**United States Department of the Interior**
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

DRAFT

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard)

other names/site number

name of related multiple property listing N/A

## 2. Location

street & number 105 Carlton Avenue and 104 Adelphi Street ☐ not for publication

city or town Brooklyn ☐ vicinity

state New York code NY county Kings code 047 zip code 11205

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this __X__ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property __X__ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

**___ national ___ statewide __X__ local**

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard)** Kings County, NY
Name of Property County and State

## 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- [X] private
- [ ] public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [ ] public - Federal

**Category of Property**
(Check only **one** box.)

- [X] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

**Number of Resources within Property**
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | 0 | buildings |
| | | sites |
| | | structures |
| | | objects |
| 2 | 0 | **Total** |

**Name of related multiple property listing**
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC / multiple dwelling

**Current Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC / multiple dwelling

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH and EARLY 20TH CENTURY
REVIVALS / Medieval Revival

**Materials**
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: BRICK
roof: ASPHALT
other: STONE

## Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

### Summary Paragraph

The Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard) is a complex of two contributing apartment buildings and a landscaped courtyard constructed in two phases between 1929 and 1932 in the Wallabout neighborhood of Brooklyn, Kings County, New York. The buildings are located on a through-block site facing Carlton Avenue to the west and Adelphi Street to the east, on a block bounded by Park Avenue and Myrtle Avenue to the north and south. The two buildings were constructed for the Brooklyn Gardens Apartments, Inc., a limited dividend corporation that aimed to provide, with state assistance, low-cost housing for New Yorkers of modest means. The original parts of the complex (100-108 Adelphi Street and 101-107 Carlton Avenue) were completed in 1930 and designed by architect Frank H. Quinby in the Medieval Revival style. In 1932, an addition was built at 109-111 Carlton Avenue to the designs of architect W.H. McCarthy in a seamless continuation of the earlier sections. The five-story, U-shaped buildings are clad with textural clinker brick and feature large pointed-arch passageways that lead to the interior courtyard where the main building entries are located. These courtyard entries provide access to discrete interior stairwells that historically provided the main circulation within the buildings. While the complex remains residential, the buildings are now divided into two tax lots with separate ownership.

## Narrative Description

*Location*

The Brooklyn Garden Apartments' surrounding neighborhood exhibits a wide variety of uses including residential, commercial, and industrial buildings. To its immediate north and south, the block is filled with a combination of nineteenth-century frame, brick, and brownstone-fronted rowhouses as well as apartment building infill from the second half of the twentieth century. Myrtle Avenue, the main commercial thoroughfare to the south, is fronted with mid-to-late nineteenth century tenements with stores at the ground floor. The elevated Brooklyn-Queens Expressway (1960), a viaduct that runs over Park Avenue, defines the block on its north side.

To the west, the Brooklyn Garden Apartments is bordered by the Fort Greene Houses—now separated into two entities and known as the Walt Whitman and Ingersoll Houses—a state-aided public housing project organized into multiple superblocks, begun in 1940 and finished in 1944. To the south of Myrtle Avenue is the neighborhood of Fort Greene, which includes the Fort Greene Historic District (NRHP 1980, boundary increase 1984) and the individually listed Feuchtwanger Stable, a Romanesque Revival-style building constructed in 1888 at 159 Carlton Avenue (NRHP 1986).

The block to the east is dominated by P.S. 46, the Edward C. Blum School, a Modern-style building designed in 1957 by Katz, Waisman, Blumenkranz, Stein, Weber. The block is otherwise occupied by nineteenth-century rowhouses and twentieth-century apartment buildings. Farther east is the Wallabout Historic District (NRHP 2011), a collection of vernacular residences largely built between the 1830s and 1880s.

The Wallabout neighborhood, which extends to the north of Park Avenue and the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, was historically associated with the Brooklyn Navy Yard (NRHP 2014), a shipyard and industrial complex that was established in 1801 and is a National Register-listed historic district. To the northeast is the Wallabout Industrial Historic District (NRHP 2012), which includes a mix of industrial buildings including factories and warehouses dating to the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century.

*Exterior*

The Brooklyn Garden Apartments complex is organized as two U-shaped buildings grouped around a central, irregularly shaped garden courtyard. No. 105 Carlton Avenue was constructed in two sections: 101-107 Carlton Avenue was completed in 1930, and 109-11 Carlton Avenue was built as an addition in 1932. No. 104 Adelphi Street was completed in 1930.

Both buildings are five stories tall and executed in a simplified Medieval Revival style with cladding of clinker bricks laid in Flemish bond. The facades are characterized by their highly textured wall surfaces with projecting brick headers at every third brick course and variegated brick colors including red, brown and blue-black.

Both buildings feature a large, Gothic-inspired pointed-arch passageway that leads to the interior courtyard. The masonry-trimmed arch features corbelled voussoirs resting on engaged columns with Corinthian capitals. Above, the facades are arranged with irregularly spaced bays of single windows of various sizes, a functional expression of the original apartment layouts within. No. 105 Carlton Avenue retains its historic parapet (described below), while 104 Adelphi Street retains a small portion of its historic parapet and its historic fire escapes.

The interior courtyard elevations of both the 105 Carlton Avenue and 104 Adelphi Street are clad with red brick laid in common bond. The interior side of the pointed-arch passageway is articulated with a simpler masonry-trimmed corbelled arch resting on slightly projecting brick piers. At each of the various elevations are deep, round-arched entrances and small open-air vestibules that lead to the stairs within. Above, the elevations are characterized by single openings with replacement windows. In some areas, window openings have been infilled or modified in size.

105 Carlton Avenue

The Carlton Avenue building consists of two sections. The north section was completed in 1930 and was built with an L-shaped plan and a roughly symmetrical façade with twelve window bays and a central pointed-arch passageway at the ground story. The south section was completed in 1932 and created a seamless extension of the original design with an additional five window bays. The additional wing made the building U-shaped in plan.

The building's watertable is executed in brick and is divided from the upper stories by a soldier-brick course of brick. The pointed-arch passageway, located in the center of the 1930 section of the building, is painted and is accessible via a non-historic concrete ramp with metal railing. Another non-historic entrance—originally a window—is located at the north side of the Carlton Avenue elevation and consists of a single-leaf metal door reached by a set of concrete steps. At the first story there are a number of non-historic security lights, security cameras, and window grilles.

At the upper stories, the one-over-one double-hung windows are all aluminum replacements. A limited number of masonry openings have been partially infilled with brick matching that used at the spandrels and with short double-hung windows. Also, a number of small vents have been inserted beneath the windows.

A brick soldier course divides the upper stories from the historic parapet, which terminates with a stepped gable directly over the passageway entrance. The gable features a decorative stone niche with an arched recess, a ball finial, and battlements. Additional finials and battlements are located at the north and south ends of the building. The parapet is capped with masonry coping.

The roof of 105 Carlton Avenue is flat with an asphalt surface. The roof is divided into three sections demarcated by demising walls. Five stucco-clad stair bulkheads punctuate the roof level as well as a non-historic elevator bulkhead and non-historic mechanical equipment. The sections of the parapet around the side and rear elevations are capped with terra-cotta coping.

The courtyard landscape at 105 Carlton Avenue dates to a 1988-1992 rehabilitation project when the building was converted to supportive housing for single women and children, housing for mentally disabled adults, and single-residence occupancy use. The design includes accessible ramps to the building entries, concrete paving, and other landscape features such as concrete-edged planting beds, tree pits, and benches. At the interior side of the passageway to the street, there is a non-historic security window opening, metal railings, and a metal gate.

At the north side of the building, within the lightwell, is a play area that is accessible from the basement level of the building. This area is finished with a rubberized surface coating on the concrete slab and has painted concrete walls.

104 Adelphi Street

The street-facing exterior design and condition of the 104 Adelphi Street building is similar to 105 Carlton Avenue. Notable differences include, at the ground story, a non-historic metal areaway fence, non-historic light fixtures at either side of the passageway, and a non-historic metal gate within the outer part of the passageway.

Above, 104 Adelphi Street retains its historic fire escapes with simply designed metal baskets. While most of its historic parapet has been replaced, it does retain two historic sections at either end of the building with historic ball-top finials. A metal railing is visible over the front of the parapet.

The roof of 104 Adelphi Street is flat with an asphalt surface. The roof is divided into two sections demarcated by a demising wall. Four stair bulkheads rise above the roof level. The sections of the parapet around the side and rear elevations are capped with terra-cotta coping.

The courtyard landscape at 104 Adelphi Street is situated at a higher grade than the Carlton Street side, but the two are connected by a historic concrete stair with a historic pipe metal railing. The Adelphi Street side features concrete paving, several historic lampposts, and raised concrete beds for tree pits and other plantings. The various building entrances on this side are each accessible via a short set of historic steps with simple metal railings.

*Interior*

105 Carlton Avenue

No. 105 Carlton Avenue has five separate entrances from the courtyard that lead to five discrete historic stairwells. Historically, the stairwells acted as the building's sole circulation and provided access to the individual apartments that radiated from each stairwell on each floor. The stairs are metal with decorative newel posts, metal balusters, wood handrails, and marble treads. The stair landings have vinyl-tile floors, painted brick walls with some areas of brick infill, and single-leaf metal doors.

In the 1988-1992 rehabilitation project, the floor plan was altered to accommodate double-loaded corridors and smaller rooms, and an elevator core was added near the center of the building. No historic finishes remain in these spaces.

At the ground floor, there are a variety of uses. At the northwest corner of the building is a large community room finished with sheetrock walls and ceilings, and wood floors. The rest of the spaces, including the offices

on the ground floor and the living spaces on the upper floors, are finished with sheetrock walls and ceilings, and vinyl-tile floors. The north side of the building is largely occupied as partitioned office space, and the rest of the ground floor is taken up by living areas with small residential units with living/dining/kitchen areas and bedrooms as well as a larger multi-use space with a kitchen at the south end of the building.

The upper floors are used as transitional and permanent residences. Most of the floors are organized with double-loaded corridors that provide access to single bedrooms, shared bathrooms, and common areas with kitchens. All of the walls and ceilings are sheetrock; the floors in the common areas are vinyl tile and the bedrooms are wood.

The basement is divided into multiple uses including storage, maintenance, laundry, and community rooms. It is built of concrete with areas of exposed concrete-encased beams across the ceiling. The walls, and portions of the ceiling, are finished with sheetrock; the floors are vinyl.

104 Adelphi Street

No. 104 Adelphi Street has four separate entrances from the courtyard that lead to four discrete historic stairwells. As at the Carlton Avenue building, historically, the stairwells acted as the building's sole circulation and provided access to the individual apartments that radiated from the stairwells on each of the upper floors.

The interiors of 104 Adelphi Street are not publicly accessible; however, apartment rental listings indicate that its historic metal stairs remain intact and likely still provide access to the individual apartments within. The interiors of the apartments do not appear to retain any historic finishes and typically have sheetrock walls and ceilings, and wood or tile floors.

*Integrity*

In both planning and architecture, the Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard) convey a strong sense of historical integrity. Though changes to the complex over the course of its history are apparent, character-defining elements of the original design are intact.

These features include the distinctive plan of the complex, featuring two U-shaped buildings built around a central courtyard, intended to give residents ample light, air, and recreation space. Additional elements that contribute to the buildings' historic identity include their Medieval Revival-style details such as clinker brick wall surfaces, large pointed-arch passageways to the interior courtyard, and functional fenestration. At the interiors, the buildings retain their original circulation pattern in the form of their historic courtyard entrances and historic stairs. This interior arrangement reflects popular ideas of the reform housing movement, which often omitted interior corridors in favor of multiple courtyard entrances as a way to provide privacy to tenants as well as apartments with multiple light exposures and cross-ventilation.

**Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard)** Kings County, NY
Name of Property County and State

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [X] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [X] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- [ ] A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [ ] B removed from its original location.
- [ ] C a birthplace or grave.
- [ ] D a cemetery.
- [ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- [ ] F a commemorative property.
- [ ] G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
SOCIAL HISTORY
ARCHITECTURE

### Period of Significance
1929-1932

### Significant Dates
1930, 1932

### Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

### Cultural Affiliation

### Architect/Builder
Frank H. Quinby, architect
W.H. McCarthy, architect

### Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance is based on the dates of construction of the housing complex, 1929 to 1932.

### Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

**Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard)** Kings County, NY
Name of Property County and State

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**
(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard) is a limited-dividend housing project located in the Wallabout neighborhood of Brooklyn in Kings County, New York. The period of significance for the property is 1929 to 1932, the years of its construction. Overall, the project retains a high level of integrity to its original planning and design.

The complex is **locally significant** under **Criterion A** in the areas of *Politics/Government* as a direct implementation of the New York State Housing Law of 1926, which introduced—for the first time in the nation—government-backed stimulation and subsidy of new housing development. The law had three major provisions, all of which were employed by the developers of the Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard):

1) Enabling the creation of limited-dividend housing corporations, overseen by the newly created State Housing Board that regulated apartment rents and capped profits at 6 percent.
2) Exempting these affordable housing developments from property taxes.
3) Allowing the limited-dividend corporations to use eminent domain to assemble building parcels.

The Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard) project was built by Brooklyn Garden Apartments, Inc. a limited dividend company organized in 1928 and spearheaded by lawyer, housing reformer, and State Housing Board member Louis H. Pink, who sought to create a model tenement that would exemplify the benefits of the new housing law. The project was the first development built under the 1926 law to utilize the eminent domain provision of the law.

It is also significant under *Social History* as a model tenement offering improved living conditions at moderate rents. Developed and backed by some of New York's most notable advocates of improved affordable housing including New York Governor Alfred Smith and financier and philanthropist John D. Rockefeller Jr., the Brooklyn Garden Apartments, Inc. built two philanthropic model tenements: the first project was completed in 1929 at Fourth Avenue between 23rd and 24th Streets; the second project, which aimed to improve upon the first and is the subject of this nomination, was initially completed in 1930 in the Navy Yard district. These endeavors sought to provide healthful, sanitary living conditions for low-income New Yorkers who were increasingly being concentrated in overcrowded, derelict tenements. They are representative of the long effort to enhance the design and condition of affordable housing in New York City, starting with the first Tenement House law in the mid-nineteenth century and continuing into the twentieth century.

The property is also **locally significant** under **Criterion C** in the area of *Architecture* as an intact, representative example of a model tenement designed using the garden apartment plan and embellished with Medieval Revival style ornament. Completed in 1930 for the Brooklyn Garden Apartments, Inc. and designed by architect Frank H. Quinby, with an addition built 1932 designed by W.H. McCarthy, the project features two five-story U-shaped buildings organized around a courtyard. Drawing on new ideas about housing, planning, and social issues, the design reflects many themes prevalent at the end of the 1920s, particularly the concept of the garden apartment, which aimed to provide ample light, air, and recreation space to tenants. It was also,

notably, intended to be a cost-efficient type of development with its minimal lot coverage, an idea popularized by Andrew J. Thomas, an architect who designed the first Brooklyn Garden Apartments project.

As with many model housing projects, the architectural innovation of the Brooklyn Garden Apartments was as much a function of its floor plan and interior layout as its exterior design. Both buildings lacked street-facing entrances and common spaces such as lobbies and hallways, instead featuring multiple decentralized stair halls opening onto an interior courtyard. As noted in the nomination, the Navy Yard project aimed to maximize light and air and provide a high level of privacy.

The exterior design incorporates simplified Medieval Revival elements, with facades executed in a way that was both modern—with simple, planar surfaces—but also referential in their use of brickwork associated with the construction of extra-thick masonry walls, and Medieval-style features such as large, pointed-arch entryways and battlements.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

*Development of the Wallabout neighborhood*

The Wallabout neighborhood derives its name from the Walloons, French-speaking Protestants from what is now Belgium, who settled in the seventeenth century on a bay along the East River and named it *Waal-bogt*, or "bend in the river."[1] Out of this name came the modern-day corruption "Wallabout," after which the bay, its shores, and other local landmarks came to be known.

In 1637, Joris Jansen Rapalje, a Walloon tavern-keeper, "purchased" over 300 acres from the Canarsee Indians and he and his family established farms in the vicinity. The area remained rural through the eighteenth century, with several families occupying houses along a road near the shore of Wallabout Bay, just north of present-day Flushing Avenue.[2]

After the Revolutionary War, the state confiscated Rapelje's property since he was a British Loyalist and suspected spy.[3] The land was sold to Comfort and Joshua Sands, who soon transferred it to John Jackson. Jackson constructed a shipyard along the waterfront and, in 1801, sold the forty-two-acre property to the United States government for use as a federal naval shipyard. The surrounding area saw increased development spurred by the creation of the naval facility, now known as the Brooklyn Navy Yard (NRHP 2014), and the bursts of activity that followed each of the nation's conflicts.

[1] Andrew Dolkart, "Wallabout Cultural Resource Survey," prepared for the Myrtle Avenue Revitalization Project LDC (March 2005), 6, https://www.myrtleavenue.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/WallaboutCulturalResourceSurvey.pdf.
[2] Dolkart, "Wallabout Cultural Resource Survey," 5.
[3] During the war, the British anchored their fleet in Wallabout Bay and kept notorious prison ships there, where thousands of soldiers, sailors, and citizens perished. At the end of the war, the shore of Wallabout Bay was left as a vast graveyard, and the remains of the prison ship "martyrs," as they came to be known, were ultimately interred in a vault in Fort Greene Park (located in the Fort Greene Historic District, NRHP 1983), the original site of a Revolutionary-era fort on a hill overlooking the bay.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the population of Brooklyn was growing at an exponential scale—from 36,233 in 1840 to 266,661 by 1860.[4] Before long, residential and commercial areas centered around Brooklyn's Fulton Street and the Fulton Ferry—a steam route connecting Brooklyn and Manhattan and established in 1814—began to expand east towards Wallabout. During the 1840s, 1850s, and 1860s, the area was extensively developed with single-family residences of modest scale, mostly constructed of wood, but also some brick and stone, in a variety of styles including Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate, and neo-Grec.[5] Many of the houses were owned by professionals and merchants with connections to the naval industries.

In 1888, the somewhat isolated neighborhood gained increased transportation options with the construction of the Myrtle Avenue Elevated, a railroad opened by the Union Elevated Railroad Company to provide a link to Downtown Brooklyn and the Brooklyn Bridge (NHL 1964, NRHP 1966), which had been completed in 1883.[6] The elevated had stops at Navy Street, Vanderbilt Avenue, and Washington Avenue and, at its north end, connected to the Brooklyn Elevated Railroad (opened 1885), which ran between Williamsburg and East New York. These developments, plus the increasing demand for housing in New York City, led to the construction of speculative multi-family tenements, which were likely occupied by tenants employed at the navy yard, nearby factories, or those who commuted to Manhattan for work.

While the blocks between Park and Flushing Avenues, closest to the navy yard, became increasingly industrial over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the blocks between Myrtle and Park Avenues remained largely residential. Historic maps from 1887 show the block where the Brooklyn Garden Apartments would later be built was occupied by small, mid-nineteenth century wood and brick houses, some with rear buildings, on Carlton Avenue and Adelphi Street, and store-and-dwelling buildings on Myrtle and Park Avenues. Historic maps from 1916 (Figure 1) show that the block remained largely unchanged except for the addition of an Old Law tenement at 110 Adelphi Street (built 1900) and two New Law tenements at 88-90 Adelphi Street (built 1914) and 113-117 Carlton Avenue (built ca. 1910).

By the 1920s, much of Wallabout's mid-nineteenth century housing stock was in poor condition. Many houses were subdivided into multiple units and operating without modern conveniences such as indoor plumbing. By 1926, the "Navy Yard district" was being described as one of the "worst" neighborhoods in Brooklyn and a "plague spot" worthy of clearance and rebuilding.[7] The Brooklyn Garden Apartments, Inc.'s Navy Yard project was the first attempt at revitalizing the area through eminent domain. Much larger projects followed in the post-war years including the Fort Greene Houses (Associated Architects, 1940-44), a state-aided public housing project of thirty-five brick buildings ranging from six to fifteen stories and organized into multiple superblocks between Fort Greene Park and Park Avenue, and the Farragut Houses (Fellheimer, Wagner & Vollmer, 1952), a

[4] Dolkart, "Wallabout Cultural Resource Survey," 6.
[5] For more, see Andrew D. Dolkart, "Wallabout Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2011).
[6] "The New Road Opened," *New York Times*, April 11, 1888.
[7] "New York's Underworld Service Club," *Allentown Morning Call*, December 31, 1926; "New Housing Law Ready to Function," *New York Times*, January 2, 1927.

state-aided project of ten buildings, each thirteen or fourteen-stories tall, located to the immediate west of the navy yard.[8]

Activity at the Brooklyn Navy Yard peaked during World War II but began to decline, like much of the city's waterfront industrial economy, in the years that followed as the federal government pulled back on naval construction and trucks eclipsed ships as the primary means of moving goods. In an effort to make the city more interconnected, city planner Robert Moses created plans for the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway (BQE), a trenched and elevated highway intended to connect Brooklyn to Queens and the boroughs to the major bridges. Although initially planned in the early 1940s, the section of the BQE that ran near the Brooklyn Navy Yard (called the Navy Yard Viaduct) was not completed until 1960.[9] The structure, which ran over Park Avenue, effectively severed the Wallabout neighborhood (and many other neighborhoods) into two sections—a northern industrial zone associated with the navy yard and a southern residential/commercial zone connected to the Fort Greene neighborhood.

In 1966, the Brooklyn Navy Yard closed and was decommissioned along with over ninety other military bases and installations in a government-led drawdown.[10] In 1969, the City of New York took control of the yard and set out to transform it into an industrial park with a combination of light and heavy industry. That same year, the Myrtle Avenue Elevated was closed and demolished, although a section of the original line remains in use today (part of the M train service) between Bushwick in Brooklyn and Middle Village in Queens.[11] With the loss of the elevated train, the Wallabout neighborhood was left largely disconnected from the wider city subway system. Many buildings in the vicinity became vacant and rundown and much of the Wallabout zone became known as the northern edges of the Fort Greene and Clinton Hill neighborhoods.

During the 1990s and 2000s, the area rebounded and there was increased large-scale development on the low-rise blocks north of Myrtle Avenue. In 2007, at the behest of residents and preservationists, the City Council approved new zoning for the neighborhood's ninety-nine blocks that allowed high-rise development along the commercial corridors but prevented them on the side streets. Since then, further efforts have been made to preserve the area's historic, low-scale buildings including the 2011 designation by the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission of one block of Vanderbilt Avenue and the 2011 listing of the Wallabout Historic District, extending from Clermont Avenue to Hall Street, between Myrtle and Park Avenues, in the National Register of Historic Places.

