



HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY FORM

NYS OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION
& HISTORIC PRESERVATION
P.O. BOX 189, WATERFORD, NY 12188
(518) 237-8643

OFFICE USE ONLY

USN:

IDENTIFICATION

Property name (if any) Tarrytown Sewage Treatment Plant
Address or Street Location South side of West Main Street in Pierson Park
County Westchester Town/City _____ Village/Hamlet: Tarrytown
Owner Village of Tarrytown Address South Broadway & Franklin Street, Tarrytown, NY 10591
Original use Sewage Treatment Plant Current use Tarrytown Recreation Department Offices
Architect/Builder, if known Fred Berlanti & Son Date of construction, if known 1940

DESCRIPTION

Materials – please check those materials that are visible

Exterior Walls:	<input type="checkbox"/> wood clapboard	<input type="checkbox"/> wood shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> vertical boards	<input type="checkbox"/> plywood	
	<input type="checkbox"/> stone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> brick	<input type="checkbox"/> poured concrete	<input type="checkbox"/> concrete block	
	<input type="checkbox"/> vinyl siding	<input type="checkbox"/> aluminum siding	<input type="checkbox"/> cement-asbestos	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____	
Roof:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> asphalt, shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> asphalt, roll	<input type="checkbox"/> wood shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> metal	<input type="checkbox"/> slate
Foundation:	<input type="checkbox"/> stone	<input type="checkbox"/> brick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> poured concrete	<input type="checkbox"/> concrete block	

Other materials and their location: _____

Alterations, if known: Converted to function as offices Date: 1970s

Condition: excellent good fair deteriorated

Photos

Provide several clear, original photographs of the property proposed for nomination. Submitted views should represent the property as a whole. For buildings or structures, this includes exterior and interior views, general setting, outbuildings and landscape features. Color prints are acceptable for initial submissions.

Please staple one photograph providing a complete view of the structure or property to the front of this sheet. Additional views should be submitted in a separate envelope or stapled to a continuation sheet.

Maps

Attach a printed or drawn locational map indicating the location of the property in relationship to streets, intersections or other widely recognized features so that the property can be accurately positioned. Show a north arrow. Include a scale or estimate distances where possible.

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(See Reverse)

PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION

IF YOU ARE PREPARING A NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION, PLEASE REFER TO THE ATTACHED INSTRUCTIONS

Narrative Description of Property: Briefly describe the property and its setting. Include a verbal description of the location (e.g. north side of NY 17, west of Jones Road; a general description of the building structure or feature including such items as architectural style (if known) number of stories type and shape of roof (flat gabled mansard shed or other) materials and landscape features. Identify and describe any associated buildings, structures or features on the property such as garages silos privies pools gravesites. Identify any known exterior and interior alterations such as additions replacement windows aluminum or vinyl siding or changes in plan. Include dates of construction and alteration if know. Attach additional sheets as needed.

See Continuation Sheet

Narrative Description of Significance: Briefly describe those characteristics by which this property may be considered historically significant. Significance may include, but is not limited to, a structure being an intact representative of an architectural or engineering type or style (e.g., Gothic Revival style cottage, Pratt through-truss bridge); association with historic events or broad patterns of local, state or national history (e.g., a cotton mill from a period of growth in local industry, a seaside cottage representing a locale's history as a resort community, a structure associated with activities of the "underground railroad."); or by association with persons or organizations significant at a local, state or national level. Simply put, why is this property important to you and the community. Attach additional sheets as needed.

See Continuation Sheet

Tarrytown Sewage Treatment Plant

Physical Description

Constructed in 1940, the Tarrytown Sewage Treatment Plant is located in Pierson Park, on the south side of West Main Street, in the Village of Tarrytown, Westchester County, New York. It currently functions as office space for the Tarrytown Recreation Department. The park is situated on bulkheaded landfill, and is bound to the north by West Main Street, the east by Andre Brook, and the south and west by the Hudson River. Within the park, the plant is bound to the north and west by paved parking lots, and the south and east by a grassy field.

