

6.0 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Introduction

This DEIS section provides a summary of the Phase 1A Literature Search and Sensitivity Assessment and Phase 1B Archaeological Field Reconnaissance Survey report prepared for the Brewster Yards project by Hudson Valley Cultural Resources Consultants, Ltd. (HVCRC) in January 2022. Refer to DEIS Appendix K for the complete report.

6.1 Phase 1A Literature Search and Sensitivity Assessment

Phase 1A research generally entails library research of available recorded documents, and sometimes interviews of knowledgeable individuals, to determine the likelihood that archeological and/or historic resources could be located within the proposed area of disturbance. For purposes of the archaeological assessment, the area of proposed site disturbance is considered the Area of Potential Effect, or APE. Wetlands are located outside the boundaries of the Project APE.

Records Research

Files of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) and the New York State Museum (NYSM) were reviewed for information regarding previously recorded archeological sites within one mile (1.6 km) of the Project Site. Six archaeological sites have been previously identified within one mile and these were determined to not be impacted by the proposed undertaking.

More than ten archaeological surveys have been completed for sites within one mile of the Project Site and identified precontact archaeological sites in that area. HVCRC consulted historical documents and maps available at the Library of Congress, David Rumsey Cartography Associates and the New York Public Library, examining historical maps of Putnam County to identify possible structures, previous road alignments and other landscape features or alterations that could affect the likelihood that archeological and/or historic resources could be located within the Project APE. These maps are included in the archaeologist's report, with the approximate boundaries of the Project APE superimposed.

An 1854 map shows a barn or outbuilding in the Project APE, which on later maps was no longer shown. On USGS mapping prepared in 1960 and 1980 a structure is shown on adjacent land (now the County-owned parcel) and another along the eastern boundary of the APE. In a 1981 aerial image, portions of the Project site are divided into farm fields, bounded by forested land to the north and south of the APE.

Precontact Period Sensitivity

Precontact period archaeological sensitivity is based primarily on proximity to previously documented precontact archeological sites, known Precontact period resources, and physiographic characteristics, such as topography and proximity to freshwater. In addition to the precontact period sites identified in the area, the project's location a short distance from wetland areas and the Croton River, combined with the fact that undisturbed and level terrain exists

within the Project APE makes this landscape moderately sensitive for precontact cultural resources.

Historic Sensitivity

Careful examination of the historic and topographical maps available indicate that the Project APE has been agricultural land for a significant portion of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The topographical maps and aerial images indicate that the mid-nineteenth century outbuilding located in the southern portion of the site was removed before the onset of the twentieth century. A second outbuilding was constructed on the south side of Zimmer Road in the late twentieth century, which currently exists as foundation remains. The Project APE is considered to have a low historic sensitivity.

National Register Eligible/Listed Sites

The National Register Database and OPRHP files were reviewed to identify structures on or in the vicinity of the Project APE that have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places or identified as National Register Eligible. No historic properties (listed or eligible for listing) are located on or within a one-half mile radius of the Project APE.

6.2 Phase 1B Archaeological Field Reconnaissance Survey

When the Phase 1A analysis identifies potential sensitivity for cultural resources on the project site, a Phase 1B Archaeological Field Reconnaissance Survey, including subsurface investigations, should be completed to determine the presence or absence of cultural resources in areas that may have the potential to yield cultural resources. The results of the Phase 1A described above confirmed that the entire Project APE is located in an area of precontact period activity. In addition, the landscape closely conforms to an ecological model that indicates that the level, undisturbed portions of the Project APE are moderately to highly sensitive for precontact cultural materials. Therefore, Phase 1B field investigations were undertaken.

For the field investigations, areas were identified during an intensive walkover inspection which evaluated the landscape to determine areas of prior disturbance, slopes in excess of 12% grade, and/or saturated or wet soils (to be excluded from testing in accordance with State standards). Evidence of former land usage was also documented. A 50-foot grid for shovel testing was established along transects conforming to the land surface and the boundaries of the Project APE. The locations of the transects, shovel tests and disturbed areas were recorded on a field map. Hand-dug shovel tests were excavated 50 feet apart and at least 10 cm into sterile subsoil, unless impeded by rocks or other obstructions. All soils excavated were screened through 0.25-inch hardware cloth. Shovel test profiles were recorded, including stratigraphic depths, Munsell soil color, texture and inclusions, disturbances and artifacts.

In total, 488 test holes were excavated within the APE. None of the completed shovel tests yielded significant cultural material, nor are they indicative of an archaeological site. In the southern extent of the Project APE two upright stones were identified which are consistent with other stone property markers identified in the Town of Southeast. These stones do not exhibit any markings or carvings and there are no buried features associated with these markers. No significant built features were identified in the Project APE.

Based on the results of the survey, and the sparse recovery of cultural material within the boundaries of the Project APE, the proposed is not considered to have an adverse effect on archaeologically significant sites.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the completed Phase 1B survey, no archaeological sites or historic structures are located within the area of proposed site disturbance (the APE). Therefore, the proposed development of the Brewster Yards project will not affect any potentially significant cultural resources. In the opinion of HVCRC, no additional cultural resources investigations are warranted for the proposed Project. In its letter dated February 7, 2022, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation concurred with this recommendation. (See Appendix B.)

6.3 Future Without the Proposed Project

As no historical or archaeological resources have been identified at the project site, no change in circumstances would be expected relative to such resources with or without the proposed project.

6.4 Proposed Mitigation Measures

As no impacts to historical or archaeological resources have been identified, no mitigation measures are proposed.