

Section 5.0 Cultural Resources

In February 2021, Hudson Valley Cultural Resource Consultants (HVCRC) was retained to complete a Phase 1A Literature Search and Sensitivity Assessment and Phase 1B Archaeological Field Reconnaissance Survey as part of the due diligence process for the proposed Soundview - Underhill Farms Development in the hamlet of Yorktown Heights, Town of Yorktown, Westchester County, New York. The purpose of the Phase 1 Cultural Resources Survey is to determine whether previously identified cultural resources (historic and archeological sites) are located within the boundaries of the proposed project, and to evaluate the potential for previously unidentified cultural resources to be located within the boundaries of the Project Area of Potential Effect (APE). All work was completed in accordance with the *Standards for Cultural Resource Investigations and the Curation of Archeological Collections Published by the New York Archeological Council* (NYAC) and recommended for use by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). The report has been prepared according to the New York State OPRHP's *Phase 1 Archaeological Report Format Requirements*, established in 2005.

The findings of OPRHP described in this report are the determinations made by their office under the New York State Historic Preservation Act (14.09) and are reflective of the provisions of that Law and its nomenclature. The Law requires consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO/OPRHP) for any project planned that will cause a change to a property that is determined to be eligible for inclusion in the State and/or National Register, and an exploration to the fullest extent practical, to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to such properties. The processes through which the Adverse Effect is mitigated results in the development of a Letter of Resolution (LOR) which outlines agreed upon measures to minimize, or mitigate the Adverse Effect caused by a change to the historic property. The measures, or stipulations, outlined in the LOR are agreed-upon through consultation with the SHPO and with the involved parties.

In addition to the review under NYSEHPA (14.09), the Soundview Underhill Farm Project is also subject to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), 6NYCRR Part 617 of the New York State Environmental Conservation Law. SEQRA applies to projects undertaken or permitted by county and local governments. Under this act, municipalities may request that a project be reviewed by the SHPO. Under SEQRA determinations about the extent or significance of a project's impacts must be determined by the Lead Agency. The determination of an impact will evaluate the change caused by the project and the extent to which mitigation measures sufficiently reduce the potential impact. All SHPO comments under this review are advisory only.

The evaluation of impacts to historic resources is like the evaluation made for other factors of the SEQRA Review, in how a Lead Agency reaches its determination of significance. The Lead Agency would need to identify whether there are significant unmitigated adverse impacts, or if sufficient and effective mitigation measures have been identified.

The background research as well as the cultural and environmental overviews were completed by Beth Selig, MA, RPA, President and Principal Investigator with HVCRC. A project site visit was conducted on January 12, 2021, to observe and photograph existing conditions within the Project APE. The information gathered during the walkover reconnaissance is included in the relevant sections of the report.

The proposed Soundview-Underhill Farms Development Project is located on the northern side of Underhill Avenue and west of Saw Mill River Road. Glenn Rock Road borders the property to the west. The property includes the former Floral Villa estate built between 1828 and 1886 owned

by Edward Underhill. The estate includes the former mansion, and seven support and out buildings. Two large root cellars are located to the north of the house. A pond is located in the southwestern portion of the Project APE which drains through a culvert into a buried channel that crosses the Project APE to the northeast. The landscape around the buildings is maintained as lawn.

The western portion of the Project APE is a mix of steep slopes, overgrown soil piles, and level areas, which contain surface water. An emergency access easement crosses through the western portion of the Project APE. This access is for the apartment complex located outside the northern boundary of the Project APE. A water pipe easement bisects the northwestern portion of the APE. The western portion of the Project APE is overgrown with bushes, brambles, and small trees.

The Soundview School property includes the following structures:

Building A: Underhill Mansion/Soundview School

Building B: Summer Kitchen/Root Cellar/Storage/Soundview Design Studio

Building C: Residential Cottage/ Soundview Middle School

Building E: Carriage house/Horse Barn= Soundview Science building

Building G: Carpenters Workshop/storage barn _Soundview Storage

Building H: Chapel- Soundview Music Conservatory

Building I: Residential Cottage- Soundview Playhouse

Building J: Residential Cottage

The proposed undertaking consists of constructing a series of residential structures within the boundaries of the Project APE. These residential structures will consist of townhouses, condominiums and apartment units. The proposed design will retain the former Mansion. The proposed undertaking includes the removal of the existing outbuildings. The current plan includes the construction of parking lots, access roads, and stormwater management basins.

Recorded Archaeological Sites and Surveys

To gather information on the history of the Project APE and the surrounding region HVCRC reviewed the combined site files of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) and the New York State Museum (NYSM) for information regarding previously recorded archeological sites within one mile (1.6 km) of the Project APE. HVCRC also consulted regional Native American sources for descriptions of regional archeological sites.

