

## Appendix D: Cultural Resources

Phase Ia Archaeological Assessment Survey  
Proposed Solar Photovoltaic Array  
Riggs Street  
Town of Oxford, Connecticut

July, 2023



ACS

◆ Archaeological Consulting Services ◆

**Phase Ia Archaeological Assessment Survey  
Proposed Solar Photovoltaic Array  
Riggs Street  
Town of Oxford, Connecticut**

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**July, 2023**

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## Abstract

This report contains the results of a Phase Ia archaeological assessment survey conducted by ACS (Archaeological Consulting Services) during the month of June, 2023. The project calls for an evaluation of potential cultural resources to be affected by the construction of a solar farm on a property that measures about 67 acres in Oxford, Connecticut. The project property consists of one large lot, extending between the discontinued course of Larkey Road on the west and Riggs Street on the east. The project property is currently undeveloped, with the exception of a cleared area on Riggs Street representing a former gravel quarry now used as a staging area and bee-keeping facility. The project is being coordinated by Solli Engineering, a civil engineering firm based in Monroe, Connecticut. Solli supplied site plans which show the proposed development and existing conditions. The project is subject to review by the Connecticut Siting Council and the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

The project area lies in central Oxford, to the north of Oxford Road (Route 67). Background research indicates a low sensitivity for potential prehistoric cultural resources, with a statistical prehistoric landscape sensitivity model developed and utilized by ACS indicating a high score of only 13.3 out of a potential 100.0, and therefore within the low sensitivity range (0-20). The low score can be attributed to rocky soil contexts and considerable distance to the nearest major water source, which is Jack's Brook that flows through the eastern part of the property, Riggs Street Brook along the eastern Boundary, and unnamed intermittent stream in the western section of the property, and the Little River along Route 67 to the south. The property bears a higher sensitivity for historic cultural resources, given the location of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Enos Candee family occupation near the northeast corner of the property in an area marked by open fields, but also some chance for historic collier sites given ownership of the property by two or more manufacturing companies utilizing wood for fuel.

Because of the possibility that this large property could contain historic collier sites and other historic occupations along Riggs Street and possibly the discontinued course of Larkey Road, ACS recommends a Phase Ib archaeological reconnaissance survey, limited to a highly stratified systematic testing research design. The survey should be performed prior to any construction activities and subject to review by the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).



## Project Summary

**Project Name:** Proposed Solar Photovoltaic Array, Riggs Street, Oxford, Connecticut.

**Project Purpose:** To investigate possible cultural resources which may be impacted by the construction of a solar farm in Oxford, Connecticut, in compliance with requirements of the Connecticut Siting Council and the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office.

**Project Funding:** The Nevar Company, Cheshire, Connecticut.

**Project Location:** Riggs Street, Oxford, Connecticut.

**Project Size:** ~22 acres.

**Investigation Type:** Phase Ia archaeological assessment survey.

**Investigation Methods:** Background research, pedestrian surface survey.

**Dates of Investigation:** June, 2023.

**Performed by:** ACS (Archaeological Consulting Services), 118 Whitfield Street, Guilford, Connecticut 06437, (203) 458-0550 (telephone), (203) 672-2442 (fax), acsinfo@yahoo.com.

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**Submitted to:**

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Connecticut Office of State Archaeology (Dr. Sarah Sportman, State Archaeologist), University of Connecticut, 354 Mansfield Road, Storrs, Connecticut 06269-1176, (860) 486-5248.

**Reviewing Agency:**

Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office (Catherine Labadia, Staff Archaeologist), 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, Connecticut 06103, (860) 500-2329.

**Recommendations:** Phase Ib archaeological reconnaissance survey of selected areas to be impacted, including the historic Enos Candee site on Riggs Street, area near discontinued Larkey Road, and limited testing for possible historic collier sites.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Project Description

This report provides the results of a Phase Ia archaeological assessment survey conducted by ACS for the planned development of a solar voltaic array, or solar farm, in Oxford, New Haven County, Connecticut. The owner of the property is The Nevar Company of Cheshire, Connecticut. The project consists of one large lot of 65.87 acres, listed with the Oxford tax assessor office as Tax Map 27, Block 15, Lot 7. The lot spans between Riggs Street on the east and Larkey Road on the west, and resides just north of town-owned land at 462 and 486 Oxford Road (Route 67). The project area is in central Oxford, with the adjacent town-owned land including the town hall and other offices. There are no current structures on the property, that mostly contains vacant wooded land. The current access drive is near the southeast corner of the property off Riggs Street, where there is an open staging area formerly the site of a small gravel quarry, and where there is also a storage trailer and bee keeping facility kept on site.

ACS was contacted by Solli Engineering, a civil engineering firm based in Monroe, Connecticut to conduct the archaeological assessment survey for the project. Solli supplied ACS with a survey map, indicating that the survey was likely required for review by the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Connecticut Siting Council. The survey map shows existing conditions, including topography and wetlands, as well as the proposed layout of the solar facility. The solar development is distributed in a relatively saturated pattern throughout the project property, although with a generous setback from existing streams and wetlands on the property.

ACS conducted the assessment survey in conformance with the *Environmental Review Primer for Connecticut Archaeological Resources* issued by SHPO. The assessment survey evaluated the potential need, if any, for a Phase Ib archaeological reconnaissance survey. The archaeological assessment survey consisted of a thorough background research effort and pedestrian surface survey to evaluate the potential sensitivity of the project area for any prehistoric and/or historic cultural resources, with SHPO to serve as review agency for the final report.

## CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

### Environmental Setting

The project area is located in the Town of Oxford, New Haven County, Connecticut. The project setting is in the Southwest Hills (IV-A) ecoregion of Connecticut. The project area lies in the central part of Oxford, a couple of miles to the west of Route 8, and several miles southeast of Interstate 84. The area contains a mix of residential neighborhoods and vacant wooded land, with the Oxford town hall and other civic facilities immediately to the south. The large lot is roughly rectangular east to west, and borders Riggs Street on the east and Larkey Road on the west. There are no structures on the parcel, which is mostly wooded land with the exception of several cleared areas, and the proposed development will occupy much of the acreage with the exception of broad wetlands setbacks (Figure 1).

Underlying bedrock is a metamorphic mix of Ordovician Collinsville and Taine Mountain gneiss, schist, amphibolite and granofels (Ot + Oc), an Ordovician formation on the order of 440 to 500 million years old, with the western edge of the property more specifically within a unit of Taine Mountain granofels (Otb) (Rodgers 1985). The metamorphic formations are highly foliated within this area, with bedrock bedding dips to the east-northeast on the order of 55 degrees to nearly vertical, affording the opportunity for potential prehistoric rockshelters to be present. The rugged property contains hill slope surfaces that generally dip to the south, or to the east or west into small stream valleys (Stone et al. 1992) (Figure 2). Elevations vary on the property from about 570 feet above mean sea level along the northern boundary, to as low as 380 to 400 feet above mean sea level at the southern boundary where it crosses an intermittent stream valley and Jack's Brook. The project area is within the Little River drainage basin (#6920) that empties west into the Naugatuck River about three miles to the southeast (McElroy 1991). The Little River runs along the course of Route 67 to the west and south of the property, and Riggs Street Brook is a tributary of the Little River that runs south on the east side of Riggs Street, each roughly anchoring the west and east boundaries of the property, with an intermittent stream tributary of the Little River and Jacks Brook tributary of Riggs Street Brook dissecting the property from north to south almost in thirds, with prominent toe slopes at the southern end of each.

The project area contains three principal soil types (Figure 3) within an area designated as the Hollis-Charlton Rock outcrop soil association (Reynolds 1979; USDA NRCS websoil survey 2023). Correspondingly, the property is dominated by a variety of Charlton and Hollis fine sandy loam soils (CrC, CnC, HpE, HSE), with the Charlton soils dominating hill tops, and the Hollis soils dominating side slopes. Some Paxton fine sandy loam units better suited for agriculture, and a rocky Woodbridge fine sandy loam soil dominate the eastern hill slopes between Jack's Brook and Riggs Street (PbB, PbC, PbD, PeC, WzC), with some of these areas cleared. In particular, the southern section along the west side of Riggs Street has been extensively quarried for gravel, and is now a flat cleared area with visible cuts into the surrounding hill slopes visible. The soils are all moderately well drained to well drained, with dark brown to very dark brown topsoil, yellowish brown to dark yellowish brown subsoil, and olive to grayish brown gravelly substrata except where truncated by bedrock in the Hollis units. Wetland soils of the streams include poorly drained Ridgebury, Leicester, and Whitman very rocky fine sandy loam (RN).

