

RED HOOK PLAY CENTER (SOL GOLDMAN POOL), 155 BAY STREET, BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN, including the bath house, swimming pool, former diving (now wading) pool, bleachers, comfort station, storage house, perimeter brick and steel fencing, and landscaped seating areas flanking the northern end of the pool complex, Bay Street between Henry Street and Clinton Street, Brooklyn.

Constructed 1934-36; Joseph L. Hautman and others, Architect; Aymar Embury II, Consulting Architect.

Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn, Tax Map Block 582, Lot 1, and portions of the adjacent public way, consisting of the property bounded by a line extending northerly from the intersection of the western curbline of Clinton Street and the northern curbline of Bay Street to the southern curbline of Lorraine Street, westerly along the southern curbline of Lorraine Street to the eastern curbline of Henry Street, southerly along the eastern curbline of Henry Street to the northern curbline of Bay Street, and easterly along the northern curbline of Bay Street to the point of beginning.

On January 30, 2007, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool) (LP-2241) including the former diving (now wading) pool, bleachers, comfort station, storage house, perimeter brick and steel fencing, and landscaped seating areas flanking the northern end of the pool complex. Seven witnesses spoke in favor of designation, including Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe and representatives of the Municipal Art Society of New York, the Historic Districts Council, the Society for the Architecture of the City, and the New York Landmarks Conservancy. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. The Commission also received a letter in support of designation from Councilmember Sara M. Gonzalez. Several of the speakers and letters also expressed support for the larger designation effort of all the WPA-era pools.¹

Summary

The Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool) is one of a group of eleven immense outdoor swimming pools opened in the summer of 1936 in a series of grand ceremonies presided over by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia and Parks Commissioner Robert Moses. All of the pools were constructed largely with funding provided by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), one of many New Deal agencies created in the 1930s to address the Great Depression. Designed to accommodate a total of 49,000 users simultaneously at locations scattered throughout New York City's five boroughs, the new pool complexes quickly gained recognition as being among the most remarkable public facilities constructed in the country. The pools were completed just two and a half years after the LaGuardia administration took office, and all but one survives relatively intact today.

While each of the 1936 swimming pool complexes is especially notable for its distinctive and unique design, the eleven



facilities shared many of the same basic components. The complexes generally employed low-cost building materials, principally brick and cast concrete, and often utilized the streamlined and curvilinear forms of the popular 1930s Art Moderne style. Each had separate swimming, diving and wading pools, and a large bath house with locker room sections which doubled as gymnasiums in non-swimming months. Perimeter seating and rooftop promenades and galleries furnished ample spectator viewing areas. The complexes were also distinguished by innovative mechanical systems required for heating, filtration and water circulation. Sited in existing older parks or built on other city-owned land, the grounds surrounding the pool complexes were executed on a similarly grand scale.

The team of designers, landscape architects and engineers assembled to execute the new pool complexes, in addition to hundreds of other construction and rehabilitation projects undertaken between 1934 and 1936 by New York's newly consolidated Parks Department, was comprised largely of staff members and consultants who had earlier worked for Moses at other governmental agencies, including architect Aymar Embury II, landscape architects Gilmore D. Clarke and Allyn R. Jennings, and civil engineers W. Earle Andrews and William H. Latham. Surviving documents also indicate that Moses, himself a long-time swimming enthusiast, gave detailed attention to the designs for the new pool complexes.

Designed by Joseph L. Hautman, the Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool) is set on a landfill site located on Brooklyn's waterfront between the former Erie Basin and the Gowanus Canal. Uniquely situated on reclaimed waterfront property, the Red Hook Play Center was the first major accomplishment in the Parks Department's plan to transform a large swath of the industrial waterfront into a modern recreational area. Just three years after the pool's completion, its physical setting was remarkably altered with the construction of the Red Hook Houses, the 20-building federally funded public housing project that rose directly to the north of the Red Hook Play Center. Designed to accommodate 4,462 people, the Red Hook Play Center officially opened on August 17, 1936 and became the eleventh and last WPA pool to open in New York City and the fourth to open in Brooklyn.

The streamlined and classically-inspired form of the Art Moderne bath house met the low-cost criteria stipulated by the WPA while still presenting an attractive design. The long, low design of the C-shaped bath house emphasizes the characteristic horizontality of the style, accentuated by horizontal bands of windows, contrasting cast-stone coping, and long cast-stone sills and lintels. The bath house arcades as well as the segmental-arch openings on the comfort station and storage house also contribute to the horizontality of the structure. The sharp, elemental quality of the monumental arches and buttresses that dominate the three primary bath house facades presents a distinctly modern interpretation of classical architectural forms, while the rounded door and window jambs, gently sloping buttresses, and stepped brickwork are characteristic of the Art Moderne style. The formal symmetry of the entire complex can be appreciated from all angles, both within the pool enclosure and outside of it.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

History of the Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool) Site²

The Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool) is located in the Red Hook section of Brooklyn on a landfill site between the Red Hook Recreational Center and the Gowanus Bay. Red Hook was first settled by Native Americans, who named the area Ihepetonga, meaning a high point of sandy soil. The Dutch “bought” the land from the Native Americans in 1636³ and named it Red Hook (Roode Hoek in Dutch) for the reddish color of its soil and the shape of the peninsula that juts out into New York Harbor. Red Hook became part of the town of Brooklyn in 1657, by order of Governor Peter Stuyvesant.⁴

The 19th century ushered in an era of intense commercial development for Red Hook, and by the time of the Civil War its waterfront had become an international port and the busiest shipping center in the nation. In the 1840s, entrepreneurs like Colonel Daniel Richards, James S.T. Stranahan of the Atlantic Dock Company, and railroad contractor William Beard began to build the Atlantic and Erie Basins, completed in 1850 and 1864, respectively. These were massive dock basins lined with wharves, brick and stone warehouses, or “stores,” and grain silos and grain elevators designed to receive, store, and transfer ship cargo.⁵ In 1848 the New York State Legislature allocated funding for the conversion of the Gowanus Creek into a commercial canal that would link the Midwestern grain barges, arriving in Red Hook’s Erie Basin via the Erie Canal, with markets in downtown Brooklyn. At the height of its industrial capacity, the 1.5-mile Gowanus Canal saw as many as 26,000 barge passages in the span of one year.⁶

Red Hook’s growth as a community was driven by the shipping industry, and its population in the 19th and early 20th centuries was characterized by various European immigrant groups who came to the area in search of jobs as dockworkers: first Irish, German, and Norwegian, and later Italian and Puerto Rican immigrants. By the 1920s, the Columbia Street area was a recognized Little Italy.⁷ African-American longshoremen began working Red Hook’s docks as early as the 1890s.⁸ Red Hook’s dockworkers lived in speculatively built rowhouses, many of them converted into boarding houses. Squatters contributed to Red Hook’s negative image: in the 1880s, a community of 2,000 squatters lived, along with several hundred head of livestock, in a shanty town known as “Slab City” located between Hamilton Avenue on the east and the waterfront on the north, west, and south.⁹ By the early twentieth century, Red Hook’s seedy reputation had been solidified by stories of the rowdy sailors who frequented the taverns along Smith Street, the violent scuffles between “gashouse” gangs, and finally the emergence of the Mafia and organized crime in the 1920s. Suffering from this poor reputation, Red Hook became the target of municipal social welfare efforts during the Great Depression. Opened in 1936, 1939, and 1940, respectively, the Red Hook Play Center, the Red Hook Houses, and the Red Hook Recreational Area were the products of this public investment.¹⁰

The Red Hook Play Center is located on a landfill site bordered by the Red Hook Houses on the north, the Red Hook Recreational Area on the west, the Henry Street Slip (known alternately as the Brooklyn or Henry Street Basin) on the south, and the mouth of the Gowanus Canal on the east. The Red Hook Play Center was originally named for the surrounding area, and it was one of only two of the 11 WPA pools opened in 1936 that was not constructed in an established or enlarged park.¹¹

An 1886 insurance map shows that although the street grid and tax lots had been mapped, the site was still mostly underwater. By 1904, the site had been filled and the waterline pushed back. In 1913 the city’s Sinking Fund Commission acquired a tract of land that included the pool site for the purposes of constructing a freight railroad terminal,¹² but it appears that the pool site itself was used as a baseball field from 1915 until approximately 1929. Early in 1934 the tract was turned over to the Parks Department to become part of a large outdoor recreational area planned for the waterfront between the Erie Basin and the Gowanus Bay. Controversy ensued when Langdon W. Post, the Municipal Housing Authority’s Tenement Commissioner, declared that the site would be needed for the 38-acre housing development for which the city had just secured federal funding.¹³ However, 15 acres of the urban renewal area were eventually given back to the Parks Department so that it could move forward with its plan.¹⁴ Parks Commissioner Moses stated that the Red Hook Recreational Area would be a “valuable adjunct to the housing development.”¹⁵ An outdoor swimming pool would

constitute the first phase of the plan, while the second phase would include an athletic field, a circular running track, bleachers, a field house, tennis courts, basketball courts and hockey fields. Public bathing was not new to Red Hook; the Parks Department had apparently maintained a floating pool at the foot of Conover Street during the early 1900s.¹⁶ A press release dated July 23, 1934 first publicized the location of the new pool, and by March 1936 construction of the one-million dollar Red Hook Play Center was well underway.¹⁷

Fiorello LaGuardia, Robert Moses and the New Deal¹⁸

Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected President of the United States in 1932 in the middle of the Great Depression that followed the stock market crash of 1929. Roosevelt promised to rebuild confidence in American capitalism and to improve the nation's standard of living by creating the New Deal economic program of unprecedented public spending on social programs and construction projects.

New York City had been especially hard hit by the economic downturn,¹⁹ and its citizens, hoping for change, elected Fiorello H. LaGuardia to the mayoralty of New York City in 1933 as an anti-Tammany Hall reform candidate. A maverick Republican and a five-term congressman from East Harlem, LaGuardia won the mayoral election on the "Fusion" ticket after losing the 1929 mayoral race on the Republican line. The Fusion Conference Committee at first considered running Robert Moses, another Republican, who was appointed Chairman of the New York State Council of Parks in 1924 by his political mentor, Governor Alfred E. Smith, a Tammany Hall Democrat from New York City. However, the committee decided against Moses because of his association with Smith, and chose LaGuardia instead. At the time, Moses was a popular public figure with a reputation as a progressive and as the builder of great parks and parkways like Jones Beach and the Northern State Parkway on Long Island. His endorsement of LaGuardia during the campaign was considered instrumental in securing a victory for LaGuardia. Within a week of the election, LaGuardia chose Moses, a champion of reform politics, as New York City's new Park Commissioner.

Moses accepted the position of Commissioner of Parks in the LaGuardia administration on the condition that the five existing independent Parks Departments (one for each borough) would be consolidated into a single department with himself as the sole Commissioner, with authority also extending over the City's parkways. Moses also demanded that he be appointed the Chief Executive Officer of the Triborough Bridge Authority, which was then building the bridge of that name, and that a new agency, the Marine Parkway Authority, which would build a bridge to the Rockaways, be created with himself at the helm. Already in charge of the Long Island State Park Commission, the New York City Council of Parks, the Jones Beach State Park Authority, and the Bethpage State Park Authority, Moses thus gained control of all existing and proposed parks and parkways in New York City and many others in the metropolitan region.

In the 1920s, Moses was at the forefront of the national recreation movement that began in the first decade of the twentieth century, led by such men as President Theodore Roosevelt and the lesser-known George D. Butler of the National Recreation Association. The movement gained momentum under the administration of President Calvin Coolidge with the organization of the National Conference on Outdoor Recreation (NCOR) in 1924.²⁰ The Depression of the 1930s further amplified the need to provide more, or improve existing, outdoor recreational opportunities, especially in urban areas. Fortunately, such goals fit nicely into FDR's New Deal economic programs. Mayor LaGuardia's success in securing a lion's share of monies made available by the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA), and Moses' management skills and his ability to attract talented designers and engineers to his staff, resulted in profound physical changes to the environment of New York City. The construction and renovation of neighborhood recreation areas, such as pools and playgrounds, were some of the most ambitious and successful programs undertaken by Moses with funds largely provided by the WPA.

Moses began to assess the state of the City's parks and to plan for their future as soon as LaGuardia announced his intention to appoint Moses as Park Commissioner. According to one source: "Immediately after the election he wrote out, on a single piece of paper, a plan for putting 80,000 men to work on 1,700 relief projects."²¹ Moses hired a consulting engineer and three assistant engineers to

survey every park and parkway in the City. The survey was completed by the time he took office in mid-January 1934.

