BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENT
CONFERENCE REPORT

SUBJECT: Monthly SHPO-FHWA-ACOE-NHDOT Cultural Resources Meeting
DATE OF CONFERENCES: November 1 & 8, 2012
LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: John O. Morton Building/Research & Materials Building
ATTENDED BY:

NHDOT
Sheila Charles
Keith Cota
Dean Eastman
Jill Edelmann
Jon Evans
Jonathan Hebert
Nickie Hunter
Bob Juliano
Bob Landry
Marc Laurin
Don Lyford
Christine Perron
Josh Prescott
Steven Swana
Denis Switzer
C.R. Willeke

Federal Highway Administration
Jamie Sikora

NHDHR
Laura Black
Edna Feighner

Archer Western
Steve DelGrosso

Albacore Park
Ken Herrick

Maine HPC
Kirk Mohney

City of Somersworth
Dave Sharples

City of Portsmouth - Via Phone
Nancy Carmer
Nick Cracknell,
Juliet Walker

Portsmouth Historical Society - Via Phone
Richard Candee

Preservation Co.
Carol Hooper
Lynne Monroe

HNTB
Jim Fisher
Kevin Horgan

MJ
Jennifer Zorn

VHB
Nicole Benjamin-Ma
Greg Goodrich
Steven Hodgdon

(When viewing these minutes online, click on an attendee to send an e-mail)

PROJECTS/PRESENTATIONS REVIEWED THIS MONTH:
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(When viewing these minutes online, click on a project to zoom to the minutes for that project)

November 1, 2012

Sandwich, M305 (no federal funds)
Participants: Sheila Charles, NHDOT

Initial review for removal and resetting of approximately 100 feet of an existing stonewall at 392 NH Route 113. The feature appears to be a rough line of stones associated with modern landscaping efforts, rather than a formalized historic stonewall. It will be set back 6 to 8 feet to increase visibility out of the property owner's driveway and to increase the snow storage area. The project will result in minor ground disturbance due to overturning of stones and grading to create a shallow ditch, no lower than 3 inches below grade of

the existing edge of pavement. The terrain behind the stonewall steeply slopes away from the road. Edna Feighner agreed that no further archaeological study or coordination was necessary. It was agreed that the project would result in No Historic Properties Affected.

Carroll, X-A002(196), 21431

Participants: Christine Perron, Dean Eastman, Jonathan Hebert, NHDOT

Continued consultation on the proposed Mount Washington Hotel Scenic Overlook. Sheila Charles opened the discussion by saying that she had recently received the End of Field Letter from the archaeologist. The Phase 1B survey has been completed and did not find any resources in the project area. Edna Feighner agreed that no further archaeological study or coordination was necessary.

Jon Hebert provided an update on the project. Since the project was last discussed in June, the design of this scenic overlook project has changed due to further consideration of safety concerns and other issues. The project still consists of the construction of a new scenic overlook on the south side of US Route 302, but now it has been decided to discontinue the existing overlook located on the north side of the roadway. The location of the existing overlook will be used instead for a storm water treatment swale, which will be planted with grass and will not require fencing. The Department was also asked to consider planting low shrubs along the swale. The slope at the front of the new overlook will no longer require a retaining wall and will instead consist of a 1 ¼:1 mechanically stabilized slope. Once constructed, this slope will be planted with juniper, which will provide a low-maintenance, hardy vegetative cover. The slope at the back of the new overlook will be a 1 ½:1 stone lined slope covered with humus and grass. There will be a stone-lined ditch along the top of the overlook but the stone will not be visible from the overlook.

The new overlook will require cutting into the hillside within the railroad right-of-way, but all impacts will be at least 25’ away from the ballast and tracks. Christine Perron commented that Jamie Sikora had said at the last meeting that the work proposed within the railroad right-of-way would be a *de minimis* 4(f) impact, and she provided DHR with a copy of the letter sent to the Department from the Conway Scenic Railroad in support of the project.

Laura Black asked about coordination with the Mount Washington Hotel. C. Perron replied that since the Hotel was providing the match to the Scenic Byways Grant, the Department was coordinating closely with them on the project. J. Hebert added that a meeting with Hotel representatives and the Commissioner’s Office was held a few weeks ago and the Hotel was supportive of the project as proposed. Dean Eastman commented that he could send L. Black correspondence from the Hotel indicating their support.

C. Perron said that the state historic marker that is currently located at the existing overlook will need to be relocated to the new overlook. L. Black suggested following up with Mary Kate at her office on this issue to ensure that the new location is properly documented.