Figure 1: Map of the Project Area

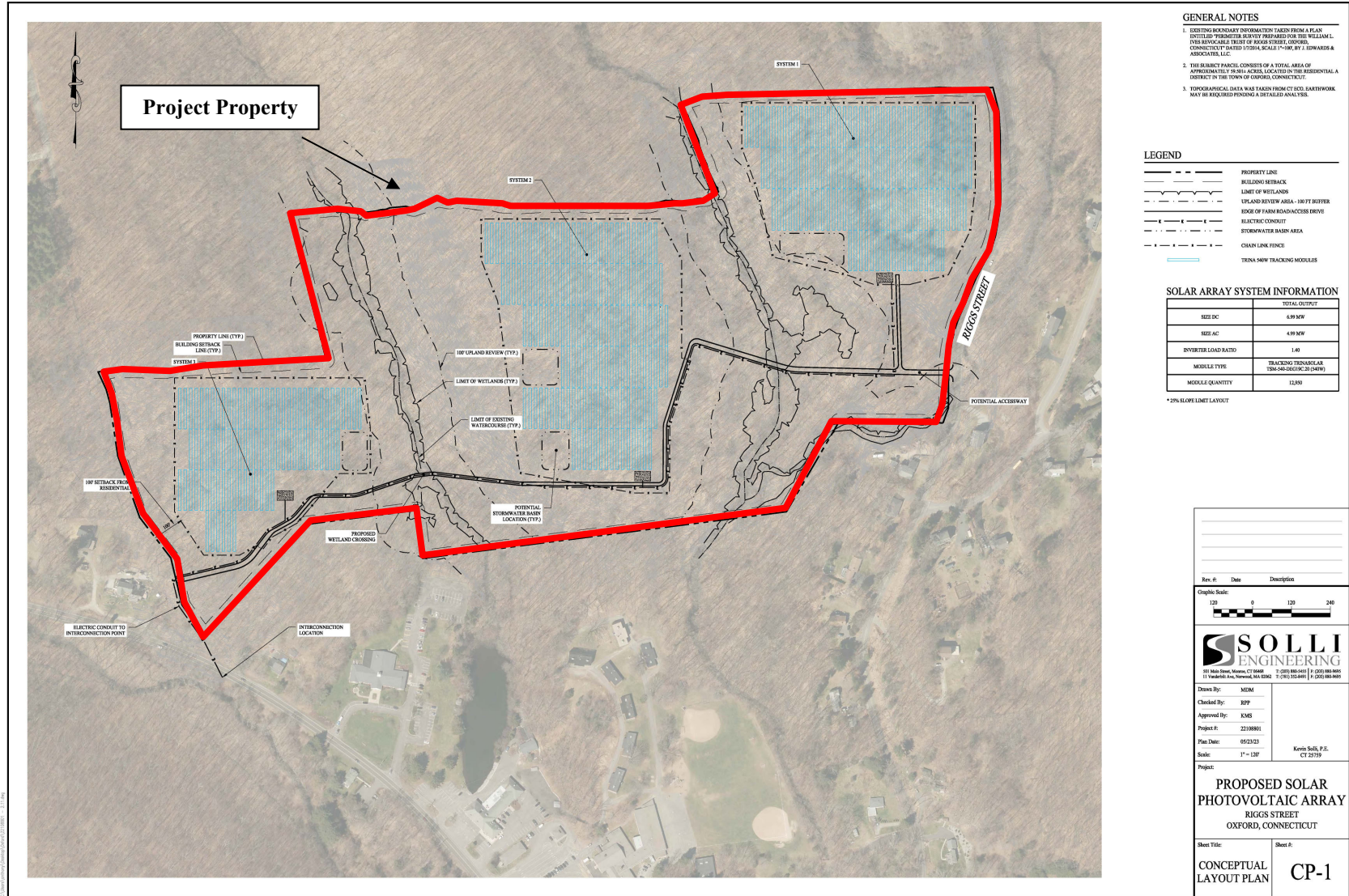


Figure 1: Map of the project area, from site plans drafted by Solli Engineering. Scale 1:2,400 (1" = 200').



Figure 2: USGS 7.5' Topographic Map, Southbury and Naugatuck Quadrangles

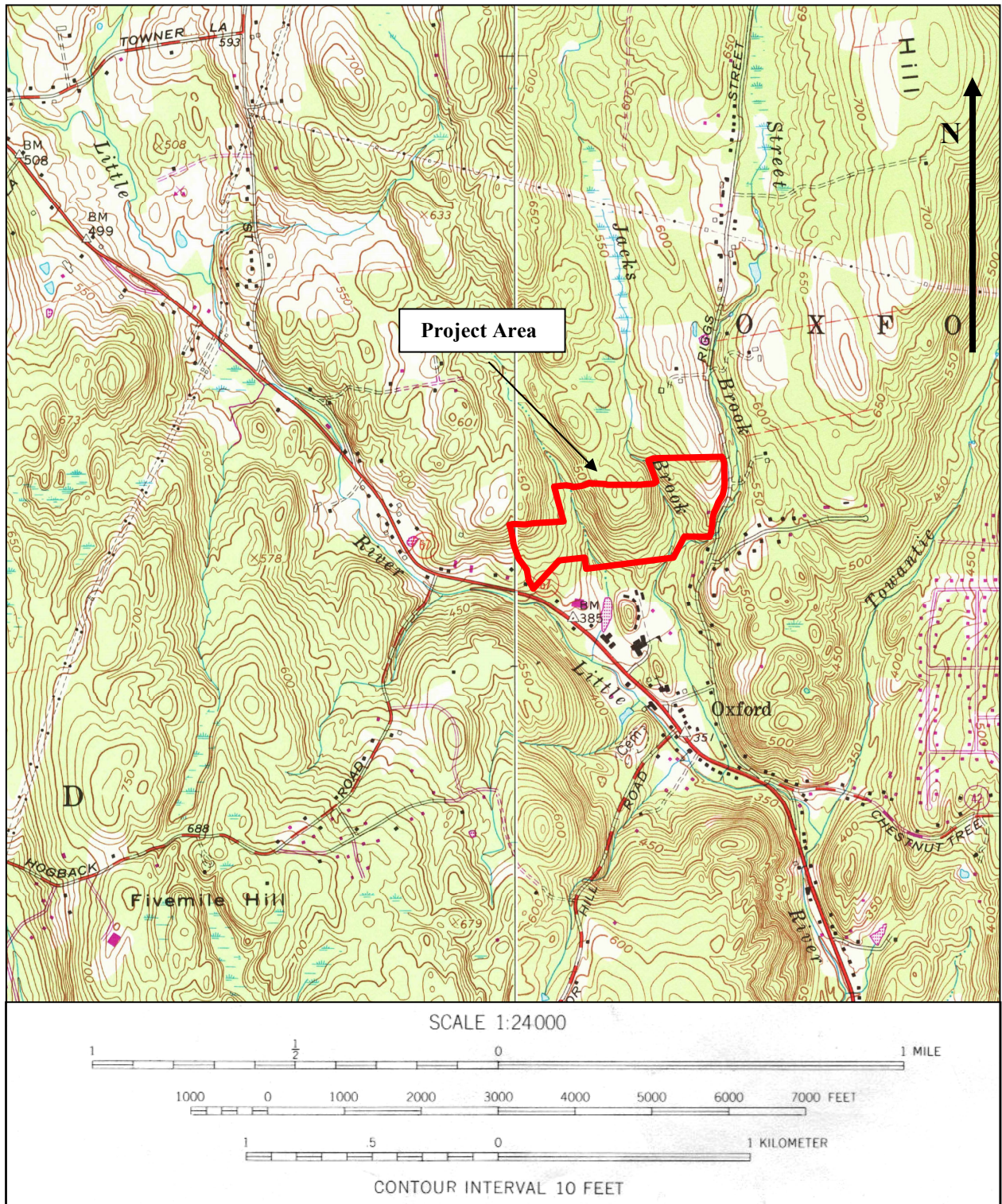


Figure 2: From USGS 1984.

Figure 3: USDA Websoil Survey Map

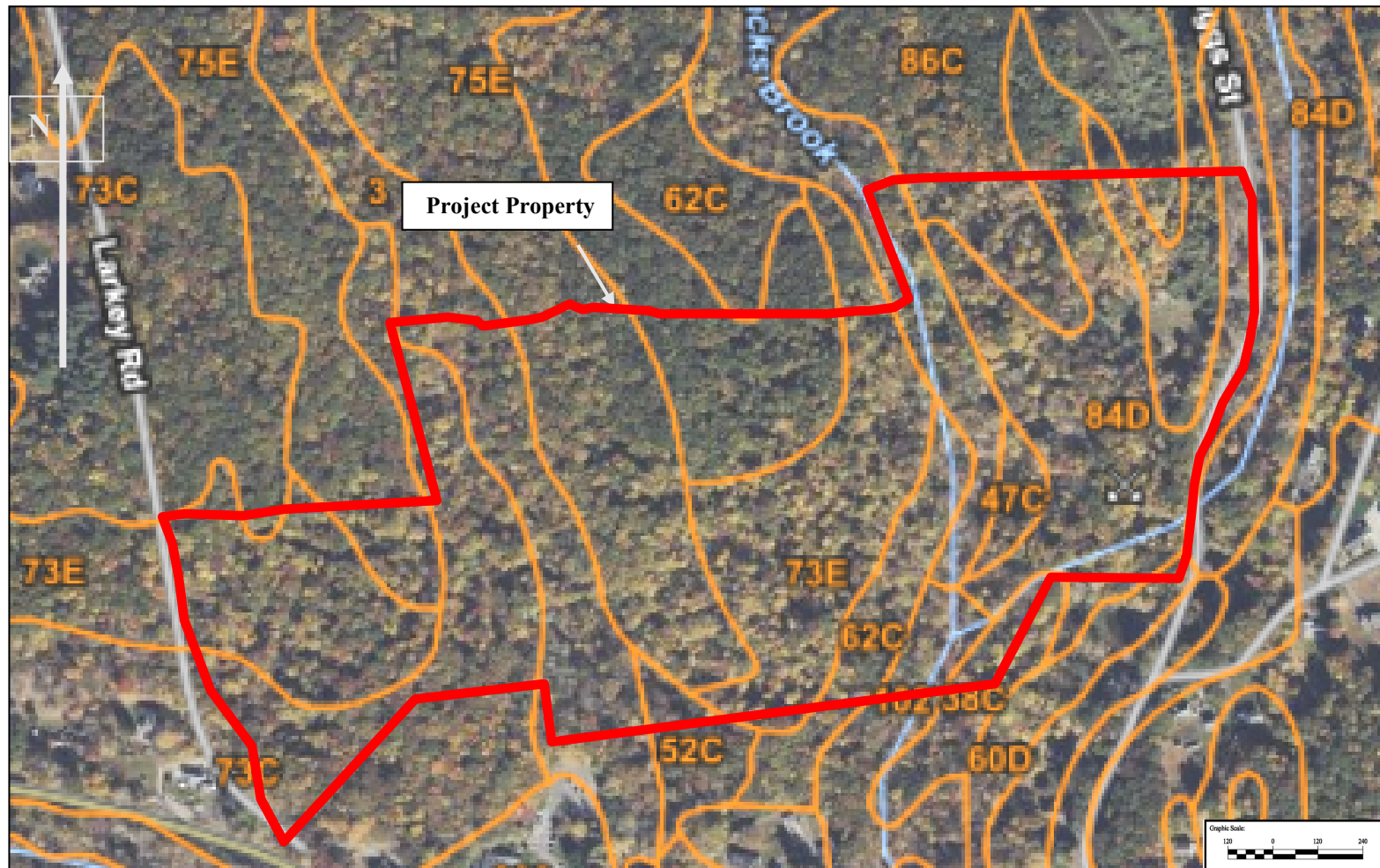


Figure 3: From USDA NRCS websoil survey.



## Cultural Setting

### Regional Prehistory

The prehistory of the project region and New England in general can be broadly divided into periods reflecting changes in environment, Native American subsistence and settlement patterns, and the material culture which is preserved in the archaeological record. Although it remains controversial today, the conservative estimates for the first occupations of North America are about 18,000 to 15,000 years ago, just after the maximum extent of the last glaciation and the broadest extent of the Bering land bridge (Kehoe 1981:7; Parker 1987:4; Jennings 1989:52). Southern Connecticut itself remained glaciated until about 15,200 B.P. (Snow 1980:103; Gordon 1983:71; Parker 1987:5; McWeeney 1994:181, 1999:6).

