DESIGNATION REPORT

Aakawaxung Munahanung (Island Protected from the Wind) Archaeological Site

Landmarks Preservation Commission

Designation Report
Aakawaxung Munahanung (Island Protected from the Wind) Archaeological Site
June 22, 2021

Designation List 525
LP-2648

DESIGNATION REPORT

Aakawaxung Munahanung (Island Protected from the Wind) Archaeological Site

LOCATION

Borough of Staten Island
Conference House Park, 298 Satterlee Street (aka 298-300 Satterlee Street)

LANDMARK TYPE

Individual

SIGNIFICANCE

Aakawaxung Munahanung (Island Protected from the Wind) Archaeological Site is associated with over 8,000 years of occupation by Indigenous Peoples. It contains the region's best-preserved known cultural complex and archaeological site associated with the Indigenous presence in New York City.

LPC, 2021

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Landmark Site: Borough of Staten Island, Tax Map Block 7857, Lot 1 in part consisting of the portion bounded by Hylan Boulevard to the north, Satterlee Street to the east, the formerly mapped street just south of Clermont Avenue to the south, and the high water mark on the shoreline to the west, as shown in the attached map.

Calendared: January 19, 2021
Public Hearing: May 18, 2021

On May 18, 2021, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Aakawaxung Munahanung (Island Protected from the Wind) Archaeological Site as a New York City Landmark and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No.1). The hearing was duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of the law. Five people spoke in support of the proposed designation including a representative of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation who read a letter from Commissioner Silver, and representatives of the Delaware Tribe of Indians, the Professional Archaeologists of New York City, Historic Districts Council, and the Society for the Architecture of the City. There was no testimony in opposition to the proposed designation. Additionally, the Commission received eight letters of support including from the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Tribal Historic Preservation Office, the Society for American Archaeology, the New York Archaeological Council, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, the Historic House Trust of New York City, the Conference House Association, and two individuals.

Summary

Aakawaxung Munahanung (Island Protected from the Wind) Archaeological Site

Located in Tottenville at the southern-most point of Staten Island, the Aakawaxung Munahanung (Island Protected from the Wind) Archaeological Site contains the region's best known cultural complex and documents Indigenous Peoples' life beginning about 8,000 years ago and continuing through the Colonial period.[1] The landmark site includes approximately 20 acres of highly archaeologically sensitive land located within the city's Conference House Park. Its designation recognizes the history of Indigenous Peoples' occupation of the site and protects its below-ground archaeological resources.

Indigenous Peoples have lived in what is now New York City, including Conference House Park, for hundreds of generations. Over thousands of years, dramatic changes to the geography and ecology of the area influenced how people used the land, with the earliest groups moving frequently to hunt, and later groups settling in villages to utilize abundant adjacent resources.

At least 19 archaeological projects have taken place within Conference House Park since the 19th century that uncovered the region's best-known cultural complex within the landmark site documenting the use of the site for over 8,000 years. In addition, over 100 features were found that were primarily associated with the Woodland-period occupation at the site, about 3,000 to 500 years ago. Archaeologists also uncovered a series of hearths and other artifacts from the Early Archaic period (about 8,000 years ago) confirming that cooking, butchering, and toolmaking were among the activities that occurred at the site.

The British drafted a land deed in 1670 that was signed by representatives from a few Indigenous Peoples' groups. While Europeans viewed contracts such as this as a purchase agreement, scholars have noted that at this time, Indigenous Peoples did not perceive them the same way, understanding them more as temporary tenancies. The 1670 contract largely succeeded in expelling the Indigenous Peoples' population, who were Lenape and spoke Munsee (hereafter called "Munsee"), from Staten Island but it is not known when the last Indigenous Peoples left this site.

Soon after the British acquired Staten Island, Christopher Billopp received a British patent for land that included the landmark site as well as the land to the north, on which he built Conference House in 1676, a designated New York City Landmark. The designated Henry Hogg Biddle House, built c. 1853, is located just north of Conference House. Contact period and historic-era archaeological resources, such as projectile points made of copper and brass, have also been found at the site and are significant evidence that the area was used during the period of contact between Indigenous Peoples and European colonists.

In 1926, Conference House Park was donated to the City of New York and today includes paths, trails, woods, and a beach. The Aakawaxung Munahanung (Island Protected from the Wind) Archaeological Site is the city's first landmark to recognize the thousands of years of Indigenous Peoples' habitation.

Landmark Description

Aakawaxung Munahanung (Island Protected from the Wind) Archaeological Site

Description

The Aakawaxung Munahanung (Island Protected from the Wind) Archaeological Site includes approximately 20 acres of highly archaeologically sensitive land located within New York City's Conference House Park at the southwestern end of Staten Island in an area known as Tottenville. Located along the western coast of the Island, the site is roughly bounded by Hylan Boulevard to the north, Satterlee Street to the east, and the formerly mapped street just south of Clermont Avenue to the south; the western boundary follows the high-water mark on the shoreline. The landmark site closely corresponds to the boundaries of the Ward's Point Archaeological Site National Historic Landmark, which was established in 1993 to recognize its archaeological significance. The area is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the Ward's Point Conservation Area, which encompasses the landmark site. There are two designated New York City Landmarks located directly north of the Aakawaxung Munahanung (Island Protected from the Wind) Archaeological Site: Conference House, which gives the park its name, and the Henry Hogg Biddle House.

The landmark site overlooks the confluence of Arthur Kill and the mouth of the Raritan River and is adjacent to the Raritan Bay. It is set on a bluff that rises from a sandy beach and is primarily wooded (see Figures 1-9). As a New York City park, the site has long been protected and cared for by the Department of Parks and Recreation. The modern park includes paths, hiking and biking trails, and a visitor's center within a one-story 1920s bungalow at 298 Satterlee Street. Woodlands and dunes along the beach comprise most of the site. The visitor's center, paths, parking lot, fences, curbs, streetlamps, dog park, and other fixtures were constructed and installed generations after the landmark site's significant occupation by Indigenous Peoples and are not considered contributing features.

The Impacts of Changing Geography, Ecology, and Climate

Twenty thousand years ago, this region, including Staten Island, was buried under a glacier nearly two miles thick. The Laurentide Ice Sheet was a glacier that extended to the southeastern shoreline of the island, connecting it to Long Island and the lower arm of Cape Cod beyond. The water bound in the ice sheet meant that sea levels were about 330 feet lower than they are today. When the glacier retreated, its movement shaped New York City's geography and climate, including the estuary and provided ideal conditions for many species.[2]

As the climate warmed, the glacier receded northward, and meltwaters flowed southward. The open tundra-like vegetation and cold-loving trees like spruce, fir, birch, and alder gave way to pine and deciduous forests of oak, hickory, and beech. Mammoth, mastodon, caribou, giant beaver, and sloth called the city home, later disappearing as a result of environmental change and animal and human predation.[3] Six thousand years ago, sea levels started to stabilize, and the coastline began to resemble that of today. By four thousand years ago, tidal salt marshes had developed along the shores of Staten Island. These marshes were home to a diverse and rich ecosystem of plants and animals. By two thousand years ago, sea levels in the area of today's New York City had stabilized and were nearly at current levels.[4]

Site Ecology

The landmark site is set on a bluff that rises from a sandy beach. It overlooks the confluence of Arthur Kill and the mouth of the Raritan River, an important estuary that has significantly shaped the area's ecosystem. There are natural springs in the vicinity, and the site is primarily wooded with trees including hackberry, Carolina poplar, pin oak, and large-toothed aspen. Many of the trees are covered in vines like poison ivy, honeysuckle, and Virginia creeper and there are salt-loving grass species such as sea rocket and beach grass.[5]

The site is still home to many animals such as deer, small game, foxes, and birds, some of which stop at the site on their annual migrations. Because of its estuarine environment, in the past there were very large shellfish beds, including oysters, in the surrounding waters. While greatly diminished, in the Colonial period an oyster bed about 1.6 km in diameter known as the "Great Beds" was present just beyond the mouths of the Arthur Kill and Raritan River at the western end of Raritan Bay.[6] Clams, such as the quahog clams which were used by Indigenous Peoples to make wampum,[7] may still be found. Oysters were harvested for thousands of years and became an especially important industry for southwestern Staten Island in the 19th century.[8] While oyster beds could be found throughout the Hudson River estuary, the oyster beds found along the southern and eastern shores of Staten Island were ideal for commercial use. By 1830, exploding population growth and demand for the shellfish coincided with the decline of the island's oyster beds, which resulted in an effort to reseed the Staten Island beds with seed oysters from the Chesapeake before the Civil War.[9] As the century came to a close, however, the beds were slowly smothered by the continual dumping of waste into New York's waters and were impacted by pollution from industrial uses in the harbor and up the Hudson.[10] Efforts are now underway to reseed the city's oyster beds, including within the landmark site's vicinity, as a means of improving the water quality and to provide greater protection from storm surges.[11]

Indigenous Peoples at the Aakawaxung Munahanung (Island Protected from the Wind) Archaeological Site

The presence of Indigenous Peoples at the Aakawaxung Munahanung (Island Protected from the Wind) Archeological Site in Staten Island, and in the region that became New York City, is long, vibrant, and complex, spanning thousands of years. It is unknown what they called themselves at the start of this long period, but at the time of European contact they were Lenape, or Delaware, who spoke Munsee. Their descendants today include the Delaware Nation, the Delaware Tribe of Indians, and the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohicans.[12]

There are two ways to understand this long period. One is through oral histories, which are passed down through generations and often provide essential information about the past. Indigenous Peoples' oral histories have indicated that the Delaware traditionally occupied this area until the early-18th century,[13] though no oral histories specifically related to this site were identified at the time of designation.[14] The second way is through archaeology which is the study of material objects, or artifacts, and features, which are non-movable elements created by humans such as hearths or walls. Archaeologists study both artifacts and features and their relation to each other and to nonmaterial parts of culture, to learn about the past. Artifacts are objects made, used, or modified by humans, whether in the past or present. They are the embodied material evidence of this cultural information; they indicate what their makers and users thought was important or proper or useful for life in the world as they saw it. Archaeological features such as hearths and shell middens also provide important information about the past and how people lived. It should be noted that in an effort to be as protective of this site as possible, this report has limited the descriptions of archaeological discoveries that have been made at the landmark site.

