

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only

received FEB 29 1980

date entered APR 17 1980

**1. Name**

historic Public School 39

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 417 Sixth Avenue \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town New York \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district 15

state New York code 036 county Kings code 047

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Stephen R. Aiello, President - Board of Education

street & number 110 Livingston Street

city, town Brooklyn \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state New York 11201

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kings County Register's Office  
Brooklyn Municipal Building

street & number 210 Joralemon Street

city, town Brooklyn \_\_\_\_\_ state New York

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

LP-0952  
title Landmarks Preservation Commission has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_\_\_ yes  no

date March 8, 1977 \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county  local

depository for survey records 305 Broadway

city, town New York \_\_\_\_\_ state New York

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

This richly detailed three-story symmetrical school building is transitional in style combining features of the Italianate and French Second Empire styles.<sup>1</sup> Each long side of the rectangular brick building has handsome two-tiered windows recessed between equal width wall sections set above a base with conventional fenestration. The regular rhythm of these windows is broken at the center of each side by a two-story high, projecting stair tower.

The entrance or principal facade of the building, facing Sixth Avenue, is enriched by stone trim which contrasts with the brick. A central bay or tower with a rusticated first floor, which is the main feature of this facade, is flanked by high narrow corner pavilions with stone quoins at the first floor. Centered in this tower is the recessed main entrance doorway crowned by an arch with an ornamental keystone. At the second floor, above the main entrance, two high windows with corbeled heads are united under a common lintel with end corbels. These windows, in turn, are surmounted by a high Venetian window of the type popularized in the Italianate style; a central column separates two arched windows with circular form above, and all are enframed by a single stone arch with faceted keystone. The spandrel panel between these tower windows bears the inscription "Public School 39." Flanking the tower, inside the paneled end bays, are a series of paired windows, segmental arched at the first floor and round arched at the upper two floors. Crowning the tower, where it projects above the roof, are three small arched windows above which is a band of diminutive corbeled arches set in the brickwork. Originally this central tower was crowned by a mansard roof, removed during the 1940s.

On either side of the tower, steep mansard roofs of slate with iron crestings extend out to meet the truncated pyramidal roofs above the end or corner pavilions at the Sixth Avenue end, while a low, double-pitched roof covers the remaining length of the building behind the entrance facade. The mansard roofs are distinctive elements of the French Second Empire style. One of the most striking features of the school is its bold roof cornice with modillions and paired brackets so characteristic of the Italianate style. The cornice above the end pavilions is carried on the same paired, grooved brackets as those which recur along the side walls.

Each floor within Public School 39 is separated into two rectangular spaces by a central corridor and stairway. Each of the two spaces could originally be subdivided into three classrooms by means of rolling doors. This feature of flexible classroom size, later advocated in the 1960s, was eliminated by the removal of the rolling doors in order to comply with fire code regulations. The first floor has one double space used for many functions. Offices and service rooms flank either side of the staircase which is enclosed with steel frames and safety glass. Each of the three floors has a similar plan.

<sup>1</sup>The text of this report was taken almost in its entirety from the New York Landmarks Preservation Commission Designation Report, Public School 39 (LP-0952), March 8, 1977, by Daniel P. Brunetto.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1876-77

**Builder/Architect** attributed to Samuel B. Leonard

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Public School 39, also known as the Henry Bristow School, has been a neighborhood institution in the southern section of Park Slope for one hundred years. Prominently sited at the corner of Sixth Avenue and Eighth Street, it is a handsome and distinctive brick school building which combines features of the Italianate and French 2nd Empire styles. Opened in 1877, the school is a symbolic link to the early history of education in Brooklyn.