When Moses took over the Parks Department, it was already employing 69,000 relief workers funded mainly by the federal Civil Works Administration (CWA) and the Temporary Emergency Relief Administration (TERA). However, Moses found the men to be ill-equipped and inadequately supervised, and considered many of the construction projects to have been poorly designed. He immediately began to revamp the entire operation of the Parks Department and established a Division of Design, located at the Arsenal in Central Park. The staff was to be headed up by experienced professionals drawn mainly from his State agencies. Some of his talented staff of young architects, landscape architects and engineers had worked on the designs for Long Island's highly acclaimed parks, including Jones Beach, which he considered one of Moses' greatest accomplishments. His staff also included a number of well-known and accomplished designers, among them architects Aymar Embury II and John M. Hatton, and the landscape architect and civil engineer Gilmore D. Clarke. Other top members of Moses' staff were the landscape architect Allyn R. Jennings, and civil engineers W. Earle Andrews and William H. Latham.

The Parks Department's Division of Design comprised a topographical unit of about 400 surveyors and draftsmen, a landscape architecture unit of about sixty people, an architecture unit of sixty architects and draftsmen, and an engineering unit of about fifty. Smaller units included an Arboricultural Department and an Inspection Department. All the work in the Division of Design was under the direct supervision of the Park Engineer, who was aided and advised by a Consulting Architect, a Consulting Landscape Architect, and a Consulting Engineer.²² All new projects began in the topographical unit, where a complete survey of the land was prepared. It then moved on to the landscaping unit, where the basic concept for the design was developed. Next, landscape, architecture, and engineering units collaborated to produce the final design and all the necessary construction documents. The Park Engineer and his aides had to approve all of the plans. Moses himself sometimes stepped in to revise or overrule a design, especially on the larger, more visible projects.

Moses' superior management ability and political savvy allowed him to move projects along very quickly and to produce concrete results, gaining for him much public admiration. However, Moses' personal demeanor was notoriously stubborn and arrogant, and he was known, at times, to disregard the legitimate authority of other governmental agencies. Once, when the Department of Plant and Structures refused to suspend a ferry service that used a terminal in the path of the proposed Triborough Bridge approach road, Moses had his men demolish the terminal while the boat was on the other side of the river. He feuded with President Franklin D. Roosevelt for years, even while Washington was pouring millions of dollars into Moses' own Parks Department. His later battles with and subsequent triumphs over community groups opposed to the routing of the Gowanus and the Cross-Bronx Expressways through their neighborhoods are now legendary. Moses was also known to have been insensitive to people of color, reputedly tried to restrict access to many of his recreational facilities, including the WPA-era pools.²³

To many, Robert Moses was a master builder who helped modernize New York City's infrastructure; to others his policies led to the destruction of many distinctive neighborhoods. In the summer of 1934, however, Moses was a hero. Hundreds of projects, covering virtually every neighborhood in the city, had been completed. Structures were repainted, tennis courts resurfaced, and lawns reseeded. Hundreds of new construction projects were either already underway in the process of being designed.²⁴ Among them was the Red Hook Play Center in Brooklyn.

History of Swimming in New York City²⁵

The Hudson and East Rivers lining the shores of Manhattan both served as popular bathing spots dating to the Colonial era. Despite extensive contamination resulting from decades of unchecked pollution, the long tradition of swimming in New York City's rivers was still strong at the middle of the nineteenth century. Out of concern for the health and welfare of the people of the city, and particularly of immigrant populations who took the most advantage of the rivers, the city opened its first floating pools in 1870. The floating pools, however, were essentially wood-framed structures suspended on pontoons, filled with the same unfiltered river water. By the turn of the century, there

were about two dozen of these floating pools moored at various places along the waterfront, competing directly with industry for the space. Some improvements were eventually made to the floating pool concept, for example by 1914, the pools were required to be watertight and filled with purified water. Nonetheless, as river quality continued to erode, and access to nearby beaches improved, the floating pools gradually disappeared.

In 1891, New York City's first public bath was opened on the Lower East Side of Manhattan by the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, one of several charitable organizations operating bath houses for a small fee. Following passage of an 1895 state law requiring cities with populations of 50,000 or more to construct free public baths, the City of New York opened the Rivington Street Bath in 1901. By 1914, thirteen City-operated bath houses had been constructed in Manhattan, mostly sited within immigrant neighborhoods where overcrowded tenements lacked indoor plumbing. These shower and bathtub facilities, however, were never very popular with the working class, and swimming pools and gymnasias eventually were added to some public baths in hopes of attracting more patrons (most bath houses erected after 1905 included these features in their original designs). The indoor pools at the bath houses never quite replaced the need or demand for outdoor swimming facilities in the city, and by the 1930s, it was clear that they had not aged well.

When Robert Moses became Park Commissioner in 1934, only two City-owned public outdoor pools existed, one at Betsy Head in Brownsville, Brooklyn, and the other at Faber Park on Staten Island. Moses, however, considered the Betsy Head pool "unsanitary" and often lamented its "unattractive, inadequate, and impractical bath houses."²⁶ Moses, a strong believer in the need for safe bathing in the city, consulted with the heads of the New York City Health and Sanitation Department in July 1934. Finding that only an increase in the number of swimming pools could ease the existing burden, Moses wrote the following in a press release picked up by the *New York Times*:

It is no exaggeration to say that the health, happiness, efficiency and orderliness of a large number of the city's residents, especially in the summer months, are tremendously affected by the presence or absence of adequate swimming and bathing facilities. We are providing additional wading pools for children as fast as we can...This, however, does not meet the problem of any but small children...It is one of the tragedies of New York life, and a monument to past indifference, waste, selfishness and stupid planning, that the magnificent natural boundary waters of the city have been in large measure destroyed for recreational purposes by haphazard industrial and commercial developments, and by pollution through sewage, trade and other waste...We must frankly recognize the conditions as they are and make our plans accordingly...²⁷

To Moses, a forerunner in the national recreation movement and an avid swimmer since his university days, a change was desperately needed, and by October 1934, excavations had already begun for the first of eleven state-of-the-art swimming pools. The pools were to be sited near inner-city neighborhoods in order to provide swimming for those who could not easily reach places like Orchard Beach or the beaches of Long Island. In addition to swimming pools, the new centers would incorporate elaborate bath houses, and also provide active adult sport areas, children's playgrounds, and other amenities. The eleven pools opened in the summer of 1936 and quickly gained recognition as being among the most exceptional public facilities constructed in the country.²⁸ All of the pools featured new bath houses, with the exception of Hamilton Fish and Betsy Head.²⁹ After the completion of the WPA-era pool complexes, no new public swimming pools were constructed in New York City until the 1970s. Over 1.65 million bathers are thought to have used the new swimming pools in their first summer.

The Swimming Pools, Moses, and Segregation in New York City³⁰

Institutionalized racism was still an established way of life in the United States during the inter-war years, even on the federal level. For example, as a result of federal guidelines articulated in the 1935 Federal Housing Administration Underwriting Manual, it was impossible for non-segregated developments to attain mortgage insurance, meaning ethnic and even religious minorities could only

secure mortgages in certain areas. The result was a substantial increase in both racial segregation and urban disinvestment in cities across the country, New York included. At its peak, estimates of segregation in public housing nationwide ran as high as 90 percent due in large part to both federal and local government policies.³¹ Even as late as 1943, the City of New York gave its approval for Metropolitan Life's all-white, middle income projects – Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village.

Similar to many people of his era, Robert Moses was also known to have been insensitive to people of color, an attitude which may have impacted both the siting and administration of the WPA-era pools. LaGuardia and Moses often went to great lengths to show the media that they did care about minorities, holding, for example, a celebration for 25,000 people upon the opening of the Colonial Park pool, at which the mayor offered the facility as proof that his administration was in fact “building and doing things for Harlem.”³² Although LaGuardia and Moses claimed they were siting pools in the most congested areas of the city, Colonial Park in Harlem remained the only one sited in a predominantly “non-white” neighborhood. Moreover, the Thomas Jefferson Park pool, located in East Harlem (LaGuardia's old congressional district) was close to Spanish Harlem where the city's growing Puerto Rican population was settling. To discourage minority use at this facility, Moses reputedly kept the water heating system turned off, believing that the cold water would not bother Caucasian swimmers, but would somehow deter non-whites.³³

It has been alleged that the Parks Department at the time had an active policy of hiring only white lifeguards and attendants in hopes of deterring minority patrons. Whether or not such directives came from Moses himself, the fact remains that the pools were largely segregated at the time of their opening. In the Pulitzer Prize winning biography, *The Power Broker*, Robert Caro writes that “one could go to the [Thomas Jefferson] pool on the hottest summer days, when the slums of Negro and Spanish Harlem a few blocks away sweltered in the heat, and not see a single non-Caucasian face.”³⁴ Similarly, oral histories relating to Betsy Head Pool tell of an unwritten rule that “African-Americans could swim in the Brooklyn pool only in the late afternoon, after white residents had vacated the premises.”³⁵ Such claims are supported by photographs and video footage from the era, showing that largely, white and black New Yorkers swam in different pools.³⁶ For a handful of sites, however, including the Highbridge and Colonial Park Play Centers in Manhattan, as well as McCarren Play Center in Brooklyn, photographs and video footage seem to indicate that, on occasion, the populations did mix.³⁷

The Design and Construction of the Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool) ³⁸

The Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool) is one of a group of eleven immense outdoor swimming pools opened in the summer of 1936 in a series of grand ceremonies presided over by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia and Park Commissioner Robert Moses. All of the pools were constructed largely with funding provided by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), one of many New Deal agencies created in the 1930s to address the Great Depression. Designed to accommodate a total of 49,000 users simultaneously at locations scattered throughout New York City's five boroughs, the new pool complexes quickly gained recognition as being among the most remarkable public facilities ever constructed in the country. The city's pool construction program was reported to have been the most expensive in terms of total cost. Robert Moses, an avid swimmer who had a home near the ocean in Babylon, Long Island, was known to have taken a special interest in the design and construction of bathing and swimming facilities, such as Jones Beach, Orchard Beach and Riis Park, as well as the neighborhood swimming pools.³⁹ As a result of his special attention, along with that of Aymar Embury II and Gilmore D. Clarke, the design and execution of New York City's aquatic facilities in the 1930s were a cut above most other park projects at the time.

At the start, the Parks Department adopted a list of shared guidelines for the entire pool project in order to enhance the efficiency of the design effort, to unify the operations of each complex, and to meet the various local and federal requirements of the relief programs. For example, each pool complex was to have separate swimming, diving and wading pools, and a large bath house, the locker room sections of which doubled as gymnasiums during non-swimming months. The bath houses, which would serve as the centerpieces of each complex, would be distinctive pavilions that would establish the design motif of each facility. Concrete bleachers at the perimeter of the pools would furnish spectator viewing areas to be augmented at some sites with rooftop promenades and galleries. There would be a minimum width for the

decks to provide enough room for sunbathing and circulation, and at least one dimension of each swimming pool would have to be a multiple of fifty-five yards to allow swimming competitions to be held at standard distances in either English or metric systems. There had to be underwater lighting for night swimming, and heating for the pools. Plus, the complexes had to share low-cost building materials, principally brick and cast concrete, as required by the federal government as per the terms of the WPA funding.

To satisfy federal stipulation on low-cost materials, it appears that the design team for the pools determined that the streamlined and curvilinear forms of the Art Moderne and Modern Classical styles would best meet the low-cost needs and still permit pleasing aesthetics. As a group, the pools were also distinguished by the innovative mechanical systems required to heat, filter, and circulate the vast amounts of water they used. Many of these innovations set new standards for swimming pool construction, such as scum gutters that allowed in enough sunlight to naturally kill off bacteria and a series of footbaths filled with foot cleaning solution through which bathers were forced to pass upon entering the pool areas from the locker rooms. Despite the fact that the basic components were essentially the same and that the WPA required that only inexpensive materials be used, each of these swimming pool complexes is especially notable for its distinctive and unique setting, appearance, and character.