The long history of Indigenous Peoples in the region has been divided by archaeologists into chronological periods defined by cultural patterns, tool technology, and, to a lesser extent, climate change.[15] Archaeologists do not know how these periods were defined by those living in them. The commonly used archaeological eras are PaleoIndian (12,000–9,500 BP [years before present as set in 1950]),[16] Archaic (9,500–3,000 BP), Woodland (3,000–500 BP), and the Early Colonial period (500–250 BP), also called the Contact period, which covers the period in the 17th and 18th centuries when Indigenous Peoples first began to encounter newly arrived Europeans and enslaved Africans.[17]

The PaleoIndian period marks the end of the Wisconsin glaciation approximately 12,000 years ago and the first human inhabitants of Staten Island. PaleoIndians, named after this period as it is unknown how these people identified themselves, were hunter-gatherers living in small bands of fewer than 50.[18] They were descendants of those who migrated into North America across the exposed land of the Bering Strait and along the Pacific Rim. They occupied temporary camps and workstations, and frequently moved in pursuit of game animals and raw materials for food, shelter, and tools. At this time, the landmark site would have contained plants and animals accustomed to the cold, dry climate. PaleoIndians seasonally hunted big-game animals,

many now extinct, like mammoth, mastodon, musk ox, caribou, elk, and moose, along with giant beaver and sloth, and supplemented in the off-season with smaller game, fish, and wild plants.[19] One of the earliest locations of human occupation in the United States was discovered on Staten Island about three miles to the north of the landmark site and outside of the park.[20]

The oldest documented discoveries from the landmark site date to about 8,000 years ago which was a period called the Early Archaic (9,500–7,000 BP). At this time the climate was warmer than the preceding PaleoIndian period. Dense pine and oak forests stretched across most of the region, and glacial lakes transformed into marsh and swamp land.[21] The site would not have been located along the shore as it is today and would have likely been forested. The toolkit of the PaleoIndian, predominately used for hunting and skinning an array of animal species, now also included tools suited for woodworking, basket making, hide rendering, and other functions. Tool forms such as chipped stone axes and adzes appear in increasing numbers in the archaeological record beginning in the late Early Archaic and extending through the remaining Archaic phases.[22]

A series of hearths found in 1960 at the southern end of the landmark site provided a rare glimpse into daily life 8,000 years ago.[23] Later analysis revealed that the hearths were the center of a variety of domestic activities, including butchering, cooking food, and making tools. Fire-reddened and cracked stones found in and around the hearths is evidence of cooking—more specifically grilling and boiling. Analysis also identified chipped-stone spear points and knives for hunting and butchering, stone scrapers used to prepare animal hides for clothing, hammer stones and chert cores indicating tool manufacture, and groundstone celts, or stone axes, that were used for woodworking.[24]

In the Middle Archaic period (7,000–5,500 BP), although sea levels continued to rise, the landmark site could be characterized as a wooded inland area still some distance from the shoreline. Common tree species during this period include deciduous oak, chestnut, and hemlock trees.[25] The period also marks a significant change in the lifeways of Archaic peoples: hunting and gathering expanded to include newly available marine resources, creating a diverse food base that archaeologists call a "broad-spectrum" diet. As a result people began to stay in place longer, establishing larger seasonal base camps that were supplemented by foraging camps targeted to specific resources, like coastal fishing and shellfish gathering sites, and inland quarries and hunting camps.[26] Stone projectile points dating to the Middle Archaic (7,000–5,500 BP) have been found at the landmark site.[27] In this period, projectile points were spear points used for hunting game of varying sizes.

By the Late Archaic Period (5,500–4,000 BP) archaeologists believe that people lived in villages in river valleys, moving to coastal sites in the warm months and to interior hunting camps in winter. They stayed intermittently at fishing stations and other sites where specific food or material resources could be obtained in the warm months.[28] Pollen and other botanical evidence from soil cores indicate that forests had fully transformed during this period into stands of oak and chestnut, which became habitat for deer, bear, raccoon, and turkey.[29] These trees produced acorns and chestnuts—called "mast"—which became an integral part of the Late Archaic diet along with shellfish.[30] Stone tools that have been found at the landmark site indicate that it was more intensively occupied during this period.[31]

Projectile points from the Late Archaic found at the landmark site indicate that the area was used for hunting a range of animals including deer and bear.[32] The tools also indicate that technological

innovations emerged in the Late Archaic and continued into the Transitional Archaic period.[33] The Transitional, or Terminal Archaic period (4,000–3,000 BP), overlaps with the Late Archaic and the beginning of the Woodland period. In the Transitional period, the estuarine and forest habitats stabilized, and sea levels were about 15 feet lower than they are today.[34] Artifacts discovered at the site indicate that technological and cultural innovation continued.

During the Transitional period, three new cultural traditions[35] arose among Indigenous Peoples living in Staten Island and in the region, based on distinct types of projectile points. All three types of projectile points, made from flint, jasper, and argillite have been found at the landmark site and in its vicinity and were used to hunt different animals including rabbits and turkeys.[36]

The Woodland period was marked by a series of social, economic, and technological changes. Year-round villages emerged in the area and likely at the landmark site, in some cases supporting small-scale cultivation of squash, beans, and corn alongside seasonal procurement and hunting camps.[37] Spanning approximately two and a half thousand years, two connected changes emerged in the Woodland period: settlement patterns and the adoption of small-scale farming. Woodland period agriculture centered on the cultivation of maize, beans, and squash, and brought with it the widespread production of pottery vessels for the first time.[38] Archaeologists theorize that the combination of farming and ceramic technology correlated with the emergence of permanent villages and a subsequent population boom,[39] but the timing, nature, and extent of the transition to settled life and farming was regionally variable.[40] Archaeological evidence suggests that coastal food abundance may have been enough for the Indigenous Peoples' communities of Staten Island, who may have fished and traded with their farming neighbors for squash, beans, and corn.[41] Multiple studies have confirmed through archaeobotanical evidence (micro and macro botanical remains) from harbor sites, for example, that domesticated crops like maize were rare and that it is more likely that Indigenous Peoples on the Island consumed marine foods and ate little maize.[42]

The archaeological record also indicates more complex practices are evident during the Woodland period as documented at the site. In addition, stone smoking pipes provide the first evidence of ritual and/or social smoking.[43]

By the Woodland period, a rich mixture of ecological and environmental habitats in the region made it a particularly viable and sustaining home. There were now extensive oyster beds in the waters surrounding the area known today as New York City. Shellfish and crustaceans thrived: hard-shell and soft-shell clams, scallops, mussels, whelks, crabs, and lobster. Indigenous Peoples used these resources and left middens along many of the city's coastal areas including at the landmark site with the discarded shells that may also contain other food waste, tools, and significant cultural materials. New York Harbor housed seals, whales, porpoises, eel, flounder, sheepshead, blackfish, shad, and more. The rivers provided a predictable food source with seasonal runs of anadromous fish—inland spawning saltwater fish with nutritious fat reserves.[44] Indigenous Peoples supplemented coastal resources with inland hunting and gathering.[45] There is significant evidence in the archaeological record indicting that during the Woodland period the landmark site was home to Lenape, Munsee-speaking peoples who were members of the larger Eastern Algonquian group and language family.[46] Munsee is a linguistic categorization, but the term may also be used to refer to the people who spoke it.

Artifacts dating to the Woodland period that have been found include ceramic sherds from vessels

used for the preparation, serving, and storage of food and drink. The styles of these artifacts indicate close contacts with Munsee in central and northern New Jersey especially in the later Woodland period as well as contact with Munsee living along the Hudson and Delaware Valleys.[47] In addition, one group of artifacts reveals links to far more distant people. These include shell beads primarily of the *Olivella* species which are native to more southern waters ranging from Florida to Virginia, and a pipe that resembles the Hopewell pipes of the Midwest and is unlike anything else found in the region.[48]

Other Woodland period artifacts that have been identified at the landmark site include tools for specialized uses such as hunting, fishing, horticulture, and making other tools. The abundance and weight of the Woodland period artifacts, as well as the many pit features used for fires, caches, and garbage, indicate that people were living at the site for long periods of time, likely in a village. No post-holes have been documented to date at the landmark site, a hallmark for the wooden structures that would have anchored the villages of the time. Longhouses were made of wood and typically measured 60 to 80 feet in length by 10 feet wide and 8 to 10 feet high. They would have included fireplaces, provided tool and food storage, and most essentially sheltered several families of the same matrilineage.[49] Given how early most of the archaeological work occurred and the limited nature of the resulting records, it is possible that post-holes were found but not recognized or recorded as such.[50]

Contact Period

The Aakawaxung Munahanung (Island Protected from the Wind) Archaeological Site contains significant archaeological evidence from the period when Indigenous Peoples first had contact with Europeans in Staten Island. The first Europeans settled in New York City in the early 1600s, initiating the end of the Woodland period in the region. At the time, southern Staten Island was inhabited by the Raritan who were a part of the Munsee speaking people.[51] The Raritan called Staten Island "Aakawaxung Munahanung " which has been translated as "the island protected from the wind."[52] Elizabeth Meade, author of a 2017 archaeological documentary study of the area posits that the "name may have also referred to the village settlement at Ward's Point."[53] Other names for Staten Island include "Matawucks" and "Eghquaous" which were terms found in early land transactions between Indigenous Peoples and Europeans and were likely Dutch spellings of Munsee words.[54]

Particularly notable discoveries at the landmark site include tangible evidence of the interactions between Europeans and Indigenous Peoples. Materials sourced from Europe, such as copper, brass, and iron were integrated into Indigenous Peoples' toolmaking and were only available once Europeans began to trade with the Indigenous Peoples.[55] Their presence is a key indicator that the site was used in the Contact period during the early 1600s.

