sholem Aleichem Cooperative, were developed independently.

All of these organizations built cooperative worker housing projects which served as important catalysts within larger socialist political movements. Most were located in the Bronx. Each cooperative had a well-defined ideology, related to the diverse currents in leftist Jewish politics.

The Sholem Aleichem houses were founded by members of the Workmen’s Circle, with “shared ideals related to the preservation of secular Yiddish culture” – hence naming the complex for Sholem Aleichem, the famed Yiddish writer who spent much of his life in the Ukraine but eventually lived and died in the Bronx. Beyond housing, all these organizations offered such additional services as cooperative grocery stores, schools and daycare. At Sholem Aleichem,

...several artists’ studios were incorporated into the design, in order to encourage working artists to join the cooperative. The sculptor Aaron Goodelman and the painter Abraham Maniewich lived there for years. ... there was an auditorium for lectures, concerts, and dramatic productions [and] cooperative “cafeterias,” which served various functions, from banquets to teas. ... Perhaps at the Sholem Aleichem Houses the cultural activities were most extensive, in keeping with the strength of that particular mandate within the organization.

Sholem Aleichem Houses, unfortunately, failed financially within a few years, going into receivership in 1929 and then sold in 1931. But the complex has survived largely intact, and remains the major architectural presence in the proposed historic district.

Plunz identifies the physical characteristics of the Bronx cooperatives, shared by Sholem Aleichem Houses:

The massive buildings were placed on the urban periphery, among open fields and private single-family cottages.... The Sholem Aleichem Houses, for example, was a great castlelike building

²⁶ Richard Plunz, “The Garden Apartment,” *A History of Housing in New York City, Dwelling Type and Social Change in the American Metropolis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), pp. 151 ff.

perched on a hill, in sharp contrast to its surroundings.... A fundamental part of the cooperative's philosophy had to do with proximity and therefore lent itself to high-density living.... The irregularly shaped perimeter enclosed a hilltop site, with a central garden and large fountain overlooking the west Bronx. The relatively high coverage of 55 percent was reconciled by the hilltop view. The contrast with the normal gridiron figuration was striking, evoking the character of a lofty urban oasis.



Kindergarten group at Sholem Aleichem Houses, 1933

Photo courtesy Esther Nelson Sokolsky, life-long resident (pictured in the front row at the far right)

Plunz's reference of a ground coverage of 55 percent as "relatively high" – when the standard New York apartment house covers closer to 80 percent of its lot – must be understood in the context of the "garden apartment" movement, in which an ideal coverage was closer to 40 per cent, leaving the remainder for open space and greenery, as an antidote to the prevalence of concrete in the city.

The choice of "Tudor" for the style of Sholem Aleichem, and other similar complexes, appears unrelated to the political or cultural values promoted by the cooperative. Instead, it appears to relate to the general taste for neo-Tudor in residential architecture of all kinds, and is matched by the style of many of the houses in the surrounding streets.

Neo-Tudor single-family houses, 1920s and 1930s



3432-34 and 3426-28 Giles Place

The neo-Tudor style of the Sholem Aleichem Houses is continued in several clusters of neo-Tudor single-family houses, some free-standing, others in rows. By the 1920s, the neo-Tudor had developed into a popular choice for residential architecture, whether in large suburban “stockbroker Tudor” mansions on Long Island and in Westchester, or in dense urban complexes like Tudor City at East 42nd Street and First Avenue in Manhattan or landscaped clusters like Hudson View Gardens in Washington Heights. In the Bronx, the neo-Tudor shows up most frequently in apartment complexes like Sholem Aleichem Houses, but also appears in groups of houses, similar to many such clusters in Queens.