### *Paleo-Indian*

The Paleo-Indian period is documented in Connecticut after 13,000 years ago and extends to roughly 9,500 B.P. (Swigart 1974; Snow 1980:101; Lavin 1984:7; Moeller 1984, 1999). The earliest radiocarbon date in Connecticut was secured recently at the Brian D. Jones site, at about 12,500 B.P. (Leslie and Sportman 2020). An unpublished date of 12,600 B.P. was also obtained from the site (Sportman pers. comm. 2022). This was a period of climatic amelioration from full glacial conditions, and a rise in sea levels which fell short of inundating the continental shelf. It was during this time that tundra vegetation was replaced by patches of boreal forests dominated by spruce trees (Snow 1980:114; Parker 1987:5-6), and eventually white pine and several pioneering deciduous genera (McWeeney 1994:182, 1999:7). Early in the period, the environment was conducive to the existence of large herbivores and a low population density of humans who procured these animals as a major subsistence resource, although warming temperatures and denser forests contributed to the extinction of certain species. The projected human social and settlement patterns are those of small bands of semi-nomadic or restricted wandering people who hunted mammoth, mastodon, bison, elk, caribou, musk ox, and several smaller mammals especially after the extinction of megafauna (Ritchie 1969:10-11; Snow 1980:117-120; Jones and Forrest 2003). Episodes of sparse vegetation during this period encouraged the use of high lookout points over hollows and larger valleys by people in pursuit of large game. The southern part of New England had an earlier recovery from glacial conditions when compared to areas to the north, however, with a higher density of vegetation that might have precluded Paleo-Indians of Connecticut from focussing heavily on the larger mammals (McWeeney 1994:182).

The cultural material associated with this period includes large to medium-sized, fluted projectile points (cf. Clovis), in addition to knives, drills, pieces esquillees and graters, scrapers, perforators, awls, abraders, spokeshaves, retouched pieces, utilized flakes, and hammerstones (Wilbur 1978:5; Snow 1980:122-127; Moeller 1980). Although numerous finds from this period have been found in Connecticut, only a few, small *in situ* sites exist throughout the state. Finds tend to be located near very large streams in the lower Connecticut River Valley, and in rockshelters of other regions (McBride 1981). A survey performed by the Connecticut Office of State Archaeology and the Archaeological Society of Connecticut resulted in the documentation of 53 Paleo-Indian "find spots" in Connecticut (Bellantoni and Jordan 1995), while a more updated research survey indicates up to 72 locations and sites (Bouchard 2014). Many more sites have likely been eradicated by rising sea levels since the Paleoindian period (Anderson 2001).

### *Early Archaic*

The Early Archaic period lasted from approximately 9,500 B.P. to 7,500 B.P. (Snow 1980:159; Lavin 1984:9; Moeller 1984). Sea levels and temperatures continued to rise during this period as denser stands of forests dominated by pine and various deciduous species replaced the vegetation of the former period (Davis 1969:418-419; Snow 1980:114; Parker 1987:9; McWeeney 1994:184-185, 1999:8-9). This environmental change was rapid and caused a major shift in the animals it supported, including deer, moose, other small to medium-sized mammals, migratory birds, fish, and shellfish. The material culture changed along with the environmental conditions to include the atlatl and smaller stemmed and bifurcated projectile points (Stanly, cf. Kanawha and Lecroy) for procuring smaller, faster game in more closed settings (Wilbur 1978:6-7). The expanded tool set included choppers and anvil stones. Fish weirs and nets with stone weights could have been used as early as the Early Archaic in Connecticut (Wegner 2018). Settlement patterns were probably becoming more territorialized towards a central-based wandering character (Snow 1980:171; see also Forrest 1999), and possibly a greater focus on wetlands (Jones and Forrest 2003). Some semi-subterranean habitation structural features are evident in the region at this time, and may be part of a Gulf of Maine Archaic tradition in which there was a focus on quartz as a lithic resource without a high emphasis on projectile points (Robinson et al. 1992; Forrest 1999) and instead more of a focus on more expedient tool forms than the more formalized Paleoindian toolkit (Anderson 2001). The Early Archaic period is poorly represented in Connecticut and the lower coastal river valleys, probably resulting from a combined effect of low population densities in response to rapidly changing environmental conditions, as well as site location and preservation factors (Snow 1980:168; McBride 1981; McBride and Dewar 1981:45; Lavin 1984:9; McWeeney 1986; see also Forrest 1999).

### *Middle Archaic*

The Middle Archaic period extended from approximately 7,500 B.P. to 6,000 B.P. (Snow 1980:173; Lavin 1984:9; McBride 1984; Jones 1999). It was by the end of this period of increased warming that sea levels and coastal configurations had stabilized and approached their present conditions (Kehoe 1981:211; Gordon 1983:82; Parker 1987:9). The period is marked by the establishment of forests with increasing proportions of deciduous hardwoods in relation to the pine predecessors in Connecticut (Davis 1969; Snow 1980:114; McWeeney 1999:10). The material culture included square or contracting-stemmed points (Neville, Stark, and Merrimac), semi-lunar groundstone knives, ground and winged banner stones for atlatls, plummets for nets, gouges, denticulates, perforators, percussed celts and adzes and grooved axes for woodworking (Snow 1980:183-184), as well as tools used in previous periods and rare triangular projectile points that may be precursors of Squibnocket points of the Late Archaic (Forrest 2010). This more extensive range of material culture indicates a broader subsistence base than in previous periods, including greater fish and shellfish procurement (Wilbur 1978:8; Snow 1980:178-182; Anderson 2001) which was associated with the stabilization of sea levels towards the end of the period. The increased breadth of subsistence resources had the effect of increasing scheduling efforts and may have caused settlement patterns to take on more of a central-based or seasonally circulating pattern with bands joining and dispersing on a seasonal basis (Snow 1980:183). Sites found in the lower Connecticut River Valley region suggest that a wider range of environments and associated site types were exploited, including both large and special task sites in upland

areas (McBride 1981, 1984:56). This regional pattern may confirm the suggested settlement pattern of central-based, seasonally circulating or restricted circulating groups of people supported by logistical procurement sites throughout the state. Middle Archaic sites are fairly rare in Connecticut, again a combined product of rising sea levels and poor site preservation (see Forrest 1999).

### *Late Archaic*

The Late Archaic period ranged from approximately 6,000 B.P. to 3,700 B.P. (Snow 1980:187; Lavin 1984:11; McBride 1984; Pfeiffer 1984; Cassedy 1999). This period is marked by a warm-dry maximum evident from pollen cores in the region (Davis 1969:414; Ogden 1977; Anderson 2001). Hardwood, oak-dominated forests very similar in character to ones established today covered most of Connecticut by the Late Archaic (Parker 1987:10). The Late Archaic in Connecticut has been divided into two traditions: the Laurentian and the Narrow Point (Lavin 1984:11), with the former perhaps being distributed more in the interior. The Laurentian tradition is defined by wider-bladed, notched and eared triangular points, and ground slate points and ulus, while the Narrow Point tradition includes smaller, thicker, and narrower points, which as a succinct tradition may have survived well into the Woodland era (Millis and Millis 2007). The tool kit and general material culture became even more expanded during this period, with the advent of ground stone manos, nut mortars, pestles, and bowls, as well as stone pipes, bone tools, corner-notched (Vosburg, Brewerton, and Vestal), side-notched (Otter Creek, Brewerton, Normanskill), smaller narrow-stemmed (Dustin, Lamoka, Squibnocket, and Wading River), and triangular points (Squibnocket, Brewerton, and Beekman), grooved and perforated weights, fish weirs and harpoons, and decorative gorgets (Wilbur 1978:15-24; Snow 1980:228-231). The groundstone material has been inferred as being associated with an increased vegetable diet that consisted of berries, nuts, and seeds (Snow 1980:231; Lavin 1984:13), including acorn, butternut, chestnut, walnut, hickory, bayberry, blackberry, goose foot, cranberry, partridge berry, service berry, strawberry, and swamp current (Cruson 1991:29). Deer continued to be the predominant meat source, although animal remains recovered from archaeological sites in the region include black bear, raccoon, woodchuck, rabbit, otter, gray squirrel, red fox, gray fox, wolf, wild turkey, grouse, pigeon, migratory fowl, and anadromous and freshwater fish and shellfish (Cruson 1991:28-29). Various sea mammals and fish were procured along the coast.

The increasing breadth of the subsistence base and material culture was in turn associated with a central-based settlement pattern in which a restricted range of seasonally scheduled and used areas were exploited in a more semi-sedentary fashion than previously (Lavin 1984:13; Dincauze 1990:25). Sites in the lower Connecticut River Valley suggest that the larger rivers served more as long-term bases within a central-based circulating system than in the Middle Archaic (McBride 1981; McBride and Dewar 1981:48). The interior uplands of Connecticut may have supported a relatively independent set of seasonally circulating groups which used larger wetlands as long-term bases (Wadleigh 1981). Mortuary practices of the time suggest some sedentism for certain groups of people who were buried in specialized secondary cremation cemeteries and who may have had some control over restricted resources (e.g. riparian transportation routes) (Walwer 1996). Although the cremation sites largely include utilitarian funerary objects, some contain non-local materials which suggest trade association with cultures to the west of Connecticut (Walwer 1996).

### *Terminal Archaic*

The Terminal Archaic period extended from approximately 3,700 B.P. to 2,700 B.P., as defined by the Susquehanna and Small-Stemmed traditions (Swigart 1974; Snow 1980:235; Lavin 1984:14; Pfeiffer 1984; Pagoulatos 1988; Cruson 1991; Cassedy 1999). Steatite, or soapstone, was a frequently used material by this time, and could be fashioned into bowls and other objects. The mass, permanency, and labor intensiveness of creating these heavy items have led to the inference of more sedentary base camps, especially on large rivers where the development of a canoe technology had become fully established and increased the effective catchment area within which groups of people were gathering resources on a continuous basis. The material culture of the period was very similar to the Late Archaic, with a proliferation of stemmed projectile point types including Snook Kill, Bare Island and Poplar Island stemmed points, Orient Fishtail points, Sylvan and Vestal side-notched points, and Susquehanna corner-notched points. The resource base continued to consist of deer and small mammals, nuts, shellfish, turtles, and birds (Snow 1980:249). The first signs of ceramics (Vnette I pottery) tempered with steatite fragments appeared during this period (Lavin 1984:15; Lavin and Kra 1994:37; see also Cassedy 1999:131), and archaeological evidence of trade with other regions becomes more substantial for this time (Pfeiffer 1984:84).