While Giovanni de Verrazano was likely the first European to arrive at what is now New York City in 1524, it was not until Henry Hudson arrived in 1609 that more permanent European settlements emerged. Meade notes that it was also Hudson's arrival that "marked the beginning of violent encounters with the Native American as well."[56] During Hudson's exploration of the island there was a clash between Native Americans and Hudson's unit and one of Hudson's men perished as a result. This aggressive encroachment into Staten Island made the Indigenous Peoples there distrustful of the Europeans, prompting groups to establish surveillance points on hills in the hopes of preparing themselves for future attacks from the colonists.[57]

The introduction of European goods and cultural trends had far reaching and devastating consequences on Indigenous Peoples' life, disrupting the traditional economy, instigating wars, introducing diseases, and forcing the dislocation of communities. New materials and commodities were introduced into trade during the Contact period, including guns, cloth, kettles, glass beads, and alcohol. While Indigenous Peoples likely remained in villages along waterways, the growing amount of trade with Europeans to acquire these items meant that Indigenous Peoples' communities began to move around less frequently. At the same time, the rapidly increasing European population posed an ever-greater threat to Indigenous Peoples' territory and consequently, disputes intensified.[58] A series of wars erupted between Indigenous Peoples and the Dutch throughout the colony including the so-called "Pig War," which occurred in Staten Island in 1641[59] and the "Peach War" in 1655.[60] After the Peach War, Europeans acquired large areas of land, including in Brooklyn, which forced some Indigenous Peoples to relocate to Staten Island.[61] Relocation could not help Indigenous Peoples avoid the biological threats introduced by the colonists and diseases had debilitating impacts on Indigenous Peoples' communities.[62] Scholars have estimated that anywhere between 50 and 91 percent of the Munsee population in the area died as a result of European diseases, such as influenza, measles, and smallpox.[63]

The Indigenous Peoples of Staten Island who survived the wars and diseases were eventually forced off their land by other means, namely a series of three land deeds that were drafted by the colonists – the first two initiated by the Dutch, and the third initiated by the British. The deeds transferred ownership of Staten Island from the Indigenous Peoples to the Europeans. While Indigenous Peoples signatories were included in these documents, scholarly interpretations of early land contracts between Europeans and the Munsee people suggest that the Indigenous Peoples participants likely viewed them more as easements or tenancies rather than a sale. Archaeologist and author Anne-Marie Cantwell argues that the "Munsee did not yet realize that they were perceived as selling the land in the European sense, that is permanently alienating themselves from it. Rather, they thought they were simply allowing the Europeans to use it for a while."[64] This conflict of perception explains why Indigenous Peoples may have signed contracts that did not include fair compensation for their land and why the first two contracts that "sold" Staten Island did not result in the mass expulsion of Indigenous Peoples that the Europeans had hoped for; instead, several contracts and years of conflict ensued.[65]

The first contract was drafted between the Dutch and Indigenous Peoples in 1630, and by 1641 (the same year as the "Pig War") many members of the Raritan people had left the area, while some remained.[66] The Peach War resulted in the second land contract, when the Dutch again tried to acquire Staten Island in 1657.[67] The European presence, which switched from Dutch to British after they gained control of the colony in 1664, was heavily armed and growing in population. This pressure ultimately meant that Indigenous Peoples had no viable choice but to agree to sell the remainder of their land in Staten Island in 1670 under the third and final contract with the colonists.[68]

After the British took control of New York in 1664, Staten Island's expansive land and coastal areas provided important agricultural and marine resources that were exported to the colony's urban center. While Europeans settled the northern and eastern shores of Staten Island first due to proximity to Manhattan, the southern and western coasts developed more slowly. Starting in the 1670s, most of the area was owned by an Englishman, Captain Christopher Billopp.[69] Billopp arrived in New York

in 1674.[70] Local legend holds – though it is likely apocryphal – that Billopp gained Staten Island for the New York colony by beating a sailor from New Jersey in a boat race around the island.[71] Evidence does show, however, that after his arrival he received a manorial grant from the British Governor of New York, Edmund Andros, in 1676 that included 932 acres of land at the southwestern end of Staten Island, in addition to 30 acres of salt meadows along its western shore, all within the area now known as Tottenville and encompassing all of the Aakawaxung Munahanung (Island Protected from the Wind) Archaeological Site.[72] In 1676, Captain Billopp constructed a 2½-story fieldstone residence that would become known first as the Manor of Bentley or Billopp House, and later as Conference House. It was designated a New York City Landmark in 1967 and is located just north of the landmark site.[73]

As a result of its first European owner, the area became known for a time as Billopp's Point.[74] The family operated the property as a wheat farm and enslaved Africans lived and worked there.[75] Additional land grants were bestowed on Billopp in 1687, increasing his total property to 1,630 acres.[76]

There is little archaeological evidence of an Indigenous Peoples presence in the vicinity of the landmark site after Billopp's acquisition of the land.[77] However, historical accounts from the Billopp family claim that some small groups of Indigenous Peoples continued to live within the southwestern area of Staten Island into the 18th century,[78] and by other accounts, communities of Indigenous Peoples may have even remained in Staten Island into the 20th century.[79]

Colonial History[80]

Captain Billopp died in 1725.[81] His will indicated that at the time of his death the manor was quite substantial, with an orchard and large fenced fields.[82] Three subsequent generations of the family assumed ownership and management of the Manor of Bentley.[83] In addition, the family also operated a ferry from the end of Amboy Road, north of the landmark site.[84]

Staten Island served as a strategic location during the Revolutionary War.[85] At the start, the Americans installed cannons along the southwestern coast in the vicinity of the landmark site. On July 25, 1776 American troops there and British soldiers in New Jersey engaged in a cannon battle and one person died. Staten Island was occupied by British forces after the Battle of Brooklyn later that summer and they remained there for the rest of the Revolution.[86]

The Manor of Bentley was used as the location of a significant but failed peace conference on September 11, 1776 between Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and Edward Rutledge, representing the American side, and Lord Richard Howe (Admiral of the British Fleet) and Henry Strachey (Howe's secretary), representing the British. The purpose of the meeting was to seek a peaceful settlement of the Revolutionary War, but these efforts proved futile since the Americans refused to renounce their demands for independence. As a result, the Manor of Bentley subsequently became known as Conference House.[87]

During the Revolutionary War, the manor house was owned and inhabited by Captain Billopp's great-grandson, Colonel Christopher Billopp.[88] Colonel Billopp was the leader of the Tory element in Staten Island and he remained loyal to the British during the Revolutionary War. Confiscation laws passed during and after the war allowed New York State to seize land owned by people known to have been loyal to the British crown.[89] To avoid forfeiture of his property, Colonel Billopp divided the family lands, already diminished by earlier sales to slightly over 1,000 acres, into nine farms of varying sizes, and sold them off between 1780 and 1781. He sold

the portion of his property including the landmark site and Conference House among 373 acres of land to Samuel Ward in May 1781 for 3,730 pounds and fled to Nova Scotia. [90] As a result, the southeastern tip of Staten Island became known as Ward's Point.[91]

19th- and 20th-Century Use of the Site

In 1801 Samuel Ward's son, Caleb, sold a 30-acre waterfront parcel north of the landmark site to Isaac Butler. Butler's future son-in-law, Henry Hogg Biddle, acquired the land around 1831 and constructed a Greek Revival-style house just north of Conference House c. 1853; the Henry Hogg Biddle House was designated a New York City Landmark in 1990.[92] Caleb Ward lived at Conference House for the remainder of his life, and one of his sons built the Apka Ward house in the first half of the 19th century; originally located within the northern area of the landmark site, it is no longer extant.[93] The Ward family continued to use the landmark site for farming until 1835 when the tract was sold to a real estate developer as an investment property, prompting a series of additional sales to other land developers who eventually subdivided the land and sold off lots in the 1850s.[94] In 1858, excavation work for one of the earliest buildings known to have been constructed within the landmark site, the no-longer extant Cole-Decker house, revealed archaeological resources.[95] As a consequence of these discoveries, archaeologists (professional and avocational), so-called "relic collectors," and trespassers began to search for artifacts within Conference House Park over the next century.[96]

By 1874, W.H. Aspinwall, a wealthy American businessman and co-founder of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company and Panama Canal Railway companies, owned more than 200 acres of mostly undeveloped land in the southwestern region of Staten Island, including much of the landmark site.[97] The land was an investment property and Aspinwall never resided there.[98] In the 1870s, very few structures were present south of the Biddle House and Conference House; the Cole-Decker house, owned at the time by J. Cole, was extant along with the Hoboken Yacht Club House owned by Aspinwall, which appears to have been located possibly within, or just outside of, the southern boundary of the landmark site.[99]

The landmark site and its surroundings were surveyed and laid out for streets and building lots starting in the 1870s, but the real estate boom that developers had hoped for never occurred.[100] By 1907, most of the landmark site was owned by Charles H. Leland and Abner Decker, who had purchased the property previously owned by J. Cole (the Cole-Decker house). Several wood frame structures dotted the otherwise undeveloped land, with a network of planned streets in the vicinity.[101] By 1917, Charles H. Leland continued to own most of the landmark site and Decker was still in ownership of the Cole-Decker property. William Alberti was in possession of the northern area of the landmark site, south of Conference House. While the area that would become Conference House Park remained still largely undeveloped in 1917, more wood frame houses and streets appear on historic maps further to the east.[102] A few streets in the area were paved prior to the 1920s, including Satterlee and Massachusetts, but most were not, remaining instead as dirt paths or lost under vegetational growth.[103] In some cases, the trees that originally flanked the former streets and paths remain as visible allées among the wooded areas within the landmark site. Curbs, streetlamps, and fire hydrants that once lined these former streets also remain in some places.

