



DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING
CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN OFFICE

UPPER EAST SIDE
MIDBLOCK STUDY

STUDY DESCRIPTION AND
PROPOSAL

February 1985

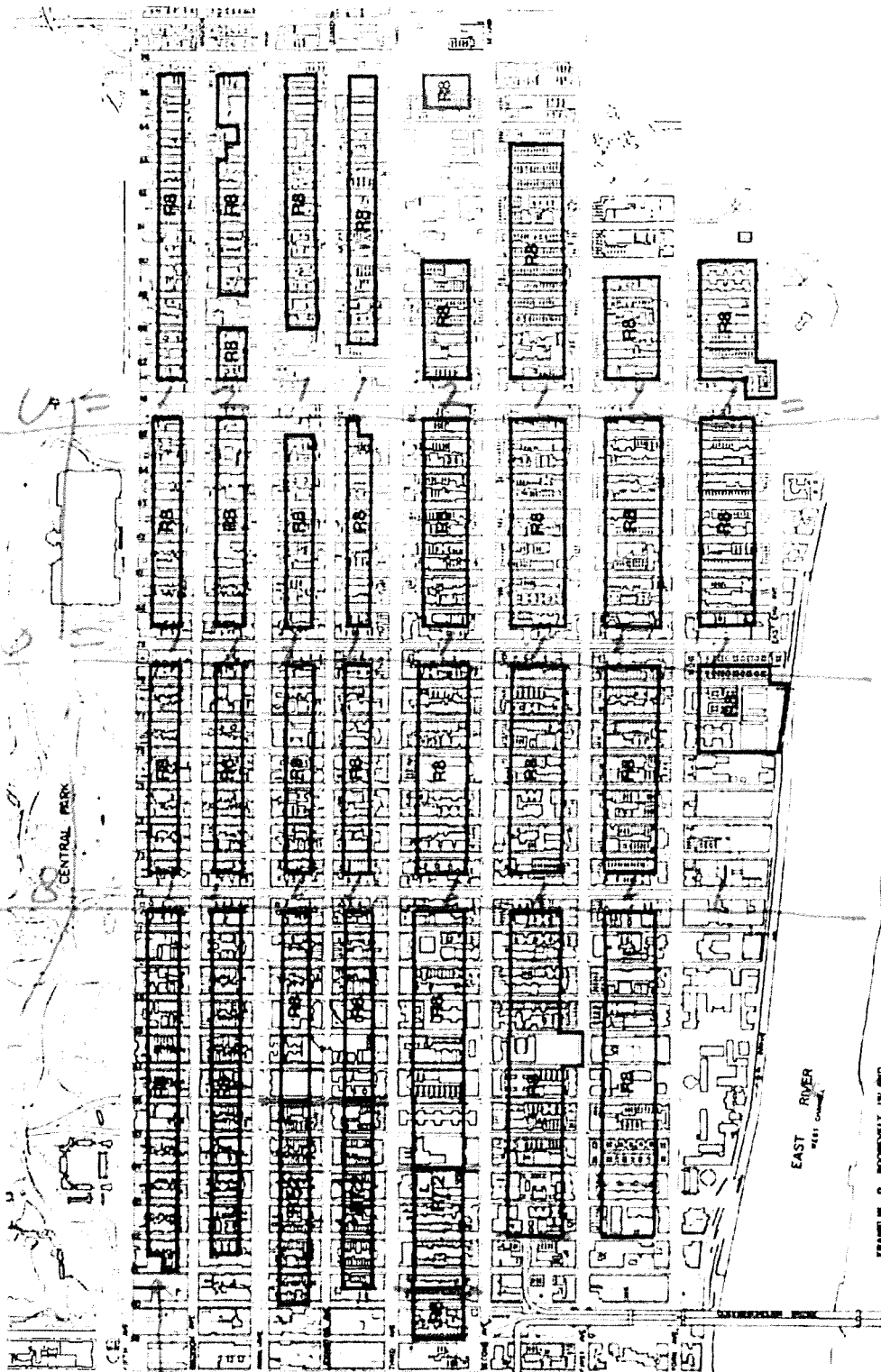
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BACKGROUND

On May 24, 1984, the Board of Estimate passed the West Side zoning package, which introduced into the Zoning Resolution a set of alternatives to the low-coverage tower and plaza regulations formulated in 1961. A key element of that package was an R8B zoning district for residential midblocks which encourages new development to match the low and mid-rise scale of existing buildings.

