United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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 Boston Road Plaza

other names/site number

name of related multiple property listing N/A

2. Location

street & number 2440 Boston Road ☐ not for publication

city or town Bronx ☐ vicinity

state New York code NY county New York code 005 zip code 10467

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

Boston Road Plaza
Name of Property

Bronx County, NY
County and State

5. Classification

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

	private
X	public - Local
	public - State
	public - Federal

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

X	building(s)
	district
	site
	structure
	object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
1	0	sites
		structures
		objects
3	0	**Total**

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC / multiple dwelling
SOCIAL / meeting hall
LANDSCAPE / plaza

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC / multiple dwelling
SOCIAL / meeting hall
LANDSCAPE / plaza

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT / Brutalism

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: BRICK
roof: ASPHALT
other: CONCRETE, METAL

DRAFT

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

Boston Road Plaza, located at 2440 Boston Road, is a public housing project for senior citizens in the Allerton neighborhood of the eastern Bronx, Bronx County, New York. The development is located on a 1.9-acre triangular block bounded by Boston Road to the west, Holland Avenue to the east, and Waring Avenue to the south. Designed by architect Norman Dorf of Davis Brody & Associates and the landscape architecture firm Paul Friedberg Associates and completed in 1972, the property is composed of one contributing twenty-story Brutalist-style tower containing 236 residential units, a contributing one-story community center, and a parking lot, all set within a landscaped site (one contributing site).

A significant example of Brutalist architecture, the design's dramatic massing, with staggered shapes and massive cantilevers, demonstrated that bold architecture was possible even within the limited budgets of public housing. The building was constructed with a reinforced, flat-plate concrete frame and clad with brown jumbo brick, a trademark feature of designs by Davis Brody & Associates. The surrounding modern landscape design by M. Paul Friedberg used complementary materials and included a range of passive and active recreation spaces spread across the triangular site. The building has been in continuous use as senior citizen residences with a variety of community services since its construction. Although some alterations have been made to the complex, including two expansions of the senior center completed in 1987 and 2008, Boston Road Plaza retains a high degree of integrity to its original design and period of significance of 1970 to 1972.

Narrative Description

Location

Boston Road Plaza is located in the southwestern section of the Allerton neighborhood of the East Bronx, in an area that was historically known as Bronxdale. Bordered by Bronx Park to the west and Pelham Parkway to the south, the area is characterized by a mix of multifamily attached and semi-detached houses and six-story elevator apartment buildings constructed in the early-to-mid twentieth century. The western section of the neighborhood in which Boston Road Plaza is located is additionally marked by scattered high-rise apartment buildings dating from the mid-twentieth century, including the city-financed and NYCHA-built and operated Pelham Parkway Houses (Rogers & Butler, 1950) and Parkside Houses (Walker & Poor, 1951) and Mitchell-Lama projects from the 1960s, including Adee Towers (1962), Bronx Park East (1963), Oak Towers (1965), and the Aller-Ville Arms (1966).

National Register listings in the area include the Pelham Parkway Subway Station (NRHP 2005), built in 1917 in the historical Bronxdale area, as well as the United Workers Cooperatives (NRHP 1986, NHL 1991), built between 1926 and 1929 in Allerton.

Site Plan & Landscape

Boston Road Plaza is located within an irregularly shaped city block and consists of a modernist landscape with two discrete buildings—a high-rise apartment tower and a low-rise community building—set within it. The block is shaped as a right triangle at the northwest corner of Waring and Holland Avenues, with the diagonal Boston Road as the hypotenuse. Within the site, the buildings are oriented orthogonally, matching the local street grid.

DRAFT

The footprint of Boston Road Plaza's residential tower is made up of three parallel offset rectangles with its façade facing Boston Road. Southwest of the tower and across the main plaza is the community center, which historically had a square footprint but today extends south to Waring Avenue. The community center's façade originally faced east toward the inner portion of the block, but later non-historic extensions to the community center (in 1987 and 2008) have created new entrances, which are oriented toward Boston Road.

The diagonal orientation of Boston Road creates triangular spaces between the building entrances and the street that are used as plazas; the triangular space formed by the west facade of the tower and the north elevation of the community center is the main plaza. The main plaza consists of a historic paved, landscaped seating area arranged in an irregular grid parallel to the orientation of the tower and community center. The plaza is paved in a combination of herringbone-bond red brick and scored concrete, and is dotted with raised square concrete tree planters, each of which was originally planted with a willow oak. The area is furnished with historic two-sided boxy wooden benches. A similarly landscaped but non-historic plaza featuring non-historic seating is found between Boston Road and the community center additions.

A small seating area immediately southeast of the tower features three poured-concrete chess tables with matching stools that share the blocky furniture design of the main plaza. From this seating area, a scored-concrete pathway extends diagonally southeast to Holland Avenue; the pathway is lined by high concrete curbs with a non-historic low steel capping fence. The area beyond the fence is a lawn prescribed for badminton and croquet on the original site drawings, with surrounding scarlet oak tree plantings. The southeast corner of the property is occupied by a parking area that is separated from the lawn by a high concrete wall topped by a steel fence.

The property is located on a pronounced gradient, with a significant rise in elevation from Boston Road to Holland Avenue on the east. Most of this slope is attributable to the immense rock outcrop that lines the property along its Holland Avenue frontage. The landscaping of the northern and eastern sections of the site embraces the presence of the outcrop by featuring naturalistic terrain with grass, tree plantings, and picnic tables. A poured-in-place concrete elevated walkway transverses the rock outcrop to provide rear access to the tower's first floor from Holland Avenue; the walkway descends a short flight of steps to reach the grade of the street.

A non-historic, formal garden, originally used as a play area, on the eastern side of the property is carved out from the rock outcrop and uses the boulder's natural shape as its frame. The garden takes a radial form around a circular center planter; from the planter, cast-stone pavers radiate outward toward the garden's curving concrete knee wall, while a series of cast-stone pavers arranged in rings encircle the center planter to form a radial grid. The surrounding knee wall serves as the base for a low steel fence. The margin between the knee wall and the enveloping boulder is planted with ornamental trees, shrubs, and flower beds. The garden is abutted on its north by a rectangular concrete platform topped by a lamp.

Residential Tower (one contributing building)

Exterior

The residential tower at Boston Road Plaza is organized as three parallel, offset twenty-story slabs that align at a central circulation and utility core. The tower's east and west elevations are twelve bays wide each, while its north and south elevations are each three bays wide. The tower's central jog also creates additional north and south elevations, both of which are two bays wide. The tower is mainly clad in brown jumbo brick laid in running bond with dark metal spandrels and precast concrete trim.

DRAFT

The tower's most distinctive element is its cantilevered profile. Between its thirteenth and fourteenth stories, the north and south bays of the tower cant outward to accommodate additional square footage at its uppermost floors. The cantilevers are supported by monumentally scaled brick-clad brackets that are flush with the east and west elevations; the brackets are capped on their sides with precast concrete.

At its ground story, the front elevation of the tower is marked by an arcade facing the main plaza. The arcade is lined by jumbo-brick piers that carry the vertical lines of the tower to the ground. The concrete headers between the piers are angled downward and inward at a 45-degree angle and are horizontally scored with a single line near their tops. The north end of the arcade houses the tower's main entrance, composed of non-historic stainless steel and glass infill; the original entry infill was aluminum and glass. The entry is recessed within the arcade; the south end of the entry recess features a utilitarian steel door that leads to the former perambulator room. South of the entry recess, the arcade is lined by a continuous ribbon window with a sloped cast-stone sill.

Windows throughout the tower are replacement aluminum double-hung sash, finished in a dark bronze color that matches the tone of the historic spandrels. According to the sizes of their openings, windows alternate between triple-ganged and single configurations. Historically, the windows were a combination of aluminum double-hung and sliding sash.

Interior

The residential tower's Brutalist exterior motif continues uninterrupted into its intact lobby, which is accessed through a small vestibule. The vestibule and lobby bear matching historic finishes, including brown jumbo-brick walls identical to the exterior cladding, glazed buff-colored square quarry-tile flooring in running bond, and painted plasterboard ceilings. The west end of the lobby near the facade features two load-bearing, poured-in-place concrete piers with wooden formwork texturing. The piers are currently covered in a non-historic red paint finish. The east wall of the lobby contains the residential mailboxes. Just to the north, a rear ell extending from the east side of the lobby comprises the elevator lobby, with two elevators on its north wall and the landing to stair A on its east end. Boston Road Plaza's management office is also located on the tower's ground floor, south of the residential lobby. The management office is accessed via a separate entry on the tower's rear façade. North of the residential lobby, the ground floor is devoted to heating, gas, electric, and plumbing utilities.

At the upper floors, the elevators open onto an elevator lobby that connects the two offset, double-loaded residential corridors to the east and west. The elevator lobby and residential corridors both have historic brown jumbo-brick walls with simple steel railings and non-historic vinyl-tile flooring; the residential corridors have painted, textured concrete ceilings, while the elevator lobbies feature textured plasterboard dropped ceilings with recessed lighting. The residential corridors are naturally lit by the historic floor-to-ceiling windows at either end. A niche within the western corridor of each floor, distinguished by small, square historic blue tile cladding, houses the trash chute. The south side of the elevator lobbies, opposite the elevators, is the site of the tower's two stairwells, which are bundled together in a scissor configuration. The stairwells have utilitarian finishes including painted CMU walls, concrete stairs and landings, and steel-bar banisters.

On the first floor (not to be confused with the ground floor below), the standard upper-floor layout varies: a corridor extends east from the elevator lobby toward the rear entry facing Holland Avenue, and the tower's north wing contains service spaces, including the laundry room and tenant storage rather than apartments. The laundry room features quarry-tile flooring and structural facing-tile walls. Unique among the tower's residential corridors, the first floor's south corridor also features two jumbo-brick partitions with metal-frame doorways passing through each.

DRAFT

Apartments throughout Boston Road Plaza share simple, unadorned finishes, including painted plasterboard walls, non-historic vinyl-tile flooring, and textured, painted concrete ceilings. Apartments also each include a historic pass-through between their kitchen and living room. Between the second and twentieth floors, each floor contains twelve apartments; the first floor contains seven apartments, including one studio-apartment and six one-bedrooms. Between the second and twelfth floors, each floor includes two studio-apartments and ten one-bedrooms. At the thirteenth and fourteenth floors, where the east and west tower slabs are extended over cantilevers, there are two studio-apartments, eight one-bedrooms, and two two-bedrooms; above the fifteenth floor, where the central tower slab is additionally extended over cantilevers, there are two studio-apartments, four one-bedrooms, and six two-bedrooms. In total, Boston Road Plaza contains 235 apartment units.

Community Center (one contributing building)

Exterior

The community center, today called the Boston Road Elias Karmon Senior Center, is a separate, one-story building with brown jumbo-brick cladding that matches the residential tower and a sawtooth roof. Originally a square-footprint building, the community center has received two substantial additions since its construction that have extended the building south to Waring Avenue. The first of these additions, designed by William Schacht & Giorgio Cavaglieri Architects, was completed in 1987. The second addition, designed by Davis Brody Bond, the successor firm to Davis Brody & Associates, opened in 2008.

The original portion of the community center fronts onto the main plaza that is shared with the residential tower. Its Boston Road-facing profile is defined by its sawtooth profile and the two large, north-facing clerestories that rise above its roofline, flush with the facade. The north clerestory is also flush with the north elevation and is glazed with wrap-around aluminum ribbon windows. On its east end, the pitched roofs are hipped. The community center's original main entrance was located within the recessed bay on its north elevation; since the completion of the 2008 addition, the main entrance has been located on the north-facing elevation of the addition near Boston Road. The east elevation of the community center is glazed with recessed ribbon casement windows with each bay divided between brick piers. The 1987 addition was designed sympathetically to the original community center building and is clad in an identical brown jumbo brick with matching ribbon windows on its east elevation. While the 2008 addition to the community center uses an ivory-colored brick in stack bond for its cladding, it features compatible proportions with the older portions of the building and continues the ribbon-window motif for its glazing. The roof profile of the newer addition further ties it together with the original community center by incorporating its own north-facing clerestory, a contemporary interpretation of the historic clerestories to the north. The 2008 addition also extended the 1987 addition closer to Boston Road with a glass-and-aluminum enclosure and refaced the 1987 addition's western facade with aluminum.

Interior

The community center retains much of its original 1972 layout, which includes an open meeting room space daylit by the building's historic clerestories. Much of the building reflects changes made in the 2008 renovation which included an expansion of the building and the creation of a new multi-purpose space. All finishes throughout the community center are contemporary and include plasterboard walls, non-historic vinyl flooring, non-historic plasterboard, and acoustic-panel dropped ceilings. Corridors within the 2008 addition are lined by matte-tile walls, and the offices within the 1987 addition feature exposed concrete piers along their outer walls.

DRAFT

Integrity

Boston Road Plaza exhibits a high degree of integrity of both its architecture and its landscape. Though minimal changes to the project over the course of its history are apparent—including the installation of new windows and entry infill, a sympathetic enlargement and renovation of the community center, and replacement of select landscape features—character-defining elements of the original layout, design, and finishes are intact. Typical for a public housing project of its age, the minor alterations to Boston Road Plaza over the course of its history reflect the New York City Housing Authority's evolving, often standardized renovation practices, as well as the changing needs of residents.

By retaining its jumbo-brick cladding system, distinctive cantilevered end bays, and contrasted geometric and naturalistic landscaping, Boston Road Plaza remains a highly legible landmark of New York City's public housing architecture of the late 1960s and early 1970s. In its interior layout and features, including original floor plans, circulation, and public space finishes, the tower and community center continue to reflect Boston Road Plaza's specialized design as an affordable, majority-senior housing project.

DRAFT

8. Statement of Significance

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

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

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL HISTORY
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
1970-1972

Significant Dates
1972

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

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
Davis Brody & Associates (architect)
Paul Friedberg Associates (landscape architect)

Period of Significance (justification)
The period of significance is based on the dates of construction of the housing complex, 1970-1972.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

DRAFT

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

Boston Road Plaza is significant under **Criterion A** in the areas of *Social History* and *Politics/Government* as an intact example of a "scatter-site" public housing project built for seniors in New York City that illustrates both the city's efforts to provide housing for the city's needy population in the late twentieth century and the entrenched intolerance that threatened to derail them. Completed in 1972 in the Allerton neighborhood of the Bronx, the twenty-story building was part of the scatter-site housing program initiated by Mayor John Lindsay in 1966 as an effort to battle the city's entrenched racial and economic segregation. A companion to 1966s Model Cities program, which was intended to rebuild deteriorated inner-city neighborhoods, the scatter-site projects, all built by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), were smaller projects located within established middle-income communities where they could ostensibly "foster economic and ethnic integration and stable balanced communities."[1] Despite these good intentions, the program faced fierce resistance from the residents of majority-white neighborhoods, who objected to the influx of new residents due to a fear of overcrowding and a desire to use the land for other public purposes (such as parks and libraries). These thinly veiled objections were often code for discrimination and bigotry, as residents fought to keep their neighborhoods free of diverse racial, ethnic, and economic groups. The late 1960s and early 1970s were marked by protracted, emotionally charged public battles over the program that revealed the effects of long-term income inequality, economic injustice and officially sanctioned discrimination that plagued the efforts of lower income groups to find decent, affordable housing in New York City.

The project is also significant under **Criterion A** in the area of *Social History* as an example of senior public housing, a building type that developed during the 1950s and 1960s to address the needs of the increasingly large population of older people in the United States, many of whom had low incomes.[2] Developments like Boston Road Plaza were the result of successive rounds of national legislation that expanded the ability of seniors to qualify for public housing and increased the funding provided for the construction of senior housing. These projects not only provided seniors, both working and retired, with affordable housing that met their specific physical needs, but also aimed to provide them with a community. Unfortunately, a number of these projects were also part of the scatter-site effort and were initially blocked by neighborhood groups seeking to preserve racial exclusivity, in some cases leading to long delays or even cancellation.

Boston Road Plaza is also significant under **Criterion C** in the area of *Architecture* for its distinctive Brutalist design by well-known modern architect Norman Dorf of Davis Brody & Associates, with a landscape design by Paul Friedberg Associates (later known as M. Paul Friedberg & Associates). The building is a twenty-story Brutalist-style tower with bold cantilevers containing 236 residential units and an adjacent one-story community center with a dramatic sawtooth roof and clearstory windows. The building's dramatic massing, with staggered shapes and massive cantilevers, both illustrated the expressive, sculptural character of the Brutalist style and allowed the architects to vary the interior apartment plans. The community center's large, north-facing windows provide ample light to the spaces within. Dorf's striking design was also an attempt to demonstrate that bold architecture was possible even within the limited budgets of public housing. The period of significance is based on the dates of construction of the housing complex, 1970 to 1972.

[1] City Planning Commission, "Cal. No. 7, CP-19336, Plan and Project Approval," May 11, 1966, New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Archive, Box 7029.
[2] The term "elderly" is often used to describe frail individuals and is typically not preferred by older adults. During the middle part of the twentieth century, however, the word was in common usage and therefore it is used throughout this document. For more information on modern interpretations of the word see Dale Avers, et al., "Use of the Term 'Elderly,'" *Journal of Geriatric Physical Therapy* 34, no.4 (October/December 2011), accessed May 4, 2023: https://journals.lww.com/jgpt/Fulltext/2011/10000/Use_of_the_Term__Elderly_.1.aspx.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Evaluating Public Housing[3]

The history of public housing in America is an extremely complex subject. Issues relating to housing inequality date to the Republic's earliest days, as do the moral and social values associated with home and specific ideas about family and community relationships. The cost of land, widely differing site characteristics, religious, social and class distinctions have also raised complicated questions about who may and should live where, how they should live, and who is responsible for housing the citizen.