*Philanthropic tenements in New York City before 1926*

During the mid-nineteenth century, New York City philanthropists, social reformers, builders, and architects began to explore the possibilities of building high-quality tenements—sometimes known as "model tenements"—to house the city's urban poor, who were increasingly being crowded into congested neighborhoods and old, substandard tenements. The city's earliest tenements had been constructed in the 1840s

[8] The Fort Greene Houses are separated into two entities and known as the Walt Whitman and Ingersoll Houses.
[9] "Expressway Link in Brooklyn Open," *New York Times*, January 6, 1960.
[10] For more on the history of the navy yard, see Lindsay Peterson, "Brooklyn Navy Yard Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2014), section 8, pg. 45.

and were four- or five-stories tall with stairs at the center and cramped, windowless bedrooms. Although efforts were made to pass minimum sanitary and fire codes in 1867, tenements for the working class remained poorly ventilated and shabbily constructed.

It was under these conditions that interest in model tenements grew. The term "model tenement" was, however, misleading in that it implied levels of perfection that did not typically exist in these types of developments. They were, as architect and author James Ford later explained, more akin to a "working model," in which designers hoped to showcase improvements that could eventually be incorporated into new housing laws and be adopted by other builders.[12]

By the 1870s, some saw private housing philanthropy, otherwise known as limited-dividend housing or "philanthropy plus five percent," as the potential solution to the city's dire shortage of sanitary, well-constructed housing for wage earners. As opposed to purely philanthropic companies, which earned no profit on their developments, private housing philanthropy allowed private capital to receive a small return on their investment. Supporters of the concept hoped it would spur the creation of modern, safe tenements and that the income-producing nature of the enterprise would avoid stigmatizing the residents as recipients of charity. Importantly, it was also hoped that the construction of model tenements, which were meant to show how desirable apartments could be built at low cost, would induce more builders and profit-seeking investors to build tenements of a similar, high quality throughout the city.[13]

English precedents provided the earliest inspiration for model tenement projects in the city. One example was the model working-class housing designed by Henry Roberts and built at the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London by Prince Albert.[14] The design included open-air public stairs—thought to help prevent disease and fires—instead of the dark, interior stairs found in most rowhouses. It also increased light and ventilation and provided a dedicated water supply and water closet.

The first major example of private philanthropic investment in housing in the United States was the Home and Tower Buildings (located in the Cobble Hill Historic District, Brooklyn, NRHP 1976), built in 1876-1879 by philanthropist Alfred Tredway White and designed by William Field and Son. The buildings featured open stairs that led to the apartments, each of which included a living room, one or two bedrooms, and separate kitchens and baths.[15] The Tower Buildings also included an internal courtyard with a lawn, gazebo, and encircling promenade. In 1890, White built another model tenement complex along the lines of the earlier buildings. The Riverside Buildings (located in the Brooklyn Heights Historic District, NRHP 1966) consisted of nine buildings (of which four survive) that were praised by Jacob Riis in his 1896 book *How the Other Half Lives*, as the "beau ideal of the model tenement."[16]

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[11] "1,200 on Last Trip on Myrtle Ave. El; Cars Are Stripped," *New York Times*, October 4, 1969.
[12] James Ford, *Slums and Housing* 2 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936), 672.
[13] Ford, 671-672.
[14] Richard Plunz, *A History of Housing in New York City*, revised edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 88.
[15] Plunz, 89.
[16] Jacob Riis, in Christopher Gray, "A Model Tenement in Dickensian Style," *New York Times*, August 23, 1992.

Around the turn of the century, architects such as Ernest Flagg began to propose that, instead of dumb-bell tenements, which had become the prevailing tenement plan type after the passage of the Tenement Reform Law of 1879 (otherwise known as the Old Law), they could create larger buildings with spacious courtyards that would both allow more light and air to reach the apartments and create common areas that could be shared by tenants.

One company that utilized this approach was the City and Suburban Homes Company, which was established in 1896 as a limited-dividend corporation. The company, which was backed by wealthy philanthropists such as railroad magnate Cornelius Vanderbilt, built multiple projects including the Clark Buildings (Ernest Flagg, 1898, demolished), the First Avenue Estate (James E. Ware and Philip H. Ohm, 1900-1916, NRHP 1986), and the York Avenue Estate (Harde & Short, Percy Griffin, and Philip H. Ohm, 1900-1913, NRHP 1994). All of these projects adopted a fairly low-rise perimeter block design with central light-courts, which provided plentiful light, ventilation, and amenities to residents.[17]

While some limited-dividend companies continued to develop projects intended for moderate-income tenants or buyers in the more suburban outer boroughs—such as at Sunnyside Gardens (NRHP 1984), a low-density garden apartment community designed by Clarence Stein—few model tenements were built in the densest parts of the city. The City and Suburban projects would remain among the last philanthropic tenements built in New York City until the late 1920s and 1930s, after the passage of the State Housing Law of 1926.

*The State Housing Law of 1926*

In March 1925, a study by the State Commission of Housing and Regional Planning, chaired by urbanist and architect Clarence Stein, found that despite the city's recent residential building boom, the supply of low and moderate rental apartments was not meeting the need of the city's wage earners, especially the two-thirds of the population with incomes less than $2,000 (this amount is roughly $35,000 today, adjusted for inflation).[18] An analysis of apartment vacancies showed that most of the vacant apartments in the city were in high-cost rentals while both Old Law tenements (built between 1879 and 1901) and New Law tenements (built after 1901) had much smaller vacancy rates.

By January 1926, Governor Alfred Smith, who had been raised by Irish immigrants in a tenement on Manhattan's Lower East Side, began to advocate for a law that would spur the development of better housing for the city's low-income residents. In February, Smith addressed the State Legislature, where he decried the condition of the city's tenements, which he said bore a direct relation to disease, crime, insanity, and juvenile delinquency. Calling housing an "elemental need" and "public necessity," Smith outlined a scheme in which

[17] Both the First Avenue Estate and the York Avenue Estate are listed on the National Register and designated as landmarks by the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission. The success of the City and Suburban Homes Company encouraged others to enter the field, notably steel magnate Henry Phipps, who constructed the Phipps Houses (demolished) a six-story model tenement in 1905 at 321-337 East 31st Street designed by Grosvenor Atterbury.
[18] "Public Money Must Build Tenements," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 22, 1925.

"the State, without becoming a landlord and without lending credit, could yet lend a helping hand to that great part of the population which today cannot afford the kind of shelter it should in decency have."[19]

In reality, the state's "helping hand" directly benefited private capital in the hopes that it would bring indirect benefits to the city's poor. The stated goals of the legislation were to incentivize private capital to build new housing in the worst tenement areas of the city with tax abatements, low-interest mortgages through the creation of a State Bank (which would allow owners to charge lower rents), and by providing builders the power to acquire large sites in crowded areas via eminent domain, a typically difficult, expensive endeavor. Essentially, the plan would remove some of the vagaries and pitfalls of pure speculation, and replace them with a regulated, conservative approach to tenement building that also provided for the public interest. While the *New York Times* found the proposal "comprehensive and daring," others were quick to call it "wildcat finance" and "ultra-socialistic."[20]

The Republicans in the Legislature were particularly opposed to the idea of a State Housing Bank, which they believed constituted state aid. Opponents of the policy, such as John W. Ahern, president of the Lawyer's Mortgage Company, insisted that lending money on mortgages was "an expert's business" for which the state was not qualified to participate.[21] Others, like Samuel Untermyer, a progressive lawyer and civic leader, predicted that without a State Bank, the state was merely postponing the inevitable coming of state or municipal aid and that "the longer we delay through experiments and temporizing with half-way measures the more hopeless will be our plight."[22]

Eventually, the Republicans put forward their own housing proposal, known as the Nicoll-Hofstader Bill. While the State Bank was eliminated and the power of eminent domain was transferred from the State Bank to the limited-divided companies themselves, the rest of the bill largely maintained Smith's other ideas including the creation of a State Housing Board, which would authorize limited-dividend companies and oversee their operations. In return for accepting regulations on dividends (capped at 6 percent), rental and management of their properties, including sale, the companies would be vested with the power of condemnation and exempted from state taxation on their property and bonds.[23]

Smith signed the housing bill into law in May 1926, saying that he hoped the new law "may prove the beginning of a lasting movement to wipe out of our state those blots upon civilization, the old, dilapidated, dark, unsanitary, unsafe tenement houses that long since became unfit for human habitation and certainly are no place for future citizens of New York to grow in."[24]

It soon became apparent, however, that progress on replacing poorly maintained tenements would be slow without a municipal tax abatement. Thus, in October 1926, the State Housing Board introduced an ordinance

[19] Silas Bent, "Governor Argues for His Housing Plan," *New York Times*, February 28, 1926.
[20] Bent, "Governor Argues for His Housing Plan."
[21] "Smith Plan Evokes Varied Views Here," *New York Times*, January 8, 1926.
[22] "Smith Won't Insist on Housing Bank," *New York Times*, March 13, 1926.
[23] "Housing Bill Passes," *New York Times*, April 22, 1926.
[24] "Smith Signs Housing Bill of Republicans," *New York Herald Tribune*, May 11, 1926.

that would exempt model tenements built by limited dividend companies from local taxation.[25] Board member Louis H. Pink, a lawyer and housing reformer, told the *New York Times* that limited dividend companies were "not clamoring for permission to organize and operate," but that the city needed to cooperate on tax exemption so that the tenants could get the benefits of low rents.[26]

By March 1927, the only limited divided company that had formed was for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, which already had a project in progress and wanted to come under the law's provisions to reduce rents. New York City Mayor Jimmy Walker was being blamed for the lack of progress, as many potential limited dividend companies wanted assurances as to how they would be treated by the city.[27] After several months of pressure from housing experts and civic organizations, including the League of Mothers' Clubs, who held a mass meeting on the topic, Mayor Walker introduced a bill giving model tenements a twenty-year exemption period, which was less than the forty years that the State Housing Board had recommended.[28] Although realty companies fought the bill, calling it a special subsidy at the expense of all taxpayers, it was finally passed in June 1927.[29] With an assurance on local tax exemption, companies waiting on the sidelines began to enter the program.

*Louis H. Pink & The Brooklyn Garden Apartment, Inc.*

Born in Wausau, Wisconsin, Louis Heaton Pink (1882-1955) was a lawyer and housing reformer who spent his formative years in New York as a resident worker at the University Settlement (NRHP 1986), the first settlement house in United States, which offered support services to recent immigrants and low-income families on the Lower East Side. After this, Pink worked at the United Neighborhood Guild and held positions at the Brooklyn Disciplinary Training School, the Board of Education, and the Mayor's Committee on Taxation, before eventually being appointed by Governor Smith to the New York State Housing Board in 1926.[30]

Pink had a deep interest in reformist social movements that aimed to alleviate poverty in urban areas. In 1927, he participated in the philanthropic hotel movement with the creation of the Upanin Workingmen's Hotel (now demolished) at 282 Bridge Street in Brooklyn, a temporary lodging house for single working men.[31] Like the private philanthropic tenement, the goal of the philanthropic hotel was to help the poor as well as make a modest profit for its investor. Designed by architect L.E. Ballade and eventually known as the Bridge-Johnson

[25] "Wants Model Flats Exempt from Tax," *New York Times*, October 1, 1926.
[26] "Lauds State Law on Model Housing," *New York Times*, January 9, 1927.
[27] "Housing Dependent on Tax Exemption" *New York Times*, February 27, 1927; "Delay in Housing Laid to Walker," *New York Times*, March 8, 1927.
[28] "Mayor to Push Bill for Taxless Flats," *New York Times*, March 9, 1927; "Walker Introduces Tax Exemption Bill," *New York Times*, March 11, 1927.
[29] "City Passes Bill For Tax Exemption," *New York Times*, June 8, 1927.
[30] Other members of the New York State Housing Board included Darwin R. James, the chairman; Oliver Cabana, Jr., John Halkett, Louis H. Pink, and Sullivan W. Jones, the State Architect.
[31] The prototype of the philanthropic hotel was the Mills Hotels that were erected by banker Darius Ogden Mills in Greenwich Village and the Lower East Side (both 1897) and in the Theatre District (1907). The hotels provided low-cost accommodations for single men and were viewed as a way for workers to lift themselves out of poverty.

