



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

Office of Environmental Analysis

October 28, 2019

Katherine Marcopul
Administrator and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
New Jersey Historic Preservation Office
501 E. State Street
Station Plaza Building 5
Trenton NJ 08625

RE: **Jersey City and Harsimus Cemetery Historic District Boundary Clarification
(Section 106 Technical Memorandum)**
STB Docket No. AB 167 (Sub-No. 1189X), Consolidated Rail Corporation—
Abandonment Exemption—in Hudson County, New Jersey.

Dear Ms. Marcopul:

The Surface Transportation Board's (Board) Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) is submitting a Section 106 Technical Memorandum entitled the Jersey City and Harsimus Cemetery Historic District Boundary Clarification to your office for review. This document is associated with the proposed abandonment of a line of railroad in the City of Jersey City, Hudson County, New Jersey known as the Harsimus Branch. The Technical Memorandum clarifies and corrects information set forth in the Board's Cultural Resources Effects Assessment Report issued on March 29, 2019 relating to the boundaries of the Jersey City and Harsimus Cemetery Historic District in relation to the proposed abandonment of the Harsimus Branch.

If you have any questions or comments please feel free to reach out to Alan Tabachnick of my staff at 202-245-0367, or alan.tabachnick@stb.gov. Thank you for your continued effort on this project.

Sincerely,

Victoria Rutson
Director
Office of Environmental Analysis

Cc: Andrea Tingey

SECTION 106 TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

Harsimus Branch Abandonment, STB Docket Nos. AB 167 (Sub-No. 1189X), AB 55 (Sub-No. 686X) and AB 290 (Sub-No. 306X), HPO Project 08-0811

October 25, 2019

Jersey City and Harsimus Cemetery Historic District Boundary Clarifications

Introduction

This Section 106 Technical Memorandum clarifies and corrects information set forth in the Surface Transportation Board's (STB or Board) Cultural Resources Effects Assessment Report Effects Report (Effects Report) issued on March 29, 2019 relating to the boundaries of the Jersey City and Harsimus Cemetery Historic District (Cemetery Historic District) in relation to the proposed abandonment of a line of railroad known as the Harsimus Branch in Jersey City, New Jersey.

The Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) is sending this Technical Memorandum to the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office (NJ SHPO) for review and concurrence. This document was prepared by Historic Preservation Specialist Alan Tabachnick, who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications for history, architectural history, and archaeology.

STB's Section 106 Process to Date¹

As part of the Board's responsibilities under Section 106, OEA has been advancing the four steps of the Section 106 review process. OEA completed Step 1 (Initiate the Process) in 2009, when, in consultation with the NJ SHPO and interested parties, OEA initiated the Section 106 process, and defined the undertaking and the Area of Potential Effects (APE). On March 23, 2009, OEA issued an Environmental Assessment (EA) recommending that the Board impose a condition requiring Conrail to take no steps to alter the historic integrity of any historic properties within the APE prior to the completion of the Section 106 process. Before the Section 106 process could proceed further, the Board issued a stay of the abandonment case while litigation unrelated to Section 106 proceeded. The stay was lifted in 2014 and OEA reinitiated Section 106 consultation.

As part of Step 2 (Identification of Historic Properties), OEA held in-person consulting party meetings in May and June 2016 to discuss the approach for identifying additional historic properties within the APE and to share preliminary results. Following ongoing consultation with the NJ SHPO and the other Section 106 consulting parties, OEA issued the Cultural Resources

¹ This section summarizes the Board's Section 106 process to date. Please see the Effects Report for a complete discussion.

Identification Report (CRI Report) on May 5, 2017. After receiving comments on the CRI Report from the NJ SHPO and other consulting parties, OEA issued a Cultural Resources Identification Report Addendum (CRI Report Addendum) on October 16, 2018. The issuance of the CRI Report Addendum concluded the identification phase of the Section 106 process. In the CRI Report, OEA recognized the Cemetery Historic District as a resource eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

To initiate Step 3 (Assessment of Adverse Effects), on March 29, 2019, OEA issued a Cultural Resources Effects Assessment Report (Effects Report) that documented the potential impacts of the abandonment on historic properties. During the preparation of an Effects Report Addendum (November, 2019) being prepared in response to comments and as part of the Section 106 consultation process, OEA reexamined the relationship between the Jersey City and Harsimus Cemetery and the proposed abandonment. This technical memorandum provides additional information on the Jersey City and Harsimus Cemetery Historic District and clarifies that the Harsimus Branch Rail Line and right-of-way does not cross any part of the Cemetery Historic District. This is a change from what was shown in earlier reports, where the right-of-way of the Harsimus Branch appeared to cross the boundary of the Cemetery Historic District.

The Cemetery Historic District and the Harsimus Branch Rail Line and the Depiction of their Property Lines

The Cemetery Historic District, located at 435 Newark Avenue, Jersey City, consists of the cemetery and contributing resources that include the Gatehouse, and all structures, monuments, paths, steps, fences and walls dating to the period of significance. The boundary of the Cemetery Historic District is the property boundary (Block 10901, Lot 107). OEA determined and the NJ SHPO concurred in July 2017 that the property was eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criteria A, C, and D, with a period of significance from 1812 to 1966.