The distribution of sites and site types in the lower Connecticut River Valley during this period suggests that there was a change in settlement to one with fewer, yet larger sites in riverine settings, and associated satellite task-specific sites in the uplands (McBride 1981; McBride and Dewar 1981:49). The implications are less foraging-strategy residential movement and more task-oriented collection activities within a radiating settlement pattern, but probably one in which some degree of seasonal circulation of settlement took place. Pagoulatos (1988) has shown that while sites associated with the Small-Stemmed tradition tend to suggest a more mobile settlement pattern in the interior uplands, sites of the Susquehanna tradition indicate a semi-sedentary collector strategy in major riverine and estuarine environments. At least certain groups exhibited semi-sedentism and some control over restricted resources, as indicated by the elaborate burials of the Terminal Archaic (Walwer 1996). Mortuary practices from the period include secondary cremation interments in formalized cemetery areas, with individual pits containing fragmented utilitarian material from communal cremation areas, as well as highly stylized funerary objects from non-local material (Walwer 1996). The lack of other, less formalized burial types evident in the archaeological record may be a matter of poor preservation, in which case it has been proposed that the cremation cemeteries are representative of a stratified society in which a portion of the people (of the Susquehanna "tradition") were able to generate a surplus economy that supported a semi-sedentary settlement pattern. This surplus may have been generated by the procurement and control over the transportation of steatite from various areas in Connecticut and surrounding territory.

### *Early Woodland*

The Early Woodland period in Connecticut extended from about 2,700 B.P. to 2,000 B.P. (Lavin 1984:17; Juli and McBride 1984; Cruson 1991; Juli 1999). A cooling trend during the Early Woodland (Davis 1969:414; Parker 1987:10; McWeeney 1999:11; Fiedel 2001) is thought to have reduced population sizes and regional ethnic distinction as the hickory nut portion of the

resource base was significantly decreased, although the apparent decline in populations may possibly be related to other factors such as the inability to confidently distinguish Early Woodland sites from those of other periods (Filios 1989; Concannon 1993). Climatic deterioration and depopulation are in turn thought to have inhibited the progression towards, and association with, more complex social structures and networks that were developing further to the west and south (Kehoe 1981:215). A proliferation of tobacco pipes may indicate the beginnings of agricultural efforts in the northeast. The Early Woodland of this region, however, exhibits no direct traces of subsistence crop remains, indicating continuity with previous periods in terms of subsistence practices (Lavin 1984:18).

Materially, the period is marked by a substantial development of a ceramic technology, with the Early Windsor tradition of pottery being dominant in the Early Woodland of Connecticut (Rouse 1980:68; Lavin 1984:17, 1987). Both Early Windsor cord-marked and Linear Dentate ceramic forms were being produced at this time. Diagnostic projectile points can be developmentally traced to indigenous points of previous periods, consisting of many stemmed forms in addition to Meadowood and Fulton side-notched points, Steubenville points, and Adena-Rossville types, but now may have been used in conjunction with the bow and arrow (Lavin 1984:18). Adena-like boatstones are also found in this period. Although rare contact with the Adena culture is evident throughout assemblages of the period, the Early Woodland in southern New England remained a very gradual transitional period (Snow 1980:279,287; Lavin 1984:19).

A heightened use of ceramics has been erroneously promoted as an automatic indication of increased sedentism in many areas. Instead, central-based camps with restricted seasonal encampments appear to be the dominant settlement pattern (Snow 1980:287). Minimal archaeological evidence from the lower Connecticut River Valley appears to suggest a similar settlement pattern to the Terminal Archaic in which large riverine sites served as central bases with upland seasonal dispersal or specific task sites (McBride 1981; McBride and Dewar 1981:49), but with a lesser degree of sedentism. Interior uplands populations also decreased during the Woodland era, perhaps related to the intensification of agricultural resources along major riverine and coastal areas (Wadleigh 1981:83). The trend towards greater mobility may in part be attributed to the decline in the use of steatite that no longer gave certain groups control over critical and restricted resources, as indicated by the declining ceremonialism of burial sites at the time which were more often located in habitation sites and exhibited combinations of secondary cremation features and primary inhumations (Walwer 1996). This transition in the socio-economics of the region was brought about by the decrease in importance of steatite as ceramics obscured its value for producing durable containers. Partially preserved primary inhumations appear for the first time in the region based on preservation considerations.

### ***Middle Woodland***

The Middle Woodland period lasted from about 2,000 B.P. to 1,000 B.P. (Lavin 1984:19; Juli and McBride 1984; Cruson 1991; Juli 1999). The climate was returning to the conditions basically witnessed today (Davis 1969:420; McWeeney 1999:11). It is a period which exhibited considerable continuity with previous periods in terms of both subsistence and material culture. Cylindrical pestles and groundstone hoes are tools diagnostic of the period and reflect developing

agricultural efforts, including the cultivation of squash, corn, and beans on a seasonally tended basis (Snow 1980:279). Direct evidence for agriculture in the form of preserved vegetal remains, however, does not generally appear until the early Late Woodland (Lavin 1984:21) when corn is thought to have been introduced into the Connecticut River Valley from the upper Susquehanna and Delaware River Valleys (Bendremer and Dewar 1993:386). Projectile point forms from the period include Snyders corner-notched, LongBay and Port Maitland side-notched, Rossville stemmed, and Greene lanceolate types. A proliferation of ceramic styles was witnessed during the Middle Woodland (Rouse 1980; Lavin 1984:19-20, 1987; Lavin and Kra 1984:37), including Rocker Dentate, Windsor Brushed, Sebonac Stamped, Hollister Stamped, Selden Island, and Windsor Plain types that were all also produced in the Late Woodland, with the exception of the Rocker Dentate. Net and fabric-marked ceramics are key indicators of the shift into the Windsor tradition that would follow into the Late Woodland (Wink and Leslie 2021), although ceramic forms from the Early Woodland were still being produced as well. Minor traces of the Hopewell cultures to the west are also present in the archaeological record of this period. Site types and distributions in the lower Connecticut River Valley imply that a moderate increase of sedentism with aspects of a radiating settlement pattern took place on large rivers, supported by differentiated upland task sites (McBride 1981; McBride and Dewar 1981:49). This trend may have been supported by the expansion of tidal marshes up larger rivers (McBride 1992:14).

### *Late Woodland*

The Late Woodland period extended from approximately 1,000 B.P. to 1600 A.D., the time of widespread European contact in the broader region (Snow 1980:307; Kehoe 1981:231; Lavin 1984:21; Feder 1984, 1999). A warmer climate and increased employment of large scale agriculture for subsistence in New England were associated with increased population densities, more sedentary settlements, and more permanent living structures and facilities in larger villages. Settlements in Connecticut, however, tended to remain smaller with only small scale agricultural efforts, and as part of a seasonal round in which smaller post-harvest hunting and task-specific settlements were established in fall, and protected settlements occupied in winter (Guillette 1979:CI5-6; McBride and Bellantoni 1982; Lavin 1984:23; Starna 1990:36-37). Instead of maintaining permanent villages near agricultural plots, aboriginal populations engaged in the slashing and burning new plots and let old plots lie fallow periodically (Salwen 1983:89). In this area, domestic resources included corn, beans, squash, Jerusalem artichoke, and tobacco (Guillette 1979:CI5; Starna 1990:35). Agriculture was largely maintained by women, with the exception of tobacco (Salwen 1983:89; Starna 1990:36). Deer, small mammals, fish and shellfish, migratory birds, nuts and berries, and other wild foods continued to contribute significantly to the diet (Waters 1965:10-11; Russell 1980). Many of the foods produced were dried and/or smoked and stored in baskets and subterranean holes or trenches.

The increasing diversity of wild estuary resources may have served to increase sedentism in the coastal ecoregions of Connecticut (Lavin 1988:110; Bragdon 1996:67), while agriculture and sedentism may have been even more prominent along the larger river bottoms as floodplains stabilized and experienced less flooding (Bragdon 1996:71; Forrest et al. 2008:11). Late Woodland settlement patterns of groups in the uplands interior ecozones of Connecticut may have included the highest degree of mobility, while many sites from the central lowlands represent task-specific sites associated with larger settlements along the Connecticut River (McBride 1992:16). House structures consisted of wigwams or dome-shaped wooden pole

frameworks lashed and covered with hides or woven mats, and clothing was made from animal hides (Guillette 1979:CI7-8; Starna 1990:37-38). Pottery for the period is defined as the Late Windsor tradition in Connecticut (Rouse 1980:68; Lavin 1984:22, 1987). Most of the ceramic forms of the Middle Woodland were still being produced, in addition to the newer Niantic Stamped and Hackney Pond forms. Ceramics of the East River tradition also appear in the area during the Late Woodland, having originated and been concentrated in the New York area (Rouse 1980; Wiegand 1987; Lavin 1987). The period exhibits some continuity in terms of projectile point forms, although the Jack's Reef, Madison triangular, and Levanna points are considered diagnostic for the period. As likely with earlier periods, the material culture included various textile products such as baskets and mats, and wooden utensils such as bowls, cups, and spoons (Willoughby 1935; Russell 1980:56).

Unlike groups of the Mississippi valley, the overall cultural pattern for the entire Connecticut Woodland era exhibits considerable continuity. Interregional contact increased during this period, however, with non-local lithic materials increasing from as low as 10% to as high as 90% from the early Middle Woodland to the Late Woodland (McBride and Bellantoni 1982:54; Feder 1984:105), although most trade appears to have been done between neighboring groups rather than initiated through long-distance forays (Salwen 1983:94). The lack of enormous agricultural surpluses for the time is indicated by the low density of small storage features in habitation sites, as well as the ubiquitous primary inhumation of people without a select portion of graves exhibiting special treatment that would require high energy expenditure (Walwer 1996). As confirmed by early ethnohistoric accounts, this suggests a largely egalitarian and relatively mobile society for the Late Woodland despite the fact that this period marks the highest development of food production (i.e. agriculture) during the course of prehistory in the region. Corn was undoubtedly important, however, as a disproportionate amount of the simple, flexed burials were oriented towards the southwest which was the aboriginally acknowledged direction for the origins of corn and the Spirit Land.