In October 1934, the Parks Department announced the start of excavations and site work for several of the new pools. The Red Hook Play Center site presented the designers with a virtual “blank slate,” given that it would require virtually no demolition and, unlike the nine other pools sited in existing parks, would be constructed in advance of the recreational area and park that would eventually surround it. Another unique feature of the pool site was the planned location of the wading pool outside of the main pool enclosure, on a site directly north of the pool complex across Lorraine Street. Plans for the Red Hook Play Center were filed at the New York City Department of Buildings beginning in the spring of 1936, including drawings for a large swimming pool, adjacent diving and wading pools, and two L-shaped brick bath houses that could accommodate 4,462 bathers. The year 1936 was known as “the swimming pool year,” since ten of the eleven pools were opened that summer, one per week for ten weeks.⁴⁰ Each opening day was a memorable event for its neighborhood; the day-long events featured parades, blessings of the waters, swimming races, diving competitions, appearances by Olympic stars, and performances by swimming clowns. Mayor LaGuardia attended every opening to perform the ribbon cutting. Festivities continued well after dusk with LaGuardia pulling the switch to turn on each pool’s spectacular underwater lighting to the “oooohs” of the crowds. The opening ceremony of the Red Hook Play Center on the evening of August 17, 1936 marked the eleventh and last WPA pool to open throughout New York City; nearly 40,000 people gathered for the ceremony, 6,500 of them squeezed inside the pool enclosure to hear speeches given by the mayor and Brooklyn Borough President Raymond V. Ingersoll, among others. Mayor LaGuardia spoke, praising Moses’ ability to secure federal funding for public works, and admonishing the children listening to “please use the pool in the morning and don’t pester your mothers for dimes to go swimming in the afternoon, because dimes are scarce nowadays.”⁴¹ Intended to be used throughout the year, plans to convert the main pool for winter use were drawn up: the pool was to be drained, temporary wood stairs were to be installed, benches were to be placed along the inside perimeter, and handball, paddle tennis, basketball, volleyball and shuffleboard courts were to be added.

Long after its opening, the Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool) continued to be a popular social center for the residents of Red Hook. Together with the remaining WPA-era pools, the Red Hook Play Center is one of the major achievements of the New Deal in New York City.

The Designers Behind the Planning of Red Hook Play Center⁴²

The eleven WPA-era pool facilities shared many common features and specifications that could be repeated at each site, and contained other elements that were similar from complex to complex. As a result, junior designers, having different areas of expertise, appear to have moved quickly among the various pool projects. The department produced designs and construction documents simultaneously with great speed so that eleven pools and hundreds of other park projects, including some massive undertakings like Orchard Beach, were completed within a few years. Aymar Embury II and Gilmore D.

Clarke, respectively the Parks Department's Consulting Architect and Consulting Landscape Architect, were employed by the City on a part-time basis to oversee designs for park projects under Robert Moses. William H. Latham, the head of the Division of Design at the time, was the Park Engineer, responsible for the preparation of all plans and specifications within the department. Major design problems were discussed by Embury and Clarke before the preliminary sketches were made under Latham's direction. Completed sketches were subject to approval by the Park Engineer, the General Superintendent, and Commissioner Moses. The consultants would give regular criticism during the preparations of the plans.

Aymar Embury II (1880-1966) was born in New York City and studied engineering at Princeton University, where he received a Master of Science degree in 1901. He acquired his architectural training through apprenticeships with three New York firms: George B. Post, Howells and Stokes, and Palmer and Hornbostel. He also worked for Cass Gilbert. In 1905, Embury won both first and second prize in a contest held by the Garden City Company for a modest country house to be built in Garden City, Long Island. This gained for him a reputation as a talented designer, and led to many commissions for country houses in the New York metropolitan area. He subsequently published seven books and several pamphlets, mainly on early American architecture, establishing him as an authority on that subject. By the start of the Great Depression, he was well-known and had received a wide range of commissions all over the East Coast of the United States, including college buildings and social clubs, in addition to residences. In addition to the Red Hook Play Center, he designed the Players and Nassau Clubs in Princeton, New Jersey, the Princeton Club in New York City, and the University Club in Washington, D.C. Embury was said to have supervised the design of over six hundred public projects, including Orchard Beach, Bryant Park, the New York City Building at the 1939 World's Fair, the Donnell Branch of the New York Public Library, the Hofstra University Campus, the Central Park and Prospect Park Zoos, Jacob Riis Park, four of the other ten neighborhood pool and play centers,⁴³ and played a major role in the design of the Lincoln Tunnel, the Triborough Bridge, and many more.

The lead architect for each pool project generally designed the bath house, which was unique to each site, establishing the motif that guided the design and detailing of the rest of the complex. Although each pool complex has been credited to a particular architect, the designs appear to actually have been collaborative efforts among the army of architects, draftsmen, engineers, and landscape architects employed by the Parks Department in the 1930s. Although the design of the Red Hook Play Center is most commonly attributed to Aymar Embury II, the majority of the architectural plans and construction drawings on file at the Olmsted Center archives in Queens were prepared by Joseph L. Hautman. Hautman was born in Cincinnati in 1903, attended the University of Cincinnati from 1922 to 1923, received his degree in architecture from MIT in 1926, and later studied at the Ateliers des Beaux Arts in Paris from 1927 to 1928. Between 1933 and 1936, Hautman was "Chief of Architecture" for the Park Department, and served as assistant to the Chairman of the Board of Designs for the New York World's Fair of 1939. Hautman joined the firm of Voorhees, Smith, Smith & Haines in 1942, where he remained an architect at least through the 1960s.

Many of the bath house drawings, including façade elevations, plans and details, were drawn by A. Caputo, while the comfort station and storage house drawings, including façade elevations, plans and details, were drawn by Charles Leonardi. Leonardi was born in Italy in 1901 and received his secondary education at the Mechanics Institute and his graduate education at Columbia University and later the New York Structural Institute. He worked as a designer in the offices of Cass Gilbert; as an architectural designer in the offices of James Gamble Rogers, Starrett & Van Vleck, Eggers & Higgins; and finally as an architectural designer and draftsman in the firm of Welton Becket & Associates in Santa Monica, California.⁴⁴

Gilmore D. Clarke was directly involved with the landscape design of the Red Hook Play Center and Recreational Area, and also the Red Hook Houses.⁴⁵ Clarke (1892-1982) was born in New York City and studied landscape architecture and civil engineering at Cornell University, from which he received a Bachelor of Science degree in 1913. He served as an engineer in the army during World War I, receiving many citations and decorations, and remained in the Army Reserve Corps until 1939. During the 1920s, he served on several local, state and federal commissions as landscape architect, including the Architectural Advisory Board for the United States Capital, the New York State Council of Parks (which was headed by Robert Moses), and the Westchester County Park Commission, among

many others. For his work in Westchester County, Clarke was awarded the Gold Medal of Honor in Landscape Architecture from the Architectural League of New York in 1931. By the time of the Great Depression, Clarke was already established as the most popular landscape architect in public works in America. Clarke's career advanced during the 1930s. Besides being hired by Robert Moses as the Consulting Landscape Architect to the New York City Parks Department, he also became a member of the National Commission on Fine Arts, the New York State Planning Council, and the Board of Design for the 1939 New York World's Fair. His work for the Parks Department included Astoria Park, Bryant Park, Central Park Zoo, City Hall Park, Orchard Beach in the Bronx and the Henry Hudson Parkway. He taught landscape architecture at Cornell University from 1935 to 1950, serving as dean from 1939 until his retirement in 1950, and wrote several articles for trade periodicals. In 1935, Clarke joined Michael Rapuano, an engineer and landscape architect, establishing the New York civil engineering and architectural firm of Clarke & Rapuano, Inc. Clarke was president of the firm from 1962 until his retirement in 1972. Later in his career, Clarke worked as a consultant on the construction of the United Nations Headquarters in New York and became a Trustee for the American Museum of Natural History.

Subsequent History⁴⁶

The Red Hook Play Center was only partially completed in time for its August 1936 opening; according to a Parks press release dated September 21, 1936, the men's and women's bath houses were only half constructed.⁴⁷ Additionally, drawings for the wading pool planned for the site directly north of the main pool (across Lorraine Street) were not issued until March 1937; it remains unclear when the wading pool was completed and when it was converted to its present use as a playground with basketball courts.⁴⁸ Apart from mechanical upgrades, few changes were made to the pool complex until the 1980s.⁴⁹

By the late 1970s, many of the WPA-era pools, the Red Hook Play Center included, had deteriorated, partially as a result of the fiscal crisis of the 1970s which hit the Parks Department particularly hard.⁵⁰ By March 1981, the Parks Department workforce had dwindled to a record low of 2,900 employees, mostly unskilled and temporary, as compared to the 30,000 parks employees on staff during the Moses administration. The strain on Parks Department resources was evident in the deplorable conditions of many of its facilities. To address the rapid deterioration of its recreational facilities, in 1977 the Parks Department began a major capital construction program involving more than 500 projects, expected to total more than \$180 million, partly in Federal funds – the first such projects undertaken by the parks system since the fiscal crisis halted such work in 1975, and arguably the most ambitious program to improve the parks since the 1940s. Among the projects planned was a \$10 million plan to preserve Prospect Park, a \$1 million renovation of the Coney Island Boardwalk, and restorations of several WPA-era pools, such as Jackie Robinson (Colonial Park) in Harlem and Betsy Head in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn.

Plans were filed in early 1983 for a major renovation of the Red Hook Play Center. Over the next few years, the pool complex was closed to the public as the main swimming pool and deck were reconstructed; the diving pool converted into a wading pool; new plumbing, filtration and electrical systems installed; the interior layout of the bath house reprogrammed; and portions of the bath houses reconstructed. A major aspect of the renovation was the construction of a new central annex building to connect the previously separate men's and women's bath houses. The annex, which contains the new main entrance and lobby, ticket booth, administrative and security offices, and first aid facilities, was designed in keeping with the architecture of the original bath house, comfort station, and storage house buildings. The original Art Deco entrances to the men's and women's bath houses were preserved within the enclosure of the new lobby building. The Parks Department called the renovations of the WPA-era pools "an essential part of the revitalization [of] the entire public recreational infrastructure of the city," helping transform the aging pools into modern recreational facilities.⁵¹ Additional work undertaken during the renovation included replacing steel windows with new aluminum windows; sealing obsolete windows and doors; spot cleaning, repointing and repairing areas of damaged brickwork and coping; replacing the roofs of the comfort station and storage house; installing new cast aluminum signage; installing new ladders and a stainless steel gutter system in the

pools; installing new ramps for accessibility; repaving the pool deck; installing new lifeguard chairs; interior alterations and mechanical upgrades; and re-landscaping of the area outside of the pool enclosure. In 1986 the Red Hook Play Center was reopened to the public, and in that same year it was formally renamed the Sol Goldman Pool to honor the ongoing financial contributions of the Brooklyn-born real estate magnate.⁵²

The WPA-era pools faced a new set of challenges beginning in the mid-1980s, with pools like the Crotona Play Center in the Bronx becoming infamous for vandalism and walkways littered with broken glass. In 1991, Mayor David Dinkins proposed closing the pools as part of a package of budget cuts. Only a donation of \$2 million from Sol Goldman guaranteed the pools would be kept open for at least a portion of that summer; an additional \$1.8 million was still needed to cover the entire nine-week long swimming season.⁵³ In the mid-1990s, a menacing ritual known as “whirlpooling” had become common throughout the pool system, a practice characterized by groups of teenage boys locking arms and shoulders, churning the water and disrupting the activities of other swimmers, particularly women who often found themselves unwillingly fondled. Several more serious complaints of sexual assault were recorded throughout the pool system in the summer of 1994. With improvements in security staffing and increased vigilance on the part of patrons, many of the problems of the 1990s did eventually dissipate, and by 2003, the pools were once again touted as both extremely safe, and a welcome alternative on a hot summer day.

The Architecture and Site of the Red Hook Play Center⁵⁴

The New Deal construction projects within New York City, such as the Red Hook Play Center, were a part of a national trend that included similar projects undertaken by various governmental agencies, ranging from the vast Tennessee Valley Authority to small cities and towns. Urban projects built with WPA funding often possessed similar qualities from region to region, partly because the difficult economic climate dictated the use of inexpensive building materials, but also because the programs provided employment opportunities for a generation of young architects and engineers, many of whom were committed to modernism. For example, the bath house and waterfront facilities at Aquatic Park in San Francisco are similar in plan and appearance to the public pool and beachfront projects being built at about the same time in New York City. The California facility, with its streamlined, concrete facade and steel-framed windows, bears a striking resemblance to the facade added in 1936 with WPA funds to the bath house at Jacob Riis Park in Queens. The original and creative use made of these modest materials by Moses' talented design teams and the careful siting of each project makes every one of them a distinguished, individual design, as much related to their specific environment and needs as to one another.

