

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 Kent Manor  
 other names/site number Hampton Court  
 name of related multiple property listing N/A

### Location

street & number 117-01 Park Lane South   not for publication  
 city or town Kew Gardens   vicinity  
 state NY code NY county Queens code 081 zip code 11418

### 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

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**5. Classification**

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

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

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

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
5	1	buildings
1		sites
		structures
		objects
6	1	<b>Total</b>

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

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

N/A

N/A

**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 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
REVIVALS / Georgian Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

foundation: \_\_\_\_\_  
walls: Brick  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof: Asphalt, Copper  
\_\_\_\_\_  
other: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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### **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**

Kent Manor, now known as Hampton Court, is a Georgian Revival apartment complex in Kew Gardens, Queens. Designed by Jewish architect Benjamin Braunstein, Kent Manor was completed in 1937. The neighborhood of Kew Gardens is composed of mainly early twentieth century, large, free-standing, Revival style houses; a handful of attached rowhouses; several garden apartment buildings; and newer twenty-first-century developments. Commercial buildings and most of the larger garden apartment buildings are concentrated along the main thoroughfares, including Metropolitan Avenue, Lefferts Boulevard, and Kew Gardens Road. The winding and hilly side streets mostly contain larger free-standing Revival-style houses.

Kent Manor is located on the western edge of Kew Gardens and surrounded on three sides by Forest Park, a large, lush public park established in 1898. Kent Manor is located on an irregular-shaped lot bound on the east by Park Lane South, on the south by Metropolitan Avenue, and on the western and northern sides by Forest Park. Both Metropolitan Avenue and Park Lane South are lined with mature and young trees, and there are two bus stops for each thoroughfare at the southeast corner of Kent Manor. While Metropolitan Avenue, south of the complex, is quite level, Park Lane South, to the east of the complex, has a significant rise to the north. This resulted in the apartment complex being staggered, with the two northernmost buildings being at a slightly higher elevation than the southernmost two. The nomination includes the parcels historically associated with Kent Manor.

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### **Narrative Description**

Kent Manor is within a park-like designed landscape that is reinforced by the surrounding natural landscape of Forest Park. An emergency fire lane, which is accessible via vehicular and pedestrian gates, runs around the exterior of the complex. A chain-link fence marks the boundary of the property where it adjoins Forest Park. The Kent Manor complex includes a total of seven resources, all but one of which contributes to the significance of the property. A brick and metal gate on Park Lane South, 1 non-contributing structure, provides access to the complex's central courtyard; it was installed ca. 1987 after the property became a cooperative and was renamed Hampton Court. Kent Manor's four primary buildings, Aspen Manor, Birch Manor, Cedar Manor, and Dogwood Manor, contain a total of 316 apartments. Each of the buildings has an irregular H-shaped plan and is situated on the parcel to form a central X-shaped court. Aspen Manor and Birch Manor are identical in plan, while Cedar Manor and Dogwood Manor have variations due to the parcel and site. An octagonal one-story security and information booth, the fifth contributing building, is situated in the central landscaped courtyard. The overall designed landscape, including the courtyard and paths, is counted as a contributing site.

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### **Kent Manor Designed Landscape (ca. 1937, 1 contributing site)**

The designed landscape of Kent Manor is typified by brick paths and steps connecting the buildings to each other and the central security booth, garden beds lined by short brick walls, and small-scale plantings of trees, shrubs, and flowers (Figure 5). The paths are lined by benches and cast-iron lamps. A small brick plaza surrounds the central security booth, and the entire building is surrounded by the ubiquitous paved brick paths, which in this area surrounding the information/security booth, form a sort of central plaza. Mature, tall, deciduous, and a few evergreen trees are placed all around the complex, in between all of the buildings, and in the center, forming a green canopy that provides ample shade in the summer months. Behind the brick paths, there are garden beds, some with mulch, a variety of shrubs including ferns, some areas with grass lawns, some stone pavers here and there, and a great variety of plant species, which are the home to scores of squirrels, chipmunks, butterflies, bees, and many birds, among other animals. The brick paths form smaller “plazas” directly outside each east or west entrance to each of the four buildings and are flanked on each side by garden beds and more plantings. The entire atmosphere is therefore one of intense greenery, especially in the spring and summer months when all the plants, including the shrubs, trees, and flowers are all in bloom. The fact that the complex is surrounded by Forest Park on three sides only adds to the visual and tactile impression of fresh air, copious greenery all around, the sensory perception of sweet flowering smells, and the sight and sound of many small animals.

### **Park Lane South Gate (ca. 1987, 1 non-contributing structure; postdates period of significance)**

There are two principal entrances to the Kent Manor complex - one to the south at Metropolitan Avenue, and a grand gate off of Park Lane South, between Dogwood and Cedar Manors. The current gate was not included in Braunstein’s plans, although longtime residents do recall there being some sort of formal entrance. It is likely that the iron elements in the current gate were installed when the complex became a co-op in the 1980s, and when it was renamed Hampton Court, as it states in prominent letters on top. The central gateway is framed by two brick pillars standing approximately fifteen feet tall, approximately fifteen feet apart from each other. The pillars feature a brick and stone quoining pattern and have angled stone caps topped by black lanterns. Each pillar has a brass sign stating the complex’s Park Lane South address. The two wrought-iron gates, one hanging off each pillar, are always kept open. The pillars are connected with a rectangular panel with “HAMPTON COURT” inscribed in golden letters and an arched wrought iron sunburst element. The sunburst has thirteen black spokes radiating up and outwards from the center, each with a golden finial. Short curving brick retaining walls run from each pillar and curve slightly towards Park Lane South, creating a sort of visual enclosure for the gate. They also run into the complex itself for a few feet until they end right before the start of a series of downward steps, six in total. These short brick walls are capped by wrought-iron fencing with golden finials. Each wall comes out to meet the curb where they end in shorter brick quoined pillars with stone caps and black lamps. A shorter stretch of brick retaining wall and fencing continues along the street to end in a final brick quoined pillar.

### **Information and Security Booth (1937, 1 contributing building)**

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A small information and security building is located at the center of the Kent Manor complex. It is a one-story, Flemish bond brick building with a shallow hipped copper seam roof. It measures approximately twenty by twenty feet in plan, and is approximately twenty feet tall as well, to its eaves. The base is square in plan, but as it rises its corners cut inwards halfway up the wall, forming an octagonal shape at the top. A small square-shaped cupola with vents on all sides capped by a weathervane is located at the center of the roof. All four half-height brick corners are capped by small gable roofs with red asphalt roofing. All the windows, including the four small circular windows on each side, appear to be replacements within historic casings.

Each elevation has the same basic shape. The eastern (primary) elevation has one six-over-six window in the center and is flanked by two smaller four-over-four windows. Above each window, there is a red awning with vertical white stripes. The central window has brick infill below it, suggesting that this was historically a door, black lamps on either side of it, and an awning above it with "information" printed in white. A small circular window with nine small panes is located above the central window. The southern elevation has three attached six-over-six windows in the central bay. A blind brick arch with a cast stone keystone is located above the windows; the arch is as wide as the central window. The window is flanked by white wooden square lattice panels. A small nine-paned circular window is located above the windows. The western elevation has a central door with a wood surround with Corinthian pilasters and a triangular pediment. The door has nine glass panels and a mail slot. The door is flanked by four-over-four windows. A nine-paned circular window is located over the door. The northern elevation has three attached six-over-six windows in the central bay capped by a blind brick arch with a cast stone keystone. The window is flanked by white wooden square lattice panels. A small nine-paned circular window is located above the windows.

### **Building A - Aspen Manor (1937, 1 contributing building)**

Aspen Manor (Building A) is located at the complex's southwest corner.<sup>1</sup> It directly faces Metropolitan Avenue and Forest Park to the south, the complex's private walkways and gardens to the east, a fire lane and Forest Park to its west, and Building B across another walkway and garden to its north. Building A is a six-story, irregularly H-shaped, roughly sixteen-bay by ten-bay, red Flemish bond brick apartment building with a flat roof and two rooftop solariums. Designed in the Georgian Revival style, the building incorporates brick quoins that rise until below the third story, and an elaborate wooden entrance on the eastern and western sides, each of which is flanked by two small octagonal windows. Overall, the building retains its historic fenestration, but the original windows have been replaced with vinyl sash with a variety of muntin patterns throughout; windows generally feature brick soldier course lintels and header sills. Due to the building's H-plan, each elevation has a central recessed mass flanked by projecting side wings. On the east and west elevations, the recessed area is larger, forming courtyards.

The central four bays of the facade (eastern elevation) are inset to create a small entrance courtyard that connects to the larger central complex landscape. The central two bays of the inset section project slightly to form the entrance; the corners of this projecting section feature brick quoins for the first two stories. On the first

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<sup>1</sup> Note. The architectural description of Aspen Manor, provided in detail here, is nearly identical to the design and materials of the other three apartment buildings in the complex.

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story, the central entrance has double doors with fifteen smaller windowpanes per door. Above the doors, the glass transom features the words "Aspen Manor" inscribed in faux-gold calligraphy. The doors and transom are inset within a highly decorative wood surround, which features delicate molding, Corinthian columns, a tripartite entablature, and an elaborate, curved pediment with a seamed copper roof. The entrance is flanked by two octagonal windows framed with brick headers and eight-over-eight windows in the recessed section. On the second story, two tripartite windows are located over the entrance and one-over-one windows in the recessed section. On the remaining four stories, there are two six-over-six windows in the central bays and smaller one-over-one windows in the recessed section. The quoins end below the third story where a horizontal Flemish bond beltcourse runs all around the building. The third through fifth stories have six-over-six or eight-over-eight windows in each bay. A brick cornice runs between the fifth and sixth floors. It has a soldier course set off by headers capped by projecting brick in a dentil and cornice pattern. The brick cornice prominently juts out of the building, and each dentil is composed of two header bricks. On the sixth story, the six-over-six and eight-over-eight windows each feature brick jack arches with central keystones. A projecting beltcourse runs above the sixth story at the base of the parapet. Sections of the parapet which historically had wooden balustrades have been infilled with new brick in Flemish bond. A red aluminum coping caps the parapet wall. The pattern of brick quoins, beltcourses, and cornice described here is consistent across all elevations.

The walls facing into the courtyard are symmetrical and feature regular fenestration, primarily with eight-over-eight or one-over-one windows. Emergency fire escapes, painted red, are located on each side and reach the roof through an opening at the parapet level. Two six-bay-wide, symmetrical masses flank the inset section forming the courtyard. The east elevations of these masses are mirror images of each other. The innermost bay on each side has eight-over-eight windows on each story. The next two bays (working outwards from the center) feature six-over-six tripartite windows. On the second story, the windows in these second and third bays are projecting tripartite bay windows with copper roofing. In the sixth story, these bays feature two six-over-six windows in each bay. The fourth bay has a small one-over-one window on the first story and large eight-over-eight windows on the remaining stories. The fifth and sixth bays are slightly set back from the rest of the elevation; the setback and corner each feature brick quoining for the first two stories. These bays have six-over-six windows. Finally, each of these two extruding side masses have smaller, four-by-four sliding windows below the first, second, third, and fourth rows of windows, at the basement level of the building. At the basement level, smaller four-by-four sliding windows are located in the four innermost bays; the other bays at the basement level are unfenestrated.

Aspen Manor's western elevation faces a wide emergency fire lane and Forest Park beyond. This elevation, which features a central inset courtyard flanked by two projecting masses, is almost completely identical and symmetrical to the eastern elevation. A brick path flanked by shrubs leads to the entrance at the center of the inset four bays. On this elevation, the inset section is flush and does not have additional recessed areas as on the east elevation. The elaborate central entrance is identical to the eastern elevation. The two six-bay-wide symmetrical flanking masses follow the general pattern established on the east elevation with a few exceptions. Molded or foliate cast stone panels are located between the first and second-story windows. The second-story windows in the second and third bays from the center each feature Palladian windows. The outermost bay (sixth from the center) has small one-over-one windows instead of six-over-six windows like the east elevation. The west elevation is crowned by the structures that form the building's rooftop solarium. The parapet wall extends

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higher to form taller walls with a central gabled parapet featuring an opening in the shape of a Palladian window. The building's two elevator shafts are visible to the east of each solarium structure. They are tall and narrow brick structures, and the one on the southern side has a chimney-like protrusion at the top.

Aspen Manor's southern and northern elevations are identical and symmetrical. The southern elevation, which faces Metropolitan Avenue, is set back approximately twenty feet from the curb and the northern elevation faces Building B, Birch Manor. The southern elevation has two large masses flanking a two-bay central recessed section with a side entrance. A wide brick pathway with steps and long landings leads to the entrance; the entrance to the path is flanked by cast-iron lamps on short brick pillars. The first-story entrance, which is set within a recessed section of the elevation and flanked by slightly projecting corner masses, has a set of double fifteen-pane wooden doors. The door has a simpler wood surround featuring a narrow transom and sidelights capped by a brick soldier course. The entrance is flanked to the south by a six-over-six window. The upper stories feature paired windows in the bay above the entrance and six-over-six windows in the flanking bay. The slightly projecting mass to the north of the entrance has tripartite windows on each story. The walls facing into the brick pathway are not symmetrical in form and feature slightly different fenestration with patterns of smaller one-over-one and larger six-over-six windows.

