

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received AUG 14 1985  
date entered SEP 12 1985

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

1. Name

historic Sutton Place Historic District

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 1-21 Sutton Place; 4-16 Sutton Square

not for publication

city, town New York

vicinity of

state New York

code 036

county New York

code 061

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>NA</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<u>NA</u> being considered	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 see attached

street & number

city, town

vicinity of

state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Surrogate's Court/Hall of Records

street & number 31 Chambers Street

city, town New York

state New York 10007

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

## 7. Description

**Condition**  
 excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**  
 unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**  
 original site  
 moved

date NA

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

The Sutton Place Historic District is a cohesive residential development consisting of twelve contributing houses, four houses which are non-contributing due to their age, and the common garden to the rear of all of the homes. The district consists of the entire block bounded by Sutton Place on the west, Sutton Square on the north, East 57th Street on the south, and the East River on the east. The district is made up exclusively of four- and five-story single-family residences with brick or stucco front and rear facades. The earliest designs in the district date from 1920 when the Sutton Place development began. The primary building type in the surrounding area is the apartment building, most of which are thirteen to twenty stories tall and were built in the 1920s and 1930s. Directly to the north of the historic district, across Sutton Square, is a small group of row houses that face onto Riverview Terrace, a private street. This group consists of two houses from the 1940s and three houses with facades that display original detail from the 1880s.

The buildings within the historic district can be divided into two stylistic categories. Approximately half of the houses adapt eighteenth-century American Georgian Colonial or seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English Georgian motifs (photos 1,3). These houses are constructed of brick laid in Flemish bond and they are examples of the twentieth-century American Colonial Revival style. The design of these houses tends to be quite refined with a limited amount of beautifully carved stone detail such as the entrance enframingent of Nos. 1 (photo 4) and 3 (photo 1) Sutton Place. The remainder of the buildings in the historic district are extremely refined stucco structures which take their basic form from Italian Renaissance villas, but which exhibit Renaissance, Gothic, and Georgian detail (photos 1,2). This detail is generally simple and restrained and is often limited to the entrance enframingent (photo 5). Almost all of the houses in the historic district have fine iron railings (photos 3-5) that enliven the streetscape. There are four buildings in the district that are less than fifty years old. These buildings were designed in a manner compatible with the older structures and they do not detract from the character of the area (photos 6-9).

\*(12 contributing building, 1 contributing structure)

### Buildings in the Sutton Place Historic District

- 1 Sutton Place. Anne Vanderbilt Residence. Mott B. Schmidt, 1921. (photos 1,4). Four-story Neo-Georgian style brick building; round-arched entrance set within brick enframingent with brick pediment; projecting cornice; brick parapet; paneled door; three-story rear extension; garden entrance with arched hood.
- 3 Sutton Place. Anne Morgan Residence. Mott B. Schmidt, 1921-22 (photo 1). Large Neo-Georgian style four-story brick house; arched entrance set within Ionic-columned stone enframingent; modillioned cornice; splayed stone lintels; service entrance with transom and splayed stone lintel; mansard on garden facade.
- 7 Sutton Place. Marshall Kernochan Residence. Polhemus & Coffin, 1934. Neo-Italian Renaissance style four-story stucco building; street level entrance with Doric pilasters supporting a broken pediment with central urn; large ground-floor window and service door grouping set within rusticated enframingent; broken pediments at third floor windows echoing that of entrance; balcony on garden facade.

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

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Sutton Place Historic District

Continuation sheet New York County, NY

Item number 7

Page 2

- 9 Sutton Place. Robert W. Goelet Residence. H. Page Cross, 1969-71 (photo 6). Simple, refined Colonial Revival style four-story residence designed by the son of Sutton Place developer Eliot Cross; round-arched entrance with raised brick surround; splayed brick lintels; stone sills; cornice. Non-contributing due to age.
- 11 Sutton Place. Read & Everett, 1921-22 (photo 2). Stuccoed, four-story residence with subtle detail; rusticated base; iron fence and balconies; stucco cornice.
- 13 Sutton Place. Elisabeth Marbury/Elsie de Wolfe Residence. Mott B. Schmidt, 1921-22 (photo 2). Four-story stuccoed building with subtle Georgian detail; rusticated base; splayed lintels; shoulder-arched entrance; paneled door; ironwork. Alteration: bowed windows replace original sash on second floor.
- 15 Sutton Place. Isabelle Cammann Residence. James Casale, 1921-22 (photo 2). Five-story stucco building with subtle Gothic detail; sunken entrance topped by ogee arch; small-paned windows; iron balconies and railing; crisply cut windows with projecting sills; mansard roof with two dormers.
- 17 Sutton Place. Chauncey Olcott Residence. Mott B. Schmidt, 1921-23 (photo 2). Five-story stucco residence with Neo-Georgian detail; sunken entrance; rusticated base; paneled door; splayed lintels with projecting keystones; projecting cornice and belt course; mansard roof with two dormers; ironwork. Alteration: original sash replaced by plate glass.
- 19 Sutton Place. Norman Alexander Residence. John D. Latimer Associates, c.1980 (photo 2,7). Five-story brick building with French Renaissance detail executed in Paris; segmental-arched window and door openings with stone enframements; mansard roof with two dormers; iron balconies. Non-contributing due to age.
- 21 Sutton Place. Simeon Ford Residence. William Lescaze, 1923-24 (photo 2). English Palladian style four-story stucco house; rusticated base; quoins; niche on Sutton Place elevation occupied by statue of saint; monumental Ionic pilasters on Sutton Square elevation support broken pediment; ornate entrance on Sutton Square; oriel in east facade of four-story rear elevation. Alterations: sash of dormer window on Sutton Place replaced by plate glass; parapet added to top of mansard roof.
- 4 Sutton Square. Henry H. Sprague Residence. Carl Volmer, 1921-22. Four-story brick Neo-Georgian house; sunken entrance; paneled door; iron fence and brick wall; second-floor window grouping topped by fan; stepped side parapet.
- 6 Sutton Square. Edgar Stillman Residence. Murphy & Dana, 1921-22 (photo 3). Wide four-story brick Neo-Federal style house; ground floor with three shallow recessed arches; entrance with leaded fanlight and paneled door; central oriel; simple stone cornice; stone rosette.