In the Cultural Resources Inventory Report (CRI Report) issued by OEA in May 2017, the mapping used to illustrate the limits of the Harsimus Branch Rail line appeared to inaccurately place the route of the line across a portion of the Cemetery Historic District. This was due to the scale of the maps used to illustrate the location of the Harsimus Branch in the City of Jersey City and the Area of Potential Effects (APE) of the proposed abandonment, which covers a large geographic area. This mapping issue can be seen in a number of figures in the CRI Report (Figure 3.14c, 1885 Sanborn Map, page 3-18; Figure 3.15, 1886 Survey and Map of the Route of the Railroad of the New Jersey Junction Railroad Company, page 3-19; and Figure 3.18c, 1906 & 1910 Sanborn Map, page 3-23).

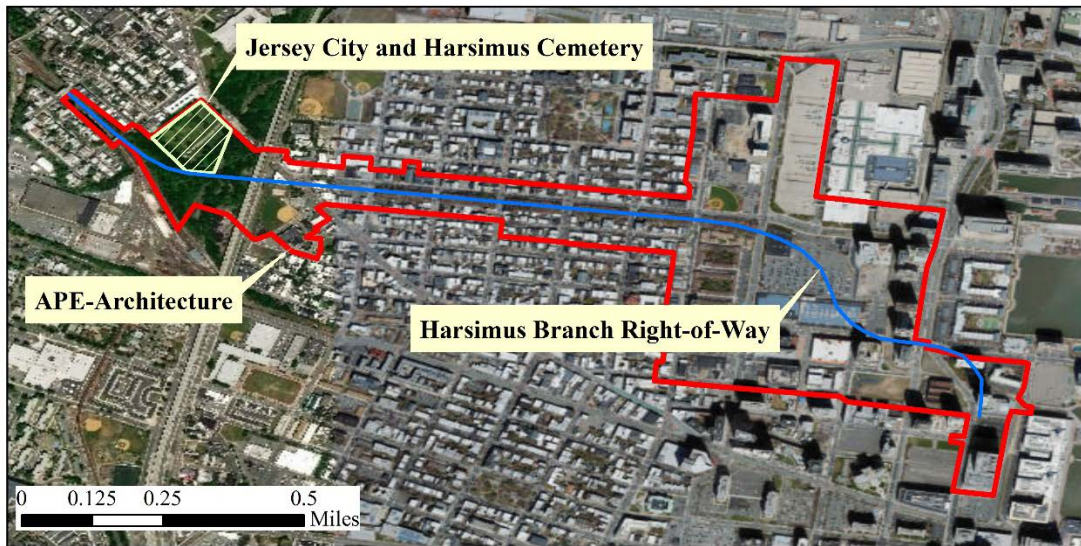


Figure 1: Harsimus Branch Right-of-Way in relation to the project APE.

The small-scale map above (Figure 1) shows the entire project area, using a blue line to indicate the rail line and a red line to indicate the project's APE. Use of similar small-scale maps in the Effects Report may have led to the misunderstanding that the rail right-of-way crosses the Cemetery Historic District. In contrast, the large-scale map below (Figure 2) focuses on the western end of the Harsimus Branch, where the Cemetery Historic District is located, and clearly demonstrates that the Harsimus Branch does not cross into the Cemetery Historic District.

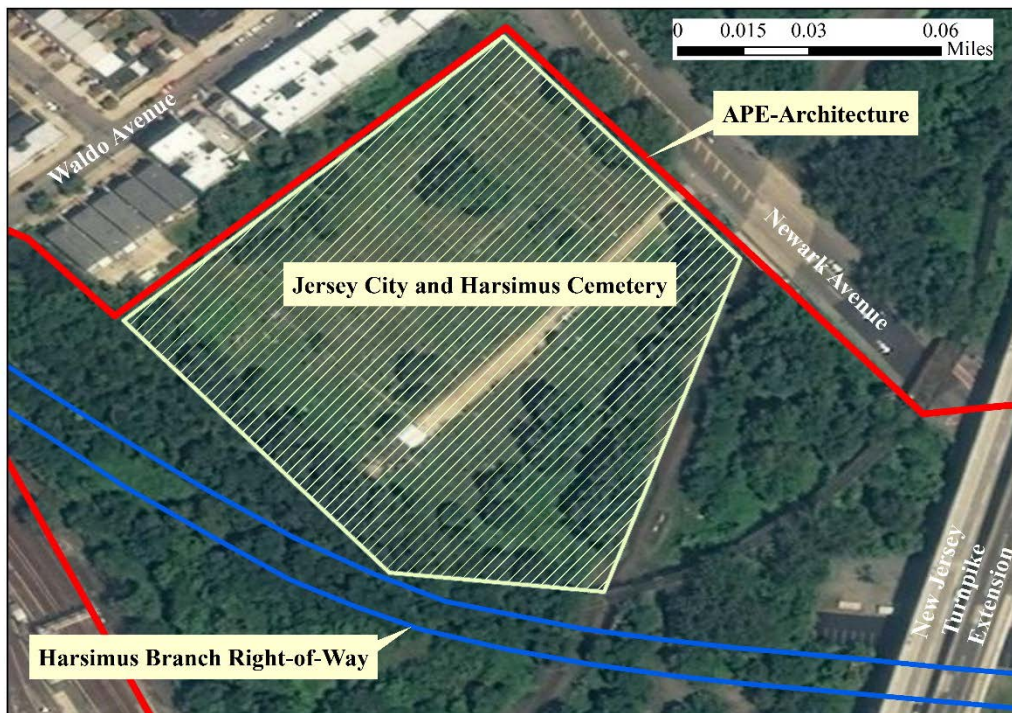


Figure 2: Harsimus Branch Right-of-Way in relation to the Cemetery Historic District.