The plant originally featured multiple structures, two of which are extant: the Administration Building and attached Digester. The Administration Building is a one-and-half-story brick building laid in common bond with Colonial Revival-style influences. It sits atop a concrete foundation and is capped by a slate-clad hipped roof with a projecting cross gable. The roof is pierced by a central corbelled chimney, and the western slope is pierced by an eyebrow vent.

The cross gable features a cast stone cornice. The primary or east façade is seven bays long, and features an entry in the projecting cross-gable section, flanked by windows. The entry and windows are set within cast stone surrounds. The entry features a contemporary screen door, and is accessed by a concrete step flanked by iron railings. An awning is appended above the entry. Eight-over-eight double-hung sash with storm windows pierce the facade. A narrow slot window with diagonal panes occurs in the front-gable section above the entry. Gutters are appended at the cornice level, and leaders are appended on the north and south ends of the façade.

The north and south façades are three bays wide respectively, and feature eight-over-eight double-hung sash. A one-bay hyphen is appended to the west façade which connects the Digester to the Administration Building. A boarded-up window is visible in the north half of the west façade, and an I-beam connects the building to the digesters. A window also occurs in the gable of the west façade.

The brick Digester, laid in common bond, sits atop a concrete foundation, and is capped by a flat roof articulated with plywood. The Digester is comprised of north and south cylindrical digester tanks, connected by a hyphen. The hyphen is pierced by a metal door flanked by eight-over-eight double-hung sash. The south digester is pierced by two doors.

Historic Context

Tarrytown, 19th Century

Residential and industrial development proliferated in Tarrytown during the 19th century, spurred by technological innovations in transportation. For example, stage coaches traveled along South Broadway between New York City and Albany from before the American Revolution (1775-83) to the mid-19th century. The coaches accommodated up to 20 passengers, and, in the winter months, wheeled vehicles gave way to sleds. In addition to passengers, the stage coaches transported mail and other goods between communities (Canning & Buxton, 1975).

The Hudson River also became a major travel route following the invention of the steamboat by Robert Fulton in 1807. By 1824, regular freight and passenger steamboat service had been established along the Hudson River between New York City and Albany, despite initial tense opposition from many Tarrytown

residents who feared for the continued economic viability of their sail-powered sloops and schooners (Canning & Buxton, 1975).

Increasingly, wealthy industrialists and prominent citizens began to appreciate the beauty of the Hudson River Valley which, by the 1830s, served as an inspiration for many painters, writers, and architects. In 1838, William Paulding, a Tarrytown native who served as mayor of New York City from 1824-29, commissioned architect A.J. Davis to design a country villa overlooking the Hudson River, one of many being constructed along its bluffs between New York City and Albany. The estate and gardens, dubbed Lyndhurst, popularized the Gothic Revival style, and was situated in Tarrytown on the west side of South Broadway (National Trust for Historic Preservation, no date [n.d.]).

In 1849, the Hudson River Railroad pushed its way north from New York City toward Albany, and tracks were laid along the east bank of the Hudson River through Tarrytown. The railroad initially consisted of a single track, but eventually, increased passenger and freight demand required construction of three other sets of mainline rails, in addition to a railroad depot in the central portion of Tarrytown. The railroad ushered the region into the industrial age, and facilitated the establishment of industries (Canning & Buxton, 1975). Because it was constructed along the Hudson River, the railroad effectively cut-off riverfront access for much of Tarrytown, and allowed for greater industrial growth along the river.

In conjunction with the railroads, steamboats continued to be a viable mode of transportation. The 1868 Beers, Ellis & Soule atlas depicts a steamboat landing with a freight and passenger depot at the western terminus of Main Street in Tarrytown, north of the future site of the sewage treatment plant. The Hudson River flanked Main Street to the south and west, providing access to steamboats and freighters. Steamboats facilitated travel from Tarrytown across the river to Nyack in Rockland County. By this time, industrial development, such as coal yards and gas works, had developed along the river north of Main Street (Beers, Ellis & Soule, 1868).