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

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

Sutton Place Historic District

Continuation sheet New York County, NY

Item number 7

Page 3

For NPS use only

received

date entered

- 10 Sutton Square. H. Page Cross, 1973 (photo 3,8). Neo-Georgian style four-story brick residence; originally identical to No. 6, but altered to resemble No. 12; stone window and door enframements; paneled door; iron railing. Non-contributing due to age.
- 12 Sutton Square. Dr. Kenneth Taylor Residence. Delano & Aldrich, 1920-21 (photo 3). Five-story brick residence with heavy English Georgian detail; entrance with segmental-arched stone enframement; windows with stone segmental pediments, stone lintels, and stone quoins; stone panels between third and fourth floors; iron railings; mansard roof with two dormers. Alteration: garage placed in ground floor.
- 14 Sutton Square. Dr. Foster Kennedy Residence. Henry O. Milliken, 1920-21. Five-story stuccoed house with subtle Georgian detail; round-arched entrance with recessed door and fanlight; rusticated base; French windows; second floor windows with blind arches; mansard roof with two dormers.
- 16 Sutton Square. 1984 (photo 9). Five-story brick residence with Colonial detail; columnar entrance portico; stone quoins, lintels, sills, and belt courses; iron railings. Non-contributing due to age.

The garden of Sutton Place is set behind a wall which runs along East 57th Street. The garden consists of a grassy lawn bordered by flower beds, bushes, and trees. Approximately one-third of the garden (the easternmost section nearest to the East River; generally that section extending south from the party wall separating 14 and 16 Sutton Square) was removed in 1939 for the construction of the East River Drive. The drive was constructed beneath the site of the garden. This section of the garden was replaced in 1945 when construction was completed and the garden retains much of its original appearance.

## 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 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" 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** 1920-1935 **Builder/Architect** various

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Sutton Place Historic District is architecturally significant as a cohesive intact residential enclave that exemplifies a distinctive early twentieth century architectural movement in New York City. Exponents of this movement sought to "beautify" the nineteenth-century brownstone neighborhoods of New York by altering or rebuilding the old houses using restrained Colonial, English Renaissance, and southern European motifs. In the 1920s several planned real estate developments were begun that transformed entire groups of rundown brownstones, regarded then as a blight on the city, into stylish new enclaves complete with shared landscaped gardens. The buildings in the Sutton Place Historic District, originally constructed in the 1880s, were acquired in the early 1920s by a syndicate headed by architect Eliot Cross. All sixteen buildings were individually sold and developed, but their designs were subject to the regulations of restrictive covenants and to review by the syndicate's architects. This resulted in a unified composition. In addition, a common rear garden was protected by the covenant. Many of the facades of the Sutton Place development were designed by prominent architects, including early works by Mott B. Schmidt and William Lescaze, as well as fine representative examples of the work of such firms as Delano & Aldrich, Polhemus & Coffin, and Murphy & Dana. Popular mainly among the city's most affluent residents, the movement to redesign the city's typical nineteenth-century residences was seen as a way of keeping the wealthy from abandoning the city for the suburbs and as an alternative to apartment house living. Prominent individuals who were among the original residents of the historic district include Anne Vanderbilt, Anne Morgan, and Elsie de Wolfe. Although scattered individual residences exist throughout New York City that were altered using restrained decoration during this period, Sutton Place is one of only two neighborhoods to survive as distinct enclaves that retain a communal landscaped garden, thus conveying the feelings and associations that characterize this design and development type.

The present development of the Sutton Place Historic District began in 1920, but the developmental history of the district extends back to the late 1870s. Sutton Place, actually a part of Avenue A (now York Avenue), was named for Effingham B. Sutton, a dry goods merchant and real estate developer. Sutton made his fortune as a trader and was the first to send ships to California after the discovery of gold. Along with other investors, Sutton is believed to have bought up land on the far east side of Manhattan adjacent to the East River, on the assumption that this would become an affluent locale. This did not occur; the initial architectural development of these riverside blocks in the late 1870s and early 1880s consisted of Neo-Grec style brownstone-fronted flats and row houses. These buildings were typical of the structures erected throughout the city, particularly along the east side of Manhattan, to house middle-class families. By the early 1890s these buildings were not only stylistically out of date, but most had become inexpensive rooming houses.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property slightly less than one acre

Quadrangle name Central Park, N.Y.-N.J.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A	<u>18</u>	<u>587300</u>	<u>4512160</u>
	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

See map

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

NA

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

See continuation sheet

name/title Merrill Hesch

organization NYS Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

date July 1985

street & number Agency Building 1

telephone 518-474-0479

city or town Albany

state New York 12238

# 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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation

date Aug 8, 1985

### For NPS use only

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

Alouise Byer  
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 9/12/85

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Sutton Place Historic District Item number 8 Page 2  
New York County NY