In New York City, the late-nineteenth century flood of immigrants from eastern and central Europe followed by the migration of African Americans from the south in the early twentieth century focused attention on inadequate living conditions in poorly built and overcrowded tenements, leading reformers to lobby for model tenement laws and architectural experiments. Despite good intentions, these had little effect, as the ten groups of model tenements built between 1855 and 1905 were vastly outnumbered by the 50,000 tenements built in the same period.[4] Yet, housing was still seen as the purview of private industry and associated with capitalism. None of these reformers, architects, or builders ever considered that the government would build or subsidize housing.[5] That role was a product of the Great Depression, which precipitated a critical housing shortage, and it was primarily intended to create jobs in the building industry (1934, National Industrial Recovery Act, Public Works Administration). It wasn't until 1937, with the Wagner-Steagall Housing Act, which stated a clear federal commitment to providing decent housing for the American poor, and the subsequent US Housing Act of 1949, a response to the post-WWII housing crisis, which set aside large sums for public housing units and linked housing to slum clearance, that building and subsidizing public housing, became a government mandate.

This legislation came about through the involvement of and compromises among multiple agencies, lobbyists, political figures, idealists, and reformers and thus embodied multiple contradictions. What some saw as a benevolent program, others (realtors in particular) saw as socialism; still others sensed it as paternalism, while some community leaders and scholars perceived it as discrimination and segregation. To varying degrees, all of these assessments were correct. For example, programs funding housing were linked with provisions requiring that the new housing be segregated. Government programs indeed created decent housing complexes in urban areas for Black veterans, but other programs denied them mortgages, virtually preventing them from living anywhere else. And while government agencies continually sought to improve building and site designs in cooperation with noted architects and landscape firms, redlining, neighborhood protests, and underfunding often restricted the developments to lower budget buildings on constrained lots. Conversely, some local citizens and groups fully participated in local housing development and others embraced the policies that resulted in segregation because "all-Black" neighborhoods provided them with a substantial political voting bloc.

Thus, the history of public housing in the United State does not follow a path of consistent policy but is marked by complexity and contradiction, a fact acknowledged by scholars. Catherine Bauer (1905-1964), for example, was one of the most well-known housing scholars and reformers in the country. Her 1934 book, *Modern Housing*, was a passionate argument for a public housing program based on the Modern architecture that she had seen and studied in Europe. Subsequently, she was the primary author of the 1937 US Housing Act and a director of research for the United States Housing Authority, which administered the act. However, near the end of her long and varied career, in 1957, she wrote "The Dreary Deadlock of Public Housing" for *Architectural*

[3] This section was prepared by the NYSHPO
[4] Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 123.
[5] Wright, *Building the Dream*, 123.

Record, a detailed and self-critical examination of the program's failure to solve the perceived problems. In recent years, numerous contemporary scholars in different disciplines have provided varied and engaging perspectives on government housing programs.

New York City's public housing program is the largest in the country and almost impossible to compare with any others. Over nearly a century, the New York City Housing Authority (the first public housing agency in the country, established in 1934) built more than 300 public housing complexes under different programs, using combinations of local, state, and federal funding sources and diverse architects and in a great many different forms and locations, evoking a wide range of responses, from praise to protest.

The New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) acknowledges the fraught history of public housing programs in New York City and elsewhere and their enormous impact on the lives they served, especially people of color, who were their frequent occupants – either by intention or by default, replacing earlier occupants. SHPO staff have researched and are continuing to pursue existing and emerging information on the impacts of the various housing programs and the direct and indirect effects of public housing on specific populations, such as Puerto Ricans and African Americans. We are strongly committed to the belief that everyone's history is worthy of documentation and preservation, and we strive to present the fullest available interpretation for each property, including up-to-date bibliographic entries. Nevertheless, the National Register has multiple purposes, including honor and recognition, but it is also a planning tool, providing eligibility and direction for various other programs, such as grants and tax credits. Nominations must be based on current scholarship, but they are not intended or expected to rival the work of scholars. As a result, while we are committed to thoroughly documenting sites that are important *because* they represent the lives of these Americans and within an appropriate contextual framework, we are also unable to encapsulate the specific perspectives of all scholars and historians. Such exercises are beyond the scope and purpose of the National Register program.

The development of the Allerton neighborhood

Allerton is a neighborhood located in the northeast section of the Bronx and is bounded by the Bronx & Pelham Parkway on the south, the Esplanade on the east, Adee Avenue on the north, and Bronx Park East on the west. The neighborhood is situated directly east of Bronx Park, a large public park that includes the New York Botanical Garden (NRHP/NHL 1967) and the Bronx Zoo (the Rainey Memorial Gates are NRHP, 1972).

This area of the Bronx was first developed in the early nineteenth century and known as Bronxdale. The village of Bronxdale was one of several small rural communities—the others being Schuylerville, Unionport, Olinville, Stinard Town, and Middletown—surrounding the Town of Westchester, a part of southern Westchester County. Bronxdale was formed along the Boston Post Road (now known as Boston Road), which was a Native American path that became a postal route between New York City and Boston in the late seventeenth century, at a point at which it passed over the Bronx River. Here, a variety of businesses were established including the Bronx Bleach and Dye Works in 1823 and the Lorillard Snuff Mill in ca. 1800 (NRHP 1977).[6] The town also included a tape factory, a school, hotel, and various residences. North of the town were larger estates, including that of Peter Lorillard III, who owned and operated the snuff mill.

---

[6] Frederick W. Beers, *Town of Westchester, Westchester Co., N.Y.* [map], Page No. 14, Atlas of New York and vicinity from actual surveys by and under the direction of F.W. Beers (Philadelphia, PA: James McGuigan, 1868), David Rumsey Collection. For more on the Diogomaye Ndiaye, "The Boltons of Bronxdale," February 2, 2011, accessed June 7, 2023: https://bronxriver.org/post/story/theboltonsofbronxdale. For more on the Snuff Mill see the NR.

In the 1880s, Bronxdale was radically transformed by the construction of a new park system in the Bronx. As part of the New Parks Act of 1884, New York State authorized the purchase of extensive tracts of land which were used to create six new parks (Bronx Park, Pelham Bay Park, Van Cortlandt Park, Crotona Park, Claremont Park, and St. Mark's Park) and three new parkways (Bronx & Pelham Parkway, Moshulu Parkway, and Crotona Parkway), which connected several of the parks.[7] The new Bronx Park was created out of lands that had been occupied by the various river-adjacent factories and a large part of the Lorillard estate. The new Bronx & Pelham Parkway was planned to follow the existing route of Fordham & Pelham Avenue and connect Bronx Park to Pelham Bay Park (the two-lane Pelham Parkway was not actually built until 1911).

As the nineteenth century came to a close, the Bronx and parts of Westchester became more integrated, physically and administratively, into New York City. In 1874, the area west of the Bronx River, formerly part of Westchester, was annexed to New York City; in 1895, the area east of the Bronx River, including the village of Bronxdale, was also annexed.

Most of the northern areas of Bronxdale, east of the Bronx Park and north of the parkway, remained rural with a number of farm properties, including the Williamsbridge Farm, owned by Lorillard Spencer, and the Hitchcock homestead.[8] The area was also populated by larger country estates such as that of John Jacob Astor IV, whose property was located along Williamsbridge Road, not far from the Morris Park Race Course, which was established in 1889 as a thoroughbred horse-racing facility.

With developments in mass transit, areas in the Bronx that were once rural quickly transformed into commuter suburbs. Between 1910 and 1940 the population of the Bronx increased by 300 percent, reflecting these shifts.[9] In Bronxdale, new development arrived with the extension of the Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) Company's White Plains Road Line, which opened in 1904 between East 180th Street and Jackson Avenue, also known as the West Farms Division of the subway system. In 1913, the IRT signed the Dual Contracts, along with the city and the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company, to extend the West Farms Division as an elevated line along White Plains Road to 241st Street, which was practically the city limits. In 1917, new elevated stations were opened at Pelham Parkway (NRHP 2005) and Allerton Avenue.

With the subway came new residential developments of single-family houses as well as innovative apartment complexes, such as the Farband Houses, a limited-dividend project built in 1928 by the National Jewish Workers' Alliance on Barnes Avenue and Williamsbridge Road, and the experimental United Workers' Cooperative Colony (NRHP 1986, often referred to as "The Coops" or the "Allerton Coops"), built in 1929 on Bronx Park East between Allerton and Arnow Avenues.[10]

Other changes, especially the rise of the automobile and its roadways, accelerated the neighborhood's development and the transformation of Boston Road into an auto-focused corridor. In 1924, Boston Road was established as Route 1 (NY 1) within the modern New York State Highway system, and in 1926 it was removed from the state system and designated as part of the U.S. Highway system. To the west, the Bronx River Parkway was completed in 1925, providing a connection between the Bronx and Westchester. Other

[7] Kara Murphy Schlichting, *New York Recentered: Building the Metropolis from the Shore* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 66.
[8] Joseph Rudolf Bien, *Towns of Westchester and Pehlam* [map], Page No. 14, Atlas of Westchester County, New York (New York: Julius Bien & Company, 1893), David Rumsey Collection.
[9] Bill Twombly, *East Bronx: East of the Bronx River* (Charleston, SC: Acadia Publishing, 1999), 7.
[10] City of New York, Landmarks Preservation Commission United Workers' Cooperative Colony, designation report LP-1795, prepared by Andrew S. Dolkart (New York: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, 1992) LPC report.

transportation developments included the construction of the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge and the Hutchinson River Parkway in 1939, the extension of Cross Bronx Expressway east of the Bronx River Parkway in 1956, and the completion of the New England Thruway in 1958.

The 1950s also brought new city-financed, NYCHA housing developments to Allerton, including Pelham Parkway Houses (Rogers & Butler, 1950) and Parkside Houses (Walker & Poor, 1951), both large, no-subsidy projects meant to house World War II veterans and their families. In the 1960s, several Mitchell-Lama projects, meant to provide affordable housing for middle-income residents, were also constructed, including Adee Towers (1962), Bronx Park East (1963), Oak Towers (1965), and the Aller-Ville Arms (1966).

By 1951, the neighborhood around the future site of Boston Road Plaza was sparsely settled with small groups of residences—both rows of attached and detached houses and apartment buildings—on the side streets and, on Boston Road, garages, auto shops, gas stations, and small manufacturing buildings.[11] The block on which Boston Road Plaza would eventually be built was the site of a one-story auto shop, a small storage building, and a used auto sales shed. Although mostly devoid of buildings, the block's surface area was likely used for the storage of vehicles that were being repaired or re-sold.

In 2014, the *New York Times* wrote about the confusion over the neighborhood's name and the resident's desire for the area to be known as Allerton, after nineteenth-century settler Daniel Allerton (1818-1877). While the Bronx borough historian, Lloyd Ultan, admitted there was historical context for the name Bronxdale, he also acknowledged that naming conventions in the Bronx were futile since "nobody knows precisely where a neighborhood ends and begins, because practically overnight the Bronx urbanized and farms were covered with apartment houses."[12] At the time of the article, the neighborhood boasted about 60,000 residents, three-quarters of whom were Hispanic or Black, with 36 percent foreign-born. As a response to the outcry, the Department of City Planning updated its community maps, and the neighborhood became officially known as Allerton.

Scatter-site housing in the 1960s and 1970s

By the mid-1960s it had become clear to NYCHA that the days of large-scale neighborhood clearance and new massive developments based on the "towers in the park" model were waning, if not over.[13] Backlash to the wholesale clearance and rebuilding of entire neighborhoods reached a crescendo in the late 1950s and early 1960s, as prominent critics such as public-housing advocate Catherine Bauer and journalist and community organizer Jane Jacobs voiced their concerns about the drastic changes these massive projects wrought on existing neighborhoods as well as their often lackluster design and poor management.[14] Beginning in the mid-1950s, government housing policy began to reflect the belief that overly large housing projects in concentrated areas effectively perpetuated and exacerbated the existing socio-economic problems of the localities in which

---

[11] *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from New York, Bronx, Manhattan, New York*, Sanborn Map Company, vol. 22, 1951 [map], retrieved from the New York Public Library.

[12] Ben Kochman, "City Planning puts Allerton on the map, wants to keep Bronxdale," *BronxTimes*, March 26, 2014, accessed July 10, 2023: https://www.bxtimes.com/city-planning-puts-allerton-on-the-map-wants-to-keep-bronxdale/; Winnie Hu, "Bronx Neighborhood Fights for Its Spot on the Map," *New York Times*, April 6, 2014.

[13] The "towers in the park" model was based on the ideas of Swiss-born French architect Le Corbusier. The concept originated in the Le Corbusier's Ville Contemporaine (1922), which was a collection of high-density apartment buildings, built with modern materials like steel and concrete, laid out in a regular park-like setting accessible with the help of the automobile. Post-war planners, especially Robert Moses, New York's mercurial chairman of the Committee on Slum Clearance, fully embraced "towers in the park" as a method to enact the complete transformation of large sections of the metropolis. The architectural expression of the type was high-rise, high-density buildings on a landscaped site.

[14] Catherine Bauer, "The Dreary Deadlock of Public Housing," *Architectural Forum* 106, no. 5 (May 1957): 140-142; Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961).

DRAFT

they were placed.[15] Moreover, in response to complaints of outright discrimination in some of New York City's privately developed housing projects (ex. Stuyvesant Town), in 1950 the state legislature enacted a law forbidding racial discrimination in any housing that received state aid, for example, in the form of tax exemptions or land condemnation.[16]

Partially in reaction to the new attention focused in the problem, in March 1966 New York's liberal mayor, John Lindsay (1921-2000), announced plans for a new method of public housing site selection, in which projects were to be distributed more widely throughout the city. The "scatter-site" program, as it came to be known, called for the majority of new public housing in the city to be placed in outlying, non-minority neighborhoods where their presence could foster racial and economic integration.[17] The city's stated goal was to integrate low-income minorities, many of whom were being displaced from newly cleared areas or were desirous of leaving run down neighborhoods, into stable, safe and prosperous communities. A complementary goal of the socially progressive administration was that integration would have a favorable effect on the existing residents, who would theoretically become more tolerant and worldly.[18] By forcing integration, Lindsay's program actively sought to address segregation, which had been long entrenched in the public housing program and contributed to the stigmatization of those who lived there. Another benefit often mentioned by public officials was that scattering the new projects would simply reduce the pressure on existing distressed neighborhoods, which were estimated to house more than a million families.[19]

Lindsay's approach to the site selection for new federally aided public housing was two-fold. First, he created an interdepartmental group—consisting of the Office of the Housing and Development Coordinator, the Housing and Redevelopment Board, NYCHA, and the Department of City Planning—to authorize the selection of new public housing sites, taking some of the onus off of the housing authority alone.[20] Second, he made clear that he would no longer recognize the unofficial vetoes issued by borough presidents in the past to block construction of public housing in residential areas of Brooklyn and Queens.[21]

The new projects would range in size, from "vest-pocket" developments (smaller buildings built on vacant land and carefully integrated into communities) to larger structures, that were lower in density (scatter site projects). The main criterion was that scatter-site projects be located outside of so-called "ghetto" areas, including in middle-class neighborhoods and in low- and marginally middle-income areas. A complementary Model Cities program, also enacted in 1966, was created to address the physical, social and economic issues of what were described as "hard-core slum areas" of Harlem-East Harlem in Manhattan, the South Bronx, and Bedford-Stuyvesant and East New York in central Brooklyn.[22]

The changes to New York City's approach to building public housing also coincided with the apex of the American civil rights movement, which had begun in the previous decade, and was a social campaign for equal

---

[15] Richard Plunz, *A History of Housing in New York City*, revised edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 270-272.
[16] Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law* (New York: Liveright, 2017), 107.
[17] In the 1950s several cities had begun to explore the concept of dispersal of public housing, but the efforts were uneven before the late 1960s.
[18] Some conservative intellectuals took a particular affront to this method of social planning. One of these was Roger Starr, a planning official, author and editorial writer who believed that scatter-site housing was unjustified and unproven. For more, see Roger Starr, "The Lesson of Forest Hills," *Commentary* 53, no. 6 (June 1, 1971): 45-49, and Bruce Lambert, "Roger Starr, New York Planning Official, Author and Editorial Writer, Is Dead at 83," *New York Times*, September 11, 2001.
[19] Steven V. Roberts, "Charges of Bigotry Fly at Hearing on Housing for Poor," *New York Times*, August 3, 1967.
[20] "Lindsay Enlarges Housing Site Role," *New York Times*, March 17, 1966.
[21] Frank Lynn, "Lindsay Today," *Newsday*, June 18, 1966.
[22] Charles G. Bennett, "Model Cities Plan is Initiated Here," *New York Times*, August 17, 1967.

rights for African Americans and for an end to legalized racial segregation, discrimination, and disenfranchisement. In addition to reforms such as the restriction of tax exemptions passed in states such as New York, the movement culminated in the mid-1960s with the passage of major legislation, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion or sex, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which prohibited racial discrimination in voting, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968, which prohibited discrimination in the sale, rental and financing of housing based on race, religion, or national origin. Although the Fair Housing Act removed obstacles for African Americans and other minorities to purchase homes, the truth was that these groups were still greatly disadvantaged because they had not been able to build wealth through previous homeownership and because discrimination began to take on more subtle forms. While many celebrated the movement's success in ending the Jim Crow era, others came to believe that the civil rights reforms did not do enough to address the racism and economic problems that continued to confront African Americans, nor did they erase the effects of its long history.