The elevations of the masses directly facing Metropolitan Avenue (southern elevation) are symmetrical and identical. Because of the area's topography, this spot where Kent Manor and Metropolitan Avenue meet is the lowest-lying spot in the whole complex. As a result, the more-exposed basement level on each mass has four-by-four sliding windows. A brick header course runs across the basement level, connecting the window lintels. In the innermost and outermost bays, the eight-over-eight window on the first story is inset within a large arched brick panel. This frame has a decorative and narrow iron railing at its bottom. The iron railing's top ends where the actual window begins, and they are so narrow that they cannot be used for anything. The arch is capped with header brick and has a keystone. The upper stories have eight-over-eight windows. The inner bays have two six-over-six windows on each floor. Each mass also has an exterior red-painted fire escape extending from one of the central bays. The northern elevation is identical to the south elevation except that it does not have an entrance on this side. The two masses on this elevation are mirror images of the same masses on the building's south elevation, including the positioning of its fire escapes. All other architectural details are identical.

### **Building B - Birch Manor (1937, 1 contributing building)**

Birch Manor (Building B) is the northwest apartment building on the parcel. Birch Manor, identical in plan to Aspen Manor, is a six-story, irregularly H-shaped, roughly sixteen-bay by ten-bay, red Flemish bond brick apartment building with a flat roof and two rooftop solariums designed in the Georgian Revival style. Overall, the building retains its historic fenestration, but the original windows have been replaced with vinyl sash with a variety of muntin patterns throughout; windows generally feature brick soldier course lintels and header sills. The building features a pattern of brick quoining on lower stories, brick beltcourses, a brick cornice, and a brick parapet. Due to the building's H-plan, each elevation has a central recessed mass flanked by projecting side wings. On the east and west elevations, the recessed area is larger, forming courtyards.

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On the east elevation, Birch Manor's central recessed mass is identical in form and design to Aspen Manor. It features slightly projecting central bays with recessed flanking bays, a central double door entrance with a surround of identical design, and an identical fenestration pattern and brick detailing. The flanking wings on the east elevation are also the same pattern. Similarly, the building's southern elevation is also nearly identical to Aspen Manor. The most significant departure is that Birch Manor does not have a side entrance on this elevation. Since Birch Manor is placed at higher ground than Aspen Manor, its basement level has full-height windows on the two flanking masses and smaller windows in the centrally recessed section. The northern façade is also similar in design except that it has a brick pathway and secondary entrance door and surround identical to the one at Aspen Manor's southern elevation.

Birch Manor's western elevation, facing Forest Park, is almost completely identical to the aforementioned western façade of Aspen Manor. Again, due to Birch Manor's slightly higher elevation, there are a series of brick steps that lead up to a brick pathway to the entrance with an elaborate wooden surround. At this western entrance, there is only one black cast-iron lamp, at the southwest corner of the brick path. There is a black metal gate that encloses this centrally recessed mass, and to the sides of the brick pathway, there are plantings and trees. Other than the basement having large six-over-six windows, the western elevation is identical in design to Aspen Manor.

#### **Building D - Dogwood Manor (1937, 1 contributing building)**

Dogwood Manor (Building D) is located at the southeast corner of the Kent Manor complex. Dogwood Manor is a six-story, irregularly H-shaped, roughly sixteen-bay by ten-bay, red Flemish bond brick apartment building with a flat roof and two rooftop solariums designed in the Georgian Revival style. Overall, the building retains its historic fenestration, but the original windows have been replaced with vinyl sash with a variety of muntin patterns throughout; windows generally feature brick soldier course lintels and header sills. The building features a pattern of brick quoining on lower stories, brick beltcourses, a brick cornice, and a brick parapet. Due to the building's H-plan, each elevation has a central recessed mass flanked by projecting side wings. On the east and west elevations, the recessed area is larger, forming courtyards.

This entrance to Dogwood Manor, and the whole building, is slightly elevated when compared to Aspen Manor across the brick path to the west, making it approximately half a story taller. The only deviation from the model of Aspen Manor to this building is that the northern wall, and therefore the entire northwest unit of the building, is narrower. This slight difference in width allows the building to line up on the site with the other buildings. Despite this deviation, the western elevation of Dogwood Manor is a mirror image of the eastern elevation of Aspen Manor. Its central recessed entrance and flanking masses have the same details and fenestration, including its bay windows. While Dogwood Manor is slightly more elevated, it has four-by-four sliding windows at its basement level.

Dogwood Manor's southern elevation is similar to Aspen Manor's. The only deviation is that there is no formal or auxiliary residential entrance on this side for Dogwood Manor; instead, there is only an entrance to the basement level. Dogwood Manor's southern façade likewise has three masses, with a narrow centrally recessed



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mass. Each mass's corner windows on the first story level have recessed brick arched frames with decorative iron railings below each window. The emergency fire escapes are also similarly placed.

Dogwood Manor's northern elevation is similarly an almost perfect mirror image to Aspen Manor's. The main difference is that, as mentioned before, Dogwood Manor's northwestern unit is narrower than Aspen Manor's northeastern unit. The western mass on the elevation is four bays wide and does not have a fire escape. The outermost bays have eight-over-eight windows on each story and the inner bays have one-over-one windows. The eastern mass on the elevation is six bays wide and follows the established pattern: eight-over-eight windows on the outer bays with recessed arched frames on the first story, central six-over-six windows, central fire escapes, and four one-by-one basement-level windows. Unlike Aspen Manor, Dogwood Manor has a secondary entrance in the central recessed section of this elevation. A brick path leads to the double door entrance which, identical in design to the other secondary entrances in the complex, features a surround with sidelights and transom. The walls facing the narrow central courtyard have regular fenestration with eight-over-eight and one-over-one windows.

Finally, Dogwood Manor's eastern elevation, which faces Park Lane South, is a mirror image of Aspen Manor's western elevation. The central recessed mass on the elevation has the same elaborate wooden entrance with a curved pediment with copper roofing, octagonal windows flanking the entrance, and tripartite and eight-over-eight windows on the stories above the entrance. These last rows of windows share a fire escape with the windows on the walls facing into the courtyard. These inner-facing walls, which retain their historic fenestration pattern, have regular bays of eight-over-eight and one-over-one windows. The two main masses of the elevation have the same fenestration pattern established on Aspen Manor's western façade, including the use of tripartite windows, Palladian windows, cast stone panels, and a slightly set-back section on the southern portion of the elevation. The two solariums with their Palladian window forms rise directly through the parapet on this eastern side of the building. West of the solariums there is an attached taller brick structure housing the elevator mechanisms; the southern solarium also has a square chimney-like element attached to its northern end. The solariums form L-shapes on the roof, with the extension on the southern mass extending to the south, and the extension on the northern mass extending to the north. Like in all the other buildings, the solariums have gabled roofs with copper roofing, with a flat gable where the Palladian 'window' faces the east (the west at Aspen Manor), and a hipped roof on its southern and northern extensions.

### **Building C - Cedar Manor (1937, 1 contributing building)**

Cedar Manor (Building C) is located at the northeast corner of the Kent Manor complex. This is the largest and most complex of the four buildings and has an irregular plan to make the best use of the irregularities of the parcel. Cedar Manor was constructed in a more constricting plan, due to these lot shape restrictions and the desire to maintain regular spacing between the buildings of the complex. As a result of these spatial limitations, in plan, the southern two-thirds of Cedar Manor look identical in size and shape to that of Dogwood Manor, but Cedar Manor's northern third is a more irregular mass. Finally, Cedar Manor, like Birch Manor to the northwest, is slightly taller than the southern two buildings due to the topography of the land.

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Dogwood Manor is a six-story, irregularly H-shaped, roughly sixteen-bay by ten-bay, red Flemish bond brick apartment building with a flat roof and one rooftop solarium designed in the Georgian Revival style. Overall, the building retains its historic fenestration, but the original windows have been replaced with vinyl sash with a variety of muntin patterns throughout; windows generally feature brick soldier course lintels and header sills. The building features a pattern of brick quoining on lower stories, brick beltcourses, a brick cornice, and a brick parapet. Due to the building's H-plan, each elevation has a central recessed mass flanked by projecting side wings. On the east and west elevations, the recessed area is larger, forming courtyards.

On the southern elevation, the building is similarly divided into three masses. The central recessed mass has a basement-level door right in front of a sloping concrete path. The bays on the walls facing into this recessed area have regular fenestration with one-over-one and six-over-six windows. At the basement level, which is fairly elevated, there is one large six-over-six window at the east inner wall, and two smaller one-over-one windows on the western side. The western and eastern masses of the southern façade follow the established pattern at the complex. They have the same fenestration, window types, first-story recessed brick framing and arches around the windows at the corners, fire escape placed straddling the center windows, and sixth-story windows with flat arches and keystones.

On Cedar Manor's eastern elevation, the southern mass and central recessed area are consistent with the typical design at the complex. The central recessed area features the typical wide courtyard and double door entrance with an elaborate wooden surround, transom, and Corinthian columns. A brick path leads to the elaborate front entrance; two tall evergreen trees stand nearby. The entrance is flanked by small octagonal windows and the bays above the entrance follow the regular pattern of tripartite and six-over-six windows. The walls facing into the courtyard have regular fenestration with tripartite, eight-over-eight, and one-over-one windows. The southern mass also follows an established pattern. Working out from the innermost bay, the bays follow patterns of several window types, including tripartite windows, two Palladian windows on the second story level with slightly recessed cast-stone surrounding arches, plain cast-stone panels under the second story, a set-back corner of the elevation, and bays of one-over-one and six-over-six windows. Cedar Manor, unlike the other three buildings on the complex, only has one solarium. The solarium faces east and rises directly through the parapet on the eastern elevation to form a prominent gable with a central Palladian window form.

The northern sections of Cedar Manor are more complicated because of their irregular shape. The northern mass of the eastern elevation is three bays wide with two significant steps back that are each approximately one bay wide. The outermost bays of the primary section of the elevation have eight-over-eight windows and the central bay has tripartite windows (these separate into two six-over-six windows at the sixth story). A Palladian window is located in the central bay of the second story, and flat cast stone panels run between the first and second-story windows. This whole face is symmetrical and has the same design elements that we've seen elsewhere, including the same horizontal brick bands. The building has two deep setbacks, the first going approximately twenty-five feet and the second going approximately thirteen feet. One set-back bay has one-over-one windows and the other has a fire escape. The northeasternmost corner of Cedar Manor comes directly up to the fire lane that surrounds the entire Kent Manor complex.

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Cedar Manor's western elevation maintains the typical form with the centrally recessed section forming an entrance courtyard. This recessed section is a mirror image of Birch Manor, which it faces. The double door entrance, which is set within a slight projection on the elevation, has a transom with "Cedar Manor" in gold lettering, an elaborate wooden entryway with a curved pediment and two small octagonal lobby windows flanking the entrance on the first floor. The inset bays follow the established fenestration pattern of tripartite, six-over-six, and one-over-one windows. The walls facing into the courtyard have regular fenestration with tripartite, eight-over-eight, and one-over-one windows. The design of the southern mass on the western elevation has typical massing, fenestration, and detailing. The innermost bay has large eight-over-eight windows, followed by the two bays of tripartite windows. At the second story, these bays have distinctive bay windows and at the sixth story, these bays have two separate six-over-six windows instead of tripartite windows. The following bay has eight-over-eight windows from the second to fifth stories but a one-over-one window at the first story level. After a slight setback of the elevation, the final two bays have six-over-six windows. Basement-level four-by-four sliding windows are located below the innermost four bays. The northern mass of the western elevation of Cedar Manor is more complex. The three southernmost bays are set back approximately eighteen feet from the remaining five bays of the elevation. The southernmost bays have regular fenestration with (from north to south), one-over-one, tripartite, and six-over-six windows. The remaining section of the elevation has bays of eight-over-eight windows, tripartite windows, two bays of one-over-one windows, and a bay of eight-over-eight windows. Following the typical design, the bays with tripartite windows feature a bay window at the second story and separate into two six-over-six windows at the sixth story.

Cedar Manor's northern elevation, which directly faces the fire lane and Forest Park, is its most irregular. While it conforms to the basic plan of two masses with a central narrow courtyard, this elevation lacks symmetry to accommodate the lot line. The western mass has three bays to the east and, after a slight step back, two bays to the west, and the central recessed section is three bays wide. The eastern mass has three steps which are two, two, and three bays each. Each step in the elevation features brick quoining up to the third story, consistent with how corners are treated elsewhere in the complex. The centrally recessed section has a first-story secondary entrance, which is consistent in design with those at the other buildings. The three bays above have regular fenestration with eight-over-eight windows. The inward-facing walls of this central recession have regular fenestration with tripartite windows, eight-over-eight windows, paired six-over-six windows, and one-over-one windows. The eastern mass has regular fenestration with six-over-six and one-over-one windows in the first two bays (starting from the west). The next two bays, which are set approximately six feet back, have one-over-one and eight-over-eight windows, and the final three bays, set back approximately twelve feet, has one bay of one-over-one windows and two bays of eight-over-eight windows. Starting from the east, the western mass has one bay of eight-over-eight and one of the tripartite windows. The building steps out approximately six feet; six-over-six windows and a fire escape are located along this face. The remaining three bays of the elevation have regular fenestration with eight-over-eight windows.