In order to clarify the relationship between the Jersey City and Harsimus Cemetery and the Harsimus Branch, OEA undertook additional historic map research from a variety of sources. This analysis, presented below, helped to better understand how the landscape in this area developed over time, from the 1830s to the present. It also confirmed our assessment that the Harsimus Branch right-of-way did not cross any portion of the Jersey City and Harsimus Cemetery.

Evolution of the Jersey City and Harsimus Cemetery in Relation to the Harsimus Branch

In analyzing the relationship of the Cemetery Historic District to the adjacent railroad network and understanding the evolution of the landscape in that location, it is helpful to review detailed mapping. The Jersey City and Harsimus Cemetery was not a static entity from its outset, and its limits evolved over time. In addition, a number of different railroads were introduced into this landscape (including the Harsimus Branch) in the 19th and 20th centuries. The following analysis illustrates the evolution of that location.

The original plan of the Jersey City and Harsimus Cemetery dates to 1831 (Figure 3; Bridges 1831). This map shows the planned cemetery property bounded by “The Turnpike” (what was to become Newark Avenue) on the north, land owned by John M. Newkirk (the future Waldo Avenue) on the west, the lands of a Cornelius V. Riper and H. D. Van Winkle to the east (in the future to be a railroad right-of-way), and land belonging to Stephen Simonson on the south (land that would become the Pennsylvania Railroad Harsimus Branch right-of-way). The cemetery is planned as a rough L/V shape, with a corner section excluded (in the northwest corner) and likely still remaining in private hands at that time (Figure 3; Bridges 1831).

During the nineteenth century, a number of railroads were introduced into this area, changing the landscape to the south and east of the cemetery. Over time the cemetery became landlocked by rail lines. Hackett’s 1873 Map (Figure 4) shows the “Proposed Line of Railroad” that was to become the Harsimus Branch line. The map also shows the outline of the Cemetery Historic District, roughly following the same outline as can be seen in the earlier map from 1831 (Figure 3). It appears to show that the southernmost corner of the cemetery may have been purchased by the railroad company for transportation use.

By 1879, the Pennsylvania Railroad had constructed its line between Fifth and Sixth Streets, connecting the waterfront to points west, and crossing to the immediate south of the cemetery (Figure 5; Dripps 1879). An 1880 Map of Jersey City shows the Cemetery Historic District (labeled “J.C. Cemetery,” with Newark Avenue to the north and the Pennsylvania Railroad to the south. A creek is also visible running to the east of the cemetery (Figure 6; Spielmann & Brush 1880). This map does not provide any details about the property limits of the cemetery at that time.

By 1889, the New Jersey Junction Railroad had constructed a line that crossed to the immediate east of the cemetery, adjacent to its eastern property line (Figure 7: Harrison 1889). This map also shows the Pennsylvania Railroad Harsimus Branch to the south of the cemetery.

The 1919 Plat Book shows the Jersey City Cemetery, bounded by Newark Avenue on the north, the New Jersey Junction Railroad on the east, Waldo Avenue on the west, and

unfortunately tears in the spine of the volume make it impossible to clearly see the full length of the cemetery's southern property line (Figure 8: Hopkins 1919). This map is valuable as it shows the location of the cemetery office and the greenhouse, adjacent to Newark Avenue. It also shows other parcel lines within the cemetery limits, as well as the hillside which forms the western property boundary, and within which burial vaults were constructed, which are contributing resources within the cemetery.

The 1928 Plat Book is the best historic source to provide detailed property boundaries for the Jersey City Cemetery, as well as for the railroads to the east and south (Figure 9: Hopkins 1928). This map clearly shows the cemetery, bounded by Newark Avenue to the north, Junction Railroad to the east, residential buildings along the east side of Waldo Avenue to the west, and lands belonging to the Pennsylvania Railroad to the south. The Pennsylvania Railroad Harsimus Branch occupies land up to the boundary of the cemetery but does not extend onto cemetery property. There are multiple parcels south of the Cemetery Historic District, and at that time all appear to be owned by the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Current tax parcel mapping of the Jersey City Cemetery in relation to Conrail property can be seen in Figure 10 (Tax Parcel Map entitled "Jersey City Harsimus Cemetery"). The Cemetery Historic District, labeled "J.C. Harsimus Cemetery," occupies Lot 107. The Harsimus Branch rail line is visible south of the property line of the cemetery, occupying Lot 92 (labeled "Conrail (Formerly P.C.T. CO.) Harsimus BR. Class II; and Conrail (Formerly P.C.T. Co.) Harsimus BR. Main Stem." The current tax parcel mapping shows that the rail corridor does not cross cemetery property. The N.J. Junction Branch Conrail (Formerly P.C.T. Co.) is visible along the eastern property line of the cemetery, occupying Lot 108. Neither of these former rail corridors appear to cross Cemetery Historic District property.