In tandem with these societal shifts, federal-level housing policy and programs changed in the mid-1960s. In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson created a new cabinet department, called the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), as part of his "Great Society" domestic program. When it was officially formed in 1966, the department began to create programs that were meant to address and rectify past policies that had been "destructive of community."[23] The new programs focused on minimizing the future impact to communities and included scatter-site housing, rent-supplement programs (allowing families to integrate into middle-income areas inconspicuously), and turnkey programs (harnessing the speed and money of private development on smaller projects; the latter program was not without problems, however, as it lacked the quality control exerted by government agencies). Many of these programs reflected a desire to rectify the previous failings of government housing policy, which had, over the previous decades, actively displaced minority groups from distressed areas and re-housed them, with only limited efforts at integration, in new projects of debatable quality.

Although some of the programs floundered for lack of funding, HUD's ability to steer the scatter-site program by way of its regulatory procedures was considerable. As the administrator of federal housing, HUD provided the architectural standards, cost allowances, and, crucially, final sign-off on location, for all new federally financed projects. The concept of scatter-site housing became significantly more widespread after 1967, when HUD undertook a new policy of equal opportunity regulation pursuant to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In its Low-Rent Housing Manual, HUD noted that due to the persistence of new public housing projects being placed in what was called the "ghetto," new proposals "to locate housing only in areas of racial concentration will be *prima facie* unacceptable."[24] In other words, to get federal funds, local housing authorities were going to have to prove that they were dispersing new public housing projects outside of minority-only communities or else do without the funds.

The city's first six scatter-site projects, located in middle-class communities in Kingsbridge, Riverdale, and Pelham Bay in the Bronx, Woodside and Flushing in Queens, and Greenpoint in Brooklyn, were presented to the City Planning Commission and the Board of Estimate in April and May 1966.[25] While under the city's new approach, inner-city projects were to be low-scale, averaging from six to eight stories, the scatter-site projects were allowed to be high-rise structures.[26] Hundreds of people showed up to object to the proposals for their

---

[23] George Schermer Associates quoted in James Hogan, *Scattered-Site Housing: Characteristics and Consequences* (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1996), 5.
[24] Low-Rent Housing Manual quoted in Hogan, 6-7.
[25] "Housing Hearing Sets Off Debate," *New York Times*, April 21, 1966.
[26] Steven V. Roberts, "Housing in Slums to Avoid Towers," *New York Times*, June 8, 1966.

neighborhoods, arguing that the buildings were too big and that their communities lacked sufficient schools, transportation, and recreational facilities, and could thus not absorb the additional population.[27] Their vociferous reaction was national news, with *The Chicago Defender*, a Black newspaper, publishing the headline: "N.Y. Homeowners Fight to Keep Negroes Confined to the Central City."[28]

By June 1966, the City Planning Commission had approved thirteen scatter-site projects representing some 3,500 apartments, with roughly half reserved for the elderly. Recognizing the high level of tension around the subject of scatter-site housing, the City Planning Commission issued a statement defending the program. While it acknowledged the "fears and anxieties" expressed by opponents of low-income housing, it stated that "the real danger to the city is the feeling of hopelessness which can lead to the kind of explosions that tear at the very fabric of our society," undoubtedly referring to the increasing instances of race riots across the country.[29] These clashes were a broad reflection of the frustration and poverty faced by minorities, especially Black and Hispanic people, in the United States.[30] In addition to city officials, supporters of the scatter-site program included civic groups and housing advocates, many of whom realized that objections to the program were based on longstanding racial bigotry and efforts to maintain policies of discrimination and segregation.[31]

Of all the scatter-site projects, the one proposed at Forest Hills, Queens caused the largest uproar and had the most lasting impact on the program. Initially planned for Corona, the project was moved to Forest Hills after the former neighborhood objected to the proposal. The plan consisted of three twenty-four-story towers, a community center, and a parking lot. Over the course of six years, the community fought the project tooth and nail, garnering national headlines and countless thought pieces on the state of racial relations in America. In 1972, future New York governor Mario M. Cuomo was appointed to mediate the controversy. His efforts failed and, after a few months, the public housing aspect of the project was abandoned in favor of a smaller cooperative-type building.

By November 1971, the city reported that of its original scatter-site projects, the vast majority had been put on hold due to community opposition. At that point, the only project of the original group to have been completed was Cassidy-Lafayette, a complex of four six-story buildings for seniors in Staten Island. By the next year, a total of five projects had been completed and many more were slated for completion, including several in the Bronx—located at East 180th Street and Monterey Avenue, Bailey Avenue and West 193rd Street, 2440 Boston Road (later Boston Road Plaza), 3033 Middletown Road (later Middletown Plaza), Fort Independence Street and Health Avenue, Tremont Avenue and Sedgewick Avenue, and Randall Avenue and Balcom Avenue—as well as a project at Pennsylvania Avenue and Wortman Avenue in East New York, Brooklyn.[32]

By 1972, a third of the housing authority's twenty-four scatter-site developments were designated for seniors. According to NYCHA chair Simeon Golar (1928-2013), a Black man, the first chair to have grown up in public housing, and the public face of the program, this was due to legal and practical reasons. "When it becomes

---

[27] Steven V. Roberts, "Housing Projects in Queens Scored," *New York Times*, June 16, 1966.
[28] "N.Y. Homeowners Fight to Keep Negroes Confined to the Central City," *The Chicago Defender*, May 21, 1966.
[29] Steven V. Roberts, "Planners Defend Public Housing," *New York Times*, June 22, 1966.
[30] Many of these issues came to the fore in a report issued by the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (also known as the Kerner Commission), which investigated the causes of dozens of urban riots between 1964 and 1967. It warned that the concentration of housing in slum areas was reinforcing the "ghetto walls" and urged the continuation of scatter-site housing programs. For more, see David K. Shipley, "McGovern Says He Is Opposed to Forced Scatter-Site Housing," *New York Times*, October 28, 1972.
[31] Roberts, "Charges of Bigotry Fly at Hearing on Housing for Poor."
[32] Steven R. Weisman, "Housing Unit Reports Progress on 'Scatter-Site' Goals for City," *New York Times*, November 28, 1971; Preston Layton, "Scatter-Site Housing Finds a Home in the City," *Daily News*, November 19, 1971.

DRAFT

difficult to get housing through," he noted in the *New York Times*, "communities are always more amenable to projects for the elderly—partly because the elderly are usually white and partly because the community appreciates the need for housing these people."[33] The federal government, Golar added, also provided more funds for these types of projects. Taller buildings had also proved more suitable for elderly tenants than for families, who had difficulty supervising children from high floors.

Not all cities maintained as strict an adherence to the federal government's scatter-site policy as New York. In fact, due to a failure to provide plans for scatter-site developments, the federal government had halted federal public housing funds to the housing authorities in Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, and Cleveland. New York, by contrast, had a constant stream of funds flowing toward the city.

This federal money came to a halt, however, with President Richard Nixon's housing moratorium on January 8, 1973, which reflected a shift towards conservatism on domestic policy issues.[34] Under the moratorium, HUD suspended all subsidized housing programs and issued strict new guidelines for urban renewal, bringing many cities' housing construction programs to a halt.[35] After this point, the Nixon and Ford administrations focused on de-concentration through residential mobility programs, specifically Section 8 certificates and vouchers, which were authorized under the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. That legislation effectively marked the end of funding for the construction of new public housing and for other forms of subsidized housing, and the beginning of federal funds flowing through block grants and income support.

By 1975, however, some scatter-site projects were being lauded by their former opponents. Although the middle-class Kingsbridge community had protested the construction of the Fort Heath-Independence project, three years later it was considered a success and, according to Mayor Abraham Beame (1906-2001), a "model for the kind of results that can be achieved when government officials and community residents work together."[36]

Many housing authorities continued to explore strategies in the development of scatter-site housing through the second half of the twentieth century. In 1996, a comprehensive study was made by HUD on scatter-site programs and their characteristics and performance. The survey concluded that it was "a demonstrably better housing choice for families than concentrated high-density projects," that could, through the weaving together of separate spatial systems, "fashion effective remedies to the poverty, inequality and hyper segregation that characterize many U.S. cities today."[37] Efforts to implement non-federally financed scatter-site public housing continue in locations across the country today.

Public housing for seniors

In the United States, the problems of the nation's elderly became a public, widespread issue during the 1930s as the Depression took hold and a large number of older, unemployed workers sought aid from the government. In 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act, which gave cash assistance to the elderly as part of his vast New Deal domestic program. Few advancements were made in senior citizen policy until after World War II when, in 1950, President Harry Truman initiated the first National Conference on Aging, which sought to evaluate the policy challenges posed by the elderly population. The conference concluded that

[33] Jonathan Kandell, "Opposition to Scatter-Site Housing Transcends Racial and Economic Lines," *New York Times*, February 6, 1971.
[34] Hogan, 7.
[35] Agis Salpukas, "Moratorium on Housing Subsidy Spells Hardship for Thousands," *New York Times*, April 16, 1973.
[36] Jill Gerston, "Bronx Scatter-Site Project Welcomed by Its Ex-Foes," *New York Times*, February 14, 1975.
[37] Hogan, xvii.

DRAFT

senior citizens were the most rapidly growing portion of the population, the majority of them lived in cities, and a significant portion had low incomes.[38]

Although virtually no federal policy addressed the housing issues of the elderly, in New York City housing officials had sought to address the needs of poor seniors. Since its inception in 1933, NYCHA had provided apartments for the elderly in its public housing developments. Early examples of projects with housing reserved for aged persons include the Red Hook Houses (Alfred Easton Poor, 1938), which had an entire wing of two-room apartments for elderly residents, and the Fort Greene Houses (Rosario Candela, Wallace K. Harrison, et al, 1944, now separated into two entities and known as the Walt Whitman Houses and Ingersoll Houses), which had fifty-six one-room apartments for aged, single persons.[39] In 1942, New York State began its first program of housing for seniors, requiring that a percentage of its state-aided projects be designed and reserved for aged persons.[40] In 1956, it was estimated that approximately 1,000 aged singles and 1,500 aged couples lived in New York City's public housing units.

In 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower established the Federal-State Council on Aging and signed housing act amendments that made single elderly people eligible to live in public housing, increased funding for projects associated with public housing for the elderly and granted loans to the elderly under the Federal Housing Administration program. In addition to spurring new nationwide construction, the changes in public policy also had the effect of attracting the interest of architectural thinkers and practitioners. In May 1956, architectural historian and critic Lewis Mumford wrote in *Architectural Record* about the need to integrate older people into urban settings and in August 1958 Jane Jacobs called for more public housing for the elderly.[41] Additionally, architectural competitions began to address the concept of senior housing, such as the one held by *Architectural Record* that was sponsored by the National Committee on Aging of the National Social Welfare Assembly.[42]

In addition to discussions of how to locate and plan senior housing, the articles also detailed the design considerations required for housing for the aged, which mostly centered on their safety and comfort. Features deemed desirable, if not necessary, for apartments for the elderly included: at the entry, wider doorways without thresholds to prevent tripping; in the bathroom, "non-slip" tile floors, bathtubs with built-in seats, and grab bars at the tub wall; in the kitchen, wheelchair-height electric stoves to avoid asphyxiation by gas, and lower shelves and cabinets to provide easier reach; and in the living areas, larger radiators to provide more heat, additional lighting, and plenty of closets. In addition to physical needs, the social and emotional needs of seniors were increasingly seen as critical to their well-being, and, thus, the importance of community centers, where seniors could socialize with friends and family, was deemed a necessary component of almost any new senior-focused structure.

Early senior public housing projects constructed under the Housing Act of 1956 included the Highland Garden Apartments in Somerville, Masschusetts (Abbott Associates, 1959), Victoria Plaza in San Antonio, Texas (Noonan & Thompson & Krocker and Marmon & Mom, 1960), and Dexter Manor in Providence, Rhode Island (Lloyd W. Kent, 1962).[43] Victoria Plaza, in particular, was celebrated as an example of high-rise construction

---

[38] *Some facts about Our Aging Population; National Conference on Aging Federal Security Agency, Washington, D.C. August 13-15, 1950* (Washington, DC: National Conference on Aging, 1950).
[39] Thomas W. Ennis, "Homes for Aged: Modern Dilemma," *New York Times*, November 18, 1956.
[40] In 1956, New York State required senior housing to make up five percent of new projects. By 1961, that had increased to ten percent.
[41] Lewis Mumford, "For Older People—Not Segregation but Integration," *Architectural Record* 119 (May 1956): 191-194; Jane Jacobs, "Housing for the Independent Aged," *Architectural Forum* 109 (August 1958): 86-91.
[42] "Prize Winning Designs and Report of the Jury - Home for the Aged Competition," *Architectural Record* (January 1956): 161-168.
[43] "Public Housing for the Elderly," *Progressive Architecture* 42 (March 1961).

DRAFT

that was "being used as a research laboratory in the problems of the aging" in which local artists, merchants, landscape architects, and service organizations were all given a proprietary interest, making it a community enterprise.

The Housing Act of 1959 encouraged additional federal public housing projects for the elderly and authorized the FHA to grant mortgage insurance for nonprofit rental housing for the elderly. In May 1961, the first White House Conference on Aging brought additional national attention to the subject of senior public housing and laid out specific policy statements and recommendations. The report called for an expansion and extension of the public housing program for the elderly, especially where private enterprise could not meet the locality's needs.[44] In terms of planning and design, it called for multi-unit structures to be dispersed in neighborhood areas where seniors could maintain close relationships with community and health agencies rather than "concentrated in institutional-like projects".[45]

The Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965, signed by President Lyndon Johnson, expanded federal funding for the construction of senior public housing and raised the allowable construction costs from $3,000 to $3,500 per room. On the whole, the federal government allowed higher costs for senior housing. However, this was not due to the expense of its senior-specific features; rather, it was because these buildings needed to accommodate a higher number of small units compared to the average non-senior public housing development. One notable example of new senior public housing was Crawford Manor, a fifteen-story tower in New Haven, Connecticut, featuring a ribbed concrete-block skin and distinctly shaped curved balconies that was designed by Paul Rudolph and completed in 1967.[46] Like other public housing, efforts to build senior public housing were largely abandoned with Nixon's 1973 housing moratorium and, after that point, endeavors to build senior housing were relegated to private industry.

Boston Road Plaza

A little over a month after the scatter-site program was announced in 1966, a new federally financed project known as the "Boston Road-Waring Avenue Area," or Project No. NY 5-95, was presented to the City Planning Commission (CPC). The proposal involved the construction of a twenty-story building with 236 apartment units designed for the elderly on a 1.9-acre site in the Allerton neighborhood of the Bronx. The triangular-shaped block on which it was to be built was largely vacant and occupied by several sheds, a tire salvage yard, a used-car lot, a diner, and a large outcropping of rock along Holland Avenue. The CPC approved the plan on May 11, 1966, and it was subsequently approved by the Board of Estimate (BOE) on May 20th.

The design of the Boston Road project was awarded to Davis Brody & Associates (now known as Davis Brody Bond), a firm that had become known for its bold, large-scale housing developments, and Paul Friedberg Associates, a rising landscape architecture firm founded by M. Paul Friedberg (born 1931). Davis Brody & Associates was established in 1952 by Lewis Davis (1925-2006), Samuel Brody (1926-1992), and Chester Wisniewski (1921-2015) as Davis, Brody & Wisniewski.[47] Once Alan Schwartzman (1923-2018) became a

[44] United States Congress, Senate Special Committee on Aging, *The 1961 White House Conference on Aging: Basic Policy Statements and Recommendations* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., 1961), 69.
[45] United States Congress, Senate Special Committee on Aging, *The 1961 White House Conference on Aging,* 73.
[46] " Balconies for the Elderly," *Architectural Forum* 124, no. 2 (March 1966): 57; "Crawford Manor Apartments," *Progressive Architecture* 48 (May 1967): 125-129.
[47] David W. Dunlap, "Lewis Davis, Designer of Apartment Towers, Dies at 80," *New York Times*, May 23, 2006; Herbert Muschamp, "Samuel M. Brody, 65, Architect of Housing Complexes, Is Dead," *New York Times*, July 30, 1992; "Chet Wisniewski, Architect, Creative Force, Menemsha Summer Resident," *Vineyard Gazette*, January 29, 2016, accessed July 23, 2023: https://vineyardgazette.com/obituaries/2016/01/29/chet-wisniewski-architect-creative-force-menemsha-summer-resident.

partner in 1965 it was renamed Davis, Brody & Associates.[48] As Davis, Brody & Wisniewski the firm first began to garner attention in the late 1950s and early 1960s with its Modernist residences such as the Japanese-inspired house for Gustave E. Rosenau in Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania, and a steel-frame house on pilotis for a family in West Orange, New Jersey, and for its innovative ecclesiastical buildings such as the hip-roofed Congregation Beth El Synagogue (1957) in Orange, New Jersey, and the octagonal United Church of Christ Congregational (1965) in Connecticut.[49]

By the mid-1960s the firm, now known as Davis Brody & Associates, began to take on more institutional and government-financed projects. One of these was a laboratory building at SUNY New Paltz (1965), which was clad with exposed board-formed concrete and brick infill and featured sculptural cantilevers, a flourish that would soon become one of the firm's design trademarks.[50]

Davis Brody & Associates' profile rose dramatically in the late 1960s and early 1970s as they completed several large-scale residential projects including:

- Riverbend Houses (1963-1967, Mitchell-Lama):
  Located on Fifth Avenue between 138th and 142nd Streets in Harlem. A middle-income cooperative built for 625 families. Consists of middle- and high-rise units in conjoined towers on a triangular site.