By 1790, the early residents of the Gowanus section of Brooklyn, which includes today's Park Slope, had organized a school. Under the provisions of an 1805 law, the school district serving Gowanus elected trustees for the school in 1810. This school became known as Public School 2. By the 1870s, new facilities were needed to serve the increasing student population. This problem was temporarily solved in the Gowanus section when Primary School 2 was organized, as an outgrowth of Public School 2, in the house of Henry Bristow in 1873. Shortly afterward, in March of 1876, the Board of Education bought property at the corner of Sixth Avenue and Eighth Street from George Riggs to be the site of Public School 39. The school, which was begun in 1876, opened for classes in 1877 under the leadership of its first principal, Harriet N. Morris. The pupils of Primary School 2 were transferred from the school in Henry Bristow's house to Public School 39 across the street. During the first year of classes at Public School 39, the student register swelled from about 300 students during the spring semester to approximately 840 students in the fall. Although the school had been designed for a capacity of 1,087 students, it did not accommodate that number of students until 1880.

It is believed that Public School 39 was designed by Samuel B. Leonard, who was the Superintendent of Buildings for the Board of Education at the time. It was modeled after Public School 37 which had been built the year before. Both buildings have nearly identical designs and display similar decorative detailing. One of the most distinctive features of the interior of Public School 39 was the division of each floor into two open spaces, each of which could be subdivided into three classrooms by means of rolling doors. This concept of flexible classroom size became widely advocated during the 1960s. In 1963, Public School 39 was forced to remove its rolling doors in order to comply with fire code regulations.

In 1916, the school was named after the late Henry Bristow (1840-1906) as part of a new citywide program to honor local civic leaders. Bristow was a local public administrator who had been elected the representative of the 6th Congressional District in 1900 and who had previously served as president of the 22nd Ward. In addition, Bristow was a member of the Brooklyn Board of Education during the 1880s and was appointed Police Justice in 1897. It is very fitting that Public School 39 be named in honor of so civic minded an individual as Bristow, in whose house Primary School 2 was first organized.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre (see attached site map)

Quadrangle name Brooklyn, NY

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

A 

1	8	5	8	5	8	9	0	4	5	0	2	2	5	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property occupies Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 1000, Lot 1 and is roughly 100feet by 172.10 feet.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Daniel P. Brunetto Contact; Elizabeth Spencer-Ralph 518-474-0479

organization Landmarks Preservation Commission date October, 1979

street & number 305 Broadway telephone (212) 566-7577

city or town New York state New York

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Stephen White*

title Director, Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau date 2/26/80

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*for [Signature]*

date April 17, 1980

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Lynn A. Beebe

date April 17, 1980

Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED FEB 29 1980

DATE ENTERED

APR 17 1980

Public School 39  
CONTINUATION SHEET Kings County ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

---

Abstracts. Brooklyn Properties, Block 1000, Long Island Historical Society.

Brooklyn Eagle, October 11, 1906, December 11, 1907, April 8, 1934.

Department of Public Instruction. Annual Report... The City of Brooklyn, 1875, 1876.

Howard, Henry, W.B. The Eagle and Brooklyn...History of the City of Brooklyn.  
Brooklyn: The Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 1873.

Landmarks Preservation Commission. Public School 39 Designation Report (LP-0952),  
by Daniel P. Brunetto. New York: City of New York, 1977.

New York Herald Tribune, April 4, 1954.

New York Post, March 2, 1977.

The Phoenix, July 1, 1976.

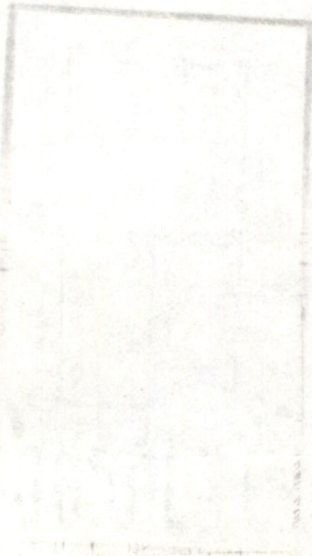
The Phoenix Magazine, June 3, 1976.

Stiles, Henry K. History of Kings County. New York: W.W. Munsell & Co., 1884.