Ensuring that new development does not jeopardize the integrity of existing midblock context is not an issue which is limited to the Upper West Side. Studies of the Yorkville area of the Upper East Side done by City Planning in 1982-83 demonstrated incompatibility between the zoning regulations and the midblock building characteristics. Community Board 8 expressed similar concerns during its review of the West Side rezoning, and passed a resolution urging that the midblocks of the Upper East Side be considered for the R8B mapping.

In June 1984, City Planning initiated a study of the 175 midblocks in Community Board 8 zoned R7-2 or R8. (See Map 1) The present report outlines the results of this work, and offers a proposal for public review and discussion.

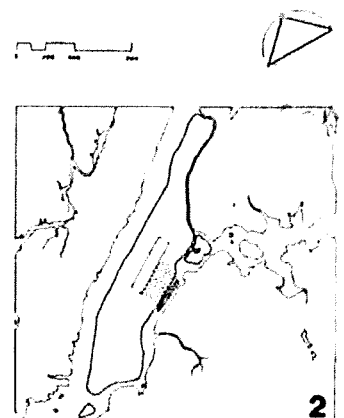


STUDY AREA

UPPER EAST SIDE

Map 1

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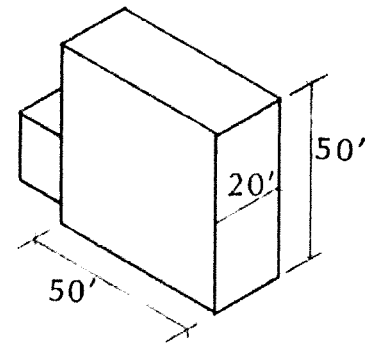
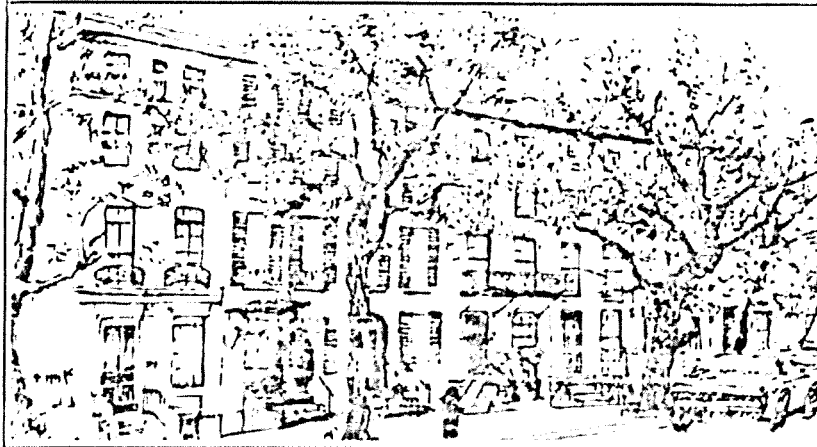