In 1870, Tarrytown voted to incorporate itself as a village governed by a board of trustees (Canning & Buxton, 1975). Taxes collected by the village were utilized to provide public services, including paved roads, sewers, fire companies, and police protection (“History of Westchester, n.d.). By 1889, plans for a sewer system in Tarrytown were approved by the New York State Board of Health. According to *The New York Times*, the plans involved a drainage system and an “elaborate automatic arrangement for rendering sewage innocuous” (*The New York Times*, September 29, 1889). In 1892, *The New York Times* indicated that the village was soon to be utilizing rain water to flush their sewers (*The New York Times*, January 8, 1892).

During this period, sewers discharged waste, typically untreated, into the Hudson River and other bodies of water throughout the state. However, towards the end of the 19th century, steps began to be taken to address pollution. In 1895, the Bronx River Sewer Commission was created to eliminate pollution in the Bronx River in Westchester County and the Bronx. The following year, the commission issued a report which described the condition of the Bronx River as an “open sewer,” and proposed that a sewer be constructed along the river (LaFrank, September 20, 1990).

Increasing Pollution and Tarrytown, Early-20th Century

Despite the recommendations of the Bronx River Sewer Commission, no action was taken until 1905, when a new sewer commission was appointed. The commission was authorized to spend \$2,000,000 to construct a sewer along the Bronx River, from White Plains to the north to Yonkers to the south (*The New York Times*, June 15, 1905). In conjunction with the sewer project, a public reservation, including a scenic parkway, would also be created along the river. By 1913, land began to be acquired, and river clean-up

commenced. By 1916, work on the parkway was underway and the condition of the river was highly improved (LaFrank, September 20, 1990).

By this time, numerous industrial facilities developed along the Hudson River in Tarrytown. Gas and electric works and coal and lumber yards were located immediately north of Main Street, and General Motors was located north of those facilities. The introduction of large plants in Tarrytown increased the village's population, and led to increased sewage. Despite progress made to clean up the Bronx River, and growing concerns about sewage control, towns and villages in New York, including Tarrytown, continued to discharge sewage and industrial waste into the Hudson River.

In 1921, a law was amended which required that all plans for sewage or industrial waste disposed into any body of water be submitted to the State Engineer for approval prior to issuance of permits by the Health Commissioner. That year, numerous permits were granted to the Village of Tarrytown for sewer extensions, including one that would discharge sewage into the Hudson River at the western terminus of Josephine Street, one block north of Main Street. Josephine Street is no longer extant. The permit was granted under the condition that when required by the state, the village would be obligated to construct "satisfactory disposal works for the treatment of the entire village of Tarrytown" (New York State Department of Health, 1922).

Increasing Concern over Pollution, and Construction of the Tarrytown Sewage Treatment Plant, 1930s-40s

By the 1930s, pollution in New York's water bodies, including the Hudson River, was widespread, and began to attract increasing attention. The impact of pollution on recreational uses along the river began to be widely reported by the press. In 1932, water at Westchester County beaches was tested, including Kingsland Point Park in North Tarrytown. The tests indicated that the water was "seriously polluted" and was a "menace to the health" of bathers. The source of much of the pollution stemmed from 28 major sewer outlets between Peekskill to the north and Hastings-on-Hudson to the south which discharged untreated or inadequately treated sewage directly into the river (*The New York Times*, November 27, 1932). The following year, the beach at Kingsland Point Park was ordered closed (*The New York Times*, May 25, 1933).

In 1936, the Board of Supervisors from the State Department of Health ordered Westchester County to provide for proper treatment of sewage by 1940, and specifically cited Irvington, Tarrytown, North Tarrytown, Ossining, Croton and Peekskill. A *New York Times* article noted that the state had issued previous requests which had gone unheeded (*The New York Times*, August 22, 1936). By this time, 11 outlets discharged sewage into the Hudson River from Tarrytown. During the summer months, approximately 75 percent of the sewage was treated with chlorine. However, for the remainder of the year, Tarrytown's sewage was untreated, and discharged directly into the river (Village of Tarrytown, January 1942).