Whitlock, E.J. Souvenir of Our Public Schools of Brooklyn, N.Y. New York:  
Brooklyn Board of Education, 1882.



APR 17 1980



80002646

Property Public School 39

State ny - Kings

Working Number 2-29-80 703

**TECHNICAL**

**CONTROL**

Photos 4  
Maps 2

**HISTORIAN**

*This school building dating from 1877 is an example of public school architecture showing influence of the Second Empire and Italianate styles. Having been in use as a school since it was built, PS ~~39~~ reflects the history of public education within Brooklyn.*

**ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN**

*Accept P. Reed 4/15/80*

**ARCHEOLOGIST**

**OTHER**

**HAER**

Inventory \_\_\_\_\_  
Review \_\_\_\_\_

**REVIEW UNIT CHIEF**

*Accept  
L. Bebe  
4/17/80*

**BRANCH CHIEF**

**KEEPER**

National Register Write-up \_\_\_\_\_  
Federal Register Entry 2.3.81

Send-back \_\_\_\_\_  
Re-submit \_\_\_\_\_

Entered APR 17 1980





1. *Public School #39*  
*Kings County, New York*

*Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1980*  
*Neg. at: New York City Landmarks*  
*Preservation Commission*

*View from west*

APR 17 1980

FEB 29 1980

*2084*



2. Public School #39  
Kings County, New York

APR 17 1980

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1980  
Neg. at: New York City Landmarks  
Preservation Commission

View from south

FEB 29 1980

3074



3. Public School # 39  
Kings County, New York

APR 17 1980

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1980  
Neg. at: New York City Landmarks  
Preservation Commission

Detail: front elevation

4074

FEB 29 1980



4. Public School #39  
Kings County, New York

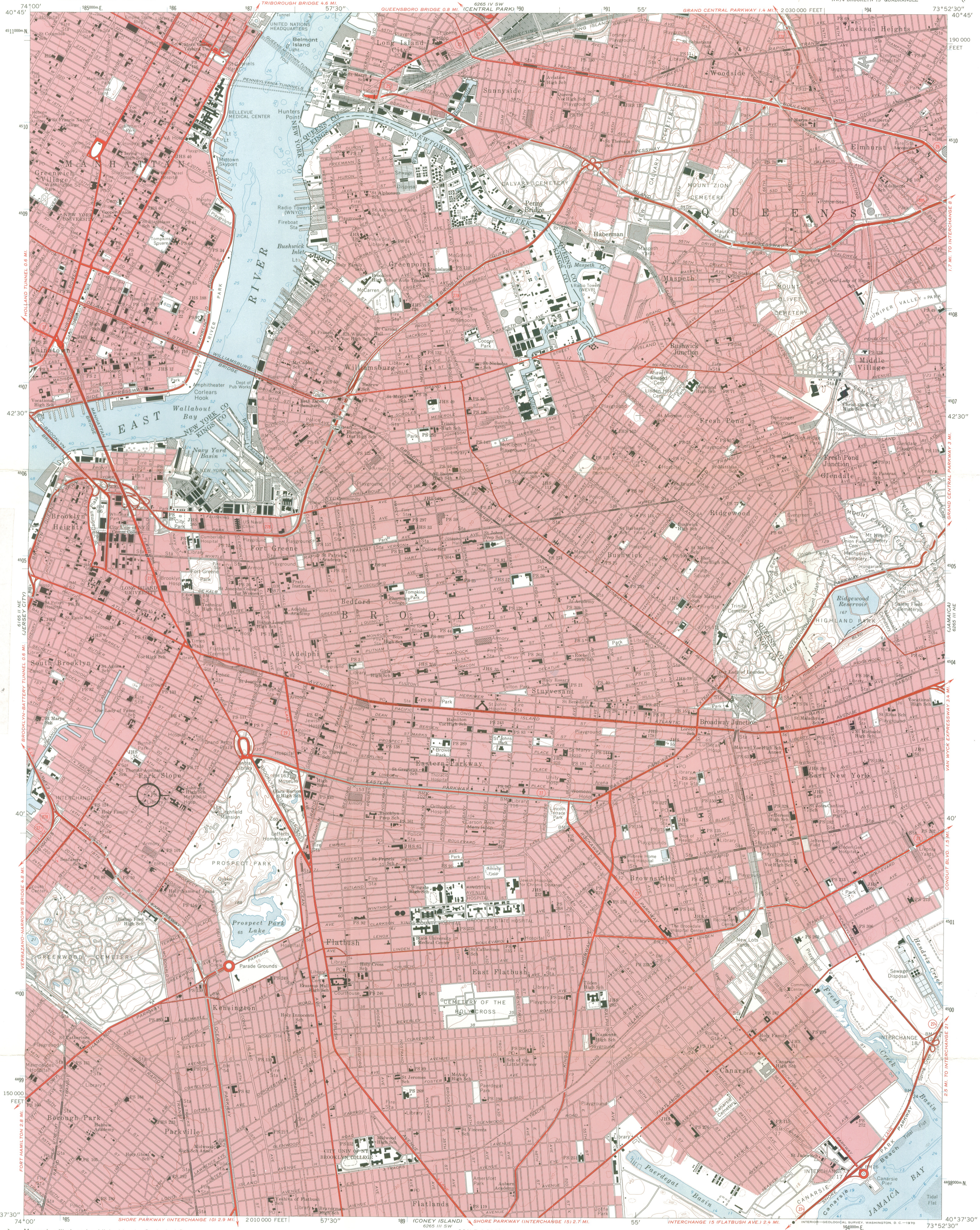
Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1980  
Neg. at: New York City Landmarks  
Preservation Commission