### ***Local Sites and Surveys***

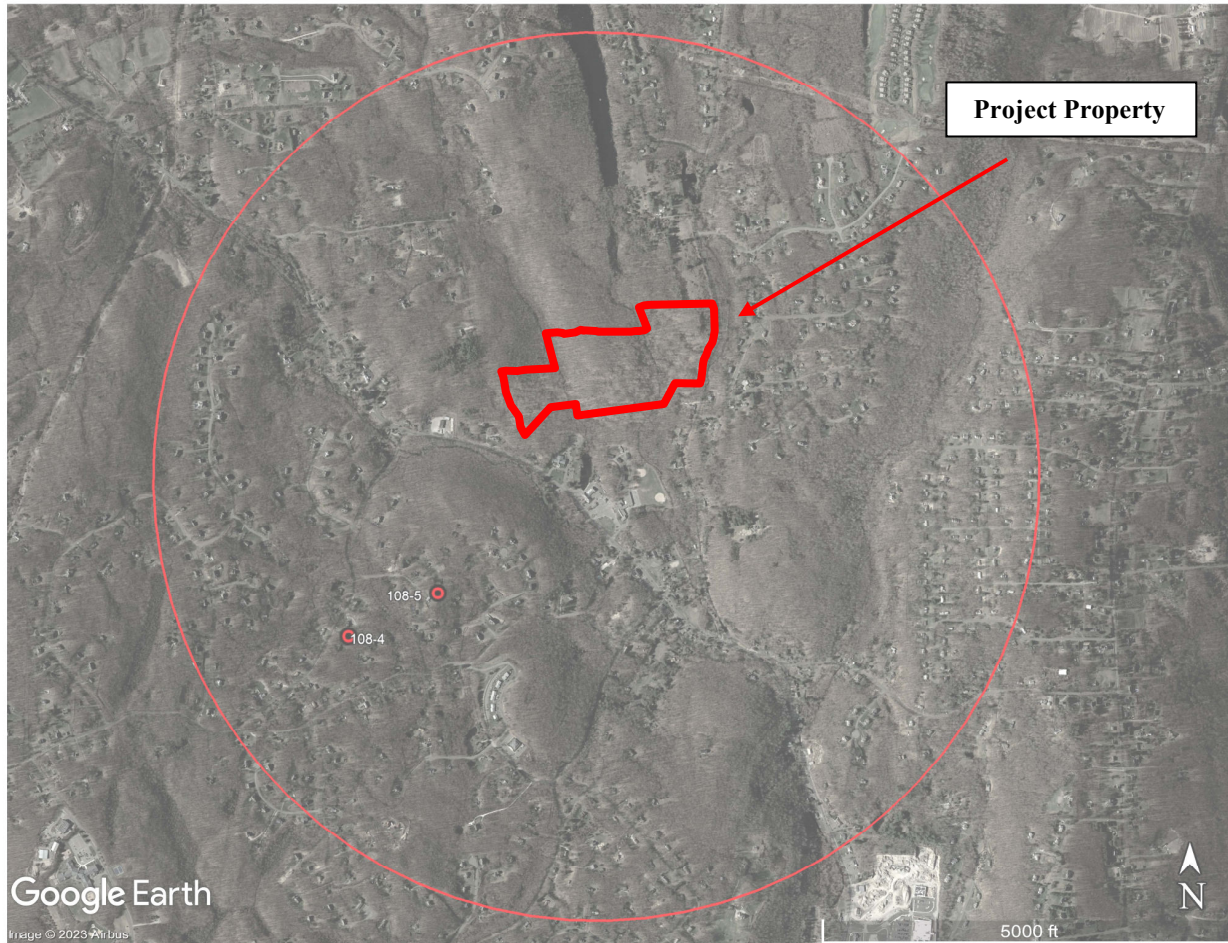
According to site files of the Connecticut Office of State Archaeology (CT OSA 2023) and Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office (CT SHPO 2023), there are only two previously recorded prehistoric sites within a mile of the project area (Figure 4). Both are related to the same agricultural farmstead, with the nearest major body of water consisting of the Little River over one-quarter mile to the north, and the project area at a similar distance further to the northeast. Together, amateur surface collections at the two sites produced Middle to Late Woodland triangular (possible Lamoka or Madison) quartz projectile points, quartz knife, and grooved groundstone tool.

### ***Summary***

A low density of archaeological sites has been recorded in the region surrounding the project area. This is likely attributable to the low stream rank of the Little River drainage basin and rugged topography of the area, but also likely due to a low density of professional surveys. The surface collections reported and from farms within one-half mile to the south reveal that more sites are likely yet to be discovered in the area, and probably located according to well established settlement models with a focus on proximity to fresh water sources and well drained soils, with sites more abundantly located on the larger streams further along the drainages.



**Figure 4: Prehistoric Sites of the Region**



*Figure 4: From CT SHPO 2023. Red dots are previously identified archaeological site locations, all prehistoric within one-mile radius of the project area.*



## Local History

### *Contact Period*

The Contact period is designated here as the time ranging from the first substantial contact between Europeans and Native American inhabitants of the area, to the time the area was thoroughly occupied by Euroamerican settlers, from roughly 1600 to 1700. The first contact between aboriginal populations of the broader region and European explorers occurred in 1524 when Verrazano reached the coast of New England (Terry 1917:16). Others followed in the first decade of the 1600s (Salwen 1983). In 1614, Dutch explorers reached the Connecticut River (DeForest 1852:70; DeLaet 1909 [1625-1640]:43), and in 1625 they were met by the Quinnipiac in New Haven Harbor (Brusic 1986:9) when they established fur trading relationships with the native inhabitants in the region until the early 1630s (Guillette 1979:WP2-4). Substantial English settlements in the area started in 1635-1636. DeForest (1852:48) estimated about 6,000 to 7,000 Native Americans in Connecticut at this time, while Winthrop had estimated somewhere between 12,000 and 15,000 and most others (Trumbull 1818:40; Gookin 1970[1674]; Cook 1976; Snow 1980:35; Bragdon 1996:25) estimate between 16,000 and 20,000.

The composition of the tribes at the time of contact is fairly well known, although boundaries fluctuated significantly, as did the political alliances by which the tribes could be defined (Thomas 1985:138). Three major divisions of Algonkian speaking groups can be delineated, and their territories conform well to ecozone distributions (see Dowhan and Craig 1976:26 and Speck 1928:Plate 20), including the Mohegan-Pequot range in the Southeast Hills and Eastern Coastal ecoregions, the Nipmucks in the Northeast Hills and Northern Uplands ecoregions, and tribes of the Wappinger-Mattabesec Confederacy in the North Central Uplands and most of western Connecticut. The validity of the Wappinger-Mattabesec Confederacy as a cultural entity has been challenged (Salwen 1983:108-109), with many smaller and somewhat independent tribes occupying much of the western half of the state.

The Paugussetts, Naugatucks, and Wepawaugs occupied the territory surrounding the project area at the time of initial contact, with the Paugussetts on the western side of the Housatonic and lower Naugatuck Rivers, the Naugatucks to the north near the town of the same name, and the Wepawaugs to the east, although records of various early land transactions suggest that these tribes were very integrated and closely affiliated, along with the nearby Pequannocks and Pootatucks who have all been loosely termed Paugussetts (DeForest 1852:49-50; Guillette 1979:GH-1-2). The Paugussett confederacy of these five tribes occupied an area loosely defined by the West River of West Haven to the east, Sasco Brook in Fairfield to the west, the confluence of the Shepaug and Housatonic Rivers to the north, and further north along the Naugatuck River (Spiess 1933:31; Guillette 1979:GH-2). More specifically, the Pootatuck sub-tribe inhabited the Newtown-Southbury-Woodbury area before it was occupied by settlers of European descent, the Wepawaugs were concentrated in Milford along the Wepawaug River east of the Housatonic River, the Naugatucks were to the north along the river of the same name, the Pequannocks in the Stratford area, and the Paugussett proper in the Bridgeport area (DeForest 1852; Spiess 1933; Guillette 1979). Oxford is situated between these principal areas of settlement and contains headlands of many associated drainages, thus its principal use by any specific subtribe remains debatable. According to Speck (1928), the Paugussett subtribes were linguistically part of the larger Wappinger-Mattabesec Confederacy of tribes that extended west of the Connecticut River and onto Long Island.

Ethnohistoric sources yield clues to aboriginal Final Woodland and early Contact settlement patterns (McBride and Bellantoni 1982; Starna 1990:36-37). Spring settlements were located to take advantage of anadromous fish runs in larger drainages and along the coast. Late spring attention focussed on tending corn fields. Semi-sedentary settlements near these fields were supported by special task hunting and gathering sites. Dispersal in the late fall and winter brought smaller groups into protected, upland or interior valleys where hunting and gathering continued, for a longer duration in the Contact period than earlier and by a smaller subsistence unit (family). Fortified villages were likely a response to very early Contact period intertribal political strife resulting from increased economic pressures of sedentism and territoriality (Salwen 1983:94; McBride 1990:101; but see Thomas 1985:136). One such fortified village of the Paugussetts is said to have been located on the Housatonic less than a mile north of its confluence with the Naugatuck River (DeForest 1852:51). Large villages were found to be associated with a central-based circulating settlement pattern with family units dispersing from and returning to the major settlement on a seasonal basis in the lower Connecticut River Valley and surrounding region in the early Contact period (McBride 1981). Eventually, however, many Native American populations had been dispersed and afflicted by disease, warfare, and intertribal conflict to the point that small, scattered reservations served as the last community sites for various aboriginal populations in the area. Small Native American settlements of the late 17th century may have been located at Hospital Bluff on the west side of the Naugatuck, and near East Mountain on Mad River to the east (Anderson 1896(1)).

The early Contact period economic base for Native Americans in Connecticut continued to consist of hunting deer and small mammals, gathering berries, nuts and roots, and procuring shellfish and fish on larger drainages and along the coast (Waters 1965:7; Salwen 1970:5). This basic subsistence strategy was supported by varying intensities of horticulture, including the production of corn as the staple, as well as squash, beans, Jerusalem artichoke, and tobacco (Guillette 1979:CI5; Starna 1990:35). The importance of corn is evident in the description of ritual activities, including the Green Corn Festival and similar ceremonies that extended with various groups into the present day (Speck 1909:194-195; Speck 1928:255; Tantaquidgeon 1972:81; Fawcett 1995:54-57). Elderly women held extensive knowledge of wild plants which provided a host of medicines and treatments (Tantaquidgeon 1972; Russell 1980:35-37).

Wigwams continued to serve as the principal form of housing, in some cases well into the 18th century (Sturtevant 1975). The material culture included a mix of aboriginal forms as well as some European goods such as metal kettles and other metal implements (knives, projectile points), cloth, glass beads, and kaolin pipes (Salwen 1966, 1983:94-96). Wampum served as an important trade item for the Native Americans with European traders, but more significantly had served as symbolic signs of allegiance or reciprocity and sacred markers or tokens of honor in the form of belts (Guillette 1979:CI8; Ceci 1990:58-59; Salisbury 1990:87; Fawcett 1995:59). With European metal drill bits, tribes along the coast were now mass producing wampum for trade with the Dutch and English who in turn used the shell beads to trade with other tribes further inland (Salwen 1983:96; Ceci 1990:58). Late Contact period Euroamerican goods included various metal tools, glass bottles, ceramic vessels, kaolin clay tobacco pipes, and nails (McBride and Grumet 1992). Unlike the Late Woodland, Contact aboriginal lithic products were once again mostly manufactured from local sources (McBride and Bellantoni 1982:54). Dugout canoes may have continued to provide a major form of transportation in larger drainages (Salwen

1983:91). While colonization brought new material goods to Native Americans in the area in exchange for land and services, the indigenous inhabitants became increasingly subject to legislative and economic restrictions by the colonists (Salisbury 1990:83).

