BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENT

CONFERENCE REPORT

DATE OF CONFERENCES: January 8, 2009, January 22, 2009

LOCATION OF CONFERENCES: J.O. Morton Building

ATTENDED BY: Joe Adams, Jill Cunningham, Mike Dugas, Cathy Goodmen, Tom Jameson, Steve Johnson, Marc Laurin, Jim Marshall, Joyce McKay, Kevin Nyhan, Christine Perron, Alex Vogt, Chris Wasczcuk, Trent Zanes, NHDOT; Dina Boles, NH Public Works; Edna Feighner, Beth Muzzey, Linda Wilson NHDHR; Jamie Sikora, FHWA; Bruce Bohannon, Town of Swanzey; JoAnn Fryer, CLD; Liz Hengen, Historical Consultant; Pam Laflamme, City of Berlin; Gene McCarthy, Vicki Chase, McFarland-Johnson; Lynne Monroe, Kari Laprey, Preservation Company; Mike O'Donnell, TF Moran; Bill Veillette, Town of Amherst

SUBJECT: Monthly SHPO-FHWA-ACOE-NHDOT Cultural Resources Meeting

Meredith, STP-F-X-0241(014), 10430
Amherst, X-A000(560), 14832
Swanzey, X-A000(361), 14421
Pelham, X-A000(415), 14491
Lebanon-Hartford, X000(627), 14957
Nashua 13716 (no federal number)
Hopkinton, STP-TE-X-000S(450), 13483A
West Rindge Surplus Land
Berlin, X-A000(052), 12958B

Thursday, January 8, 2009

Meredith, STP-F-X-0241(014), 10430. Participants: Cathy Goodmen and Jim Marshall, NHDOT; Gene McCarthy, Vicki Chase, McFarland-Johnson; Liz Hengen, Historical Consultant.

Gene McCarthy reviewed the project and the purpose of presenting it at the Cultural Resource meeting. McFarland-Johnson (MJ) was seeking guidance on the level of study that would be required as the project moves forward from a planning study into preliminary design and permitting. Specifically, MJ was seeking guidance on the potential presence of fatal flaws of the alternatives and components.

The project is a planning study funded by DOT to address traffic and safety concerns in the Route 3/25 travel corridor, using the approach of context sensitive solutions. A committee made up of local residents, business owners, regulators, and other interested parties has been meeting for the last two years to develop solutions to the issues of traffic congestion and safety in the study area. The result of the process was the selection of alternatives to be further developed and studied for resource impacts. Although the study area included Route 25 up to the Center Harbor town line, the committee focused on Meredith Village and the Route 3/25 intersections. Improvements to the Route 25 portion of the study corridor may be studied and included as part of a planning document, but will not be included as part of the design and permitting phase of this project.

The committee rejected an alternative that widened the Route 3 approach to the Route 3/25 intersection to four lanes, as it was seen as not in keeping with the village character. The two alternatives chosen for further study

were the "Intermediate" alternative, which includes a third turning lane on Route 3 through the village center, and intersection improvements to the Route 3/25 intersection, and the "Roundabout" alternative, which includes eight new roundabouts between the Route 104/3 Intersection and the Route 3/25 Intersection. Various configurations were considered for the Route 3/25 Intersection, including an upgraded signal. The town rejected the signal configuration because it was viewed as not in keeping with the village character. A single lane elliptical roundabout at the Route 3/25 Intersection minimizes takings of adjoining properties.

In addition to the two alternatives discussed above, two other options were selected for further study – the Pleasant Street Bypass, which would involve making a portion of Route 25 one way going west, and a new bridge to be constructed over Hawkins Brook. This option alleviates traffic pressure at the intersection and avoids property takings around the intersection. A second option, the School Bypass, would involve a new road extending from Route 25 at Barnard Ridge Road, around the school property, and connecting to Route 3 via Greenmore Road.