The implementation of a modern aesthetic in the design of the WPA pools stands as a testament to the influence of the young designers on Moses' team; Aymar Embury II, who oversaw the design of the eleven neighborhood pools, was generally a traditionalist with little patience for modernism. In a 1938 interview, Embury was quoted as having said:

If an architect has any function, it is to coordinate units so that they do a required job and at the same time create a pleasant emotion. Modernists believe that the essence of their work is to do something that has never been done before. They leave off all ornamentation because, they say, the ornaments do not aid the structure to do its job. I suppose some of these architects do not use neckties or buttons when they dress.⁵⁵

Considering the adopted guidelines of the entire pool project and the WPA stipulation that low cost materials be used, it is fitting that the design of the Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool) employs a modern vocabulary. The classically-inspired Art Moderne bath house met the low-cost material need while still presenting an attractive design. The long, low design of the C-shaped bath house emphasizes the characteristic horizontality of the style, accentuated by horizontal bands of windows, contrasting cast-stone coping, and long cast-stone sills and lintels. The bath house arcades as well as the segmental-arch openings employed on the comfort station and storage house also contribute to the horizontality of the structure. The sharp, elemental quality of the monumental arches and buttresses that dominate the three primary bath house facades presents a distinctly modern

interpretation of classical architectural forms,⁵⁶ while the rounded door and window jambs, gently sloping buttresses, curving brick walls, and flushed and stepped brickwork are characteristic of the Art Moderne style. The double-height non-historic lobby building amplifies the original bath house design, using three monumental arches to continue the existing rhythm and introduce a strong focal point for the entire façade. The formal symmetry of the entire complex can be appreciated from all angles, both within the pool enclosure and outside of it.

Description

Plan and Circulation: The Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool) is located on a 4.7-acre site near Red Hook's industrial waterfront on the block bounded on the north by Lorraine Street, on the south by Bay Street, on the west by Henry Street, and on the east by Clinton Street. The main entrance to the pool is located on Bay Street. The pools, deck area and bath house are entirely enclosed by a fence; the pool site is separated from the waterfront by the ballfields, paths, and landscaped areas of the Red Hook Recreational Area located directly to the south, and bounded on the north by the massive Red Hook Houses housing project. The mouth of the Gowanus Canal lies two blocks to the east of the Red Hook Pool.

The C-shaped brick bath house runs continuously east to west for nearly the entire length of the block on the south side of the site. The main pool, rectangular in shape and with the long axis running east to west, lies adjacent and parallel to the bath house. Beyond the main pool, occupying roughly the northern third of the site, is a smaller C-shaped wading pool (formerly the diving pool) flanked on the east and west ends by the curving brick walls of the pool enclosure, which narrows at this point to accommodate two square pocket parks forming symmetrical incursions into the northwest and northeast corners of the block. The northwestern corner of the pool site is anchored by a one-story brick comfort station and the northeastern corner by a one-story storage house. The comfort station and storage house are connected by a continuous brick wall backing up to a set of monumental concrete bleachers that face south towards the pools. The filter room is located beneath the bleachers. A fence of brick piers and metal slats encloses the entire pool complex. Beyond this fence, the pool site is surrounded on all sides by a generous strip of grass, with ample shade provided by the mature trees planted at regular intervals in the grassy area; tree species include sycamore, oak, and European lime. The landscaped area is bordered by a pipe-rail fence set into a concrete curb, and beyond this fence is a wide sidewalk of hexagonal asphalt pavers. Many of the original lantern-style lamp posts remain within the landscaped area. Two pocket parks occupy the northwest and northeast corners of the block, as described above. The parks are paved with hexagonal pavers and planted with a grid of European lime trees, and fixed benches and movable picnic tables provide seating.

The Bay Street entrance to the Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool) bath house is reached from the sidewalk by two low flights of granite stairs and a concrete access ramp for the disabled. Pool patrons must enter the bath house through turnstiles installed just inside the three main entry doors, and from there proceed through the double-height lobby to the left towards the men's locker room or to the right towards the women's locker room. A first aid room and offices are located off of the lobby along the north (pool-facing) wall of the bath house. The locker rooms double as gymnasias. After dressing and stowing belongings in the lockers, patrons pass through to the adjacent room where toilet and shower areas are separated by a partition wall. From the shower area, patrons pass through the former foot bath area, turning to the left (from the women's locker room) or to the right (from the men's locker room) to exit through an arcade onto the pool deck. After patrons are finished using the pool, they re-enter the shower rooms and pass through the locker rooms before exiting through the lobby.

The Bath House: The one-story C-shaped bath house is entirely clad in Flemish bond brick (unless otherwise noted), and has a five-bay main façade featuring monumental arches set between brick buttresses. The one-and-a-half story center bay contains the main entrance, lobby and offices and was constructed at a much later date than the two original L-shaped bath house buildings now serving as the east and west wings containing the locker rooms. The foundation of cast-granite blocks forms a continuous band flush with the façade around the entire bath house, and the simple cast-stone sills and lintels are also set flush with the façade. The original cast-stone coping at the cornice line is covered

by metal flashing in various places. The aluminum sash windows of the bath house, as well as those of the comfort station and storage house, are non-historic and are protected by stainless steel-framed screens.

South Façade (street-facing)

Center bay. The one-and-a-half-story center bay of the bath house dates to 1986, but was built to replicate the original bath house design as nearly as possible. The center bay is dominated by three semicircular arches separated by four gently sloping buttresses. The arch brick in each arch is laid in stretcher bond, and terminates where the arch meets the buttress. The center arch contains a circular-headed window with eight hopper panes and ten fixed panes. The center archway contains four stainless steel doors, and located directly above the door frame is a metal box for a roll-up security gate. The arches to the left and right of the center arch contain circular-headed windows with eight hopper panes and ten fixed panes, but below these sit sloping brick spandrel panels of four soldier courses, set above brick infill. Four security lights are affixed to the cornice at regular intervals, and on the parapet below the cornice a sign of metal letters reads “SOL GOLDMAN/ RECREATION CENTER & POOL/ RED HOOK PARK”. The center bay is flanked by—and connects in circulation—the long east and west wings of the bath house containing the men’s and women’s locker rooms. The east and west wings are the two original bath house buildings. Historically they were separated by an open plaza that served as the main point of entry to the pool and was the location of the freestanding ticket kiosk.

West wing. The west wing of the bath house’s south façade can be divided into three bays, reading from left to right. The left bay is one story and has three double-pane hopper windows centered on the wall. The cast-stone sills are composed of two rectangular blocks of equal length with an ear detail at each outer end. Each window is surmounted by a flat arch of gauged voussoir brick laid in a stretcher bond pattern. Two security lights are affixed to the façade above the left and right windows, connected by a metal pipe for wiring. To the right of the left bay is a narrow transitional bay that is slightly taller and contains one triple-pane hopper window with a cast-stone sill composed of one rectangular block with an ear detail at each end. The window is surmounted by a flat arch of gauged voussoir brick laid in a stretcher bond pattern. To the right of the transitional bay is the one-and-a-half story center bay, which is dominated by three semicircular arches separated by four gently sloping buttresses. All three arches contain a circular-headed window with eight hopper panes and ten fixed panes. Below each window is a sloping brick spandrel panel of four soldier courses set above brick infill. The arch brick in each arch is laid in stretcher bond, and terminates where the arch meets the buttress. A concrete cheek wall encloses two grates just above grade at the base of the center bay. Several black-painted pipes emanate from the rightmost grate and run vertically up the wall at the location of the third buttress, terminating at the top of the brick spandrels. Three security lights are affixed to the wall above the arches, connected by a horizontal pipe for wiring. The right bay of the west wing is shorter than the center bay and contains one double-pane hopper window with a cast-stone sill composed of one rectangular block with an ear detail at each end. The window is surmounted by a flat arch of gauged voussoir brick laid in a stretcher bond pattern.

West pavilion. The west pavilion, which originally housed a concession stand, is cube-shaped with monumental piers marking three corners of the structure; the fourth corner of the pavilion is subsumed in the south-facing plane of the wall connecting the west wing to the center bay. The piers terminate approximately 1½ feet below the pavilion’s cornice line, where cast-stone coping is mostly obscured by metal flashing. Segmental pier arches span between the piers on the west, south, and east-facing walls of the pavilion. The arches originally contained metal grilles in a lattice pattern, but are now bricked up, thus enclosing the pavilion. Set within the non-historic brick infill of the west, south, and east-facing pavilion walls are double-pane segmental windows with cast-stone sill courses that span the width of the segmental arches.

The point at which the west wing of the bath house meets the center bay of the bath house is marked by a one-story wall that projects forward from the façade and then runs westward to meet the north wall of the one-story west pavilion. (A similar pavilion, described in detail below, can be found where the east wing of the bath house meets the center bay). Centered on the east wall is a bricked-up doorway surmounted by a flat arch of gauged brick voussoirs laid in stretcher bond; this sealed

doorway is partially obscured behind the leftmost buttress of the non-historic center bay. The upper portion of the south wall has been rebuilt. Located on the south wall very near the point at which it meets the west pavilion is a small single-pane window with a cast-stone sill with ear details at each end.

Entry plaza. The east and west pavilions flank the plaza in front of the main pool entrance, and create a transition from the plaza to the sidewalk by their cast-granite foundation blocks that step down in two increments to street level. The east exterior wall of the west pavilion and the west exterior wall of the east pavilion form one side, respectively, of the raised planter beds that flank the main entry stairway. The east and west planter beds are contained on the street- and plaza-facing sides by a low brick cheek wall with granite foundation blocks and cast-stone coping. The corners of the east and west cheek walls at grade are marked by short brick piers with a cast-stone foundation and cast-stone coping, surmounted by the original lantern-style lampposts (the west lamppost is missing its globe). The words “AD 1936” are cast into the foundation stone of the east pier. The corners of the east and west cheek walls at plaza level are marked by low brick piers with a cast-stone foundation and cast-stone coping; the original piers were lowered in height during the 1983-86 renovation. The cast-stone coping of the cheek walls and piers has been painted a tan color. The east planter bed was made smaller during the 1983-86 renovation to accommodate a concrete ramp for accessibility to the disabled. The concrete ramp, clad in brick with cast-stone coping and black-painted metal railings, begins at grade in front of the east pavilion and wraps around the planter bed to terminate at the northeastern corner of the bath house entry plaza.

The point at which the east wing of the bath house meets the center bay of the bath house is marked by a one-story wall that projects forward from the façade and then runs eastward to meet the north-facing wall of the one-story east pavilion. Centered on the west-facing plane of this wall is a bricked-up doorway surmounted by a flat arch of gauged brick voussoirs laid in stretcher bond; this sealed doorway is partially obscured behind the rightmost buttress of the non-historic center bay. The upper portion of the south-facing plane of the wall has been rebuilt, and a security light is affixed to the wall here. Also located on this wall, very near the point at which it meets the east pavilion, is a small single-pane window with a cast-stone sill with ear details at each end.

East pavilion. The east pavilion is cube-shaped with monumental piers marking three corners of the structure; the fourth corner of the pavilion is subsumed in the south wall described above. The piers terminate approximately 1½ feet below the pavilion’s cornice line, where cast-stone coping is mostly obscured by metal flashing. Segmental pier arches span between the piers on the east, south, and west walls of the pavilion. The arches originally contained metal grilles in a lattice pattern, but are now bricked up, enclosing the pavilion. Set within the non-historic brick infill of the east, south, and west-facing pavilion walls are double-pane segmental windows with cast-stone sill courses that span the width of the segmental arches. The windows on the west, south and east walls are somewhat obscured behind wire mesh security grates.

East wing. The east wing of the bath house’s south façade can be divided into three bays, reading from right to left. The right bay is one story and has three double-pane hopper windows centered on the wall. The cast-stone sills are composed of two rectangular blocks of equal length with an ear detail at each outer end. Each window is surmounted by a flat arch of gauged voussoir brick laid in a stretcher bond pattern. Two security lights are affixed to the façade above the left and right windows, connected by a horizontal pipe for wiring. Directly to the left of the rightmost bay is a short transitional bay that is slightly taller and contains one triple-pane hopper window with a cast-stone sill composed of one rectangular block with an ear detail at each end. The window is surmounted by a flat arch of gauged voussoir brick laid in a stretcher bond pattern. Directly to the left of this transitional bay is the one-and-a-half story center bay, which is dominated by three semicircular arches separated by four gently sloping buttresses. All three arches contain a circular-headed window with eight hopper panes and ten fixed panes. Below each window is a sloping brick spandrel panel of four soldier courses set above brick infill. The arch brick in each arch is laid in stretcher bond, and terminates abruptly where the arch meets the buttress. Two security lights are affixed to the wall above the left and right arches, connected by a horizontal pipe for wiring. The left bay is shorter than the center bay and contains one double-pane window with a cast-stone sill composed of one rectangular block with

an ear detail at each end. The window is surmounted by a flat arch of gauged voussoir brick laid in a stretcher bond pattern.

