This chapter has two goals. The first is to act as a transition into the following two chapters which focus on a small portion of the urban environment and the second is to provide information on a scale that will not be addressed, due to time constraints, in those chapters. Reaching the first goal involves providing historical and environmental context for the case study. This context is vitally important in a study dealing with sequent occupancy on an urban scale. The second goal is related to the first in that it will provide insights at the District level, the scale on which neighborhood dynamics occur and the next logical extension of the research.

With that last statement in mind, it should be noted that this chapter does not provide a comprehensive history of either the social or environmental dynamics of the study area. What it does provide is a record of relevant evidence found during the project regarding the creation of urban cultural landscapes in the area over time. As such, it addresses many of the same issues of fixed, semi-fixed and non-fixed features broadly introduced in the previous chapter and more rigorously analyzed, at a finer scale, in the next chapter. By providing this large-scale context, this chapter also helps to answer many questions that would otherwise have no apparent resolution at the finer scales.

The Study Area

The larger context of the study area will be known as “The Lower East Side” for the purposes of this project. This is somewhat different than the name is used currently in New York, but it has some relation to the historical development of the city. The Lower East Side will be considered here as being comprised largely of land that made up three colonial estates (see Figure 2.1). As this chapter will discuss, these estates were once owned by the Bayard, DeLancey and Rutgers families, and the relevant lands lie east of Broadway.

As noted above, this chapter will move progressively toward discussing smaller portions of the city, until two blocks (“face blocks”) are singled out. Figure 2.2 is a diagram of that progression, showing the same cropped image of lower Manhattan and Brooklyn as Figure 2.1, with an “exploded” view of the southeast corner of the Bayard estate (with some other relevant land south of Bayard Street). Then the two case study blocks are indicated by the footprints of the buildings that currently occupy them.
Figure 2-1 -- The Approximate Borders of Three Colonial Estates

(Plan from NYC Dept. of City Planning Sectional Maps)
A Brief Environmental & Social History of the Lower East Side

Documentation regarding land use in the Lower East Side dates at least to the mid-17th Century when Manhattan was still under Dutch control. The off-site Dutch West India Company bureaucratic structure had developed an explicit, but not quite site specific, plan for the outlying, exurban areas of the city. The local officials endeavored to implement the plan as best they could, considering that the topography deviated from the assumed regularity underlying the plan. What was implemented was a series of 12 farms, which had either 55 or 80 rods of frontage, on either side of a public thoroughfare that led away, northward, from the heart of the settlement at the tip of the island. (33. Stokes 1916) Farm, by the way, in the Dutch language, reportedly translates as “bouwerie,” and part of the environmental legacy of this era is that the thoroughfare later assumed the logical name of the Bowery.

These farms were intended to be held in separate ownership and they were relatively distant from the built up portion of the city in the 1600's, lying a mile and a half from the fort. (32. Blackmar 1989) After the English assumed control in 1664, the city breached its old defensive wall and began to expand, in a piecemeal fashion, along the East River towards the bouweries. (33. Reps 1965) In the late 17th century, as this gradual expansion was occurring, the original bouweries and land grants began to be consolidated by several powerful families into a few large, country estates. (32. Blackmar 1989) These estates grew to considerable size, and those held by the Bayard, Rutgers and DeLancey families were estimated to contain 200, 108 and 300 acres, respectively. (32. Blackmar 1989; 33. Stokes 1916) The boundaries between the estates were apparently somewhat indeterminate in the beginning, particularly between the Rutgers and DeLancey estates which both fell on the east side of the Bowery and extended to the river. Bayard’s estate lay to the west of the street and extended well beyond Broadway’s current right-of-way. (33. Stokes 1916)

The indeterminacy of the property boundaries was not to last. The Bowery was, in the 1700's, the High Road to Boston, which no doubt, attracted a degree of potential revenue generating traffic. Additionally, in the thirty years between 1730 and 1760, “...the volume of shipping doubled and the town’s population grew to 20,000.” (32. Blackmar 1989) This prosperity created a demand for additional land to build upon (33. Reps 1965) and the aforementioned country estates were well situated to capitalize on the prospect.