An early group of Tudor-inspired houses in the historic district was designed by Manough Exerjian in 1925 at 3446-3440 Cannon Place, a year before construction of Sholem Aleichem Houses. According to his *New York Times* obituary,²⁷ Exerjian (c.1898-1974), originally from Turkey, “graduated in 1914 from the Royal School of Architecture” in Istanbul, and immigrated to the United States that same year. His practice was based in Great Neck, in Nassau County,

Most of the neo-Tudor houses in the district, however, date from the early or mid-1930s. Architect-developer Solomon Pomeranz designed two clusters in the district: two houses at 3872 and 3874 Cannon Place in 1933, and a row of six houses at 3411 to 3421 Cannon Place (two blocks to the south of the first pair) a year earlier. Born in New York (1896) to Russian-born parents,²⁸ Pomeranz became a builder-architect active in the Bronx. The six houses at 3411 to 3421 are designed as a row – entrance porches

²⁷ *New York Times*, November 6, 1974, p. 48.

²⁸ Dolkart Columbia studio report, citing census records.

are designed to serve pairs of adjoining houses. Details include brick facades with randomly placed stones, stucco with half-timbering, chimneys and sloping roofs.

The most imposing neo-Tudor row comprises nine houses on Giles Place, directly across from Sholem Aleichem, designed by Brooklyn architect Benjamin Driesler. The houses form three groups – one of five houses (built 1936), and two of two houses each (built 1933). Their ornamental details, including patterned brick facades combined with randomly placed fieldstone, patterned brick chimneys rising to chimney pot, half-timbering, and clay tile roofs, create a typically neo-Tudor picturesque streetscape along Giles Place.

Besides these rows, there are several free-standing individual neo-Tudor houses. Nos. 3900 and 3902 Orloff Avenue are modest examples. Two larger houses stand at 3865 Cannon Place and, larger still, at 3878 Cannon Place. This latter was designed in 1936 by architect John J. Sheridan for his daughter, Kathleen. It is unusually elaborate in its design, including a fieldstone façade, half-timbering, a slate roof, and a turret. Sheridan (1887-1954), according to his obituary in the *New York Times*,²⁹ was:

...designer for the James Gamble Rogers architectural firm and formerly was designer for the architectural firm of Starrett & Van Vleck, both of this city. Mr. Sheridan, who was an infantry captain in World War I, designed several war memorials for both world wars. Among them are a World War I memorial in Pelham Bay Park, the Bronx, and a World War II memorial in St. Vincent's, B.W.I.

At the time of his death, Sheridan was living at No. 3878.

Post-World War II Mitchell-Lama moderate-income cooperative

Besides having one of the city's 1920s cooperative garden-apartment complexes in Sholem Aleichem Houses, the neighborhood also has one of the very first Mitchell-Lama cooperative apartment houses built in New York City – the Park Reservoir complex of three buildings at 3835 Sedgwick, 3845 Sedgwick (with alternate entrances on Cannon) and 3915 Orloff Avenue. The Mitchell-Lama law, passed in 1955 by the State legislature, was described in a 1957 article in the *New York Times*.³⁰ The law was...

...designed to encourage the construction of apartments renting at \$19 to \$25 a room. It permits the state or city to make fifty-year low-interest loans – for up to 90 per cent of construction costs – to private builders and cooperatives that agree to a limit of 6 per cent profit on their investment. The law was sponsored by State senator MacNeil Mitchell, Manhattan Republican, and Assemblyman Alfred A. Lama, Brooklyn Democrat. It also provides a 40 per cent realty tax abatement for thirty years.

...Two are [currently] under construction. These are the 275-family Park Reservoir development on Orloff Avenue [sic], the Bronx, and the 420-family Earl W. Jimerson Houses on Linden Boulevard in Brooklyn. Park Reservoir is sponsored by the Park Reservoir Housing Corporation, headed by Abraham Kazan, at 570 Grand Street, Manhattan.

As historian Richard Plunz explains:

²⁹ *New York Times*, January 25, 1954, p. 19.

³⁰ *New York Times*, August 25, 1957, p. 292.