West Façade (street-facing)

The one-story west facade of the bath house has two bays of different widths. The right bay comprises more than half the length of the façade and contains three double-pane hopper windows. The windows are set above a continuous cast-stone sill and set below a continuous cast-stone lintel, both flush with the façade. The outer ends of the cast-stone sill terminate in an ear detail. A large portion of this bay is overgrown with ivy such that only half of the leftmost and rightmost windows are visible. The left bay of the west façade contains three graduated segmental arches slightly recessed from the façade and separated by two brick piers without capitals that terminate abruptly at the level of the arch crown. The arch brick is laid in three stepped soldier courses, and the archways are enclosed by grilles of vertical metal slats (the original latticed grilles were removed during the 1983-86 renovation). Beneath each arch is a molded cast-granite plinth that sits directly atop the bath house foundation blocks and spans the width of the archway. Two security lights are affixed to the façade above the brick piers and connected by a horizontal pipe for wiring.

East Façade (street-facing)

The one-story east facade of the bath house has two bays of different widths. The left bay comprises more than half the length of the east façade and contains three pairs of double-pane hopper windows. It appears that the brick wall has been rebuilt or sandblasted beneath the rightmost window. The windows are set above a continuous cast-stone sill and set below a continuous cast-stone lintel, both flush with the façade. The outer ends of the cast-stone sill terminate in an ear detail. Two security lights are affixed to the façade above the windows and connected by a horizontal pipe for wiring. The right bay contains three graduated segmental arches slightly recessed from the façade and separated by two brick piers without capitals that terminate abruptly at the level of the arch crown. The arch brick is laid in three stepped soldier courses, and the archways are enclosed by grilles of vertical metal slats (the original latticed grilles were removed during the 1983-86 renovation). Beneath each arch is a molded cast-granite plinth that sits directly atop the bath house foundation blocks and spans the width of the archway.

North Façade (pool-facing)

The north (pool-facing) façade of the bath house is one story and has five bays: two outer arcades, the east and west wings, and the center bay. Metal flashing covers the cornice line of the entire north façade. The foundation of the north façade is composed of blocks of cast granite, with the exception of the concrete foundation of the non-historic center bay.

The arcades. The arcades form the short legs of the “L” shape of the east and west wings of the bath house, projecting from the north façade at ninety-degree angles. The east and west-facing arcades each have three segmental arches slightly recessed from the façade, set between two battered piers; the arch brick is laid in three stepped soldier courses. Located on the wall to the right of the west arcade is a bricked-up slot window; the flat arch of gauged brick voussoirs is still visible above the brick infill. Located on the wall to the left of the east arcade is a bricked-up slot window surmounted by a similar flat arch. A louvered vent surmounted by a flat arch is located on the portion of the north-facing wall of the east arcade that is outside of the main pool enclosure. The middle archway of the east arcade is enclosed by a chain-link fence and gate. The arcades provide a semi-private transition from the inside space of the locker rooms to the outside space of the pool deck; they now serve as the main exits from the men’s and women’s locker rooms and as storage areas. Both exits are marked with cast-stone plaques reading “WOMEN” and “MEN”, respectively, located on a ceiling beam beneath each arcade. The footbaths located in the passages leading to each arcade were filled in during the 1983-86 renovation.

The east wing. The east wing is divided by six regularly spaced buttresses, reading from left to right. Centered on the wall to the left of the leftmost buttress are two double-pane hopper windows set above cast-stone sills with an ear detail at each end. To the right of the leftmost buttress is a metal door surmounted by a metal box for a roll-up security gate. To the right of the door is a double-pane hopper window with a cast-stone sill with an ear detail at each end. A continuous cast-stone lintel surmounts both the door and the window at the level where the buttresses merge into the wall plane.

The word “WOMEN” is cast into the lintel above the metal door. The following window configuration is repeated on the three wall sections between the four middle buttresses: three double-pane hopper windows set above a continuous cast-stone sill with an ear detail at each end and surmounted by a continuous cast-stone lintel at the level where the buttresses merge into the wall plane. To the right of the fifth buttress are two single-pane hopper windows, each with a cast-stone sill with an ear detail at each end, but surmounted by a continuous cast-stone lintel. To the right of the sixth buttress is a slot window set above a cast-stone sill with an ear detail at each end and surmounted by a flat arch of gauged brick voussoirs laid in a stretcher bond pattern. To the right of this window is a metal door surmounted by a metal box for a roll-up security gate. To the right of this door, very near where the east wing meets the center bay, is a pair of triple-pane hopper windows set above a thin cast-stone sill and surmounted by a deep cast-stone lintel set flush with the façade; the windows are somewhat obscured behind wire mesh security grates. The window opening is slightly recessed, and the façade walls curve inward to frame the windows on either side. The east wing wall has been rebuilt between the middle four buttresses beginning at the level of the lintels.

The center bay. The center bay (corresponding to the north façade of the 1986 addition described in the previous section) is slightly taller than and set forward from the east and west wings. The three pairs of windows centered on the façade have sill and lintel details similar to those described above, but are somewhat obscured behind wire mesh security grates. Flanking the windows are two metal doors set in deep frames, surmounted by metal boxes for roll-up security gates. A megaphone speaker is affixed to the wall just below the cornice line at the center of the façade. A prominent feature distinguishing the center bay is three cast-stone intaglio (sunken relief) panels depicting sporting scenes, located above the three windows.⁵⁷ The top half-story of the bath house’s south façade is visible (from certain angles) above the center bay. In the center of this plain brick wall is a concave semicircular bay containing eight clerestory windows.

The west wing. The west wing is divided by six regularly spaced buttresses, reading from right to left. To the right of the rightmost buttress are two double-pane hopper windows above sills of cast-stone blocks with an ear detail at each outer end. To the left of the rightmost buttress is a metal door surmounted by a metal box for a roll-up security gate, and to the left of the door is a single-pane hopper window set above a cast-stone sill with an ear detail at each end. The door and window are surmounted by a continuous cast-stone lintel with the word “MEN” cast into it. The following window configuration is repeated on the three wall sections between the four middle buttresses: three double-pane hopper windows set above a continuous cast-stone sill with an ear detail at each end and surmounted by a continuous cast-stone lintel at the level where the buttresses merge into the wall plane. To the left of the fifth buttress are two double-pane hopper windows; the windows each have a cast-stone sill with an ear detail at each end, but are surmounted by a continuous cast-stone lintel. To the left of the sixth buttress is a slot window set above a cast-stone sill with an ear detail at each end and surmounted by a flat arch of gauged brick voussoirs laid in a stretcher bond pattern. To the left of this window is a metal door surmounted by a metal box for a roll-up security gate. To the left of this door, very near where the west wing meets the center bay, is a pair of triple-pane hopper windows set above a thin cast-stone sill and surmounted by a deep cast-stone lintel set flush with the façade; these windows are somewhat obscured behind wire mesh security grates. The window opening is slightly recessed, and the façade walls curve inward to frame the windows on either side. The right bay wall has been rebuilt between the middle four buttresses beginning at the level of the lintels.

The Comfort Station

The northwestern corner of the pool site is occupied by a one-story comfort station that can be accessed from Lorraine Street via a short flight of concrete stairs or a C-shaped concrete ramp. The comfort station was originally intended to serve patrons of the wading pool located across Lorraine Street.

North façade. The north façade of the comfort station is dominated by a monumental segmental arch laid in stretcher bond, beneath which is a recessed entryway with rounded jambs containing doors for men’s and women’s facilities, respectively. Beneath the arch, the walls of the north façade curve inward to create the recessed entryway. A security light is affixed to the vaulted

ceiling beneath the arch. On the back wall of the entryway are two cast-stone plaques cast with the words “MEN” and “WOMEN”. The west-facing women’s room door is surmounted by a flat arch of gauged brick voussoirs laid in stretcher bond, while the east-facing men’s room door has only a simple steel lintel. A bricked-up slot window surmounted by a flat arch is located just above the men’s room door. The segmental arch is flanked by a monumental pier to the right and a projecting bay to the left (the projecting bay was originally a pier, but its height was raised to cornice level during the 1983-86 renovation). The pier wraps around the building’s corners, forming a continuous wall on the west façade and serving again as a pier on the south façade. The projecting bay also wraps around the building’s corners, forming a continuous wall on the east façade and another projecting bay on the south façade. The pier terminates in a thin band of cast-stone coping approximately one-and-a-half (1½) feet below the cornice line, which is also marked by cast-stone coping. The historic cornice, a recessed band of lead-coated copper stamped with repeating stylized arc motifs, no longer remains.⁵⁸ The projecting bay terminates at the cornice line with a band of cast-stone coping. Both the pier and the projecting bay on the north facade feature a bricked-up slot window, centered on the wall, set above a cast-stone sill with an ear detail at each end and surmounted by a flat arch of gauged brick voussoirs laid in stretcher bond. During the 1983-86 renovation the original low-pitched lead-coated copper roof was replaced with a built-up flat roof.

West façade. The west façade of the comfort station features a bricked-up doorway centered on the wall, surmounted by a flat arch of gauged brick voussoirs laid in stretcher bond. Cast-stone coping marks the pier and cornice line.

South façade. The south (pool-facing) façade of the comfort station is dominated by a monumental segmental arch laid in stretcher bond set between a monumental pier on the left and a projecting bay on the right (the projecting bay was originally a pier, but its height was raised to cornice level during the 1983-86 renovation). The arch contains a circular-headed window with eight hopper panes and ten fixed panes. The windows are separated by a brick panel and have a continuous cast-stone sill with an ear detail at each end. A security light is affixed to the wall at the crown of the arch. A square of new brick infill is visible directly above the security light, indicating the historic location of a ventilation grille. Both the pier and the projecting bay feature a bricked-up slot window, centered on the wall, set above a cast-stone sill with an ear detail at each end and surmounted by a flat arch of gauged brick voussoirs laid in stretcher bond. A low bench of cast granite abuts the foundation wall and faces the pools; it is slightly longer than the span of the segmental arch above.

East façade. The east façade of the comfort station abuts the western end of the concrete bleachers and is marked at this point by stepped cast-granite blocks set flush with the façade. A security light is affixed to the upper portion of the wall. There is a two-panel, triangular security fence situated atop the northeastern corner of the comfort station.

Storage House

The northeastern corner of the pool site is occupied by a one-story storage house.

North façade. The north façade of the storage house is dominated by a monumental segmental arch laid in stretcher bond, beneath which is a recessed entryway with rounded jambs containing a metal double-door located on the back (north-facing) wall. The door is surmounted by a flat arch of gauged brick voussoirs laid in a stretcher bond, and a security light is affixed to the vaulted ceiling above the door. Beneath the archway, the walls of the north façade curve inward to create the recessed entryway. The segmental arch is flanked by a monumental pier to the left and a projecting bay to the right (the projecting bay was originally a pier, but its height was raised to cornice level during the 1983-86 renovation). The pier wraps around the building’s corners, forming a continuous wall on the east façade and serving again as a pier on the south façade. The projecting bay also wraps around the building’s corners, forming a continuous wall on the west façade and another projecting bay on the south façade. The pier terminates in a thin band of cast-stone coping approximately one-and-a-half feet below the cornice line, which is also marked by cast-stone coping. The historic cornice, a recessed band of lead-coated copper stamped with repeating stylized arc motifs, no longer remains. The projecting bay terminates at the cornice line with a band of cast-stone coping. Both the pier and the projecting bay on the north facade feature a bricked-up slot window, centered on the wall,

set above a cast-stone sill with an ear detail at each end and surmounted by a flat arch of gauged brick voussoirs laid in stretcher bond. The slot window located on the pier contains a small louvered vent set within the brick infill. A painted metal sign is mounted on the wall to the right of the archway, and it reads "LAND & WATER CONSERVATION/ USA/ PROJECT." During the 1983-86 renovation the original low-pitched lead-coated copper roof was replaced with a built-up flat roof.

East façade. The east façade of the storage house is a plain brick wall with cast-stone coping marking the pier and cornice lines; a round utility vent projects from the center of the wall.

South façade. The south (pool-facing) façade of the storage house is dominated by a monumental segmental arch laid in stretcher bond set between a monumental pier on the left and a projecting bay on the right (the projecting bay was originally a pier, but its height was raised to cornice level during the 1983-86 renovation). The arch contains a circular-headed window with eight hopper panes and ten fixed panes. The windows are separated by a brick panel and have a continuous cast-stone sill with an ear detail at each end. A security light is affixed to the wall at the crown of the arch. A square of new brick infill is visible directly above the security light, indicating the historic location of a cast-stone and bronze clock. Both the pier and the projecting bay feature a bricked-up slot window, centered on the wall, set above a cast-stone sill with an ear detail at each end and surmounted by a flat arch of gauged brick voussoirs laid in stretcher bond. A low bench of cast granite abuts the foundation wall and faces the pools; it is slightly longer than the span of the segmental arch above.

