

## J. Historic and Cultural Resources

### 1. Existing Conditions

#### a. Phase IA Archaeological Assessment

The Phase IA Literature Review and Sensitivity Analysis was performed by CITY/SCAPE: Cultural Resource Consultants (CITY/SCAPE) in June 2009 (refer to Appendix H). The project is bounded on the south by Washburn Road, a historic road that existed prior to 1851<sup>1</sup>, and on the north and west by residential development. The access road that divides the subject site north to south has been shown on historic maps to be preceded by a farm lane extending between Washburn Road and Chappaqua Road<sup>2</sup>.

The main house on the property is a Colonial Revival structure dating to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, early 20<sup>th</sup> century, between 1870 and 1920). This house is the only structure on the site that is over 50 years old, as most of the other buildings were built in the 1970s or more recently<sup>3</sup>. Based on the information provided by the owner of the property, the house was built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century; however, none of the 19<sup>th</sup> century maps show the structure. The stonewalls surrounding the residential portion of the property are reported to have been constructed in the 1970s<sup>4</sup>.

The project is located on land that slopes from a high point of  $\pm 360'$  above mean sea level to an elevation of  $\pm 280'$  on the eastern border of the site overlooking the Taconic State Parkway. There is, however, some variation in the topography, with the land sloping down from the house to the driveway that divides the site, then rising to a level knoll before falling again to the east. Slopes on the site range from 2 to 35 percent, with the steepest areas having slopes that range between 15 and 35 percent.<sup>5</sup>

As part of the initial research for the Phase IA literature review CITY/SCAPE: Cultural Resource Consultants examined the OPRHP and NYSDM archaeological site maps housed at Peebles Island. These files indicate that no prehistoric sites have been reported within a 1-mile radius of the Taconic Tract Subdivision site. In addition to the fact that no prehistoric sites are listed in the area, there are also a number of environmental factors that suggest the potential for the site to contain prehistoric resources is low. There include the steep and extremely steep slopes that characterize much of the project area, as well as the lack of easily accessible, naturally occurring water on the site. The examination on the site does not suggest that any of the bedrock outcrops located within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) have sufficient overhang or are of sufficient height to have served as rock shelters.

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<sup>1</sup> Phase IA Literature Review and Sensitivity Analysis, Taconic Tract Subdivision Site, CITY/SCAPE: Cultural Resource Consultants, June 2009, page 1

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. page 1

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. page 5

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. page 5

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. page 3

No quartz veins were observed in the bedrock on the site, suggesting that no prehistoric quarries are present on the site<sup>6</sup>.

In addition to the archaeological site files, the OPRHP files were reviewed to identify whether it was likely that the project area contained historic cultural resources. The review of the historic maps for the area, to be discussed below, indicates that until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the project area was interior farmland associated with the Washburn farm and that no structures were located on the site.<sup>7</sup>

The examination of the OPRHP files indicates that few professional surveys have been completed in the area. Two surveys by Hartgen and Fisher dating to 1978 and 1979 were of the Taconic State Parkway from the Hawthorne Circle Interchange to Campfire Road. No prehistoric sites were reported as a result of the 1978 field survey. Several historic sites were indentified, two of which were subjected to additional testing in 1979. In 2002 CITY/SCAPE: Cultural Resource Consultants completed a Phase IA Literature review and Sensitivity Analysis and Phase 1B Archaeological Field Reconnaissance Survey for the Village of Briarcliff Manor. The report was prepared as part of a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (Application No. 1296-0013-6047) for the Pocantico River, which flows through Briarcliff Manor. No prehistoric or historic sites were identified as a result of the Phase 1B survey completed for the Pocantico River Channel Widening Project.<sup>8</sup>

The review of the OPRHP site files showed that there were two National Register or National Register-eligible structures within a 1-mile radius, the first being the Taconic State Parkway, which runs along the eastern boundary of the site, and the second being the New Croton Aqueduct.

Based on the lack of reported prehistoric archaeological sites within a 1-mile radius and the environmental factors present on the site, it is considered that the prehistoric potential of the Taconic Tract Subdivision is low. With respect to historic cultural resources, the map research indicates that no 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century dwellings were located on the project area, and that the house on the property appears not to have been built before 1901. It is, therefore, considered that the potential for historic cultural resources to be located on the site is also low. Based on these finding, no further archaeological work is recommended for the Taconic Tract Subdivision.<sup>9</sup>

The Taconic State Parkway will visually be affected by the proposed project, however there will be no physical impact to the Parkway.

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<sup>6</sup> Phase IA Literature Review and Sensitivity Analysis, Taconic Tract Subdivision Site, CITY/SCAPE: Cultural Resource Consultants, June 2009, page 6

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. page 6

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. page 7

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. page 17

## 2. Anticipated Impacts

The review of the OPRHP site files showed that there were two National Register or National Register-eligible structures within a 1-mile radius, the first being the Taconic State Parkway, which runs along the eastern boundary of the site, and the second being the New Croton Aqueduct. The Taconic State Parkway will be visually, but physically impacted, by the project. The visual impacts of the proposed project could be mitigated through plantings that include a mix of evergreens and broad leaf evergreen, such as rhododendrons. In the area in which the project area is located, the New Croton Aqueduct is a subsurface feature that will not be impacted by the proposed project.<sup>10</sup>

## 3. Proposed Mitigation

In order to protect the visual integrity of the Taconic State Parkway, a buffer between the subdivision and the Parkway will be preserved with adequate and appropriate landscaping proposed for this buffer.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. page 6-7