In sum, OEA concludes that, based on detailed examination of historic maps from 1831 through the present, the Harsimus Branch right-of-way does not cross any portion of the Cemetery Historic District. This conclusion supports OEA's findings regarding the potential effects of the proposed abandonment on the Harsimus Branch on the Cemetery Historic District set forth in the Effects Report and in a forthcoming addendum to that report, which will be submitted to the NJ SHPO in November 2019.

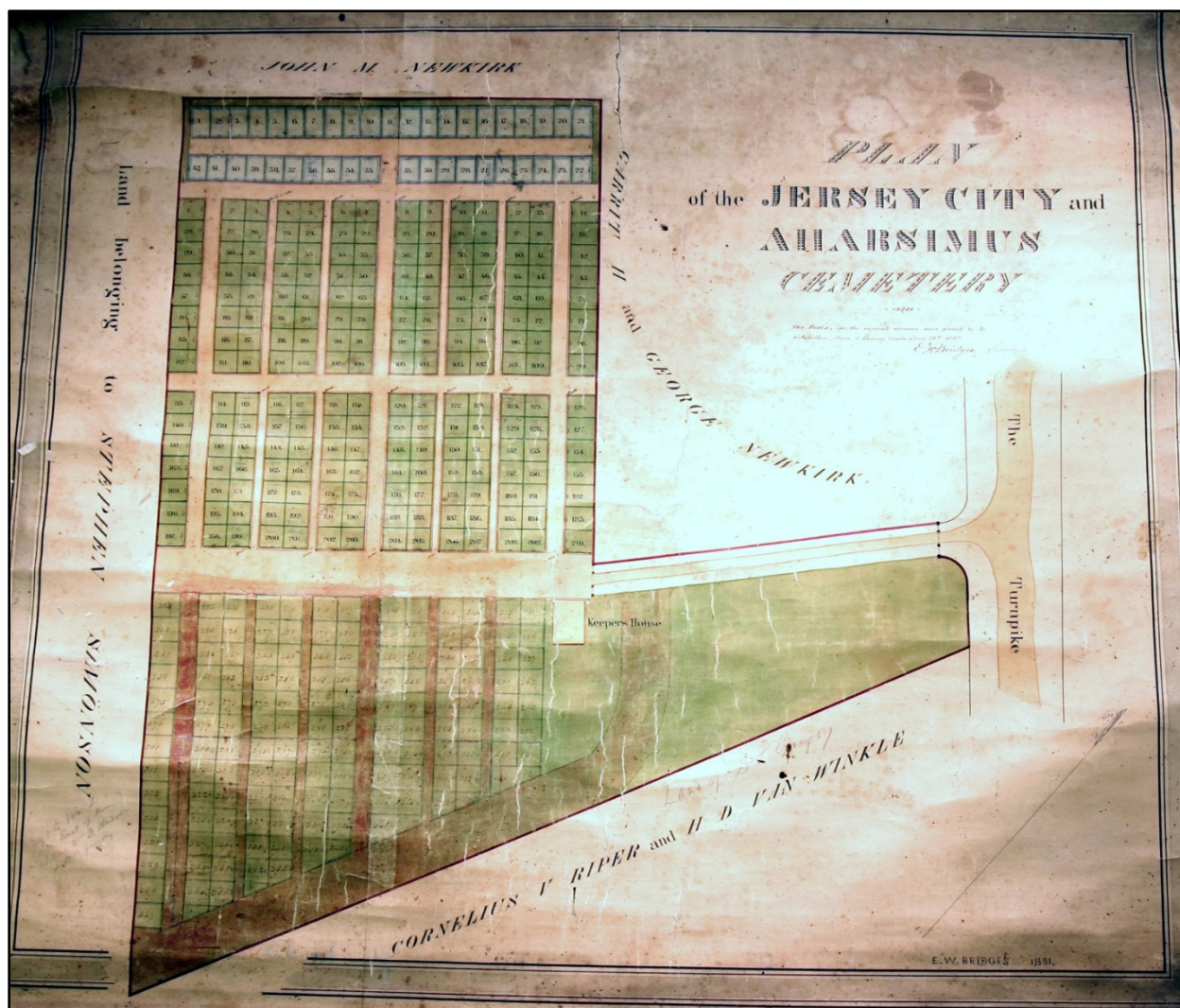


Figure 3: 1831 Plan of the Jersey City and Aharsimus [sic] Cemetery. Surveyed by William E. Bridges. Accessed on September 9, 2019 at <https://gardenstatelegacy.com>.