West façade. The west façade of the storage house abuts the eastern end of the concrete bleachers and is marked at this point by stepped cast-granite blocks set flush with the facade. A security light is affixed to the upper portion of the wall. There is a two-panel, triangular security fence situated atop the northwest corner of the storage house.

The Bleacher Wall

The comfort station and storage house are connected by a brick wall approximately eleven feet tall that backs up to the south-facing bleachers within the pool enclosure. The north (street-facing) face of the wall features seven evenly spaced bricked-up slot windows similar to the ones described in the previous sections; a metal door is located between the second and third slot windows from the right. The wall has a foundation of cast granite blocks and is capped with cast-stone coping. During the 1983-86 renovation, two stairways leading to the top of the bleachers from the comfort station and storage house were sealed and the height of the bleacher parapet wall lowered. Seven security lights are affixed to the upper part of the wall at regular intervals. Together, the comfort station, bleacher wall, and storage house form the northern enclosure of the pool site.

The Pool and Deck Area

The swimming pool occupies the majority of the 3.27-acre pool site and is surrounded by a rectangular concrete deck. A smaller rectangular concrete deck continues around the wading (former diving) pool to the north. The pool deck is enclosed on the north by the bleachers, on the south by the bath house, and on the east and west by a fence. The fence is approximately twelve feet tall, and is composed of substantial brick piers separated by vertical steel slats (replacing the original iron pickets) anchored in a cast-granite plinth that sits above the foundation wall. The piers are spaced roughly thirteen feet apart and have a cast-granite base and a tapering cast-stone coping stone. The steel top rail of the fence sits at the level where the coping stone begins. Two curving brick walls mark the point at which the east and west fences narrow to enclose the smaller wading pool deck area. The curving wall on the west fence line is painted with a contemporary under-the-sea mural scene. The fence terminates with brick piers abutting the north wall of the east and west bath house arcades, and the south wall of the comfort station and storage house.

Pool Deck. The concrete pool deck is raised approximately two to three feet above grade, and replaced the original pool deck of what appeared to be terra cotta tiles. Signs reading "3'9" DEEP/ NO DIVING" are painted on the deck in black letters on a yellow background at various points around the perimeter of the pool. Two curvilinear and four blocky cast-concrete drinking fountains dating from

the 1983-86 renovation are located near the exits to the men's and women's locker rooms, near the south walls of the comfort station and storage house, and at the northeastern and northwestern corners of the deck around the main pool. Twenty-six of the 32 original lantern-style lamp posts remain, and are arranged in a grid around the swimming pool and wading pool. Two yard-arm flag poles are located in the center of the pool deck at the east and west ends of the wading (former diving) pool. The flag poles and lamp posts were restored during the renovation.

Swimming Pool. The main pool is constructed of poured concrete and is rectangular in shape, measuring 330 feet long by 130 feet wide by three feet-nine inches deep. The long axis runs east to west and is parallel to the bath house. The pool was fully reconstructed during the 1983-86 renovation, and the following features were installed: a concrete access ramp at the southeastern corner of the main pool, eight white-painted metal and wood life guard chairs (four along the north side and four along the south side of the main pool), stainless steel ladders, and a stainless steel scum gutter system. The underwater lights were removed, and the two water-circulation fountains located in the middle of the pool were sealed with stainless steel pyramidal caps. The pool has a capacity of 1716 people.

Wading (former Diving) Pool. The diving pool was originally rectangular in shape with two chamfered corners, and measured 150 feet long by 65 feet wide with the long axis running east to west. During the 1983-86 renovation, it was almost entirely filled in with red concrete and reconfigured into a C-shape, and the diving platforms at the east and west ends were removed. The wading pool is separated from the main deck area by a fence of thin metal posts and balusters. Twelve brightly painted (red, yellow and blue) pole sprinklers were installed around the perimeter of the wading pool, and two four-headed pole sprinklers were installed near the center. Eight sculptural, bird-shaped sprinklers were installed on the octagonal portion of the pool deck located at the center of the "C." The wading pool has stainless steel scum gutters.

Bleachers. The south-facing (pool-facing) bleachers are constructed of concrete and have seven risers of equal height, approximately 1'6" tall. Four sets of two stainless steel railings are distributed across the bleachers at four regular intervals, dividing the bleachers into five sections. The bleachers area painted turquoise with the exception of the center section, which is painted yellow. A concrete head house containing a door for access to the filter room beneath the bleachers is located in the leftmost bleacher section, abutting the east wall of the comfort station. A metal stairway with a landing leads from the pool deck to the filter room door, which is located at the level of the second bleacher riser. The bleachers were resurfaced and received new railings during the 1983-86 renovation.

(Former) Wading Pool. No longer extant, the wading pool was originally located on a site across Lorraine Street from the main pool complex. Plans and photographs in the Parks Department archives indicate that the wading pool was rectangular, with the shorter east and west ends slightly bowed. The wading pool site is now occupied by the basketball courts of the Bush-Clinton Playground, part of the Red Hook Recreational Area. It is not included within the proposed landmark site.

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NOTES

¹ The site was previously heard on April 3, 1990 (LP-1786).

² Information in this section based on the following sources: Marcia Reiss. *Red Hook and Gowanus: Neighborhood History Guide* (New York: The Brooklyn Historical Society, 2000); *Insurance Maps Borough of Brooklyn* (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1886, 1904, 1909, 1915, 1939-1951); Henry R. Stiles. *A History of the City of Brooklyn* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Pub. by subscription, 1867-70) 3 vols.; “Red Hook Point: Thirty Years in the Slums,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, December 2, 1872, 4; “Opportunities for Sanitary Improvement in the Sixth and Twelfth Wards,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, May 9, 1885; W. Lewis Butcher and Harry Manuel Shulman, New York State Crime Commission. *Study of Problem Boys and Their Brothers by the Sub Commission on Causes and Effects of Crime* (Albany: J.B. Lyon, 1929); “Brooklyn Picked for Model Housing,” *New York Times*, May 16, 1934, 21; LPC, *Tompkinsville (Joseph H. Lyons) Pool Designation Report (LP-2234)* (New York: City of New York, 2008), report prepared by Tara Harrison; Hilary Ballon and Kenneth T. Jackson, eds., *Robert Moses and the Modern City: the Transformation of New York* (New York: Queens Museum of Art, 2007); “City Forced to Cut Housing Plan 66%,” *New York Times*, February 13, 1938, 31; “The Facts on Brooklyn Parks,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, September 22, 2006; “Red Hook to Get Athletic Center,” *New York Times*, June 2, 1934, 19; “Press Release: Public Swimming Facilities in New York City.” New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (July 23, 1934).

³ Reiss, 4. Historian R. P. Bolton writes that the Native American “system of land tenure was that of occupancy for the needs of a group” and that those sales that the Europeans deemed outright transfers of property were to the Native Americans closer to leases or joint tenancy contracts where they still had rights to the property. Reginald Pelham Bolton, *New York City in Indian Possession*, 2d ed. (New York: Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, 1920; reprint 1975), 7, 14-15, as cited in LPC, *NoHo Historic District Extension Designation Report (LP-2287)* (New York: City of New York, 2008), report prepared by Marianne Percival and Kathryn Horak; and Robert Steven Grumet, *Native American Place Names in New York City* (New York: Museum of the City of New York, 1981), 69, as cited in LPC, *NoHo Historic District Extension Designation Report*.

⁴ Stiles, 1: 60.

⁵ Together, the Atlantic and Erie basins represented the latest technology in commercial shipping operations. Principal cargoes included grain, sugar and coffee—all goods whose bulk required more square footage for handling and storage than Manhattan’s older waterfront infrastructure could accommodate. An important feature of the basins was the graving dock, enormous inland dry docks used for the construction, maintenance and repair of ships. Reiss, 6-7.

⁶ Reiss, 14. The first wave of industry fostered by the development of Red Hook’s waterfront infrastructure and the opening of the Gowanus Canal included oil stores, textile manufacturing (patent felt or pressed wool), and brick-making. Later industries included foundries, ironworks and paint manufacturing “Red Hook Place Names,” Thesis (Brooklyn College, 1965); Henry R. Stiles, Ed., *The Civil, Political, Professional and Ecclesiastical History and Commercial and Industrial Record of the County of Kings and the City of Brooklyn, New York, from 1683 to 1884* (New York: W.W. Munsell & Co., 1884); William Perris, *Maps of the City of Brooklyn* (New York, 1855) and *Insurance Maps of the Warehouses, Etc. in Brooklyn from the Navy Yard to Partition Street* (New York: Perris & Browne, 1860-1861); *Insurance Maps, 1877, 1904, and 1915* (New York: Sanborn Map & Publishing Co.); and Brooklyn City Directories (J. Lain & Co.), as cited in LPC, *Brooklyn Clay Retort and Fire Brick Works Storehouse Designation Report (LP-2108)* (New York: City of New York, 2001), report prepared by Betsy H. Bradley.

⁷ Reiss, 12.

⁸ Reiss, 10.

⁹ “Opportunities for Sanitary Improvement in the Sixth and Twelfth Wards,” *Brooklyn Eagle* (May 9, 1885) (accessed via the Brooklyn Public Library website May 29, 2008, <http://eagle.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/APA26309/skins/BE/PrintArt.asp?SkinFolder=BE>).

¹⁰ In 1927, The New York State Crime Commission issued a report on juvenile delinquency among boys, recommending investment in schools, recreational centers, social service agencies, and policing to reverse

the trend in poor neighborhoods. Although the report was based on case studies of boys from Harlem and the Lower East Side, it mentioned “ten or twelve” slum areas in the city where similar conditions could be expected to foster the same type of social problems. Butcher and Shulman, 12-13. A few years later in 1934, the Regional Plan Association conducted a study of slum areas in all five boroughs. The study identified a handful of neighborhoods in Manhattan and Brooklyn where low land values, low family rentals, and large population loss contributed to “slum” conditions that were ripe for clearance and redevelopment; Red Hook was one of the neighborhoods identified. Following a more detailed study of potential slum clearance areas conducted by the Tenement House Commission of the city’s Municipal Housing Authority, in the spring of 1934 Red Hook was chosen as one of two sites in Brooklyn to receive a “model housing development.” “Brooklyn Picked for Model Housing,” *New York Times* (May 16, 1934, 21) (accessed via Proquest Historical Newspapers database October 2, 2008).

¹¹ The other was the Tompkinsville (Joseph H. Lyons) Pool in Staten Island. LPC, *Tompkinsville (Joseph H. Lyons) Pool Designation Report (LP-2234)*, 4.

¹² The Sinking Fund Commission controlled all city-owned property. Marta Gutman, “Sol Goldman Pool,” in Ballon and Jackson, 154.

¹³ The Red Hook Houses was one of New York City’s first and largest public housing projects. Located directly north and west of the pool, the Red Hook Houses was the city’s first housing project to receive funding from the United States Housing Authority and was built to house the local population of dockworkers and their families. When it opened in 1939, the Red Hook Houses contained a total of 2,545 apartments distributed in a complex of 20, six-story red-brick towers that formed an austere backdrop to the pool. “City Forced to Cut Housing Plan 66%,” *New York Times* (February 13, 1938, 31) (accessed via Proquest Historical Newspapers database October 2, 2008).

¹⁴ This was the result of controversy that beleaguered the housing project’s planning process. Ballon and Jackson, 154.

¹⁵ “Red Hook to Get Athletic Center,” *New York Times*, June 2, 1934, 19 (accessed via Proquest Historical Newspapers database October 2, 2008). The Parks Department continued acquiring parcels of land to enlarge the recreational area until 1947. “The Facts on Brooklyn Parks,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, September 22, 2006. accessed via *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* website September 5, 2008: http://www.brooklyn eagle.com/categories/category.php?category_id=27&id=8514).

¹⁶ Reiss, 28.

¹⁷ “Press Release: Public Swimming Facilities in New York City.” July 23, 1934 (accessed via Parks Department website October 8, 2008, http://nycgovparks.org/sub_about/parks_history/annualreports.html); “40,000 At Opening of Red Hook Pool,” *New York Times*, August 18, 1936 (accessed via Proquest Historical Newspapers website October 3, 2008); New York City, Department of Buildings, New Building permit 7693-36 (1936).

¹⁸ This section adapted from LPC, *Astoria Park Pool and Play Center Designation Report (LP-2196)* (New York: City of New York, 2006), report prepared by Donald Presa; LPC, *Crotona Play Center Designation Report (LP-2232)* (New York: City of New York, 2007), report prepared by Jennifer Most; and LPC, *Tompkinsville (Joseph H. Lyons) Pool Designation Report (LP-2234)*.