Local historians and politicians initiated several campaigns in the late-19th and early-20th centuries to protect Conference House Park, primarily to ensure that Conference House itself, which was vacant, did not fall victim to development

or vandalism. Their attempts continued in vain in 1888, 1896, 1901, and 1909; however, in 1925 advocates persuaded investors to purchase Conference House and 11 contiguous lots, encompassing the entirety of the landmark site, and to donate the property to the City of New York. This was accomplished on April 29, 1926. Care and improvement of the property was assumed by the Conference House Association in 1929 in partnership with the City. The house is also a member of the Historic House Trust of New York City. The visitor's center at 298 Satterlee Street, which is a Spanish Revival style bungalow and the only remaining structure located within the Aakawaxung Munahanung (Island Protected from the Wind) Archaeological Site, was constructed in the 1920s, around the time of the City's acquisition of Conference House and its surrounding grounds.[104] It is considered a non-contributing feature within the landmark site. In 1937, the site was opened to the public. Over the years, the Department of Parks and Recreation has continued to expand Conference House Park, which now includes 265 acres of land.[105]

New York City's Tribal Nations Today

Indigenous Peoples still live in New York City. Some are descended from people who were here when the European colonists arrived, and others have come from across the Americas. The descendants of the original Munsee now live among the Delaware Nation, the Delaware Tribe of Indians, and the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohicans, all of which are recognized by the U.S. Federal government as being Tribal Nations that are descended from the Tribal Nations that once lived in what is now New York City in addition to the Shinnecock Nation.[106] New York State has also recognized these tribes as well as the Unkechaug Nation.

At the time of European arrival, the Munsee were separated by two dialects of the Eastern Algonquian language—Unami south of the Raritan River and Munsee to the north—and by family groups.[107] The Sinoway were in the East Bronx with the Wiechquaeskecks in the West Bronx and Manhattan. The Canarsee were in Brooklyn with villages in southern Manhattan. The Rockaway and Matinecock were in Queens, and the Canarsee, Raritan, and Hackensack were on Staten Island.

The Unkechaug and Shinnecock of Long Island had different ties that connected culturally and by language to the Indigenous Peoples of Southeastern Connecticut across the Long Island Sound to the north.

During the 17th and early-18th centuries, the pressures and threats faced by the region's Indigenous Peoples from expanding colonial settlements, a rapidly changing ecosystem, disease, and armed conflict with Europeans combined and contributed to the displacement and reconfiguration of tribal governments. These communities banded together to form new alliances amongst themselves, with their Unami kin, and neighboring tribes like the Mahicans to the north and east. Land treaties brokered with Europeans provided temporary stability until European expansion into new territories violated negotiated terms and displaced the Munsee further north and west into Pennsylvania and Ohio. Today, descendants of the Munsee, including those who identify as Delaware or Mohican, live on Tribal land in Wisconsin, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Ontario, Canada.

Archaeological Excavations at the Site

The first archaeological discoveries at the site were made in 1858 during the construction of the Cole-Decker house, formerly located along the southern end of the site.[108] The first professional archaeological project was undertaken for the

American Museum of Natural History by George Hubbard Pepper, who grew up in Tottenville and is more widely known for his work in the American Southwest. He worked at the site from 1893–1899.[109] This project provides the most detailed information about the Indigenous Peoples presence at the site.[110]

The next large project was conducted by Mark R. Harrington in 1920 for the Museum of the American Indian-Heye Foundation, which is now part of the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian.[111] He and his team found over 30 archaeological features and hundreds of artifacts. Avocational archaeologists and Staten Island residents Albert Anderson and Donald Sainz worked at the site from 1959–1967 and in 1967, they uncovered a stratified Early Archaic series of hearths that were only fully understood once they were analyzed and published by William A. Ritchie and Robert Funk in 1971.[112]

It must be noted that while these projects provide most of the known data about the Indigenous Peoples' presence at the landmark site, the work occurred before modern standards of archaeology were set. Therefore, it is uncertain where excavations occurred or how the discoveries that were made related to one another. Today, articles from the period and secondary sources are relied upon to understand what was discovered.[113] More importantly however, this work was performed without input from the Tribal Nations. In addition, it must be noted that there have been multiple episodes of looting at the site and it is unknown how widespread these activities have been or where the resulting collections may now reside.

A few archaeological projects have occurred at the site since 1960. Jerome Jacobson spent many years investigating past projects at the site including examining related archaeological collections and interviewing people he identified as having made discoveries at the site and cataloging their private collections. He also conducted archaeological field testing in 1960 to document the site stratigraphy and encountered several features.[114] He synthesized what has been discovered about the site and published a book about his findings with the Staten Island Museum in 1980.[115] He also played an essential role in placing the site on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982 and its listing as a National Historic Landmark in 1993.

In 1997 archaeologist Arnold Pickman, surveyed the park to create a sensitivity model to be applied as a planning document for future Department of Parks and Recreation work.[116] This study was used as a basis for the 2003 park reconstruction project in order to minimize the disturbance to any significant archaeological resources. The archaeological firm, John Milner Associates, conducted testing during the project and recovered Indigenous Peoples' artifacts but no features.[117]

Additional archaeological projects have occurred in the vicinity including work conducted by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission in 1980 when artifacts associated with the site's Indigenous Peoples and historic past were uncovered near Conference House.[118] Please see the full list of archaeological projects included in the Appendix.

Archaeological Resources

The site still contains significant archaeological resources related to Indigenous Peoples' occupation of the site over thousands of years.

Cultural Complex:

Archaeology has uncovered artifacts and features that indicate that the site was occupied at least for short periods of time over thousands of years, beginning with Early Archaic period. According to

Jerome Jacobson, most of the features were not well documented by the archaeological excavators in the late-19th and early-20th centuries, and so they are hard to date but indicate evidence of food preparation and tool making.[119] In addition, hundreds of artifacts created during the Woodland period were found. These collections indicate that the site was used over 8,000 years and, at least in the later Woodland period, there was likely to have been a village.[120]

Other features have also been documented at the site suggesting more intensive use from the Woodland period and possibly into the 17th century.[121] In the 1960s, Jerome Jacobson concluded the evidence found at the site was in keeping with Munsee traditions.[122]

Middens:
Shell middens are collections of discarded shells (usually oyster) that sometimes include other types of food waste, tools, and on occasion, culturally sensitive materials. The site has been found to contain an extensive deposit of shells that are sometimes mixed with earth. It is unclear if this layer represents Indigenous Peoples' middens, which were then spread out through historic plowing activities and/or if this layer also includes shells from the 19th-century oyster harvesting activities as Tottenville was an important center for this industry.[123] However, it is possible to see piles of shells today at the surface which may be middens (see Figure 5).

Historic-era Archaeological Resources:
It is not known when the last Indigenous Peoples left the site but there are accounts that at least one group remained in the area until the 18th century.[124] This suggests that it is possible that the site may contain Indigenous Peoples' archaeological resources dating from the beginning of the Contact period through the 18th century. In addition, while the landmark site is primarily significant for its association with the lives of many generations of Indigenous Peoples who were once at the site, it also has the potential to contain archaeological resources associated with European and early American settlement, including the 19th-century Cole-Decker farmstead and the Apka Ward house.[125]

Climate Change Impacts

As a coastal resource, the Aakawaxung Munahanung (Island Protected from the Wind) Archaeological Site is already facing a range of climate change impacts, which are likely to pose preservation challenges at the site.

This part of Staten Island, at the mouth of the New York Bight,[126] is exposed to extreme wave action and coastal flooding during hurricanes and other severe storm events as storm-driven waves are funneled into New York Harbor, Raritan Bay, and the shoreline of Staten Island. On October 29, 2012, Superstorm Sandy approached New York City with tropical-storm-force winds and storm surge, resulting in significant erosion in the site's vicinity including at the landmark site's protective bluffs and along the shoreline.[127]

The city is working with the New York State and the federal government on mitigation projects in the vicinity of the landmark site.[128] In addition to coastal impacts, erosion at the site is also caused by storm water runoff. Green infrastructure has been built adjacent to the landmark site to better manage drainage.

Because of the sensitivity of this coastal site, and the varied projected impacts, a range of mitigation and resiliency measures may need to be constructed near or on the landmark site.