### *Buildings A, B, C, and D Interiors*

Overall, the interior plans of all of the buildings retain integrity to their historic appearance. The public spaces, formal and informal common spaces and corridors, retain historic period finishes. On the interior, the common

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spaces of all four of the buildings follow a consistent pattern due to the almost identical architecture and plan of the buildings. On the first story of each building, there is a large lobby. On the outer-facing sides of the lobby, there is a series of four pilasters covered in wood molding, and two sets of fireplaces at the north and south ends, along with comfortable furniture adjacent to the fireplaces. The octagonal windows provide light, as do the six-over-six windows that flank them. The walls have traditional rectangular molding panels which are covered in wallpaper; each building has a distinct design and color. A decorative wooden cornice runs along the entire lobby. On the court-facing sides of the lobbies, there are no pilasters, but instead a wall running along where the pilasters would be placed. Here we see a set of vestibule doors, which create a secure vestibule between them and the elaborate outside entrance. In that vestibule, there is a buzzer system to allow visitors in. The second, inner set of doors is only accessible to residents with a key. From within, flanking the inner doors at each side, two rooms house the mailboxes for each of the residents. These rooms in plan create a slight recession on the court-facing façades and there is natural light provided to them through the octagonal windows at this side.

There is wainscoting all along the entire lobbies, and more wood paneling below it, placed wherever there are larger panels above. At the north and south ends there are a set of four steps, which lead to the side entrances where those exist, and to the elevators that lead to the apartments on each north and south end. While the main area of the lobbies has checkered tile, these elevated spaces that lead to the apartments are entirely carpeted on the first-story level. There are a set of three elegant and understated brass chandeliers hanging in a row down the center of each lobby and a series of wall-mounted chandelier units, each with two prongs holding electric candles. The decorations in each building's lobby vary, as do the colors, and there are a variety of small bookcases, indoor plants, and paintings that decorate the four lobbies. Parts of the basement levels are also used as common spaces for all of the buildings, housing laundry rooms, communal libraries, and play areas for children. The basements have a more rudimentary appearance, being composed of cinder-block walls, and concrete floors.

The individual apartments were historically designed with one- or two-bedroom plans (Figure 6). These general configurations remain today. There is some variation in the arrangement of the plan for each apartment, depending on its size and location in the building. Each apartment has a foyer, living room, kitchen, dining alcove, bathroom, and one or two bedrooms.

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**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.)

- 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.
- 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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1937

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Benjamin Braunstein

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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.

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance for Kent Manor is the date of construction, 1937.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

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### **Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Kent Manor is significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture as a good example of an early twentieth-century garden apartment complex in Queens. While the Kew Gardens originally developed as a wealthy suburban enclave of single-family homes, it was increasingly accessible to rapid transportation and the target of new apartment construction. Kent Manor was designed by Jewish architect Benjamin Braunstein, who designed several award-winning apartment buildings throughout New York City. Braunstein's Georgian Revival design for the garden apartment complex maximized light, air, and open space while also creating a variety of apartment types suited to middle-class renters. At Kent Manor, the garden apartment concept was emphasized by its somewhat unusual surroundings: a large public park, Forest Park, surrounding the complex on three sides. The complex's Georgian Revival aesthetic adds visual interest to the buildings and, through the repetition of similar motifs, creates a continuity of design uniting the complex. The buildings feature Flemish bond brick, highly decorative entrances flanked by Corinthian columns, arched and Palladian window detailing, brick quoining, beltcourses, and cornices, and solariums featuring large gables with Palladian window forms.

### **Early History and Development of Richmond Hill and Kew Gardens**

The development of Kent Manor was predated by that of the Victorian-era village of Richmond Hill, the neighborhood of Kew Gardens immediately north of it, and the large and protected landscape of Forest Park, which surrounds the complex on three sides. Before the acquisition of hundreds of acres of land by the Man family, the area where Kent Manor now sits was largely farmland, some of it owned by the Lefferts family, which owned land throughout Brooklyn and Queens, along with the Welling and Hendrickson families. As Greater New York continued to develop outward throughout the nineteenth century, farmland gradually transformed into communities.

Albon Man, a wealthy New York City lawyer, purchased 250 acres of undeveloped farmland in Queens in 1869. He aimed to develop it into a suburban community for people anxious to leave the crowded Manhattan streets for more spacious areas with plenty of light and air.<sup>2</sup> Together with architect Edward Richmond, Man was influenced and inspired by the nineteenth-century planned garden communities being developed outside major cities, such as Llewellyn Park in New Jersey (1852), Garden City on Long Island (1869), and Riverside, Illinois (1869).<sup>3</sup> The oldest portion of this community was listed as the Richmond Hill Historic District in 2019. The center of this new village of Richmond Hill, incorporated in 1894, was located at the intersection of Myrtle and Jamaica Avenue with Lefferts Boulevard, where shops, the Republican Club, the Carnegie Library, a theater (State Register listed, 2003), and the railroad station were located, all within close walking distance of both large Queen Anne style Victorian houses and smaller homes for the working-classes.<sup>4</sup> Richmond Hill was

<sup>2</sup> Carl Ballenas and Nancy Cataldi, *Images of America: Richmond Hill* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2002), 7-8.

<sup>3</sup> Barry Lewis, *Kew Gardens: Urban Village in the Big City* (Kew Gardens, NY: Kew Gardens Council for Recreation and the Arts, Inc., 1999), 9-10.

<sup>4</sup> Vincent Seyfried and Jeffrey A. Kroessler, "Richmond Hill," in *The Encyclopedia of New York City, Second Edition*, ed. Kenneth T. Jackson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 1,103.

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located adjacent to land that would become Forest Park during the late nineteenth century; this 536-acre nature preserve was later conserved as wooded parkland in part through a sizable land donation from the Man family.<sup>5</sup>

From the beginning, Man aimed to plan out Richmond Hill while conserving as much open land as possible; to that end, and in a practice that was common during the period, Man used restrictive covenants to enforce the function and look of all lots. In particular, the covenants enforced a uniform setback of twenty feet to allow for continuous green lawns, a prohibition against fences, minimum lot sizes, and restrictions against nuisances of various kinds.<sup>6</sup> A significant part of the open land was the centrally-located village commons near the railroad station, at the intersection of Lefferts Boulevard and Hillside Avenue, where a Carnegie Library was built in 1904.

### **Kew Gardens**

Kew Gardens was developed on the hilly land just north of Richmond Hill. After the 1890s, it was used as a golf course for village residents; this was supplied with a clubhouse (now a private residence) and a lake hazard that developers drained in 1910 to make way for the new Long Island Railroad (LIRR) station and tracks.<sup>7</sup> Kew Gardens' hilly topography initially helped to protect it from the rapid development that Queens saw after its consolidation into the City of New York in 1898. Geographically, the area is bounded by Forest Park and Forest Hills Gardens to the west, Flushing Meadows Corona Park to the north, the Victorian-era and bucolic Maple Grove Cemetery (NR Listed, 2004) to the northeast, and Richmond Hill to the south.

As in Richmond Hill, the Man family, under the auspices of Alrick Man, developed Kew Gardens, imposed restrictive covenants, and regulated their application and enforcement through their development corporation, the Kew Gardens Corporation.<sup>8</sup> The Mans donated some land and created community institutions to serve as central gathering spaces to create community, such as the neighborhood church, the Country Club, the elementary school, a hotel, and commercial buildings running along the main thoroughfares of Lefferts Boulevard and Metropolitan Avenue; all remain extant except the Clubhouse, demolished in the 1930s and now the site of a historic Art Deco theater. Instead of imposing a regular grid of streets, they planned curving streets, a cul-de-sac, dead ends, and general variation in form to flow with the natural geography. The railroad line, running through the center of the town, which so often divides communities, was instead overcome by a series of three bridges, the main one being the Lefferts Boulevard bridge, with shops on either side. This was and still

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<sup>5</sup> "Historical Places of Interest in Richmond Hill, NY," *The Richmond Hill Historical Society*, <<http://www.richmondhillhistory.org/rhplaces.html>>.

<sup>6</sup> Lewis, "Kew Gardens," 10; "Richmond Hill, Queens," *The Historic Districts Council*, <<http://6tocelebrate.org/neighborhood-items/richmond-hill-queens/>>.

<sup>7</sup> Vincent Seyfried, "Kew Gardens," *The Encyclopedia of New York City, Second Edition*, ed. Kenneth T. Jackson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 697.

<sup>8</sup> Lewis, *Kew Gardens*, 17.

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is locally known as the ‘Ponte Vecchio’ Bridge because the stores were hung from steel beams and set over the passing trains; it is the center of the community to this day.<sup>9</sup>

Architecturally, most of the commercial buildings were designed and built in either the Tudor Revival or the more modern Art Deco styles. However, developers built a wider variety of architectural styles for the houses and the apartment buildings, including Tudor Revival, Dutch Colonial Revival, Georgian Revival, Spanish or Italian Revival, and even Anglo-Japanese.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, the Man family wanted to attract people of varying social classes and wealth; this is still reflected in the varying sizes and types of properties, from the grandest houses on very large lots to medium-sized homes on smaller lots, to rowhouses, to apartment buildings for renters and later, owners in the form of condominiums and cooperatives.<sup>11</sup> Throughout all areas, regardless of building type, they were careful to make this a true *garden* suburb by planting hundreds of trees and covenanting the same twenty-foot setbacks with verdant and united lawns for visual and neighborly cohesion.<sup>12</sup>

In the 1920s, Kew Gardens became the choice of residence for dozens of writers, Broadway stars, and movie agents, because of its proximity to Manhattan and its village feel. It was home to celebrities such as the celebrated pianists Josef and Rosina Lhevinne, Broadway actress Marjorie Gateson, comedian and actor Will Rogers, Charlie Chaplin’s agent, at least one of the Ziegfeld Follies, author Dorothy Parker, George Gershwin, and Nobel-laureate Ralph Bunche in later years, to name a few.<sup>13</sup> Wealthy residents lived in large houses with ample outdoor space, while more working-class residents lived in the earliest apartment buildings, concentrated near Kew Gardens Road and Union Turnpike.

After the 1930s, the neighborhood began to change as the Kew Gardens Corporation, which enforced all the covenants, and Country Club went bankrupt during the Great Depression. The Kew Gardens Civic Association (KGCA), which had been formed in 1914 to represent the interests of homeowners, became the only remaining community organization. During the 1920s, it especially fought against the development of apartment houses in the area; however, it was unable to legally enforce any restrictions as there was only a “gentleman’s agreement” regarding development, thereby heralding the construction of even more apartment buildings. The pace of development only quickened with the construction of the Grand Central Parkway in 1933, the Interboro Parkway in 1935, and the arrival of the subway system in 1936.<sup>14</sup> Although the LIRR had serviced residents since 1910, the arrival of the subway served as an additional impetus for the development of more apartment buildings housing lower-middle-class residents. The 1930s also saw the arrival of thousands of Jewish refugees

<sup>9</sup> Lewis, 18; “Ponte Vecchio,” in *A Picture History of Kew Gardens, NY*, <<http://www.oldkewgardens.com/ss-lefferts-1000.html>>; Seyfried, “Kew Gardens,” 697.

<sup>10</sup> Lewis, *Kew Gardens*, 36-39. Kew Gardens is more expensive to live in than Richmond Hill, because it is better served by trains (the LIRR takes 15 minutes to get into Penn Station) and because of higher property values. The most expensive houses regularly sell for anywhere from \$1-3 million. Forest Hills Gardens is even more expensive because of its very well-preserved housing stock and private self-regulation.

<sup>11</sup> David Chiu, “Kew Gardens, Queens: ‘An Urban Village’ in the Big Apple,” *The Cooperator New York*, January 2011, <<https://cooperator.com/article/kew-gardens-queens/full>>.

<sup>12</sup> Lewis, *Kew Gardens*, 20.

<sup>13</sup> Carl Ballenas, *Images of America: Kew Gardens* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2014), 83-109.

<sup>14</sup> Seyfried, “Kew Gardens,” 698.



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who were barred from living in nearby Forest Hills Gardens because of that community's racial deed restrictions.<sup>15</sup>

## Development of Forest Park

Forest Park, which surrounds Kent Manor on three sides, currently occupies 535 acres and contains the largest continuous oak forest in the borough.<sup>16</sup> Envisioned by James S. T. Stranahan, the President of the Brooklyn Board of Park Commissioners, as a link in a long chain of parks extending from Park Slope to Jamaica, this dream of a kind of "Emerald Necklace" for the city was fueled in part as a reaction to the ever-increasing demand for development at the end of the nineteenth century. Despite these pressures, city leaders desired to set aside as much land as they could for the enjoyment of New Yorkers. Indeed, the creation of a complex city bureaucracy in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and the desire to use political powers to improve the environments where people lived and worked, is directly tied to the progressive social reform movements of the era. The realization that natural resources had to be protected and conserved, is also tied to the conservation efforts of leaders like Theodore Roosevelt and Jacob Riis, as well as to larger movements such as the Garden City and the City Beautiful movements.

Initially known as Brooklyn Forest Park, it was created in 1895 with the purchase of the first plots of private land and had nearly reached its present size by 1898. A total of 124 separate parcels were purchased in separate transactions to create the park.<sup>17</sup> One of those who donated land for the creation of the park was Albon Man, who in 1917 ceded a portion of land along Park Lane from Union Turnpike to Myrtle Avenue, finally delineating the park's present border. The firm of Olmsted, Olmsted, and Eliot first surveyed and designed a plan for the park in 1896, creating the bucolic and meandering Forest Park Drive. The park's 110-acre nine-hole golf course opened in 1901, and a large Dutch Colonial Revival clubhouse opened in 1905; that building, "Oak Ridge," is now the park's administrative offices. Residents and visitors also had access to tennis courts, a track-and-field complex known as Victory Field, hiking trails, horseback riding, a bandshell for summer concerts and events, playgrounds, dog parks, model aircraft fields, and baseball and football fields, among other amenities. The headquarters of the Queens Parks Department is situated at the Overlook, the area of the park north of Metropolitan Avenue which surrounds Kent Manor.

