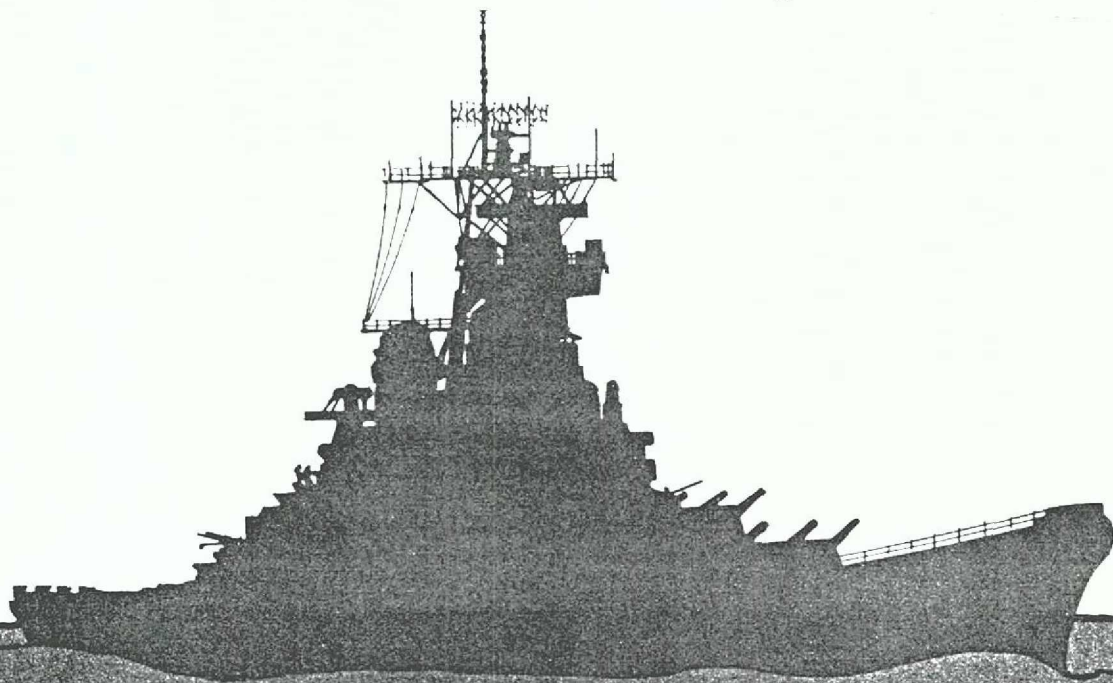


Draft Supplemental
Environmental
Impact Statement

Surface Action Group
Homeporting



761

Stapleton-Fort Wadsworth Complex
Staten Island, New York

Department of the Navy
December 1985

Army Corps of Engineers
New York District

Volume III

Nodar, and the three auto body shops employ truck and wrecker drivers and perhaps other off-site employees, which would increase the total number of jobs associated with the properties.

Several of the firms in the area are using the public land on the east side of Front street for storage of equipment to provide car parking, in addition to Front Street itself.

3.1.4 Socioeconomics

The description of existing socioeconomics at the Stapleton and Fort Wadsworth locations was presented in the DEIS (3.1.7 and 3.1.8) and FEIS (3.1.7). There has been no material change in this information; it is therefore incorporated by reference into this supplemental EIS document.

3.1.5 Community Facilities and Services

The description of existing community facilities and services at the Stapleton and Fort Wadsworth locations was presented in the DEIS (3.1.6) and FEIS (3.1.6). There has been no material change in this information; it is therefore incorporated by reference into this supplemental EIS document.

3.1.6 Cultural Resources

The description of existing cultural resources at the Stapleton and Fort Wadsworth locations was presented in the DEIS (3.1.9) and FEIS (3.1.9). The continuing coordination efforts regarding cultural resources are reviewed here. Because of the additional 14 acres proposed to be acquired at Stapleton, that area is examined in more detail. New information about Stapleton waterfront archaeology and the results of new studies at Fort Wadsworth are also presented. Figure 3-1 illustrates cultural resources at Fort Wadsworth.