Previously Recorded Archaeological Sites

Two previously identified archaeological sites have been identified within a one-mile radius of the Project APE. The Railroad Turntable is located to the southeast of the APE, along the North County Trailway. The Hallock's Mill Historic Site is located 5200' (1585.3 m) northeast of the Project APE. These historic sites will not be impacted by the proposed undertaking. While no pre-contact sites have been identified within a mile, sites have been identified further to the northeast near the Amawalk Reservoir.

Previously Completed Archaeological Surveys

As part of the research for this report, surveys completed for projects in the general area were consulted. More than four surveys have been completed within a one-mile radius of the Project APE. These surveys were completed for both municipal undertakings as well as residential

developments. These surveys have identified historic sites within the general vicinity of the Project APE.

Native American Context

During the Paleoindian period, mobile bands of hunter-gatherers occupied what is now New York State. These bands exploited the resources of the landscape by hunting game and gathering plants. Paleoindian sites have been identified in the upland regions a short distance from the Hudson River. Subsistence patterns in this period revolved primarily around hunting. The early inhabitants of the area moved seasonally along major river valleys, keeping to the elevated terraces. In the lower Hudson Valley area, information on Paleoindian sites is limited. The Piping Rock site in the Village of Ossining, a Clovis Point recovered from the Purdy House in White Plains and a fluted point recovered at Croton Point are among the few Paleoindian finds that have been reported in Westchester County.

Indigenous people in the region were mainly Algonkian. During the first half of the seventeenth-century, the Algonkian tribes sold approximately 25 tracts of land to the Dutch, including lands within Westchester County. These land transactions between the early colonists and the native populations were often ambiguous, causing disputes to arise. A peace treaty was established in 1645 to settle the land disputes.

Historic Context

The following discussion of historic and cartographic research provides information concerning the likelihood of encountering Map Documented Structures (MDS) and other intact historic cultural resources within the boundaries of the Project APE. HVCRC consulted historical documents and maps available at the Library of Congress, David Rumsey Cartography Associates, and the New York Public Library.

Historic Background

At the time of its formation, Westchester County included nearly all of the southern part of New York that bordered the Hudson River. The land that now comprises Westchester County was first explored in 1524 by Verrazano and later by Henry Hudson. The Dutch first settled the region on behalf of the Dutch West India Company. The first recorded settlers, William Truesdale and Samuel Tuttle, purchased land in what is now the town of Salem. During the late eighteenth-century, Lewisboro consisted of small farms, subdivided from lands belonging to Cortlandt Manor. This sizeable tract, encompassing a considerable portion of this part of the lower Hudson Valley, was granted to Stephanus Van Cortlandt prior to 1700 and was first populated by tenant farmers.

Yorktown was incorporated in 1788, and named in commemoration of the Battle of Yorktown in Virginia. The hamlet of Yorktown Heights was established around the railroad station. Edward Underhill and Charles Whitney brought what was then the New York and Boston Railroad to the town in 1872. By the end of the century, the station was surrounded by stores, businesses, and churches. This area was known throughout the nineteenth century as the “hamlet of Underhill.” The name was changed in the early twentieth century to Yorktown Heights, due to the prominent topography that surrounded the village.

Underhill Farm

The Underhill Farm property was owned in the early nineteenth century by Abraham Underhill, who owned a total of 240 acres of land. Underhill was one of the founding families of Yorktown. Underhill began construction of his house in 1828, slowly expanding and enlarging the mansion which was completed in 1880. Underhill named the mansion Flora Villa. Abraham Underhill owned a number of mills and mill rights on the Croton River. The mill rights leased from the Van Cortlandt's, processed large quantities of flour that were shipped to New York City markets. Abraham Underhill died in 1841.

When Edward, Abraham's only child inherited the farm, it was mostly wilderness. Edward began the process of improving the land, which included draining swamps and wetlands, removing rocks to plow the soil, and constructing large and elegant buildings that entirely changed the whole appearance of the farm. Abraham had been one of the early importers of Merino Sheep and the first to introduce the Iron plow into Westchester County. By the time his residence was completed in 1881, the farm was known as the best cultivated in the town and was well stocked with horse and cattle.

Edward Underhill passed away in 1888. At that time, his estate included a barn, a chapel with a bell tower, a carpenters' workshop, and several other outbuildings. The lithograph of the Flora Villa, published in 1886, shows several lean-tos, a pig-sty, and a small boat house by the pond. This lithograph also shows a series of stone-lined paths around the buildings with wrought iron gates at the access to Underhill Avenue.