In 1937, James L. Barron, director of sanitation for Westchester County Health Department, noted that "recreational uses along the Hudson River are being sacrificed and gradually destroyed by the discharge of untreated or inadequately treated sewage" from numerous villages and towns, including Tarrytown. Furthermore, he noted that "river water has now reached the critical limit of bacterial pollution and dissolved oxygen is seriously depleted at certain points" (*The New York Times*, June 10, 1937).

On July 30, 1938, the Village of Tarrytown applied for funding from the Public Works Administration (PWA) to construct a sewage treatment plant (Village of Tarrytown, January 1942). The PWA was established as part of the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) of 1933, geared toward lifting the country out of the Great Depression (1929-45). The PWA funded both federal, state, and/or local projects.

From its inception through its termination in 1941, the PWA spent \$6 million to construct over 34,000 projects. At the federal level, projects included Navy and Coast Guard vessels, flood control work, irrigation projects, and government buildings, among others. At the local level, the PWA funded construction of streets and highways, sewers and treatment plants, power facilities, dams, and schools, among other projects (The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, 2003).

On October 8, 1938, President Franklin D. Roosevelt approved 112 PWA sewage projects. Of these, 39 were located in New York, including the sewage treatment plant in Tarrytown, as well as a plant that would serve North Tarrytown. The plant was estimated to cost \$300,000, and the PWA contributed \$135,000, or 45% of the total cost (*The New York Times*, October 9, 1938). The PWA didn't provide plans or designs, and therefore, the Village of Tarrytown was responsible for the design of the sewage treatment plant. Upon receipt of the award, Charles J. Kupper was selected as consulting engineer (Village of Tarrytown, January 1942). Kupper, a New Jersey resident, was a municipal engineer for a number of townships in New Jersey, and had designed numerous sewage treatment plants (*The New York Times*, November 11, 1974). Fred Berlanti & Son served as contractor. James R. Losee, who held the post of village engineer for 50 years, served as engineer during construction. D.D. Egan and R. Livingston held the posts of chief operator and assistant operator, respectively (Village of Tarrytown, January 1942).

In 1939, plans were developed by Kupper, Losee, Egan, and Livingston (Village of Tarrytown, 1942). By June of that year, *The New York Times* reported that construction had commenced on the plant. The article also noted that by January 1940, each community between Peekskill to the north and Yonkers to the south would have begun or completed construction of modern sewage treatment plants (*The New York Times*, June 11, 1939). Keeping on schedule, construction was completed at the Tarrytown Sewage Treatment Plant on October 25, 1940, and it began processing sewage on November 18, 1940 (Village of Tarrytown, January 1942).

The Tarrytown plant was designed in the Colonial Revival style, a typical style selected for Depression-era civic and institutional architecture. Similarly, the Colonial Revival style was also selected for the North Tarrytown sewage treatment plant on River Street, also constructed in 1940.

The plant was located on a six-acre bulkheaded landform, accessed via West Main Street, and surrounded by the Tarrytown Harbor in the Hudson River. The 1929 Hopkins Map depicts the landform which was presumably created in the mid-1920s by dumping garbage into the harbor (Hopkins, 1929). Prior to establishment of the plant, the landform was used as the village refuse and garbage dump.

The sewage treatment plant included three main components:

- Interceptor Sewer
- Treatment Plant
- Outfall Sewer

The interceptor sewer cost approximately \$91,000 to construct, and these costs were associated with furnishing and laying the sewer. The treatment plant cost approximately \$227,000, and included the following major components:

- Administration Building (56 feet [ft] long and 25 ft wide)
- Clarifiers (62 ft long by 14 ft wide and 10 ft deep)
- Digestors (29 ft diameter, 22 ft deep)
- Glass Covered Sludge Bed (116 ft long by 40 ft wide)
- Roadways, Walkways, and Plantings

The outfall sewer cost approximately \$7,400, and an additional \$6,200 was spent on easements. The total cost of the plant amounted to \$332,100.21, roughly \$32,000 over the original estimated \$300,000 budget. The plant was designed for primary treatment, and had a capacity of 1.5 millions of gallons per day (MGD). However, it was designed in a manner that allowed for treatment of up to 3 MGD if necessary (Village of Tarrytown, 1942).