At the turn of the century New York's most affluent citizens were building houses on and just off of Fifth Avenue north of 59th Street. With incomes unrestrained by taxes, the city's financial and social elite were building large and showy mansions which were sumptuously decorated. World War I put a stop to this building. The advent of the income tax, decline in the number of people willing to work as servants, and advances in automotive technology dramatically altered the life-style of wealthy New Yorkers in the post World War I era. The period of grand, often ostentatious private buildings came to an end. As the New York Times reported, "the rich, these days, are not as rich as they used to be--that the bigger their incomes are the more of those incomes goes for taxes....Economy has become the general fashion in all social strata, and there now is little or no humiliation attendant upon the pulling in of horns, the diminution of luxury, a revision to ideas as to what is essential to comfort and happiness."<sup>1</sup> As the large mansions became too expensive to maintain, many were replaced by apartment houses or converted into multiple dwellings.<sup>2</sup> Rather than live in an apartment building, large numbers of the city's affluent upper middle class and upper class chose to move out of New York entirely, settling in the surrounding suburban areas. This change in living habits is reflected in the professional and popular architectural magazines which, during the 1910s and 1920s, illustrated suburban residences almost exclusively. As the Architectural Forum noted in 1924:

Many are leaving [New York] to make their permanent homes in the country, where estates are constantly increasing in size and number, as country life occupies more and more the time and interest of city people.<sup>3</sup>

The affluent urbanite who did not wish to live in a multiple dwelling or move to the suburbs was faced with a dilemma during this period. The large mansions were too expensive to maintain, but apartment living entailed the abridgement of a certain amount of privacy; the smaller houses on the side streets of the East Side were the brownstone-fronted row houses that symbolized all that was ugly about New York. Brownstone had been the facing material for most New York residences erected between about 1850 and the early 1880s and brownstone houses lined the blocks from Greenwich Village north into Harlem. By the 1880s, when stones of varying hues had gained popularity, brownstone was condemned as the scourge of New York. Edith Wharton described the New York of her childhood as "this little low-studded rectangular New York cursed with its universal chocolate-coloured coating of the most hideous stone ever quarried."<sup>4</sup> By the 1920s the press was filled with comments such as that written by Wesley Sherwood Bessell in Architecture:

Years back New York was infested with a blight, now known as the "brownstone era." This blight has been handed down to the present generation of architects as an heirloom. It has existed as a nightmare to the profession who have had to face these monstrous rows of brownstone buildings.<sup>5</sup>

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

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Sutton Place Historic District

Continuation sheet New York County, NY

Item number 8

Page 3

In the second decade of the twentieth century a movement was initiated to redesign the old brownstones, thus making the houses more livable and making New York's streets more "picturesque." There were two major design trends evident during this period--a restrained version of the Colonial Revival or Neo-Georgian style and a streamlined stucco mode. The Colonial Revival style first gained popularity for urban dwellings in the last years of the nineteenth century, primarily through the work of McKim, Mead & White. The earliest of these Colonial Revival houses were red brick structures with stone bases and trim and they were often ornamented with bold three-dimensional detail. Major examples of these buildings in New York City are the James J. Goodwin Houses at 9-11 West 54th Street (1896-98) and the Henry B. Hollins House (1899-1901) at 12-14 West 56th Street. In the second and third decades of the twentieth century, Colonial Revival designs became more refined. The stone trim on these brick houses became more planar and the success of the facade designs often depended on the proportions of the openings and wall surfaces and on the placement of simple, often flat decorative details. Generally, only the main entrance was framed by ornate carved forms. Buildings designed in this "Colonial Revival" style often combined motifs derived from late seventeenth and eighteenth century English architecture, as well as from eighteenth and early nineteenth century American models. The leading New York practitioners of this distilled Colonial Revival style were Mott B. Schmidt and the firm of Delano & Aldrich. These architects and others designed entire new residences in the style as well as new facades for older homes.

A more unusual development of the early decades of the twentieth century was the movement to redesign the facades of the old row houses by stripping off the stoops and all projecting ornament (lintels, window and door enframements, old bracketed cornices, etc.). The facades were then covered with stucco tinted colors such as beige and yellow that were redolent of the Mediterranean villas of Italy and Spain. Like their Colonial Revival style neighbors, these buildings are extremely refined, with large planar areas and modest ornamental touches. These simple, but sophisticated houses have ornament that is generally limited to small flourishes around the entrance and to the addition of iron railings, tile panels, sculpture and similar features. The cultivated design of these buildings is particularly striking when compared to the far more ornate and frequently ostentatious Beaux-Arts style private homes built a generation earlier. They reflect a new elegant and restrained life-style favored by a certain portion of New York's wealthiest citizens. As with the mansions built at the turn of the century, these stucco structures are based on European design precedents; they are closely related to the very restrained and planar Italian villas illustrated in contemporary magazines.<sup>6</sup>

It was not only the exteriors of old houses that were altered. The interiors were redone as well; their decoration echoed the new restraint evident outside. Behind this work was the belief that by "remodeling with individual taste the old high-stoop houses, thus happily and rapidly replacing the monotonous mediocrity of unbroken brownstone fronts,"<sup>7</sup> New York's streets would be beautified and made suitable for wealthy people who wished to remain in New York, but still live in a private home. Termed "miracles of plastic surgery"<sup>8</sup> and likened to "the ugly

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Sutton Place Historic District

Continuation sheet

New York County, NY

Item number 8

Page 4

duckling...growing into a swan,"<sup>9</sup> the movement to redesign old houses swept across the eastern edge of Manhattan, particularly in the area east of Third Avenue from about 48th Street to 65th Street, within walking distance of the offices and shops of Midtown.