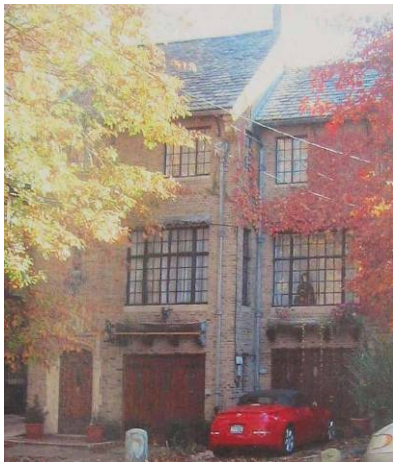
The Limited Profit Housing Companies Law passed by the New York state legislature in 1955 also had a critical impact on the design and construction of government-subsidized housing in New York City, extending over the next two decades. Popularly known as the Mitchell-Lama program after the originators of the legislation, it was the first program to openly provide government philanthropy for the middleclass. It was designed to promote construction of urban middle-income housing, which neither the public housing program nor unsubsidized private developers were producing. Developers could receive mortgages from either New York State or New York City for 90 percent of project costs at lower interest rates than on the private market. They could also receive property tax exemptions. In return, limits were placed on profits. Design, construction, operating costs, and rents were also subject to public control – either by the state or by the city, depending on the source of financing. Frequently Mitchell-Lama projects were initiated in conjunction with the Title I slum clearance program, which provided the sites.³¹

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on a fieldwork examination of the study area, and an understanding of its historic context, there appear to be three buildings that may be individually eligible for listing on the National Register, as well as one National Register-eligible historic district.

Individual buildings

The three individual buildings, Nos. 3826 and 3828 Sedgwick Avenue (architect/owner James F. Delaney, 1926) and No. 3868 Sedgwick Avenue (architect undetermined, c. 1930), appear to meet criterion C under architecture for their neo-Tudor designs, similar in quality to some of the neo-Tudor houses in the proposed historic district. Because this survey was reconnaissance-level only, it did not include interiors; the interior integrity of each of these three buildings will need to be assessed before a formal eligibility finding would be possible.



Nos. 3828 and 3826 Sedgwick Avenue



No. 3868 Sedgwick Avenue

Historic district

The proposed district meets Criterion A, under social and ethnic history, because the Sholem Aleichem Houses complex is a significant example of early 20th-century working-class cooperative housing

³¹ Plunz, *A History of Housing in New York City*, *op. cit.*, pp. 281-282.

pioneered by immigrant Jewish communities. The Park Reservoir Housing Cooperative, built on Cannon Place, Sedgwick Avenue and Orloff Avenue in 1957 as one of the city's very first Mitchell-Lama housing complexes, continues the pattern of experimental cooperative housing in the city.

The proposed district meets Criterion C under architecture because of the quality of the Tudor-inspired designs of the Sholem Aleichem houses and the similar designs of neo-Tudor row houses and individual houses on surrounding streets, as well as the design of the group of early "garden homes," by the firm of Hoppin & Koen, on Orloff Avenue and West 238th Street. It also meets Criterion C under community planning and development, because it draws much of its physical character from the unusual street plan laid out in 1877 over the signature of Frederick Law Olmsted – that street layout being one of the few surviving from the period before the Parks Department lost control over street planning and the Manhattan grid was extended across the Bronx, annexed to the city just three years earlier. Since the Olmsted plan has no existing landscape component, or buildings planned to accompany the plan, however, it does not have significance as landscape architecture.

The proposed historic district's period of significance would be 1877 to 1957. The former year is the date of the street plan, while the latter year is the date of the Park Reservoir Housing Cooperative, the Mitchell-Lama housing complex that continues the history of innovative cooperative housing begun by the Sholem Aleichem Houses.

The proposed boundaries of the district, along Orloff Avenue, West 238th Street, Cannon Place and Giles Place, reflect major physical interventions. The west side of Cannon Place, south of West 238th Street, is largely vacant, except for a very large and intrusive new apartment building. Orloff Avenue north of the spur of Cannon Place at the southern intersection of those two streets has largely been redeveloped in recent years with similarly large and intrusive apartment buildings. Cannon Place north of its northern intersection with Orloff Avenue has recently seen alterations and demolitions. While Sedgwick Avenue has some surviving buildings from the same period as the district, it has also seen much new development.

The proposed district includes 97 buildings (of which 10 are non-contributing), plus one contributing structure (the 238th Street stairs) and one contributing site (the 1877 Olmsted street layout).