Because the school bypass included an area that was not included in the scope of the original project, Edna Feighner pointed out that it would be impossible to comment on the potential subsurface impacts of this component until it had been studied further. J. McKay commented that the next phase of study for the project should include study of cross sections from old highway improvement projects to analyze the depth of disturbance that has previously occurred. She requested that the archaeologist consult with her and with DHR during the scope development process for the next phase of the project.

Beth Muzzey made the following comments relevant to the proposed alternatives and project components:

- In the village center, any reduction of width would be seen as beneficial.
- The roundabout alternative introduces a new type of roadway, which may not be in keeping with the historic village district. However, the roundabouts may improve access to the village center, which would be a benefit to local merchants.
- The Route 25 portion of the study area has historic farms and farmscapes, and should be maintained as a rural roadway, and not made into a high-speed highway. Of special concern is Moulton Farm.

Liz Hengen commented on the Pleasant Street and school bypasses.

- Any alternative that increased traffic down Plymouth Street, which is part of the historic village district, may have an effect on the district.
- Greenmore Road (not included as part of the original study area) includes a 1940's housing development that has some historic significance. The vicinity surrounding the school bypass would have to be studied for potential impacts to historic resources.

There was discussion about Liz Hengen's report and if it was ready for DHR review. The report contains only recommendations for properties that required DHR forms, not completion of the forms. As a planning study, the report does not detail potential impacts to cultural resources from any of the proposed alternatives. J. McKay had a few comments on Liz Hengen's report and will forward them to close out this initial phase of work. Likewise, the archaeological study did not detail the depth of disturbance previously incurred in any of the sensitive areas in the study corridor. Therefore, no Section 106 clearance is being sought at this stage of the project.

Joyce McKay and the DHR will be consulted as the scope of work for the next stage of the project is developed.

Amherst, X-A000(560), 14832. Participant: JoAnn Fryer, CLD (jlf@cldengineers.com).

JoAnn Fryer of CLD Consulting Engineers, Inc. presented the project on behalf of the Town of Amherst. The project is a Municipally Managed TE-funded project. Tom Jameson is the NHDOT project manager.

Project Overview

The project involves removal of the existing pavement, reconfiguration of the roadway network within the limits of the existing pavement, regrading and repaving. The project limits include Main Street and Church Street, as well as the intersections of Courthouse Road and Old Manchester Road. In addition, an informal parking area adjacent to the south side of the Village Green will be filled and graded to provide a more formal parking area. Other aspects of the project include:

- Minimal excavation required to place curbing (1.5 ft deep) in front of the Town Hall and to reconstruct two existing leaching catch basins in place on Church Street and install a new catch basin in front of Town Hall (5 feet deep).
- Walkways in front of Town Hall will be removed and replaced with granite pavers.
- Paved walkway will be installed along the inside of the fence on the south side of the Village Green. It was noted that there is an existing leach field in the green.

All structures abutting the project are over 150 years old, all eligible for or already on the National Register for Historic Places. No private structures are proposed to be effected by the project. All work is within the existing Right-of-Way. The Town is investigating the potential to improve the safety of the entrance to the Town Hall including the possibility of widening the granite steps and/or landings and potentially adding handrails.

Directly behind the Town Hall is the Town Cemetery. During previous construction work at the Town Hall (as noted above), two unmarked graves were found adjacent to the Town Hall during excavation operations to add an elevator shaft to the building.

NHDHR Determinations

- Additional information is needed to complete the review for archeological resources. Archaeological survey, Phase 1A & 1B was requested prior to ground disturbing activities. Monitoring will be required during construction. Additional phases of archaeology need to be completed if significant resources are found.
- There are no concerns regarding aboveground resources.
- It was noted that Kathleen Wheeler, Independent Archaeological Consulting worked with the Town following the discovery of the graves in the previous project. She is an historical archaeologist and would therefore be qualified to do the study for this project.
- NHDHR will need to be alerted if there are any changes to the proposed ground disturbance prior to any activities (including any test pits, pavement cores, etc.). They would also like to know when the excavation for the project will start.

