

III. EXISTING CONDITIONS, IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

R. Cultural, Historical and Archeological Resources

R. Cultural, Historical and Archeological Resources**1. Existing Conditions**

The property is comprised of four tax parcels, identified by Section-Block-Lots: 26.18-1-17, 26.18-1-18, 26.18-1-19 and 26.19-1-1. Currently parcel 26.18-1-17, at the southwest side of the overall property fronting Old Crompond Road, is a residential lot with two dwellings. Parcel 26.18-1-18, fronting Route 35/202, contains Zino's Nursery and Landscaping and Anthony's Power Equipment and includes three buildings, a former dwelling, a former workshop now used as an office, and a large barn. Parcel 26.18-1-19, within the central and northern portion of the property, contains a vacant motel complex with two former motel buildings and two sheds. Parcel 26.19-1-1, at the southeastern side of the property fronting Route 35/202, was a former gas station which is now used as a gate and fence supplier. Two wetlands have been identified within the project site, one on the west side of the property and the other at the northeast corner of the property.

- a. **Precontact Archaeological Sensitivity and Disturbance Record.** From what is known of precontact period settlement patterns in Westchester County, most habitation and processing sites are found in sheltered, elevated sites close to wetland features, major waterways, and with nearby sources of fresh water. The project site contains a tributary to Hunter Creek, as well as areas of well drained soils. There are some portions of the property that have natural terrace landforms with slopes less than 12 percent, as shown on Figure 15 in the Cultural Resources Report (DEIS Appendix VII.I). These factors signify potential precontact sensitivity. However, arguing against sensitivity are the facts that (1) no precontact sites have been recorded within a one-mile radius of the project site (the exceptions were a few precontact artifacts found on a nearby parcel that were not formally recorded as a site), and (2) archaeological testing within the western portion of the project site in 1984 (Figure 15, Appendix A of the Cultural Resources Report, DEIS Appendix VII.I) failed to document any precontact resources. Additionally, the majority of the project site is highly disturbed from previous building episodes, grading, filling, and earthmoving, as confirmed by the site walkover and the soil borings. Figure 15 illustrates the existing conditions on the project site and shows area of disturbance, slope and previous archaeological testing.
- b. **Historical Period Archaeological Sensitivity and Disturbance Record.** The project site has contained a farmhouse structure since at least 1851, and probably earlier. It is likely that the former dwelling, now used for power equipment repair on the project site, represents this original building. The former workshop, now used as an office, may also date to the nineteenth century, although the degree of alterations to the structure makes dating it problematic. Regardless, it appears that there was a nineteenth-century occupation on the project site associated with the former farmstead. If

undisturbed, areas surrounding these former farm buildings would have a high historical period archaeological sensitivity. Former resident Diane Smith noted that the house relied on well water and a septic system, but did have indoor plumbing. She was not aware of any former privy locations on the property, but it should be assumed that such shaft features existed at one time.

The site walkover revealed that a portion of the project site containing the former farm buildings is very heavily disturbed from current use of the property as a landscaping business. The topography of this lot has been significantly altered to accommodate the present nursery and power equipment repair facilities, including driveways, subgrade sprinkler systems, the septic field, and tiered nursery beds. It appears unlikely that any potential archaeological resources associated with the former farmstead, such as sheet middens or privy shafts, have survived this extensive earthmoving. Because the property has relied on its potable and non potable wells for water through the twentieth century, it is less likely that they would contain archaeological deposits. The remainder of the project site was undeveloped until the mid-twentieth century. None of these twentieth-century buildings or developments should be associated with any significant archaeological resources. For these reasons, the Applicant's consultant, Historical Perspectives, Inc. (HPI) concludes that the project site is not sensitive for historical period archaeological resources.

- c. **Architectural Resources.** Architectural resources to be considered for the present project include resources within the project site boundaries, as well as resources within the project site viewshed.