*Interior of classroom*

APR 17 1980  
1084

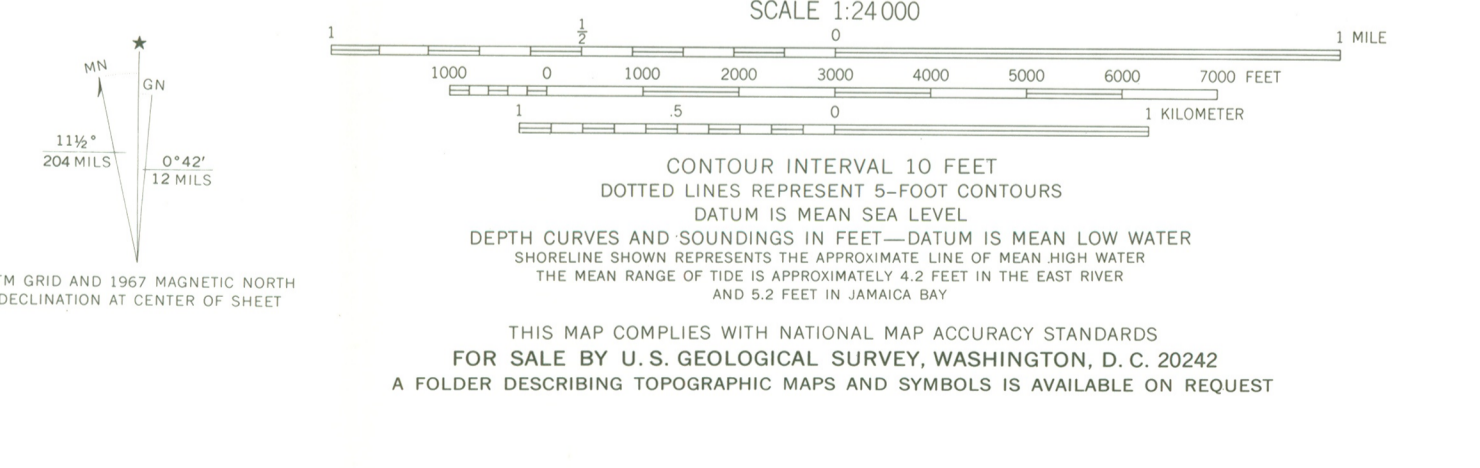
FEB 29 1980





Public School 39  
417 Sixth Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY  
Kimp Co.  
UTM Reference: 18/585890/4502250  
Brooklyn Ave