This architectural development had its genesis on East 19th Street between Irving Place and Second Avenue in the Gramercy Park Historic District. Known as the "block beautiful," this street of Greek Revival style brick houses and Italianate style brownstone residences erected as middle-class housing in the mid-nineteenth century began to be modernized in the 1910s. Most of the design work on this street was undertaken by architect Frederick Sterner, whose stucco facades ornamented with tile, ceramic, and iron detail are still visible. These buildings were primarily altered into multiple dwellings that attracted moderately successful artists, actors, and other cultured people. This new design idea caught on and soon the city's wealthiest citizens began altering old brownstone houses into new single-family residences. In 1921 the New York Times Magazine noted the revolutionary quality of this movement:

For the first time in the history of respectable cities... the millionaires are moving into the cheap old dwelling houses that were foreordained at their beginnings to harbor, in the relaxation of their evening suspenders, middle-class filing clerks and floor-walkers with tired feet.<sup>10</sup>

The article goes on to report that "a whole new school of architecture [has] been developed as a result of this exodus"; the author labels this style "New Yorkized Venetian."<sup>11</sup>

Most of the facade alterations were undertaken individually by owners who purchased single properties. There were, however, a few large-scale projects. The two most influential of these are the Turtle Bay Gardens Historic District (NR listed 1983) and the Sutton Place Historic District. Turtle Bay was begun in 1919 by a single individual who had twenty mid-nineteenth century houses on East 48th Street and East 49th Street altered into a unified composition with their rear gardens combined and landscaped. The houses were then sold off with protective covenants.<sup>12</sup>

Sutton Place differed from Turtle Bay in that its design was not the work of a single architect. The old houses on Sutton Place and Sutton Square were owned by two parties--Sutton Square, Inc. and George Osborn. The development had a combined landscaped garden and was protected by a single covenant, but each site was sold and developed individually by its purchaser within restrictive guidelines established in 1920. Because of its spectacular riverside setting and the ability of owners to design their own homes, Sutton Place attracted people of the highest social caliber. Sutton Place became the center for the new architectural design and new social lifestyle and it has remained one of the most prominent residential enclaves in New York.

The acceptance of this new way of living by prominent members of such leading

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

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

For NPS use only  
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date entered

Sutton Place Historic District

Continuation sheet

New York County, NY

Item number 8

Page 5

New York families as the Vanderbilt's, Morgan's, and Roosevelt's had a tremendous impact on the redesign of old houses all over the newly fashionable far East Side. It should be noted, however, that while this area attracted people from the leading families of the city, these were people who consciously sought to remove themselves from the traditional social life which centered on Fifth Avenue and Park Avenue. Many of those who moved to Sutton Place were heavily involved in the arts and philanthropy and they were seeking a somewhat artistic, but still distinguished place in which to live. As one New York Times Magazine article commented, the keynotes of Sutton Place and similar areas were "quaintness and artistry...just as correctness is that of Park Avenue."<sup>13</sup>

The block now bounded by 57th Street, Sutton Place, and Sutton Square was ripe for redevelopment in 1920. Not only was the block beautifully sited on the East River, but all but two of the lots were in the same ownership. In February 1920 the executors and trustees of Theodore Schumacher sold their holdings to George Osborn. Soon after, Osborn acquired the remainder of the block. Osborn was involved with real estate as the manager of the Phipps estate and it seems likely that he purchased the block as a financial venture. Several months after the purchase Osborn sold all but three lots to a syndicate known as Sutton Square which was headed by architect Eliot Cross. Osborn retained 1-5 Sutton Place, which he sold individually in 1921.

The Sutton Square syndicate arranged an elaborate plan for the redevelopment of the entire block including the properties retained by Osborn. This plan envisioned the sale of each lot and required the redesign of all of the buildings by their new owners. The entire development was to focus on a rear garden (overlooking the river) which would be in common ownership. All buyers of property had to sign a restrictive covenant. According to the covenant agreement recorded on July 2, 1920, its purpose was "to establish a uniform plan, scheme or restriction respecting the use of the dwelling houses and also respecting the use, embellishment and maintenance of that portion of said block not now in the actual occupation of buildings as a garden or place in common...for the use and benefit of each and every purchaser of any of said dwelling houses."<sup>14</sup> The covenant required that each building be a first class private dwelling that was not more than four stories and basement tall; that each house be occupied by one family (1-5 Sutton Place could be combined into a single four-family residence; however, this did not occur); that each owner pay an annual maintenance for the upkeep of the garden; and that kitchens and laundries be removed from the garden fronts. The most interesting feature of the covenant was the clause that required owners to refinish the front and rear elevations of the old houses by on or about July 1, 1922. The covenant noted that owners had to repaint or refinish the walls, repaint the window sash and frames, and construct ornamental cornices. In addition, all exterior decoration and refinishing was to be approved by the architectural firm of Cross & Cross. It is clear that one of the objectives of the development was to rid the block of the brownstone fronts which were regarded as a blight on the neighborhood.

The architectural firm of Cross & Cross consisted of Eliot Cross (1884-1949), who headed the Sutton Square syndicate, and his older brother John Walter Cross (1878-1951). Soon after establishing their office in 1907 Cross & Cross began

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

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

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Continuation sheet Sutton Place Historic District Item number 8 Page 6  
New York County, NY

to be patronized by socially prominent clients. The firm favored a restrained Colonial Revival idiom in their own designs such as the Links Club (1916, 36-38 East 62nd Street) and several houses within the Upper East Side Historic District. In later years they designed several notable Art Deco style structures including the General Electric Building (1931) at Lexington Avenue and East 51st Street and Tiffany & Co. (1939) at Fifth Avenue and East 57th Street. Eliot Cross had a financial interest in the success of the Sutton Place project as an investor in the syndicate and as the initial mortgagee for most of the early sales (these were later assigned to the New York Trust Company). The design review was undoubtedly established to ensure that no single house was too outlandish or would cheapen the ambiance and quality of the development. Almost immediately, the Sutton Place plan was a success. The development established the area as a prestigious residential section and land values and speculation increased. Soon, investment in the neighborhood rose dramatically and large apartment houses, several designed by Cross & Cross, were built on the surrounding blocks.