EXISTING CONDITIONS

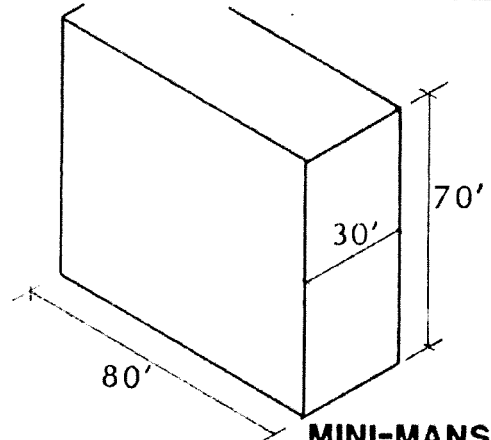
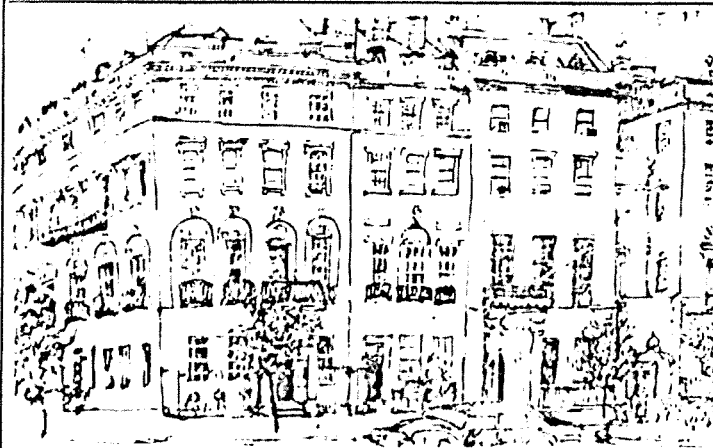
Building Characteristics

The midblocks on the Upper East Side are an identifiable environment characterized by a consistent scale and street relationship. This consistency is defined in large part by the recurrence of three similar building types (Diagram 1).

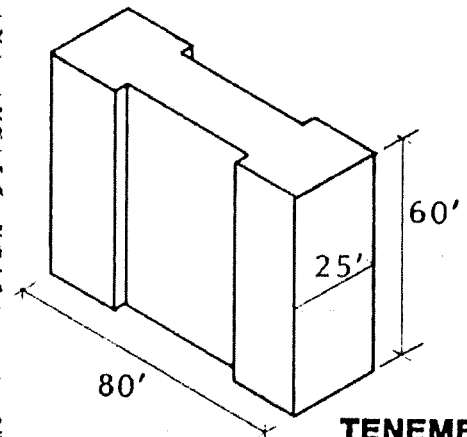
- o The 3-to 5-story, 50-to 60-foot high brownstones or limestones are set back 5 to 10 feet from the street line where they form continuous walls of varying length with uniform setback and cornice lines. The FARs range from 1.8 to 4.
- o The 4-to 6-story, 55-to 70-foot high mini-mansions are built to the street line, wider than brownstones and extend deep into the lot. Mini-mansions often provide stunning examples of varying architectural styles, and several of them have been designated as landmarks. They are found most frequently between Fifth and Park avenues, from 60th to 80th streets. The FARs range from 3.5 to 4.2.
- o The 5-to 6-story 60-foot high walk-ups are built to the street line, are generally 70-80 feet deep, and have air shafts of varying sizes. The consistent pattern of these buildings contributes to the character of the area while also providing a significant housing resource for a range of income groups. The FARs vary from 3.5 to 4.8.



BROWNSTONE



MINI-MANSION



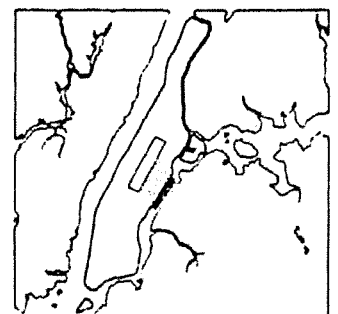
TENEMENT

Diagram 1:

MIDBLOCK BUILDING TYPES

UPPER EAST SIDE

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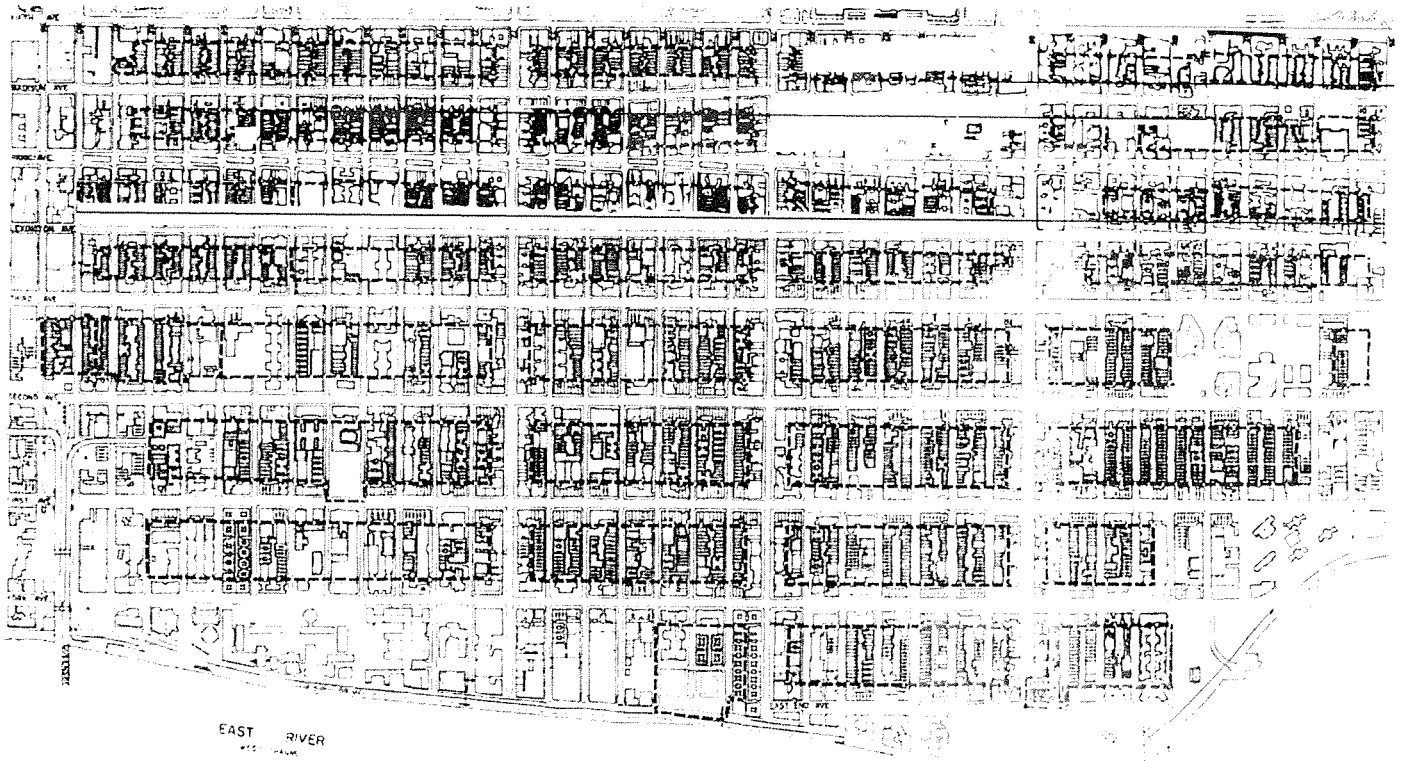
In addition to these three housing types, there are also non-residential buildings such as churches, garages and schools that maintain low-scale midblock characteristics.

Of the approximately 2,900 buildings analyzed, about 2,700, 93 percent, conform to these midblock types. (see Map 2: Buildings of R8B Scale). The majority of these structures are either brownstones or tenements:

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Brownstones	1356	50
Mini-Mansions	186	7
Tenements	960	35
Other	<u>220</u>	<u>8</u>
TOTAL	2722	100

The anomalies in the consistent midblock pattern generally occur in one of two situations: where there has been institutional development, e.g. Sloane Kettering Institute, or where 12-15 story residential buildings have been constructed, generally in the 1940's or 1950's. There are relatively few post-1961 residential buildings in the midblocks.

The mini-mansions are generally between Fifth and Madison where, at a smaller scale, they echo the grand houses that once lined Fifth Avenue. The tenement buildings correspond to areas that were less desirable for residential living at the time they were constructed, either because of the presence



EAST RIVER
RIVER

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT ISLAND

BUILDINGS OF R8B SCALE

UPPER EAST SIDE · Map 2
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