Hotel after its location, the hotel contained 272 rooms as well as club features such as a restaurant, laundry, and barber shop for residents.[32]

In 1928, Pink published *A New Day in Housing*, a study of housing in Europe and in the United States. Pink's effort was one of several serious studies of housing abroad made in the late 1920s and early 1930s intended to arouse interest in low-cost housing in the United States.[33] In the book, Pink explored modern housing from places such as England, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany and analyzed the challenging housing situation in New York. Although Pink called the 1926 New York State Housing Law "disappointing" in its results thus far, he concluded by saying that it still pointed toward substantial progress and was "the most helpful legislation of its kind yet enacted in this country."[34]

Pink was already in the midst of organizing his own limited dividend company under the state law. In December 1927, plans were announced for the establishment of a new limited dividend company known as the Brooklyn Garden Apartments, Inc. The *New York Times and New York Herald Tribune* both reported on the scheme, which was to include seven apartment houses designed by architect Andrew J. Thomas and set to cost $1.5 million, with $500,000 to be raised by stock subscriptions (expected to pay a 6 percent return) and the rest by a mortgage with an interest rate of 5 percent.[35] The effort was spearheaded by Ralph Jonas, the president of the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, who appointed Pink as the chair of the sponsoring citizens' committee and the public face of the enterprise. Although a site had not yet been purchased, Pink expressed his desire for the first project to be located near the Navy Yard, "housing being at its worst in that district."[36] In his 1928 book, Pink wrote that the "express purpose" of the endeavor was to prove "that it is practical to operate under the act."[37]

By February 1928, between $80,000 and $85,000 worth of stock had been subscribed for the Brooklyn Garden Apartments, Inc., including $1,000 from Governor Smith and other subscriptions ranging from $100 to $25,000.[38] The effort continued to gain steam with the help of events such as the one held at the home of committee member Mrs. H. Edward Dreier, where Eleanor Roosevelt spoke about Brooklyn's housing conditions and the need for constructive building operations such as the Brooklyn Gardens Apartments.[39] By May, it was announced that financier and philanthropist John D. Rockefeller Jr. had pledged $150,000 to underwrite the balance of capital necessary for the company's first project, which would cost $700,000 in total.[40] At that same time, it was also disclosed that a site had been purchased on Fourth Avenue, between 23rd

[32] "Upanin Hotel Title," *New York Times*, February 8, 1927; "Hotel Plans Are Filed," *New York Times*, May 20, 1927.
[33] Other examples included Catherine Bauer's *Modern Housing* (1934) and Herbert Undeen Nelson's *New Homes in Old Countries* (1937).
[34] Louis H. Pink, *A New Day in Housing* (New York: The John Day Company, 1928), 187.
[35] "$11-Room Flats with Gardens for Brooklyn," *New York Herald Tribune*, December 11, 1927; "Brooklyn to Build Model Tenements," *New York Times*, December 11, 1927.
[36] "$11-Room Flats with Gardens for Brooklyn," *New York Herald Tribune*.
[37] Pink, 112.
[38] "Smith Puts $1,000 in Better Housing," *New York Times*, February 9, 1928; "M'Cooey Will Act on Model Houses," *New York Times*, February 10, 1928.
[39] "Garden Ap'ts Fund Becomes $115,000," *Brooklyn Times Union*, 3/9/28; "Rockefeller to Back New Housing Project," *New York Times*, May 22, 1928.
[40] "Model Suites Planned for Brooklyn Block," *New York Herald Tribune*, May 22, 1928.

and 24th Streets, in South Brooklyn and that architect Andrew J. Thomas, working in collaboration with Frank H. Quinby, had completed plans for the model tenement.

Thomas was a New York-born, self-taught architect who became a prominent supporter of the garden apartment idea in the 1910s.[41] After World War I, during which he had designed housing for the Emergency Fleet Corporation, Thomas began to argue that the full reconstruction of old tenement blocks with low-coverage buildings was the most economical method of providing healthful housing for the poor (as opposed to building rehabilitation or partial block demolitions). In his 1919 competition submission to the New York State Reconstruction Commission for the redevelopment of a Lower East Side Block, Thomas proposed fourteen U-shaped buildings around the perimeter of a city block with a large interior garden.[42] Thomas's entry into the tenement house competition, sponsored by the Phelps Stokes Fund in 1921, similarly featured two U-shaped buildings around a central court, with primary access to the buildings located from the garden.[43]

Thomas's work for companies such as the Queensboro Corporation and the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company soon caught the attention of John D. Rockefeller Jr., who hired him to design the model tenements for industrial workers (1924) in Bayonne, NJ, the Paul Lawrence Dunbar Apartments (1926-28, NRHP 1979) on West 149th and 150th Streets in Central Harlem, and the Thomas Apartments (1928, part of the Grand Concourse Historic District, NRHP 1987) on the Grand Concourse in the Bronx.[44] The latter projects, one built as a cooperative for middle-class Blacks and the other for union workers in the Bronx, were similar in design, with five- or six-story U-shaped buildings with interior courtyard spaces, permitting ample light and air to reach the apartments within. Both apartments also included community and social spaces such as playgrounds and meeting rooms.

For the Brooklyn Garden Apartments, Inc., Thomas worked in association with Frank H. Quinby (1868-1932). Quinby was born in Armonk, NY, attended the Chappaqua Mountain Institute, and studied architecture with private tutors.[45] He opened his own practice in 1892 and quickly established himself within Brooklyn's architectural circles. Along with suburban and summer residences in New York and Maine, Quinby was a designer of factories, warehouses, and loft buildings including the Empire Pipe Bending & Supply Co. at 235-253 Park Avenue in Brooklyn (1906, part of the Wallabout Industrial Historic District, NRHP 2012), the eleven-story loft building at 129 Lafayette Street (1911) in Manhattan, and the E.W. Bliss Foundry at 39 Jay

[41] "Andrew Thomas, A City Architect," *New York Times*, July 27, 1965; Christopher Gray, "Dr. Dolittle's Kind of Coop," *New York Times*, July 14, 2011.
[42] Plunz, 137.
[43] Thomas's entry did not qualify since his lot coverage was too low per the competition requirements. Plunz, 136.
[44] Thomas's work in Jackson Heights includes Linden Court (1920), the Chateau (1922), and the Towers (1923), all located within the Jackson Heights Historic District (NRHP 1999). The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company project (1924) to design fifty-four buildings to house 2,125 low-income families in Sunnyside, Astoria, and Woodside. For more, see New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, "Jackson Heights Historic District," (New York: Landmarks Preservation Commission, 1993). For more on the Dunbar Apartments, see Karen Ansis & Steven Senigo, "Dunbar Apartments," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1979) and for the Thomas Apartments see Merrill Hesch, "Grand Concourse Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1987).
[45] "Frank H. Quinby, Architect, Dead," *New York Times*, August 11, 1932.

Street in Brooklyn (1913, part of the DUMBO Industrial District, NRHP 2000). Quinby also designed public buildings such as fire houses, park buildings, and public baths.

The Brooklyn Garden Apartments project on Fourth Avenue, which remains extant, was the first project wholly planned in response to the State Housing Law. [46] This section of Fourth Avenue was not far from the docks, factories, and warehouses in Red Hook and Bush Terminal and was densely populated with old tenements. While Pink asserted that the neighborhood required "new life and rebuilding," it is noteworthy that the site that was actually selected was vacant.[47] The six-story brick building, which was completed in July 1929, closely followed Thomas's earlier endeavors in that it was designed to form the perimeter of the property with only 53 percent of building coverage and a large garden court at its center.[48] Notably, the main entrances to the building were from the garden court, which was accessible through three large arched passageways from Fourth Avenue, 23rd Street, and 24th Street, giving residents a high level of privacy through the remoteness of their apartments from the street. From each courtyard entrance, the apartments were accessed via a number of discrete stairs, which provided the only circulation within the building. On its exterior, the design was modest and vaguely Mediterranean or Romanesque in its architectural inspiration, with plain brick facades, round-arched passageway entries, and ornamental stone features at the parapet (much of which has since been removed).

As Thomas had explained to the newspapers, his design allowed for ample light and air, making every room "an outside room" with cross ventilation. The 164 apartments, which rented for $10.50 per room, were also equipped with modern kitchens and bathrooms. Although there were no elevators in the building, Thomas and Quinby included dumbwaiters that could carry laundry to drying racks on the roof, allowing the courtyard to remain pristine and not filled with draped lines of clothing.[49] The project also included children's playgrounds and playrooms, and a community room with social activities guided by a trained social worker. The inclusion of stores along Fourth Avenue was intended to help reduce overall costs.

Although the project was described as a success and was reported to be 97 percent rented, the *Brooklyn Times Union* noted that the interior-facing apartments were the slowest to rent and that most tenants wished to face Fourth Avenue, where they could have "the fun of seeing the automobiles going by."[50] Additionally, it was determined that the rooms were too small and the apartments had too little closet space. The Brooklyn Garden Apartments, Inc. aimed to rectify these mistakes in its next development.

*The Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard)*

By April 1929, the Citizens' Committee of the Brooklyn Garden Apartments, Inc. had already chosen a site in the Navy Yard district for its second venture.[51] As opposed to the earlier model tenement, which had been

[46] The Amalgamated Coop Dwellings project had been in development before the law was passed.
[47] Pink, 112.
[48] Virginia Pope, "New Model Tenements to Rise in Manhattan," *New York Times*, April 21, 1929.
[49] "Brooklyn To Build Model Tenements;" "Model Suites Planned for Brooklyn Block;" Richard Webster, "Families of Limited Means Soon to Have Model Housing," *Brooklyn Times Union*, December 31, 1929.
[50] Webster, "Families of Limited Means Soon to Have Model Housing;" "Model Suites For 111 Ready in Brooklyn," *New York Herald Tribune*, August 31, 1930.
[51] Pope, "New Model Tenements to Rise in Manhattan."

constructed on vacant land, the new 20,000 square foot site between Park and Myrtle Avenues, running through from Adelphi Street to Carlton Avenue, was occupied by nine one- and two-family frame and brick dwellings and stables that would be demolished under the eminent domain powers that had been given to the limited dividend companies. In 1920, these houses were occupied by white, working-class families, mostly born in New York. The residents held a range of jobs including longshoreman, ironworker, clerk, machinist, stableman, chauffeur, and domestic worker, among other professions.[52] A small number of families were immigrants hailing from Ireland and Poland.

The Navy Yard project, which was designed by Thomas's former associate, Frank H. Quinby, followed along the lines of the earlier Fourth Avenue project in terms of its design, apartment arrangement, and rental and management structure. The Navy Yard project was somewhat smaller, with 111 apartments divided between two separate buildings, but like the Fourth Avenue building, the two structures were arranged around a central garden courtyard where several entrances provided access into the buildings.

Like earlier reform housing projects, the Navy Yard development sought to reduce lot coverage, provide communal uses in the leftover spaces, and provide maximum light and ventilation to the apartments within. Its open courtyard plan and circulation pattern, which omitted interior corridors in favor of multiple courtyard entrances and discrete stairs, were a direct result of those goals. This specific plan type evolved from Ernest Flagg's Parisian-influenced *porte cochere* prototype of 1894, which featured a single opening from the street and a central courtyard with multiple building entrances.[53] The "Flagg-style plan," as termed by historian Richard Plunz, was hugely influential because it could easily be adapted within the gridiron street plan and provided abundant light and ventilation to the apartments. It was first realized at Flagg's Clark Buildings (demolished), built for the City and Suburban Homes Company in 1898, and was later modified by other tenement designers, including James E. Ware and Harde & Short, in other City and Suburban philanthropic tenement projects, and by others creating similar housing.

