

L. Cultural Resources

1. Existing Conditions

Environmental Information

The RPC Campus contains a varied topography ranging from level to moderately sloping terraces overlooking Tappan Lake to the west. The underlying bedrock is predominately Upper Triassic age mudstone, sandstone, and arkose of the Brunswick Formation (Fisher et al 1970). These formations are not chert bearing.

The Project Site lies east of Tappan Lake and is part of the Hackensack River drainage basin which flows south into New Jersey. Prior to development, two small intermittent streams bisected the property. According to the soils maps for Rockland County, the project area contains several soil types generally found along hills and ridges and in urban land settings. The soils found within the Psychiatric Center area consist mostly of Cheshire-urban land complex and Wethersfield-urban land complex. These areas are generally covered by streets, buildings and other impervious structures. The soils within and surrounding the golf course include Wethersfield gravel loam, Cheshire gravelly fine sandy loam, and Watchaug fine sandy loam. Descriptions of the soil characteristics are presented in Chapter IIIC.1, Topography and Soils.

Environmental information concerning the Project Site and vicinity is useful in assessing its archeological potential. Plant species that are indigenous to the area or those that were introduced after colonization were often a valuable resource to the inhabitants of a particular region. Several forest types have been proposed that are likely to have existed in New York before land modifications, deforestation, and the introduction of foreign species (Küchler 1964). The forest type within which the Project Site is located is therefore described through the concept of “potential natural vegetation” which infers its past forest environment, not necessarily that which is current. The Project Site is within the Appalachian Oak Forest zone of natural vegetation. This forest type exists as several discrete zones located in eastern New York and within the Hudson River watershed extending eastward into Connecticut and Massachusetts. This natural vegetation zone consists primarily of broad-leaved deciduous trees with northern red oak and white oak representing the most populous varieties. This forest type provided abundant natural resources for precontact cultural groups who may have traversed the region. They supplied abundant mast seeds for white-tailed deer and turkey, which provided the major source of animal protein for the Native Americans who hunted them. Additionally, acorns and other seeds were processed by these same groups into ground meal for winter provisioning.

Large sections of the Project Site have been impacted by the Rockland Psychiatric Center and Broadacres Golf Course.

Archeological Sites

An examination of the archeological site files at the New York State Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) revealed no archeological sites within a one mile radius of the Project Site. The New York State Museum (NYSM) archeological site files identified five precontact sites within a one mile radius. The general site location and a brief description of each site is provided in the table below.

**Table III-1
NYSM Archeological Sites Within One Mile**

NYSM Site No.	Site Identifier	Description and Location
6385	GB-N 43A, GB-N 43 B	Precontact occupation located along Blauvelt Brook 122 meters (400 ft) northwest
6391	GB-N 45	Precontact occupation near Tappan Lake (Hackensack River) 1524 meters (5000 ft) west
6393	GB-N 47	Precontact occupation 1220 meters (4000 ft) southeast
8104	Arthur C. Parker	Traces of occupation 1220 meters (4000 ft) south
8106	Arthur C. Parker	Village Site 610 meters (2000 ft) south

State and National Registers

An examination of the OPRHP computer inventory revealed that the Rockland Psychiatric Center (RPC) is eligible for the State/National Registers as a district. The RPC has been assigned OPRHP #087.03.000126 with individual buildings as structures assigned OPRHP #s 087.03.000127-087.03.000164. The location of each building but not the district boundary is provided as part of the inventory form. It is presumed that the entire hospital complex is part of the district. The RPC is described as a rural campus of over 80 individual buildings or structures. The first buildings of the psychiatric facility were constructed between 1928 and 1938. Two styles of architecture are evident, the Mission style for the major patient and treatment buildings and the restrained Colonial revival for staff housing and services. Most of the buildings are described as having stucco wall surfaces and classical detailing. According to the district inventory form, the structures are architecturally significant as perhaps the largest assemblage of institutional Mission style buildings in the Hudson Valley and historically as one of the foremost centers in the country for psychiatric research (National Register Inventory Form 1983). Of the 143 buildings on the RPC site, 58 are located within the project boundary. Table 3 in the Phase IA Archeological Investigation (Appendix H) provides a list of the district buildings and if they are located within the Project Site. A map and the building-structure inventory forms are also provided in the Phase 1A Report in Appendix H of this DGEIS.

Precontact Archeological Sensitivity and Potential

The archeological sensitivity of the study area for precontact sites is based on several factors including physiographic characteristics (topography and drainage) and the proximity of known sites. Generally, land forms in the vicinity of rivers, lakes, streams, and wetlands suggest a higher potential for occupation or use by Native Americans who may have inhabited the area. These water bodies represent potential food and water sources as well as potential transportation corridors.

Prior to development of the RPC Campus, two small intermittent streams bisected the property. Five precontact sites lie within a mile of the Project Site. The presence of recorded archeological sites in the vicinity of the project area suggests a high sensitivity for precontact cultural resources. Although most precontact occupations tend to congregate near larger water sources like the Hackensack River to the west, they are also found adjacent to small upland tributaries, intermittent streams, and wetlands similar to the ones once located within the central portion of the Project Site. The undisturbed terraces overlooking the small intermittent streams and wetlands have the greatest potential for yielding precontact cultural resources.