Apparently seizing the opportunity, “...Hendrick Rutgers, who had a portion of his farm laid out in streets and lots... in 1765, agreed with James DeLancey on a boundary line between their farms, running along Division and Little Division (now Montgomery) Streets.” (33. Stokes 1916) Nicholas Bayard also recognized the development potential of his property having, in 1752, laid out the southern portion of his estate, “...the part of the farm east of Rhynders (Centre) Street, and south of the road to the mansion (Broome Street) over to the

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Figure 2-2  The Case Study Blocks in Context
(Plan from: NYC Dept. of City Planning Sectional Maps)
Bowery Road . . ." in lots. (33. Stokes 1916)

The subdivisions on both the Bayard and DeLancey estates were platted by Francis Maerschalck and in contrast to the largely irregular blocks that typified the incremental growth of the city to the south, these new subdivisions were comprised of rectangular blocks. (see The Ratzen Plan - Figure 2-3) (33. Reps 1965) The simple rectangular geometry of the blocks, which displayed little regard for topographical features like Mount Pleasant at the future intersection of Grand and Baxter Streets, still displayed some irregularity in response to issues such as the estate’s boundaries. As has been noted for the cities of Chicago and Leeds, England, "(t)he urban plan was not simply imposed on the preexisting rural landscape by an arbitrary subdivision of this landscape into building units . . . (The) land holdings of the rural landscape acted as a framework within which . . . the subsequent building activity had to be adjusted." (26. Ward 1962) The most significant adjustment evident on the Bayard estate is the slight bend in a number of blocks to respond to a similarly bent estate boundary on the Bowery. This bend, in effect, kept the newly platted approximately north-south streets parallel to the adjacent Bowery.

However, most of the blocks are rectangular, and this geometry was apparently selected for the same pragmatic values that influenced the Commissioners’ Plan of 1811 to utilize a similar, but more elongated geometry. As the Commissioners argued, idiosyncratic block configurations, such as circles, ovals and stars, did offer some benefits of variety, but at the expense of "... convenience and utility." The regular blocks of the newly planned areas of the city would readily accommodate constructions that were "... principally composed of the habitations of men, and that straight-sided and right-angled houses are the most cheap and convenient to live in." (32. Blackmar 1989)

Once subdivided, rather than being sold for a one-time only capital gain, the city’s landowners typically leased lots for periods of fifteen to ninety-nine years. The leases were often for unimproved land and in improving the property the tenant was often constrained by restrictive covenant to particular choices in land use, siting and construction. For example, Henry Rutgers’ leases specified that the tenant should construct a "...good, substantial and workmanlike brick building not less than two stories in height and not less than thirty-six feet in depth... so as to cover the whole front(age)..." At the expiration of the lease, any improvements were either to be removed from the property, or, if suitably constructed, the landlord would purchase the improvements from the tenant. (32. Blackmar 1989)

The Rutgers’ estate had an apparent locational advantage though over Bayard’s and DeLancey’s, by virtue of being further south, closer to the port’s advancing development and by its considerable frontage on the East River. Accordingly, the pace and quality of construction seem to have been more lax on the other estates. As depicted in a painting (Figure 2-4) executed from Mount Pitt in 1793, Rutgers’ estate, in the background,
Figure 2-3 A portion of the Ratzen Plan of 1767
(Plan from: 33 Reps 1965)
has an array of buildings located on the shore of the river while the foreground, the former DeLancey estate, is still largely unimproved. (The DeLancey estate was confiscated, and sold off in block-size increments, after the Revolution as a result of the family's loyalist sympathies. (32. Homberger 1994)) The pace of development can also be seen in a description penned by John Lambert, an English visitor to New York, in 1807:

upon, or consists only of unfinished streets and detached buildings. (33. Stokes 1916, p. 399)

Construction was occurring on the Bayard and DeLancey estates though, as depicted in a nearly contemporary painting (Figure 2-5) executed in 1810, showing a new, two-story wood-frame building being raised on Grand Street between two existing buildings. Another paint-

The Broadway and the Bowery Road are the two finest avenues in the city . . . The Bowery Road commences from Chatham Street, which branches off from the Broadway to the right . . . After proceeding about a mile and a half it joins the Broadway and terminates the plan . . . for the enlargement of the city. Much of the intermediate space between these large streets, and from thence to the Hudson and East Rivers, is yet unbuilt

ing (Figure 2-6) executed in 1809, shows several houses and an African Methodist Meeting House on Elizabeth Street, between Canal and Hester Streets. Lying just west of Elizabeth Street, Mott and Mulberry Streets are shown by a contemporary street directory as having numbered houses extending just north of their intersections with Hester Street. Beyond that point, many houses also appear to have already existed. These buildings were unnumbered at the time and were listed "... in rotation as they follow in the street." (31. Elliot's 1812) Individual