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Revised in cooperation with New York Department of Transportation  
Control by USGS, USC&GS, USCE, and City of New York Board of  
Estimate and Apportionment  
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
taken 1954, and from USC&GS Charts T-5094, T-5335, T-5454  
T-5459, T-5460, and T-8449  
Topography by planetable surveys 1955-1956. Revised from  
aerial photographs taken 1966. Field checked 1967  
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Charts  
275 (1964), 542 (1967), and 745 (1966). This information  
is not intended for navigational purposes  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on New York coordinate system, Long Island zone  
100-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18, shown in blue  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown  
Entire area lies within New York City



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty	Light-duty
Unimproved dirt	-----
Interstate Route	○ State Route

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 5-FOOT CONTOURS  
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL  
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER  
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER  
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 4.2 FEET IN THE EAST RIVER  
AND 5.2 FEET IN JAMAICA BAY

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

RECEIVED  
FEB 29 1968  
NATIONAL REGISTER

1967  
AMS 6265 III NW—SERIES V821

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE NEW YORK

Date Entered APR 17 1980

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Church of the Holy Communion and Buildings	New York New York County
Double-Span Whipple Bowstring Truss Bridge	Claverack Columbia County
Public School 39	New York Kings County
First Shearith Israel Graveyard	New York New York County
Garibaldi Memorial	Staten Island Richmond County
DeLand, Henry, House	Fairport Monroe County

Also Notified

Honorable Daniel P. Moynihan

Honorable Jacob K. Javits  
Honorable S. William Green  
Honorable Gerald B. Solomon  
Honorable Leo C. Zafferetti  
Honorable John M. Murphy  
Honorable Frank Horton

State Historic Preservation Officer  
Mr. Orin Lehman  
Commissioner  
Parks and Recreation  
Agency Building #1  
Empire State Plaza  
Albany, New York 12238

NR Byers/bjr 4/24/80

For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.

Harrison 5/30

436

JUN 2 1980

Mr. Jeffrey Raynor  
Paskus Gordon & Hyman  
45 Rockefeller Plaza  
New York, New York 10111

Kings Co.  
N.Y.

Dear Mr. Raynor:

The purpose of this letter is to provide the information you requested in the telephone conversation with National Register staff member Lynn Beebe on May 20, 1980.

The following properties located in Kings County, New York have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places between January 1, 1980 and May 23, 1980:

- Floyd Bennett Field Historic District
- Brooklyn Borough Hall
- Hanson Place Seventh Day Adventist Church
- Interborough Rapid Transit Subway Control Houses: Thematic Resources (Bronx, Kings, and New York Counties)
- Kings County Savings Bank
- Monsignor McGolrick Park and Shelter Pavillion
- New Utrecht Reformed Church and Buildings
- Public School 39 ✓
- ~~Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Transfiguration of our Lord~~
- ~~St. Bartholomew's Protestant Episcopal Church and Rectory~~
- State Street Houses
- Twenty-third Regiment Armory
- Williamsburgh Savings Bank

If we can be of further assistance to you, please let us know. We appreciate your interest in the National Register.

Sincerely,

Carol D. Shull (Sgd.)

Carol D. Shull  
Acting Keeper of the National Register

cc: Mr. Orin Lehman, SHPO, New York

bcc: S. Harrison:jrb:343-6401:5-30-80  
FILE COPY

Alicia —

Can a policy be devised to deal with resources that are considerably less than 10 acres — (other than .9) per Modica

1857-60

w: brick

f: succo  
o: wood  
brick

Rom Rev. / Classical

Add Pap. etc.

o: marble  
Terra cotta

Stalactite  
2nd Empire

w: brick

r: slate

o: stone  
iron