Proposed Fort Independence Historic District



BUILDING LIST FOR PROPOSED HISTORIC DISTRICT– arranged west to east and north to south

ORLOFF AVENUE AT WEST 238TH STREET

Orloff Avenue

Nos. 3827, 3823, 3819, 3815, 3811, 3805

West 238th Street

Nos. 127, 123, 119, 115, 111, 105

Hoppin & Koen, 1922

Twelve houses, described as “New Garden Houses – with Garages – in New York City,” and “twelve white stucco houses with green roofs,” under construction in 1922. The six houses on Orloff Avenue survive largely intact; six houses on West 238th Street have been sided.



105 to 127 West 238th Street



115 to 127 West 238th Street

Current photos showing resided houses



3805 Orloff Avenue



3805 to 3815 Orloff Avenue

Current photos

ORLOFF AVENUE, north end of Cannon Place

North side (this is an east-west spur of Orloff Avenue connecting to Cannon Place)

No. 3519 Orloff Avenue, architect undetermined, 1956-57 (NB 35-1956). Park Reservoir Housing Cooperative, one of the very first Mitchell-Lama projects built in New York City. Three largely identical buildings; see No. 3840 Cannon Place (aka 3835 Sedgwick Avenue).



No. 3519 Orloff Avenue

South side (this is an east-west spur of Orloff Avenue connecting to Cannon Place)

No. 3902 Orloff Avenue: architect undetermined, c. 1935

No. 3900 Orloff Avenue: architect undetermined, c. 1935

Two modest neo-Tudor free-standing houses, patterned brick and randomly placed stone.



No. 3902 Orloff Ave; No. 3900 Orloff Ave

CANNON PLACE, between Orloff Avenue and West 238th Street

West Side, north to south

No. 3887 Cannon Place: architect undetermined, originally 1927 (NB 617-1927); altered or replaced. Non-contributing.

No. 3883 Cannon Place: architect undetermined, 1941 (NB 360-41); modest neo-Federal.



No. 3883 and No. 3887 Cannon Place

Nos. 3877-3879 Cannon Place: architect undetermined, c.1951 (NB 508-51 and 509-51). Plain design with remnants of neo-Georgian detail.

No. 3869 Cannon Place: c. 1940, modest neo-Georgian

No. 3865 Cannon Place: c. 1935; handsome neo-Tudor with half-timbered gable.



Nos. 3865, 3869, and 3879-3877 Cannon Place

No. 3861 Cannon Place: Christian Rosborg, 1934 (NB 28-1934); originally a frame house, refaced with stucco.

No. 3855 Cannon Place: architect undetermined, 1951 (NB 582-51); modest neo-Georgian, brick with randomly placed stones.



No. 3855 and No. 3861 Cannon Place

No. 3853 Cannon Place: c.1950; non-contributing



No. 3853 Cannon Place

No. 3839 Cannon Place: c. 1950; modest neo-Georgian.

No. 3831 Cannon Place: c.1950; modest neo-Georgian

No. 3829 Cannon Place: c.1950; modest neo-Georgian

No. 3827 Cannon Place: c.1950; modest neo-Georgian

No. 3823 Cannon Place: c. 1940; modest neo-Georgian, brick with randomly placed stones.



Nos. 3823, 3827, 3829, 3831 and 3839 Cannon Place

North side

(Cannon has an east-west spur connecting to Orloff Avenue; this is the north side)

No. 3820 Orloff Avenue (formerly a Cannon Place address), Solomon Pomeranz 1936 (NB 509-36). Neo-Tudor, brick with randomly placed stone; gabled roof and gabled entry porch. Pomeranz designed many houses within the proposed historic district.

No. 3821 Cannon Place: Solomon Pomeranz, 1936 (NB 546-1936) Appears altered or replaced; non-contributing.



No. 3820 Orloff Avenue, No. 3821 Cannon Place

East Side, north to south

No. 3878 Cannon Place: Neo-Tudor house, 1936-37 (NB 486-1936); large neo-Tudor house with brick and fieldstone façade, corner tower with half-timbering at the top. Designed and built by architect John J. Sheridan for his daughter Kathleen.