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unnumbered houses were not clearly identified, but if the density of occupancy was the same for these unnumbered houses as for the numbered houses, which had an average of just under three persons listed per house, the unnumbered houses on Mulberry Street would have included an additional 40 buildings. If these buildings occupied both sides of Mulberry Street, north of Hester Street, construction would appear to have moved at least one block further north, past Grand Street. (31. Elliot’s 1812)

These buildings were indicative of the active transformation of the area’s rural character at that time, and one individual recalled disdainfully, that in 1811, “(a)ll that was romantic in the scenery and prepossessing in the cultivated grounds immediately above Canal Street was doomed. The city was on the march and every form of hill and dale and pleasant valley must be sacrificed.” (33. Stokes 1916) One of the hills sacrificed was the one that crested at Grand and Baxter Streets, the fill from which was apparently used in the land-filling of the Collect Pond lying just to the south, a project proposed in 1802 but not completed until 1812. (33. Stokes 1916)

The significance of this land-filling could be interpreted as representing, not just a topographical transformation, but a social one as well, since the Collect had long been a focal point for noxious trades, including tanneries, slaughterhouses, breweries and ropewalks. In the wake of the earthwork, many buildings were erected on the Bayard and DeLancey estates. These buildings typically housed space for small shops or crafts-shops, and residences which were often occupied by mechanics and artisans employed on the docks and in the shipyards. (32. Blackmar 1989) The inevitable result of this advancing development is evidenced in a description of the area from 1828, which describes “(t)he section of the city east of the Bowery . . . (as being) . . . occupied by a dense population, principally inhabiting small, two-story, wooden or brick buildings.” (33. Stokes 1916)

The Erie Canal had opened in 1825 and the city was booming. Three thousand new houses were built in the city, which was still contained largely, below 14th Street, but a housing shortage still existed. (32. Ellis 1966) The first of the many waves of immigration had begun to arrive and thousands of formerly rural Irish landed in New York, many of whom initially settled in the area of southern Mulberry Street known as “The Bend.” It is reported that so many people emigrated from Ireland that New York soon contained a larger Irish population than any other municipality outside of Dublin. (32. Ellis 1966) The rural Irish, many of whom were young, poor and without family ties in the new country, were scorned by many of the more established residents of the city and flight from the older neighborhoods, discrimination and even violence fostered the creation of an Irish ethnic enclave in the area. (32. Ellis 1966)
By 1851, many of the lots comprising the blocks of Bayard’s original plat appear to have been “improved,” as indicated by only ten of the 208 listed addresses on Mulberry Street being described as “vacant lot” in a contemporary street directory. (31. Doggett’s 1851) In response to the increased demand for housing coming with the immigrant influx, many landowners had begun construct three and four-story tenements on the rear of many lots in the area, behind the existing two and three-story wood and brick buildings. In 1845, for example, 17 such buildings were constructed on Mulberry and Mott Streets. (32. Blackmar 1989) Jacob Riis, a pioneering 19th-century photo-journalist and social reformer, described the transformation of the area’s building stock:

Washington had moved... far out of town... now the old residents followed his example... Their comfortable dwellings in the once fashionable streets along the East River front fell into the hands of real estate agents and boarding-house keepers... '(I)n its beginning the tenant-house became a real blessing to that class of industrious poor whose small earnings limited their expenses, and whose employment in workshops, stores or about the warehouses and thoroughfares, render a near residence of much importance.' (Now) the old house suddenly became valuable... Their 'large rooms were partitioned into several smaller ones, without regard to light or ventilation... and they soon became filled from cellar to garret with a class of tenantry living hand to mouth... '(T)he old houses... were not intended to last... (s)til the pressure of the crowds did not abate, and in the old garden... a rear house was built, generally of wood, two stories high at first. Presently it was carried up another story, and another. Where two families had lived ten moved in... (W)hat the rear house had left of the garden (became) a "court." (19. Riis 1890, pgs. 5-7)

The influx of Irish immigrants was reinforced, in the 1840’s by the Potato Famine, but by this time they were also joined by German immigrants. Following the revolution in Germany of 1848-49, the Germans came to comprise the second largest group of foreign-born residents of the city after the Irish. (32. Ellis 1966) The Germans concentrated largely east of the Bowery, in an area that became known as Kleindeutschland or in a misinterpretation of Deutsche, as "Dutchtown." (32. Homberger 1994) Here, in addition to a significant commercial presence on Canal and Grand Streets, they established an expansive cultural network of beer halls, theaters, concert halls, cafes and restaurants. (15. Sanders 1969) The Germans also resided west of the Bowery as Riis notes the multi-ethnic atmosphere of the "Five Points" at the southern most extent of Mulberry Street.