In 1907 the farm was purchased from Henry and Katherine Kear by Gilbert and Anna Simonton Beaver. The Beaver's were dairy farmers and maintained the farm buildings and mansion. Anna Beaver died in 1919. Gilbert and Anna's only child Katherine died in 1918 while serving the war effort in New York City. In the 1920s and 1930s, Gilbert Beaver established the Gilbert Beaver Conference Farm (Westchester County Records: Deeds).

Throughout the twentieth century, the original land holdings were sold off to private developers. In 1952 Gilbert Beaver died, leaving half of his holdings to his second wife Jean Keir Beaver, and the balance to the Gilbert Beaver Conference Farm, to whom the property was left to in full when Jean Beaver died in 1985. Throughout the latter portion of the twentieth century, the property was operated by Rev. Schuyler Barber-Rhodes and his wife, Carole (Rosenberg 1987). The Beaver Conference Farm provided ecumenical retreats, and farm experiences to promote humanitarian justice. The farm offered community lectures and offered the space as a venue, for those who wished to host their own event.

The Soundview Preparatory School purchased the property in 2007. The school included facilities for boarding up to sixty-five students. In 2020, the school closed, after filing bankruptcy. In August 2020, Unicorn Contracting entered into an agreement to purchase the property.

Cartographic Research

HVCRC examined historical maps of Westchester 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 this report, with the boundaries of the Project APE and Project APE superimposed. Nineteenth-century maps frequently lack the accuracy of location and scale present in modern

surveys. As a result of this common level of inaccuracy on the historic maps, the location of the Project APE is drafted relative to the roads, structures, and other features as they are drawn, and should be regarded as approximate. The historic maps included in this report depict the sequence of road construction and settlement/development in the vicinity of the Project APE.

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. One historic property has been identified within a one-half-mile radius of the Project APE. The Yorktown Heights Railroad Station is located to the southeast of the Project APE. This property will not be impacted by the proposed undertaking. The State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation has indicated that the structure is eligible for listing on the National Register.

Assessment of Potential Cultural Resources

Pre-contact Period Sensitivity

Pre-contact period archaeological sensitivity of an area is based primarily on proximity to previously documented Pre-contact archeological sites, known Pre-contact period resources, and physiographic characteristics, such as topography and proximity to fresh water. The project's location, a short distance from wetland areas and a tributary to the Croton River and Reservoir, makes this landscape moderately sensitive for pre-contact cultural resources.

Historic Sensitivity

Careful examination of the historic and topographical maps available indicates that a large portion of the Project APE has been agricultural land for a significant portion of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Beaver Conference Farm and the former Edward Underhill Estate buildings are located within the southeastern corner of the Project APE. Portions of the former mansion house date to 1828. Given the fact that nineteenth-century structures are located within the current Project APE, the historic sensitivity is considered to be moderate to high.

Phase 1B Survey

The environmental conditions present within the Soundview-Underhill Farms Development APE indicate that the parcel is sensitive for pre-contact and historical cultural resources. Therefore a Phase 1B Archaeological Field Reconnaissance Survey was completed within the location of the proposed development that was assessed to have the potential to yield cultural resources.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Soundview-Underhill Farms Project APE includes the former Edward B. Underhill Mansion and seven outbuildings (support buildings). This property most recently functioned as a private school, with several of the outbuildings serving as classrooms. The historical records indicate that Edward Underhill built the first structure (a residence) on the property in 1828 and continued to improve the property, expanding the house, modifying the landscape, and constructing numerous farm buildings, throughout the nineteenth century. In the twentieth-century, the property served as the Beaver Conference Farm until it was purchased by the school in 1989.

The Soundview Preparatory school was founded in 1989. From that time until 2007, they operated in Mount Kisco. The school included facilities for boarding up to sixty-five students. In 2007, building permit records indicate that Soundview was beginning to make changes to the building. The permit records indicate that in 2007, the interiors of four buildings were demolished, and three buildings had requests for demolition. In 2012 permits were requested for alteration to an existing classroom building, likely one of the barn spaces into a lunchroom. In August of 2017, demolition permits were issued for two small one story outbuildings (Building D & F). In August 2020, Unicorn Contracting entered into an agreement to purchase the property and is planning to redevelop the property. In 2020, the school closed, after filing bankruptcy.

The results of the archaeological survey indicate that there has been significant soil displacement throughout the APE over the past two centuries. While the shovel tests did identify cultural materials they were mixed with modern debris, as well as being within displaced stratigraphy.