Swanzey, X-A000(361), 14421. Participants: Tom Jameson, NHDOT; Mike O'Donnell, TF Moran (modonnell@tfmoran.com); **Bruce Bohannon, Town of Swanzey**

Mike O'Donnell distributed project materials (NHDHR RPR form and attachments) and introduced the project. Full size sets of preliminary drawings, dated 1/8/09, were presented for discussion. The project limits and location were discussed. The nearby covered Cresson Bridge was added to the National Register on 11/14/78, however the bridge is outside of the project limits and will not be affected. The railroad itself was determined not eligible on 12/20/95.

M. O'Donnell explained how the trail would be graded, including the normal crowned areas and reverse crowned areas. DHR was asked if the Phase 1A could be limited to areas where excavation is deeper than 1-2 feet, since the rail bed has previously been disturbed. Bruce Bohannon from the Town of Swanzey confirmed that the rail ballast had been removed.

M. O'Donnell stated that no changes to existing culverts are proposed. There is one location where a new culvert may be constructed parallel to an existing culvert in order to minimize erosion nearby.

Edna Feighner requested that photographs be sent to NHDHR for review. A Phase 1A archaeological survey should be conducted for the entire project area, since work with heavy equipment is proposed and that the area along the Ashuelot River is known to be archaeologically sensitive. Any digging that will need to be done (grading, culvert installation, work in ditch lines, etc.) within the project area should be surveyed.

Beth Muzzey noted that work involving stonewalls should be avoided, also culverts and mile markers of historic significance should be protected. B. Bohannon stated that the markers shown on the plan are not historic; they were placed by Keene State College. No historic markers would be affected.

The Phase 1A process, schedule, and costs were discussed. This additional work was not anticipated and will subsequently increase project costs and delay proposed schedule.

This project should be placed on the agenda again after the Phase 1A study has been completed.

Pelham, X-A000(415), 14491. Participants: Kevin Nyhan

A No Adverse Effect Memo with a de minimis taking was signed and distributed.

Lebanon-Hartford, X000(627), 14957. Participants: Steve Johnson, Christine Perron, and Alex Vogt, NHDOT

An advanced contract for a temporary bridge just downstream from the existing bridge will be part of the anticipated economic stimulus package. The contract is expected to advertise in mid-April. The temporary bridge should be open to traffic by December 2009. Steve Johnson briefly explained where the temporary bridge would be located and that the limits of approach work would be from just west of the diner property in NH to just east of the railroad overpass in VT.

Joyce McKay pointed out that the temporary bridge would not impact the Four Aces Diner, a potentially eligible structure located at the east end of the proposed approach work. Excavation would be necessary at the west end of the proposed approach work adjacent to the retaining wall just west of the Listen parking lot. The deepest the excavation is expected to be is 4 feet. The archaeological consultant indicated in his End of Field Letter that no further testing would be necessary at this location unless the impact would be greater than 5 feet below surface, which is where the buried A horizon begins. Steve Johnson will refine the design in order to better determine how deep the excavation will need to be. Beth Muzzey said that the project would need to be reviewed by the Vermont SHPO to determine if further archeological testing is warranted. Alex Vogt also indicated that a utility pole might need to be relocated in this area.

B. Muzzey asked if the temporary bridge would have a visual impact on the Historic District at the Westboro Railyard. J. McKay explained that the bridge would not impact the District because the District was located in the southern part of the railroad yard and removed from the project area. NHDHR did not find that the temporary bridge project would have an impact on the buildings that are currently being reviewed for their eligibility.