However, the successor to the Irish community on the East Side was to wait until after a shift in the demographics of immigration into the nation occurred in the 1880’s. Replacing the Northern Europeans, were Eastern European Jews fleeing the pogroms in the Russian Pale and Italians departing the turmoil left after the unification of the northern and southern portions of their homeland.
In 1880, the Italian-born population of New York was approximately 12,000. (32. Ellis 1966) Many of these early immigrants were from Northern Italy, however, in the ensuing 44 years most of their compatriots who would join them would be from Southern Italy. Growing from an initial base in the Bend, the Italian district gradually expanded northward to occupy a majority of the old Bayard estate replacing, north of Canal Street, the previous diverse Irish, Black and German Jewish population. This influx would comprise the largest immigration in the history of the United States, with the total number of Italian immigrants reaching an annual average of 616,000 people between the years of 1901 and 1914. (19. Gallo 1974)

Reformers, during this period, were appalled at the squalor of some of the housing conditions in the area, and the Tenement House Acts of 1867 and 1879 were passed as an attempt to counter "...the tenement house system - that plan by which the greatest amount of profit is sought to be realized from the least possible amount of space with little or no regard for the health, comfort or protection of the lives of the tenants..." The speaker continues to describe conditions similar to those described by Riis where "...many of these buildings were occupied on the first floor or two as shops...to the rear of such houses were other houses of the same kind that were not 'alley houses,' but had to be reached through the hallways of the fronting structures..." (35. Comer 1942) The new law was difficult to enforce though and in effect a compromise was reached by default in what became known as the "dumbbell" tenement building.

(35. Plunz 1990) The design of these dumbbell tenements was based upon a central stair with four, three-room "railroad" flats per floor, and they occupied a greater portion of the lot than the typical pre-law tenement building. (see Figures 4-2 and 4-3 on pgs. 83-84)

The housing accommodations were only part of the immigrants' environment though and it has been argued that the larger social and environmental context of Little Italy was quite supportive of the immigrants' lifestyles and ambitions. (19. Gabaccia 1984) Indications of this larger social context was noted by The New York Times in 1896, when they described the Italian enclave as something of a self-contained city. Little Italy provided "...all sorts of stores, boarding houses, grocery and fruit emporiums, tailors, shoemakers, wine merchants, musical stores, and toy and clay molders." (19. Mangione & Moreale 1992) Similarly, another observer noted that "...it was as if part of the old communities had been bodily transplanted to an American street. Signs and posters were in the Italian language, Italian tradesmen set up shop and peddlers sold food through the streets." (19. Gallo 1974)

Reformer Jacob Riis also looked outside of the tenements to provide a view of the daily, public activity in the Italian enclave in the 1890's, when the Italians were principally located south of Canal Street. Writing of the environs of southern Mulberry Street, he states that along:

...Bayard Street... Hebrew faces, Hebrew signs, and...chatter... attend the curious wanderer to
the very corner of Mulberry Street. But the moment he turns the corner the scene changes abruptly. Before him lies spread out what might better be the market-place in some town in Southern Italy than a street in New York—all but the houses; they are still the same old tenements of the unromantic type. But for once they do not make the foreground in a slum picture from the American metropolis. The interest centres not in them, but in the crowd they shelter only when the street is not preferable, and that ... is only when it rains ... When the sun shines the entire population seeks the street, carrying on its household work, its bargaining, its love-making, on street or sidewalk, or idling there ... Along the curb women sit in rows ... haggling over baskets of frowsy weeds, some sort of salad probably, stale tomatoes, and oranges not above suspicion. Ash-barrels serve them as counters, and not infrequently does the arrival of the official cart en route for the dump cause a temporary suspension of trade until the barrels have been emptied and restored. Hucksters' and peddlers' carts make two rows of booths in the street itself, and along the houses is still another—a perpetual market doing a very lively trade in its own queer staples, found nowhere on American ground save in the "Bend." (19. Riis 1890, pgs. 43-44)

While the scene apparently struck Riis as alien and peculiar, a southern Italian immigrant probably would have found it familiar. Describing everyday life in turn-of-the-century Sicily, one immigrant said, "(I)n my country peoples (sic) cook out of doors ... wash out of doors, eat out of doors, tailor out of doors, make macaroni out of doors ... And we use the house only in the night time to ... sleep." (19. Gabaccia 1984)