Historical Sensitivity and Potential

The historical archeological sensitivity is based largely on the examination of historical maps. The 19th- and early 20th-century maps indicate historical development limited to three areas. Two of the areas were impacted by construction of the hospital facility and the likelihood of finding any intact remains is extremely low. The third area lies at the south end of the Project Site, along Blaisdell Road. The house still stands and is known as the DePew House. It is owned by the Town of Orangetown and serves as an office for the town museum.

The Project Site has a low historic sensitivity and potential for containing intact historic cultural resources dating from the 18th or 19th centuries. The hospital grounds have the potential for containing historic resources dating from the mid to late 20th century.

WPA Murals

Three WPA (Works Progress Administration) murals painted by Victor Pedrotti Trent and P. Albretti hang in a building complex on the Project Site known as Kids' Corner at Rockland Psychiatric Center. The three murals are: "Patriotic Themes" painted directly on plaster by P. Albretti; the "Four Seasons" painted on canvas and signed in 1942 by Victor Pedrotti Trent; and "The Legends of Rip Van Winkle and Sleepy Hollow" painted on canvas, also by Mr. Trent. The "Four Seasons" canvas measures approximately 5 1/2 feet high by 35 feet; the "Legends" canvas is approximately 5 1/2 feet high by 50+ feet.

2. Potential Impacts

According to the Conceptual Plan, all 58 buildings occupying the Project Site will be removed. All of the buildings were generally constructed between 1927 and 1965 and are part of the Rockland County Psychiatric Center district. According to the OPRHP inventory form, some of the structures are architecturally significant as perhaps the largest assemblage of institutional Mission style buildings in the Hudson Valley and historically as one of the foremost centers in the country for psychiatric research (National Register Inventory Form 1983). If impacts to these buildings cannot be avoided, a memorandum of agreement needs to be established between the Town and OPRHP to determine the degree of documentation necessary prior to removal of the buildings. This may entail additional documentary research, detailed photo-documentation of each structure, and completion of building structure inventory forms for buildings that do not have them.

No impacts are to occur to the DePew House on Blaisdell Road, or its surrounding property.

WPA Murals

The Town of Orangetown has been seeking a new home for the three murals since the buildings where these murals hang are slated for demolition. Given current budget constraints, there is no support for taking on the preservation and restoration of these murals for the Town's collection. And, because no space in Town Hall or other municipal buildings is large enough for the murals, the Town is attempting to find another appropriate location.

The murals are now at risk because the building which houses them has recently been vacated and will no longer be heated. The change in room temperature in the unheated space may damage the surface of the murals.

Art appraiser and conservator Kenneth Jay Linsner examined the murals and prepared a report for the Rockland County Legislature on the condition of the murals. The report explains the process for removing and temporarily storing both types of murals. He suggested that due to the quality of the work and the condition of the plaster, that preservation of the "Patriotic Themes" piece not be pursued. For the two canvas murals he proposed cleaning the surfaces, facing the panels with Japanese tissue, removing and rolling them on tubes for transport and storage. The estimated cost for the "Legends" removal and storage is \$100,000; the estimated cost for the "Four Seasons" mural is \$30,000.

In an effort to identify a museum or institution that would be interested in preserving the murals, the following have been contacted:

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Barbara J. Sussman, A.M., Art Appraiser

Historical Society of Rockland County
New York State Archives and Museum
Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum
Palisades Interstate Parks Commission
GSA Fine Arts Program
National New Deal Preservation Association
Pook and Pook, Auctioneers

To date, there have been no offers to acquire.

3. Mitigation

The OPRHP and NYSM site files revealed five precontact archeological sites within a mile of the project area. Although much of the Project Site has been impacted by the RPC development and golf course, some Phase IB testing is recommended for the undisturbed wooded uplands sections of the Project Site. These areas are located at the north and west ends of the Project Site, between the golf course and the RPC buildings, and along the golf course perimeter.

The 19th and early 20th century maps indicate historical development in three areas. Two of the areas lie near the western perimeter of the Project Site and were probably impacted by construction of the hospital. The third area is the DePew House on Blaisdell Road. No impacts are to occur to this building or the surrounding property. No testing is recommended for these areas.

The RPC grounds have the potential for containing historic resources dating from the mid to late 20th century. Deposits during this time period would be minimal at best considering discarded materials were collected and brought to landfills rather than disposed of on site. Although the buildings have a certain architectural and historical significance, the anticipated scattering of material around them is not considered archeologically significant. No testing is recommended for the 20th century archeological deposits.

The Conceptual Plan includes the removal of 58 buildings. Since impacts to these buildings cannot be avoided, a memorandum of agreement needs to be established between the client and OPRHP to determine the degree of documentation necessary prior to removal of the buildings. This may entail additional documentary research, detailed photo-documentation of each structure, and completion of building structure inventory forms for buildings that do not have them.

If a US Army Corps of Engineers permit is required for wetland disturbance in the southern portion of the Project Site, additional documentation may be required by OPRHP in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, including an alternative analysis relating to the potential reuse of historic buildings.

Mitigation outlined above will be required prior to building demolition and

construction and will be further defined as part of the subsequent site plan approval process.