Sachems and councils of leading males formed the basic political unit for groups of villages (Gookin 1970; Simmons 1986:12-13), along with clan mothers whose authoritative roles became diminished as a result of a strong European male-leadership bias (Fawcett 1995). Tributes paid to sachems were generally used as reserves for the tribe at large. Although sachems were generally assigned by hereditary lineage, this was not always the case (Bragdon 1996:140-141). Authority was usually enforced by persuasion of a council. Shamans were "magico-religious" specialists of the tribes who also had a considerable role in leadership and decision-making (Speck 1909:195-196; Simmons 1986:43; Starna 1990:42-43). Rules of obligation and reciprocity operated on all levels of tribal-wide decision-making (Bragdon 1996:131-134), serving to diffuse centralized authority. Other special status roles included warriors and persons who had visions, thus social status was largely based on achievement and recognition. While the assignment of lineality (i.e. matrilineal vs. patrilineal) for the area tribes is still largely debated (Bragdon 1996:157), the well established practice of bride-pricing supports the contention of patrilineal social organization (Speck 1909:193; Salwen 1983:97). Post-marital residence appears to have been ambilocal.

On a larger scale, more powerful tribes demanded tributes from smaller ones, often resulting in loose alliances between the latter. This process resulted in a dynamic political situation that prompted intertribal conflict, especially after contact with Euroamericans (Guillette 1979; Bragdon 1996). The European settlers would eventually use this embedded rivalry system to their advantage. In the period between 1616 and 1619, and more severely around 1633, disease epidemics would initiate a trend of drastic reductions in the native population that aided in Euroamerican settlements of the area (Snow and Lanphear 1988; Snow and Starna 1989; Starna 1990:45-46). Diseases introduced into the Americas included chicken pox, cholera, diphtheria, malaria, measles, oncocercosis, poliomyelitis, scarlet fever, smallpox, tapeworms, trachoma, trichinosis, typhoid fever, whooping cough, and yellow fever (Newman 1976:671).

In 1637, the Paugussetts provided refuge for Pequots who were fleeing after their defeat in the Pequot "War", although this resulted in the defeat of the hosts by the colonists (Guillette 1979:GH-2). The Paugussetts may have been centered along the Naugatuck in western Ansonia at this time (Larson 1976:1). Trade between the English colonists and the Wepawaugs and Paugussetts was apparently peaceful in the early part of the Contact period, but after the war between Hudson River tribes and the Dutch in the early 1640s, colonists in Connecticut became concerned about the possibility of "uprisings" and proceeded to enact laws which would restrict Native American activity (Guillette 1979:GH-4). Friction increased as the Paugussetts began to become familiar with the consequences of their previous land transactions as well as agreements to pay tribute to Connecticut for protection against the Mohawks (DeForest 1852:222). English settlers let livestock feed freely in Native American corn fields, and an effort by Wepawaugs to burn underbrush for ecological purposes in Milford resulted in a larger fire that was interpreted by colonists to be a Native American attack. Other tensions of the 1640s included personal skirmishes and issues over European weapon and liquor procurement by Native Americans in the area.

As colonist populations grew and the perceived Native American threat diminished, land purchases proliferated in the 1650s. By 1665, much of the property in the region had been sold by Ansantawae and the other sachems without full realization of the consequences (DeForest 1852:270; Orcutt 1972 [1882]:14-15). Over the next 35 years, five specific transactions are thought to have covered territory within what is now Oxford, including a purchase of the Rockhouse Hill area containing the project area, as well as the Quaker Farms tract immediately to the north where Canfield, French, Riggs, and Smith families who occupied houses along the project alignment all owned property (Sharpe 1885:85-89; Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:11-18).

The aboriginal populations of the area found it increasingly difficult to continue their original adaptations, and were allotted areas on Golden Hill (Pequannocks) in Bridgeport in 1659, and Turkey Hill (Wepawaugs) in Derby on the Housatonic in 1671 to serve as reservations (DeForest 1852:264; Orcutt 1972 [1882]:13; Guillette 1979:GH1) where many subsequently tried to subsist by manufacturing baskets and engaging in other small industries. Land disputes continued after this time, and in 1680 these conflicts led to the establishment of the Corum Hill Reservation in Huntington, the agreement for which included the rights of the Paugussetts to procure fish and game in the Derby area (DeForest 1852:270; Guillette 1979:GH-8). Native American populations declined throughout the Contact period, and many in southwestern Connecticut emigrated to the north and west after King Philip's War of 1675. Settlement of the Wepawaugs continued in Derby into the 18th Century in areas surrounding Turkey Hill, including the Derby Narrows. Several of the land transactions between Euroamericans and Native Americans of the area called for fishing and hunting rights along the Naugatuck and adjacent territories (Orcutt 1972 [1882]:62-63).

In 1642 and in the face of subsequent protest by the Dutch, John Wakeman of the New Haven Colony initiated plans to build a trading house for the purpose of exchange with Native Americans in the area (Orcutt 1880:2; Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:1-2). Active Euroamerican settlement of the Derby region (then called "Paugasuck") began the mid 1650s (Orcutt 1972 [1882]:26; Larson 1976:1). Derby was given its name in 1675 (Orcutt 1880:45; Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:2), named after Derbyshire in England (Simpson 1979:2), although the town was not chartered officially until 1720 at which time it included the territory within the bounds of what is now Ansonia, Seymour, and parts of Oxford and Beacon Falls (Orcutt 1880:2; Molloy 1935:10; Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:3). Territory within Oxford began to be settled by Euroamericans about 1680, with some concentrated settlement in the Fivemile Hill area a couple of miles to the north of the project area (Sharpe 1885:83-84; Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:5-8). The road that is now Route 188, formerly known as Woodbury Road or the "Woodbury Path", was already in place several years prior (Sharpe 1885:89-90; Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:79).

Early historic Euroamerican subsistence in the Derby region consisted of self-subsistence farming of crops (wheat, buckwheat, corn, rye, hops, potatoes, turnips) and domesticated animals (cattle and hogs), and home industries such as milling, weaving, tanning, blacksmithing, carpentry, and shoemaking (Orcutt 1880; Litchfield and Hoyt 1960). In the late 1600s, a landing and associated roads were constructed at the Derby Narrows (just south of the confluence between the Housatonic and Naugatuck Rivers, on the east bank) in Derby in order to ship produce, lumber, dried fish, and beef (Orcutt 1880:245; Larson 1976:6) and manufacture ships (Orcutt 1880:262; Molloy 1935:16).

### *18th Century*

In 1731, the Paugussett Nation was dismantled (DeForest 1852:354; Guillette 1979) as removals continued. Waterbury had a short-lived Quinnipiac reservation on the southeast part of East Mountain at this time (Anderson 1896(1):357). The Turkey Hill reservation population was supposedly reduced to four persons by 1774, and the Golden Hill reservation population reduced to seven by 1765 (DeForest 1852:354-355). The end of the 18th century witnessed the continued decline of reservation populations due to land sales, Euroamerican encroachments on the land, as well as migrations to other parts of the state and New York during the "Brothertown" movement (Guillette 1979:GH-8,9). These combined factors essentially led to the end of aboriginal adaptations by the end of the 18th century when most Native Americans of the region were forced to become somewhat integrated into Euroamerican communities. By 1850, very few Paugussetts were in the area, most having moved to join the Scaghticokes or Iroquois further to the north (Spiess 1933:31).

In 1701, the first school was established in Derby (Orcutt 1880:105; Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:220), a time of considerable population growth in the area (Molloy 1935:12). In 1717, the town decided to build a bridge over the Naugatuck River (Orcutt 1880:124) in the present location of the bridge that is part of Route 853 (Larson 1976:6). From the beginning, the civic, religious, and educational institutions of Derby, and New England in general, were closely bound. In 1737, the Episcopal Church of Derby was established, to the dismay of many who preferred singular devotion to the original Congregational Church (Orcutt 1880:137; Molloy 1935:12). The middle of the 18th Century also witnessed the establishment of many mills in Derby and Oxford, including flour, wood, oil, fulling, and grist mills (Orcutt 1880:141-145; Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:98-103; Larson 1976:6). The town had other, numerous small industries by this time, including those that manufactured clothing, barrel staves, and leather. A fishing warehouse had been operating on the Housatonic since the beginning of the century (Orcutt 1880:162).

As population growth spread from the center of Derby in the first half of the 18th Century, there was a greater realization for the need to create a separate parish for the occupants of Oxford, granted in 1741 (Sharpe 1885:5; Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:19). Oxford's first meeting house was built some years later near the site of the larger Congregational Church constructed in 1795 (Sharpe 1885:165; Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:22,195-199). An Episcopal church was also formed in the town by the mid 1760s (Sharpe 1885:165; Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:207-209). By 1766, the once larger town of Derby was divided into nine school districts and was reported to have 256 families residing in the town, thus the total population at this time was probably just over 1,000 persons (Orcutt 1880:161). In 1770, a ferry was established across the Housatonic near the Derby Narrows, and was in operation until the middle of the 19th Century (Orcutt 1880:164). A number of taverns were being operated along major roads in the Oxford area by the late 18th Century (Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:44-53).

The advantageous position of Derby at the confluence of the Housatonic and Naugatuck Rivers near the Long Island Sound gave it good qualities as both a port town and center of shipbuilding. Derby and surrounding towns exported various materials by the late 18th Century, including pork, butter, cattle, produce, cheese, grain, and cider brandy, while imports included rum, molasses, sugar, coffee, fruit, and some manufactured goods (Orcutt 1880; Litchfield and

Hoyt 1960:95-96; Larson 1976:6,15). Slave trading was also active at this time. As dissent grew in the late 18th Century towards British control over colony affairs, citizens of the Derby area were equally divided between those loyal to the crown and those interested in a new direction of self government, but support for the latter quickly increased as the beginning of the Revolution approached (Litchfield and Hoyt 1960; Larson 1976:10). Because of its relatively well developed overland transportation routes and its position on the Housatonic, one of the several major drainages of Connecticut feeding the Long Island Sound, Derby had an important role in the Revolutionary War in terms of storing and providing supplies to the continental army (Orcutt 1880:191; Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:59,65). Many of the families of southern Oxford were strongly devoted to the revolution, including the French, Holbrook, Smith, and Riggs families who all owned property along the project alignment and had members sign a special declaration of Derby patriots in 1775 (Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:56). Tory sympathizers include Zachariah Hawkins of Quaker Farms to the north who had signed the same document but whose patriotism fell short of military action against England (Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:57-59). Oxford was finally incorporated as its own town in 1798.