As the northward expansion of the Italian community continued from its base in The Bend, and consequent contraction of the Irish community continued, some inter-group hostility arose and for a period, Canal Street appears to have acted as the recognized border between the adjacent communities. This is described by a young Italian-American, who after recognizing an impending violent altercation between groups of young men from both communities, stated that "... I took to my heels and did not stop running until I reached Canal Street." (19. La Sorte 1985)

The Italian district soon expanded across the Canal Street border though, and its population subdivided itself into clusters based on the region or village that the immigrants left behind in Italy. These clusters soon became identified with the streets on which they located and in moving from street to street one could identify the subgroup by the dialect overhead in conversation there. (41. Mott St. Senior Center, personal communication 1994) Elaborate feasts (see Figures 3-10 on pg. 44 and 3-14 on pg. 49) for regional patron saints were held annually on the street dominated by immigrants from that locale. Moving east to west, in the early decades of the 20th century, along three adjacent blocks, one could find Sicilians on Elizabeth Street, Calabrians on Mott Street,

As the Italian community began to grow northward along the length of Mulberry Street, another group of immigrants was expanding into quarters just a block east of the Bend, in lower Mott Street, in the short length of Pell Street and in the intersecting, 90-degree curve described by Doyers Street. This group was of Chinese origin and the community was initially founded in 1844. (4. Pan 1994) The community, which was estimated to have 120 residents in the 1860 census (13. Zhou 1992) was largely comprised of rural Cantonese laborers who had moved east across the United States from points of entry on the west coast. By 1880, 700 people of Chinese-origin or descent were reported to live in this area, however, many Irish, Italian and Jewish names were recorded as residents of these streets too. (13. Jones n.d.)

Just as the Italian immigration was beginning to mount, the Exclusion Act was passed in 1882, and Chinese immigration was halted. The Chinese community, like others in the U.S. and Canada, then began a long period of stagnation and decline. In 1943, when the Italian community had come to dominate the area from the southern tip of Mulberry Street north to Bleeker Street, the Exclusion Act was repealed, enabling the reunification of many immigrant Chinese with their families. This provided an initial infusion of new people into Chinatown's aging population and the previously "three-street town" expanded to approximately 25,000 people

by the early 1960's and encompassed the eight-block area roughly defined on the west by the Civic Center, the east by the Bowery, and on the north by Canal Street. (see Figure 2-7) As the Italian community ceded the area south of Canal to the next successor, this street apparently again became a social/cultural boundary. Anecdotal reference is often made that residents of adjacent communities wouldn't cross this boundary without fear of incident,

and Canal Street again seems to have developed as a significant barrier, this time between the Chinese and Italian communities. (13. Zhou 1992)

Eventually, the second and third generation members of the Italian community began to assimilate and move to the City's outer boroughs and its suburbs. As the Italian-American population diminished north of Canal Street, the Chinese and Hispanic communities, south and north

Figure 2-7 -- Chinatown's Expansion
This page - Left: circa 1900
(Based upon 13. Zhou 1992)
This page - Right: circa 1950
(Source: NY Times, circa 1977)
Opposite page - Left: 1994
(Based on: 13. Zhou 1992 & Personal Observation)
of Little Italy respectively, began to take advantage of the additional housing opportunities. This process was heightened, when in 1965, Congress passed the Hart-Cellers Act which significantly altered the composition of immigration into the country. In the face of a tremendous increase of immigrants from Asia, the “traditional” borders between Chinatown and Little Italy quickly fell and Chinese businesses and households began to establish themselves north of Canal. This began to significantly affect the ambience of the streets and soon a public struggle for control of the area ensued.

The Little Italy Restoration Association was organized in the early 1970's by residents of the Italian community and they soon began lobbying the city to help “preserve the character of the neighborhood.” (19. Prial 1974) The city responded by executing a planning study in 1974 – “Little Italy Risorgimento” – of the 31-blocks north of Canal Street comprising Little Italy (see Figure 2-8). In 1976, the results of the study were used by the City Planning Commission to propose the “Little Italy Special District,” which was then adopted in early 1977. (38. Babcock & Larsen 1990)

Special districts were a relatively new zoning “overlay” that the planning commission had been experimenting with since the creation of its Urban Design Group in 1967. (38. Barnett 1982) Like the previously implemented Lincoln Square and Fifth Avenue districts, the Little Italy Special District was “conservative” in nature, and its express goals were “... to restore and improve the kind of historic ethnic neighborhood that enriches our city.” (19. The Mayor’s Office 1974) As this statement alludes to, this action was not only a measure to bolster the “special Italian identity” (19. Moritz 1974) of the area though, but to create what some have deemed an "ethnic festival marketplace," (5. Margulis 1993) an idea similar to that being expressed at that time by the Rouse Company for a festival market place at the historic South Street Seaport.