- East Midtown Plaza (1963-1974, Mitchell-Lama):
  Located between 23rd and 25th Streets and First and Second Avenues in Kips Bay. A project for 727 low, moderate, and middle-income families in pair of twenty-two and twenty-seven-story towers and low-rise duplex buildings.

- Waterside Plaza (1963-1974, Mitchell-Lama):
  Located on piles and platforms in the East River from 25th to 30th Streets in Turtle Bay. Includes four towers, ranging from thirty-one to thirty-seven stories, one for low-income residents and others for middle to luxury levels, that house 1,471 families.

- Lambert Houses (1970-1973, Federal):
  Located on Boston Post Road between Bronx Part South and East Tremont in the Bronx. A 730-unit Federal Housing Administration complex of low-rise, six story buildings sponsored by the Bronx Park South Community Development Committee.

- Harlem River Park Towers (1969-1975, Urban Development Corporation):
  Located at 176th to 180th Streets between the Major Deegan Expressway and the Harlem River. A NYS Urban Development Corporation (UDC) project that housed 1,654 low and moderate-income families in conjoined towers of thirty-eight and forty-two stories.

- Cathedral Parkway Houses (1971-1975, UDC, designed in association with Roger DeCourey Glasgow):
  Located just south of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in Manhattan. Built by the UDC through its

---

[48] Thomas Vonier, "Alan Schwartzman passes away at 95," *The Architect's Newspaper*, March 15, 2008, accessed July 10, 2023: https://www.archpaper.com/2018/03/alan-schwartzman-obit/.
[49] "Convertible Plan Lends Space," *Architectural Record* 121 (Mid-May 1957): 136-139; "Structural Syllogism," *Progressive Architecture* 43, no. 5 (May 1962): 175-179; Stanley Rowland Jr., "Synagogues Here Hailed on Design," *New York Times*, December 2, 1957; "Experimentation in Ritual," *Progressive Architecture* 46, no. 3 (March 1965): 142-144.
[50] For more on SUNY New Paltz see "Experiment in Laboratory Design," *Progressive Architecture* 49 (September 1968): 132-139.

DRAFT

subsidiary, the Harlem Urban Development Corporation, with two towers, twelve and twenty-two-stories tall, for low- and moderate-income families.

- Ruppert Brewery Renewal Houses, aka Ruppert Towers (1971-1975, Mitchell-Lama & Federal): Located at 90th to 92nd Streets, Second to Third Avenues in Manhattan. Three twenty-four to forty-two-story brick-clad towers for middle- and upper-middle-income families, as well as one building for the aged.

During this period, Davis Brody & Associates honed their design aesthetic, which had always included geometric, sculptural forms, facades clad in brick and concrete, and complex site plans. To a large extent, their designs drew from Brutalism, a style that had gained popularity in the U.S. in the 1960s and was being used by architects such as Louis I. Kahn, Marcel Breuer, Ralph Rapson, and Paul Rudolph. Although most often associated with *béton brut*, or raw concrete, the Brutalist style was also characterized by the use of exposed materials (such as unpainted brick), monochrome color palettes, and expressive sculptural shapes. The building's expressionist qualities were among the defining characteristics of Brutalism, which was also referred to as Expressionist Modernism.

Indeed, one of the most characteristic features of Davis, Brody & Associates' housing projects was the unconventional massing that often included projecting and recessed forms, chamfers and angles at corners, and thrusting overhangs. In addition to being visually striking, these features crucially allowed the architects to create a greater variety of apartment plans and sizes and to provide a range of dynamic exposures and views. Despite the unusual architectural forms, the buildings were all constructed with conventional concrete structural systems and faced with brick, albeit specially developed large "superbricks" measuring 5.5 by 8 inches and laid vertically.[51] This meant that although the buildings looked quite different from others of the same type and construction, they were not necessarily more expensive. In 1974, at the peak of the Davis Brody & Associates' housing production, Ada Louise Huxtable characterized their residential developments as the "handsomest additions to the skyline in years."[52]

The designs for the public housing project at Boston Road and Waring Avenue were developed by Davis Brody & Associates from 1966 to 1969, the same years that their large projects at Riverbend Houses and Waterside Plaza began to attract public attention and critical praise.[53] In July 1967, Mayor Lindsay hailed the hiring of Davis, Brody & Associates on the Boston Road development as an example of new public housing projects by leading architects—the others being William F. Pedersen, Paul Rudolph, Slingerland & Booss, and E.N. Turano—that would "avoid the stereotype look" so often associated with the "projects."[54] Although Lindsay admitted that their work "cost a little more," he declared that "good design was well worth it."

Plans for the project, also known as 2440 Boston Road, were drawn up by project architect Norman Dorf (1938-2007), who had graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1963 and worked with Marcel

---

[51] Superbricks were also used at Riverbend and laid the same running bond. According to David Smiley, the vertically oriented superbricks emphasized the fact that they were not a structural component of the building. For more see David Smiley, "Riverbend Houses," *Affordable Housing in New York*: *the People, Places, and Polices that Transformed a City*, ed. Nicholas Dagen Bloom and Matthew Gordon Lasner (Pricneton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 218.
[52] Ada Louise Huxtable, "Breaking the Mold," *New York Times*, February 10, 1974.
[53] Ada Louise Huxtable wrote that Waterside Plaza's "unconventional towers" tied together a "handsome new neighborhood created through design" and provided "variety and human scale and open space planning." See "Housing: The Death-Wish City," *New York Times*, December 31, 1967.
[54] Alfred Miele, "6 Low-Rent Projects Will be Built by City," *Daily News,* July 14, 1967; Steven V. Roberts, "5 Top Architects to Do City Housing," *New York Times*, July 14, 1967.

Breuer on the Whitney Museum before joining Davis, Brody & Associates.[55] The architectural drawings were completed by the end of 1969 and construction was underway by the summer of 1970.

Within the steeply graded, triangular site, Dorf situated a twenty-story tower and a one-story community center along the curved Boston Road, with a large parking lot at the southern portion of the block. The tower, built of flat plate concrete and faced with the firm's signature brown "superbrick," was massed in a staggered fashion, with its broad sides facing east and west, and the shorter ends, which were characterized by massive cantilevers at the upper stories, facing north and south. According to Dorf, the unique shape of the building, with wider floors at the top, partially stemmed from a desire to "increase the open area around the building."[56]

The main entry to the building was from Boston Road, where one passed through an arcade with canted, pre-cast concrete soffits to reach the lobby—clad in brown brick like the exterior and punctuated by board-formed concrete columns—and the perambulator room. Access to the management, superintendent, and clerical offices was provided at the rear of the building, at the basement level. From Holland Avenue, a bridge also provided access to the "upper lobby" at the first-floor level, which also had space for a laundry room, tenant storage, a lunchroom, and several apartments.

The upper floors were arranged into three narrow blocks divided by two daylit corridors, the windows at the end of each corridor articulating each section on the exterior. The second through twelfth floors contained studios and one-bedroom apartments with windows that faced east and west; above, the thirteenth through twentieth floors were a mix of studios, one-bedroom apartments, and larger, two-bedroom units (allowed to be rented to retirees with families) facing north and south with large picture windows. On the exterior, these interior layouts were expressed in a series of irregular, vertically oriented window bays (with sliding windows and brown aluminum spandrel panels) on the east and west elevations and, on the north and south elevations, largely blank walls topped by three cantilevered projections with wider bays of sliding windows.

Unlike many other public housing developments, the upper-floor corridors were faced with exposed brick rather than plaster or concrete block walls and were bright and airy due to the windows at either end. Both the corridors and the apartments included features specific to the elderly residents, including wall handrails and grab bars in the bathrooms.

The separate, slightly offset community center was massed in a similarly dramatic fashion, with a sawtooth profiled roof and two bold, north-facing clerestory windows. Originally, the building was accessed through a recessed vestibule on its east elevation. Under the pitched roofs were two large meeting rooms that could be combined or divided with a folding wall that ran along a track in the ceiling. The community center also contained a club room, a lounge, and office and kitchen space. In *Architecture Plus,* author Stanley Abercrombie called the community center "a facility which is a functioning link between the housing and the neighborhood around it."[57]

The landscape design by M. Paul Friedberg similarly sought to activate the site, both for the residents and the surrounding community. Friedberg graduated from Cornell University in 1954 and opened his own landscape architecture practice in 1958. In 1964 and 1965, he garnered critical praise for his designs, in association with Pomerance & Breines, at Carver Houses (Kahn & Jacobs, 1956) and Jacob Riis Houses (James MacKenzie, Sidney Strauss, and Walker & Gilette, 1949), both New York City postwar public housing projects with the

---

[55] "Norman Kemmerer Dorf," *New York Times*, July 2, 2007.
[56] Robert E. Tomasson, "Housing Projects Break Mold," *New York Times*, December 9, 1973.
[57] Stanley Abercrombie, "New York housing breaks the mold," *Architecture Plus* 1, no. 10 (November 1973): 69.

DRAFT

typical lawns, pathways, and plantings of the era. At both, Friedberg transformed those open spaces into geometrically organized "outdoor rooms," to be used by children, teenagers, and adults. At the Riis Houses, renamed Riis Park Plaza and demolished in 2000, the landscape design was the larger and more experimental of the two, with four distinct areas divided into quiet and active spaces and including imaginative playgrounds, trellised enclaves with abstract sculptures, a sunken multi-use amphitheater, and a sitting area with a fountain intended for use by the elderly.[58]

Friedberg, who also worked on commercial, public, and education projects during this period, began working with Davis, Brody & Associates in the mid-1960s and was associated with Riverbend, East Midtown Plaza, and the Harlem River Towers, which began as a Friedberg-designed master plan for UDC and was only partially realized in the Harlem River State Park (1973, later renamed Roberto Clemente State Park).

At Boston Road Plaza, Friedberg provided a range of outdoor uses including a formal plaza, lawns for active recreation, and a play area, to be used by neighborhood children and those using the community center.[59] The irregularly shaped plaza, which acted as the main entry point to the complex, was paved with brick and interspersed with willow oaks in tree pits, benches built of concrete, steel, and Douglas fir, and chess tables with stools. To the south of the tower, near the parking lot, was a sod-covered lawn for "badminton, croquet, etc." The small play area featured climbing elements built out of pre-cast concrete modular units interspersed with bridges, slides, a tire swing, and fireman poles. At the north, narrow portion of the site, Friedberg called for a sod lawn covered with scarlet oaks to abut the existing rock outcrop that bordered the site. In all, the creative design did many things at once—it used natural and man-made features, catered to young and old, and offered opportunities for both passive and active recreation.

In September 1972 the first tenants were welcomed to Boston Road Plaza with symbolic gold keys handed out by Simeon Golar.[60] Coming at the height of the scatter-site program tensions, the *Daily News* ran a headline that read "Bronx Project Opens—Quietly," noting that "there were smiles, handshakes and not a murmur of protest, although some neighborhood residents admitted mixed feelings."[61] Although they refrained from being publicly racist or classist, some made clear their skepticism of the project. Local resident Helen Ruchlamer was quoted as saying that "we're hoping it will work out," but added "it depends on the new tenants, of course." She added that, at the very least, it was "a nice-looking building" and better than the used-car junk lots that were on the site before. These comments, while not overtly racist, hint at a deep unease with diversity and inclusion and reflect the long history of income inequality, economic injustice and officially sanctioned discrimination that plagued efforts of lower-income groups to find decent, affordable housing in New York City. The new building's residents including Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Rocco, who moved into a one-bedroom apartment in 11D and told the *Daily News* that they had waited three years for public housing in an old building with no shower. Mrs. Rocco concluded that "The atmosphere in this neighborhood is much nicer than where we lived before."

Although local reaction might have been muted, the complex was widely praised by architectural critics who appreciated the boldness of the design, especially in the context of its limited budget, which in this case was

[58] For more on Jacob Riis Plaza see John Morris Dixon, "Riis Plaza: Three Acres Filled with Life," *Architectural Forum* 125, no. 1 (July/August 1966): 68-73.
[59] When it opened, the *New York Times* explained that the community center would be shared by the new tenants and the neighborhood. See "Low-Income Units Get First Tenants," *New York* Times, September 8, 1972.
[60] "Low-Income Units Get First Tenants,"
[61] Anthony Burton, "Bronx Project Opens—Quietly," *Daily News*, September 8, 1972.

DRAFT

almost seven million dollars, including a half million dollars contributed from NYCHA.[62] *Architectural Record* wrote that the development "achieved a richness and variety uncommon in public housing and provided residents and the surrounding community with unexpected but welcome amenities."[63] Stanley Abercrombie, of *Architecture Plus*, added that the complex made "a spirited show of itself in a neighborhood which badly needed a little spirit. Not only is it a surprisingly handsome building, considering the limitations under which it was built, but it also boasts a highly ingenious floor plan…"[64] At the end of 1972 the project was given an award from the New York Society of Architects, which called it "a welcome departure from the characterless boxes which were the trademark of low-rent construction for over a quarter of a century."[65]

As was the case with many other architects, the removal of government support for urban renewal in the 1970s prompted a shift away from designing public buildings for Davis, Brody & Associates. This period also saw the first sustained reaction against Brutalism, which was briefly a dominant style and then a target of both critics and the public at large who associated it with a "bunker" aesthetic. To mitigate the impact on their firm, Davis, Brody & Associates shifted their practice toward academic and institutional buildings, as well as other types of housing. Gradually, they adopted an aesthetic that featured a wider range of materials, while continuing to create expressive sculptural forms. In 1990, the firm merged with Bond Ryder & Associates, becoming Davis Brody Bond, as they are known today. In 1998, M. Paul Friedberg & Partners (the name the firm adopted in 1975) was split into two firms, one being Friedberg's design studio, and the other MPFP, led by Friedberg's students.

Later History

In 1981, plans were drawn up by architects William Schacht and Giorgio Cavaglieri (1911-2007) to expand the Senior Citizens Center, as it was then known, to the south, into what had previously been a parking lot. The new addition, which was completed in 1987, provided a new multi-purpose room with a stage, a conference room, a recreation room, and multiple offices, and was sympathetically designed with brown jumbo brick that matched the original section. Other changes at the complex followed in the 1990s with the modification of certain apartments for the handicapped in 1994 and a full window replacement at the tower in 1995.

In 1992, Boston Road Plaza was named as an affected project in a landmark lawsuit that charged New York City with racial segregation in its public housing.[66] The suit, which was filed on behalf of more than 100,000 Black and Hispanic families, argued that New York City perpetuated segregation in its public housing by giving preference to applicants who lived in neighborhoods surrounding a project with vacancies to be filled. Projects such as Boston Road Plaza, it was determined, had given preferential treatment to white families due to its location in a predominantly white neighborhood. "The policy paid political dividends," reporter Robert Pear explained in the *New York Times*, since "white neighborhoods were more willing to accept public housing when they were assured that substantial numbers of apartments would go to white families who lived in the area."[67] At Boston Road Plaza, the percentage of white residents in January 1991 was shown to be 45.7 percent, which was far higher than the overall population of white applicants within the total applicant pool. The proposed

[62] William H. Welling, letter to the Housing Assistance Administration, Department of Housing and Urban Development, noting that the budget for Boston Road Plaza was $6,690,000 including a $480,000 contributing from NYCHA, May 7, 1970, New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Archive, Box 8198.
[63] "The Evolving Urban Architecture of Davis, Brody & Associates," *Architectural Record* 152 (August 1971): 100.
[64] Stanley Abercrombie, "New York housing breaks the mold."
[65] "Projects in City Granted Awards," *New York Times*, December 3, 1972.
[66] Robert Pear, "Bias is Admitted by New York City in Public Housing," *New York Times*, July 1, 1992; Alex Michelini, "A Closed-Door Policy," *Daily News,* July 2, 1992.
[67] Robert Pear, "Bias is Admitted by New York City in Public Housing."

DRAFT

settlement, in which New York City admitted to the practice, included reserving apartments for the roughly 2,000 families who could show they were victims of such discrimination in the thirty-one affected projects, including Boston Road Plaza. Florence W. Roisman, a lawyer with the National Housing Law Project, noted that the decision would have reverberations across the country and that public landlords "should take note."[68]

In 2002, plans were made to expand the Senior Center to the south once again, all the way to Waring Avenue. This time, Davis Brody Bond designed the addition, which referenced the original community center with its low-slung massing and sawtooth roofline with a large north-facing clerestory window. The extension was clad in ivory-colored brick, metal panels, and glass, and included the re-cladding of the 1981 addition's Boston Road elevation. Davis Brody Bond's addition created a new multi-purpose room and a library, and it repurposed the space within the 1981 addition as bathrooms and an exercise room. When it opened in 2008 as the RAIN (Regional Aid for Interim Needs) Center, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held with the Department of Aging, local elected officials, and NYCHA Chairman Tino Hernandez, who noted that seniors were the city's fastest growing population and in need of spaces such as this.[69]

Since its opening, security and safety have been a concern at Boston Road Plaza. Shortly after the complex was completed in 1972, residents created the "Over the Hill Gang," which guarded the building from those who were looking to take advantage of the elderly and the handicapped.[70] Other security measures, such as cameras, were added over time.