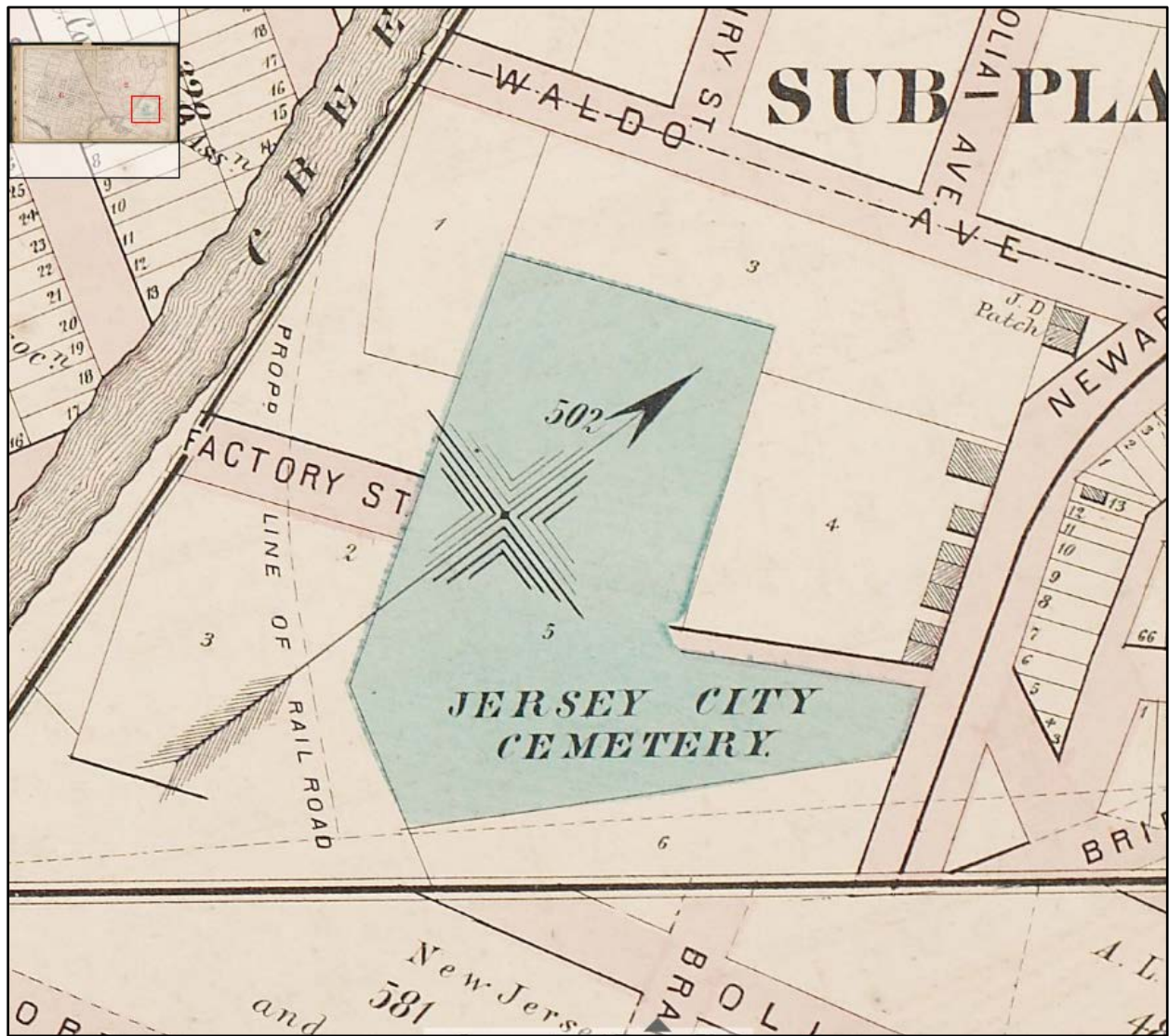


Figure 4: 1873 Map of the Jersey City Cemetery. The map shows the “Proposed Line of Railroad” that was to become the Harsimus Branch line. It also shows how the southernmost corner of the cemetery appears to have been purchased for future transportation use. Source: Atlas of New Jersey and Hudson County, William Hackett, 1873. Page 81. Accessed on September 9, 2019 at <https://mapmaker.rutgers.edu>.



Figure 5: 1879 Map of Jersey City showing the location of the cemetery in relation to the railroad and street network at that time. Source: Map of Jersey City and Hoboken, Hudson County, N.J. Published by M. Dripps, New York. Accessed on September 8, 2019 at <https://mapmaker.rutgers.edu>.



Figure 6: 1880 Map of the Jersey City Cemetery location. Shows the Pennsylvania Railroad crossing to the south of the Jersey City Cemetery, Newark Avenue to the north, and Waldo Avenue to the west. Source: Spielmann & Brush 1880 (Plate 5). Accessed on September 23, 2019 at <https://mapmaker.rutgers.edu>.