¹⁹ More than 10,000 of the City’s 29,000 manufacturing firms had shut down, and the unemployment rate skyrocketed to over thirty percent. An estimated 1,600,000 people in New York City were receiving public assistance. Robert Caro, *Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1974), 323.

²⁰ By the 1920s, the recreational needs of people were changing with the increase in leisure time afforded by the advent of shorter work weeks, paid vacations, and greater mobility due to inventions such as the car. The addition of active recreation to city parks was in keeping with popular theories on the importance of providing the public with outlets for active recreation instead of passive recreation in changing times. The Great Depression of the 1930s further amplified such needs.

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- ²¹ Cleveland Rodgers, *Robert Moses: Builder for Democracy*, 1st ed. (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1952) 82, as cited in LPC, *Astoria Park Pool and Play Center Designation Report (LP-2196)*.
- ²² A staff of 1,893 architects, engineers, landscape architects, and technicians was employed at the peak of the work. See Rodgers, 84. Moses later came under fire by a number of city aldermen for hiring people for the Parks Department's technical staff who did not meet the guidelines for relief work. Moses vigorously defended this practice, calling the investigation "Tammany-controlled." *New York Times*, April 10, 1935, 1; April 20, 1935, 4.
- ²³ Scholarship that examines whether Robert Moses actively discouraged minorities from using Parks Department facilities such as the WPA-era swimming pools is ongoing. Also see: Caro, and Ballon and Jackson.
- ²⁴ During Moses' first year as Parks Commissioner, the Department spent over \$90,000,000 (\$1.2 billion in 2005 dollars) for work relief projects, most of which was provided by the Federal government. New York City was the largest single recipient of Federal largesse during the course of the New Deal. It has been estimated that the city received one-seventh of the total national outlay. See Rodgers, 84-85.
- ²⁵ This section adapted from LPC, *Crotona Play Center Designation Report (LP-2232)*; LPC, *Tompkinsville (Joseph H. Lyons) Pool Designation Report (LP-2234)*; and LPC, *Betsy Head Pool Designation Report (LP-2240)* (New York: City of New York, 2008), report prepared by Amanda Davis.
- ²⁶ Robert Moses, "Parks and Recreation in New York," transcript of the proceedings of the National Recreation Association (1947), 20-21 as cited in LPC, *Crotona Play Center Designation Report (LP-2232)*.
- ²⁷ See "23 Bathing Pools..." 17; Robert Moses "Press Release: Public Swimming Facilities in New York City," (7/23/1934) as cited in LPC, *Crotona Play Center Designation Report (LP-2232)*.
- ²⁸ In the order of their inauguration, the eleven WPA-era pools included: Hamilton Fish Play Center (Manhattan), Thomas Jefferson Play Center (Manhattan), Astoria Play Center (Queens), Joseph Lyons (Tompkinsville) Pool (Staten Island), Highbridge Play Center (Manhattan), Sunset Play Center (Brooklyn), Crotona Play Center (Bronx), McCarren Play Center (Brooklyn), Betsy Head Play Center (Brooklyn), Jackie Robinson (Colonial Park) Play Center (Manhattan), and Red Hook Play Center (Brooklyn).
- ²⁹ The Hamilton Fish Play Center bath house, designed by Carrère & Hastings in 1898, was designated a New York City Landmark in 1982. The original 1915 bath house structure at Betsy Head was destroyed by fire shortly after the 1936 opening of the pool, and was rebuilt in 1939.
- ³⁰ This section adapted from LPC, *Crotona Play Center Designation Report (LP-2232)*, and LPC, *Tompkinsville (Joseph H. Lyons) Pool Designation Report (LP-2234)*. Architectural Historian Marta Gutman has studied the issue of race at the swimming pools and believes that the issue of segregation and racial mixing was more complex than Caro states. Her work is scheduled to appear in a forthcoming issue of the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*. See Marta Gutman, "Race, Place, and Play: Robert Moses and the WPA Swimming Pools in New York City," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 67 (December 2008): in press.
- ³¹ Walter Thabit, *How East New York Became a Ghetto*, (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 39 as cited in LPC, *Crotona Play Center Designation Report (LP-2232)*.
- ³² "25,000 at Opening of Harlem Pool," *New York Times*, August 6, 1934, N6 as cited in LPC, *Crotona Play Center Designation Report (LP-2232)*.
- ³³ See Caro, 514; Ballon and Jackson, 70-71.
- ³⁴ Caro, 514 as cited in LPC, *Crotona Play Center Designation Report (LP-2232)*.
- ³⁵ Ballon and Jackson, 81 as cited in LPC, *Crotona Play Center Designation Report (LP-2232)*.
- ³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Research currently being conducted indicates that the racial composition of pool users may have been more complex, and dependent on a variety of factors, including the entrance fee structure, which varied depending on the age of the swimmer as well as the time of day. Also see: Caro, and Ballon and Jackson

³⁸ This section adapted from LPC, *Astoria Park Pool and Play Center Designation Report (LP-2196)*; LPC, *Crotona Play Center Designation Report (LP-2232)*; and LPC, *Tompkinsville (Joseph H. Lyons) Pool Designation Report (LP-2234)*. Sources for this section include New York City, Department of Parks, Red Hook Play Center plans and blueprints on file at the Olmsted Center, Flushing, New York; Ballon and Jackson; “Mayor, Opening Red Hook Swimming Pool, Scores Bickering that Balked New Housing,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, August 18, 1936; and “The Houses,” Independent Lens, Public Broadcasting System website (accessed October 9, 2008, <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/redhookjustice/redhook.html>).

³⁹ Moses encourages his engineers to innovate more efficient heating and filtering plants, and underwater lighting that were revolutionary developments in pool technology. Caro, 456 as cited in LPC *Crotona Play Center Designation Report (LP-XXXX)*.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ For the inaugural summer, children under 14 could swim for free before 1 pm; admission cost a dime after 1 pm. “Mayor, Opening Red Hook Swimming Pool, Scores Bickering that Balked New Housing,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, August 18, 1936. LaGuardia also took the opportunity to publicly criticize the battles between local interests and city agencies that were causing delays to the Red Hook Houses project, which would not see completion until 1939. Ultimately, the approximately 8,000 residents of the Red Hook Houses would become the primary beneficiaries of the new pool, living right next door to it. “The Houses,” Independent Lens, Public Broadcasting System website.

⁴² This section adapted from LPC, *Astoria Park Pool and Play Center Designation Report (LP-2196)*; LPC, *Crotona Play Center Designation Report (LP-2232)*; LPC, *McCarren Play Center Designation Report (LP-2244)* (New York: City of New York, 2006), report prepared by Kathryn E. Horak; and LPC, *Tompkinsville (Joseph H. Lyons) Pool Designation Report (LP-2234)*. Sources for this section include George S. Koyl, ed. *American Architects Directory*. 2nd ed. (New York: R.R. Bowker Company, 1962), and Ballon and Jackson.

⁴³ Besides the Red Hook Play Center, they are the Colonial Park Pool and Play Center in Manhattan, the Crotona Park Pool and Play Center in the Bronx, the McCarren Park Play Center in Brooklyn, and the Tompkinsville Pool in Staten Island.

⁴⁴ Koyl, 415.

⁴⁵ Ballon and Jackson, 155.

⁴⁶ Portions of this section adapted from LPC, *Tompkinsville (Joseph H. Lyons) Pool Designation Report (LP-2234)*; LPC, *Astoria Park Pool and Play Center Designation Report (LP-2196)*; LPC, *Crotona Play Center Designation Report (LP-2232)*; and LPC, *Jackie Robinson (Colonial Park) Play Center Designation Report (LP-2238)* (New York: City of New York, 2006), report prepared by Jennifer Most. Sources for this section include *Insurance Maps Borough of Brooklyn* (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1886, 1904, 1909, 1915, 1939-1951); “Press Release.” New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (September 21, 1936); “Mayor Bloomberg Kicks-off Opening of New York City’s Pools with ‘First Splash’ at Red Hook’s Sol Goldman Pool,” *US Fed News Service*, Washington, D.C. (June 30, 2006); and “10 Pools to Be On Landmark List,” *Newsday*, August 3, 2007, A17.

⁴⁷ “Press Release.” September 21, 1936 (accessed via Parks Department website October 8, 2008, http://nycgovparks.org/sub_about/parks_history/annualreports.html).

⁴⁸ Given that the diving pool was converted into a wading pool between 1983 and 1986, it is possible that this is when the original wading pool was filled in for conversion to a playground. “10 Pools to Be On Landmark List,” A17.

⁴⁹ New building permits were filed in 1953, 1971, and January 1983; an alteration permit was filed in October 1982.

⁵⁰ On the local level, Red Hook's economy had all but collapsed following the introduction of mechanized container shipping and long-haul trucking in the early 1950s. In the ensuing decades, New York City's shipping industry essentially relocated to New Jersey and Red Hook's population plummeted from 21,000 to 12,000 between 1950 and 1980. Reiss, 24.

⁵¹ New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, 1986 as cited in LPC, *Jackie Robinson (Colonial Park) Play Center Designation Report (LP-2238)*, 12.

⁵² "Mayor Bloomberg Kicks-off Opening of New York City's Pools with 'First Splash' at Red Hook's Sol Goldman Pool".

⁵³ "Donation Will Keep 32 Public Pools Open," *New York Times*, May 16, 1991 (accessed via Proquest Historical Newspapers website, October 6, 2008).

⁵⁴ Portions of this section adapted from LPC, *Astoria Park Pool and Play Center Designation Report (LP-2196)*; and LPC, *McCarren Play Center Designation Report (LP-2244)*. Sources for this section include Marvin Trachtenberg and Isabelle Hyman. *Architecture from Prehistory to Post-Modernism* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1986).

⁵⁵ "Aymar Embury, Architect, Dead" *New York Times*, November 15, 1966, 47 as cited in LPC *McCarren Play Center Designation Report (LP-2244)*.

⁵⁶ Bleachers were one of the architectural elements to be found at the 3rd century baths of Caracalla in Rome. Trachtenberg and Hyman, 130.

⁵⁷ The age and origin of the panels remains unclear.

⁵⁸ This cornice detail is shown in the original building plans on file at the Parks Department's Olmsted Center archives, copies of which are in LPC files.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of careful consideration of the history, architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool) has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool) is one of a group of eleven immense outdoor swimming pools which were opened in the summer of 1936 by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia and Parks Commissioner Robert Moses; that it was constructed with funding provided by the Works Progress Administration; that the pool officially opened on August 17, 1936 and became the eleventh and final WPA pool to open throughout New York City that summer; that it was built to accommodate 4,462 swimmers; that the monumental, classically-inspired form of the Art Moderne-style bath house met the low-cost material criteria stipulated by the WPA while still presenting an attractive design; that the long, low design of the C-shaped building emphasizes the characteristic horizontality of the style, accentuated by horizontal bands of windows, contrasting cast-stone coping, and long cast-stone sills and lintels; that the bath house arcades as well as the segmental-arch openings on the comfort station and storage house also contribute to the horizontality of the structure; that the sharp, elemental quality of the monumental arches and buttresses that dominate the three primary bath house facades presents a distinctly modern interpretation of classical architectural forms, while the rounded door and window jambs, gently sloping buttresses, and stepped brickwork are characteristic of the Art Moderne style; that the formal symmetry of the entire complex can be appreciated from all angles, both within the pool enclosure and outside of it; that the original and creative use made of modest materials and forms, and the careful siting of the facility make it a distinguished, individual design; and that it, along with the other WPA-era play centers, was a major accomplishment of engineering and architecture, and is recognized as being among the most remarkable public recreational facilities ever constructed in the United States.