Tarrytown Sewage Treatment Plant, 1950s-Present

Prior to World War II, the New York State Assembly began to investigate construction of a bridge between Rockland and Westchester Counties in the vicinity of the Tappan Zee, the second widest point of the Hudson River, located between Nyack and Tarrytown. It was named for the Tappan Indian tribe of Rockland County, and the Dutch term *zee* (open expanse of water or sea). The advent of World War II temporarily defused the bridge plan, and shortly after the conclusion of the war in 1945, the issue was revived (Talley, 1989).

By the 1950s, transport of people and goods via cars and trucks became a necessity of life. It was in this climate during the early 1950s that the recently formed New York State Thruway Authority (NYSTA) commenced plans to construct a bridge crossing the Hudson River at the Tappan Zee. Although Tarrytown residents protested the project because of potential traffic increases on local streets, NYSTA opted to construct the bridge between Nyack and Tarrytown in 1950, south of the Tarrytown Sewage Treatment Plant (Laroff, 2000). The bridge was completed in 1955 and, in 1956, construction began on the Cross Westchester Expressway (Interstate [I]-287) that would link the New York State Thruway (I-87) in Elmsford to I-95 in Port Chester. The expressway was completed in 1960 (Cross Westchester Expressway, n.d.).

Landfill created during construction of the bridge was used in the vicinity of the sewage treatment plant to extend the shoreline of Tarrytown (Melvin, May 25, 1980). However, the additional land created was underutilized and unsightly. In the 1960s, James Losee outlined a plan to revitalize the waterfront for use as a recreational area. Following his recommendation, the village established a riverfront park, named Losee Park, south of the plant. By the 1970s, the local press reported on reclamation of the riverfront for recreational use. Access to the riverfront was hampered by the railroad and various culverts which flowed into the river. Furthermore, Losee Park, the only recreational area along the riverfront, was “often ankle deep in water and the rest of the riverfront is littered with debris and sludge” (Roddy & Wehle, February 7, 1975).

In the 1970s, Tarrytown underwent an effort to upgrade its sewer system as part of the Saw Mill Sanitary District Construction Project. The project called for the elimination of the Tarrytown Sewage Treatment Plant, construction of a pump station in Tarrytown south of Depot Plaza, and installation of sewer lines that would carry sewage to an improved waste treatment facility in Yonkers. During the same period, Losee Park was rehabilitated. Following the decommissioning of the plant in the late 1970s, the six-acre site was transformed into Pierson Park. The park was landscaped with gravel paths and plantings, with tennis, basketball, handball and platform tennis courts. The Administration Building and attached Digester were rehabilitated to serve as office space for the Tarrytown Recreation Department (Leahy, n.d.). The Tarrytown Senior Center was constructed in the general footprint of the former sludge bed, and a gazebo was constructed in the general footprint of the former clarifier.

National Register Eligibility Statement and Proposed National Register Boundary

The Tarrytown Sewage Treatment Plant is recommended eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A and C for its historic importance and architectural design. It is eligible under Criterion A for its associations with development of sewage treatment in Westchester County, and an increasing

awareness of the impact of pollution on the Hudson River. It is also significant as a sewage treatment plant partially funded by the PWA during the Great Depression. It is also eligible under Criterion C because it retains integrity as an example of a small-scale, Depression-era, Colonial Revival-style sewage treatment plant constructed in 1940. Additionally, the Tarrytown Sewage Treatment Plant retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The proposed National Register boundary includes the footprint of the Administration Building and Digester.