3.1.6.1 Summary of Continuing Cultural Resources Studies

Since the FEIS for the SAG Homeport was issued in February 1985, a number of activities and events have happened which affect the study of cultural resources for this project.

These include:

- a meeting with the New York State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to describe the project and solicit comments;
- completion of a report on Stapleton waterfront archaeology;
- completion of archaeological fieldwork at the Fountain - Mouquin site on Fort Wadsworth;

- a determination by the New York SHPO that the batteries at Fort Wadsworth are eligible, but that the gate houses and officers quarters do not appear to be eligible;
- a determination by the Keeper of the National Register that the Fort Wadsworth batteries are eligible;
- preparation of a preliminary case report to commence formally the Section 106 process.

3.1.6.2 Stapleton Waterfront Archaeology

A cultural resources assessment of the Stapleton waterfront was presented in the DEIS (3.1.9). Research indicated that fill conditions precluded any impact on late-prehistoric or early historic deposits; however, based on soil boring data, submerged surfaces potentially harboring more ancient cultural deposits were considered a possibility.

A major concern was a fresh water pond that once might have been located east of the existing bulkhead in the vicinity of modern day Canal Street. Soil data correlated with sea level curves suggested this pond was located on land 200 to 500 feet beyond the present bulkhead (6,000 to 10,000 years ago). This was a time when prehistoric populations are archaeologically documented on Staten Island and it would have been an environment attractive to their hunting and gathering activities. It was further suggested that when the sea level rose in response to melting glaciers, this pond and any associated cultural deposits were inundated by the encroaching sea and subsequently protected by bay-bottom deposits that formed over the millenia. Based on these interpretations, testing was recommended to determine the potential for intact cultural deposits.

A subsequent analysis (Berger, 1985) that included new soil boring data and research, in addition to existing information, offered an alternative reconstruction and interpretation of the study area. In this analysis, organic deposits were interpreted as the remnants of a fresh water glacial lake present when the area was initially available to human occupation; this lake was then superceded by the bay. This interpretation suggests that the site was never available for use or occupation.

The Berger report is currently being reviewed by the New York SHPO.

3.1.6.3 Stapleton West of Front Street

This analysis focuses on the area from Wave Street to Thompson Street between the SIRT right-of-way and the east side of Front Street.

Native American Populations. Before the major eastward expansion of the Stapleton waterfront in the nineteenth century, the shoreline was probably located within the tract under discussion here. Near the south end of the study area, approximately midway between the present alignments of Water and Canal Streets (Walling, 1859), a freshwater stream formerly entered the Bay. As pointed out in the DEIS, in connection with the discussion of the Stapleton/Fort Wadsworth corridor, this locality "on environmental grounds, would have been attractive to Native American social groups" (DEIS, pg. 3-76). These attractions are discussed there in some detail (DEIS pgs. 3-71 through 3-73).

The DEIS also reports that no specimens from this area were identified in the collections of the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences, and that the "notably vigilant" archaeologists of Staten Island have not reported the discovery of any Native American sites in the vicinity. This may be due to the fact that the stream had been diverted into a culvert, and the areas on both sides of the former channel had been filled and graded some time before 1874 (Beers, 1874).

Nevertheless, recent archaeological research in metropolitan New York urban situations has demonstrated repeatedly that, under favorable depositional circumstances, archaeological resources deeply buried under fill are often protected, intact, from the effects of later construction activities.