In February of 2021, Hudson Valley Cultural Resource Consultants completed a walkover and Phase 1B reconnaissance inspection of the Soundview-Underhill Farms Project in the Town of Yorktown, Westchester County New York. Based on the results of the survey, no archaeological sites are located within the Area of Potential Effect (APE). Therefore, the proposed undertaking will not affect any significant archaeological deposits. In the opinion of HVCRC, no additional archaeological investigations are warranted for the proposed Project.

Status of Project Review to Date

The results of the Phase 1 Survey report concluded that that there has been significant soil displacement throughout the APE over the past two centuries, and while the shovel tests did identify cultural materials they were mixed with modern debris, as well as being scattered within altered stratigraphy. The report recommended that due to this soil movement across the parcel, no further archaeological surveys were warranted. The site survey activities were directed by Beth Selig, MA, RPA, and the final report was completed by the same. In a letter dated April 27, 2021, Philip Perazio of OPRHP concurred with the conclusion that no significant archaeological sites were identified, and with the recommendation no further investigations were warranted.

A review of the project completed by the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) in June of 2021 resulted in the determination that the former Floral Villa Estate (Underhill Farm) was eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, with the period of significance as 1828 to 1888. This period encompasses the development of the property under the ownership of Abraham Underhill followed by his son, Edward B. Underhill (1828-1888). The property qualifies under Criteria A, as being associated with events that have contributed to local history and Criteria C, as the former mansion embodies distinctive characteristics of an architectural type.

On May 27, 2021, Derek Rhode of (OPRHP) reviewed the proposed project and indicated that Floral Villa, “also known as the Underhill Estate and Soundview Preparatory School is eligible for listing in the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The mansion, outbuildings, farmland, parklike lawns, and stone walls all contribute to the property and retain integrity. This finding triggers an exploration of prudent and feasible alternatives that might avoid or reduce the project effects.” In July of 2021 HCS at the request of OPRHP completed an Alternatives Analysis, which was submitted to OPRHP on August 2, 2021

In April of 2021, Beth Selig of HCS completed a visual assessment of the buildings within the Soundview- Underhill Farm project parcel. This assessment included the photo documentation of each building and a determination of age and date of construction based on visual clues. A building's age can be determined based on the type of materials used in construction (i.e. dimensional lumber, galvanized steel nails, window types, width of floorboards, mortise and tenon joints, etc.). The building discussion, with a focus on age of construction, is included later in this section.

On August 2, 2021, HCS submitted an Alternatives Analysis report to OPRHP for their review. On August 24th the OPRHP requested additional information particularly as it pertained to the proposed buildings and pathways within the property. On October 1, 2021, additional information, which consisted of a short memo and letters of support from interested parties was provided to OPRHP in response to their request. This submission also included letters of support for the project from a Town council member, the deputy supervisor, the Directory of Planning, and community members, along with a letter from John Karrel, a professional structural engineer.

On October 29, 2021, Derek Rhode of OPRHP issued a letter indicating that the review of the Alternatives Analysis had been concluded and that "there are no prudent and feasible alternatives to the development proposed at the Underhill Estate Property". His office requested "that the parties proceed with the development of a Letter of Resolution (LOR) that will outline specific mitigation plans to offset the impacts that the proposed demolition and new construction will have on the Estate."

On November 9, 2021, HCS on behalf of Unicorn Contracting submitted a Draft Letter of Resolution (LOR) to OPRHP. On December 9, 2021, the staff at OPRHP provided comments and requests for changes to the mitigation strategies outlined in the LOR. On December 21, 2021, Unicorn Contracting and HCS had a telephone call with Derek Rhode of OPRHP to discuss the suggested changes and further clarify and identify appropriate mitigation measures. The mitigation strategies discussed were forwarded to the Director of Planning for Yorktown, John Tegeder for his consideration. On January 27, 2022, Mr. Tegeder stated that the Town of Yorktown was willing to review the mitigation strategies as outlined in the LOR pursuant to the "normal site plan approval process through the Yorktown Planning Board".

Based on the conversation with Derek Rhode on December 21, 2021, and the agreement by the Town of Yorktown to review the project as outlined in the mitigation strategies, the revised LOR was submitted to OPRHP on February 9, 2022. This version of the LOR had been executed by Unicorn Contracting. On March 21, 2022, Nancy Herter of OPRHP issued a letter indicating that OPRHP would execute the LOR "at the completion of the SEQRA review process". On May 23, 2022, in a phone conversation with Beth Selig, Ms. Herter indicated that she had received numerous notes and calls from concerned members of the Yorktown community, and was holding off on executing the LOR until the Lead Agency concluded its public comment/hearing process. She wanted to be certain that the members of the local community had an opportunity to be heard. She has no issues with the mitigation strategies outlined in the LOR (listed below) and has no issues with the previously completed reports and review thereof (completed by her staff) for the project. When the Lead Agency confirms with OPRHP that the public hearing process is complete, and any needed changes or amendments are addressed, the OPRHP will move to execute the LOR document.