Within the project site, the oldest structure appears to be the former farmhouse, now used for power equipment repair, which may be the building represented on an 1851 historical map and depicted on all subsequent maps through the present time. An associated workshop, now used as an office, may also date to the nineteenth century. Portions of the massive barn on the property could date to the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, although the northern section was built in 1988 and the other sections were reconstructed at that time. The other two dwellings fronting Old Crompond Road date to the first decades of the twentieth century and the former motel and former gas station date to 1958 and 1962, respectively.

The very extensive degree of alterations to the former farmhouse and workshop has deprived these buildings of architectural integrity. In their current state, HPI concludes that neither meets criteria for inclusion in the State/National Register of Historic Places (S/NRHP). Likewise, the barn, portions of which are over 50 years old, was heavily reconstructed in 1988, again compromising its architectural integrity. HPI concludes that it does not merit inclusion in the S/NRHP. The remaining buildings on the project site

are of undistinguished architectural design and HPI concludes that they do not meet criteria for S/NRHP inclusion.

The viewshed of the proposed project includes several dwellings along Old Crompond Road, one of which, at 3258 Old Crompond Road immediately west of the project site, may date to ca. 1850. This house was included in the Town of Yorktown historic structures survey and a cultural resources survey from 1984, but has never been formally evaluated for S/NRHP eligibility. The remaining structures within the viewshed along Old Crompond Road are either undistinguished architecturally or of modern construction, and are not expected to have any architectural significance.

The remaining portions of the viewshed include vacant woodland to the north, presently undeveloped land to the south along Route 202/35 (the exception is a modern Mobil gasoline station), and the Taconic State Parkway to the east. The section of the parkway immediately abutting the project site was rebuilt in 2003-2007, as was the bridge carrying it over Route 202/35.

Taconic State Parkway (TSP) Viewshed – The existing project site is visible from the Taconic Parkway and the southbound exit ramp. Visible from the ramp are the abandoned motel buildings and paved parking area. The grounds are overgrown, buildings are in disrepair, windows are boarded up, rubbish is strewn about and graffiti accentuates the ongoing activity of vandals. Also visible from the southbound off ramp is the gate and fence supplier (former gas station). The property is in relatively degraded condition characterized by unshielded storage areas and exposed dumpsters creating an unkempt appearance from the Taconic off ramp viewshed.

Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) Park Viewshed – The FDR park is located immediately east of the Taconic State Parkway at the southeast quadrant of the intersection of the TSP with Route 202/35. The parkway is elevated above Route 202/35 and the existing project site is situated at elevations below the parkway. Even though the tallest existing building (former motel) is approximately 35 feet in height, its view from the FDR Park is obscured by the TSP. Also see Section III.B for additional discussion regarding visual impact and Appendix I, Cultural Resources Report, for more detail regarding existing resources.

2. Potential Impacts

- a. Archaeological Resources.** HPI has determined that the project site is not sensitive for either precontact or historic period archaeological resources. Based on these conclusions, it is the Applicant's opinion that the proposed project should have no impacts on potential archaeological resources and no further archaeological investigations are recommended. Final determination of these findings will be provided by the NYSOPRHP.

- b. Architectural Resources.** The proposed project will impact architectural resources within the project site boundaries as well as resources within the project site viewshed. The resources within the site boundaries will be demolished and some resources within the viewshed may be visually impacted.

Taconic State Parkway (TSP) Viewshed - - The Taconic State Parkway is listed on the S/NRHP. The parkway is identified on the national list as a Scenic Byway. Evaluation of the visual impact of the project to the parkway will be reviewed and determined by the NYSOPRHP.

The project site is visible from the Taconic Parkway and southbound exit ramp. Observation from the ramp will afford views of the proposed building, fueling facility, and parking area. The proposed building is situated adjacent and generally parallel to the Taconic right-of-way. The building will be approximately 37 to 61 feet from the right-of-way and approximately 160 to 135 feet west of the southbound ramp. The elevation of the proposed building will remain approximately 5 to 15 feet below the elevation of the ramp and will be approximately 10 feet lower in height than the existing motel.