No. 3876 Cannon Place: (Vacant lot)



No. 3878 and No. 3876 (vacant lot) Cannon Place

Nos. 3874 and 3872 Cannon Place: Solomon Pomeranz, 1933 (NB 430-1933)

No. 3870 and 3868 Cannon Place: Solomon Pomeranz, 1933 (NB 430-1933)

Nos. 3874 and 3872 are neo-Tudor houses by Solomon Pomeranz, both half-timbered; patterned brickwork on No. 3874, some recladding on 3872. Nos. 3870 and 3868 are Spanish Mission-inspired, with tiled roofs.



Nos. 3874, 3872, 3870 and 3868 Cannon Place

No. 3860 Cannon Place: architect undetermined, 1951 (NB 582-51). Post-World War II modest neo-Federal.



No. 3860 Cannon Place

No. 3850 Cannon Place: Matthew W. Del Gaudio, 1924 (NB 679-1924). Spanish-tiled roof. Del Gaudio designed many houses within the proposed historic district.



No. 3850 Cannon Place

No. 3840 Cannon Place (aka 3835 Sedgwick Avenue): architect undetermined, 1956-57 (NB 35-1956). Park Reservoir Housing Cooperative, one of the very first Mitchell-Lama projects built in New York City. Three largely identical structures, one facing Cannon Place, one facing Sedgwick Avenue, and one facing Orloff Avenue (see No. 3519 Orloff Avenue).

No. 3822 Cannon Place: Anton Pirner, 1922 (NB 1577-1922). Re-sided.



No. 3840 and No. 3822 Cannon Place

WEST 238TH STREET

West 238th Street stairs:

West 238th Street winds south until it intersects with Orloff Avenue and Fort Independence Avenue, at which point it veers east, and exists as a stair street leading up to Cannon Place, at which point it continues again as a regular street continuing east to its end at Sedgwick Avenue. It is one of a number of “stair streets” in the West Bronx, which result from the borough’s hilly topography. The street stairs count as one contributing structure in the proposed historic district.



West 238th Street, looking east

No. 75 West 238th Street: architect undetermined, 1959 (NB 1765-59). Located at the northeast corner of West 238th Street and Cannon Place. Non-contributing apartment house.



No. 75 West 238th Street

CANNON PLACE, between Cannon Place and West 238th Street

South Side (Cannon Place has an east-west spur connecting west to Orloff Avenue)

No. 3811 Cannon Place

No. 3815 Cannon Place

No. 3810 Orloff Avenue

c. 1950, group of three houses, modest neo-Georgian brick with slate roofs.



3811 and 3815 Cannon Place, 3811 Orloff Avenue

West side, north to south

Nos. 3809, 3807, 3805 Cannon Place: c. 1950, modest neo-Georgian brick with slate roofs.

No. 3803 Cannon Place: Date undetermined

No. 3801 Cannon Place: c. 1950



Nos. 3801, 3803, 3805, 3807, 3809 Cannon Place

ORLOFF AVENUE AT WEST 238TH STREET

No. 3800 Orloff Avenue: Corner of West 238th Street (at front left in photo) – Non-contributing.



No. 3800 Orloff Ave – West 238th Street stairs

CANNON PLACE, between West 238th Street and Giles

East side only, north to south

No. 3470 Cannon Place: Sholem Aleichem Houses; Springsteen & Goldhammer, 1926-27 (wing at southeast corner of Cannon Place and West 238th Street). A wing of the large cooperative housing complex.



Sholem Aleichem Houses on Cannon Place

Nos. 3494 to 3480 Cannon Place, flanked on either side by Sholem Aleichem Houses

Nos. 3494 to 3488 Cannon Place: Matthew W. Del Gaudio, 1916

Nos. 3486 to 3480 Cannon Place: Matthew W. Del Gaudio, 1915

These eight houses, now flanked by wings of the Sholem Aleichem houses, are the earliest buildings in the proposed historic district. The earlier row is red brick, the later row a light-colored brick. All have modest porches above garages; two porches have been enclosed. Del Gaudio was an active Bronx architect.