At the Navy Yard project, the plan, circulation, and apartment arrangement all aimed to maximize light and air and provide a high level of privacy. Without corridors interrupting the floor plan, each two-room-deep apartment had cross-ventilation and multiple windows facing different exposures, meaning that apartments could be well lit through different parts of the day. One difference from the Fourth Avenue project, however, was that the apartments in the Navy Yard development were somewhat smaller overall, with fewer, but larger, rooms on average. This modification was based on learned experience, as it had been found that "for enterprises such as this most tenants are seeking the smallest possible quarters."[54]

Quinby designed the Navy Yard buildings in a simplified Medieval Revival style with cladding of clinker bricks laid in Flemish bond with regularly spaced projecting headers. The choice of style, like at the earlier Fourth Avenue project, was part of a larger trend during the 1920s and 1930s of reviving historic styles from all over the world including Mediterranean, Spanish, English, French, and Colonial and, in some cases, merging elements of classic styles with eclectic, modern design elements. The facades at the Brooklyn Garden

[52] Information was obtained from the 1920 federal census records.
[53] Plunz, 41-42.
[54] Webster, "Families of Limited Means Soon to Have Model Housing."

Apartments (Navy Yard) were executed in a way that was both modern, with simple, planar surfaces, but also referential in their use of brickwork associated with the construction of extra-thick masonry walls, and Medieval-style features such as large, pointed-arch entryways and battlements. The parapets were given extra architectural interest with an arched recesses and ball finials atop stepped gables.

The land was purchased for $72,000 and the cost of the project eventually reached $426,000, of which $180,000 was made up by public subscriptions, $11,000 by tenant subscriptions, and $235,000 covered by a mortgage.[55] As opposed to the earlier project, tenants in the Navy Yard project were required to subscribe for one share of stock, one-half of which had to be paid as a deposit upon registration to live in the building. The *Brooklyn Times Union* reported that this was done not to raise funds, but to ensure that all tenants were "personally interested in the condition and the success of the enterprise."[56]

The project was finished four weeks ahead of schedule and Governor Smith, who at the time was the Democratic candidate for president, was invited to speak at the opening of 104 Adelphi Street, which was completed in September 1930; 105 Carlton Street would be completed in October 1930. The directors, it was reported, believed that the new complex was "more valuable than the first building [on Fourth Avenue], for some of the worst rookeries in Brooklyn were torn down to make way for it."[57]

By January 1931, the complex was 100 percent occupied, yet Pink began to express frustration at the small scale at which the overall housing problem was being addressed. To the *Brooklyn Eagle*, he said: "It is probable that Brooklyn Garden Apartments could raise money for another building but what would it amount to?—only another sample. The present stagnation and unemployment calls for a united effort on a large scale which will prove a real stimulus to business and will make a visible change in the neighborhoods which are going downhill."[58] Indeed, the national economic depression sparked by the stock market crash of October 1929 was taking its toll on New York City and the residential housing market.

Still, by March 1932, plans were made to expand the Navy Yard project with an addition on the south side of 105 Carlton Street.[59] Although it was filed as a separate alteration application with the Brooklyn Department of Buildings, it is likely that the addition was part of the original plan for the site and was held until there was sufficient funding to build it. The addition was filed by architect W.H. McCarthy, but it is possible and even likely that Quinby, who died in August 1932, was the designer and simply unable to complete the project due to illness. The addition was designed as a seamless extension of the original building with twenty-nine additional apartments.

*Later History of the Limited Dividend Program*

[55] "Modern Low Rent Apartment for Navy Yard Area," *Brooklyn Eagle*, February 9, 1930; Amy MacMaster, "Model Apartments Solve Housing," *Brooklyn Eagle*, February 23, 1930; "Model Suites For 111 Ready in Brooklyn."
[56] Richardson Webster, "'Al' Smith, Stockholder, To Open Garden Apartments," *Brooklyn Times Union*, September 10, 1930.
[57] Webster, "'Al' Smith, Stockholder, To Open Garden Apartments."
[58] "Low Cost Housing To Help Wage Earner and Unemployment," *Brooklyn Eagle*, January 4, 1931.
[59] This alteration was filed at the Brooklyn Department Buildings under Alteration #2796 in 1932.

By December 1931, it was reported that $9.5 million had been invested under the State Housing Law in nine projects for 1,800 families.[60] Yet, only a few years after the passage of the State Housing Law, it was apparent that a flood of new model tenements built with private capital would not be forthcoming. In the *North American Review*, Harry W. Laidler laid out some of the issues that were apparssent at the Brooklyn Gardens Apartments and elsewhere:

> These houses…have not attracted working people from the old law tenements. They have not solved the problem of the slums. They have attracted firemen and policemen and skilled artisans and writers and artists who have saved a few hundred dollars necessary for the initial payments and who can afford to pay the monthly charges. And despite the encouragement from the State, few builders or philanthropists have stepped forward to organize building corporations along similar lines...[61]

Although vacancies in the projects were generally low, it was also the case that both Brooklyn Gardens Apartments developments had a higher-than-typical number of vacancies compared to the other limited-dividend projects. Between both complexes, there were more than fifty vacancies for an occupancy average of 80.7 percent compared to the 94.2 percent averaged by the rest of the projects.[62] In his 1936 book, *Slums and Housing*, James Ford contemplated the reasons for the high vacancy rate. “Is it,” he wrote, “due to the comparatively small size of the rooms, which is the reason given by one of the members of the staff, or is it to be ascribed to some one of a long list of possible factors such as location, neighbors, rents, lack of proper publicity, or other defect in management?”[63] The challenge, he noted, was that if one assumed the problem was the size of the rooms, for example, then it might lead to new ventures in which rooms were made needlessly large, leading to higher rentals that low-income families could not afford.

Indeed, the housing built under the 1926 law was always, for various reasons, geared more toward the low-to-middle income group than those who were truly poor. That task would ultimately be adopted by the Municipal Housing Authority (later the New York City Housing Authority or NYCHA), which was formed in 1934 with Louis H. Pink as one of its five members. [64] As opposed to the limited dividend companies, which were always highly restricted, the municipal corporation was given the power and ability to finance, erect, and manage projects on a large scale, under its own initiative. The First Houses (NRHP 1979), built by NYCHA and completed 1936, was one of the first public housing projects in the United States and replaced a block of tenements that were cleared under eminent domain.

Nevertheless, Pink still viewed the limited dividend projects as sound economic investments, pointing out in 1938 that none of the projects had yet failed to show a profit, even amid the Great Depression.[65] But they were, he admitted, likely more suited for the middle-income group than for the poor, for whom the apartments had

[60] “Model Apartments Urgently Needed,” *New York Times*, December 27, 1931.
[61] Harry W. Laidler, “Property from the Poor,” *The North American Review* 232, no. 6 (December 1931): 487.
[62] “Vacancies Are Low in Model Tenements: State Projects 94.2 Per Cent Occupied,” *New York Times*, February 12, 1933.
[63] Ford, 676.
[64] “Mayor Names Five to Housing Board,” *New York Times*, February 14, 1934.
[65] “11 Projects in City Earn 5% Net Income,” *New York Times*, June 28, 1938.

originally been intended. In 1949, Pink maintained that they had proved to be a good investment.[66] Rents were, remarkably, still under eleven dollars a room, even with inflation and high rents, and even with the low-cost rentals, the Brooklyn Garden Apartments was able to get a return of 4 percent on the stock.

In 1953, tenants in the Brooklyn Garden Apartments brought a case against the state after the rents were raised.[67] At issue was the low-income restrictions that had been placed on the projects at their outset. In 1951, an amendment was enacted to allow tenants whose incomes had increased beyond the threshold to pay extra to stay in their apartment. The judge ruled that the rent increases were legal and that if excess-income tenants did not vacate, they were required to compensate in the form of rent increases. This, of course, diluted the overall percentage of low-income tenants participating within the wider limited dividend program.

In 1955, the Mitchell-Lama Housing Program (officially called the Limited-Profit Housing Companies Act) was created to spur developers to build limited-dividend housing for low- and middle-income tenants through tax abatements, much like the 1926 law had done. The major difference from the earlier law was the introduction of government financing through low-interest mortgage loans, which the previous law had not provided. In 1961, the 1926 limited dividend program was brought into the Private Housing Finance Law along with the Mitchell-Lama housing program and placed under the supervision of the state Division of Housing and Community Renewal.[68] Since that point, several housing developments, including the Brooklyn Garden Apartments, have chosen to buy out of the program and are no longer regulated as limited dividend projects.[69]

Ultimately, only nineteen limited dividend housing projects representing approximately 9,300 units were constructed in New York City between 1928 and 1977.[70] The projects, their date of construction and, in some cases, date of deregulation, are outlined below:

- In Manhattan:
  - Amalgamated Dwellings in the Lower East Side (1930, deregulated 1963, Lower East Side Historic District, NRHP 2006)
  - Manhattan Housing in the East Village (1931, deregulated 1980)
  - Stanton Homes in the Lower East Side (1931, deregulated 1980)
  - Knickerbocker Village in the Lower East Side (1934, deregulated post-2004, Two Bridges Historic District, NRHP 2003)
- In Brooklyn:
  - Brooklyn Garden Apartments—Fourth Avenue (1929, deregulated 1980)
  - Brooklyn Garden Apartments—Navy Yard (1930, deregulation date unknown)

[66] Louis H. Pink, "The Reminisces of Louis H. Pink," interview by Owen W. Bombard, 1949 (New York: Columbia Center for Oral History, 1972), 36, accessed December 15, 2023: https://dlc.library.columbia.edu/catalog/cul:g1jwstqmrr.
[67] "Rent Rises Upheld in Public Housing," *New York Times*, March 27, 1953.
[68] City of New York Office of the Comptroller and Office of Policy Management, *Affordable No More: New York City's Looming Crisis in Mitchell-Lama and Limited Dividend Housing* (New York, NY: City of New York, February 18, 2024), 7, accessed December 15, 2023: https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/affordable-no-more-new-york-citys-looming-crisis-in-mitchell-lama-and-limited-dividend-housing/.
[69] New York City Office of the Comptroller and Office of Policy Management, "Affordable No More," 8.
[70] New York City Planning Commission, *Public and Publicly-Aided Housing 1927-1973* (New York, NY: City of New York, 1974).

  - Harry Silver Apartments (1953)
- In the Bronx:
  - Farband Houses in Allerton (1928)
  - Amalgamated Houses, Units 1-6 in Kingsbridge (1928, deregulated 1966, NR Eligible)
  - Academy Gardens in Clason Point (1931, deregulated 1979)
  - Hillside Homes in Williamsbridge (1935)
  - Amalgamated Houses, Units 7 and 8 in Kingsbridge (1948, NR Eligible)
  - Amalgamated Houses Extension, or Unit 9 in Kingsbridge (1970, NR Eligible)
  - Aldus Green in Hunts Point (tenements rehabilitated in 1977)
- In Queens:
  - Boulevard Gardens in Woodside (1935, deregulated 1980)
  - Bell Park Gardens in Bayside (1950, deregulated 1989)
  - Bell Park Manor Terrace in Bellerose Manor (1951)
  - Electchester in South Flushing (1954-1966, NR Eligible)
  - Ridgewood Gardens in Maspeth (1955)

*Later History of the Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard)*

In 1971, the City of New York became the owner of the Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard) complex through foreclosure proceedings.[71] By the mid-1980s, the buildings were vacant and in poor repair. Historic photographs from this period show that 105 Carlton Avenue had been mothballed, with concrete block infill at the first story openings, as well as plywood and missing windows at the upper stories.