Nashua 13716 (no federal number). Participants: Cathy Goodmen and Joe Adams, NHDOT

This project rehabilitates the bridge that carries the southbound lane of the DW Highway over the northbound on-ramp to the FE Everett Tpk .in Nashua. It had been previously presented on November 13, 2009, and a memo was signed on December 4, 2008. The project was presented again because part of the previous work was to paint the steel beams. Bridge Design has determined that the beams need to be replaced. Bridge design noted that there are no new bridge rails that look like the existing rail and perform with the safety requirements of today. A new memo was signed. The determination of eligibility for the FE Everett Turnpike is under completion.

Hopkinton, STP-TE-X-000S(450), 13483A. Participants: Kevin Nyhan and Dina Boles.

A No Adverse Effect Memo with a de minimis taking was signed and distributed. B. Muzzey stated that after the design is completed, DHR would review the design and specifications. The reference to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards should remain in the documents. The design would need to be modified until it meets the Standards.

West Rindge Surplus Land. Participant: J. McKay w/ Edna Feighner

The Bureau of Rails has been asked to remove the archaeological covenant language from the deed that transfers a rail property from the state to Mike Morabito in Rindge. The required archaeological survey was completed, and no significant materials were found. Edna Feighner agreed to write a letter to the Transportation Commissioner indicating that all requirements of the covenant were met. The Commissioner, who signed the deed for the state, would then send a letter to the property owner, indicating that the covenant had been fulfilled. In the future, J. McKay will place a clause in the covenant stating that when all necessary commitments in the covenant are met, the covenant is no longer applicable.

Thursday, January 22, 2009

Berlin, X-A000(052), 12958B. Participants: Jill Cunningham, Mike Dugas, Marc Laurin, Joyce McKay, Chris Waszczuk, Trent Zanes, NHDOT; Jamie Sikora, FHWA; Beth Muzzey, Linda Wilson, NHDHR; Lynne Monroe, Kari Laprey, Preservation Company; Pamela Laflamme, City of Berlin

The committee finished review of 6 properties along Alternative 2. Beth Muzzey decided that any mitigation discussion would be similar to Alternative 4E. Joyce McKay suggested that documentation should concentrate on best representatives of types represented in the area of impact, with minimal documentation for remaining impacted resources. Beth agreed with this general concept. For mitigation of the District, DOT should also document streetscape, grid pattern, and pattern of development, with aerials photographs which should be processed archivally. B. Muzzey wanted to receive some input on how to approach this documentation from the NPS (HABS/HAER).

Trent Zanes presented the concept of providing a widened corridor for Alternative 2 along 3rd Avenue as mitigation for reducing the width of the street. This design includes a 10-foot shoulder with no formal parking, providing 32 feet of pavement. The concept would be a bit less safe at crosswalk as it would be wider, but still an improvement over existing. Due to control of approaches from Wight Ave and the new intersection of NH 110 with 3rd Ave, DOT would only be able to provide this widening between Hinchley St. and Madigan St. A more direct connection with 3rd Ave cannot be made due to safety concerns. T. Zanes and Mike Dugas expressed concerns with drivers' expectation coming from a narrower Wight and 2nd Ave. to a wider 3rd Ave. B. Muzzey agreed that it was not effective mitigation since the adjacent grid pattern would be lost, and this would not help in restoring the area. It was agreed that this option would not be further pursued.

Alternative 2 impacts on the District discussed:

- Considerable loss of grid
- Dead-ending of Session St.
- Nine primary contributing structures demolished (three secondary)
- Loss of building density and pattern
- Loss of Madigan Street between 2nd Ave and 3rd Ave.
- Loss of three blocks of 3rd Ave.
- Introduction of two new intersections
- Introduction of new type of roadway with curvilinear design
- Three large intersection changes
- Loss of retaining walls

Review of Alternative 4E effects – see matrix (located on CREEP) and yellow sheets (on file at DOT)

Alternative 4E impacts on the District discussed:

- Large number of buildings lost (contributing - 27 properties with 25 primary and 13 secondary and 3 noncontributing structures)
- Loss of grid (2 blocks)
- 1st Ave. no longer dead ends
- New through traffic along edge of District
- Loss of direct connection of 2nd Ave. to Hillside Ave.
- New connection of 3rd Ave with Wight St.; slight grid pattern change
- Introduction of a new road along railroad corridor
- Loss of building density and pattern
- Loss of setting for properties, including those houses adjacent to the railroad corridor
- 1st Ave no longer dead ends at the railroad
- One large intersection change
- Loss of retaining walls

Comparison of effects of the two alternatives.