Soundview School – Underhill Farm Buildings

A survey completed in 1976 of the Beaver Conference Farm indicates that the following buildings were included within the property at that time. (Figure 1) In 2017, two of the buildings shown on the survey were demolished. (Figure 2) The buildings are discussed based on those present at the time this survey was completed. Photos of the buildings and details are included in Exhibit A. Only Building A, the Underhill mansion, is proposed for preservation and restoration. Future use of the building is proposed as a restaurant on the first floor and office space on the 2nd And 3rd floors. Representative photos of the various remaining buildings are attached in the Cultural Resources Appendix.

Building A: Underhill Mansion/Soundview School was constructed in the period between 1828 and 1881. The western portion of the Mansion reflects the earliest period of construction with Federal Style architectural elements. The eastern portion of the Mansion reflects the Italianate design of the late 19th Century. The mansion features a cut stone foundation that has been reinforced with brick. The stone underneath the older period is rough cut or hand hewn, while the later portion has been cut with a steam powered saw. The upper stories are wood frame with clapboard siding. The roof of the Federal portion is covered with asphalt shingles.

Building B: Summer Kitchen/Root Cellar/Storage/Soundview Design Studio. Portions of the foundation date to the mid-19th century, while the upper portions (above grade) appear to be of later construction. This small building sits on a fieldstone and brick foundation. The foundation is supported by timbers that have been modified (altered, supported with modern lumber) since their initial use in construction and twentieth-century lumber is present, providing additional support. The upper portion of the building has been extensively renovated, most recently for use by Soundview School as a classroom. The building's interior features modern sheetrock covering the walls. The windows are modern vinyl inserts and the roof is slate shingle. These extensive modifications have eliminated the nineteenth-century integrity of the structure and in its current form, it is not reflective of the period of significance.

Building C: Residential Cottage/Soundview Middle School. Constructed in the early 20th Century (c. 1908, Beaver Conference Farm) this house has been recently renovated and improved. The interior of the building includes twentieth and twenty-first-century materials. The structure postdates the Underhill's occupation of the property and the period of significance (1828-1888).

Building D: Barn & Garage, constructed prior to 1940. Demolished in 2017. This building appears on the 1940's aerial image of the property. As this building has been demolished and no remnants currently exist the date of original construction cannot be determined.

Building E: Carriage house/Horse Barn - Soundview Science building. Formerly a large barn, the western and southern portions of the original structure were demolished (date unknown). A wall, constructed of mortared cut and fieldstone that forms the northern side of the foundation, is visible on the interior at the ground level. This is associated with the foundation of the original barn which was constructed in the mid nineteenth-century. The original barn included a second level that was accessed by a ramp on the northern side of the structure. This second floor has been renovated to include a deck that features modern concrete footings. The second level features windows with twentieth-century hardware, sheetrock, and linoleum tile flooring. The building was converted to classroom or meeting space by Beaver Conference Farm and any nineteenth-century barn features were removed. Later renovations by Soundview School (2016) which consisted of new windows and exterior finishes altered the exterior and interior. The southern portion of the building

includes a cement and poured concrete foundation, modern siding and windows. The current superstructure dates to the early-mid twentieth-century. The only remaining nineteenth-century element is the single stone wall, serving as the northern foundation wall. In its current form, the building is not considered to have historic integrity, as its many changes all post-date the period of historic significance.

Building F: Unknown Built c. 1950, this structure was demolished in 2017. This structure is not shown on the 1940s aerial image.

Building G: Carpenters Workshop/storage barn/Soundview Storage. This small barn has been substantially altered over time, based on the various openings on the exterior and interior. In addition, there are multiple styles and ages of hardware and lumber types. The foundation is built into the grade, with fieldstone around the perimeter, and features, lumber, fieldstone, and brick interior support columns. The support beams for the floor that is at ground level consist of a mix of hewn beams, early twentieth-century, and modern lumber. These beams are supported by stacked brick supports. In the interior, the framing that extends upward from the floor to the loft space appears to have been partially re-purposed from some other prior use or structure. The Beaver Conference Farm and the Soundview School have altered the barn to suit their specific purposes.