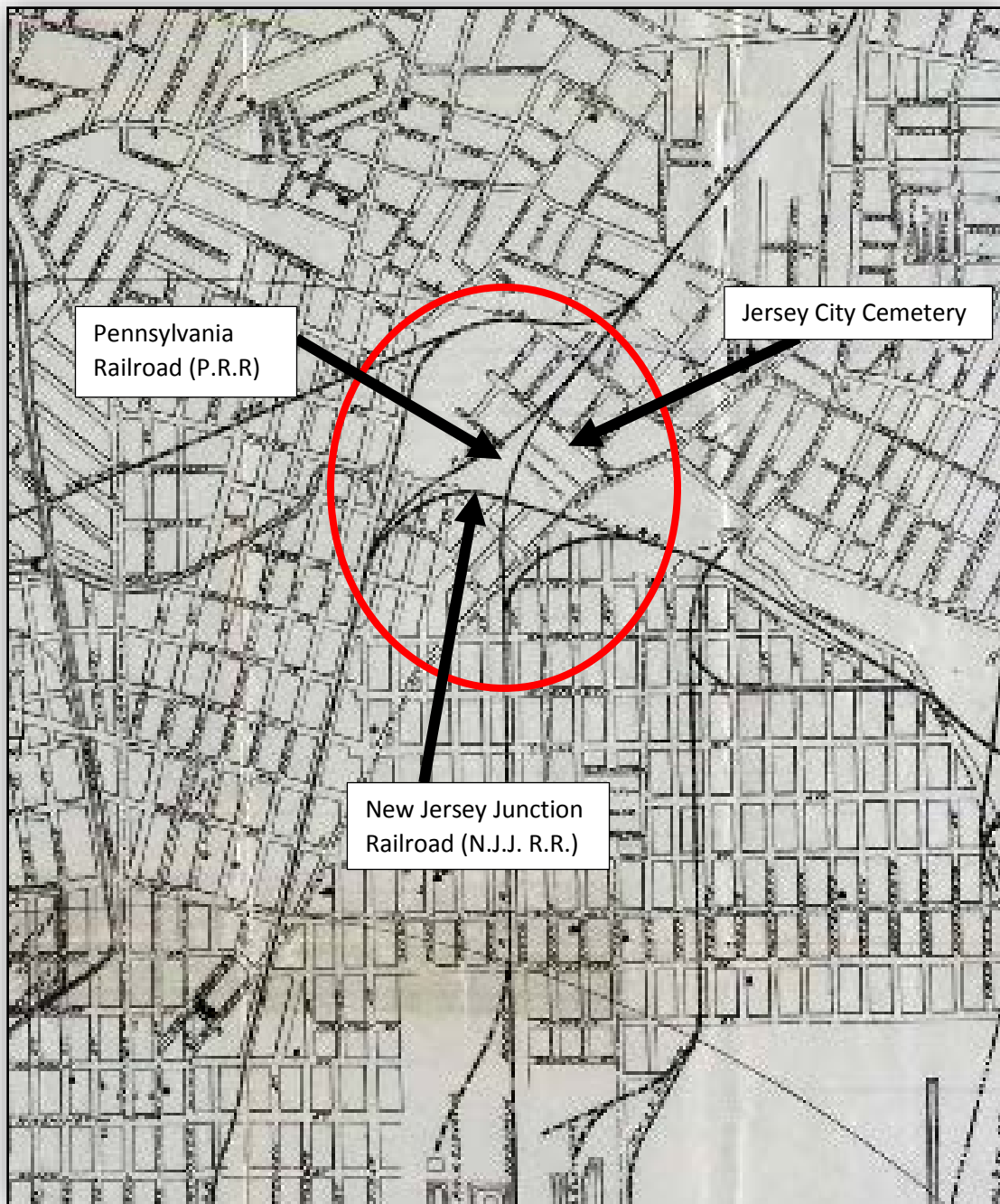


Figure 7: 1889 Map of Jersey City Showing Two Railroad Lines crossing adjacent to the cemetery. The P.R.R. is located to the south and the N.J.J. R.R. to the east. Source: Map of Jersey City and Environs, Hudson County, N.J. J.W. Harrison Publisher, Jersey City, N.J. Accessed on September 9, 2019 at <https://mapmaker.rutgers.edu>.