In 2021, NYCHA announced plans to convert Boston Road Plaza under the Section 8 Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (PACT) program, which provides unit-bound rent vouchers to private landlords.[71] The PACT program was created to raise funds needed to make repairs across the NYCHA portfolio of public housing. In February 2023 NYCHA and resident leaders chose Beacon Communities LLC, Kalel Holdings, and MBD Community Housing Corporation as the development team to carry out comprehensive repairs at the site.[72] Boston Road Plaza is planned to be rehabilitated, maintaining its current uses.

DRAFT

---

[68] Robert Pear, "Bias is Admitted by New York City in Public Housing."
[69] Eileen Elliott, "Grand Opening for Renovated RAIN Boston Road Senior Center in the Bronx," *New York City Housing Authority Journal* 38, no. 4 (April 2008): 1, 8.
[70] Daniel O'Grady, "Burglars better beware of the old folk," *Daily News*, February 28, 1980.
[71] "New PACT Projects to Deliver Comprehensive Repairs & Quality Property Management for 5,900 Bronx & Manhattan Apartments," *NYCHA* Now, October 2021, accessed May 4, 2023: https://nychanow.nyc/new-pact-projects-to-deliver-comprehensive-repairs-quality-property-management-for-more-than-5900-bronx-manhattan-apartments/.
[72] "NYCHA & Resident Leaders Select PACT Partners to Deliver $128M in Comprehensive Upgrades at 3 Bronx Developments," *NYCHA Journal*, February 24, 2023, accessed May 4, 2023: https://nychajournal.nyc/nycha-resident-leaders-select-pact-partners-to-deliver-128m-in-comprehensive-upgrades-at-3-bronx-developments/.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Abercrombie, Stanley. "New York housing breaks the mold." *Architecture Plus* 1, no. 10 (November 1973): 62-75.

Bauer, Catherine. "The Dreary Deadlock of Public Housing." *Architectural Forum* 106, no. 5 (May 1957): 140-142.

Bloom, Nicholas Dagen. *Public Housing That Worked: New York in the Twentieth Century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.

Burton, Anthony. "Bronx Project Opens—Quietly." *Daily News*, September 8, 1972.

"Crawford Manor Apartments." *Progressive Architecture* 48 (May 1967): 125-129.

Dunlap, David W. "Lewis Davis, Designer of Apartment Towers, Dies at 80." *New York Times*, May 23, 2006.

Elliott, Eileen. "Grand Opening for Renovated RAIN Boston Road Senior Center in the Bronx." *New York City Housing Authority Journal* 38, no. 4 (April 2008): 1, 8.

Ennis, Thomas W. "Homes for Aged: Modern Dilemma." *New York Times*, November 18, 1956.

"The Evolving Urban Architecture of Davis, Brody & Associates." *Architectural Record* 152 (August 1971): 97-106.

Gerston, Jill. "Bronx Scatter-Site Project Welcomed by Its Ex-Foes." *New York Times*, February 14, 1975.

Hogan, James. *Scattered-Site Housing: Characteristics and Consequences.* U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1996.

"Housing Hearing Sets Off Debate." *New York Times*, April 21, 1966.

Hu, Winnie. "Bronx Neighborhood Fights for Its Spot on the Map." *New York Times*, April 6, 2014.

Huxtable, Ada Louise. "Breaking the Mold." *New York Times*, February 10, 1974.

—. "Housing: The Death-Wish City." *New York Times*, December 31, 1967.

Jacobs, Jane. "Housing for the Independent Aged." *Architectural Forum* 109 (August 1958): 86-91.

Kandell, Jonathan. "Opposition to Scatter-Site Housing Transcends Racial and Economic Lines." *New York Times*, February 6, 1971.

"Lindsay Enlarges Housing Site Role." *New York Times*, March 17, 1966.

DRAFT

DRAFT

"Low-Income Units Get First Tenants." *New York* Times, September 8, 1972.

Lynn, Frank. "Lindsay Today." *Newsday*, June 18, 1966.

Marcuse, Pete. "The Beginnings of Public Housing in New York." 12,4 *Journal of Urban History* (August 12, 1986): 353-390.

Miele, Alfred. "6 Low-Rent Projects Will be Built by City." *Daily News,* July 14, 1967.

Mumford, Lewis. "For Older People—Not Segregation but Integration." *Architectural Record* 119 (May 1956): 191-194.

Muschamp, Herbert. "Samuel M. Brody, 65, Architect of Housing Complexes, Is Dead." *New York Times*, July 30, 1992

Navarro, Mireya. "City's Housing Agency Faulted for 'Significant Flaws' in Elevator Safety." *New York Times*, March 30, 2016.

"Norman Kemmerer Dorf." *New York Times*, July 2, 2007.

O'Grady, Daniel. "Burglars better beware of the old folk." *Daily News*, February 28, 1980.

Pear, Robert. "Bias is Admitted by New York City in Public Housing." *New York Times*, July 1, 1992

Plunz, Richard. *A History of Housing in New York City.* revised edition. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016.

"Projects in City Granted Awards." *New York Times*, December 3, 1972.

"Public Housing for the Elderly." *Progressive Architecture* 42 (March 1961).

Radford, Gail. *Modern Housing in America: Policy Struggles in the New Deal Era*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Roberts, Steven V. "5 Top Architects to Do City Housing." *New York Times*, July 14, 1967.

—. "Charges of Bigotry Fly at Hearing on Housing for Poor." *New York Times*, August 3, 1967.

—. "Housing in Slums to Avoid Towers." *New York Times*, June 8, 1966.

—. "Housing Projects in Queens Scored." *New York Times*, June 16, 1966.

—. "Planners Defend Public Housing." *New York Times*, June 22, 1966.

Rothstein, Richard. *The Color of Law*. New York: Liveright Publishing Corp, 2017.

Scott, Mel. *America City Planning*. Berkely: University of California Press, 1969.

Smiley, David. "Riverbend Houses." In *Affordable Housing in New York*: *the People, Places, and Polices that Transformed a City*, edited by Nicholas Dagen Bloom and Matthew Gordon Lasner. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016.

Starr, Roger. "The Lesson of Forest Hills." *Commentary* 53, no. 6 (June 1, 1971): 45-49

Tomasson, Robert E. "Housing Projects Break Mold." *New York Times*, December 9, 1973.

Twombly, Bill. *East Bronx: East of the Bronx River.* Charleston, SC: Acadia Publishing, 1999.

United States. Congress. Senate, Special Committee on Aging. *The 1961 White House Conference On Aging: Basic Policy Statements And Recommendations.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., 1961.

Weisman, Steven R. "Housing Unit Reports Progress on 'Scatter-Site 'Goals for City." *New York Times*, November 28, 1971.

Wright, Gwendolyn. *Building the Dream: A Social History of American Housing*. New York, Pantheon Books, 1981.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): ________________________________

DRAFT

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.93
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

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

1. Latitude: 40.862009 Longitude: -73.865948

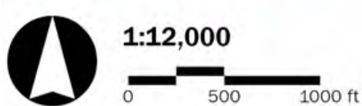
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

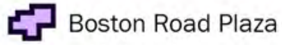
The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary encompasses the entire housing project and reflects the boundary of the property during the period of significance.

DRAFT



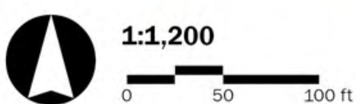


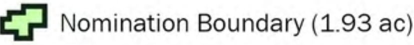
Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N

Mapped 04/29/2024 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

Boston Road Plaza | Bronx County, NY
Name of Property | County and State

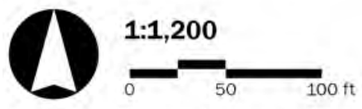
Mace Ave
Cruger Ave
Holland Ave
Boston Rd
Lat: 40.862009
Lon: -73.865948
Waring Ave

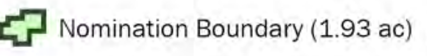


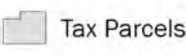


Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N New York State Orthoimagery Year: 2022 Mapped 04/29/2024 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

Mace Ave
Cruger Ave
Holland Ave
Boston Rd
2440
Block 4431,
Lot 1
Lat: 40.862009
Lon: -73.865948
Waring Ave







Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N
Bronx County Parcel Year: 2021
Mapped 04/29/2024 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

Boston Road Plaza Bronx County, NY
Name of Property County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lindsay Peterson and Jesse Kling (HQ), revised and edited by Kathleen LaFrank (SHPO)

organization Higgins Quasebarth & Partners date May 2024

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

city or town New York state NY zip code 10005

e-mail peterson@hqpreservation.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

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

- **Continuation Sheets**

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

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.

DRAFT

Figures

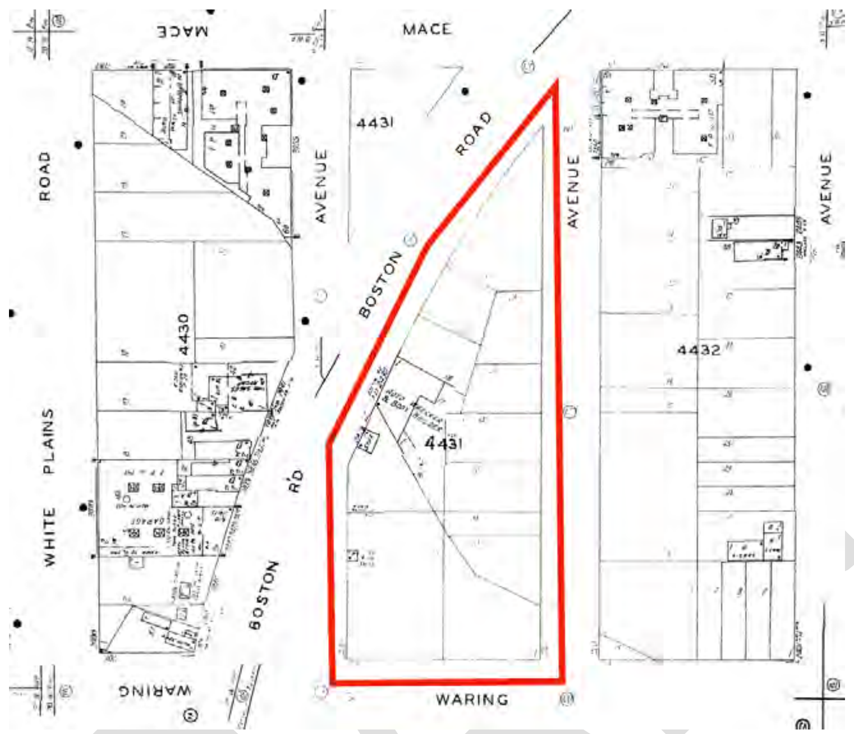


Figure 1: 1951 Sanborn map (vol. 20, sheets 21 & 23) showing the site before the construction of Boston Road Plaza. (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Collection, Library of Congress)

Figure 2: 1940 Tax Department photograph showing the used-car dealership that was previously located on the site. (New York City Municipal Archives)

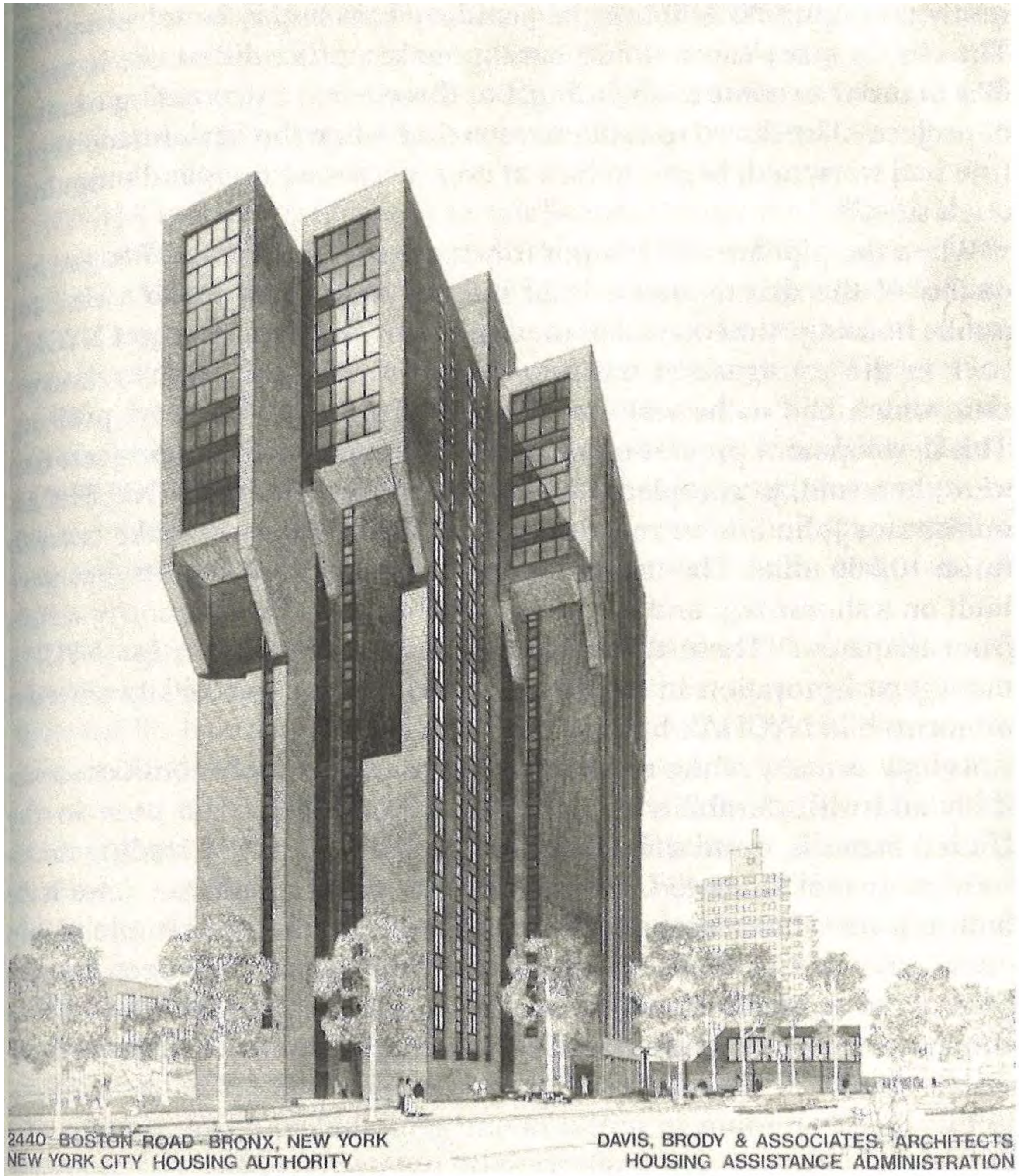


Figure 3: Ca. 1969 rendering of Boston Road Plaza.
(NYCHA via Nicholas Bloom, *Housing That Worked*, p. 159)

Figure 4: 1969 site plan showing the extent of the development including the building footprint and surrounding landscape, as well as the parking lot. The red outline marks the boundary of the nominated property not inclusive of the sidewalks or street bed. (NYCHA)

Figure 5: Drawing of the west (left) and south (right) elevations, 1969. (NYCHA)

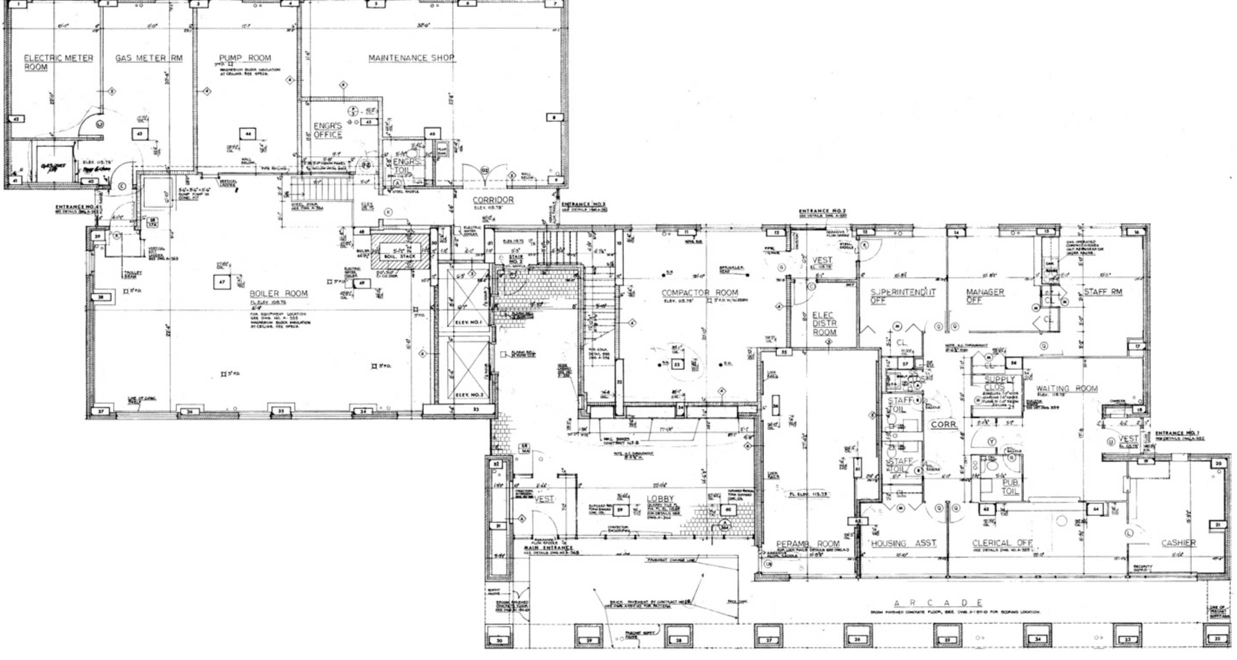


Figure 6: Ground floor (basement) floor plan showing the location of the arcade and main entrance at the west facade. (NYCHA)