The first property sale in the Sutton Place development came on July 2, 1920 when Margaret W. Cammann, wife of importer Henry Lorillard Cammann, purchased 7 Sutton Place. She was followed on July 31, 1920 by Dr. Kenneth Taylor and Dr. Foster Kennedy who purchased 12 and 14 Sutton Square. Three other purchases followed in 1920, but it was not until January 1921 that the social standing of the area was established with the purchase of 1 Sutton Place by Anne H. Vanderbilt, the widow of William K. Vanderbilt, and No. 13 by playwright Elisabeth Marbury, companion to interior designer Elsie de Wolfe, who was also to reside at the house. Other original owners included Anne Morgan, daughter of J. Pierpont Morgan at No. 3; former ambassador to Spain Joseph Willard at No. 9; Laura F. Delano, cousin of Franklin D. Roosevelt, at No. 11; American actor and famous Irish balladeer Chauncey Olcott at No. 17; banker Jabish Holmes, Jr. at No. 19; Simeon Ford, owner of New York's prominent Grand Union Hotel, at No. 21; Dr. Edgar Stillman, a diabetes specialist, at 6 Sutton Square; law professor Joseph Chamberlain at 8 Sutton Square; and Mr. and Mrs. Reredon Havemeyer at 16 Sutton Square. Later residents have included Caroline M. Slade, a leader in the women's suffrage movement, and Marshall Kernochan, composer and head of the Galaxy Music Corporation, both at 7 Sutton Place; Kermit Roosevelt, son of Theodore Roosevelt, a 9 Sutton Place; film star Miriam Hopkins at 13 Sutton Place; Robert Goelet, director of both the American Museum of Natural History and the New-York Historical Society, at 7 Sutton Place; architect I.M. Pei at 11 Sutton Place; and various Secretary Generals of the United Nations at 3 Sutton Place.

The redesign of the Sutton Place row houses began in 1920 with the alterations to the facades of 12 and 14 Sutton Square. These two buildings, one designed in a Neo-Georgian mode and the other in a streamlined Renaissance mode, were the harbingers of the two styles that were to predominate in the historic district. No. 12 was designed by the prestigious firm of Delano & Aldrich and it has a somewhat English flavor. The building is a bit more ornate than most of Delano & Aldrich's oeuvre, but it is an urbane structure, indicative of what was to follow in the area(photo 3). No. 14 was designed by Henry O. Milliken. It is a planar stuccoed building with subtle architectural detailing which includes a rusticated base, a round-arched entrance,

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Inventory—Nomination Form

Sutton Place Historic District

Continuation sheet New York County, NY Item number 8

Page 7

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French windows, and blind fanlights on the second floor.

The redesign of many of the Sutton Place buildings occurred in 1921. Four of the major redesign projects of 1921 were the work of architect Mott B. Schmidt. Schmidt (1889-1977) was born in Middletown, New York and educated at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. He established his architectural office in 1912 and by 1917 he had attracted clients of social prominence. Schmidt was introduced to Sutton Place by his friend Elsie de Wolfe, Elsie de Wolfe, one of the most important and influential interior decorators of the early twentieth century, commissioned Schmidt to redesign the house at 13 Sutton Place. For this fashion leader Schmidt designed an extremely restrained stucco house with simple splayed lintels, a shoulder-arched entrance, and a subtle iron areaway railing (photo 2). The de Wolfe connection accounts for Schmidt's commissions to design the houses of Anne Vanderbilt (1 Sutton Place), Anne Morgan (3 Sutton Place), and Chauncey Olcott (17 Sutton Place). The stuccoed Olcott house (photo 2), which displays splayed lintels with console keystones, a mansard roof, a rusticated base, and a simple iron railing, resembles the Marbury/de Wolfe house in its restrained elegance. The Vanderbilt and Morgan houses reflect Schmidt's interest in Georgian architecture. Both of these houses are new structures that totally replaced the earlier dwellings on their sites. The Vanderbilt house (photo 1,4) replaced a single row house, while the larger Morgan house (photo 1) replaced two older buildings. Anne Vanderbilt's residence has its entrance facing onto 57th Street. The brick door enframingent is reputed to have been inspired by one by Sir Christopher Wren in King's Bend Walk, London.<sup>15</sup> The house was consciously given an "antique" look--the brick was salvaged from the building which previously occupied the site and it was stained in order to tone down its coloration. The Morgan house is of red Harvard brick with white marble trim. The house was built to "recall the old houses of Philadelphia, Salem and New York."<sup>16</sup>

Most of the other houses in the historic district were designed in either the streamlined stucco or Colonial Revival modes used by Schmidt. Nos. 11 and 15 Sutton Place (photo 2) are stucco buildings with subtle detail, while most of the houses on Sutton Square are Colonial Revival in style (photo 3). Of particular note is 6 Sutton Square (photo 3), designed by Murphy & Dana in 1921, with its elegant fanlit entrance. No. 21 Sutton Place (photo 2) is one of the most interesting and important houses in the historic district. It was the first building independently designed by William Lescaze, who became a pioneering American modernist. Designed in 1923, this refined Renaissance-inspired stucco building features monumental Ionic pilasters, broken pediment, volutes, rusticated base, and sculpture niche. This commission made it possible for Lescaze to leave his job in Cleveland and open an architectural office in New York. The streamlined quality of the "distilled modernized classicism"<sup>17</sup> of this design can be seen as a precursor of Lescaze's later moderne buildings.