FDR Park Viewshed – As discussed under the existing conditions section of III.B this DEIS, the Applicant has determined that the Project may be visible from the higher elevations of the park during winter full leaf off conditions and that the project will not be visible from the greater area of the park during these winter conditions. The potential view of the site from lower elevations will be obscured by the elevated portion of the TSP. Also see Section III.B for additional discussion regarding visual impact and Appendix I, Cultural Resources Report, for more detail.

As a State park, the FDR Park is included in the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) list of Critical Environmental Areas in Westchester County (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/25161.html>). The jurisdiction of review of potential impacts to the park rests with the NYS DEC.

Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Section 14.09 of the New York State Historic Preservation Act, the role of the NYSOPRHP in the review process is to ensure that effects or impacts on eligible or listed properties are considered and avoided or mitigated during the project planning process. The Applicant's Cultural Resources Report (Appendix VII.I of this DEIS) will be submitted to the NYSOPRHP for review and recommendations to the Lead Agency.

3. Proposed Mitigation

- a. On-site architectural resources.** The structures on the project site range in age from the early-mid nineteenth century through the 1960s. HPI concluded that none of the structures are eligible for the S/NRHP. Although some of these structures have been documented to varying degrees in earlier cultural resources reports, none of the structures has been assigned a Unique Site Number (USN) by the Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), and it is assumed that the building inventory forms completed in 1984 for the two structures on Parcel 26.18-1-17 were never placed on file with the National Register and Survey Unit of the OPRHP. The three structures on Parcel 26.18-1-18 have never had building inventory forms completed, although they were addressed in the text of the 1984 and 1995 cultural resources reports. None of the structures was included in the Town of Yorktown Historic Resources Survey. HPI recommends that prior to demolition of the structures on Parcels 26.18-1-17 and 26.18-1-18, building inventory forms be completed and/or updated and submitted to the OPRHP for their files. In keeping with the goal to record every building in Yorktown constructed before 1900, the structures on Parcel 26.18-1-18 also should be added to the Town of Yorktown Historic Resources Survey.
- b. Off-site architectural resources.** The placement of the proposed project in relation to the S/NRHP listed Taconic State Parkway will require mitigation measures. Due to engineering related considerations including existing soil conditions, an existing steep embankment located on the western portion of the site and the need to avoid two wetlands on the west and northeast sides of the property, the proposed building is proposed on the eastern portion of the site adjacent to the Taconic State Parkway right-of-way. Since views of the building, the fueling facility, and adjacent parking area would be visible from the Taconic Parkway, the Applicant proposes the following mitigation measures:
- Dense landscaping within the Taconic right-of-way to mitigate views of the project site is proposed. Plantings will include a mix of evergreen and deciduous trees planted at regular intervals to provide year round visual screening of the site. The Applicant's engineer has discussed the landscape concept with Department of Transportation (DOT) representatives and the DOT supports the landscape mitigation measure. Additional site landscaping is proposed around the perimeter of the site and within the parking area to help screen and diffuse the visual mass. (See DEIS Section III.B.3).
 - The proposed Costco building includes a three foot high parapet wall that will help screen rooftop views. Earth tone building colors are also

proposed to help blend the building into the natural surroundings. The architectural plan notes that the building will have earth toned colors (primarily tan, gray, and white with a red horizontal accent stripe) and will be sided with a combination of metal and concrete.

- The western neighbor at 3258 Old Crompond Road was included in the Town of Yorktown historic structures survey and therefore visual impact is addressed. The project proposes to maintain a minimum of 150 feet of existing deciduous woodlands along the western portion of the project site. The woodlands will partially screen the proposed development from the western neighbor. Beyond the existing woodlands to remain, the Applicant proposes a mixture of evergreen and deciduous plantings along the proposed retaining wall and embankment to further soften or obscure the view.
- Also see Section III.B for additional discussion regarding visual impact and mitigation.