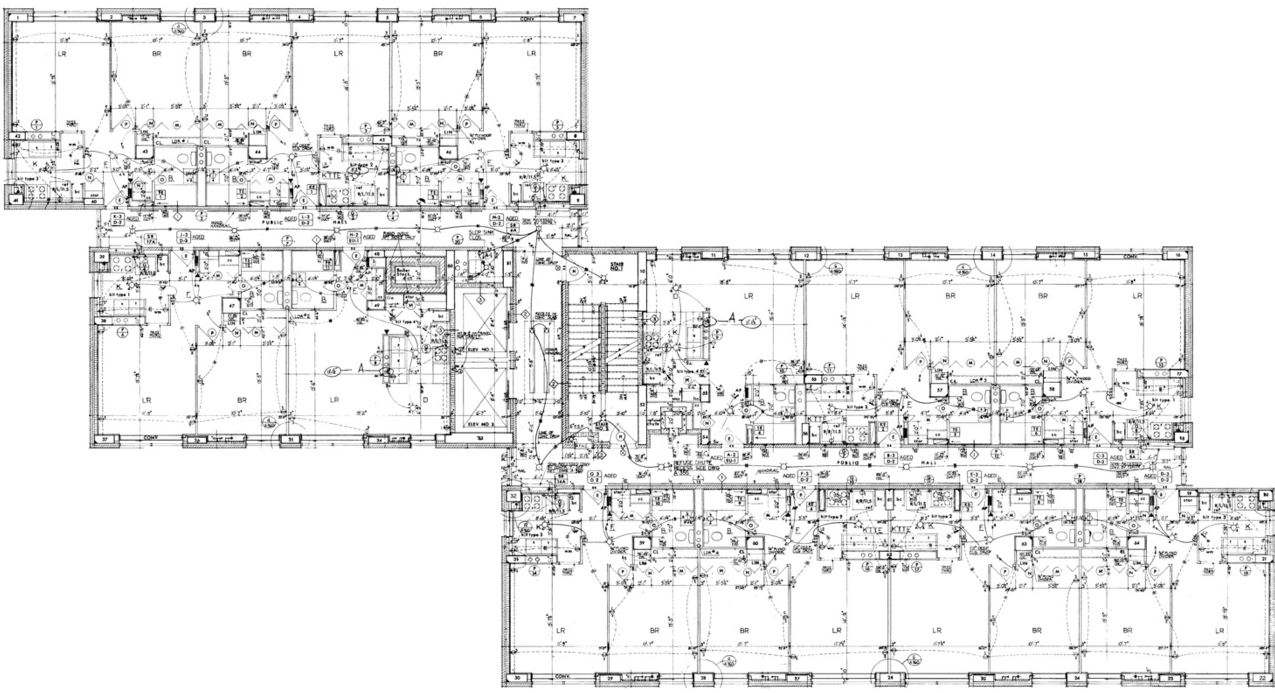


Figure 7: Typical second through twelfth floor plan showing a combination of studios and one-bedroom apartments, 1969. (NYCHA)

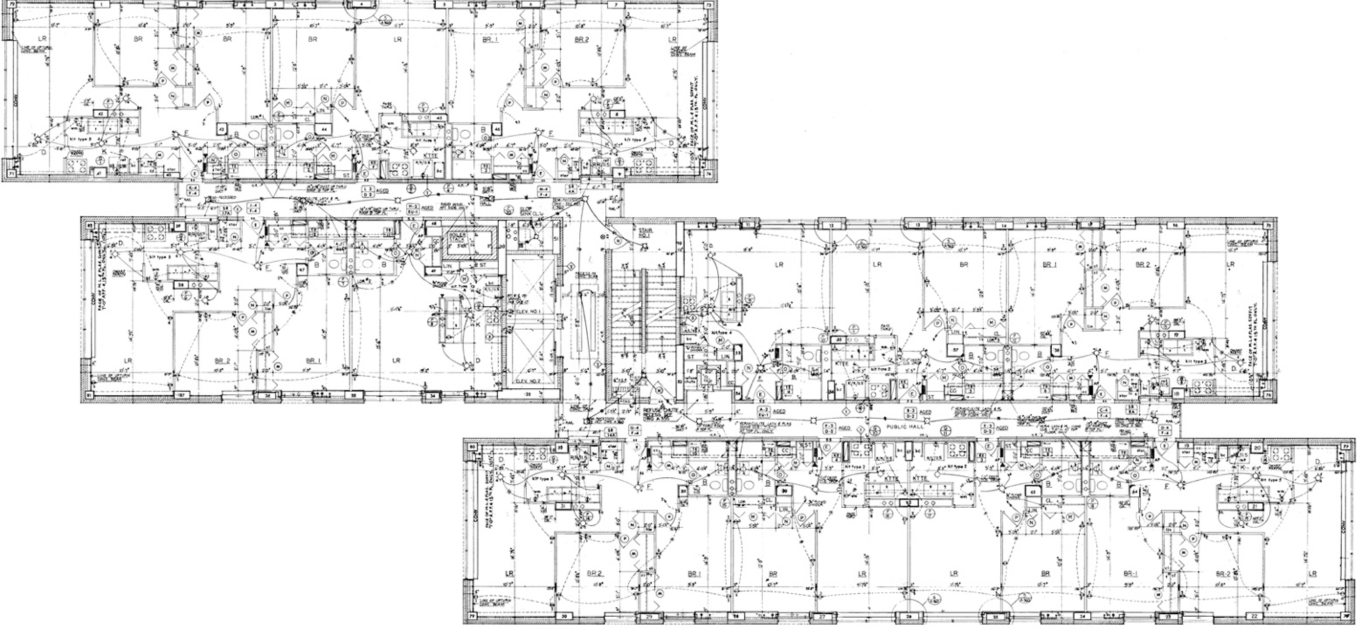


Figure 8: Typical fifteenth through twentieth floor plan showing a combination of studios, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom apartments, 1969. The two-bedroom apartments are located at the shorter north and south ends of the building. (NYCHA)

Figure 9: View of the apartment building, looking south, while under construction, February 1971. (NYCHA)

Figure 10: View of the apartment building and community center looking northeast while under construction, August 1971. (NYCHA)

Figure 11: A welcome party for the first tenants of Boston Road Plaza, who were given a ceremonial golden key by NCYHA head Simeon Golar. (NYCHA)

Figure 12: Completed view of the tower and community center looking northeast, ca. 1973. (*Architecture Plus*)

Figure 13: Completed view of the tower and community center looking northwest, ca. 1973. (*Architecture Plus*)

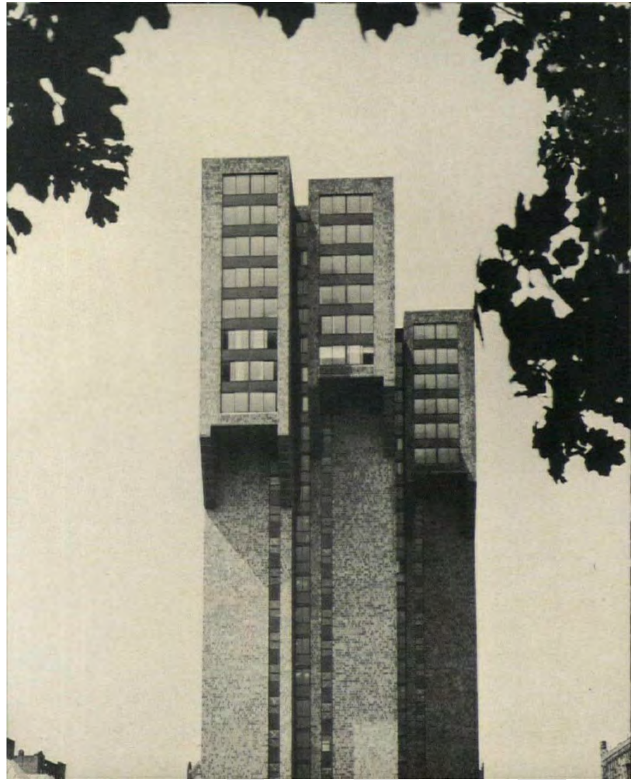


Figure 14: Completed view of the north elevation, 1972. (*Architectural Record*)

Figure 15: Typical view of the upper floors showing the brown jumbo brick cladding and original sliding windows, 1972. (*Architectural Record*)

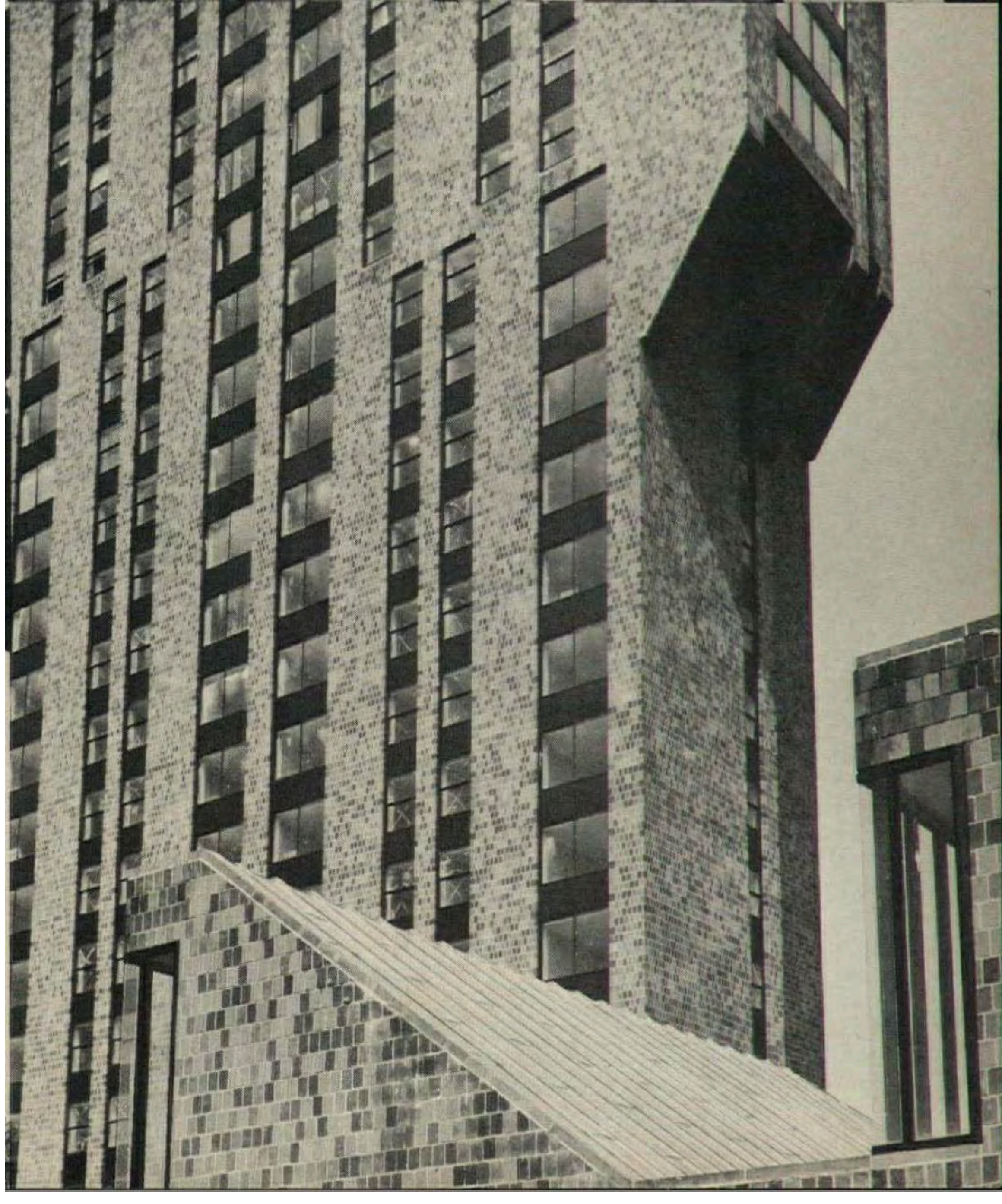


Figure 16: View of the tower looking northeast with the community center clerestory windows in the foreground, 1972. (*Architectural Record*)

Figure 17: View of the original portion of the community center looking south, ca. 1972. Note the large, north-facing clerestory windows. (NYCHA)

Figure 18: Ca. 1972 interior view of building residents in the lobby. Note the board-formed concrete columns, brick walls, and quarry tile floors. (NYCHA)

Figure 19: Ca. 1972 interior view of residents playing pool in the community center. (NYCHA)

Figure 20: Ca. 1972 interior view of residents playing cards in the community center. (NYCHA)

Photographs

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

Name of Property: Boston Road Plaza
City or Vicinity: Bronx
County: Bronx
State: NY
Photographer: Lindsay Peterson & Jesse Kling
Date Photographed: 2023

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of 21 (NY_Bronx County_Boston Road Plaza_0001)
Boston Road Plaza viewed from across Boston Road, looking east. The residential tower at is organized as three parallel, staggered twenty-story slabs that align at a central utility core.

2 of 21 (NY_Bronx County_ Boston Road Plaza_0002)
Boston Road Plaza's north elevation viewed from across Boston Road, looking south.

3 of 21 (NY_Bronx County_ Boston Road Plaza_0003)
Boston Road Plaza's residential tower and community center, looking northeast along Boston Road.

4 of 21 (NY_Bronx County_ Boston Road Plaza_0004)
The original 1972 community center with its 1987 and 2008 additions at rear, looking southeast.

5 of 21 (NY_Bronx County_ Boston Road Plaza_0005)
The base of Boston Road Plaza's residential tower along Boston Road, looking east. At its ground floor, the front elevation of the tower is marked by an arcade facing the main plaza.

6 of 21 (NY_Bronx County_ Boston Road Plaza_0006)
The main residential entry, arcade, and plaza along Boston Road, looking east.

7 of 21 (NY_Bronx County_ Boston Road Plaza_0007)
The residential tower's base, arcade, and plaza along Boston Road, looking northeast.

8 of 21 (NY_Bronx County_ Boston Road Plaza_0008)
The main residential entry at the north end of the arcade, looking northeast.

9 of 21 (NY_Bronx County_ Boston Road Plaza_0000)
The north end of the residential tower, looking east. The tower is mainly clad in brown, running-bond jumbo brick with dark aluminum spandrels and precast-concrete trim.

10 of 21 (NY_Bronx County_ Boston Road Plaza_0010)
Detail of residential tower's cantilevered upper stories, looking southeast.

DRAFT

11 of 21 (NY_Bronx County_ Boston Road Plaza_0011)
Landscaped green space and outcrop at the northern end of the property, looking southwest.

12 of 21 (NY_Bronx County_ Boston Road Plaza_0012)
Pathway crossing the property from Holland Avenue to the main plaza, looking northwest toward Boston Road.

13 of 21 (NY_Bronx County_ Boston Road Plaza_0013)
The original main entrance to the community center, looking west toward Boston Road.

14 of 21 (NY_Bronx County_ Boston Road Plaza_0014)
The original 1972 community center along Boston Road, looking east.

15 of 21 (NY_Bronx County_ Boston Road Plaza_0015)
The residential lobby and mailboxes, looking south.

16 of 21 (NY_Bronx County_ Boston Road Plaza_0016)
The elevator bank and stair landing within the residential lobby, looking east.

17 of 21 (NY_Bronx County_ Boston Road Plaza_0017)
The first floor's elevator lobby, looking west.

18 of 21 (NY_Bronx County_ Boston Road Plaza_0018)
A typical east residential corridor at the tenth floor, looking north.

19 of 21 (NY_Bronx County_ Boston Road Plaza_0019)
Typical living room, apartment 10E.

20 of 21 (NY_Bronx County_ Boston Road Plaza_0020)
A stair landing at the tenth floor. The stairwells have utilitarian finishes including painted CMU walls, concrete stairs and landings, and steel-bar banisters.