The interior features dimensional lumber throughout, a construction element that was not widely available until after World War I. The circular cut marks on the exposed lumber are indicative of a machine mill saw. Modern materials (i.e. 2 x 4's, plywood) are located in smaller quantities and represent later repairs and alterations. The construction materials that lead to the loft appear to be early twentieth-century. It should be noted that the beams supporting the main floor are rotted, and substantial bowing is present in the main level of the barn. Due to concerns about stability, the loft level of the barn was not further explored. Based on the primary construction materials the barn dates to the early 20th century, and not to the period of historic significance.

Building H: Chapel - Soundview Music Conservatory. This building was constructed in the early 20th century and was initially utilized by Beaver Conference Farm for religious purposes. Soundview School converted the space into a music conservatory. There is no foundation to speak of; only a poured concrete slab, and the utilization of a retaining wall that exists outside the southwestern corner of the structure. The basement of the building features metal lally columns. The wood frame walls on the southern side are built into the ground (grade). Recent renovations have taken place in the basement level. The interior features dimensional lumber, a construction element that was not ubiquitous (consistently available) until after World War I, and platform style framing which became the standard in the early twentieth-century. As with Building G, the cut marks on the exposed lumber are indicative of a machine mill saw. This structure postdates the Underhill's occupation of the property and the period of significance.

Building I: Residential Cottage - Soundview Playhouse. This structure was originally constructed as a barn and was most recently used as the Soundview Playhouse. The windows in the structure appear to be original and date to the 1920s. The use of dimensional lumber, sheetrock, and reused timber beams in the construction of the ceiling and attic space, further confirms an early twentieth-century construction date. Renovations took place in the mid portion of the twentieth century, based on the interior finishes (tongue and groove paneling and brick fireplace surround with fan vents). This structure postdates the Underhill's occupation of the property and the period of significance.

Building J: Residential Cottage. This structure appears to have functioned as a residential space, possibly dormitory style. The interior features a brick-dividing wall and modern lumber styles. The fenestration of the building varies, suggesting changes to the doors and windows over time. The windows in the structure appear to date to the 1920/1930s. The roof features asphalt shingles. The interior features modern lumber and sheetrock and evidence of a forced air heating system. Structure postdates the Underhill's occupation of the property and the period of significance.

Revolutionary War Period

The Yorktown Preservation Commission has raised concerns regarding the Rochambeau's and the Continental Army encampments in Yorktown Heights, and whether any related components could be identified within the Underhill Property. A review of the materials in this historical records, along with documents and historic archaeological site files from OPRHP and a notation written by Robert A. Selig, the known location for the encampment was located a mile to the north of the Underhill Estate at Hallock's Mill. The OPRHP's archaeological site files identify the location of Hallock's Mill as north of 2160 Saw Mill River Road, adjacent to an existing pond. In an email communication with Mr. Selig, dated June 22, 2022, he indicates that the research pertaining to the "700+ mile National Historic Trail through Yorktown Heights New York to the victorious siege in Yorktown Virginia in October of 1781" is ongoing and he does not have an estimated time of completion. In a printed publication Mr. Robert Selig states that the French military were ordered to dig a canal to reroute a stream through their camp. This statement is made beneath a photo of the Hallock's Mill Pond. Given the changes that Edward Underhill is reported to have made to the property, including draining wetlands and removing a large amount of surface rock and modifying soils to make the land usable for crops, any remains of the French encampment would have been lost through these processes.

An estimated 2000 American troops and 4000 French troops marched through New York to Yorktown VA in the summer and fall of 1781. A camp for an army of this size would have needed substantial water sources as well as other materials such as firewood and food. An encampment of any duration would have required the digging of latrines (away from the water source) and access to fresh water. During this campaign-company grade officers and enlisted men slept in tents, whereas officers generally lodged in nearby taverns. Fire pits for cooking were also dug at the encampments. According to work published by Robert Selig, the Continental Army along with their French allies encamped at Crompond (Yorktown Heights) again in the fall of 1782. Archaeological deposits are stratified within the soil with older cultural deposits beneath more recent period deposits. Surficial features pertaining to land use are generally visible on the land surface. These features would have remained on the landscape well after the Army had left the area.