Conclusion

The Aakawaxung Munahanung (Island Protected from the Wind) Archaeological Site is significant because of its heritage, archaeological integrity, and

age. It contains the region's best documented site regarding Indigenous Peoples' presence in the region and is especially important to the Tribal Nations as a tangible link to their ancestors who inhabited the landmark site for thousands of years. The Aakawaxung Munahanung (Island Protected from the Wind) Archaeological Site is the first New York City landmark to specifically recognize the history and significance of the hundreds of generations of Indigenous People who have lived here, and the first landmark with old Munsee language in its name. Its designation recognizes the significance of the site's long association with and importance to Indigenous Peoples.

Endnotes

[1] National Historic Landmark (NHL) Nomination, *Ward's Point Archeological Site, Staten Island, New York*, (aka Burial Ridge, STD 1–3, Tottenville Site) (nominated September 11, 1992; listed April 19, 1993), nomination prepared by Jerome Jacobson and Robert S. Grumet, Section 7; 4.

[2] Public Archaeology Laboratory (PAL), *New Discoveries at Old Place: The Story of the Old Place Neck Site, Staten Island, New York* (2016), 21, accessed April 26, 2021, http://www.palinc.com/sites/default/files/publications/Old_Place_Neck_Site.pdf; Geoarchaeology Research Associates (GRA), "Phase I and II Geoarchaeological Investigation of the Riverside Project Area, Parcel 2, Volumes I, Background, Research Design, Results, and Conclusions" (Yonkers, NY: February 2016), prepared by Joseph Schuldenrein, John A. Turck, Eva Hulse, Kevin Wiley, Rebecca Yamin, Joe Mazzariello, Acacia Berry, and Zenobie S. Garrett, 19, (report available on LPC's website, http://s-media.nyc.gov/agencies/lpc/arch_reports/1682.pdf).

[3] Eugene Boesch, "*An Overview of Life before New Amsterdam*," New York City Archaeological Repository website (2016), 1, accessed April 27, 2021, http://archaeology.cityofnewyork.us/linker/collection/6/6; Anne-Marie Cantwell and Diana diZerega Wall, *Unearthing Gotham: The Archaeology of New York City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 43, 47; "Manhattan Yields Mastodon's Bones," *New York Times* (March 26, 1925), 15.

[4] Cantwell and Wall, 61; Geoarchaeology Research Associates (GRA), "Geomorphology/Archaeological Boring and GIS Model of the Submerged Paleoenvironment in the New York/New Jersey Harbor and Bight in Connection with New York and New Jersey Harbor Navigation Project, Port of New York and New Jersey" (March 2014), prepared by Joseph Schuldenrein, Curtis E. Larsen, Michael Aiuvaslasit, and Mark A. Smith, 120, (report available on LPC's website: http://s-media.nyc.gov/agencies/lpc/arch_reports/1795.pdf).

[5] NHL Nomination, Section 7; 5.

[6] Clyde MacKenzie, "History of the Fisheries of Raritan Bay, New York and New Jersey," from *Marine Fisheries*, 4, accessed May 10, 2021, https://spo.nmfs.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf-content/MFR/mfr524/mfr5241.pdf.

[7] Wampum are shell beads that were used for ceremonial purposes that also became currency used in regional trade networks in the colonial period.

[8] Jo Ann Cotz and Edward Lenik, "Cultural Resource Sensitivity Study Sharrott Estates Archeological Project Sandy Ground National Register District" (1982), 13 (report available on LPC's website: http://s-media.nyc.gov/agencies/lpc/arch_reports/663.pdf).

[9] David Franz, "An Historical Perspective on Molluscs in Lower New York Harbor, With Emphasis on Oysters," from Gary F. Mayer, ed., *Ecological Stress and the New York Bight: Science and Management* (Columbia, SC: Estuarine Research Federation, 1982), 185–186.

[10] Ibid., 186.

[11] The Billion Oyster Project, accessed April 26, 2021, https://www.billionoysterproject.org/; The Living Breakwater Program: Tottenville, accessed April 26, 2021, https://stormrecovery.ny.gov/living-breakwaters-tottenville.

[12] For more information about these Tribal Nations please see their websites, accessed May 10, 2021: http://delawaretribe.org/; https://www.delawarenation-nsn.gov/ and https://www.mohican.com/.

[13] Federal Register**,** vol. 83, no. 155 (Friday, August 10, 2018), Notices: 39777.

[14] The Delaware Nation, the Delaware Tribe of Indians, and the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band were consulted about what oral histories they may have related to the site and the Unkechaug Nation was asked to share what they may know. At the time of designation, no oral histories were identified.

[15] Boesch, 1; Cantwell and Wall, 46; PAL, 25.

[16] B.P. is an abbreviation for years *before present*, which is calculated backwards from the year 1950.

[17] Diana DiPaolo Loren, *In Contact: Bodies and Spaces in the Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Eastern Woodlands* (Lanham, MD: AltiMira Press, 2008), 1–5, see discussion of 'early colonial' versus 'contact' period.

[18] GRA (2016), 20.

[19] Boesch, 1; Cantwell and Wall, 42; GRA (2016), 20; PAL, 25–26.

[20] Cantwell and Wall, 40

[21] Cantwell and Wall, 46; GRA (2016), 20; PAL, 26.

[22] Robert S. Grumet, *The Munsee Indians: A History*

(Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009), 26; PAL, 26.

[23] This work was subsequently analyzed by William A. Ritchie, who was the state archaeologist at the New York State Museum and Science Bureau and Robert Funk who later succeeded him in that position as reported in: William A. Ritchie and Robert E. Funk, "Evidence for Early Archaic Occupations on Staten Island," *Pennsylvania Archaeologist*, vol. 41(3) (1971), 50–53.

[24] Ritchie and Funk, 50–53.

[25] Cantwell and Wall, 54.

[26] Boesch, 1–2; PAL, 26–27.

[27] Jerome Jacobson, "Burial Ridge, Tottenville Staten Island, New York: Archaeology at New York City's Largest Prehistoric Cemetery" (Staten Island, NY: Staten Island Institute of Arts & Sciences, 1980), 55.

[28] Cantwell and Wall, 59; GRA (2016), 21.

[29] Eric W. Sanderson, *Mannahatta: A Natural History of New York City* (New York: Wildlife Conservation Society, Abrams, 2009), 284–290; Cantwell and Wall, 57.

[30] "Mast" is the fruit produced by trees and shrubs, like acorns, walnut, and hickory nuts. These nuts are referred to as hard mast whereas raspberries, blueberries, and other fruits and buds are known as soft mast. The term mast is derived from an old English word meaning "fat" or "food."

[31] Jacobson, "Burial Ridge, Tottenville Staten Island, New York: Archaeology at New York City's Largest Prehistoric Cemetery," 55–56.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Noel D. Justice, *Stone Age Spear and Arrow Points of the Midcontinental and Eastern United States* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1987), 115.

[34] GRA (2016), 118.

[35] "Cultural traditions" in archaeology refer to people using the same type and style of objects suggesting that they are transmitting how to make and use those objects, which indicates cultural connection.

[36] Jacobson, "Burial Ridge, Tottenville Staten Island, New York: Archaeology at New York City's Largest Prehistoric Cemetery," 56; Jerome Jacobson's excavations at the site provides stratigraphic evidence for a Transitional Archaic cultural horizon. A yellow sand substratum, notably absent of ceramics and found across the site, is identified by Jacobson as a pre-ceramic or Transitional Archaic occupation strata, Jacobson, "Burial Ridge, Tottenville Staten Island, New York: Archaeology at New York City's Largest Prehistoric Cemetery," 9–10, 84.

[37] Boesch, 2; GRA (2014), 128; GRA (2016), 22–23.

[38] Cantwell and Wall, 73–74, 94, 96; GRA (2016), 128; PAL, 27–29.

[39] Cantwell and Wall, 73.

[40] Cantwell and Wall, 73, 91; PAL, 27–28.

[41] Cantwell and Wall, 95; GRA (2016), 22; PAL, 27–28.

[42] P.S. Bridges, "Prehistoric Diet and Health in a Coastal New York Skeletal Sample," *Northeast Anthropology* 48, (1994), 13–23; PAL, 27–28. The isotope analysis cited by Bridges (1994) used skeletal material from Tottenville, Staten Island that are in the collections of the American Museum of Natural History.

[43] Cantwell and Wall, 81, 82–86, 104–109; GRA (2016), 22.

[44] Cantwell and Wall, 87.

[45] GRA (2016), 22–23; PAL, 27–28.

[46] Grumet, 3–4; Cantwell and Wall, 119; Anne-Marie Cantwell, "Penhawitz and Wampage and the Seventeenth-Century World They Dominated," from Meta F. Janowitz and Diane Dallal, eds., *Tales of Gotham: Historical Archaeology, Ethnohistory, and Microhistory of New York City.* (New York: Springer, 2013), 7–30.

[47] NHL Nomination, Section 7; 6.

[48] Cantwell and Wall, 84–85.

[49] Robert Grumet, *First Manhattans: A History of Indians of Greater New York*, (Norman, University of Oklahoma, 2011): 7–9; also see: Cantwell, "Penhawitz and Wampage and the Seventeenth-Century World They Dominated."

[50] Jacobson, "Burial Ridge, Tottenville Staten Island, New York: Archaeology at New York City's Largest Prehistoric Cemetery," 70.

[51] AKRF, Inc., *Revised Phase IA Archaeological Documentary Study for Coastal and Social Resiliency Initiatives for the Tottenville Shoreline: Living Breakwaters and Tottenville Shoreline Protection Projects, Staten Island, Richmond County, New York* (New York, NY: May 2017), prepared by Elizabeth D. Meade, 21 (report available on LPC's website: http://s-media.nyc.gov/agencies/lpc/arch_reports/1748.pdf).