Several buildings in the historic district have had their facades redesigned more than once. No. 7 Sutton Place, published in 1922, had a somewhat dull Italian Renaissance style stone front designed by William F. Dominick, which was replaced by a more interesting Italian front, designed by Polhemus & Coffin, in 1933-34.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

Sutton Place Historic District

Continuation sheet New York County, NY

Item number 8

Page 8

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Four buildings have facades that are less than fifty years old. These buildings were designed with the same sensibility and use the same materials as the earlier houses. They are non-contributing structures due to age alone.

Each building has a rear elevation that matches the style of the front facade. The upper stories of these garden fronts are visible from 57th Street. The garden itself was layed out in 1920 by Sutton Square, Inc. and has been beautifully maintained ever since. In 1939-45, when the East River Drive was constructed from 49th Street to 92nd Street, the eastern section of the garden (generally the area east of a line extending south from the party wall separating 14 and 16 Sutton Square) was removed, as was the house at 16 Sutton Square. The eastern section of the garden and the house were rebuilt by the city on a platform over the highway.

The Sutton Square district is as successful a residential enclave today as it was in the early 1920s when it was established. The houses continue to attract socially prominent individuals and the houses and communal garden continue to retain a high level of integrity as examples of an early twentieth century urban architectural ideal.

Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>New York Times, January 11, 1921, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>The earliest apartment building on Fifth Avenue north of 59th Street is 998 Fifth Avenue built in 1910-12. Other apartment buildings followed, particularly in the 1920s.

<sup>3</sup>Architectural Forum 41(August 1924) 49.

<sup>4</sup>Quoted in Susan Edmiston and Linda D. Cirino, Literary New York: A History and Guide (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1976), pp. 165-66.

<sup>5</sup>Architecture 43(June 1921) 190.

<sup>6</sup>Examples include the Villa Galileo (Il Giojello) at Pian De'Giullari near Florence, in Architectural Record 48(July 1920) 2; Villa Pazzi (La Vacchia) at Pian De'Giullari, in Architectural Record 48(December 1920) 498; Villa Capponi at Arcetri near Florence, in Architectural Record 49(February 1921) 116.

<sup>7</sup>Architectural Forum 41(August 1924) 49.

<sup>8</sup>Mildred Adams, "The East River Becomes the Fashion," New York Times Magazine, October 16, 1927, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup>Architectural Record 52(November 1922)403.

<sup>10</sup>Helen Bullitt Lowry, "Better Than New," New York Times Magazine, December 11, 1921, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Turtle Bay was designed before the Sutton Place houses, but the covenant was not issued until after the Sutton Place covenant.

United States Department of the Interior  
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**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Sutton Place Historic District

Continuation sheet

New York County, NY

Item number 8

Page 9

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- <sup>13</sup>Adams, p. 4.
- <sup>14</sup>"Agreement and Supplemental Agreement re Garden Assessment, Real Estate Taxes, Alterations, etc. Sutton Square, Inc. with Property Owners. July 1, 1920 (recorded July 2, 1920, liber 3167, p. 432), p.1.
- <sup>15</sup>"Two Notable Houses on Sutton Place, New York: The Homes of Mrs. W.K. Vanderbilt and Miss Anne Morgan," 41(August 1924) 50.
- <sup>16</sup>Ibid, 51.
- <sup>17</sup>Lindsay Stamm Shapiro, "The Early Work 1923-1928," in William Lescaze, Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies, Catalogue 16 (NY: Rizzoli, 1982), p. 8.

United States Department of the Interior  
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National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

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Sutton Place Historic District  
Continuation sheet New York County, NY Item number 9 Page 2

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Sq., New York City," Architectural Record 52(November 1922) 402-14.

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(February 13, 1924) No. 2439.

Lowry, Helen Bullitt, "Better Than New," New York Times Magazine. December 11, 1921,  
Section III, part 2, pp. 4-5.

New York Times, July 25, 1920, VIII, p.1; January 9, 1921, p.1; January 11, 1921, p.10;  
January 23, 1921, VIII, p.1; March 10, 1921, p.3; October 15, 1921, p.13;  
October 23, 1921, IX, p.1; November 27, 1921, p.5.

"Two Notable Houses on Sutton Place, New York: The Homes of Mrs. W.K. Vanderbilt  
and Miss Anne Morgan," Architectural Forum 41(August 1924) 49, plates 17-24.

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National Park Service**

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

Sutton Place Historic District

Continuation sheet    New York County, NY    Item number    11

Page    2

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Report prepared by:

Andrew Scott Dolkart  
201 West 92nd Street--Apt. 3F  
New York, NY 10025



85002294

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Sutton Place Historic District  
New York County  
NEW YORK

Working No. AUG 14 1985  
Fed. Reg. Date: 2-4-86  
Date Due: 9/12/85 - 9/28/85  
Action:  ACCEPT 9-12-85  
 RETURN  
 REJECT  
Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Entered in the  
National Register

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review:  sample  request  appeal  NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria \_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_  
Discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for:  technical corrections cited below  
 substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category Ownership Status Present Use  
Public Acquisition Accessible

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

7. Description

Condition

- excellent
- good
- fair
- deteriorated
- ruins
- unexposed

Check one

- unaltered
- altered

Check one

- original site
- moved date \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

---

**8. Significance**

Period \_\_\_\_\_ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates \_\_\_\_\_ Builder/Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

SEARCHED \_\_\_\_\_ INDEXED \_\_\_\_\_  
SERIALIZED \_\_\_\_\_ FILED \_\_\_\_\_  
JUN 1 1981  
FBI - WASH DC

---

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

---

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification \_\_\_\_\_

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

---

**12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification**

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_\_ national    \_\_\_\_ state    \_\_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