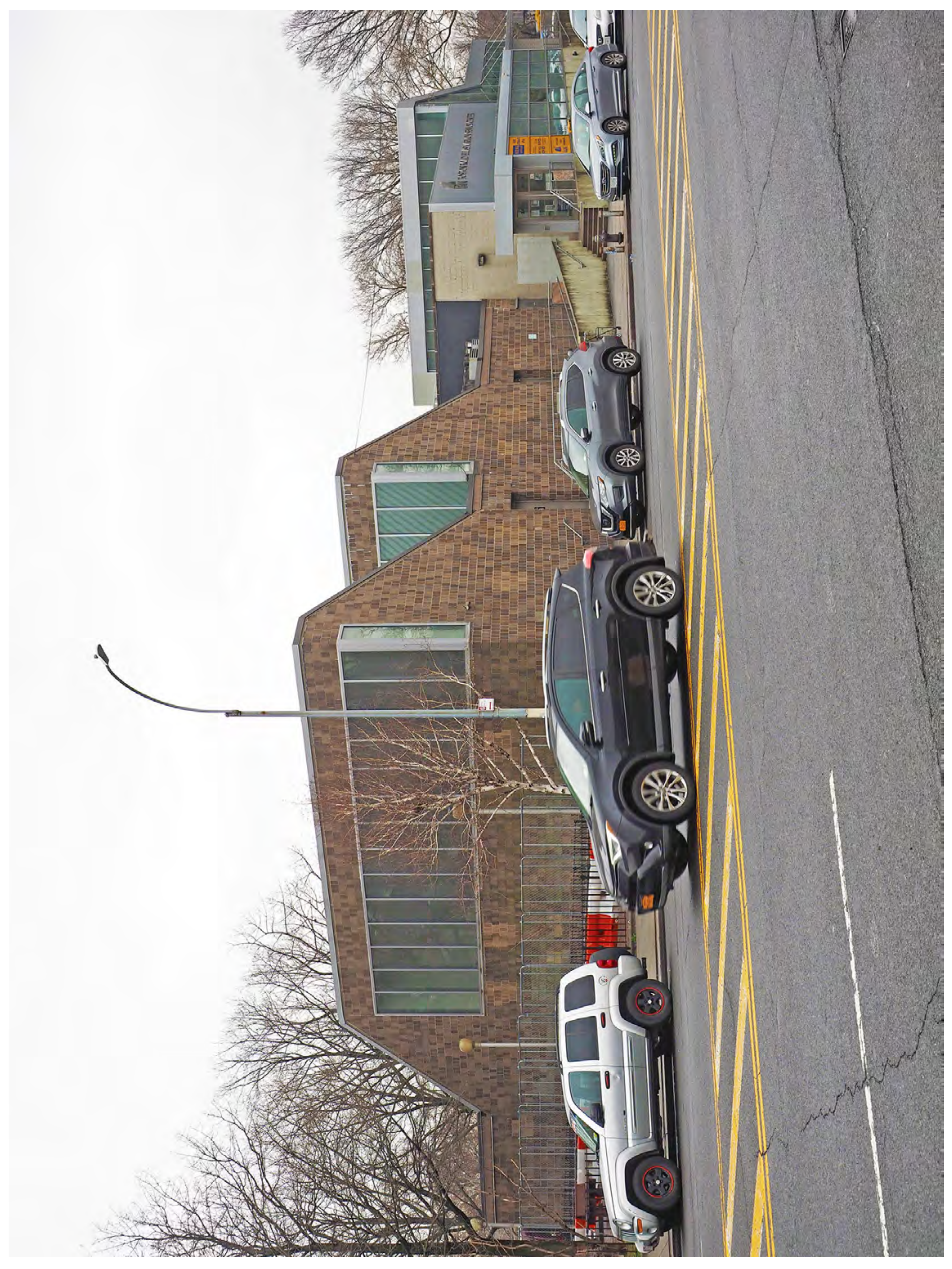
21 of 21 (NY_Bronx County_ Boston Road Plaza_0021)
The original 1972 community center prominently retains its open meeting room space that features the building's historic clerestories.