[52] Jim Rementer and Ray Whritenour from The Lenape Talking Dictionary (see : The Lenape Talking Dictionary |

About Us (talk-lenape.org)] were consulted by the Delaware Tribe of Indians about the information presented in, Grumet, *The Munsee Indians: A History,* 297, number 17.

[53] AKRF, 21; Robert Grumet also states that "Jerome Jacobson (1960) and others have suggested that Aquehonga was the name of a large Late Woodland period (ca. 950–200 B.P.) settlement located on Ward's Point, near Tottenville at the southern tip of the island," Robert Steven Grumet, *Native American Place Names in New York City* (New York City: Museum of the City of New York, 1981), 3.

[54] AKRF, 21.

[55] NHL Nomination, Section 7; 6.

[56] AKRF, 21.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 38.

[60] AKRF, 21 & 29; Jacobson, "Burial Ridge, Tottenville, Staten Island, New York: Archaeology at New York City's Largest Prehistoric Cemetery," 12.

[61] Burrows and Wallace, 69.

[62] AKRF, 21.

[63] Cantwell, "*Penhawitz and Wapage and the Seventeenth-Century World They Dominated,*"19; Grumet, *The Munsee Indians: A History*, 15.

[64] Cantwell, "*Penhawitz and Wapage and the Seventeenth-Century World They Dominated,*"10–11.

[65] Reginald Pelham Bolton, *New York City in Indian Possession* (New York: Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, 1920), 287; Cantwell, "*Penhawitz and Wapage and the Seventeenth-Century World They Dominated,*"11.

[66] AKRF, 21; Bolton, 288; Jacobson, "Burial Ridge, Tottenville Staten Island, New York: Archaeology at New York City's Largest Prehistoric Cemetery," 12.

[67] AKRF, 21 & 29; Jacobson, "Burial Ridge, Tottenville, Staten Island, New York: Archaeology at New York City's Largest Prehistoric Cemetery," 12.

[68] AKRF, 21 & 29.

[69] Ibid., 29.

[70] Conference House, A Historic Site and National Landmark and Part of NYC Historic House Trust website, "History," accessed April 26, 2021, https://theconferencehouse.org/about/history/. Some historic documents spell Billopp as Billop.

[71] AKRF, 29.

[72] Henry Barton Dawson, "Papers Concerning the Boundary Between the States of N.Y. and New Jersey", *The Gazette Series*, vol. 3 (Yonkers, NY: 1866), 122. The 2017 AKRF report identifies the year of transfer as 1675 (p. 29), so it is perhaps safer to say that the land transfer likely happened sometime between 1675 and 1676.

[73] Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), *Conference House Designation Report (LP-0393)* (New York: City of New York, 1967), 1. There is some discrepancy about the date of construction of Conference House. The LPC designation report written in 1967 states that the house was built "about 1680." The AKRF report from 2017, however, states (p. 29) that the house was built in 1676.

[74] "A Map of Staten Island During the Revolution 1775–1783" in LPC's files identifies Billopp's Point.

[75] Conference House, A Historic Site and National Landmark and Part of NYC Historic House Trust website; Historical Perspectives, Inc., "Phase IA Archaeological Documentary Study, New York City Department of Environmental Protection Wards Point Infrastructure Improvements Amboy Road from Wards Point Avenue to U.S. Pierhead and Bulkhead Line, Staten Island, Richmond Country, New York" (January 2011), prepared by Julie Abell Horn, 7. The Historical Perspectives, Inc. report described Billopp as an enslaver.

[76] Conference House, A Historic Site and National Landmark and Part of NYC Historic House Trust website; Historical Perspectives, Inc., 7. Author of this report, Julie Abell Horn, observed that Billopp "might have selected the site due to the prior forest clearing and existing Native American agricultural fields."

[77] NHL Nomination, Section 7; 6.

[78] Ibid., Section 7; 7.

[79] AKRF, 21; Grumet, *Native American Place Names in New York City*, 3.

[80] Most of the discussion of Conference House and the Henry Hogg Biddle House, both designated New York City Landmarks, is borrowed from the LPC, *Conference House Designation Report (LP-0393)*, 1 and LPC, *Henry Hogg Biddle House Designation Report (LP-1707)* (New York: City of New York, 1990), prepared by Shirley

Zavin, 2.

[81] Conference House, A Historic Site and National Landmark and Part of NYC Historic House Trust website.

[82] Historical Perspectives, Inc., 7. According to this report, Billopp's will included four horses, six oxen, ten milk cows and calves, three steers, a bull, 160 sheep, and fowl.

[83] Conference House, A Historic Site and National Landmark and Part of NYC Historic House Trust website.

[84] Historical Perspectives, Inc., 8.

[85] AKRF, 29.

[86] Ibid., 29–30.

[87] LPC, *Conference House Designation Report (LP-0393)*, 1.

[88] Conference House, A Historic Site and National Landmark and Part of NYC Historic House Trust website adds that Captain Billopp had two daughters Mary and Anne, who were put in charge of Bentley Manor starting in 1702. Mary had no children and Anne married Colonel Thomas Farmar in 1705. Anne and Thomas lived at Bentley Manor (Conference House) and bequeathed it to their third son, Thomas, who was born in 1711. Thomas (the son) took on the name of Billopp and had 8 children with his second wife, Sarah Leonard. The eldest of their children was Colonial Christopher Billopp, who owned the property during the Revolutionary War.

[89] NHL Nomination, Section 7; 7; Mark Boonshoft, "Dispossessing Loyalists and Redistributing Property in Revolutionary New York," New York Public Library Blog (2016), accessed April 15, 2021, https://www.nypl.org/blog/2016/09/19/loyalist-property-confiscation.

[90] Historical Perspectives, Inc., 8; NHL Nomination, Section 7; 7.

[91] F.W. Beers, *Atlas of Staten Island, Richmond Country, New York* (New York: J.B. Beers & Co., 1874), New York Public Library Digital Collections, identifies Ward's Point.

[92] AKRF, 5 & 43; LPC, *Henry Hogg Biddle House Designation Report (LP-1707)*, 2. The LPC designation report written in 1990 states that the Biddle House was constructed in the late 1840s; however, updated information provided in the 2017 AKRF report (p. 5) states that the home does not appear on historic maps until around 1853, indicating that the date of construction is more likely to be c. 1853.

[93] Arnold Pickman, *Archaeological and Historical Intensive Documentary Research, Conference House Park, Staten Island* (1997), 70-72 (report available on LPC's website: http://s-media.nyc.gov/agencies/lpc/arch_reports/797.pdf); John Milner Associates, *Archaeological Investigations of the Conference House Park, Staten Island, New York* (West Chester, Pennsylvania: 2004), prepared by Arnold Pickman and Rebecca Yamin, 109 (report available on LPC's website: http://s-media.nyc.gov/agencies/lpc/arch_reports/869.pdf).

[94] NHL, Section 7; 7; Caleb Ward lived at Conference House until 1835, but after his departure the house was never again owner-occupied, contributing ultimately to its deterioration, National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), *Ward's Point Conservation Area, Tottenville, New York* (# 93000609) (listed August 6, 1982), nomination prepared by Charles A. Florence, Section 8; 1.

[95] NHL Nomination, Section 7; 7.

[96] Ibid., Section 7; 8. Additional explanation about the professional excavations that occurred and their findings is provided in the following section, Excavations at the Site.

[97] Beers, *Atlas of Staten Island, Richmond Country, New York*.

[98] Tottenville Historical Society, "Places and Street Names, Aspinwall Street," accessed April 26, 2021, https://www.tottenvillehistory.com/history/places-street-names/index.php. Aspinwall Street in Tottenville is named for Aspinwall.

[99] The Cole-Decker House is no longer extant. See Beers, *Atlas of Staten Island, Richmond Country, New York* for original location.

[100] NHL Nomination, Section 7; 7.

[101] E. Robinson and R.H. Pidgeon, *Atlas of the Borough of Richmond, City of New York, Second and Revised Edition* (New York: E. Robinson, 1907), plate 22, The New York Public Library Digital Collections.

[102] George W. Bromley and Walter S. Bromley, Atlas of the City of New York, Borough of Richmond, Staten Island (Philadelphia: G.W. Bromley and Co., 1917), vol. 2, plate 35.

[103] NHL Nomination, Section 7; 7.

[104] NRHP, Section 8; 3.

[105] NHL Nomination, Section 7; 7.

[106] U.S. Department of the Interior Indian Affairs Frequently Asked Questions.

[107] Grumet (2009: 3–4) notes that the people who spoke the Munsee dialect became known as the Munsee, meaning "the people from Minisink" (near today's Delaware Water Gap), after 1727.

[108] Jacobson, "Burial Ridge, Tottenville Staten Island, New York: Archaeology at New York City's Largest Prehistoric Cemetery," 8; Arthur Hollick, ed., *Proceedings of the Natural Science Association of Staten Island*, vol. 3, (New Brighton, New York, May 13th, 1893), 40.

[109] The related collection is curated by the American Museum of Natural History.

[110] Jacobson, "Burial Ridge, Tottenville Staten Island, New York: Archaeology at New York City's Largest Prehistoric Cemetery," 8.

[111] Ibid., 9. This collection is now curated by the National Museum of the American Indian.

[112] Ritchie and Funk, 50–53.

[113] LPC did reach out to museums with related collections to see what field records they hold.