---

**13. Other**

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



W. SUTTON ST  
E. 116th ST

PASSENGER  
CARS ONLY

Photo 1  
Sutton Place Historic District  
New York County, NY  
1-9 Sutton Place, view from southwest  
Photo: A. Dolkart 7/85  
Neg: 201 West 92nd Street NYC



Photo 2

Sutton Place Historic District  
New York County, NY

Sutton Place, east side between  
Sutton Square and East 57th Street  
(Nos. 1-17--from right to left),  
view from northwest

Photo: A. Dolkart 7/85

Neg: 201 West 92nd Street NYC



Photo 3

Sutton Place Historic District

New York County, NY

6-16 Sutton Square, view from northwest

Photo: A. Dolkart 7/85

Neg: 201 West 92nd Street NYC



Photo 4

Sutton Place Historic District

New York County, NY

11-21 Sutton Place, ground floors

and entrances, view from southwest

Photo: A. Dolkart 7/85

Neg: 201 West 92nd Street NYC



Photo 5

Sutton Place Historic District

New York County, NY

1 Sutton Place entrance, view from south

Photo: A. Dolkart 7/85

Neg: 201 West 92nd Street NYC



Photo 6

Sutton Place Historic District

New York County, NY

9 Sutton Place, view from northwest

Non-contributing due to age

Photo: A. Dolkart 7/85

Neg: 201 West 92nd Street NYC



Photo 7

Sutton Place Historic District

New York County, NY

19 Sutton Place, view from west

Non-contributing due to age

Photo: A. Dolkart 7/85

Neg: 201 West 92nd Street NYC



Photo 8

Sutton Place Historic District

New York County NY

10 Sutton Square, view from northwest

Non-contributing due to age

Photo: A. Dolkart 7/85

Neg: 201 West 92nd Street NYC



SUTTON 50

Herbert

Photo 9

Sutton Place Historic District

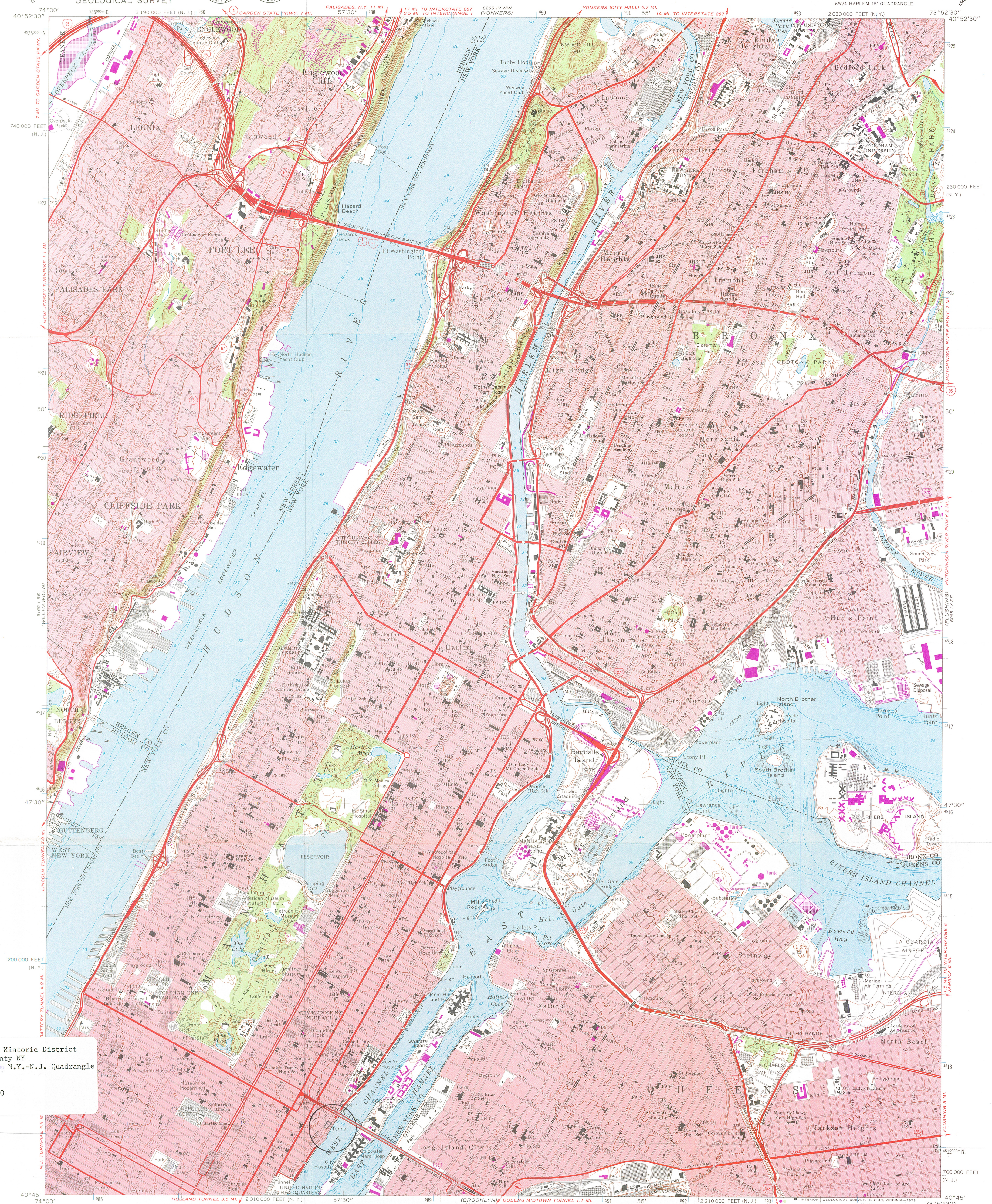
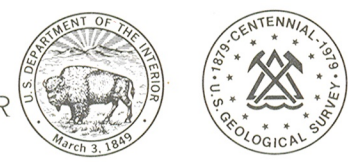
New York County NY