The environmental features that the Urban Design Group considered fundamental to the preservation of the community's Italian identity were codified in a set of design guidelines. The guidelines sought to control several environmental features, including Bulk, Storefronts, Signage and Sidewalk Improvements. (38. NYC Planning Commission 1991) When these regulations were ultimately presented to the community, Italians no longer...
represented a majority in the area and at contentious public meetings many Chinese residents and landowners complained that they had not been consulted in the development of the regulations and that they would prevent them from "... building new storefronts in the Chinese style..." within the district. (19. Hirschfeld 1976) One resident, expressing his exasperation with the districting at a Board of Estimate meeting, asked, "(h)ow can you propose what no longer exists?" (19. Solochek 1977)

This prescience of this comment is apparent in the fact that even by 1979, the Italians represented less than 40% of the district's population, versus the 98% that they represented in 1932. (19. Levanthes 1979) Land was quickly changing hands also, and by 1980, 70% of the property in the 31-block area was Chinese-owned.

The intent to attract tourists to the district appears to have born fruit, yet the neighborhood doesn't seem to have reaped nearly what they had hoped. Some new housing was built but, the proposed "piazzas" were never developed, and the "pedestrianization" of Mulberry Street apparently lasted only one summer. The remaining storefronts, which had previously served the Italian community, gradually began to serve the tourist trade as restaurants replaced local services (19. Solochek 1977) and Chinese businesses continued to open.

One of the Urban Design Group's leaders appears to have anticipated the transformation of the area into an ethnic festival marketplace as she quoted one person saying: "You see a wine and cheese store opening and you think of the few years ago when stores were closing. You see another well-designed quality restaurant; a new installed cafe, and it makes you walk down Mulberry Street with pride." (38. Ramati 1981) Ten years later, when Gennaro's Grocery on Mott Street was one of the few Italian stores remaining on the once bustling, two-block long, Italian market street (19. Hays 1990) one commentator more acerbically stated that Little Italy had turned into "... a Mediterranean version of Colonial Williamsburg." (19. Hampson 1990)

Instead of halting the succession and retaining the historic cultural landscape of Little Italy in lieu of that of Chinatown, the Special District fostered the creation of a third. This third cultural landscape is a tourist's environment, a nostalgic vision of a Little Italy that hadn't existed before. The two-block long, ethnic festival marketplace on Mulberry Street, comprised largely of newly-established restaurants, has little relation to what had historically existed in the neighborhood. As one longtime resident stated: "We never had the restaurants; it's just (these past) few years now... There was a few, one, or two... not as many as today. Mulberry Street full of restaurants! We never had that..." (41. Mott St. Senior Center, personal communication 1994)

Norman Marcus, longtime General Counsel to the Planning Commission, expressed reservations about the ultimate success of the district, stating that "(t)here are many districts that are meaningless. The Little Italy district was... because, actually, most of Little Italy was owned and
occupied by the Chinese..." (38. Babcock & Larsen 1990)

**Conclusion**

As was stated in its beginning, this chapter had two goals, both generally concerning the provision of context for the following chapters. One component of this context was provided through a discussion of the physical environment that touched upon the process of subdivision of private rural estates and their subsequent "improvement." The improvement of these estates was shown to have involved construction and modification of the original building stock and its eventual replacement. The next chapter will continue to build upon these observations, where the cycle of construction will become more evident and important to the project's argument.

The other goal of this chapter was to provide a social context. Here the dynamics of sequent occupancy were depicted indicating that the urban physical environment of the Lower East Side has historically accommodated several distinct social/cultural groups existing adjacent to one another at one time. The chapter also displayed the expansion of one community into areas previously occupied by another. This latter situation often resulted in tension, and political conflict in the case of the Little Italy Special District, regarding the "identity" of the area as Cressey's (39. 1938) model of sequent occupancy (see Chapter One) would have predicted.

The discussion of both of these components began to converge on Mott and Mulberry Streets at the end of the chapter. A portion of these two streets will accordingly become the focus of the next two chapters where the concepts of sequent occupancy, cultural landscapes and frameworks will be observed at a finer scale.