It was agreed that the project would result in No Historic Properties Affected.

Claremont, X-A001(143), 16124

Participants: Jonathan Evans, Steven Swana, Josh Prescott, NHDOT

Jon Evans began by giving a brief overview of the project. This project involves replacing the existing Plains Road/Claremont & Concord Railroad Crossing. This effort includes replacing approximately 200 feet of the existing railroad (ballast material, railroad ties, rail, etc.) as well as a pavement overlay of approximately 100 feet of Plains Road and approximately 50 feet of Industrial Boulevard. The project is

also anticipated to include the replacement/installation of updated railroad crossing approach signs and pavement markings.

Steve Swana indicated that the existing rail crossing is in disrepair and that several years ago repairs were made when the necessary gauge between the rails slipped. The crossing has since been retrofitted with gauge maintainers however this is only a temporary solution and a permanent fix is still necessary. He indicated that the proposed effort involves replacing the existing crossing with a precast concrete crossing.

J. Evans also indicated that the existing crossing only contains passive warning devices such as signs and cross bucks and does not contain any signals, cabinets, switches or gates. He did note that the former Claremont Railroad Depot (now a bicycle shop) is located just to the west of the project area; however no direct impacts to this structure are anticipated.

Laura Black indicated that she reviewed the DHR files for the Claremont & Concord Railroad and she found that in the 90's a project area form was prepared for a 2 mile section of the railroad east of the current project area. This evaluation indicated that the stretch of the railroad within the project area was not eligible for the National Register due to a lack of integrity. She did note that as this study was prepared may years ago, it was quite possible that its eligibility status may have changed or the line as a whole resource may be found eligible.

L. Black and Edna Feighner indicated that given the limited project scope and impacts, as well as the lack of any apparent historic resource impacts within the project limits this project was not anticipated to result in any historic or archaeological impacts. As a result they recommended a No Historic Properties Affected determination. They also recommended that if more and more projects along the railroad are needed it might be wise to survey the full line as a holistic resource.

Sheila Charles indicated that she would prepare and circulate a No Historic Properties Affected Memo for review and signature by NHDHR and FHWA.

November 8, 2012

Somersworth, A000(460), 12228

Participants: Jon Evans, C.R. Willeke, NHDOT; David Sharples, City of Somersworth; Steven Hodgdon, Gregory Goodrich, Nicole Benjamin-Ma, VHB

This is an initial review for the Somersworth-Berwick Bridge (101/114) project. Steven Hodgdon and Gregory Goodrich (VHB) offered a summary of the project description detailed in the submitted RPR, along with plans and renderings. The superstructure is being replaced due to structural deficiencies; the new bridge will also accommodate full sidewalks for both sides as well as lighting. The concrete portions of the substructure will be reconstructed, while the masonry portions of the west abutment will be kept intact. In order to access the west abutment backwall for reconstruction, the existing railroad crossing will need to be removed and reconstructed; similar signaling will be used.

Nicole Benjamin-Ma (VHB) provided short synopsis of history of the bridge, the crossing, and its association with nearby eligible or listed properties and districts. The crossing has been in use since the late 18th century, and the current bridge was constructed 1962-1963. A portion of the substructure likely dates to a 1906-1907 iteration of the bridge, or earlier. The Somersworth Commercial-Industrial Historic District (NR certified) and the Queensbury Mill (NR listed) are in close proximity. Though the crossing was in use during the development/ period of significance for these properties, the 1960s bridge is not directly associated with their growth or development.

Laura Black (NHDHR) noted the following:

- Since the inventory form for the bridge was only submitted to NHDHR the day before (for consideration at the Nov. 14 DOE meeting), she does not know yet if the bridge will be determined eligible for the National Register.
- With that in mind, the design of the new bridge will need to consider the following: 1) if the bridge is eligible, the character-defining features will need to be identified and incorporated into the new design and the project would need to evaluate adverse effects; 2) if the bridge is not eligible, the new design will just need to consider visual impacts to the nearby district and its period of significance, as well as how the new design meshes with other similar projects planned for the cities. The project would need to be sensitive to the districts on either side of the bridge and the adjacent railroad in NH.

Laura Black asked Nicole Benjamin-Ma about her impressions of the new bridge design in regard to the nearby historic district. Benjamin-Ma noted that she had just seen the new design; but preliminary impressions were that the use of mixed materials proposed for the new design appears to reflect the multiple materials used in the nearby district and the use of stone facing and iron railings is more in keeping visually with the district than the current railings. The neutral colors are also less visually intrusive than the clustered green railings of the existing bridge's design. Laura Black suggested consulting any known existing photographs of the current bridge or previous bridges at the site, to consider lighting and railings designs that may have been previously utilized.