In 1989, the city conveyed the property at 105 Carlton Avenue to Pastoral and Educational Services, Inc. (PAES), a nonprofit founded in 1978 by a group of clergy and concerned citizens from Downtown Brooklyn who were alarmed at the rise in mental illness and homelessness in the city.[72] The organization, later known as Brooklyn Community Housing and Services, was reacting to President Jimmy Carter's call for the creation of community-based housing programs for the mentally ill. The building was sold for one dollar under the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) Vacant Building Program, which sought to spur development in certain urban areas. Following the conveyance to PAES, 105 Carlton Avenue and 104 Adelphi Street were split into two tax lots yet remained a single zoning lot.

With plans that were filed in 1988, PAES renovated the building at 105 Carlton Avenue into a family shelter for single mothers with children, a single-room-occupancy permanent supportive housing residence, and a transitional residence for individuals with mental health diagnoses. The organization saw the potential in the residential character of the building which, it was believed, provided spaces that weren't "oppressively institutional" and the opportunities presented by the building's stacks of stairs, which allowed for a variety of user groups.[73] Designed by Cindy L. Harden in association with the Pratt Architectural Collaborative and Peter

[71] It is unknown when Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard) was deregulated. The 1971 transfer date is from a 1990 Declaration between the City of New York and Pastoral and Educational Services, Inc.
[72] Brooklyn Community Housing & Services, "History," accessed December 15, 2023: https://bchands.org/history/.
[73] Philip Arcidi, "Housing Rehabilitation—Three for One," *Progressive Architecture* (August 1992): 70-71, 117.

Woll Architects, the renovation included the preservation of the five original stairs and new interior layouts that allowed for autonomous divisions across the building and new community spaces. In 1992, *Progressive Architecture* concluded that "the support structure within is as solid as the facade."[74]

In 1990, the City sold the property at 104 Adelphi Street to Goodtree Development Associates, led by Thomas Anderson. The one-dollar sale was stipulated on a rehabilitation of the building, with plans and specifications approved by HPD, as at 105 Carlton Avenue. The building, which is occupied by rental apartments, continues to be owned by Goodtree Development, LLC. In 2019, the historic parapet was removed from the building and a railing installed.

No. 105 Carlton Avenue, which continues to be operated as short-term, transitional, and permanent housing with services for people who are formerly homeless and/or have a mental illness, is currently planned to be rehabilitated by the Brooklyn Community Housing and Services. The building will maintain its current uses.



[74] Arcidi, "Housing Rehabilitation—Three for One."

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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—. "Families of Limited Means Soon to Have Model Housing." *Brooklyn Times Union*, December 31, 1929.



**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

_X_ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
____ previously listed in the National Register
____ previously determined eligible by the National Register
____ designated a National Historic Landmark
____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #

**Primary location of additional data:**

____ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

**Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard)** Kings County, NY
Name of Property County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 0.65
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 40.694599 Longitude: -73.972654

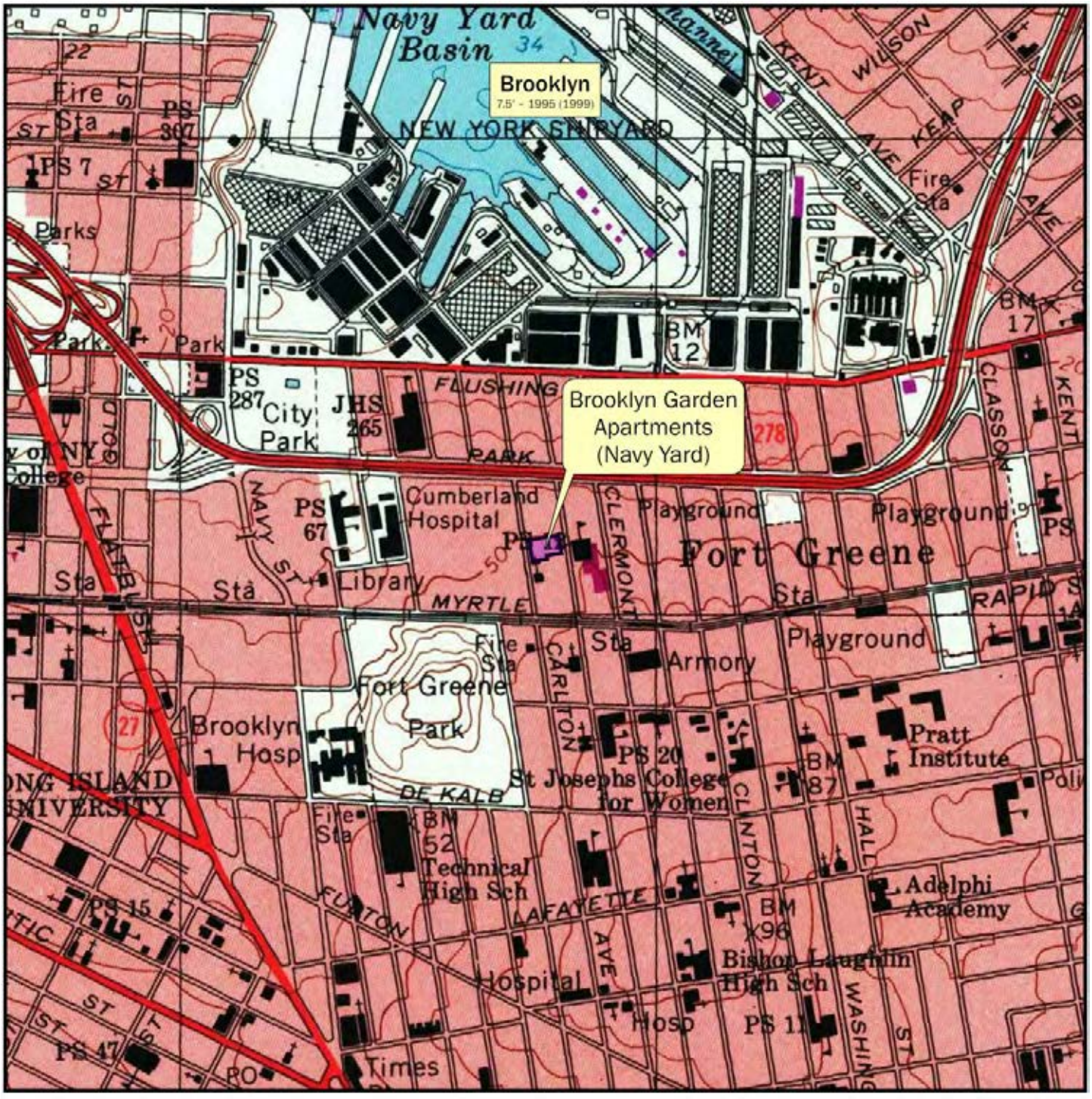
**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

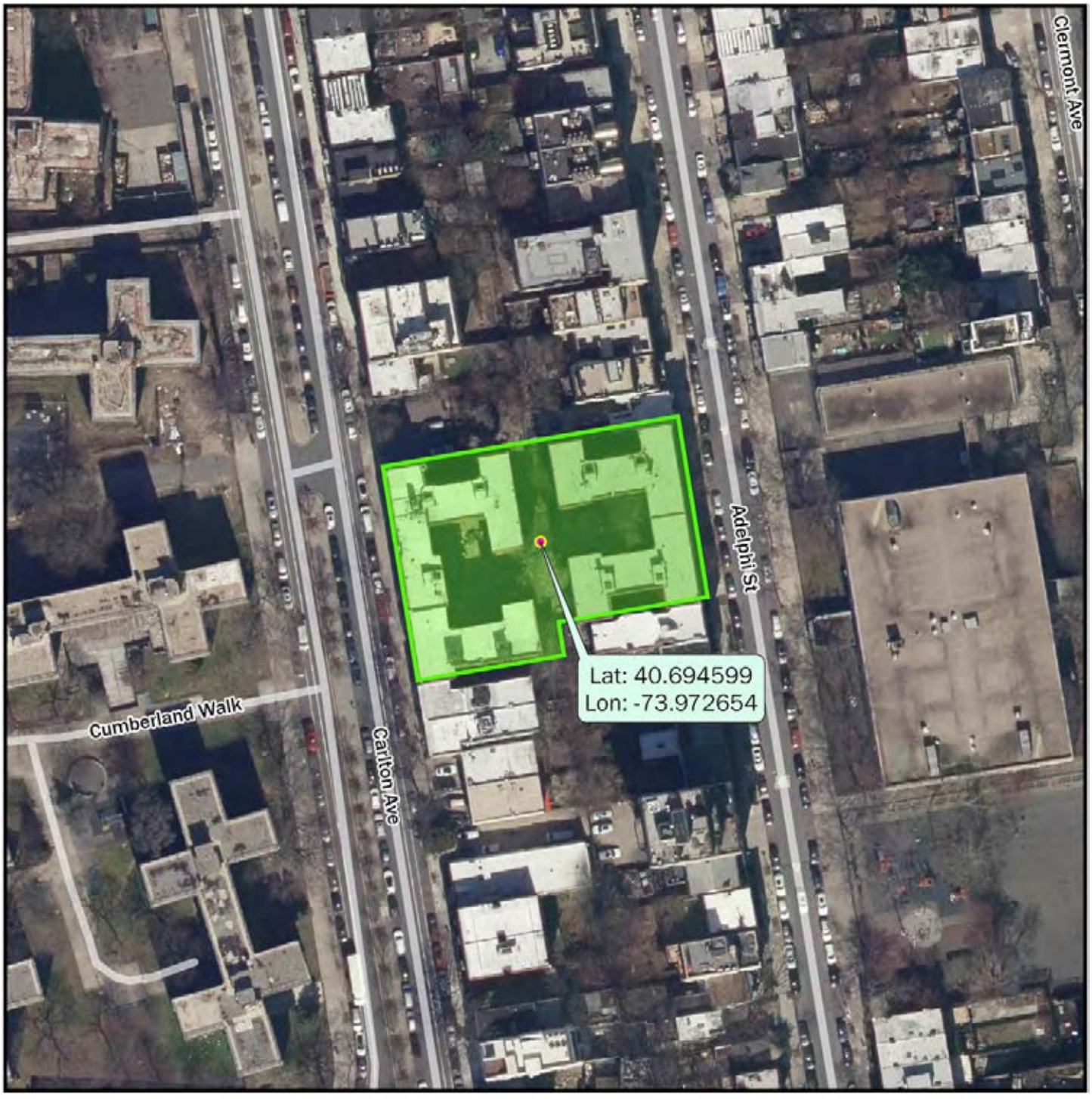
**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary encompasses the entire housing project and reflects the boundary of the property during the period of significance, 1929 to 1932. In the 1990s, the two buildings were divided into two separate tax lots and subsequently, the 105 Carlton Avenue tax lot was enlarged to include an L-shaped parcel to the building's north. The nominated property is drawn to represent the project's original construction and does not include the enlarged tax lot area to the north.

**Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard)** Kings County, NY
Name of Property County and State



**Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard)** Kings County, NY
Name of Property County and State




1:1,200
0 50 100 ft

Nomination Boundary (0.65 ac)

New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N New York State Orthoimagery Year: 2023 Mapped 06/30/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

**Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard)** Kings County, NY
Name of Property County and State


1:1,200
0 50 100 ft

Nomination Boundary (0.65 ac)
Tax Parcels

New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N
Kings County Parcel Year: 2024
Mapped 06/30/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

**Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard)** Kings County, NY
Name of Property County and State

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lindsay Peterson

organization Higgins Quasebarth & Partners date July 2025

street & number 11 Hanover Square, 16th Floor telephone 212-274-9468

city or town New York state NY zip code 10005

e-mail peterson@hqpreservation.com

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

  A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

## Figures

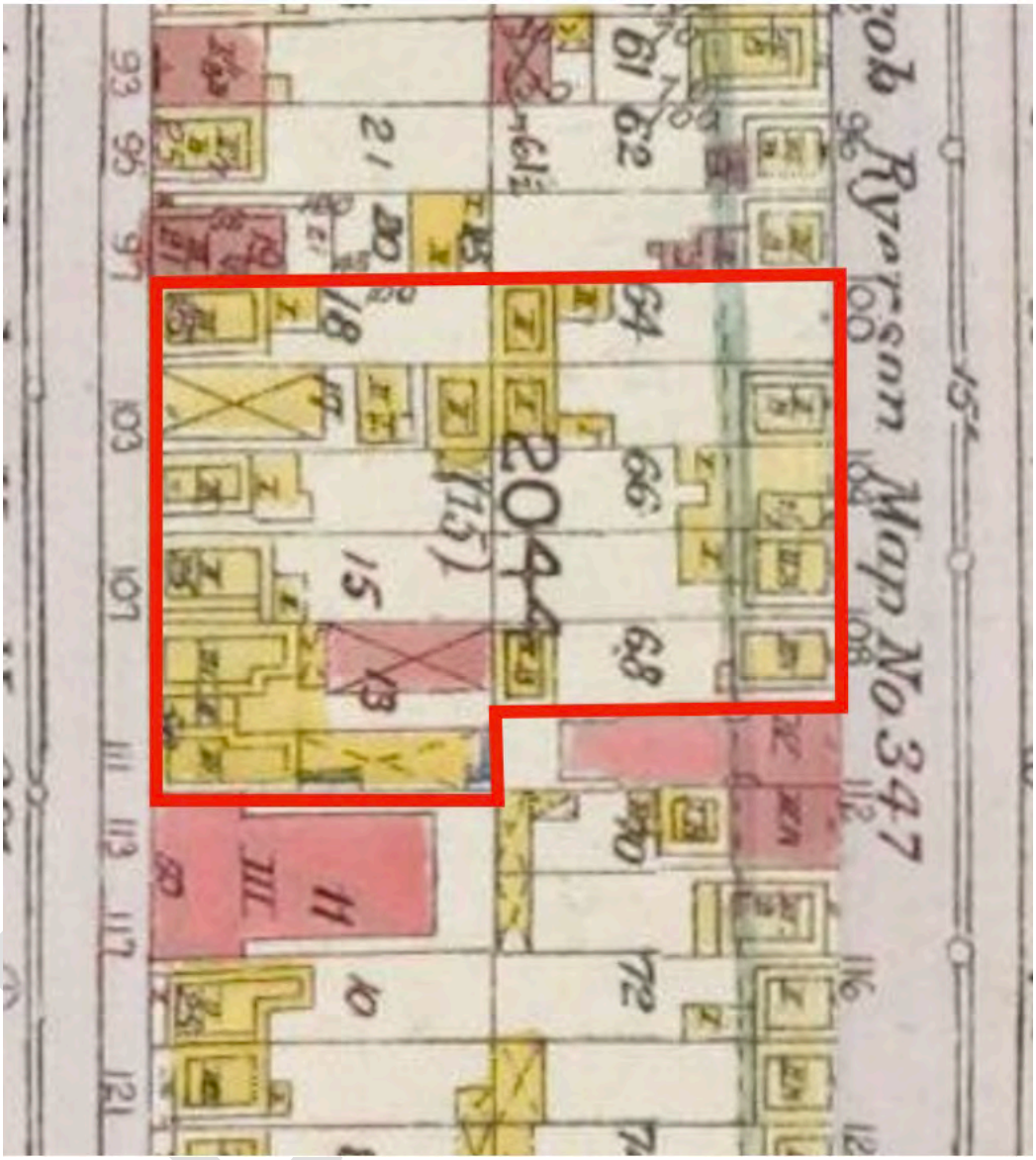



Figure 1: 1916 Hyde map showing the buildings previously on the site of the Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard) complex. These buildings were demolished under eminent domain.
(Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, New York Public Library)

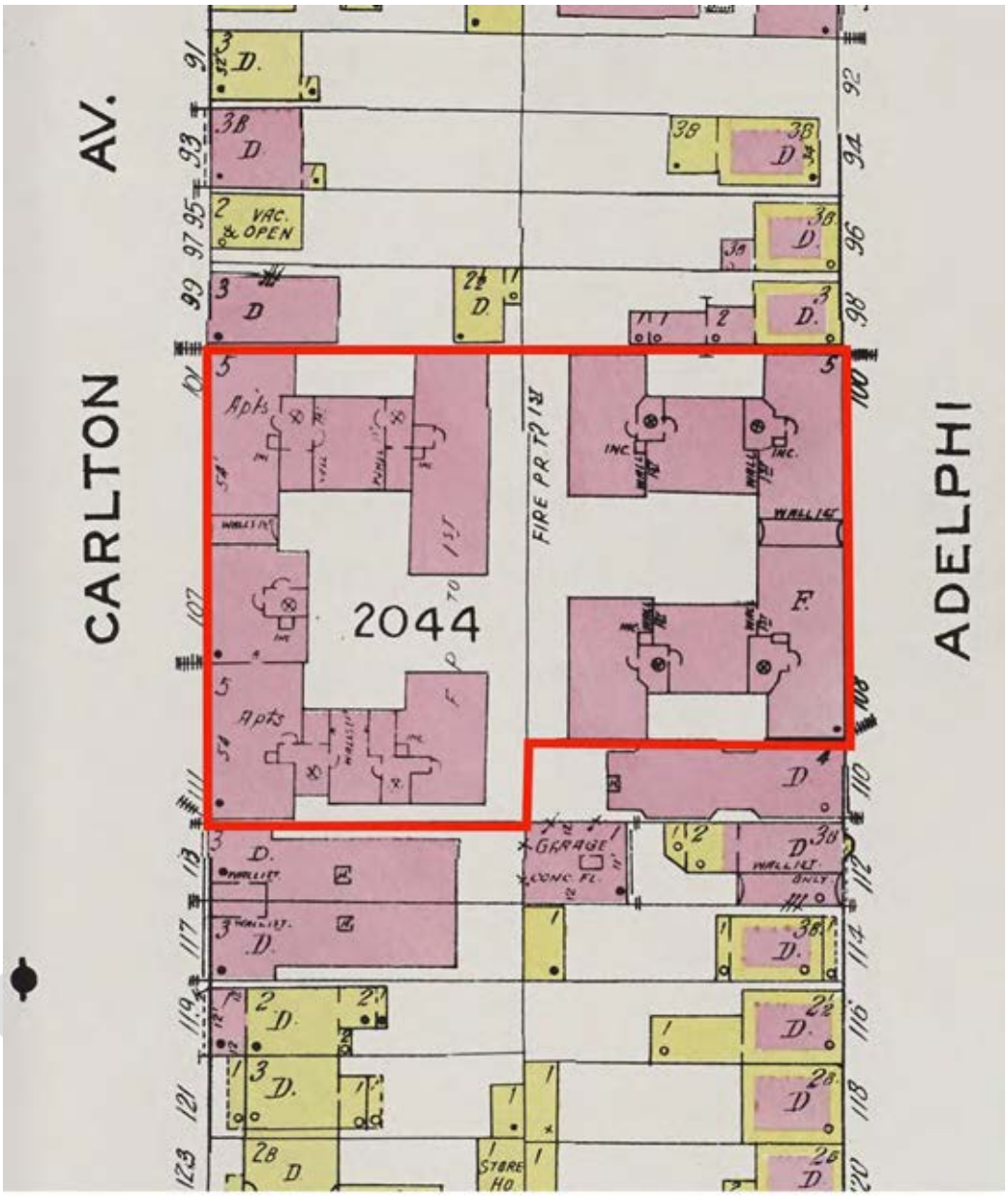



Figure 2: 1939 Sanborn map showing the full complex, which includes two U-shaped buildings situated around an irregularly shaped central courtyard. (Library of Congress)