In the early 1800s, Abraham Underhill began constructing his farmstead on the current parcel known as Underhill Farm. He is reported to have made substantial changes to the landscape. In addition, his mansion has a full basement, indicating the land surface was dug up and altered to accommodate the below-grade foundation. Two below-grade access tunnels exist at the back (northern side of the Mansion) and three buildings (Building E, G & H) are built into the existing grade. A retaining wall is located against the land surface on which Buildings I and J are located. The current construction and configuration of the built features in the Underhill Farm parcel, including graded and paved roadways and parking areas, as well as subsurface infrastructure and utilities indicates that had any deposits associated with the Revolutionary War, or Native American habitation sites, existed within the property, they have been lost due to the nineteenth and twentieth-century alterations to the property. The soil stratigraphy has been dramatically

altered, as confirmed by the shovel tests completed in 2021, to the extent that there is no potential for the Underhill parcel to contain significant archaeological deposits. This information is presented in the HCS (HVCRC) Phase 1A Literature Search and Sensitivity Assessment & Phase 1B Archaeological Field Reconnaissance Survey Soundview- Underhill Farm Project.

On April 27, 2021 Philip Perazio of OPRHP concurred with the recommendations made in this report.

The Underground Railroad

Despite its name, the Underground Railroad was neither underground nor was it a railroad. This was primarily a secret network through which Africans and African Americans could escape and leave the United States, often to Canada. Westchester County is a well-known corridor for the Underground Railroad, with known sites such as the Williams Sands house in Peekskill, the Purdy House in North Salem, Tarrytown's AME Zion Church, and Henry Ward Beecher's house in Peekskill, just to name a few. Fugitives along the route would travel up the Hudson River, through Westchester County to points north, and then on to Canada.

To identify and confirm that a location was a "safe house" along the route, primary documentation is needed. A record documenting either through personal knowledge, or a first-hand account of the activities would be needed to confirm that a property was utilized as part of the Underground Railroad. Evidence of the Underground Railroad does not appear in the archaeological record (materials left behind), nor is there any evidence of material culture, (outside of personal journals, ledgers, or Bibles that would document such activities) that can conclusively identify whether a site was part of this secret network. There is no specific artifact type that can be associated with the Underground Railroad activities. As the activities associated with the Underground Railroad were not legal, they were not well documented nor widely publicized.

Throughout Westchester County in the mid-19th century, residents belonging to the Society of Friends (Quaker Church) were the leading group of Abolitionists and primary participants in helping Africans and African Americans escape to Canada and other regions (Midwestern United States). Edward Underhill and members of his extended family were members of the Society of Friends. Given Edward's attention to improving the local community, including starting a school, it is possible that he or members of his family were involved in the Abolitionist movement or outwardly supported the abolitionist movement. Primary accounts are needed to make a definitive statement on the matter. The presence of numerous barns and "back of the house" access points on the property that would have provided hiding spaces and escape routes is insufficient evidence to state that Edward Underhill or his property were part of the Underground Railroad.

Proposed Mitigation

Unicorn Contracting is proposing to retain and rehabilitate the historic Mansion for adaptive reuse. The Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation defines rehabilitation or adaptive reuse as "the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values". It is important to determine which buildings and structures are the most significant. The highest quality and most distinctive buildings should be considered for rehabilitation and preservation, rather than those necessitated by time, nature, and redevelopment practices. Historic preservation is about not only the structure but also its function and its history. Buildings that are to be rehabilitated or restored,

need to be functional, and economically viable while at the same time reflecting the criteria that make them significant and their historic intention. This rehabilitation is expected to cost close to one million dollars, and will revitalize this vacant and unused resource. The current plan for this building is to create office and conference room spaces, and rejuvenate the outdated and older portions of the building. Retail and/or restaurant space is envisioned for the first floor, while retaining the historic elements of the building to preserve the overall historic integrity of the structure.

In addition to the Underhill Mansion, the landscape around the mansion, including the routes of the existing driveways, lawn spaces, and the pond will be retained. The pond will be refurbished, and a walking path is proposed around the perimeter to create a park-like setting. The project sponsor is proposing to have this part of the property publicly accessible, so that the community can utilize the park space. As part of the proposed plan, the condominium building will be constructed where Buildings G-J are currently located. Buildings C and E will be removed, and their locations graded and leveled for uses as lawn, parking and driveways. An apartment building is proposed to the north of the former Underhill Mansion (Building A). Parking areas are proposed to the north of the apartment building which will be utilized by the community members who will visit the proposed Senior Center.

Unicorn Contracting has explored the other available properties in the Town of Yorktown, however, due to the Yorktown Heights Design Overlay District, this property is uniquely suited to provide both residential and commercial opportunities, as well as retain a significant historic resource.

The cost of rehabilitating and restoring the former barns and outbuildings is prohibitive for the proposed undertaking and associated offsite improvements. Rehabilitation construction costs will nearly double the construction costs of the project and will not allow for the unit density needed for this type of investment project. The layout of the barns and outbuildings is not conducive to adaptive reuse. The financial viability of the development, as well as the off-site improvements, are in jeopardy if the project cannot go forward as planned. With the current plan, including the off-site and community improvements, Unicorn Contracting has created a financially viable project that will be reliant on private investors and funds. In addition to the financial loss, the reduction in the number of housing units will impact the goals of the Town of Yorktown and its residents to have available housing and commercial drivers of economic growth.