While the layout of Forest Park follows a clear set of boundaries, the two tax lots that compose Kent Manor are conspicuous. There are other areas west of Kent Manor where the park seems to have been cut off, such as the northeastern intersection of Woodhaven Boulevard and Park Lane South (Forest Park Co-ops) and a row of single-family houses along Park Lane South. The best explanation for why these areas, including Kent Manor, were not included in the land for Forest Park, is simply that the owners of those particular lots did not agree to their property being incorporated into a public park, and likely wanted to see them developed at some point.

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<sup>15</sup> Seyfried, "Kew Gardens," 698.

<sup>16</sup> Jonathan Kuhn, "Forest Park," in *The Encyclopedia of New York City, Second Edition*, ed. Kenneth T. Jackson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 470.

<sup>17</sup> "Forest Park," *NYC Parks*, <<https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/Q015/history>>.

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Historic maps of the area and the deeds for Kent Manor offer several clues as to why its parcels were not incorporated into the park. The site was and still is divided down a line perpendicular to Metropolitan Avenue into two separate tax lots. Both lots were purchased from private owners during the early twentieth century. During the 1920s and 1930s, they were owned by a series of corporations and developers, though not always by the same corporation at the same time. In 1936, both lots were transferred to 1610 Avenue P. Inc., which would ultimately develop the site as Kent Manor.<sup>18</sup>

### **The Fate of the Two Lots: Park or Development?**

Man and his Kew Gardens Corporation were aware that the best lots would be those facing Forest Park, which was as true when Park Lane and Park Lane South were laid out in 1917 as it is today.<sup>19</sup> While the area was initially developed with single-family residences, it did not take long before developers began constructing apartment buildings in the area. The first apartments, the Kew Bolmer, were constructed in 1914 along Kew Gardens Road at the intersection with Queens Boulevard. A group of homeowners joined forces that same year to create the Kew Gardens Civic Association. The group was concerned that their expensive and handsome homes would be overshadowed by taller apartment buildings filled with a working-class population. The Association reached an agreement with the Kew Gardens Corporation in the 1920s.<sup>20</sup> The agreement stipulated that “the Mans, and other developers they might sell to, [would be] forced to keep apartment houses confined to the main thoroughfares (Lefferts Boulevard, Metropolitan Avenue and Union Turnpike), leaving the side streets basically to single family homes.”<sup>21</sup>

The arrival of the LIRR in 1910 prompted the initial wave of residential development in the community. However, the Mans came to understand that a mix of suburban and urban housing types was necessary or inevitable for the neighborhood. As Barry Lewis wrote, rising land values affected this decision: “Kew Gardens was almost too valuable a piece of property for ‘just’ homes. Between 1910, when the Queensborough Bridge and the new LIRR both opened and 1929, when the stock market crashed, land values in Queens rose over 400%...”<sup>22</sup> By 1929, almost two dozen apartment buildings had been constructed along the community’s main streets: Union Turnpike, Lefferts Boulevard, and Metropolitan Avenue. All were built in popular revival styles, primarily Georgian Revival and Tudor Revival, with the occasional Spanish Colonial Revival or the more modern Art Deco to mix things up. The architectural diversity represented by the mix of free-standing homes

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<sup>18</sup> Please see the appendix for a detailed discussion of the ownership of these sites during the early twentieth century.

<sup>19</sup> “Richmond Hill and Kew Gardens; Fifteen Minutes from Manhattan,” *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, September 8, 1910. The article states “It need hardly be said that the summits of the hills at Kew and the land fronting upon Forest Park, from Myrtle avenue to Union turnpike... were always the most desirable parts of the tract...”

<sup>20</sup> *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, September 8, 1910; The article recounts that many Manhattaners would be leaving the crowded streets for more space only 15 minutes away: “Taking into consideration the dense population of Manhattan, the fact that its most desirable sections are being rapidly converted to business purposes, driving the householders by thousands into apartment houses, and the prohibitory prices which all lots and houses command in the residence sections east and west of Central Park, the conclusion is forced that in less than five years Kew Gardens will be filled with beautiful and stately homes, and that land values will have increased with geometrical strides.”

<sup>21</sup> Lewis, 43.

<sup>22</sup> Lewis, 44.

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and apartment buildings in the neighborhood ultimately reflected actual socioeconomic diversity in the community.

Early residents did not necessarily appreciate their formerly exclusive, high-class enclave being forced to tolerate the newfound presence of apartment buildings and dwellers. A 1927 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* article describes Kew Gardens as a “beautiful park village, with winding roads and paths,” and a “high-class colony” that was “being invaded today by an influx of the ubiquitous multi-family house...”<sup>23</sup> The article goes on to cite several newly constructed and planned apartment buildings, many with inner courts and “of the best type of apartment-house construction,” as if to reflect homeowners’ anxieties but also to advocate for this new growth. It concludes by promoting the community’s best assets, such as its fine country club, high-class single-family residences, and greenery, regretting that “the growth of Kew Gardens is only limited by the lack of room for further development.”<sup>24</sup>

The Great Depression did slow down the development that Kew Gardens saw in its first decades but did not completely stop it. Two transportation projects contributed to the continued attractiveness of the area: the 1935 opening of the Interboro (now the Jackie Robinson) Parkway, and the 1937 arrival of the subway line at Union Turnpike at Queens Boulevard. These developments coincided with the development of Kent Manor near both the new parkway and the new subway line. These privately owned lots appear to have been developed at the ideal time for maximum profitability.

In 1923, the two lots which later comprised Kent Manor were still vacant and residents were hopeful that a new school would be built on the site (Figure 1). According to a 1923 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* article, the chairman of the building and sites committee of the Board of Education, Dr. John L. Ferguson, stated that ““it seems that somebody who owns most of Kew Gardens does not want a school anywhere... Every time a site is suggested by the Board of Education some gouty taxpayer inserts himself into the situation with a big howl. The howl is then raised again to the effect that the city is not getting the school construction.”” Indeed, an agreement between the Queens Park Commissioner and the Board of Education “to turn over to the city a site on a corner of Forest Park in and overlooking Kew Gardens” was vetoed by the landowner. Although the “location was a beautiful one and handy to the homes of the children... a certain resident of the town owning considerable vacant land in the village raised a forcible objection to this... and with the prospect of a legal battle in view, recommended that the park property be not used.”<sup>25</sup> P.S. 99 was eventually built in 1924 on a generous lot on Kew Gardens Road.

Who were these uncooperative property owners? From the deed research, it appears that at the time of the article, the two lots were owned by Frank Phillips and the Kew Gardens Corporation. These landowners did not want to see such a large and valuable area be donated or sold under-profit for a public enterprise. A 1924 aerial view of central Queens (Figure 2) commissioned by the City of New York’s Board of Estimate indeed attests to

<sup>23</sup> “Large Apartment Houses Invade Once Exclusive Kew Gardens Home Colony,” *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 22, 1927.

<sup>24</sup> *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 22, 1927.

<sup>25</sup> “Reject Park Plot for Kew Gardens New Public School,” *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, January 5, 1923.

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the fact that the two lots lay undeveloped for many decades, seemingly overgrown with trees. To passersby, the lots must have only seemed like natural extensions of Forest Park.

That same year, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* published an article describing the onset of the construction of scores of apartment houses as part of the larger wave of development resulting from the laying out of Queens Boulevard. Calling it a “magnificent boulevard,” complete with elegant and ornamental lamp posts, the article asserted that the lots “fronting this famous boulevard will be too expensive for private dwellings.”<sup>26</sup> Dozens of apartment buildings in Kew Gardens were not only developed right on Queens Boulevard but on other streets close by due to high land values. The article referenced the Civic Association’s agreement with the developers of the apartment buildings: “several big apartments have been built, planned to form a circle outside the colony of high-class private dwellings.” It went on to assure readers that buildings were “protected by zoning restrictions” that helped limit further over-development, and that their architectural styles were in ‘harmony’ with the “architecture of the colony.”<sup>27</sup>

One of the best sources for explaining the mystery behind why the Kent Manor lots were not developed is yet another *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* article, this one from October 20, 1928, titled “Taxpayers Protest Proposed Levy for Forest Park Plot.” According to the article, property owners not only of Kew Gardens but also of neighboring Richmond Hill and Forest Hills “vigorously protested the acquisition by the city of an addition to Forest Park... at a protest meeting held last night under the auspices of the Kew Gardens and Forest Hills Civic Association in the Kew Gardens Country Club.”<sup>28</sup> The plot measured 155,000 square feet in area, and was “located on the northeast corner of Metropolitan ave. and Park Lane, and was known only recently to have been set aside on city maps as land to be added to the park. It is valued at \$600,000.” Residents were firmly opposed to the city’s acquisition of the lot, which would have expanded Forest Park because the cost of acquiring the title to the undeveloped property would be distributed 25% to the city, 25% to the borough of Queens, and 50% on the local area residents. As the land was assessed at \$600,000, it would cost taxpayers \$400 each. The residents, through the civic associations, gave a few more reasons to protest the city’s acquisition of the land, namely, “1. That the addition of this small area to a park which already consists of about 500 acres will not benefit the property owners in any appreciable degree; 2. That it is contrary to precedent to assess the costs of park lands on a local area; [and] 3. That so great is the value of the parcel for other purposes, it is questionable whether its purchase for park purposes would be wise.”<sup>29</sup> Between the creation of Forest Park in 1898 and this 1928 meeting, the value of the land had risen so much that residents, most of them private homeowners, were unwilling to pay the cost of expanding the park. They acceded to the reality that the development of large apartment buildings was inevitable.

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<sup>26</sup> “Distinctive Residential Development Along Beautiful Queens Boulevard,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, November 9, 1924.

<sup>27</sup> *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, November 9, 1924.

<sup>28</sup> “Taxpayers Protest Proposed Levy for Forest Park Plot,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 20, 1928.

<sup>29</sup> *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 20, 1928.

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In the decade after the 1928 meeting, even more development occurred in the area as a result of increased rapid transit.<sup>30</sup> Several other apartment buildings were constructed in the 1930s for the booming population of middle-class residents in the community. Once completed, Kent Manor would be at the upper end, given its location near the finest residences and enclosure by Forest Park. The development and construction of Kent Manor that same year are directly tied to the larger forces of development in the city, which were immediately felt in Kew Gardens.

### **The Architecture of Kent Manor**

In response to these forces, the owners of the two parcels finally took steps to develop them into an apartment complex. The owners, 1610 Avenue P, Inc. hired New York City architect Benjamin Braunstein (1893-1972), who designed several award-winning apartment buildings throughout the city, to design the buildings (Figure 3 & 4). Braunstein is part of an understudied phenomenon of Jewish architects who designed scores of six-story apartment buildings or complexes in Revival styles during the period.<sup>31</sup>

Braunstein was born in Constantinople in 1893 and immigrated to the United States as a young boy. He later studied at the Hebrew Technical School and the Beaux Arts Society and served in the First World War.<sup>32</sup> During his productive career, he lived in Flushing and sat as a board member of the Flushing Savings Bank. Braunstein opened his practice in 1921, and consistently applied the teachings of both the City Beautiful and of the Garden City movements in his design and construction of dozens of garden apartments. While, as a Jewish immigrant, his career may have been limited, he worked prolifically. Among the most notable apartment buildings and complexes he designed were Glen Oaks Village (Bellerose); Concord Village (Brooklyn); Beach Hill Gardens (Douglaston); Mitchell Gardens and Linden Hill (Flushing); Holland House, Sutton Hall, The Wakefield, Tilden Arms, and The Chatham (Forest Hills), and The Mowbray (in Kew Gardens).<sup>33</sup> Braunstein also designed Electchester, a housing cooperative for electrical workers, built in the early-mid-1950s. With 38 buildings and 600 apartments, it was the largest cooperative housing complex of its time.<sup>34</sup> Among other notable designs was Hawthorne Court, in Bayside, designed by Braunstein in the 1930s as an irregularly shaped garden apartment complex; it was locally landmarked in 2015.<sup>35</sup> The complex was so well-received that it

<sup>30</sup> Seyfried, "Kew Gardens," 698.

<sup>31</sup> This information was taken from a lecture given by Professor Andrew Dolkart at Brooklyn College in August 2017, and will be featured in his forthcoming book.

<sup>32</sup> "Benjamin Braunstein, 79, Dead; Architect of Garden Apartments," *The New York Times*, January 22, 1972, 32.

<sup>33</sup> Michael Perlman, "Holland House Celebrates 85 Years in FH," *Forest Hills Times*, April 23, 2014.

<[http://www.foresthillstimes.com/view/full\\_story/24980677/article-Holland-House-celebrates-85-years-in-FH](http://www.foresthillstimes.com/view/full_story/24980677/article-Holland-House-celebrates-85-years-in-FH)>.

<sup>34</sup> Ari Paul, "Electchester: A City Made for Workers," *Urban Omnibus*, December 18, 2013.

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<sup>35</sup> Liz Rhoades, "City landmarks Hawthorne Court; 1930s Bayside apartment complex gets final approval from Council," *Queens Chronicle*, March 5, 2015. <[https://www.qchron.com/editions/north/city-landmarks-hawthorne-court/article\\_5010b8a0-eeee-549f-aace-5aa7911b2762.html](https://www.qchron.com/editions/north/city-landmarks-hawthorne-court/article_5010b8a0-eeee-549f-aace-5aa7911b2762.html)>.