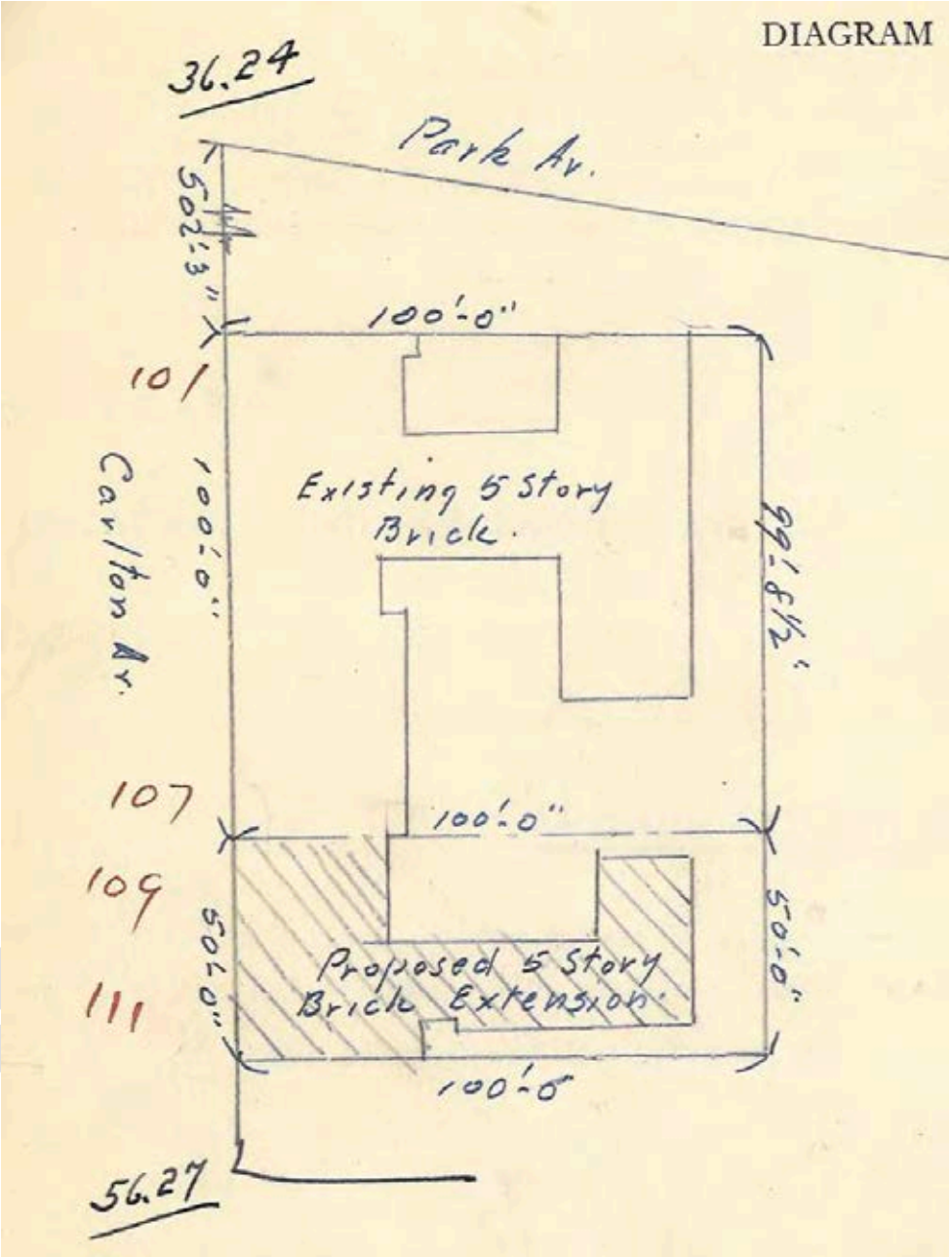
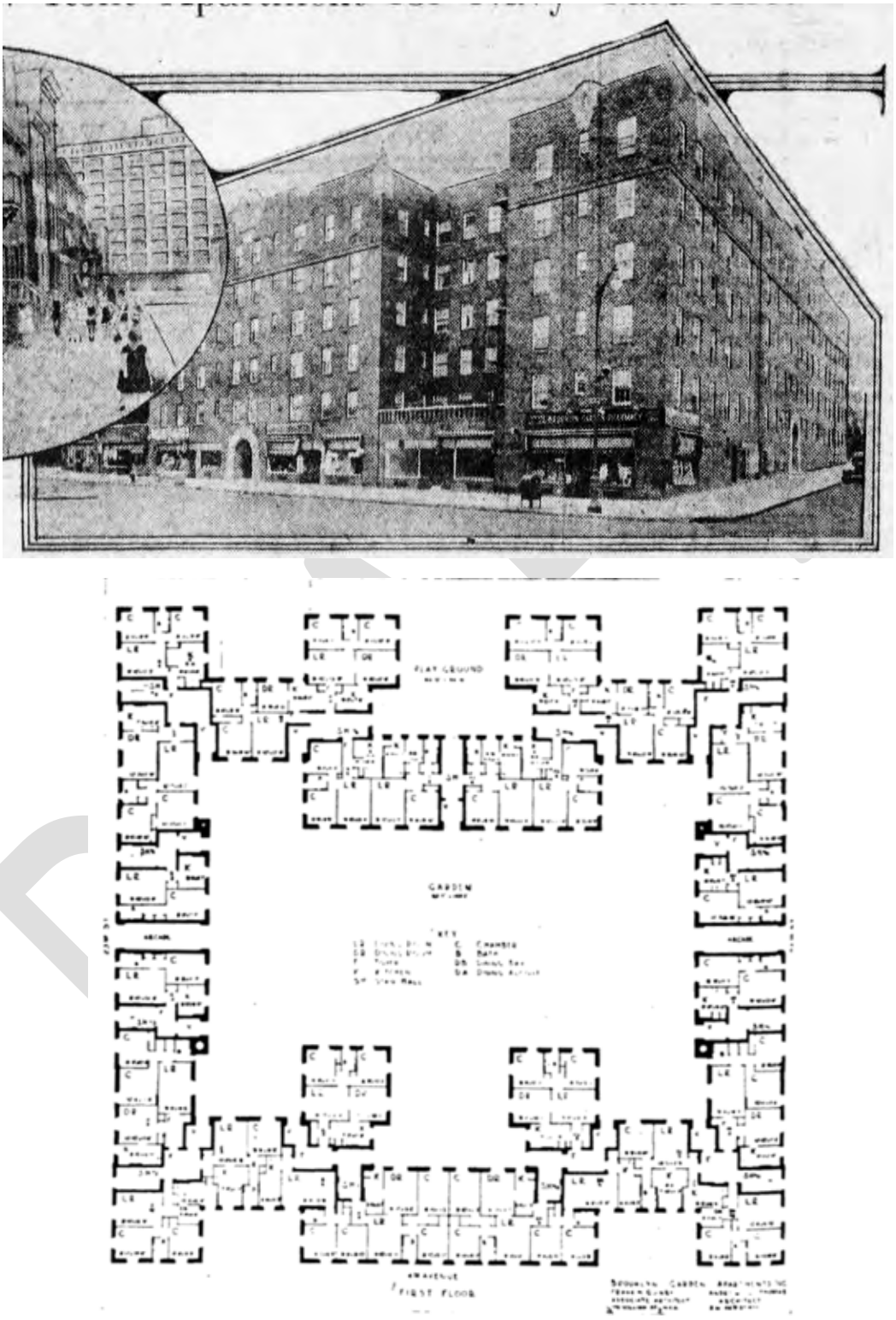



Figure 3: 1932 diagram showing the extension that was added to the building at 105 Carlton Avenue. (Brooklyn Department of Buildings)


Figure 4: 2023 NYCityMap showing the complex and its context.
(NYCityMap - http://maps.nyc.gov/doitt/nycitymap/)



Figures 5-6: 1930 exterior view (top) and first-floor plan (bottom) of the Fourth Avenue project of the Brooklyn Garden Apartments, Inc. (*Brooklyn Eagle*, February 9, 1930 above and *Report of the State Housing Board*, 1931 below)

Figure 7: Circa 1932 view of 105 Carlton Avenue. (New York Public Library)

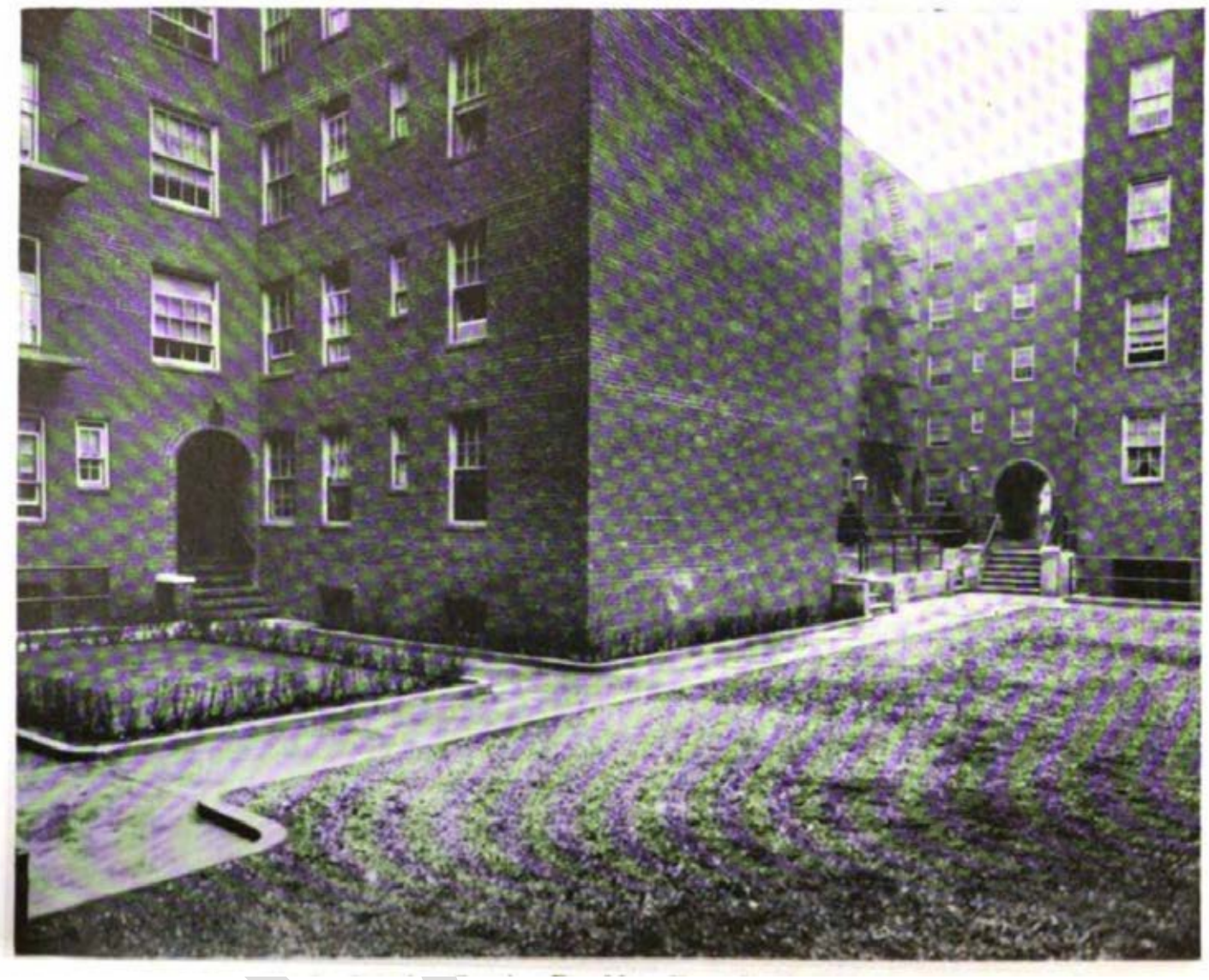


Figure 8: 1931 view of the interior court of the Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard). The view is taken from the 105 Carlton Avenue side looking towards 104 Adelphi Street. Note that this image is prior to the 1932 addition's construction. (*Report of the State Housing Board*, 1931)

Figure 9: 1937 aerial view looking north on Carlton Avenue from Myrtle Avenue.
(NYC Municipal Archives)


Figure 10: 1940 view of 105 Carlton Avenue. (NYC Municipal Archives)


Figure 11: 1940 partial view of 104 Adelphi Street. (NYC Municipal Archives)

Figure 12: 1942 view looking southeast towards Carlton Avenue. In the foreground are the Fort Greene Houses under construction. (NYC Municipal Archives)


Figure 13: Circa 1985 view of 105 Carlton Avenue showing it vacant and mothballed while owned by the City of New York. (NYC Municipal Archives)

Figure 14: Circa 1988 view of the 105 Carlton Avenue courtyard.
(Brooklyn Housing Community & Services, https://bchands.org/history/)

Figure 15: 1992 view of 105 Carlton Avenue after being rehabilitated by the Pastoral and Educational Services, Inc., currently known as Brooklyn Community Housing and Services, the present owner of the building. (*Progressive Architecture*)

Figure 16: Existing view of 105 Carlton Avenue.

Figure 17: Existing view of the courtyard at 105 Carlton Avenue.

Figure 18: Existing view of 104 Adelphi Street.

Figure 19: Existing view of the courtyard at 104 Adelphi Street.

## Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard)
City or Vicinity: Brooklyn
County: Kings State: NY
Photographer: Lindsay Peterson
Date Photographed: 2023

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

01 105 Carlton Avenue—Overview looking southeast.

02 105 Carlton Avenue—View of the pointed-arch passageway that leads to the interior courtyard.

03 105 Carlton Avenue—View of the upper stories showing the highly textured wall surface with projecting brick headers at every third brick course and variegated brick colors including red, brown and blue-black.

04 105 Carlton Avenue—Courtyard as viewed from the roof. At each of the various elevations are deep, round-arched entrances and small open-air vestibules that lead to the stairs within.

05 105 Carlton Avenue—View of the main passageway from the interior courtyard.

06 105 Carlton Avenue—View of a typical courtyard entry with an open-air vestibule.

07 105 Carlton Avenue—View of a typical interior stair.

08 105 Carlton Avenue—Interior view of a reception area on the first floor.

09 105 Carlton Avenue—View of a typical upper-floor hallway.

10 105 Carlton Avenue— View of a typical upper-floor room.

11 104 Adelphi Street—Overview looking northwest.

12 104 Adelphi Street—View of the main façade from the sidewalk.

13 104 Adelphi Street—View of the pointed-arch passageway that leads to the interior courtyard.

14 104 Adelphi Street—Overall view of the rear elevations.

15 104 Adelphi Street—View of the courtyard and building entrances.

NY_Kings County_Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard)_0001


NY_Kings County_Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard)_0002

NY_Kings County_Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard)_0003

NY_Kings County_Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard)_0004

NY_Kings County_Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard)_0005

NY_Kings County_Brooklyn Garden Apartments (Navy Yard)_0006

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