References

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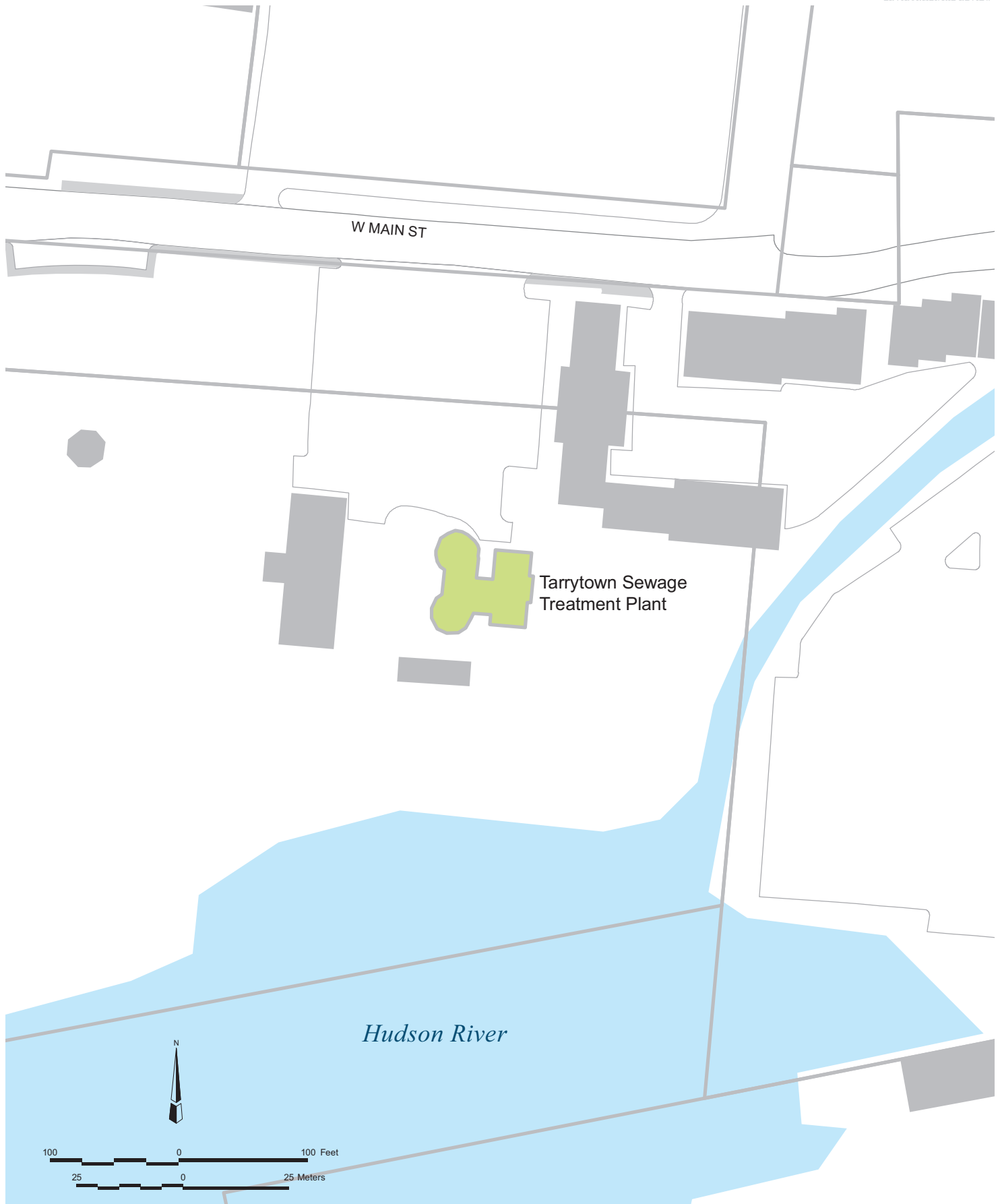
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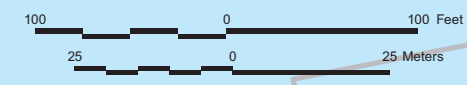
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Tarrytown Sewage
Treatment Plant

Hudson River

W MAIN ST



 Proposed National Register-Eligible Resource

***Tarrytown Sewage
Treatment Plant***



Photo 1. Looking toward east and south facades of the former Tarrytown Sewage Treatment Plant Administration Building. Note cylindrical Digester appended to the west façade.



Photo 2. Looking toward east and south façades of the former Administration Building. Note hipped roof with projecting, slate-clad cross-gable, and windows and door in cast stone surrounds.



Photo 3. Looking toward north and west facades of the former Administration Building and Digester. Although building has been converted to function as an office, it retains integrity.



Photo 4. Looking toward west façade of the former Digester and Administration Building.