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received the Queens Chamber of Commerce's first prize in 1932 "for excellence in building design."<sup>36</sup> The Commission praised the "highly scenographic environment" created by the rich textures and setting.<sup>37</sup>

Braunstein was regularly sought out for large-scale projects. One of his most ambitious but never-built projects was that of the Queens Civic Center, which was planned for near where the Queens Center Mall stands today. In 1930, Braunstein pushed for the construction of this Civic Center in Elmhurst to show off the borough's prosperity and additionally argued that Queens had several advantages over the other boroughs, namely, its relatively undeveloped state. He saw great potential for the borough, and in a great civic center that would become a focal point, he believed Queens would become exceptionally beautiful and grand.<sup>38</sup> Although the Civic Center would go through several design changes, it never received the necessary funding or political support for its construction. This belief in the ability of great buildings and vast urban planning proposals most probably stemmed from Braunstein's training at the Beaux Arts Society.

Garden Apartments, which became popular during the early twentieth century, developed in response to earlier problems with tenement and apartment living. During most of the second half of the nineteenth century, New Yorkers of the lower, working classes lived in terribly dark, cramped, and generally unsanitary conditions in the thousands of tenements that sprouted all over Manhattan to house immigrants. Jacob Riis is widely credited in helping to shed light on the deleterious living situations of millions of New Yorkers, most notably through his *How the Other Half Lives* (1890). In *Alone Together* (1990), Elizabeth Cromley documented how changing tastes in urban life and the necessity of increased density to house a growing metropolis resulted in new ways of imagining apartment living. Beginning with the "French flats" with their open layouts, and proceeding to the Stuyvesant Apartments by Richard Morris Hunt, developers and architects began imagining layouts that would permit residents to get more light and air, in particular those of the rising middle class.<sup>39</sup>

Garden apartments typically featured apartment buildings designed around large, shared green spaces in an attempt to maximize light, air, and open space. In the nearby community of Jackson Heights, the Queensboro Corporation, led by Edward A. MacDougall, created 'garden apartments,' in essence mostly 6-story apartment buildings built in large planned blocks, all encircling private interior parks. Most of Jackson Heights's garden apartments were built in the last years of the 1910s and throughout the 1920s, in varying Revivalist styles such as the Tudor Revival, the Georgian Revival, French Revival, and Spanish Revival.<sup>40</sup> Apartment buildings during this period were designed with careful consideration of new standards of living, especially for the rising middle class. As such, they made use of spacious layouts, with windows in every single room, cross-ventilation, high, nine-foot ceilings (or more), and large windows which provided vital light and air. In garden apartments,

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<sup>36</sup> "Winding Walks, Shrubbery Enhance English Charm of Bayside Houses and Win Chamber of Commerce's First Prize," *Daily Star*, January 30, 1932.

<sup>37</sup> Marianne S. Percival, *Hawthorne Court Apartments Designation Report* (New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, 2014), 1.

<sup>38</sup> "Queens Could be Made Real City, Says Braunstein: Urges Need of a Civic Center in Interests of Beauty," *Daily Star*, March 28, 1930, 11.

<sup>39</sup> Elizabeth Cromley, *Alone Together* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 62-63.

<sup>40</sup> Marianne S. Percival, *Jackson Heights Historic District* (New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, 1993), 3-5.

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the interior court, with plenty of flora and greenery, provided residents with ample fresh air, shade, and relief from urban hardscapes.

The garden apartment concept was later adapted by Braunstein and other architects to fit narrower or smaller lots in Kew Gardens and Forest Hills. Kent Manor's four primary buildings each have an irregular, H-shaped layout, typical of the garden apartments that were common in other Queens developments in Jackson Heights and Kew Gardens (Figure 5).<sup>41</sup> Pinwheel or H plan buildings allowed for spacious interiors with privacy for residents and which received cross-ventilation and were bathed in natural light.<sup>42</sup> At Kent Manor, interior plans were carefully designed to maximize these amenities while also including twelve to fourteen apartments per floor (Figure 6).

Typical of apartment buildings designed during this period, Kent Manor was designed in the Georgian Revival style. The use of Revival styles was common in Kew Gardens generally and, for apartment buildings, was used to make large, often boxy buildings more aesthetically appealing through the use of applied ornament. Apartment buildings throughout the Kew Gardens tended to blend into the general Revivalist landscape that was begun by the houses and were constructed in a variety of traditional revival styles, from the stately Georgian Revivals to the Spanish Revivals, and the ever-popular Tudor Revivals. Like the houses, they were given generous setbacks on all sides, and with inner or side courts instead of backyards. As Barry Lewis explained, apartment houses were designed "as free-standing structures surrounded by belts of greenery... with landscaped courts of various shapes and sizes."<sup>43</sup> Indeed, many apartment houses were designed on narrower and limiting lot sizes, but still retained their need for light and air. Only a handful of sites had the fortune of large plots, including Kew Hall, Dale Gardens, and of course, Kent Manor, with its generous lots surrounded by Forest Park. Braunstein's design for Kent Manor used a handful of Georgian Revival architectural details to create a cohesive design for the apartment building community while also allowing each building to be distinct in subtle ways. The high style entrances and simpler, but still designed, side entrances for the apartment buildings are consistent in design across the entire complex, suggesting equal refinement at each building. Each building also featured brick quoining, suggesting stability, and a variety of treatments including brick arched enframements, Palladian windows, bay windows, cast stone panels, and solariums. The complex's overall landscape design of brick paths and plantings also serves to physically knit the community into one designed unit.

Built in 1937, right before the Second World War, Kent Manor provided its middle-class residents the peace and tranquility of the finest apartment-house living. Its four buildings were designed around a central, landscaped court, with multiple entrances for each building. Originally, each building had a doorman, and the complex provided residents with a car service to the subway station. Inside, apartments had hardwood floors, plaster walls, archways that provided more open floorplans, elevator service, and spacious and comfortable

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<sup>41</sup> Barbaralee Diamondstein-Spielvogel, *The Landmarks of New York: An Illustrated, Comprehensive Record of New York City's Historic Buildings*, Sixth Edition (New York: Washington Mews Books, 2016), 801.

<sup>42</sup> Barry Lewis, *Kew Gardens: Urban Village in the Big City* (Kew Gardens: The Kew Gardens Council for Recreation and the Arts, Inc., 1999), 49.

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lobbies. An advertisement from 1937 attests to these amenities: “Every apartment in the building is cross-ventilated and each building will contain two solariums with elevators running up to the roof. These solariums will be furnished in a rustic manner and will have suitable garden planting. Benjamin Braunstein of Jamaica is the architect of the project. The 1610 Avenue P. Inc, is builder and owner.”<sup>44</sup>

The buildings at Kent Manor are all uniform in style and general layout, making use of red brick laid out in Flemish bond. The first two stories of each building have clustered brick quoins on the corners, followed by a simple horizontal band between the second and third stories, and a more ornamented horizontal brick band below the sixth story, in keeping with the Palladian Revivalist look. At the parapet, the buildings formerly had white wooden balustrade railings at certain intervals, which were removed under the cooperative’s last major rehabilitation project due to cost and safety concerns. The roofs of each building are flat with asphalt roll, and each building except the northeastern one has two solariums and roof terraces. Parts of these solariums housed the elevator mechanisms and were formerly used to a certain extent for staging events and as places where residents could sunbathe or take in the lush views of the neighborhood and parkland or of the iconic Manhattan skyline to the west. The complex truly would not be the same without its landscape design, which makes use of mature trees, shrubbery and hedges, flowers and plantings, grass lawns, terraced brick retaining walls, and red brick walls and paths that lead residents through the complex in a formal yet relaxing choreography of movement through space. The fact that the site is surrounded by Forest Park on the west, north, and south only adds to the site, creating three backgrounds of total greenery that one cannot ignore when walking in, out, or through the complex. This characteristic of being set within and surrounded by nature sets Kent Manor apart and arguably elevates it above other garden apartment designs.

Despite the limitations imposed by lot sizes and dimensions, developers and architects in Kew Gardens were keen on providing quality housing and on abiding by the restrictions imposed by the Kew Gardens Corporation. Architects were intent on “applying their garden apartment ideals to whatever site they were given, proving that even on narrow lots of odd dimensions you could create garden apartments with multiple exposures, cross ventilation, a maximum of light and privacy - that is, if you cared to produce quality housing.”<sup>45</sup> At Kent Manor, its developers and its architect, Benjamin Braunstein, had the luxury of working with a large plot of land, one that would be an inviting and comfortable home for hundreds of people in the coming decades.

### **Residents during Kent Manor’s Early Years**

During the 1930s, Kew Gardens received an influx of newcomers from all over the world, most notably refugees escaping Nazi Germany. Kew Gardens attracted scores of new residents who found a welcoming home in the garden apartment buildings and elegant houses of Kew Gardens. Kew Gardens was more welcoming than nearby communities, such as Forest Hills Gardens, whose covenants and restrictions barred racial and religious minorities from living there. The improvements in transportation and increase in development within Kew

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<sup>43</sup> Lewis, *Kew Gardens*, 45.

<sup>44</sup> “Public to View Queens Apartm’t,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, August 2, 1937, 3.

<sup>45</sup> *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, August 2, 1937.



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Gardens during the 1930s corresponded with a change in the community's character and culture.<sup>46</sup> Barry Lewis described this momentous decade of the 1930s as one in which Kew Gardens had merely "re-invented itself."<sup>47</sup> It was at this same time that the community "became home to a large German Jewish population that had fled the Nazi regime" and moved into the existing and new housing stock, chief among these the newest garden apartment buildings, including Kent Manor.<sup>48</sup>

Robert H. Lieberman, a Cornell Physics professor, has studied Kew Gardens during the years where he grew up there alongside scores of other Jewish refugee families. Despite their rapid assimilation into the "postwar American ideal," the children of these refugees "shared, in many instances, a sense of unease, or even guilt - a legacy of their identity as children of Holocaust survivors."<sup>49</sup> Lieberman grew up in a garden apartment building similar to Kent Manor, the Alt Green Towers, also on Metropolitan Avenue, and studied at the local school, P.S. 99. His Austrian-born parents, who spoke German at home, had fled like so many others in 1938. Lieberman recounted that he felt "embarrassed by his German-speaking parents, avoided dating Jewish girls, and ultimately married a blond Swedish woman. He settled on a 120-acre farm in Ithaca, N.Y., and largely avoided his past."<sup>50</sup> In the process of creating his documentary, "Last Stop Kew Gardens," however, he got in touch with many of his former classmates, friends, and relatives from his early years, many of whom shared the same experiences. Lieberman understood that what they shared in common was a sense of being different: "nearly all the children spoke German. Our parents were all refugees. Survivors of Central Europe: Austria, Germany, Hungary. They left behind their loved ones, who would be murdered. All they could take with them were the memories of a world that no longer existed."<sup>51</sup>

This profound trauma surely served as a strong glue that bound people together, but understandably, as Lieberman and many others felt, it was something that they felt they had to run away from. The process of assimilation by immigrant and refugee communities into broader American society has been widely studied throughout American history. In this particular microcosm, it is important to understand that many Jewish refugees in Kew Gardens, growing up in the garden apartment buildings, were pushed to succeed by their collective trauma and by their community. The physical impact of their surroundings must have surely played a role in inspiring these young refugees to excel. Despite living in apartments, they were surrounded by an attractively built community. The extent to which these Jewish refugees became successful is abundantly clear. A large portion of houses in Kew Gardens today continue to be owned by Jewish families.

The 1940 Federal Census helps illustrate how these patterns were reflected in the families living in apartments at Kent Manor.<sup>52</sup> The families living in Kent Manor were a mix of native New Yorkers, Jewish refugees, and

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<sup>46</sup> "New Apartments Add Population to Queens Area: Kew Gardens Section in Electrified Zone has Made Notable Stride," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 16, 1932.

<sup>47</sup> Lewis, *Kew Gardens*, 28.

<sup>48</sup> Seyfriend, "Kew Gardens," 698.

<sup>49</sup> Sewell Chan, "Nazi Refugees' Son Explores Complex Feelings," *The New York Times*, April 22, 2009.

<sup>50</sup> *New York Times*, April 22, 2009.

<sup>51</sup> *New York Times*, April 22, 2009.

<sup>52</sup> The information in this section is broadly drawn from the Federal Census, New York, 1940.

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newcomers to New York of different races and backgrounds. From the beginning, the population of Kent Manor was, and remains so today, a microcosm of Queens, the most diverse borough in the most diverse city in the world, and a place for newcomers and the children of immigrants. Kent Manor's residents came from a variety of places both within the United States, although a significant share was born in New York, and from other nations, mainly in central and eastern Europe. Domestically, there were neighbors from Iowa, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Minnesota, Michigan, Rhode Island, Kansas, Tennessee, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Massachusetts, and internationally there were neighbors from Germany, Russia, Romania, Yugoslavia, Finland (Ronald Sandlein, born in 1909), and even Japan (Ryusaku Tsunoda, born in Japan in 1878 and working as a curator). For instance, Otto Augustus Canis, a teacher at Fordham University, lived at Kent Manor in 1940. He was born in New York in 1894 and buried at the Trinity Church Yard in 1942. Marguerite Rose Croner (née Sirkin), a housewife, was also living in Kent Manor. She was born in Russia in 1902 and was married in Manhattan to Percival Croner, a native of Baltimore, in 1931. Paul Blumenstock, born in New York to an Austrian father, was a salesman living at Kent Manor. He was buried in 1941 at Mount Carmel Cemetery, a well-known Jewish cemetery in Queens. Louis Joel Fishbein, born in Russia in 1882, was later buried at Mount Carmel Cemetery as well.