16 Sutton Square, view from north

Non-contributing due to age

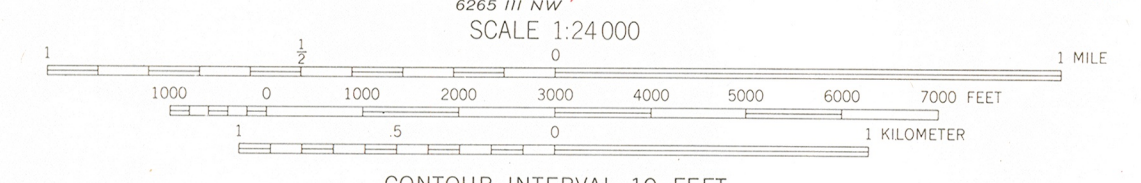
Photo: A. Dolkart 7/85

Neg: 201 West 92nd Street NYC



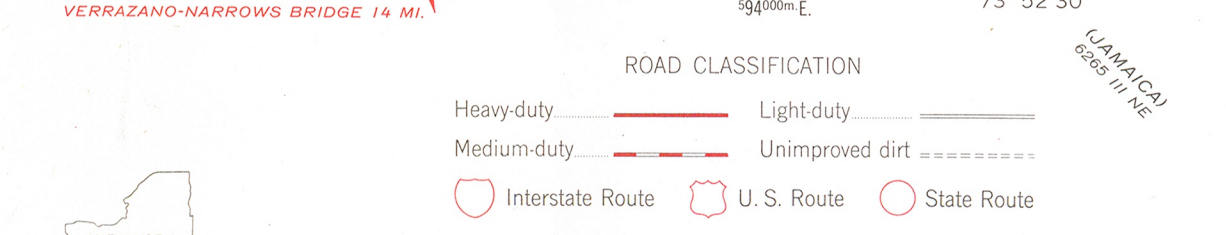
Sutton Place Historic District  
New York County NY  
Central Park N.Y.-N.J. Quadrangle  
Zone 1C  
East 587300  
North 4512160

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Revised in cooperation with New York  
Department of Transportation  
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and New Jersey Geodetic Survey  
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods and from USC&GS Charts T-4567,  
T-5089, T-5264, T-5278, T-5448, T-5449, T-5451, T-5452, T-5453, T-5458,  
and T-5778. Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
taken 1954 and planimetric surveys 1956.  
Revised from aerial photographs taken 1966. Field checked 1966  
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Charts 226, 274, 745,  
746, and 747 (1966). This information is not intended for navigational purposes  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grids based on New York coordinate system, Long Island zone,  
and New Jersey coordinate system  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18, shown in blue  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER  
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE  
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER  
THE AVERAGE RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 2 FEET  
4 FEET IN THE HUDSON RIVER AND 5.7 FEET IN THE EAST RIVER

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



QUADRANGLE LOCATION  
NEW YORK

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs  
taken 1977 and other source data. This information  
not field checked. Map edited 1979  
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of  
the National or State reservations shown on this map

CENTRAL PARK, N. Y.—N. J.  
SW/4 HARLEM 15' QUADRANGLE  
N4045—W7352.5/7.5  
1966  
PHOTOREVISED 1979  
AMS 6265 IV SW—SERIES V821

DIXON R. BROWN

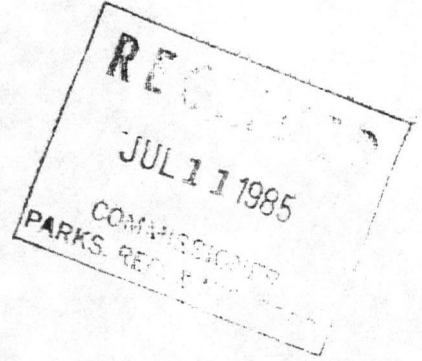
P. O. Box 57

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA 15230

June 26, 1985

REGISTERED MAIL

Mr. Orin Lehman  
New York State Historic Preservation Officer  
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau  
Agency Building #1  
Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza  
Albany, New York 12238



Dear Mr. Lehman:

RE: ONE SUTTON PLACE  
Sutton Place Historic District  
1-21, 4-16 Sutton Place  
Manhattan, N. Y. County

I am writing in reference to your June 11, 1985 letter to Mr. Henry J. Heinz II concerning the above noted property, a private residence.

Pursuant to instructions contained in your letter and on behalf of Mr. Heinz, I hereby submit this notarized objection to nomination of the Sutton Place area as an Historic District on the State and National Registers of Historic Places because of the risk of adverse economic consequence to the owners of properties in this area.

Sincerely,

*Dixon R. Brown*

Attorney-In-Fact  
for Mr. Henry J. Heinz II

State of Pennsylvania  
County of Allegheny

On this, the 27th day of June, 1985, before me *Susan M. Koontz*, the undersigned officer, personally appeared, Dixon R. Brown, known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the within instrument, and acknowledged that he executed the same for the purposes therein contained.

In witness whereof, I hereunto set my hand and official seal.

*Susan M. Koontz*  
*Notary Public*  
Notary Public

SUSAN M KOONTZ NOTARY PUBLIC  
PITTSBURGH ALLEGHENY COUNTY  
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES SEPT 1 1988  
Member Pennsylvania Association of Notaries