Euroamerican Populations. Documentary research indicates that, by 1853, all of the area under study was located on the landward side of the bulkhead line (Butler, 1853), and that both Front Street and the east-west streets connecting it to Bay Street (Wave, Sand(s), Prospect, Vanderbilt, Cross, Water, Canal, and Thompson) had all been laid out before 1859 (Walling, 1859). Nevertheless, the maps indicate that construction within the study area was confined to the blocks south of Water Street until late in the nineteenth century (Beers, 1874, 1887). At this southern end of the tract, the steam ferry terminal at Stapleton Land--at the foot of Canal Street--was in operation by 1852 (Leng and Davis, 1930). The busy Canal Street transportation corridor attracted the many businesses whose establishments lined both sides of the street (Beers, 1874). The intensive activity in this vicinity is very likely to have left behind archaeological evidence that could provide important information about changing ways of life on Staten Island during the second half of the nineteenth century.

By 1908, commercial and industrial development along the bulkhead line had spread north beyond the northern boundary of the project area (Borough of Richmond, Topographical Survey 1907-1912: Sheet No.11). However, for the purposes of this assessment, it is important to note that almost all of the structures built in the area were shed-like workshops and warehouses that are not likely to have left substantial subsurface archaeological evidence of their presence.

Architectural Resources. A few structures in the study area date from the early twentieth century, or possibly even from the late nineteenth century. However, none of these structures appears to be eligible for the National Register. If the Navy implements this proposal, consultation with the SHPO would be conducted to determine eligibility. The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (NYCLPC), which has been considering the establishment of a Stapleton Historic District on the west side of the SIRT embankment in the immediate vicinity of the project area, has not identified any potential candidates for inclusion within the district, or for individual designation, in the area to the east of the SIRT tracks (Zavin, NYCLPC, October 1985).

3.1.6.4 Fort Wadsworth

A Stage II investigation was undertaken at the Fountain-Moquin house site, based on the results of previous Stage I investigations (DEIS, Appendix C) and subsequent intensive background research. The results of that work are presented in WRT and Berger (1985) and are produced verbatim below.

An 1899 photograph of the Fountain-Mouquin house (filed at Staten Island Institute of the Arts and Sciences), shows a five-bay 1-1/2 story main block with gambrel "Flemish" roof, flanked by smaller (three-bay) one story, gable-roofed units. Such a dwelling could very well have been built on Staten Island at almost any period of the eighteenth century, although the house as shown was almost certainly the product of more than one building phase extending into the nineteenth century. Given the overall form and style of the house, it is highly unlikely that it was built as a suburban villa, and instead represents, as does the Alice Austen house further up the Narrows, the evolution of an eighteenth century vernacular, rural dwelling to the rather different requirements of wealthy Victorian suburbanites.

Based on shovel testing, the site is approximately 175 feet east/west by 150 feet north/south (Figure 3-1). The northernmost portion of the site, south of Lasher Road, has been disturbed to a depth of approximately two feet below the current ground surface by construction and demolition of military barracks, possibly dating to the Second World War. The remainder of the site appears to contain intact historic and prehistoric artifact deposits, in addition to historic house and outbuilding foundations and a walkway. This intact area of the site is approximately 80 feet north/south by 175 feet east/west.

The shovel tests and excavation units exposed an intact deposit of sheet trash, consisting of small ceramic sherds (no more than two inches square), glass, bone, metal, shell, ceramic smoking pipes, and brick fragments. This deposit appears to occur consistently in those shovel tests and units that were south of the area disturbed by the barracks construction and demolition. The frequency of materials in this sheet midden is variable, with the highest concentration in the southern portion of the site.

Some of the shovel tests, and subsequent excavation units, exposed several walls in the southern half of the site. These walls are clearly associated with at least two outbuildings, both of which are present in the 1899 photograph of the house and the 1894 map of the Fort Wadsworth area. One building is 10 by 10 feet square, with foundations extending five feet below the current ground surface. The interior foundation walls appear to be mortared. The second structure is northwest of the square structure, and consists of a brick foundation. A brick and cobble walkway runs south from this second structure.