Laura Black asked if the community has been involved in this design. Dave Sharples (City of Somersworth) answered that public input into the design of this bridge has included two public meetings. The first meeting presented the need for a new bridge, included pictures of the older bridges and examples from the region. At the second meeting, alternatives for the new design were presented, which were prepared based on input from the first meeting. The design presented at this agency coordination meeting received the most support.

Steven Hodgdon and Gregory Goodrich noted that the visual aspect of the new bridge has been the guiding principle during the planning process – this bridge is seen as a "gateway-type structure" meant as an "inviting" link to and from the city. Other future projects planned in the city are anticipated to have a similar look with similar components consistent with this new bridge design.

Laura Black asked about the railroad line and whether it has been determined eligible. Nicole Benjamin-Ma said that while she has only conducted preliminary research for the railroad, the line was constructed in the 1840s and later taken over by the Eastern Railroad and then the Boston & Maine Railroad. No DOE for the railroad line was located in the DHR files. The current crossing is understood to have been installed either at the same time as the 1960s bridge or perhaps a short time later. Laura Black noted that the eligibility of the railroad line may have to be considered, especially if the reconstruction of the west abutment of the bridge extends outside the footprint of the current railroad crossing. Jillian Edelmann (NHDOT) noted that several railroads in this area have been found to be significant.

Laura Black and Jill Edelmann agreed that following the determination of eligibility for the bridge, the next step would be for VHB to prepare a memorandum including the following information:

- Information about the decisions behind the new bridge design and an analysis of whether the new design coheres with 1) any character-defining features of the current bridge if it is found eligible; and 2) the nearby eligible historic district and nearby NR listed property. Consider the new design within the criteria of effects/adverse effects.
- Information about the railroad line, specific plans for the crossing, and when the crossing was installed; explain why the crossing and all railroad lines going through the area don't need to be

surveyed for this project, if applicable (if the proposed project will not involve the railroad corridors)

Winchester-Swanzey, DPR-BRF-X-011(005), 12906

Participants: Laurel Pushee, Don Lyford, Tim Dunn, NHDOT

NH Bridge (152/181) replacement over the Ashuelot River The project was previously reviewed on October 7, 2010, April 1, 2010, March 4, 2010, March 11, 2010, January 14, 2010, August 13, 2009, and July 10, 2008. Currently, an outlet pipe daylights just east of the identified archeological area. This project proposal to relocate the outlet structure adjacent to (south of) the sensitive area was discussed. Edna and Jaime (FHWA) reviewed the plans and provided the following options/suggestions: a Phase II be completed, the proposed pipe be rerouted to allow for flows to be directed away from the sensitive area, or the design revert back to the original pipe outlet location. These suggestions were based on their understanding that there had only been Phase I and extended phase IB investigations completed on this parcel.

The project team will look to avoiding impacts to this sensitive area by either redirecting the flows coming from this structure, or redesigning the structure location to remain in the existing area to avoid having to conduct further investigations as a result of the recommendation provided at the SHPO meeting.

Portsmouth-Kittery, A000(911), 13678F

Participants: Marc Laurin, Nickie Hunter, Keith Cota, NHDOT; Steve DelGrosso, AWC

Continued consultation on the Memorial Bridge Replacement Project, including updates on Memorial Park, the portal plaque, interpretive panels and proposed lighting.

Memorial Park Design -

Jim Fisher and Kevin Horgan (HNTB) provided a presentation on the proposed design of Memorial Park in Portsmouth. The Park currently consists of two small areas situated between Daniel and State Streets. The Memorial Plaque is mounted on a granite slab within a small triangular grassed area with a single tree, close to the bridge. The granite slab is broken and set into the ground. The larger area has a walkway crossing though the site with several overgrown shrubs. HNTB has coordinated with the City of Portsmouth, and the proposed design will have the same general traffic circulation with enhancements of the green areas. The biggest difference would be updating the parking lot reconfiguration to meet existing codes. However, the realignment of Scott Ave will increase the green space size from 5,100 sq ft to 6,200 sq ft. The larger Park area will have a central space with benches and a spot that could accommodate a future monument. Plantings would be minimal and with an open concept for safety. Due to sight line concerns, trees on the north side of Scott Ave would not be replaced. Lynne Monroe added that historically the Park was meant to be an open space, with no monument ever installed. Laura Black commented that the area was designed as a simple landscape and asked how the changes could be justified under Section 106 based on the historic character of the Park. Keith Cota iterated that the proposed design provides a pedestrian walkway that conforms to ADA requirements and increases the safety of pedestrians, the landscaping will be enhanced and manageable, and the design does not pre-empt any other future enhancements. The proposal enhances the current design, while addressing traffic flows, and increases the lawn area. Carol Hooper mentioned that agreement on a monument was never reached, but at one time $7,000 was put aside for a future monument.