[114] NHL Nomination, Section 7; 9.

[115] Jacobson, "Burial Ridge, Tottenville Staten Island, New York: Archaeology at New York City's Largest Prehistoric Cemetery."

[116] Pickman, *Archaeological and Historical Intensive Documentary Research, Conference House Park, Staten Island*, 1–3.

[117] John Milner Associates, 110–111.

[118] LPC, "*An Archaeological Investigation: Th« Conference House Park Site, Staten Island, New York* (New York: City of New York, 1991), prepared by Sherene Baugher, Edward J. Lenik, Robert W. Venables, Kate T. Morgan, and Judith M. Guston, 71, 75, 121 (report available on LPC's website: http://s-media.nyc.gov/agencies/lpc/arch_reports/782.pdf).

[119] Jacobson, "Burial Ridge, Tottenville Staten Island, New York: Archaeology at New York City's Largest Prehistoric Cemetery," 21–28.

[120] Ibid., 70.

[121] Ibid., 39.

[122] NHL Nomination, Section 7: 10. No detailed burial information is included in deference to the Consulting Tribal Nations.

[123] Jacobson, "Burial Ridge, Tottenville Staten Island, New York: Archaeology at New York City's Largest Prehistoric Cemetery," 18.

[124] Ibid., 13.

[125] John Milner Associates, 4, Figure 2, 109; Jacobson, "Burial Ridge, Tottenville Staten Island, New York: Archaeology at New York City's Largest Prehistoric Cemetery," 8.

[126] The New York Bight is a geological identification applied to a roughly triangular indentation that extends northeasterly from Cape May to Montauk Point and because of its interaction with the Gulf Stream helps to ensure that the coastal climate of the bight area is temperate. Various New York Bight studies conducted by the USGS, accessed May 3, 2021, https://www.usgs.gov/science-explorer-results?es=new+york+bight.

[127] AKRF, 1.

[128] Ibid., 4.

Findings and Designation

Aakawaxung Munahanung (Island Protected from the Wind) Archaeological Site

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and the other features of this building and site, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Aakawaxung Munahanung (Island Protected from the Wind) Archaeological Site has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City, state, and the nation..

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Aakawaxung Munahanung (Island Protected from the Wind) Archaeological Site and designates Borough of Staten Island Tax Map Block 7857, Lot 1 in part consisting of the portion bounded by Hylan Boulevard to the north, Satterlee Street to the east, the formerly mapped street just south of Clermont Avenue to the south, and the high water mark on the shoreline to the west as its Landmark Site, as shown in the attached map.

Figure 1: Beach on western boundary of the landmark site
LPC, June 2021

Figure 2: Path east of the bluff
LPC, June 2021

Figure 3: Woodlands in the center of the landmark site
LPC, June 2021

Figure 4: Looking west from bluff (above)
LPC, June 2021

Figure 5: Example of a shell layer (below)
LPC, June 2021

Figure 6: Bluffs in northwestern corner of the site, seen from the beach LPC, June 2021

Figure 7: View looking west along northern boundary of the site (wooded area at left) from Hylan Boulevard LPC, June 2021

Figure 8: Path through dunes at southern boundary of the landmark site
LPC, June 2021

Figure 9: View south into landmark site from path outside eastern boundary
LPC, June 2021

Appendix: Aakawaxung Munahanung (Island Protected from the Wind) Archaeological Site

Appendix 1

Archaeological Projects Completed in the Vicinity of the Landmark Site

Project Name	Date	Key Excavators	Findings	Collection Location	Project Archive Location
Foundation excavations for the construction of the Cole-Decker House[i]	1858	Unanticipated Discovery; Joel Cole, (homeowner) and James L. Bedell, (carpenter)	Pre-European Indigenous Peoples cultural materials[ii]	Some related materials may be in the collection of the Staten Island Museum.[iii]	Unknown
Addition to the Cole-Decker House[iv]	1863	Unanticipated Discovery; Joel Cole, (homeowner) and Isaac Bedell, Augustus Zealous, & Charles Drake (carpenters)	Pre-European Indigenous Peoples cultural materials[v]	Some related materials may be in the collection of the Staten Island Museum.[vi]	Unknown
Excavation of the Appleby Estate Cistern[vii]	ND	Samuel Gibbs, Alfred Reid, & Richard Robadee	Pre-European Indigenous Peoples cultural materials[viii]	Some related materials may be in the collection of the Staten Island Museum.[ix]	Unknown
"Sandy field adjacent to the Cole Property"[x]	1893	George H. Pepper (permission to excavate given by Richard Christopher)	Pre-European Indigenous Peoples cultural materials	Unknown[xi]	Unknown
Sandy field adjacent to the Cole Property	September 30, 1894	George H. Pepper	Cache of fish bones and oyster shells interpreted as Pre-European Indigenous Peoples cultural materials[xii]	Unknown	Unknown
"Old Billopp estate, on land adjoining Mr. Decker's property"	January 27 & 30, 1894	Captain Robert D. Wainwright and John Cochran (permission to excavate given by C. H. Leland)	Pre-European Indigenous Peoples cultural materials[xiii]	Unknown, possibly the Staten Island Museum	Possibly the Staten Island Museum

Burial Ridge, Tottenville, Staten Island, Richmond County, NY	1895	George H. Pepper & M. H. Saville. Excavation was sponsored by the American Museum of Natural History	Pre-European Indigenous Peoples cultural materials.[xiv]	American Museum of Natural History. Accessioned in 1895.[xv]	American Museum of Natural History
Burial Ridge, Tottenville, Staten Island, Richmond County, NY*[xvi]	Circa 1895	George H. Pepper & M. H. Saville. This excavation was likely sponsored by the American Museum of Natural History as well	Pre-European Indigenous Peoples.[xvii]	American Museum of Natural History	American Museum of Natural History
Estate of Mr. Acker (just below that of Mr. Decker, whose property adjoins the Billopp estate).[xviii]	March 30 and April 23,1897	Captain Robert D. Wainwright	Pre-European Indigenous Peoples cultural materials[xix]	Unknown, possibly the Staten Island Museum	Possibly the Staten Island Museum
Burial Ridge, Tottenville, Staten Island, Richmond County, NY	1900	Mark R. Harrington	Pre-European Indigenous Peoples cultural materials[xx]	American Museum of Natural History. Collection gift by F. W. Putnam in 1909.	American Museum of Natural History
Wards Point, Tottenville, Staten Island	1920	Mark R. Harrington (crew included Donald Cadzow, Charles Turbyfill, Melville Decker, and Dr. Blackie).	Pre-European Indigenous Peoples cultural materials.[xxi]	National Museum of the American Indian, collected under auspices of Museum of American Indian, Heye Foundation.	National Museum of the American Indian. (Mark R. Harrington. Unpublished field notes on archaeological research at Ward's Point, Tottenville, Ms. 1920).
Burial Ridge, Staten Island, New York[xxii]	1959–1967	Albert Anderson, his son Robert Anderson, and Donald Sainz	Pre-European Indigenous Peoples cultural materials.	Unknown, possibly the Staten Island Museum	Jerome Jacobson, "Archaeology at Tottenville, Staten Island," *The*

					Bulletin of the New York State Archaeological Association, vol. 23, 1961.
Columbia University Field School Excavations, near the Cole/Decker House Foundation[xxiii]	1960, Spring	Ralph Solecki, Columbia University	Pre-European Indigenous Peoples cultural materials[xxiv]	Possibly the Staten Island Museum	Possibly the Staten Island Museum
Burial Ridge, Staten Island, New York	1960	Jerome Jacobson, Columbia University	Pre-European Indigenous Peoples cultural materials.[xxv]	Staten Island Museum	Jerome Jacobson, *Burial Ridge, Tottenville, Staten Island, N.Y.: Archaeology at New York City's Largest Prehistoric Cemetery.* Staten Island, NY: The Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences, 1980.
H. F. Hollowell Site[xxvi]	1967	Donald Hollowell and Albert J. Anderson	Pre-European Indigenous Peoples cultural materials.[xxvii]	Unknown, possibly the Staten Island Museum	William A. Ritchie and Robert E. Funk "Evidence for Early Archaic Occupations on Staten Island," *Pennsylvania Archaeologist*, vol. 41(3), 1971.
An Archaeological Investigation: The Conference House	1979 and 1980 (1991)	The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (Sherene	Historic period artifacts with a few Contact and Pre-European Indigenous Peoples cultural materials.	Conference House Association	LPC's website

Park Site, Staten Island, New York		Baugher, Edward J. Lenik, Robert W. Venables, Kate T. Morgan, and Judith M. Guston)			
Oakwood Beach Water Pollution Control Project, Phase 1, City of New York, Borough of Staten Island	1984	Arnold Pickman and Rebecca Yamin	Historic and Pre-European Indigenous Peoples cultural materials.	Unknown	LPC's website
Archaeological and Historical Intensive Documentary Research, Conference House Park, Staten Island, New York.	1997	Arnold Pickman	Summarized research on Conference House Park and determines the site is archaeologically sensitive for both the historic and pre-European Indigenous Peoples periods.	None	LPC's website
Archaeological Investigations: Conference House Park, Staten Island, New York	2003 (2004)	John Milner and Associates (Arnold Pickman and Rebecca Yamin)	Historic and pre-European Indigenous Peoples cultural materials.	Unknown	LPC's website
Archaeological Investigations: Conference House Park, Staten Island, New York, Addendum Report: Biddle House and Wood/Leven House Landscape Improvements	2004 (2005)	John Milner and Associates (Patrick J. Heaton)	Pre-European Indigenous Peoples cultural materials.	Unknown	LPC's website
Reconstruction of the Pavilion at the End of Hylan Blvd Adjacent	2020	Chrysalis Archaeological Consultants	No significant archaeological resources within the limits of the project impact area.	None	LPC's website

to Satterlee Street in Conference House Park, Staten Island, Richmond County, New York					

[i] George H. Pepper, "Indian Graves at Tottenville," *Proceedings of the Natural History Association of Staten Island*, vol. 3, (May 13, 1893), 40–41.