Kent Manor also attracted newcomers from other parts of the United States. Rodney S. Cox, an engineer born in Ohio in 1914, lived with two other single roommates, also engineers, in their late twenties: James B. Lusk of Indiana and B. Noward McDonald of Illinois. This pattern of multiple people or families living within one household was not uncommon at Kent Manor, or in New York City in general. Hal Chadwick, a greeting card writer (Kansas, 1914), lived with his wife Bettyeaves Chadwick (Kansas, 1915), Hal's sister Ruth Arnold, (Kansas, 1909), her salesman husband M. H. Arnold (Kansas, 1907), and their son Richard (Iowa, 1932). This extended family may have been starting out in New York City and trying to make ends meet by living together, hopefully in one of the larger apartments at Kent Manor.

Just like we find today, residents could be composed of working-class families living in larger groupings to make ends meet, or more middle-class individuals who could afford the larger apartments and hired help. It is interesting to imagine Kent Manor in the 1940s, with people from so many backgrounds, religions, and cultures interacting together in the common areas, in the lush courtyard, or the solariums, making this complex a true melting pot. By forming a diverse microcosm within the boundaries of Kent Manor, all of these scores of residents further contributed to the ever-growing diversity of Kew Gardens, of Queens, and of the entire City of New York, which has only become more and more diverse since the middle of the 20th century.

A large number of immigrants from different backgrounds lived at Kent Manor. Nathan Chemiak, a naturalized citizen born in Russia in 1899, worked as an engineer for the Port Authority in tunnel projects. He shared an apartment with his wife, Clara, a teacher born in New York in 1902, their six-year-old daughter Phyllis, and their four-year-old son Earl. Herman Cohen, born in Latvia in 1888, worked as a salesman and lived with his wife Mary (Illinois, 1895). Carl Cannattatt, a textile industry dealer born in Germany in 1893, lived with his German wife Elsa and their daughters Irmgard and Marvelis. Victor Nvadon, born in France in 1892, worked as a "perfumer." Many first-generation, native New Yorkers lived at Kent Manor as well. This included Frank

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Steffens, born in Brooklyn in 1874 to a German father; H. Gillette McCutcheon, born in New York in 1880 to an Irish father; and Herbert Hoffman, born in 1896 in New York to a Hungarian-born father and an Austrian-born mother.

Kent Manor was also home to African American residents working in domestic service; it appears that African American families were restricted from renting apartments. For example, Fossie Covington, born in North Carolina in 1916, came to New York City as part of the Great Migration and worked as a live-in maid. She was employed by W. J. Davidson, a sales manager. Born in New York in 1902, he lived with his wife, Ruth, and their two sons, Richard and Edward, both babies in 1940. It is possible that all five people lived together in one of the larger two-bedroom apartments in Kent Manor.

Long-term residents of Kent Manor, several of whom have lived there since the mid-1970s, remember details and stories of older residents who had lived there since the late 1930s and 1940s. Seth Welins, now a retired former teacher and a neighborhood activist, has lived in the complex since 1976. He remembers moving into a garden apartment complex with hundreds of Jewish refugees, many of whom kept to themselves and had apprehensions about coming together to form a cooperative. Although according to him these residents felt comfortable and safe living in Kent Manor and Kew Gardens, it is likely their shared trauma of arriving as refugees impacted their worldview.

Peter Bronson moved to Kent Manor by 1975. He recalls that approximately one-third to half of all residents in the entire complex were Jewish refugees and their families. Mary Loeb, a friend he used to walk with and with whom he served on the co-op board, recounted the story of her family's departure from Germany. Her father was told by a friend in the German army that "you better leave the country because I don't like what I hear." Apparently, that was enough incentive for Mary's father to take his wife and two children to America, where they settled at Kent Manor. Peter Bronson also recalled Joan Strauss, another Jewish resident who came from Germany with her husband and two young boys. They escaped Germany to Belgium by car, as Joan's husband had friends there with whom they could stay until they were ready to leave for America. Apparently, Joan's husband had forgotten some cash that he had hidden, and when escaping through the woods, he inadvertently left Belgium and for a while was stuck in Germany. Joan and the two boys were likewise stuck in Belgium at the home of her husband's friend, who began resenting that they had to hide and take care of a Jewish family. Thankfully, Joan's husband returned in time for the whole family to emigrate to America. Joan loved Kew Gardens so much that even years after having left Kent Manor, she chose to be buried at the local and historic Victorian cemetery of Maple Grove.

Peter Bronson and Seth Welins both fondly remembered the story of another Kent Manor resident, Martinne Weill, who was born in the French-speaking region of Switzerland in 1936. Her father, Paul Weill, a Jewish scientist, was hired to work at the World's Fair in Flushing Meadows in 1939. He took two children with him and left Martinne, only 3 years old, in Switzerland with family friends. Martinne remembered being left by her family with a strange family. Unfortunately, by the end of 1939, the Second World War had begun, and the Weills were unable to return to Switzerland for years. Meanwhile, Martinne's caretakers were unable to fully

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provide for her, as there were food shortages, and after a year, they took her to the French border and handed her over to her grandfather. Eventually, an aunt brought Martinne to join her family at Kent Manor in Kew Gardens in 1943. Martinne loved the community and eventually moved out of Kent Manor to live in a house just a block away on Audley Street. Martinne was good friends with Peter Bronson's Moroccan wife, Maguy, and they often walked through the adjacent Forest Park while speaking French. In the 1970s, she would tell the younger Maguy about how Kent Manor was in those early decades, with doormen in every building, a shuttle that would take residents to the train stations or school, and how residents were able to access the roofs and socialize under and around the loggias.

Martinne's story, and those of many other Kent Manor and Kew Gardens residents, reflects the diverse experiences of a community with a significant proportion of refugees who escaped cataclysmic world events. That they found a welcoming home at Kent Manor where, amidst their trauma and desire to keep to themselves, they thrived, is an incredible testament to the power of perseverance and community. That they shared Kent Manor and the neighborhood with people from all sorts of walks of life, from young professionals from New York or the Midwest, to immigrants from all over the world, is yet another testament to the incredible diversity that can still be found at Hampton Court and Kew Gardens today.

### **Later History of Kent Manor**

Kent Manor was renamed Hampton Court in 1987, when it became a cooperative under a non-eviction plan, following a similar trend throughout New York City.<sup>53</sup> Since then, the complex, which has a very active co-op board, has seen progressive improvements to its physical plant and landscaping. While residents no longer have access to the roofs and solariums, the co-op board has continually sought to improve amenities for residents, adding libraries, modern laundry rooms, and children's play spaces in the basements. Each of the building's lobbies has been remodeled, and while some of the original interior decorations and character have been replaced or lost, the interiors maintain an understated elegance with sensible color palettes and furnishings. Most impressive of all, and at great cost to the co-op board, each of the hand-carved neo-Georgian wood porticos was recently carefully repaired and restored by an expert carpenter. These ornate entryways are all different from each other, serving to distinguish each building and welcome residents home. Similarly, the lush gardens have been very well maintained by the complex's caring staff and gardeners who meticulously care for new plantings each year and ensure that the site remains a welcoming space for residents and visitors alike, with plenty of light, air, and greenery. These several factors contribute to Hampton Court being a highly desirable place to live, and to this day residents hail from all parts of New York City and the United States

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

- 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): \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** 3.69 acres  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 598213 4507087  
Zone Easting Northing

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

**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 includes the two parcels that have been historically associated with Kent Manor.

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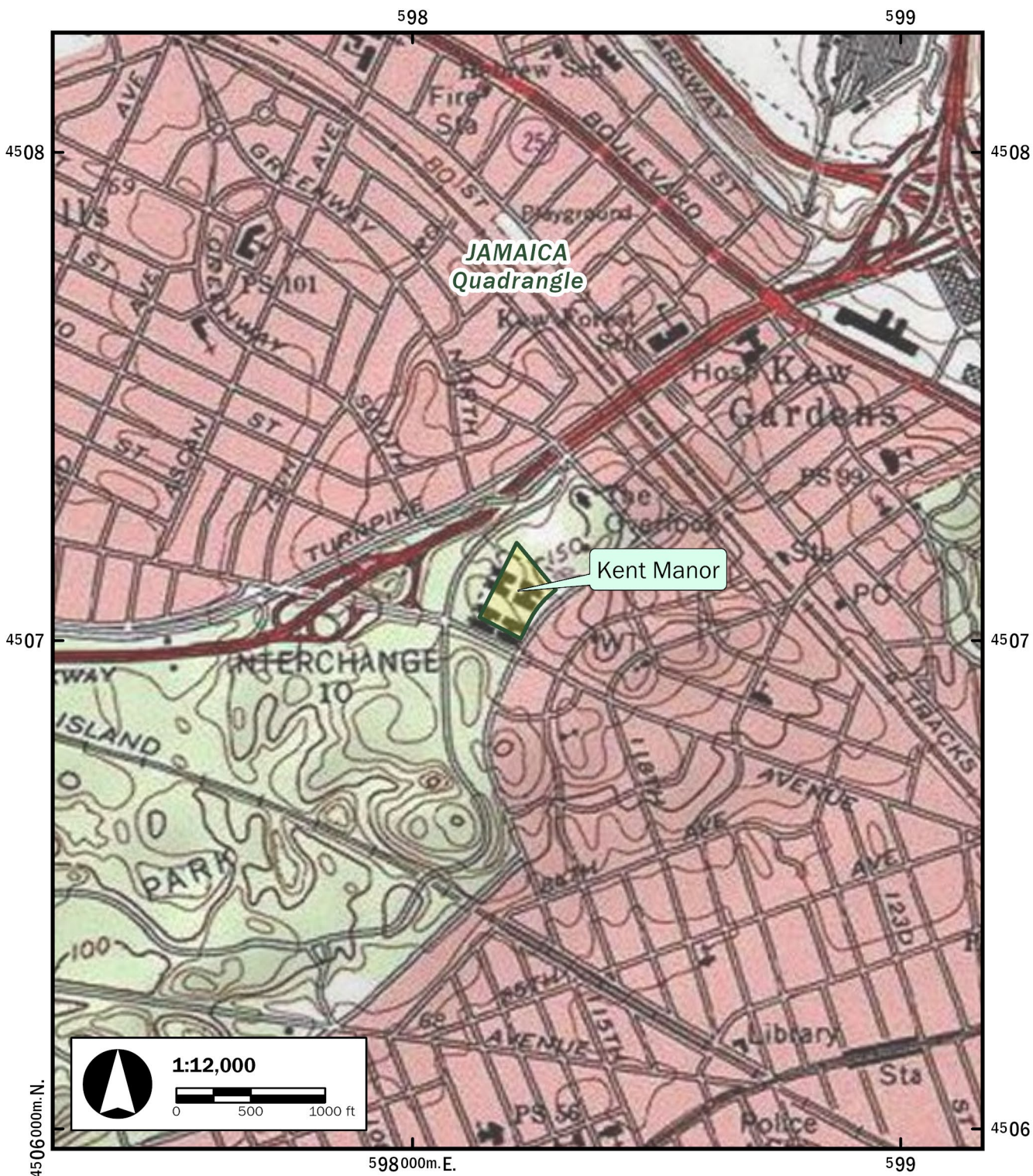
Queens County, NY

Name of Property

County and State

Kent Manor  
Borough of Queens, Queens County, New York

117-01 Park Lane South  
Kew Gardens, NY 11418



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N  
Coordinate Units: Meter

 Kent Manor



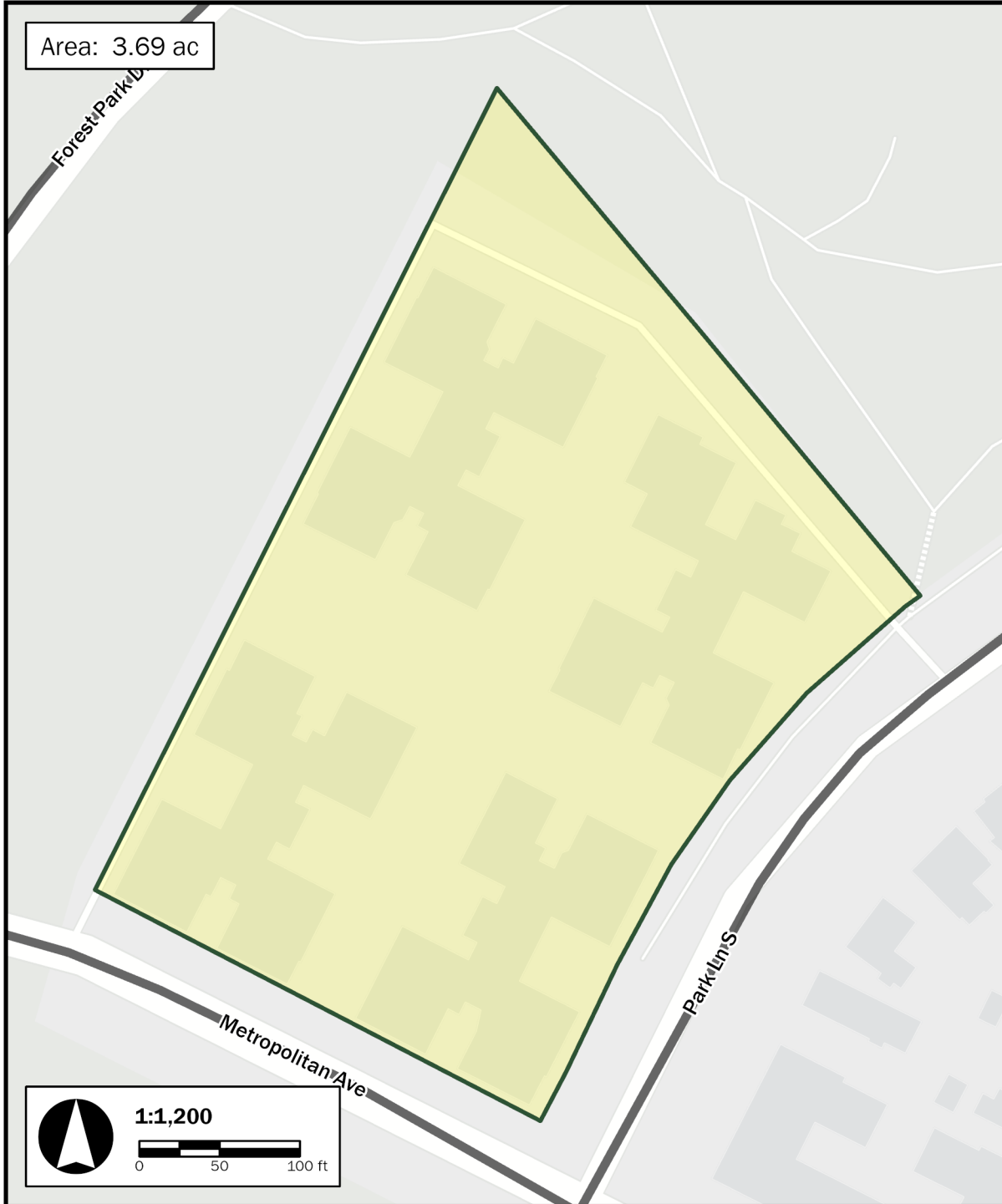


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**Kent Manor**  
Borough of Queens, Queens County, New York