### *19th Century*

The population of Oxford reached 1,410 by 1800 (Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:70). A post office was established at Oxford in 1807, and a couple of Masonic groups were also formed early in the 19th Century (Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:144-145,187). A Methodist Church was built in Oxford around 1810 (Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:215). Not long into the 19th Century, there was a substantial decrease in commercial shipping activity in nearby Derby as the result of several international and domestic political maneuverings that impacted the export of Oxford surplus agricultural goods (Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:96-97). Also, various bridges were built over the Housatonic River during the course of the 19th Century, hindering some shipping traffic (Orcutt 1880:270; Sharpe 1885:92-96; Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:89-94). Those dependent upon shad fishing were also against the idea of any bridge across the Housatonic, as were the proprietors of a steamboat line which was operating between Derby and New York during the middle of the 19th Century (Orcutt 1880:272). Ship building was essentially finished as a large industry in the area by the 1860s as a result of the railroad (Orcutt 1880:267). A railroad line along the west side of the Housatonic leading to Bridgeport was completed in 1840, accessible from Oxford over the former Zoar bridge, while another line was built along the Naugatuck River nearly a decade later (Sharpe 1885:94; Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:131-132). Later in the century, the New York & New England Railroad line ran through the northern part of town (Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:132-135).

Derby turned its attention to an increase in manufacturing enterprises during the early to mid-19th Century (Orcutt 1880:257), including cooperages and shoe makers to start, followed by an iron foundry, iron and steel works, and factories manufacturing furniture, sheet copper, copper wire, augers, carriage springs and axles, nails, pins, pens, silverware, chains, flannels and satinets, clocks, and other manufactured goods by the middle of the 19th Century (Orcutt 1880:349). The scale of industry was much smaller within the confines of Oxford, with only a few woolen, fulling, and carding mills very early in the century (Sharpe 1885:151; Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:107-109). Sheep were introduced into the area as early as 1802 by David Humphreys (Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:105-106; Larson 1976:16; DeBisschop 2004:12). Humphreys was

also instrumental in establishing the industrial district of Humphreysville, starting with mills and small factories (VRPA 1979:12). Coal was introduced into the area as a major source of fuel as early as 1807 (Orcutt 1880:438), but was more actively utilized after the advent of the railroad.

After the first third of the 19th Century, Oxford industry expanded somewhat to include hats, daguerreotypes (early photographic equipment), screws, leather goods, shoes, wooden casks and kegs, carriages, hay rakes, axes and augers, and wagon wheels (Sharpe 1885:91,151-157; Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:109-114). The middle of the 19th Century in Oxford, however, witnessed a considerable decline in both industry and population as manufacturing moved to more major railroad routes and as westward migration impacted local rural populations of the area (Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:118-120). The industry boom of the mid-19th Century in nearby Derby resulted in the concomitant establishment of more stores, churches, banks, post offices, schools, hotels, and an increasing population in the area, all bolstered by the production requirements to support the Union in the Civil War (Larson 1976:23). The first newspaper of the area was established in 1846 as the *Derby Journal* (Orcutt 1880:371; Molloy 1935:17), while the *Seymour Record* was first published in 1871 (Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:167). Oxford remained agricultural in the latter part of the 19th Century, with the establishment of an annual fair by the Oxford Agricultural Society in 1863 (Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:139,161). Oxford was divided into 13 sparsely populated school districts by 1868 (Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:221). The population of Oxford declined steadily in the latter part of the 19th Century, reaching a low of just over 900 by 1890 (Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:120).

Mid-19th century maps (Figures 5a and 5b) reveal the occupation and abandonment of a house by E. (Enos) Candee at the east end of the project property and west side of Riggs Street, corresponding to a cleared field just north of the late historic gravel quarry and entrance road into the property. That same family also had another home on the east side of Riggs Street that may have been the primary residence of the farmstead (see Sharpe 1885:194). The Candees were a prominent family in Oxford, with many fighting in the Civil War (Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:147-152). Enos was married to Elizabeth Perkins, and at 72 years old in 1865, he died (DeBisschop pers. comm. 2023), possibly prompting the abandonment of their home on the west side of Riggs Street. The homesteads of E. Allen and W.H. Clarke were located on Oxford Road in the vicinity of the current town hall to the south, and otherwise there was very sparse development along the surrounding roads. John B. Pope acquired many parcels in Oxford during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, including the Jacks Hill lot containing the project property.

### **20th Century+**

In 1905, John B. Pope sold the project property to the Coe Brass Manufacturing Company, at the time measuring 91 acres (Oxford Land Records, volume 26, page 342). Manufacturing companies of the area owned large tracts of land to harvest wood for use as fuel. The parcel was sold to the American Brass Company in 1927 as the first of seven large parcels (OLR volume 39, page 102), and in 1939 it was sold to the Ives family (ORL volume 45, page 227) who held it into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with no structures on 20th century maps (Figures 5c-5d).

A Catholic Church was first built in Oxford in 1911 (Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:219). The Stevenson Dam was constructed across the Housatonic River at the southwest boundary of Oxford in 1918 to 1920, about the time electricity first appeared in Oxford (Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:89,221,270; DeBisschop 2004:89). Oxford remained largely agricultural during the first half of the 20th Century, with the formation of the Oxford Grange in 1928 (Litchfield and Hoyt



Figure 5a: Historic Sites of the Area (1852 Map)



Figure 5a: From Whiteford 1852.

Figure 5b: Historic Sites of the Area (1868 Map)



Figure 5b: From Beers 1868.



1960:164-166; DeBisschop 2004:39-40). The first paving of roads in Oxford did not occur until the 1930s (Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:87), and the town school system was not centralized until 1948 (Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:233; DeBisschop 2004:7). Middle 20th Century service organizations started to give Oxford a suburban character, including the Oxford Parent-Teacher Association, Oxford Library Association, a fire department, the Oxford Lion's Club, the Oxford Ambulance Association, and a boy scouts troop (Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:238-289). Agriculture shifted to a focus on poultry and dairy (DeBisschop 2004). The population of the town grew accordingly during the middle of the 20th Century, from about 1,000 in 1920 to more than 3,300 by 1960 (Litchfield and Hoyt 1960:268). The population of Oxford was nearly 10,000 by the end of the 20th Century, and is over 12,700 today (HP 2022). Still somewhat agricultural, the town has some light manufacturing interests and is a center for several research and development entities, while neighboring Southbury has recently had five major industrial plants (Clark 1973:54-56).

### *Local Sites and Surveys*

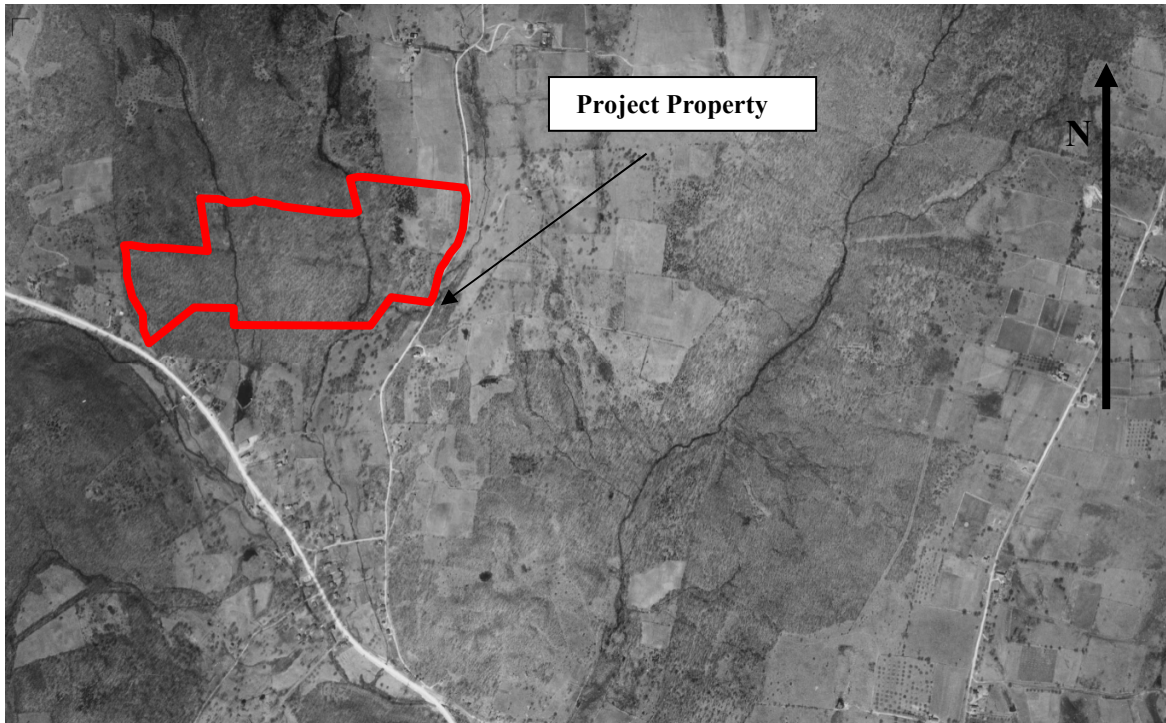
Local historic literature cites the existence of several well known Native American burial sites in the broader area. The Turkey Hill area of Derby served as the center of Wepawaug populations during the late Contact period, and it is here that a well known Contact period cemetery exists (Orcutt 1972 [1882]:13). Four other Native American cemeteries are noted in the area by Orcutt (1972 [1882]:70-71), including those in the vicinity of the "Derby Narrows", at the "New Fort" on the east side of the Housatonic, at "Chusetown" (Naugatuck Falls), and "Horse Hill" or "White Mare Hill". There are no previously recorded historic archaeological sites within one mile of the project area (CT OSA 2023; CT SHPO 2023).

There are no properties in close proximity to the project area listed with the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The Quaker Farms Historic District lies in Oxford within a couple of miles to the southwest of the project area on Route 188, and includes the Christ Episcopal Church and homes built in Colonial, Federal, Greek Revival, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival styles spanning from the early 18th Century to the early 20th Century (Ransom 1991). The closest property listed with the Connecticut State Register of Historic Places consists of the Joseph Twitchell Home on Christian Street nearly two miles to the northwest of the project area.