DRAFT

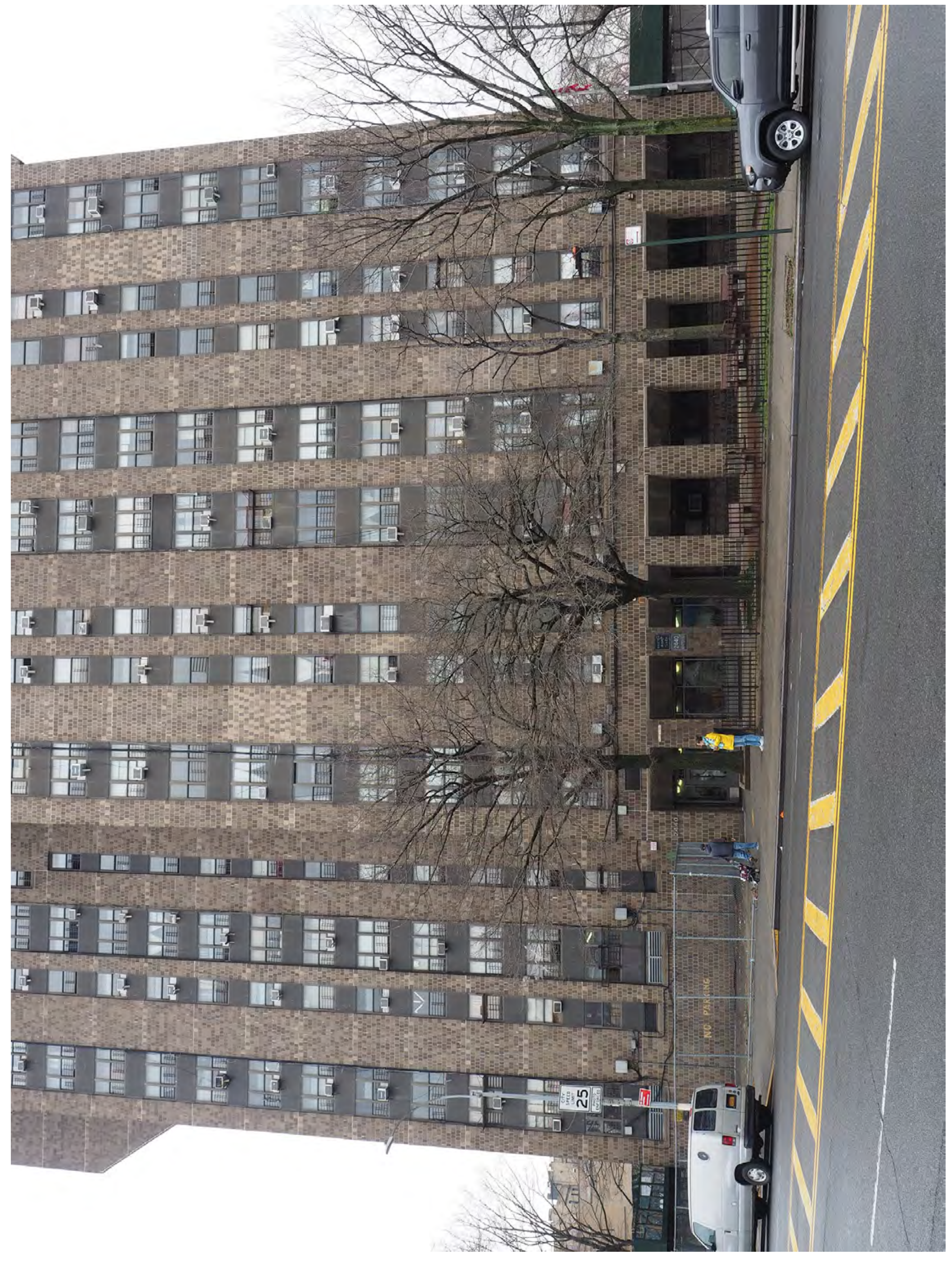
NY_Bronx County_Boston Road Plaza_0001

NY_Bronx County_Boston Road Plaza_0002

NY_Bronx County_Boston Road Plaza_0003



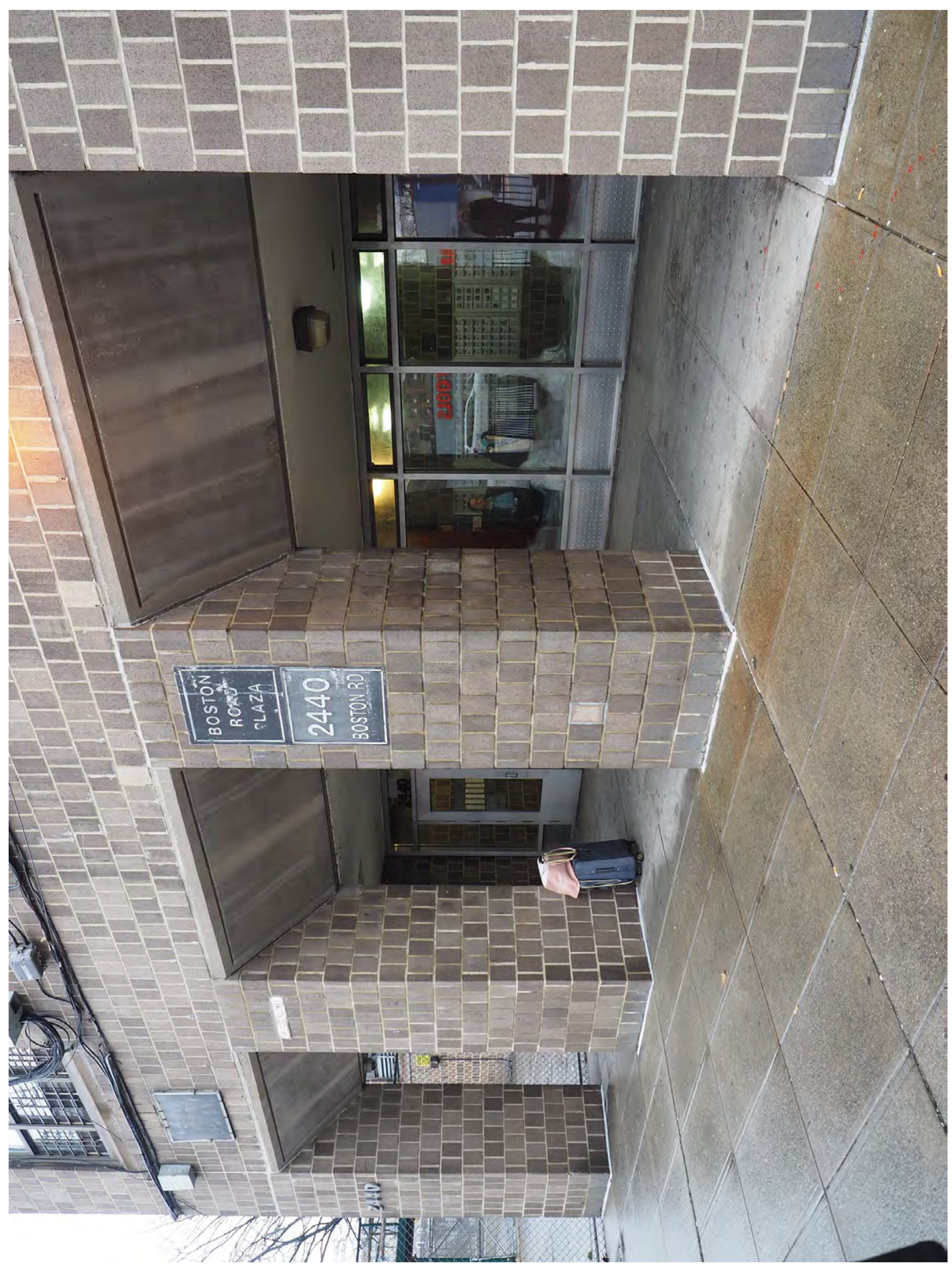
NY_Bronx County_Boston Road Plaza_0004



NY_Bronx County_Boston Road Plaza_0005

NY_Bronx County_Boston Road Plaza_0006

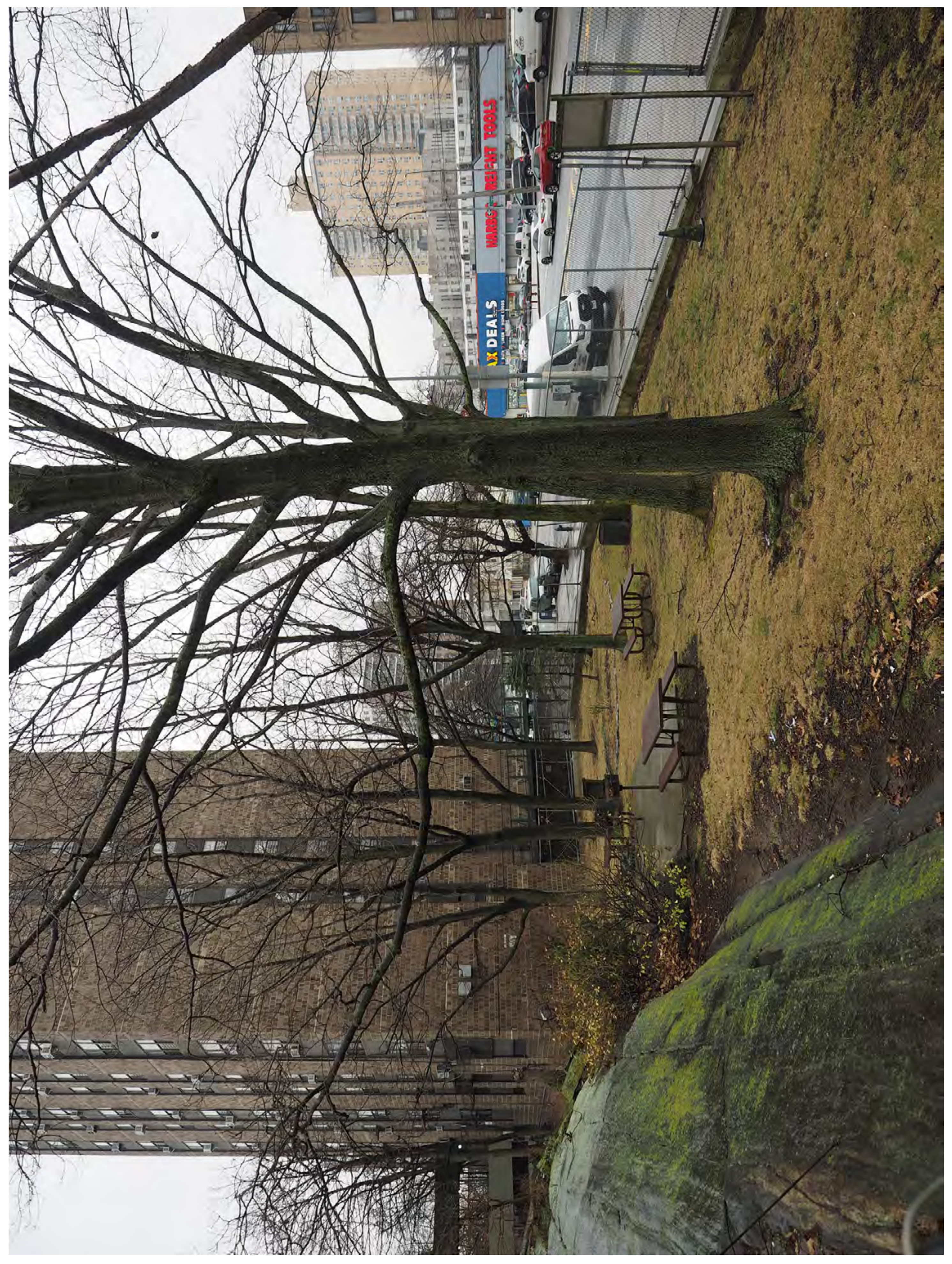
NY_Bronx County_Boston Road Plaza_0007



NY_Bronx County_Boston Road Plaza_0008

NY_Bronx County_Boston Road Plaza_0009

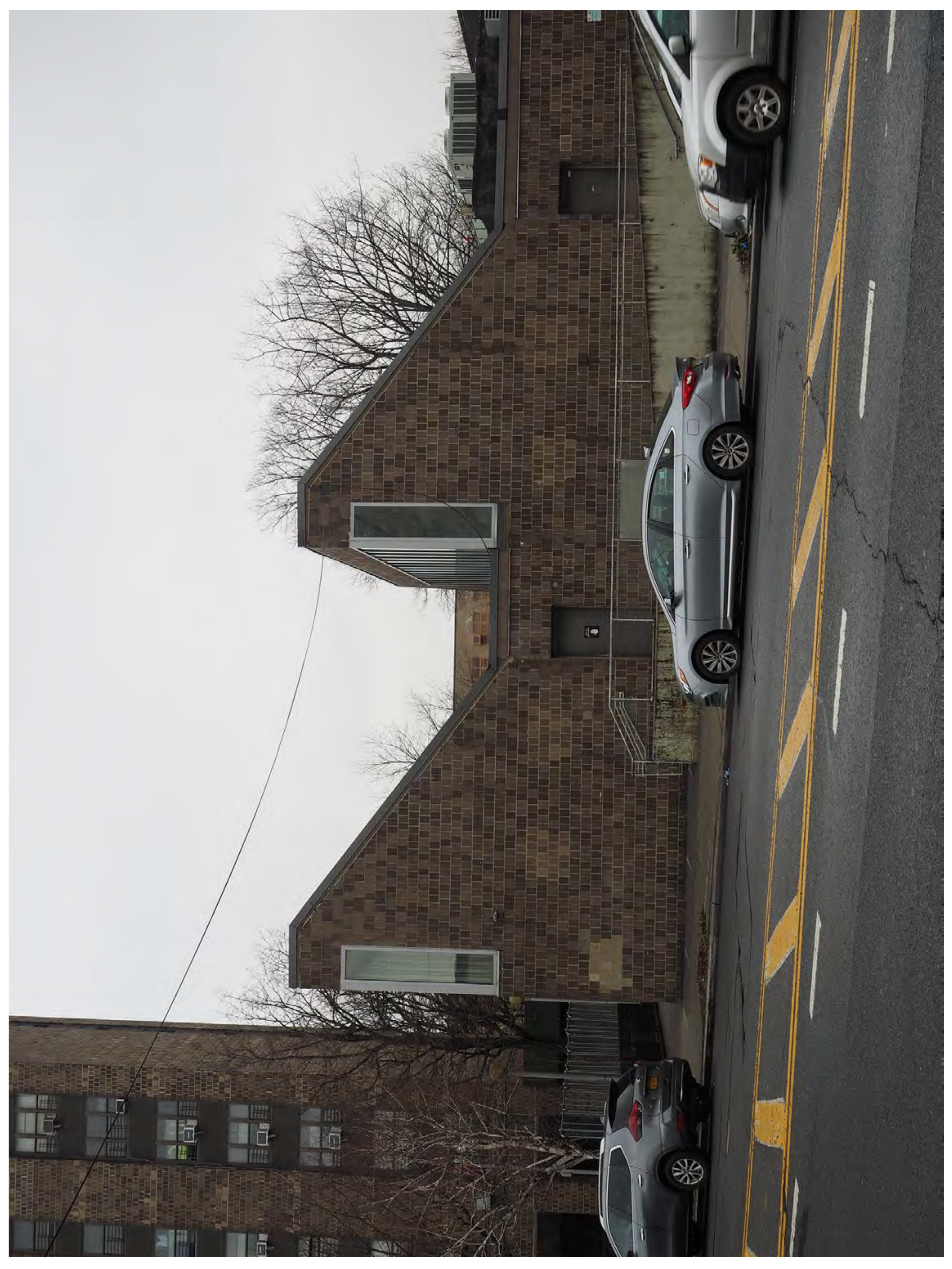
NY_Bronx County_Boston Road Plaza_0010



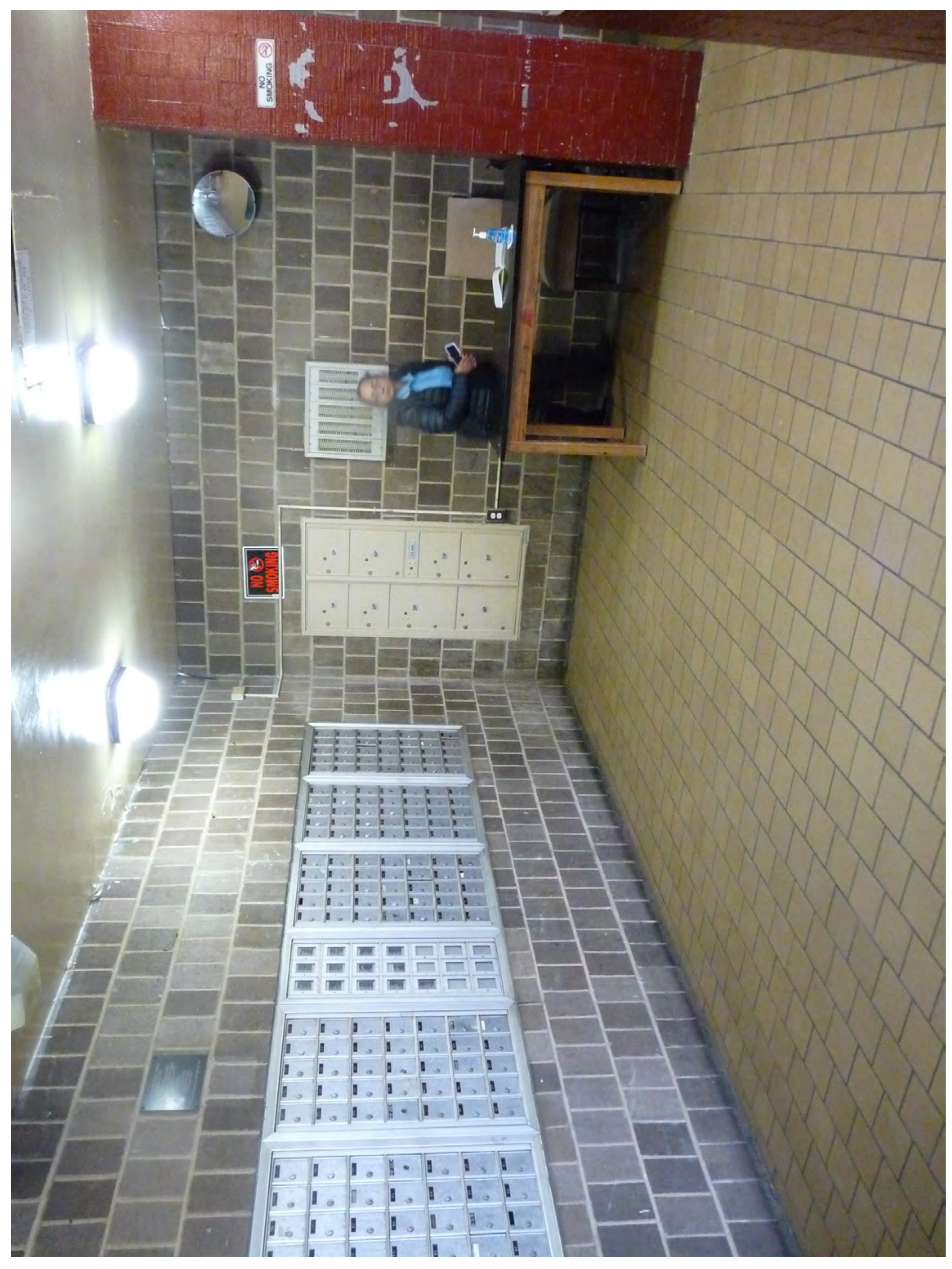
NY_Bronx County_Boston Road Plaza_0011

NY_Bronx County_Boston Road Plaza_0012

NY_Bronx County_Boston Road Plaza_0013

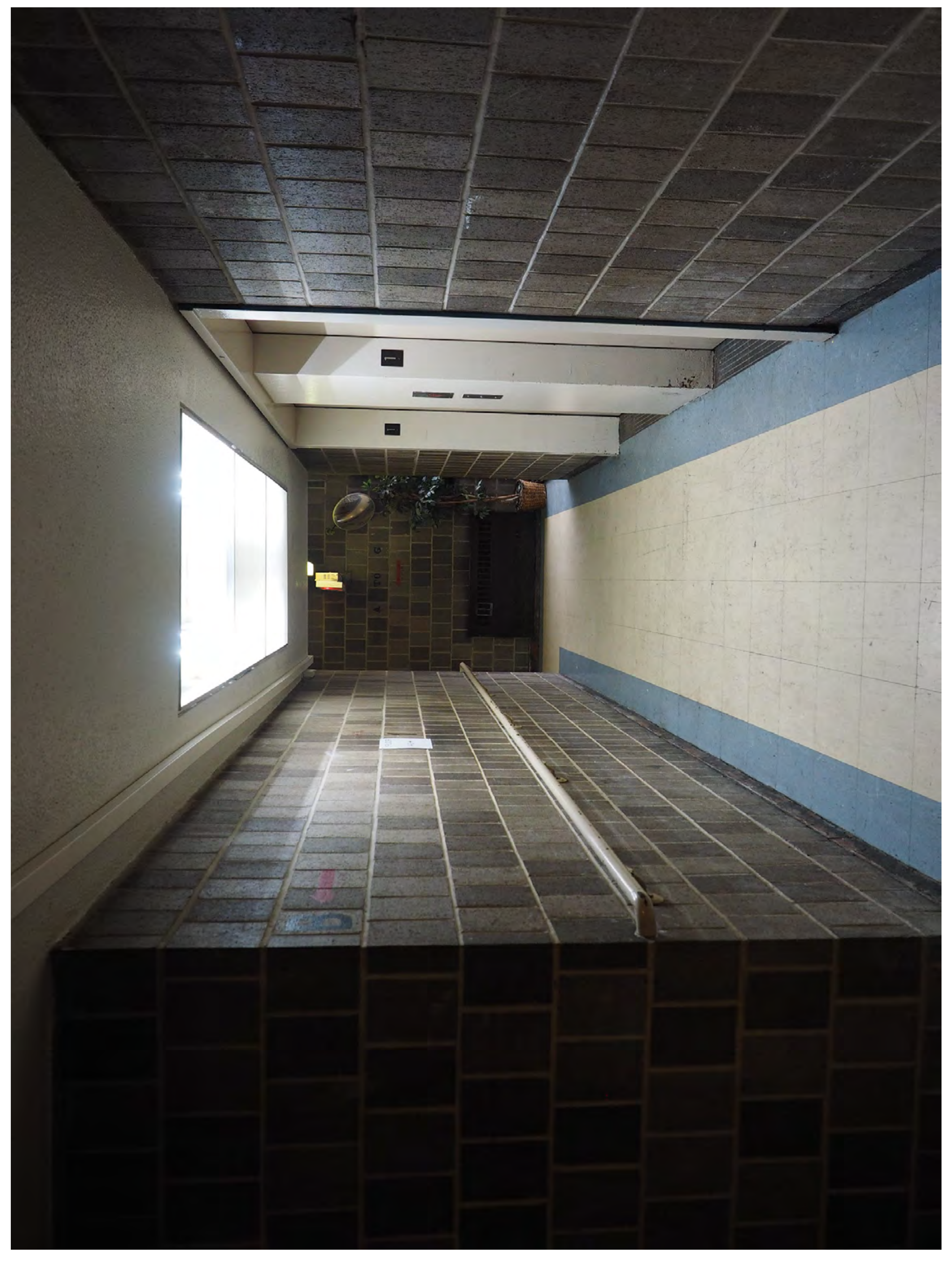


NY_Bronx County_Boston Road Plaza_0014



NY_Bronx County_Boston Road Plaza_0015

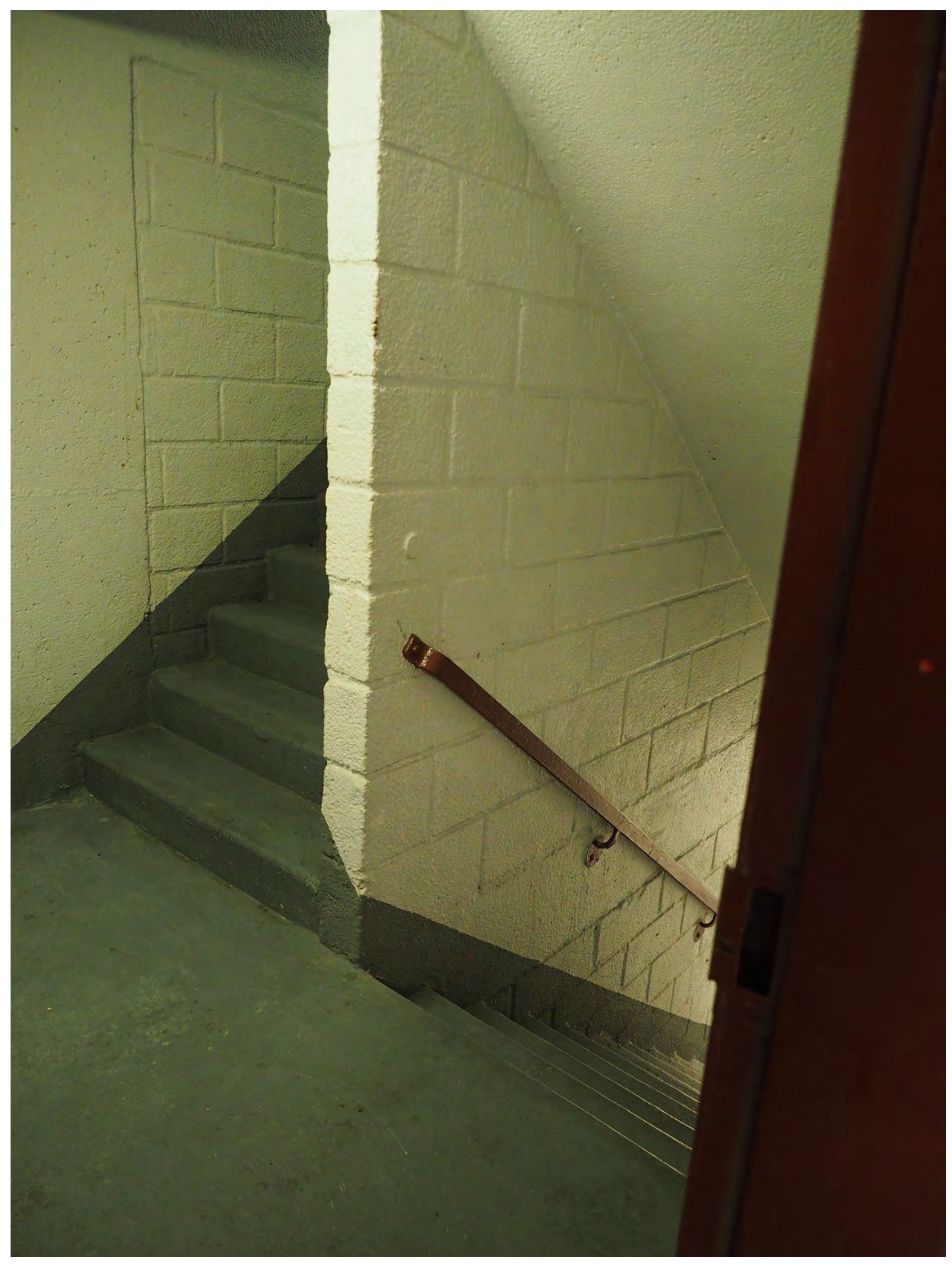
NY_Bronx County_Boston Road Plaza_0016



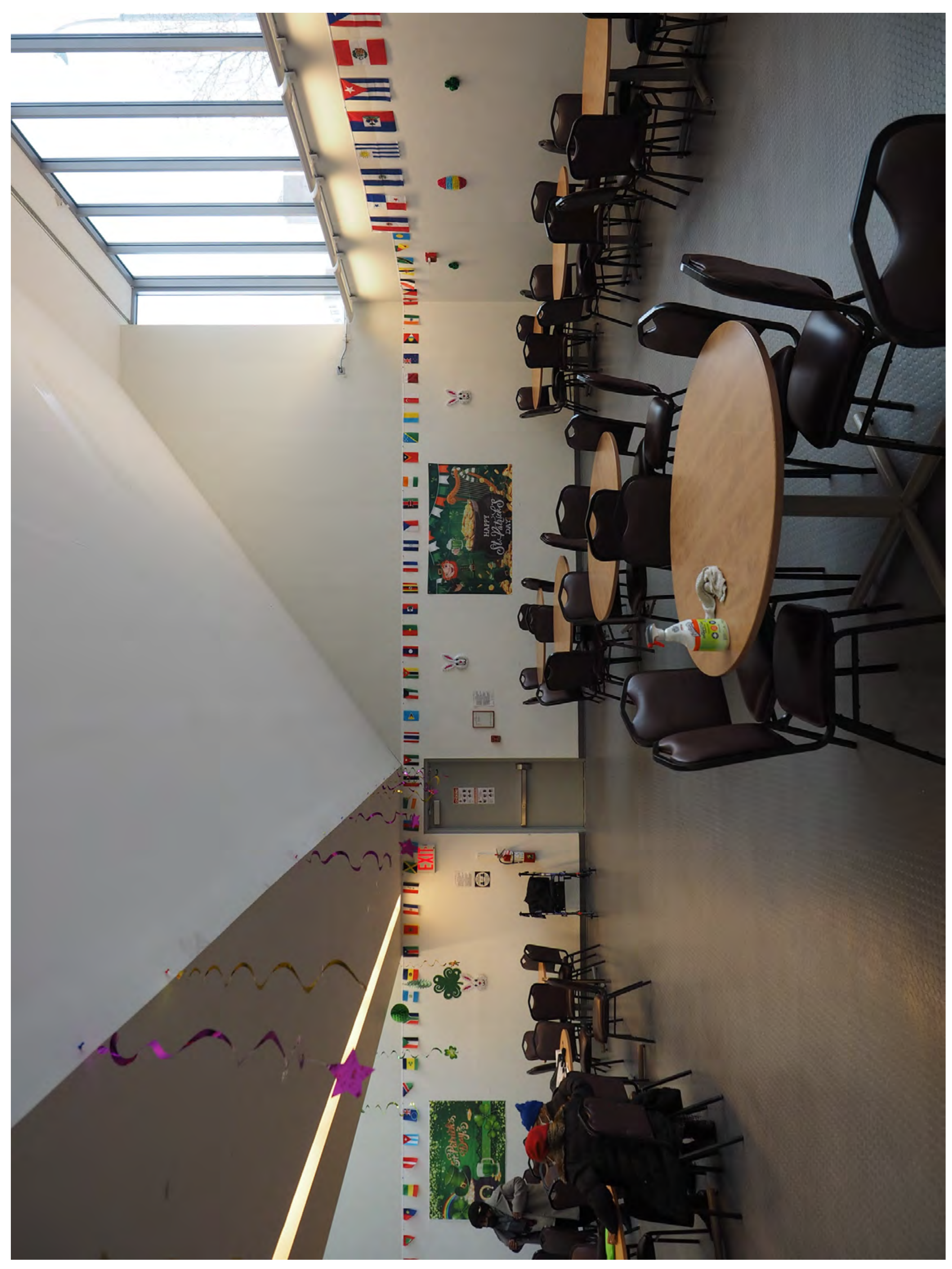
NY_Bronx County_Boston Road Plaza_0017

NY_Bronx County_Boston Road Plaza_0018

NY_Bronx County_Boston Road Plaza_0019



NY_Bronx County_Boston Road Plaza_0020



NY_Bronx County_Boston Road Plaza_0021