In addition to the outbuildings, testing revealed the outline of the main house, which contains a cellar more than six feet deep. It was not possible to determine if the cellar extends the full length and width of the main house, given the limited scope of the testing program. The cellar appears to be filled with debris from the 1907 demolition of the house.

The analysis of artifacts from the site is still in progress. However, the nature of the deposits within the site, and their temporal affiliation, are clear. The uppermost deposits within the site consist of twentieth century materials. Below this layer are deposits with nineteenth century artifacts, followed by a stratum with eighteenth and early nineteenth century materials. The latter deposit contains pearlware and creamware ceramics, redwares, bone, metal and glass. Prehistoric materials are present in all soil deposits, but the majority of these materials appear to occur in the lowest soil strata. The prehistoric artifacts consist of ceramic sherds, lithic debitage of chert and argillite, and argillite bifaces. This assemblage suggests an association with the Woodland period.

The Stage II investigation has shown that the Fountain-Mouquin House Site has the potential to provide additional information on the history and prehistory of the area. For the historic periods, the site contains an intact surface dating to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century (no later than 1840). The site also has the potential to contain additional outbuildings and deep features (privies and wells) associated with this early historic surface, although such features were not found during the testing program. These deep features are very important, given that previous archaeological work in the region has demonstrated that such features often contain rich artifact-bearing deposits. At the Fountain-Mouquin Site, it will be possible to relate these activities and behavior to identifiable households, given the available documentation. To date, little archaeological research has been done on the activities and consumer behavior of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Staten Island farmers.

The prehistoric component of this site can also provide data on the configuration of woodland occupations in this area of Staten Island. To date, the majority of archaeological research on Staten Island has focused on western portions of the

island. Study of the materials from the Fountain-Mouquin House Site will contribute to the current Staten Island data base. Specific research topics may include settlement patterning and lithic procurement strategies, especially those involving argillite, which is not naturally found on Staten Island.

The Fountain-Mouquin House Site has the potential to provide additional and significant data to current historic and prehistoric research in the New York metropolitan area, and particularly Staten Island. Therefore, the site is considered potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic places.

3.1.7 Visual Character

The description of existing visual character at the Stapleton and Fort Wadsworth locations was presented in the DEIS (3.1.10) and FEIS (3.1.10.). There has been no material change in this information; it is therefore incorporated by reference into this supplemental EIS document.

In order to provide a baseline reference for the subsequent discussion of impacts, particularly changes in land use and additional housing development at Fort Wadsworth, the map describing visual character (Figure 3-2) and new photos taken near the housing site (Figure 3-3) are included here.

3.1.8 Transportation

The description of existing transportation at the Stapleton and Fort Wadsworth locations was presented in the DEIS (3.1.11) and FEIS (3.1.11). There has been no material change in this information; it is therefore incorporated by reference into this supplemental EIS document.

3.1.9 Air Quality

The description of existing air quality at the Stapleton and Fort Wadsworth locations was presented in the DEIS (3.1.2 and 3.1.12). There has been no material change in this information; it is therefore incorporated by reference into this supplemental EIS document.

3.1.10 Noise

The description of existing noise at the Stapleton and Fort Wadsworth locations was presented in the DEIS (3.1.13) and FEIS (3.1.13). There has been no material change in this information; it is therefore incorporated by reference into this supplemental EIS document.



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
NORTHERN DIVISION
NAVAL FACILITIES ENGINEERING COMMAND
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19112-5094

19 September 1986

Sherene Baugher
Director, Archeology Division
Landmarks Preservation Commission
20 Vesey Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Ms. Baugher:

As you requested in your letter of 2 September 1986, I have enclosed copies of the two reports prepared by Louis Berger Associates for the Navy's Surface Action Group Homeport Facility in New York.

Please contact me if I can be of further assistance. Thank you for your interest in the Navy's project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. H. Stephan". Below the signature, the words "act 202" are written in a smaller, cursive script.

T. H. STEPHAN
By direction