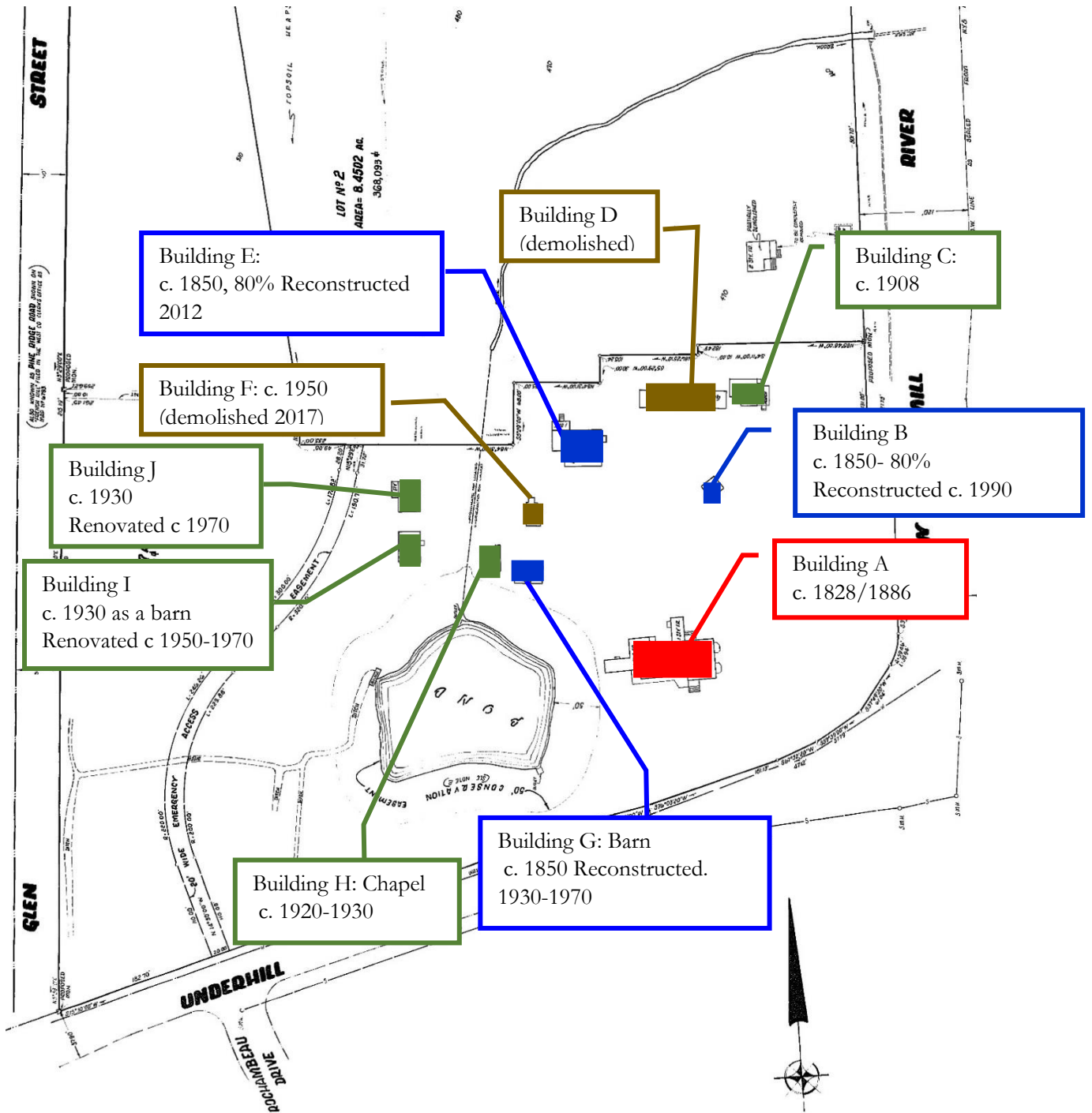


Figure 3: 1979 Subdivision of the Property prepared for Gilbert Beaver Conference Farm. (Source: Westchester County Records) Scale: 1" = 175'

- Building Demolished
- Building Substantially reconstructed, lack historic integrity
- Building constructed after Underhill
- Building constructed by Underhill, retains integrity



Figure 2: 2016 Aerial image showing the buildings within the Soundview-Underhill Farms property.