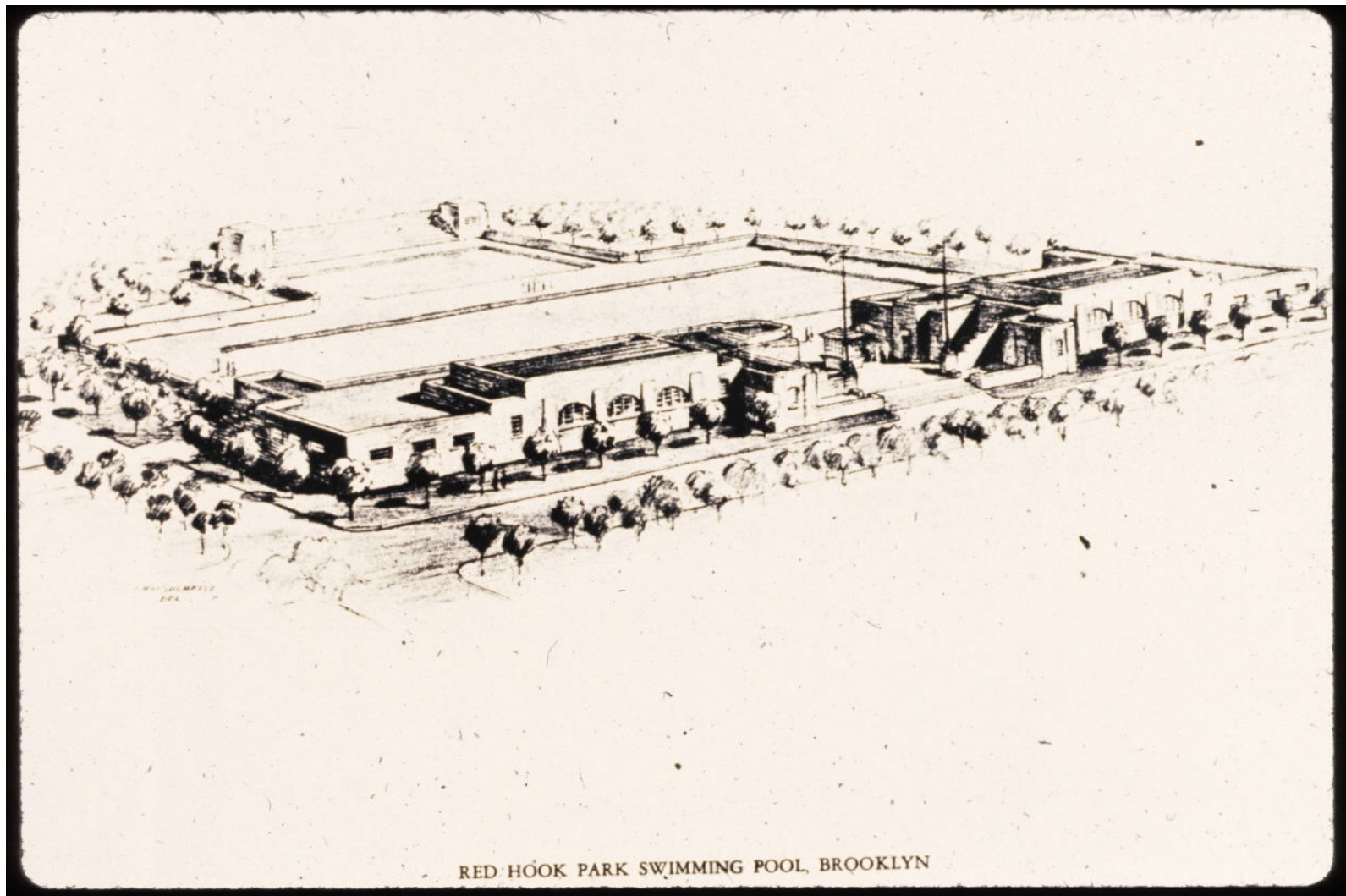
Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Red Hook Play Center, Bay Street between Henry Street and Clinton Street, Brooklyn, and designates Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 582, Lot 1, and portions of the adjacent public way, consisting of the property bounded by a line extending northerly from the intersection of the western curbline of Clinton Street and the northern curbline of Bay Street to the southern curbline of Lorraine Street, westerly along the southern curbline of Lorraine Street to the eastern curbline of Henry Street, southerly along the eastern curbline of Henry Street to the northern curbline of Bay Street, and easterly along the northern curbline of Bay Street to the point of beginning as its Landmark Site.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair

Pablo E. Vengoechea, Vice-Chair

Fred Bland, Stephen Byrns, Diana Chapin, Roberta Gratz,

Christopher Moore, Margery Perlmutter, Elizabeth Ryan, Commissioners



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Rendering, c. 1936

Image: Landmarks Preservation Commission slide library



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Pool site under construction (view west)
Photo: New York City Parks Photo Archive



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Pool shortly after completion (view southeast)
Photo: New York City Parks Photo Archive



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): View of crowds, 1940
Photo: New York City Parks Photo Archive



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): South façade

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Main entry plaza, south façade

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): West wing (men's locker room)
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Detail, west wing
Photo: Olivia Klose, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): West wing

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): West façade (men's locker room)

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): West arcade

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Western fenceline and perimeter park

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Western perimeter park (view south)
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Comfort station, north façade
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Bleacher wall (view east)

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Former filter (now storage) house

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Eastern perimeter park (view north)

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Eastern fenceline

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): East facade (women's locker room)

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): South façade (women's locker room)

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Main entry plaza (view east)

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Pools and bath house (view south)

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): East arcade (women's locker room)

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Bath house (view west)

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): North façade (non-historic)

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Intaglio panel, north facade

Photo: Olivia Klose, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): West arcade (men's locker room)
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Detail, west arcade
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Comfort station, south façade
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Former filter (now storage) house, south façade
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



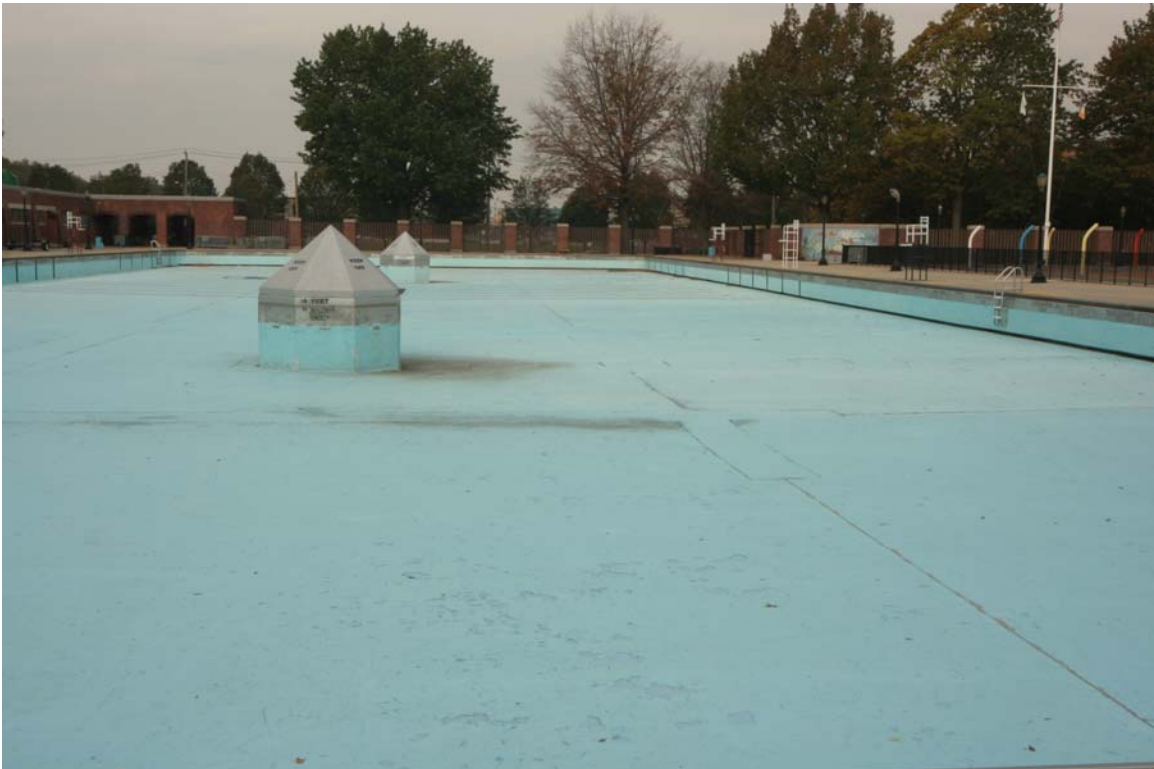
Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Wading pool and bleachers (view north)
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Detail, wading pool
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Detail, western fenceline
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Swimming pool (view west)
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Swimming pool (view south)
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Access ramp
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Stainless steel scum gutter, swimming pool
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008

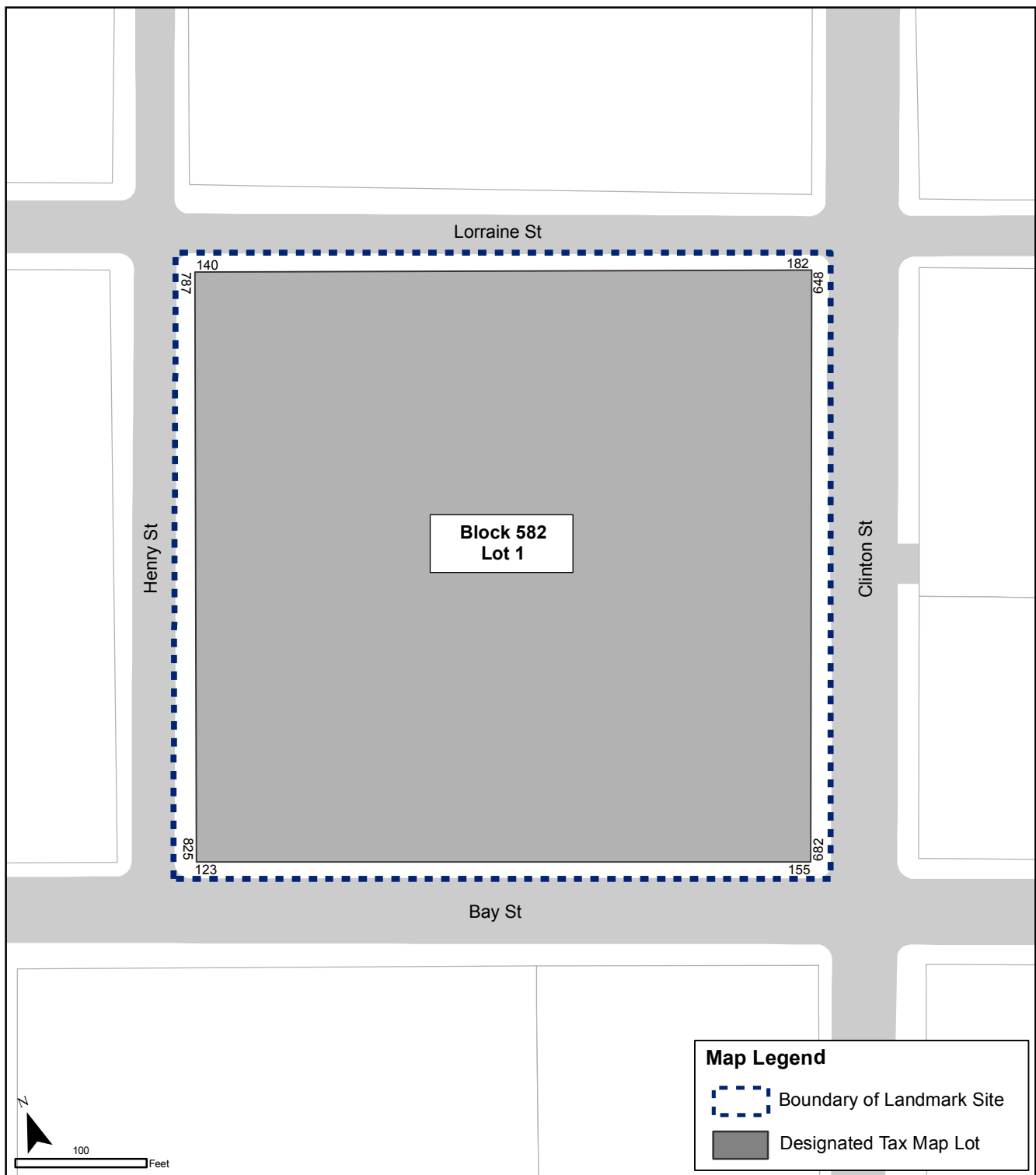


Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Pool deck (view west)
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2008



Red Hook Play Center (Sol Goldman Pool): Cast date stone, main entry plaza

Photo: Olivia Klose, 2008



RED HOOK PLAY CENTER (SOL GOLDMAN POOL) (LP-2241), 155 Bay Street (aka 123-155 Bay Street; 648-682 Clinton Street; 787-825 Henry Street; 140-182 Lorraine Street). Borough of Brooklyn, Tax Map Block 582, Lot 1, and portions of the adjacent public way, consisting of the property bounded by a line extending northerly from the intersection of the western curbline of Clinton Street and the northern curbline of Bay Street to the southern curbline of Lorraine Street, westerly along the southern curbline of Lorraine Street to the eastern curbline of Henry Street, southerly along the eastern curbline of Henry Street to the northern curbline of Bay Street, and easterly along the northern curbline of Bay Street to the point of beginning.

Public Hearing: November 18, 2008