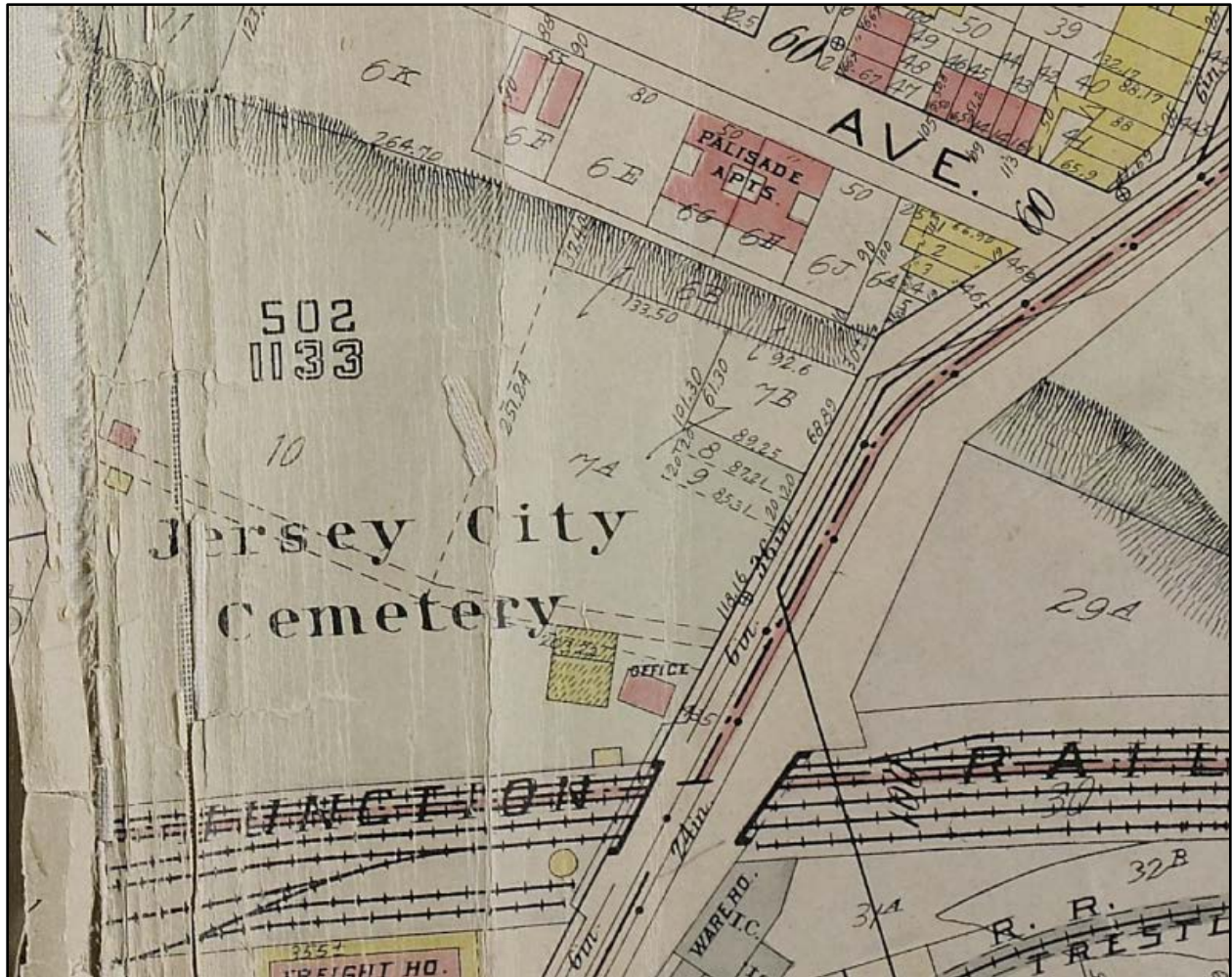


Figure 8: 1919 detailed view of Jersey City Cemetery. Note the Junction Railroad to the east, Newark Avenue to the north, and residential development along Waldo Avenue on the west. Source: Plat Book of Jersey City and Bayonne N.J. Published by G.M. Hopkins Co., Philadelphia, PA. Accessed on September 16, 2019 at <https://mapmaker.rutgers.edu/>.