Nick Cracknell, Nancy Carmer and Juliet Walker, from the City of Portsmouth, itemized the following concerns: the Plaque should be lifted to vertical and placed in a different location where people can safely see it; they do not foresee any problems with sight line issues replanting trees along the north side of Scott

Ave as long as they are planted 15 to 20 feet back from the edge of pavement. It was noted that , appropriate trees chosen (such as London Plane Trees or Magnolias) or even considering placing a Yield sign at Daniel Street and Scott Ave would help maintain traffic flows and sight line distances; they expressed that the historic openness of the area is appropriate, but the City wants to maintain appropriate vegetation; and wanted to be assured that the sidewalks would tie in with the existing brick walkways.

Steve Del Grosso agreed that the sight distance concerns would be looked at to see if trees could be included in the design. The sidewalks will be brick, apart from the ramps and the granite curbing. He did not see any issues moving the Plaque, however asked that the location of the Plaque be expedited so that the appropriate foundation could be constructed if it is to be placed within the Park. It was agreed that the broken granite slab on which the Memorial Park Plaque is affixed can be replaced. Laura Black asked if the historic nature of the Park was being recorded somehow due to the proposed significant changes, and the fact that these changes were not discussed or addressed during the preparation of the MOA. Richard Candee thought that the original design of the Park would be best interpreted through Richard Casella's film, documenting the history of the bridge. Jennifer Zorn will check with Rich Casella to make sure the Park is represented in the film. [Subsequent discussion with R. Casella indicates that it may not be feasible to use the film he is developing to document the history of Memorial Park. Other ideas were shared but not finalized.]

Five Commemorative Plaques

Options for the Overhead Portal Plaque and Statuary end pieces locations were discussed. It was agreed that these should be placed horizontally rather than downward. A rendering will be developed by HNTB.

Discussion on the location of the other commemorative plaques ensued. The Advisory Committee, sub-committee that is dedicated to the plaques has determined that the best placement of the smaller plaques is a location within Prescott Park. Richard Candee agreed that the plaques should not be placed on the new bridge, however placement in the park will require an interpretive panel explaining the significance of the bridge and accompanying plaques. Depending on the design of the plaque location and interpretive panel, the Memorial Park Plaque could be moved from the small-grassed triangle located near the bridge to the approved location within Prescott Park.

Regarding concerns with the specific language of the MOA that requires them to be replaced on the "bridge and in an appropriate area adjacent to the bridge entrance", Jamie Sikora and Laura Black stated that the MOA could be amended to allow them to be placed in an appropriate location. When the MOA was written the design of the new bridge was not known, subsequently, it has been discussed that placement on the new bridge may not be the most appropriate location. All agreed that the MOA should be amended and that the plaques should be grouped in Prescott Park as a memorial to the old bridge. Laura Black indicated that the pedestrian experience on the bridge is more the vista of the City of Portsmouth, the Navy Yard and the Harbor, it would be better if the plaques were off the bridge in an area that would be able to view the bridge location. Jennifer Zorn stated that the Plaque Subcommittee will review where the plaques should go and present their decision to the appropriate agencies.

Kirk Mohney stated that the plaque that was located on the Maine side approach should be placed in Kittery. Steve DelGrosso suggested that it could be placed on the west wing wall of the abutment, with a new panel on the diagonal or belvedere. Kirk asked for a rendering showing the exact location.

A site walk will be scheduled by Jennifer Zorn to evaluate the appropriate location. The Preservation Company will draft the panels for review by NHDHR and the City. A March 1st deadline for the completion of the panels was agreed.

Illumination

The aesthetic lights design was discussed by Denis Switzer. To comply with the NH Dark Sky Policy, down lighting from the top of the towers would be installed. Keith Cota stated that historic style street lighting and all the required navigational lights will be placed on the bridge. The next rendering of the bridge illumination will include all of the lighting.

Submitted by: Sheila Charles, Cultural Resources

http://www.nh.gov/dot/org/projectdevelopment/environment/units/technicalservices/crmeetings.htm