### *Summary*

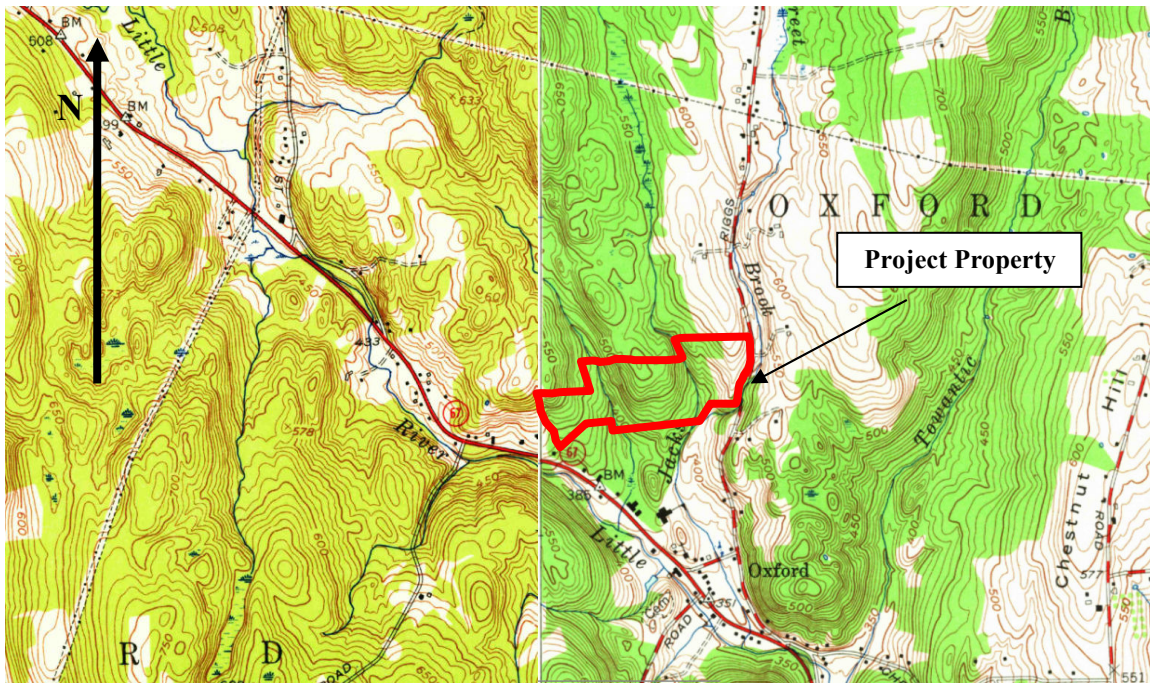
The Oxford area was in the center of Paugussett Indian territory during the Contact period, then consisting of five subtribes whose principal territories were located on major rivers of the area. Euroamerican encroachments, disease, reduced populations, and misunderstandings regarding the nature of land sales caused the removal of many Paugussetts to the north and west to form the Schaghticoke Indian tribe along with other displaced Indians by the early 18th Century. Early Euroamerican settlers came initially from Stratford, with Oxford originally a part of the town of Derby. The project property was owned by the Enos Candee family by the mid-19th century, with their homestead located on the west side of Riggs Street at the eastern end of the property. The Coe Brass Manufacturing Company and then the American Brass Company owned the parcel, then known as the "Jack's Hill Lot," probably as part of large land holdings to supply fuel to the local factories. The Ives family acquired the parcel during the Great Depression, and held it into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Figure 5c: Historic Sites of the Area (1934 Map)**



*Figure 5c: From Fairchild 1934.*

**Figure 5d: Historic Sites of the Area (1953 / 1954 Map)**



*Figure 5d: From USGS 1953 and 1954.*

## CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSION

### Prehistoric Sensitivity

Background research and the pedestrian surface survey indicate a low sensitivity for potential prehistoric cultural resources in the project area. A statistical prehistoric landscape sensitivity model developed and employed by ACS utilizes eight environmental variables to rank sections of project properties relative to a scale of 100.0 ([www.acsarcheology.com/sensitivity-model.html](http://www.acsarcheology.com/sensitivity-model.html)). In this case, the project area scores no higher than 13.3 out of a possible 100.0, and therefore solidly within the low (0-20) sensitivity range. Factors contributing to this low sensitivity score include great distance to the nearest major water source for the project area, rocky hill slope context, and fine particle fraction for dominant soils. Because of the deeply dissected drainages on the property as well as generous wetlands setbacks, there are no gently sloping, non-rocky areas within project impact areas close to Jack's Brook, Little River, Riggs Street Brook, or the intermittent stream closest to Larkey Road. More broadly, areas away from the Housatonic and Naugatuck Rivers or their direct tributaries in Oxford not in glacial outwash or alluvial sedimentary environments are going to have minimal statistical likelihood for containing significant prehistoric site contexts, with the exception of potential rockshelter sites not observed during the pedestrian surface survey of the property. ACS therefore recommends no further conservation efforts with respect to potential prehistoric archaeological resources for the current project.

### Historic Sensitivity

Historically, the project area has a moderate sensitivity for historic cultural resources. The project setting was probably on the outskirts of Paugussett settlement range during the Contact period, a tumultuous time when indigenous populations were experiencing significant impact from non-indigenous disease, land occupation by Euroamerican settlement, and removal to other regions. Euroamerican settlement was minimal during the latter part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and was relatively sparse by agriculturalists until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Because of its rugged character, only limited portions of the project property were likely used for agriculture in the form of plowed fields, or more likely pastured fields. The rest would have served as wood lots, as was likely the case during most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, as regional manufacturing companies amassed large land holdings in uplands settings to provide wood for fuel in local factories. The project property itself was owned by the Coe Brass Manufacturing Company and then American Brass Company in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and preceding ownership by the Enos Candee family could have been related to this industry. Historic maps reveal no structures other than one mid-19<sup>th</sup> century occupation of the Candee family at or near the northeast corner of the project property, with rare open fields of the property limited to this area (Figure 6). In an open field on the west side of Riggs Street high above the road, fragments of creamware and burnt whiteware were evident at the surface. The only evident historic structural



**Figure 6: Candee Site Area**



*Figure 6: North view of a cleared field west of Riggs Street at approximate location of the Enos Candee site.*

**Figure 7: Stone Wall**



*Figure 7: Northwest view of stone wall alignment along the northern boundary of the property.*

features of the property were various stone wall alignments observed during a pedestrian surface survey of the project area (Figure 7). However, there could be collier (charcoal production) camp sites related to wood fuel production in the 19<sup>th</sup> century related to support of larger industries in the region. ACS therefore recommends a Phase Ib archaeological reconnaissance survey to test eastern boundary areas near Riggs Street for potential remains related to the historic Enos Candee family occupation; far western boundary area for potential occupations related to the historically discontinued course of Larkey Road; and the broad gently sloping area towards the central part of the project area for potential historic collier sites (Figure 8). Any further archaeological study of the project property should be subject to review by the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).



Figure 8: Cultural Resource Sensitivity Map

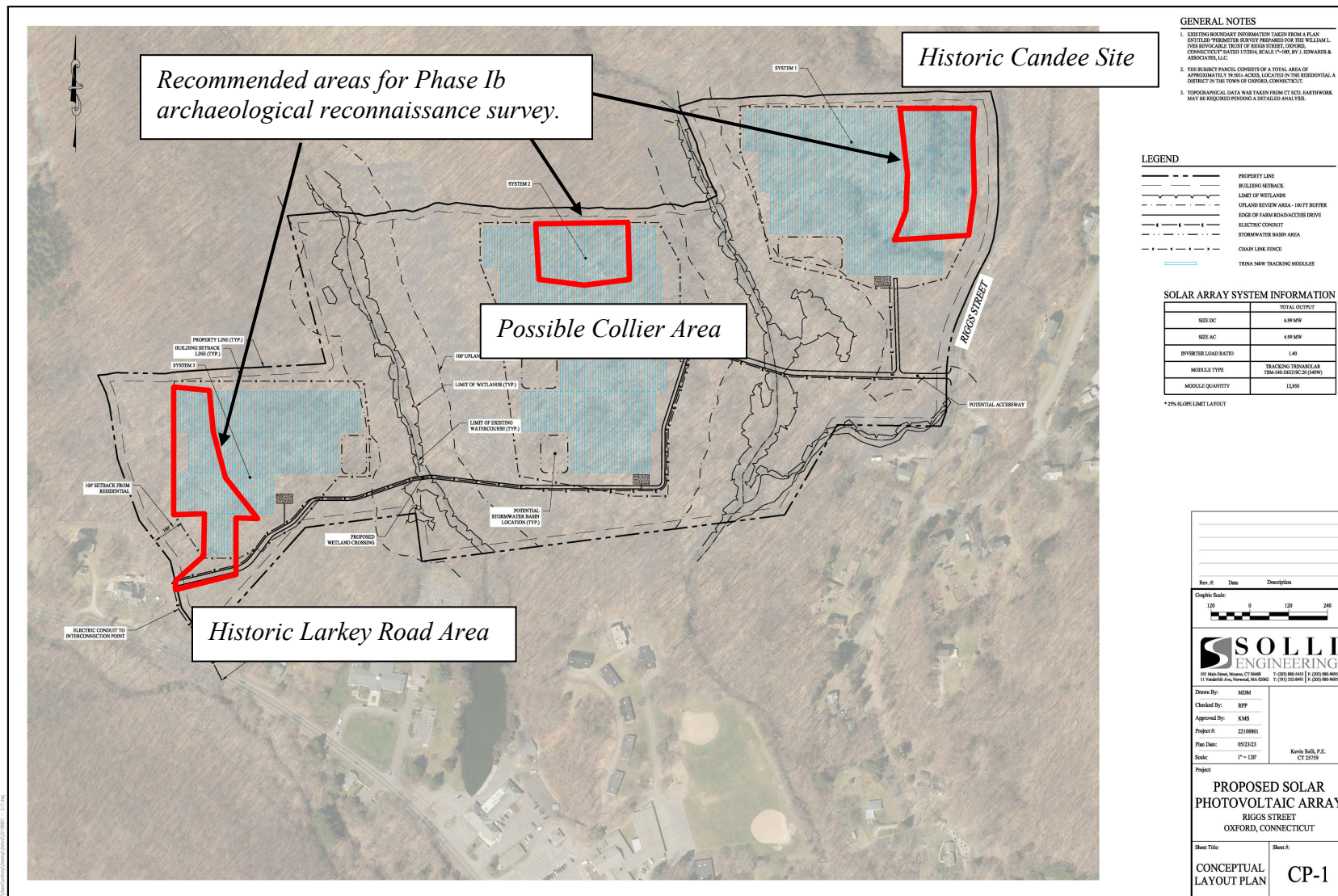


Figure 8: Map of the project area, from site plans drafted by Solli Engineering. Scale 1:2,400 (1" = 200').

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