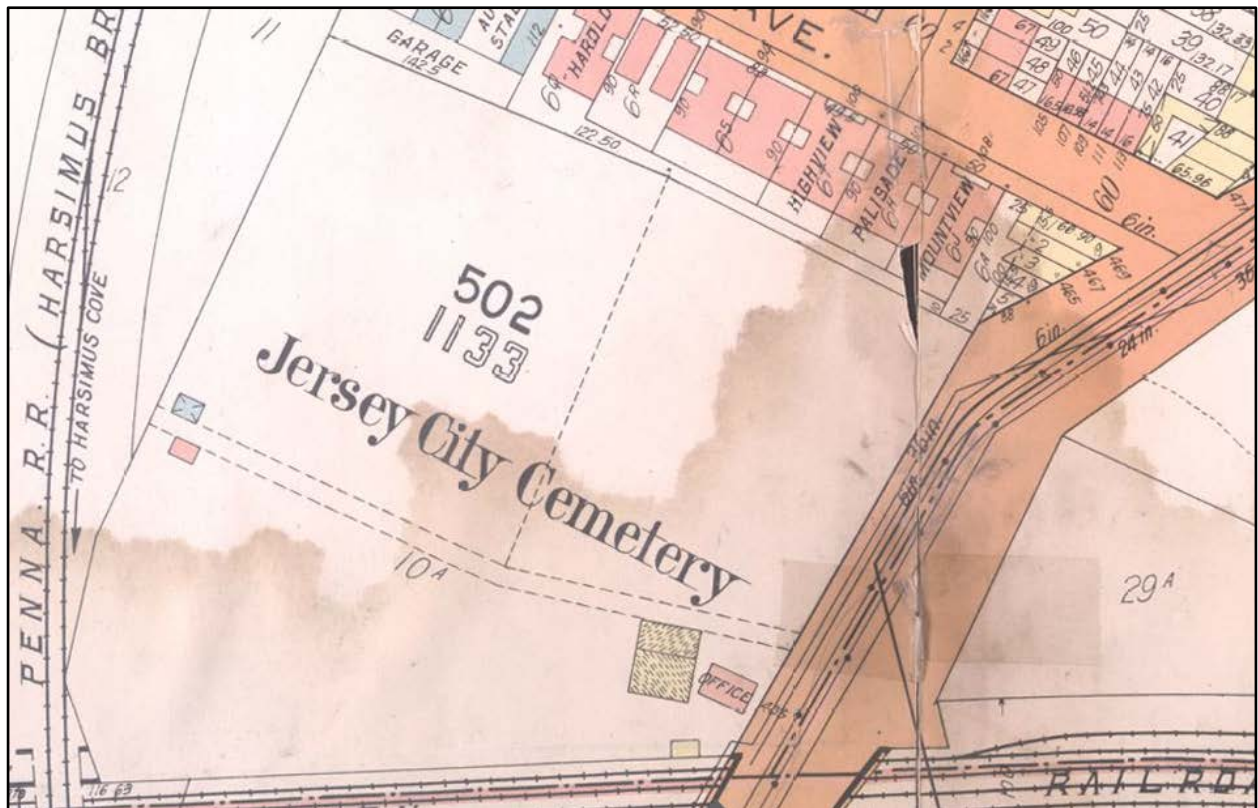


Figure 9: 1928 detailed view of the Jersey City Cemetery, including the office (in pink), and the greenhouse (in yellow). Source: Plat Book of Jersey City, Hudson County, NJ. Hopkins. Accessed on August 1, 2019 at https://mapmaker.rutgers.edu/JCplat_book/Frontpage/index.htm.

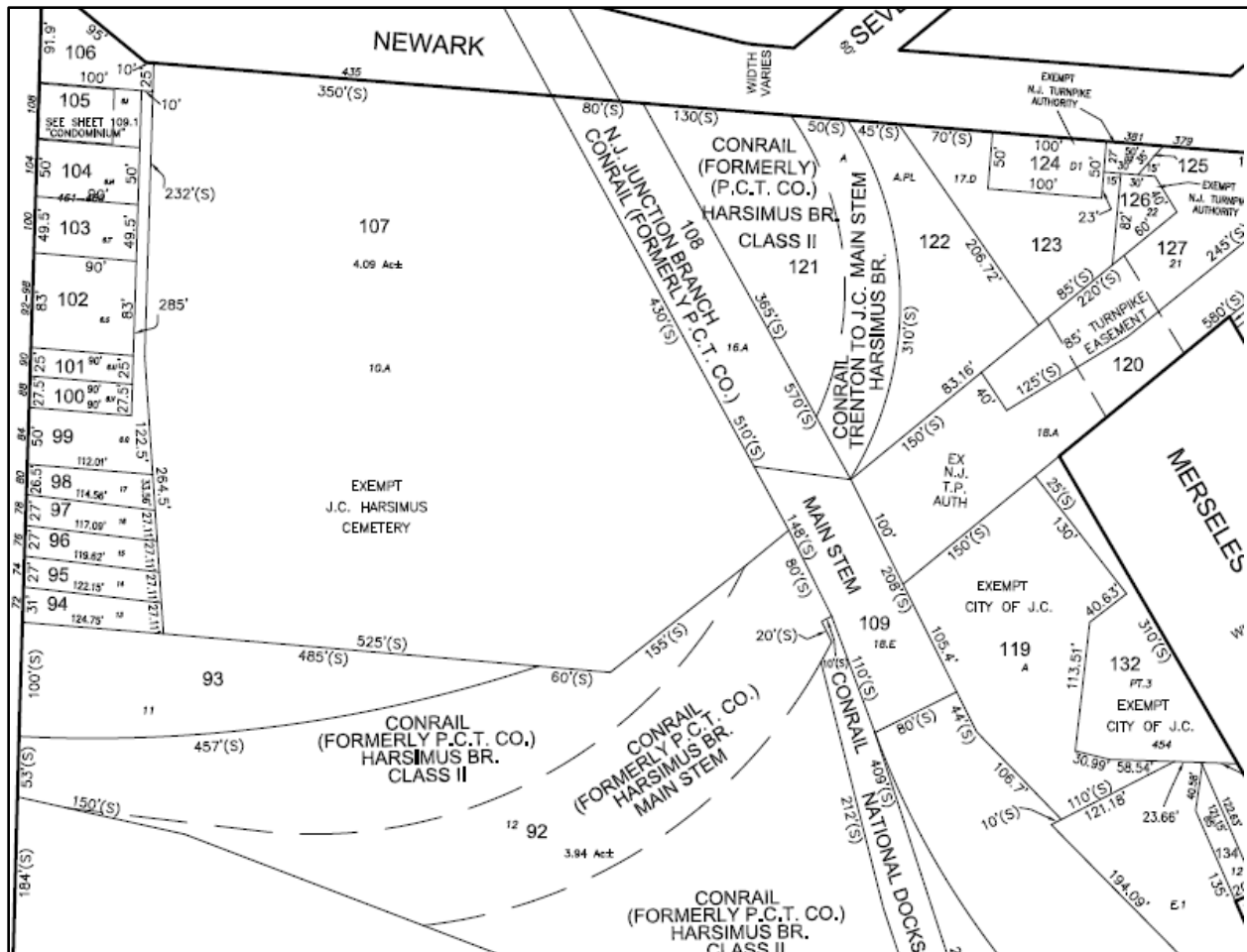


Figure 10: Tax Parcel Map of Jersey City Harsimus Cemetery. Available at: <http://hostedfiles.civilsolutions.biz/jerseycity/taxmaps/index.htm>, Accessed September 12, 2019.

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