[ii] Ibid.

[iii] Ibid., 41.

[iv] Ibid., 40.

[v] Ibid., 41.

[vi] Ibid.

[vii] The Appleby Estate is described as a part of Billopp grant, Pepper, "Indian Graves at Tottenville," 41.

[viii] Pepper, "Indian Graves at Tottenville," 41.

[ix] Ibid.

[x] George H. Pepper, "A Recent Discovery of Indian Remains at Tottenville," *Proceedings of the Natural History Association of Staten Island*, vol. IV, No. II, (November 10, 1894), 48–50.

[xi] Alanson Skinner, "The Lenape Indians of Staten Island," *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History,* vol. 3 (1909), 11–12.

[xii] Ibid., 12.

[xiii] Skinner, 12; Robert D. Wainwright, "A Recent Discovery of Indian Skeletons at Tottenville," *Proceedings of the Natural History Association of Staten Island*, vol. VI, No. 4 (February 13, 1897), 18–19.

[xiv] Federal Register**,** Vol. 83, No. 155 (Friday, August 10, 2018), 39777–39779. See page 39778.

[xv] Ibid.

[xvi] The NAGPRA inventory of American Museum of Natural History indicates that this collection was removed from "a location presumed to be Burial Ridge Tottenville, Staten Island" and they were "probably collected by George H. Pepper and M.H. Saville as part of an AMNH [American Museum of Natural History] sponsored expedition." Federal Register 2018, 39778.

[xvii] Skinner, 14–15.

xviii Wainwright, 18. Report goes on to say, "Noticing oyster shells were very plentiful on this ridge, and in some places forming circles, I dug at one of these about the latter part of last month [March 1897].'" Pickman (1997), notes that the Acker estate is the same tract reference by Pepper (1893) as the Appleby

property); Arnold Pickman, "Archaeological and Historical Intensive Documentary Research Conference House Park, Staten Island, New York NYC Parks/Pre-CEQR R," (November 1997), 7, (report available on LPC's website http://s-media.nyc.gov/agencies/lpc/arch_reports/797.pdf).

[xix] Skinner, 12–13.

[xx] Federal Register, 39778.

[xxi] Jerome Jacobson, "Archaeology at Tottenville, Staten Island," *The Bulletin of the New York State Archaeological Association*, vol. 23 (1961), 7; Jerome Jacobson, *Burial Ridge, Tottenville, Staten Island, N.Y.: Archaeology at New York City's Largest Prehistoric Cemetery* (Staten Island, NY: The Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences, 1980), 20–64.

[xxii] Jacobson, "Archaeology at Tottenville, Staten Island," 5, 8; Jacobson, *Burial Ridge, Tottenville, Staten Island, N.Y.: Archaeology at New York City's Largest Prehistoric Cemetery*, 9, 92; Pickman, 8.

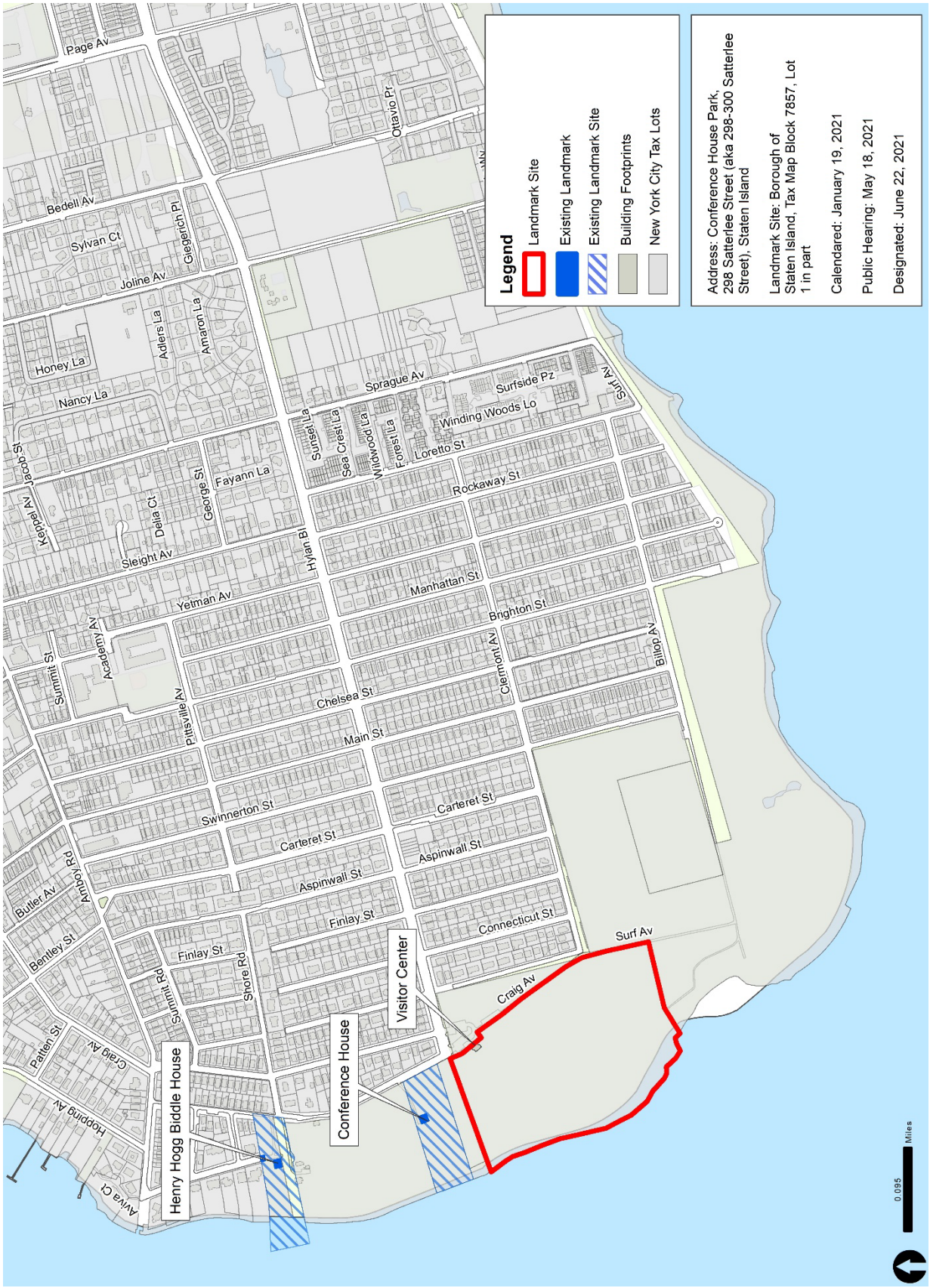
[xxiii] Jacobson, "Archaeology at Tottenville, Staten Island," 5; Pickman, 8.

[xxiv] Ibid.

[xxv] Jacobson, "Archaeology at Tottenville, Staten Island," 5–10; Jacobson, *Burial Ridge, Tottenville, Staten Island, N.Y.: Archaeology at New York City's Largest Prehistoric Cemetery*, 20–64.

[xxvi] Jacobson, "Archaeology at Tottenville, Staten Island," 5, 8; Jacobson, *Burial Ridge, Tottenville, Staten Island, N.Y.: Archaeology at New York City's Largest Prehistoric Cemetery*, V, Appendix D; William A. Ritchie and Robert E. Funk "Evidence for Early Archaic Occupations on Staten Island," *Pennsylvania Archaeologist*, vol. 41(3) (1971), 46–49. Ritchie and Funk described the H.F. Hollowell Site as a 1,500 square foot site located at Tottenville, near the southern end of the island, 46–47.

[xxvii] Ritchie and Funk, "Evidence for Early Archaic Occupations on Staten Island," 46–49.


Legend
Landmark Site
Existing Landmark
Existing Landmark Site
Building Footprints
New York City Tax Lots
Address: Conference House Park, 298 Satterlee Street (aka 298-300 Satterlee Street), Staten Island
Landmark Site: Borough of Staten Island, Tax Map Block 7857, Lot 1 in part
Calendared: January 19, 2021
Public Hearing: May 18, 2021
Designated: June 22, 2021
Page Av
Bedell Av
Sylvan Ct
Giegerich Pl
Joline Av
Honey La
Nancy La
Aders La
Amaron La
Jacob St
Keppel Av
Della Ct
George St
Fayann La
Sleight Av
Yetman Av
Academy Av
Summit St
Pittsville Av
Hylan Bl
Ottavio Pl
Sprague Av
Surfside Pz
Surf Av
Winding Woods Lo
Loretto St
Rockaway St
Manhattan St
Brighton St
Clermont Av
Bilop Av
Chelsea St
Main St
Swinnerton St
Carteret St
Aspinwall St
Finlay St
Connecticut St
Surf Av
Craig Av
Visitor Center
Conference House
Henry Hogg Biddle House
Shore Rd
Summit Rd
Amboy Rd
Butler Av
Bentley St
Patten St
Hopping Av
Alva Ct
Miles
0 095