117-01 Park Lane South  
Kew Gardens, NY 11418



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N  
Coordinate Units: Meter

 Nomination Boundary



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Borough of Queens, Queens County, New York

117-01 Park Lane South  
Kew Gardens, NY 11418



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N  
Coordinate Units: Meter  
Orthoimagery Year: 2018

 Nomination Boundary

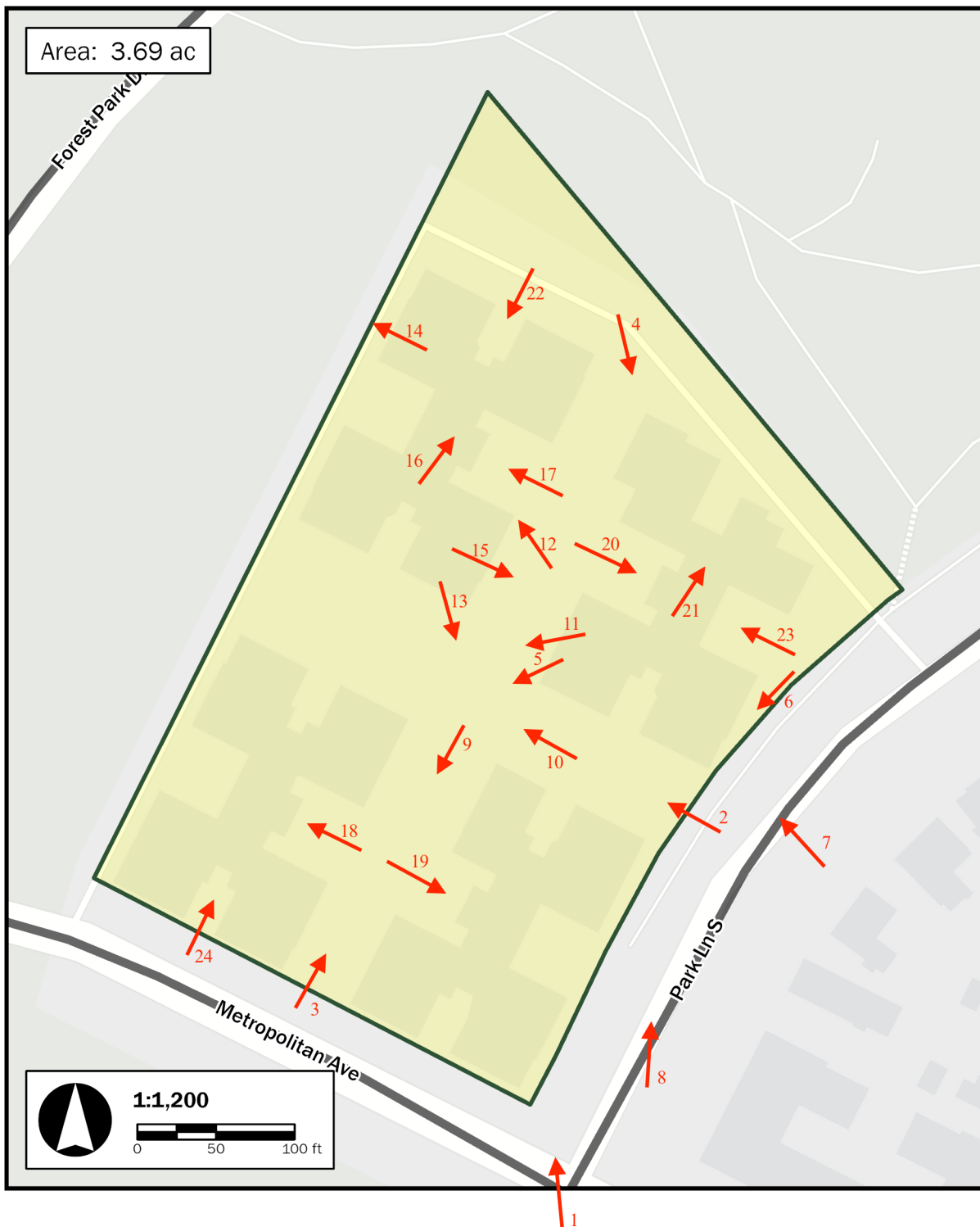


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Borough of Queens, Queens County, New York

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Kew Gardens, NY 11418



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N  
Coordinate Units: Meter

 Nomination Boundary



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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Santiago Preciado Ovalle (edited by Jennifer Betsworth, NY SHPO)  
organization \_\_\_\_\_ date January 2022  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_  
e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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### Additional Documentation

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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.)

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### Photographs:

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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: Kent Manor  
City or Vicinity: Kew Gardens  
County: Queens State: NY

Photographer: Santiago Preciado Ovalle

Date Photographed: As Noted

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

NY\_Queens Co\_Kent Manor\_0001  
Southern and eastern elevations of complex, camera facing northwest. January 2020.

NY\_Queens Co\_Kent Manor\_0002  
Eastern main gate and information booth, camera facing west. January 16, 2020.

NY\_Queens Co\_Kent Manor\_0003  
View from southern (Metropolitan Avenue) entrance, camera facing north. January 16, 2020.

NY\_Queens Co\_Kent Manor\_0004  
View of Cedar Manor's west elevation, camera facing southeast. January 16, 2020.

NY\_Queens Co\_Kent Manor\_0005  
View of northeast corner of Aspen Manor and information booth, camera facing southwest. January 16, 2020.

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NY\_Queens Co\_Kent Manor\_0006

View of east elevations of Dogwood Manor, gate, and part of Cedar Manor, camera facing south. January 16, 2020.

NY\_Queens Co\_Kent Manor\_0007

View of east elevation of Cedar Manor, camera facing west. January 16, 2020.

NY\_Queens Co\_Kent Manor\_0008

View of east elevations of Dogwood and Cedar Manors, camera facing northwest. January 16, 2020.

NY\_Queens Co\_Kent Manor\_0009

View of garden court, camera facing south from octagonal booth. June 16, 2020.

NY\_Queens Co\_Kent Manor\_0010

View of east elevation of central octagonal building, camera facing west. June 16, 2020.

NY\_Queens Co\_Kent Manor\_0011

View of Aspen Manor's north solarium, camera facing southwest.

NY\_Queens Co\_Kent Manor\_0012

View of Birch Manor's east elevation, camera facing northwest. June 16, 2020.

NY\_Queens Co\_Kent Manor\_0013

View of octagonal building and Aspen Manor's northwest corner, camera facing southeast. June 16, 2020.

NY\_Queens Co\_Kent Manor\_0014

View west out of Birch Manor's north solarium, camera facing west. January 16, 2020.

NY\_Queens Co\_Kent Manor\_0015

View east of Cedar Manor's solarium, from Birch Manor's roof, camera facing east. January 16, 2020.

NY\_Queens Co\_Kent Manor\_0016

View of lobby of Birch Manor, camera facing north. January 16, 2020.

NY\_Queens Co\_Kent Manor\_0017

View of Birch Manor's main entrance on east elevation, camera facing west. January 16, 2020.

NY\_Queens Co\_Kent Manor\_0018

View of Aspen Manor's main entrance on east elevation, camera facing west. January 16, 2020.

NY\_Queens Co\_Kent Manor\_0019

View of Dogwood Manor's main entrance on west elevation, camera facing east. January 16, 2020.

NY\_Queens Co\_Kent Manor\_0020

View of Cedar Manor's main entrance on west elevation, camera facing east. January 16, 2020.

NY\_Queens Co\_Kent Manor\_0021

View of lobby of Cedar Manor, camera facing north. January 16, 2020.

NY\_Queens Co\_Kent Manor\_0022

View of Birch Manor's northern entrance, camera facing south. January 16, 2020.

NY\_Queens Co\_Kent Manor\_0023

View of Cedar Manor's eastern elevation and main entrance, camera facing west. January 16, 2020.

NY\_Queens Co\_Kent Manor\_0024

View of Aspen Manor's southern side entrance, camera facing north. January 16, 2020.

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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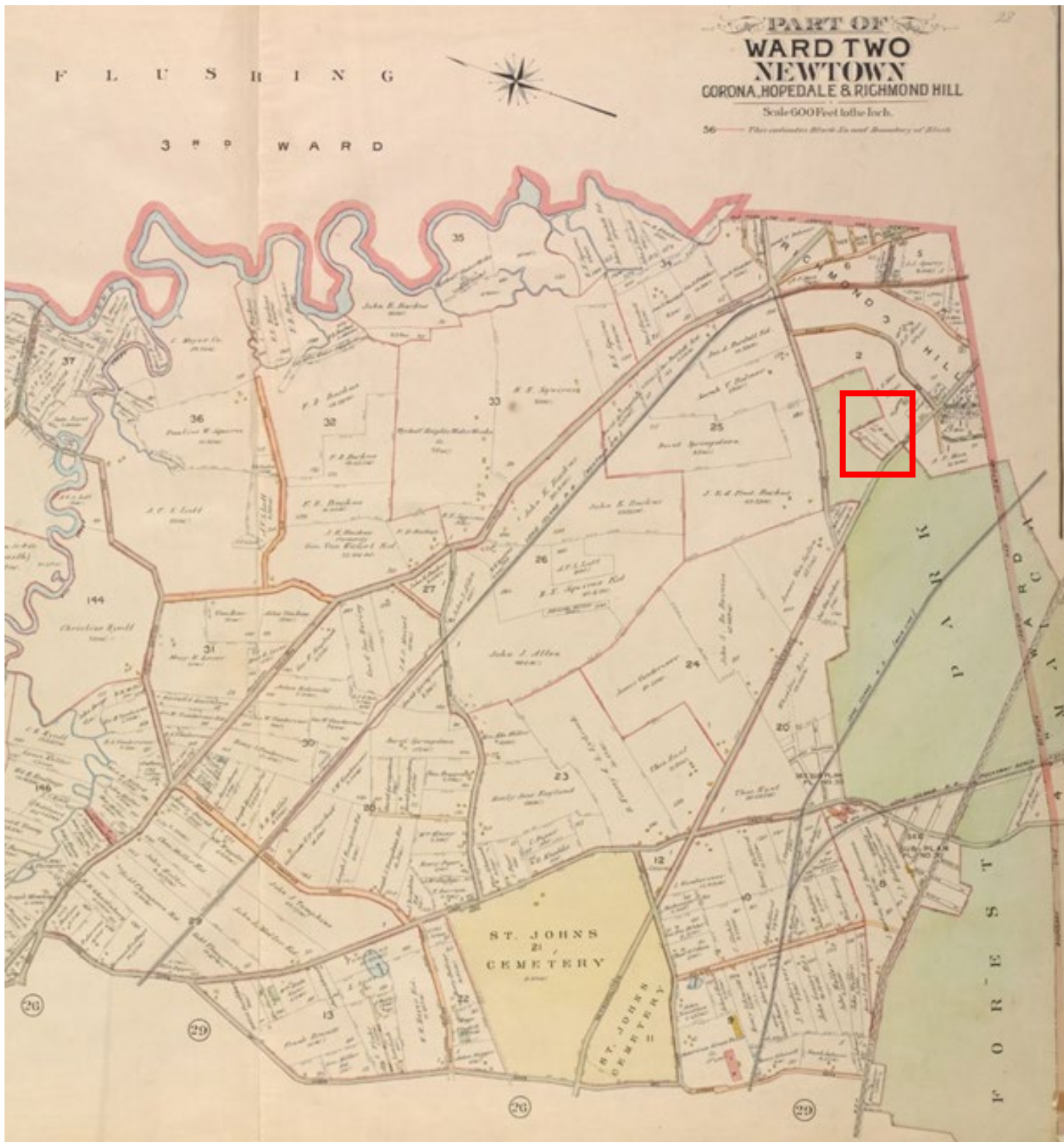


Figure 1. "Part of Ward Two Newtown," in Atlas of the Borough of Queens City of New York. Brooklyn: E. Belcher Hyde, 1903. Future location of Kent Manor outlined.