- Each has an Adverse Effect on the District. B. Muzzey stated that the Section 106 process does not allow for determination of which is more Adverse.
- More of the grid lost with Alt 2.
- More contributing structures lost with Alt 4E (25) vs. Alt. 2, with 9 (and 2 secondary). A more detailed discussion is needed for the way in which these effects will be adequately mitigated.
- Good examples of types lost – three from Alt 2 and seven from Alt 4E (proportionally the same number will be taken, except there appears to be a higher concentration of multi family housing along 4E.).
- Can't compare loss of grid vs. loss of architecture
- Need to determine quantifiable losses i.e. compare acreage, streets, block, and dwelling unit losses.
- If possible, consideration of long-term impacts needs to be made.
- The document will need to discuss the Adverse Effect for each alternative and specific mitigation for the alternative.

Mitigation was discussed.

- J. McKay discussed a documentation proposal. B. Muzzey agreed that full documentation of good examples of each building type is appropriate with the remainder of the impacted structures just needing a short form documentation, the lowest level of HABS/HAER documentation. J. Mckay will provide the details on which properties should be fully documented. Selecting examples will depend on a preliminary inspection when properties are vacated.
- Linda Wilson suggested that the collection of oral history would be appropriate to document the history of the District/buildings.
- The revitalization program has potential for long-term benefits to the District.
- Long-term viability of the District could be enhanced by setting up a program that provides rebates on historically consistent rehabilitations (20% rebate??).
- Pamela Laflamme stated that the City is already working with various groups such as the Tieletson Fund, Charitable Foundation, and Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) to provide funding to help in the rehabilitation of neighborhood cohesiveness and connectivity. A workshop on rehabilitation programs could be presented.
- Combining these efforts with the new program would be appropriate and provide more "bang for the buck."
- The program would need to comply with the Secretary of Interior's Standards.

- Effort to include the High School's Building Trade program to focus on rehabilitation work in conjunction with the program could be investigated.
- Salvage of materials from impacted properties should be pursued. The City could employ salvage companies to warehouse the materials for reuse within the District. The Department would be able to provide the opportunity for salvage after documentation and prior to demolition.
- B. Muzzey did not consider giving owners the option to move buildings back on their vacant lot a form of mitigation. DOT would make that offer anyway.
- Landscaping trees would provide more livable area, though it would not be historic mitigation for Alt. 2. However this landscaping could be considered mitigation if it provides shielding to the District along Alt 4E.
- Nadine Peterson could provide the option of a Neighborhood Heritage District in Berlin.
- A walking tour guide is appropriate and would connect with existing City area tours. Availability of brochures would be on the City's web site.
- A user guide could be added to the Area Form and provided on the City's web site.
- A rehab guide for owners would be created in conjunction with the rebate program.
- It was asked if DOT could mitigate one alternative more adequately?

B. Muzzey asked DOT to present these mitigation options at the Public Meeting

It was agreed by all that the key to the mitigation proposal is getting the rebate program established. C. Waszczuk proposed that it be funded at $100,000 (approx. 10% of project cost).

****Memos/MOA's:** Salem 15592; Salem 15596; Peterborough TIF-Union St. Reconstruction (no #); Nashua 13716; Pelham, X-A000(415), 14491; Hopkinton, STP-TE-X-000S(450), 13483A.

Submitted by
Joyce McKay,
Cultural Resources Manager