Nos. 3494 to 3480 Cannon Place, flanked on either side by Sholem Aleichem Houses

No. 3460 Cannon Place: Sarsfield J. Sheridan, 1923 (NB 32-1923). Cement-block two-family house, refaced with stucco; non-contributing.

No. 3450 Cannon Place: architect undetermined, 1960 (NB 450-60). Non-contributing.

No. 3448 Cannon Place: architect undetermined, 1960 (NB 449-60). Non-contributing.



No. 3460, No. 3450 and No. 3448 Cannon Place

Nos. 3446-3440 Cannon Place: Manoug Exerjian, 1925 (NB 549-1926). A group of neo-Tudor houses, including half-timbered gables; brick and stone facades.



Nos. 3446, 3444, 3442 and 3440 Cannon Place

No. 3400 Cannon Place: Kingsbridge Heights Rehabilitation and Care Center, c. 1975. Non-contributing.



No. 3400 Cannon Place, nursing home

CANNON PLACE, between Cannon Place and Giles Place (Cannon Place has an east-west spur at its southernmost end) west to east

North side

No. 3400 Cannon Place: Kingsbridge Heights Rehabilitation and Care Center, c. 1975. Non-contributing.



No. 3400 Cannon Place, Nursing home

South side

Nos. 3411, 3413, 3415, 3417, 3419, 3421 Cannon Place: Solomon Pomeranz, 1932 (NB 18-1932 and 19-1932). Row of neo-Tudor houses.



Nos. 3417 to 3421 Cannon Place



Nos. 3411 to 3415 Cannon Place

No. 3407 Cannon Place: architect and date undetermined. Though apparently modeled on the adjoining Tudor houses, No. 3407 was not part of that project.



No. 3407 Cannon Place next door to 3411

No. 3403 Cannon Place: Owner-architect Lawrence V. Meehan, 1921 (NB 208-1921). Capt. Meehan, according to his *New York Times* obituary (10/29/31 p. 21), was superintendent of construction, repair and supplies of the Armory Board. "Several armories were built under his supervision, notably that of the 258th Field Artillery at Jerome Avenue and Kingsbridge Road, the Bronx, which is said to be the largest armory in the world." The Kingsbridge Armory, not far from the neighborhood, is listed on the National Register (90NR00071)



No. 3403 Cannon Place, Giles Place facade



No. 3403 Cannon Place, historic photo of Cannon Place façade (courtesy FIPNA)

GILES PLACE, between Cannon Place and Sedgwick Avenue

West side, south to north

No. 3413 Giles Place: Architect undetermined; 1923 (NB 501-1923); large frame house.

No. 3419 Giles Place: Adam Perillo, 1931. Neo-Georgian brick house.



No. 3413 and No. 3419 Giles Place

No. 3435 Giles Place: “Fort Independence Hall,” 1960 apartment house. (*New York Times*, 12/11/60, p. R5, “Fort Independence Hall, a sixty-five unit apartment building at 3435 Giles Place in the Bronx, is now ready for immediate occupancy.”) Non-contributing. It was demolition of the Giles mansion to make way for this building that led to the amateur archeological finds from Fort Independence in 1958.



No. 3435 Giles Place

No. 3451 Giles Place: Sholem Aleichem Houses: Springsteen & Goldhammer, 1926-27. Long wing of the multi-building complex.