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Figure 2. 1924 Aerial view of Queens. Future location of Kent Manor circled.



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Figure 3. Plan of Elevation of Kent Manor, ca. 1935. Columbia Avery Library, New York Real Estate Brochures.

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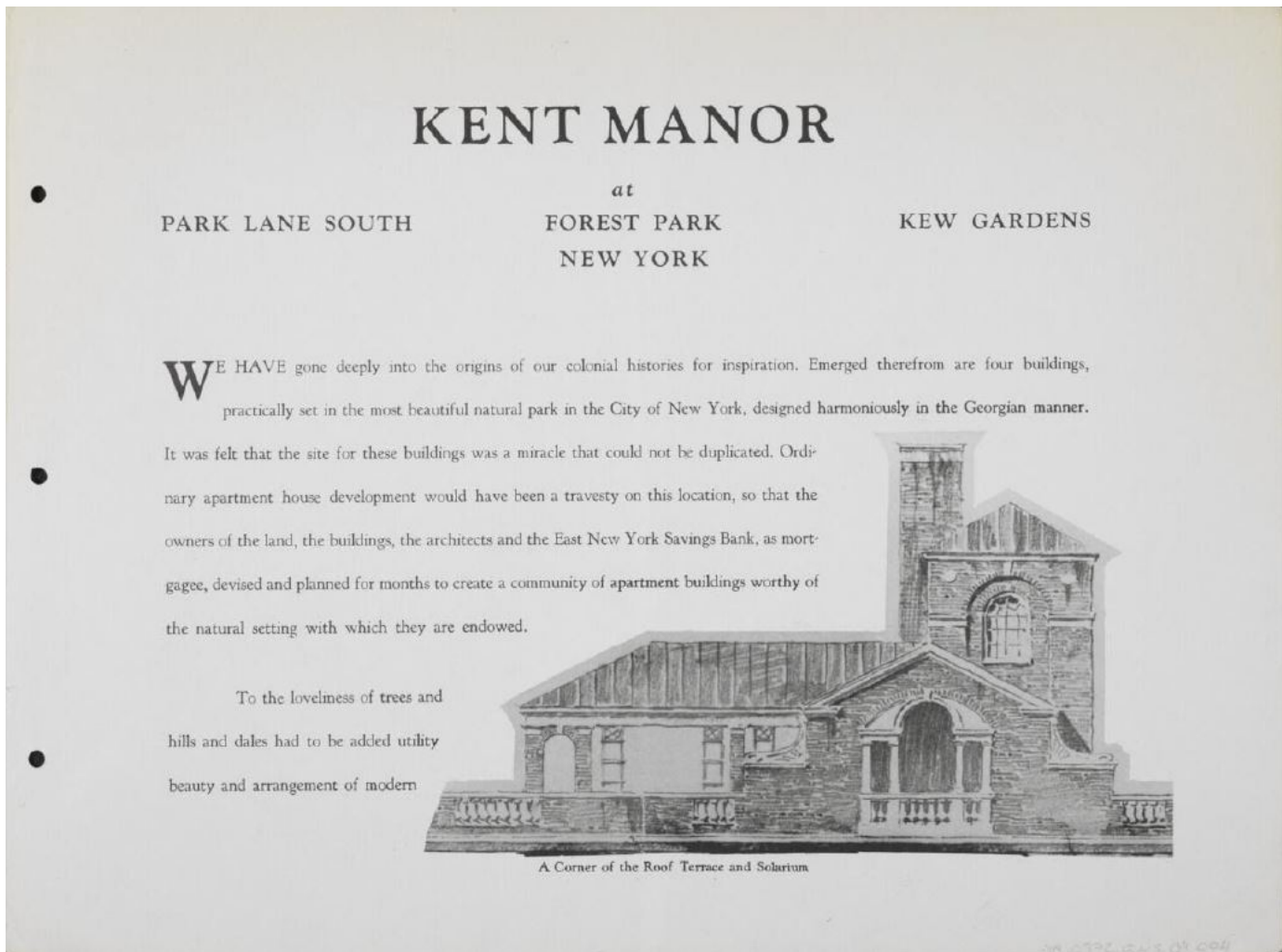


Figure 4. Description of Kent Manor, page 1. Columbia Avery Library, New York Real Estate Brochures.

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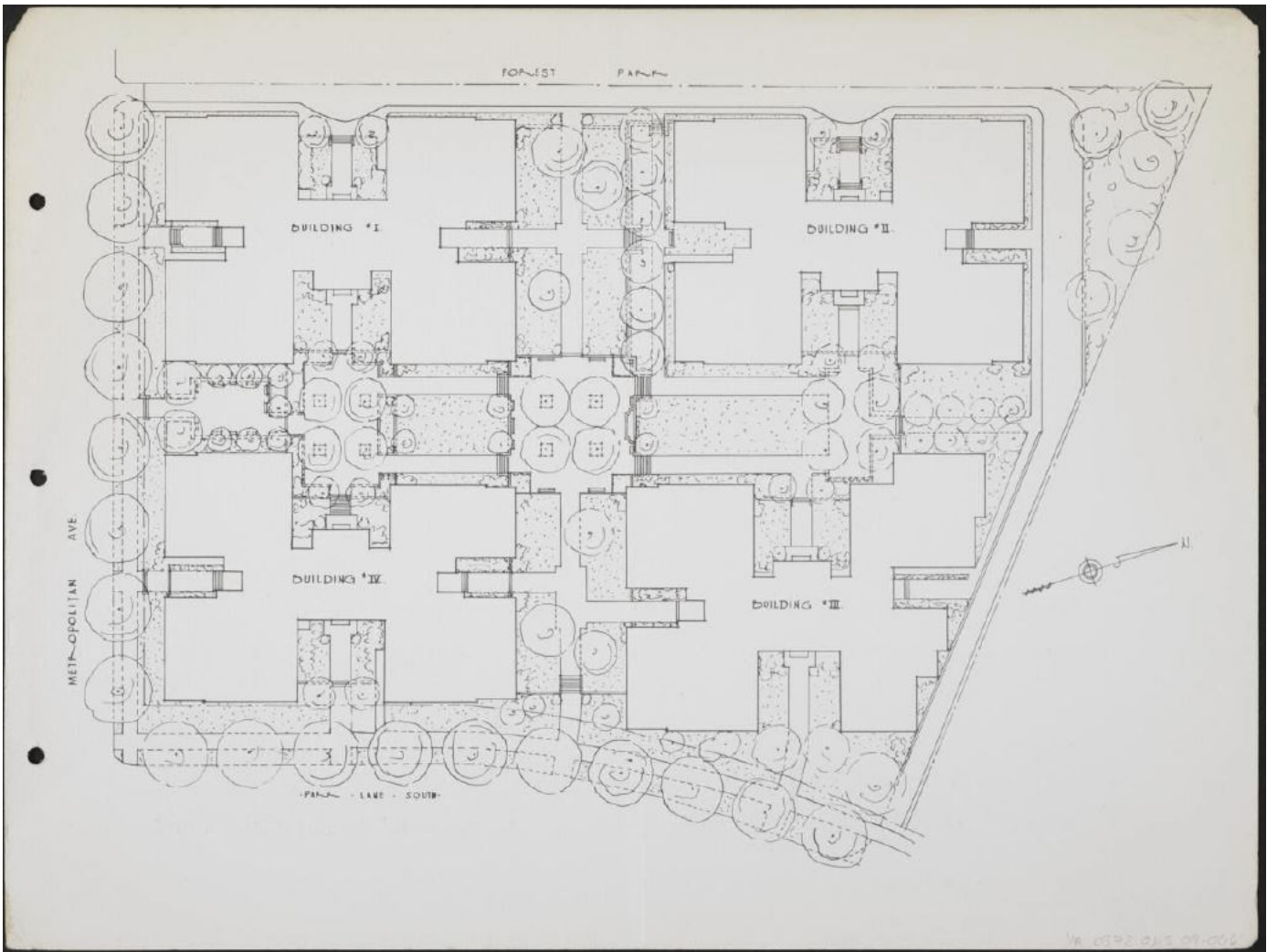


Figure 5. Landscape plan of Kent Manor. Columbia Avery Library, New York Real Estate Brochures.

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Figure 6. Apartment layouts of Building 3. Avery Architectural Library Archives.

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Figure 7. Historic photograph of Kent Manor from ca. 1940, looking north on Park Lane South past Metropolitan Avenue.

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## Appendix.

### Discussion of Ownership of Lots associated with Kent Manor

#### *Lot 1*

On December 21, 1939, the lot was transferred from 1610 Avenue P. Inc (the grantor) to the Kent Manor Management Corporation.

On August 54 1936, the lot was transferred from the East New York Savings Bank (grantor) to 1610 Avenue P. Inc (grantee).

On July 3, 1935, the lot was transferred from Schwaeber Martin, a referee on behalf of Alrick Man (grantor) to the East New York Savings Bank (grantee).

On June 24, 1931, the lot was transferred from the Poplar 37th Street Corporation (grantor) to Alrick Man (grantee).

On June 23, 1931, the lot was transferred from Alrick Man (grantor) to the Poplar 37th Street Corporation (grantee).

On January 19, 1924, the lot was transferred from Frank Phillips (grantor) to Alrick Man (grantee).

On July 20, 1904, the lot was transferred from John Van Nostrand, a referee (grantor) to Frank Phillips.

This last deed states that at a special term of the Supreme Court of Queens County, held on January 14, 1904, between Katherine H. Wetmore, plaintiff, against John Frederick Grether, defendant... that said land was sold at public auction and was struck off to Frank Phillips for \$4,200, along the land of Hamlin Babcock, the land of Frederick Backus, and the land of Eliza Mott.

#### *Lot 2 (the eastern lot, adjacent to Park Lane South)*

On December 21, 1939, the lot was transferred from 1610 Avenue P Inc (the grantor) to the Kent Manor Management Corporation.

On December 7, 1936, the lot was transferred from the Kew Gardens Corporation (grantor) to 1610 Avenue P Inc (grantee).

On October 20, 1933, the lot was transferred from Palmalz Corporation (grantor) to the Kew Gardens Corporation (grantee).

On March 8, 1932, the lot was transferred from the Kew Gardens Corporation (grantor) to the Palmalz Corporation.

On November 16, 1920, the lot was transferred from Charles O. Wooley (grantor) to the Kew Gardens Corporation.

On February 25, 1920, the lot was transferred from the Kew Gardens Corporation (grantor) to Charles O. Woolley (grantee).

*Sometime before, another transfer appears to have taken place which I was not able to locate. It continues:*

On April 27, 1903, the lot was transferred from John Wellington Mott (grantor) to Edward P. Shields (grantee) "along land of the heirs of John Lefferts and Samuel Welling..." and "being the premises allotted to Eliza Mott by the Commissioners in court" under a case with Thomas and Sarah Welling against William Welling.

On December 2, 1871, the lot was transferred from William Welling and others (grantors) to Eliza Mott (grantee)... "along the land of Samuel Whitson," and being the "same premises allotted to Eliza Mott by the Commissioners in Partition in the Supreme Court."

The deed records appear to stop there. But more clues can be gathered from historic maps. The 1908 Sanborn Map shows the two lots as separate entities from the surrounding Forest Park. Lot 1, to the west, is apparently owned by a certain "A. Grethein," while lot 2, to the east, is owned by John Wellington Mott. The same map

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shows that the eastern boundaries of Forest Park had not yet been delineated. Indeed, it wasn't until the 1917 transfer of land from the Kew Gardens Corporation to the City of New York that the border along Park Lane South was formalized.

Traveling further back in time, a 1903 Atlas of Queens shows the area where Kent Manor is located. It can easily be identified by searching for the slight curve that Metropolitan Avenue makes right on the western boundary of Kent Manor.

Note that the two lots have the same outline as present-day Hampton Court's property, and that the same two property owners are cited. Below our site, south of Metropolitan, the eastern border of Forest Park has not reached its future boundary as delineated by Park Lane South. Note that Forest Park also has another intrusion at the western border with Metropolitan Avenue and Union Turnpike, showing that the creators of the park were successful in piecing the park together in stages, and only when property owners willingly sold their land to the city.

Again traveling further back in time, we reach the 1891 Atlas of Queens, which depicts our site but shows the names of other landowners. This atlas shows us that some of the area landowners include "Backus" and "Van Sicklen," well-known names in Queens history. A. P. Man [Mann in the map] is the landowner of Richmond Hill's expanding development, now Kew Gardens, but he does not yet own the area where Kent Manor is located today. Similarly, Forest Park has not yet been assembled by the city of Brooklyn among scores of disparate landowners.

The 1873 Beers Atlas of Long Island, in particular for the village of Newtown, where our site was located, shows various farms once more. Note that the village of Richmond Hill is already listed on the map, as is the "Hopedale" stop on the Long Island Railroad, which serviced people traveling to Maple Grove Cemetery. The rest of the area is dotted with various farms, and in particular our site lists the names of a certain Mrs. Hendrickson and S. Whitson.

The 1852 Map of Newtown shows the area before Richmond Hill had been established, and was even more sparsely settled. However, we still see the area where Kent Manor/Hampton Court is today, at the slight southern curve of Metropolitan Avenue, which states that it was a farm belonging to a certain Townsend Hendrickson, one of the early European settlers to the area.