No. 3451 Giles Place, Sholem Aleichem Houses

East side, north to south

Nos. 3446, 3444, 3442, 3440, and 3438 Giles Place



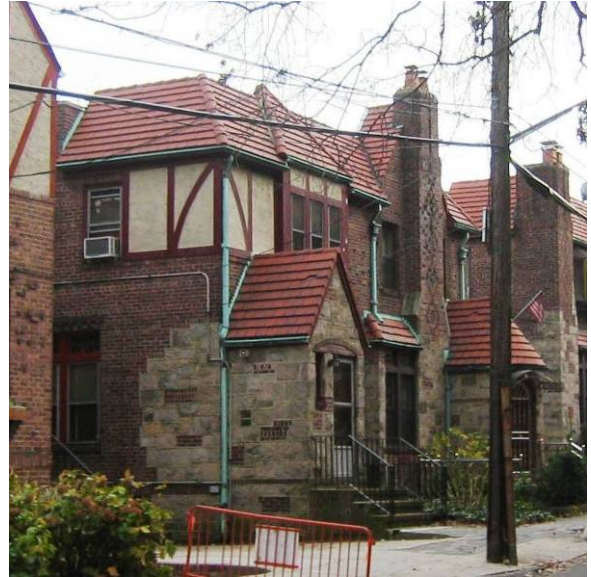
No. 3446 Giles Place



Nos. 3440 and 3438 Giles Place

Benjamin Driesler, 1936 (NB 359-1936), for M.J. Martin and Son, Inc. A row of neo-Tudor houses across the street from the neo-Tudor Sholem Aleichem houses.

Nos. 3432 and 3434 Giles Place: Benjamin Driesler, 1933 (NB 476-1933), for M.J. Martin and Son, Inc. A pair of neo-Tudor houses, built the same year as 3426-3428 below.



Nos. 3434 and 3432 Giles Place

Nos. 3426 and 3428 Giles Place: Benjamin Driesler, 1933 (NB 476-1933), for M.J. Martin and Son, Inc. A pair of neo-Tudor houses, built the same year as 3432-3434 above.



Nos. 3428 and 3426 Giles Place

No. 3422 Giles Place: architect undetermined, 1925 (NYT - 11/22/25). Modest neo-Georgian house.

No. 3420 Giles Place: architect undetermined, c.1930 (architect Arion Mueller designed a garage for the building in 1930 - NB 835-1930). Modest neo-Georgian house.



No. 3422 and No. 3420 Giles Place

Nos. 3416, 3412, 3408 and 3404 Giles Place: Chas. T.E. Dieterlin, 1923 (NB 2146-1923). This group of four two-family houses was built for the Joselyn Realty Company. Modest houses that have been resided.



Nos. 3416, 3412, 3408 and 3404 Giles Place

No. 3344 Giles Place: James Wells, 1923 (NB 412-1923). Owner-architect Wells built Nos. 3344, 3340 and 3338 as one project in 1923.



No. 3344 Giles Place

No. 3340 Giles Place: James Wells, 1923 (NB 412-1923). Owner-architect Wells built Nos. 3344, 3340 and 3338 as one project in 1923. A *New York Times* article I 1935 described it as having five rooms and bath, hot water, heat, garage, shade trees and garden, “convenient location.”



No. 3340 Giles Place

No. 3338 Giles Place: James Wells, 1923 (NB 412-1923). Owner-architect Wells built Nos. 3344, 3340 and 3338 as one project in 1923. Wells still owned No. 3338 in 1925, when he hired an architect to build a garage (NB 1562-1925).



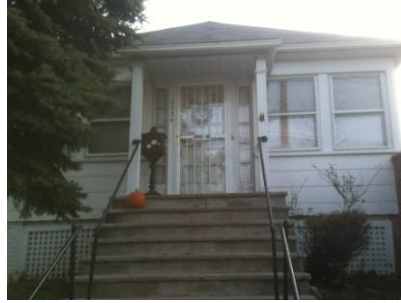
No. 3338 Giles Place

No. 3336 Giles Place: architect and date undetermined; might be a Sears catalog house.



No. 3336 Giles Place

No. 3334 Giles Place: architect undetermined;
built 1944, replacing a house of 1922.



No. 3334 Giles Place

No. 3332 Giles Place: Charles A. Newbergh,
1922 (NB 844-1922). Built for Isabella Stewart.



No. 3332 Giles Place

No. 3330 Giles Place: Dwight James Baum 1922
(NB 912-1922). Built for P. Robert O'Connor. It
apparently was paid for by Jeremiah Buckley,
father of Bronx Congressman Charles A.
Buckley, for his daughter and son-in-law
O'Connor. It has been re-sided. Jeremiah
Buckley was living in the house at the time of
his death (*New York Times*, November 30, 1949,
p. 27).



No. 3330 Giles Place

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