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February 9, 2016

Mr. Jeffrey Graham  
Senior Project Coordinator  
State University Construction Fund  
Sent via email to: [Jeffrey.Graham@suny.edu](mailto:Jeffrey.Graham@suny.edu)

**RE: University at Albany – Buried Electrical Duct Bank  
City of Albany, Albany County, NY  
Archaeological Assessment (Letter Report)**

Dear Jeff:

Environmental Design & Research, Landscape Architecture, Engineering, & Environmental Services, D.P.C. (EDR) is assisting the State University Construction Fund (SUCF) with environmental permitting associated with the installation of a new buried electrical duct bank on the Harriman State Office Campus in the City of Albany, Albany County, New York (the Project). The Project is being reviewed under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), and the environmental review for the project thus far has consisted of the preparation of an Environmental Assessment Form. As part of the environmental review for the Project, EDR conducted an archaeological assessment of the proposed duct bank. This letter provides information regarding the Project's potential effect on archaeological resources.

### **Project Location and Description**

The Project site is located on the Harriman State Office Campus immediately southwest of the University at Albany Uptown Campus in the northwestern portion of the City of Albany (see Figure 1). The SUCF is proposing to install a new buried electrical duct bank. The buried duct bank will be approximately 5,500 feet long and is proposed to run south from an existing Office of General Services Substation (north of State Employees Federal Credit Union across Washington Avenue from the main Harriman campus) between the inner and outer ring access roads on the northwest side of the Harriman Campus, then northwest across the NYS Police/NYS Emergency Management Office property to the vicinity of the Life Sciences Building on the SUNY Albany Campus. This new duct bank will improve the reliability of existing electrical and telecommunications connections on the University Campus as well as serve future University of Albany expansion development on the Harriman Campus, including the proposed Emerging Technology and Entrepreneurship Complex (ETEC).

The duct bank will be installed via both direct underground bores and open-trench excavation. Portions of the duct bank will require excavation of a trench assumed to be no wider than 10 feet wide and 4-6 feet deep. Within existing

roadways (and road crossings), it is anticipated that directional boring will be utilized to minimize traffic interruption (i.e. Washington Avenue, Harriman Campus access roads). The proposed duct bank occurs primarily on landscaped lawns, except for a small portion at the west end which occurs within second growth forest (Figure 1; Photographs 1-7).

### **Previous Cultural Resources Investigation**

One Phase 1 archaeological survey has been conducted in the vicinity of the proposed duct bank. In 2008, the Louis Berger Group, Inc. (Berger) conducted a Phase 1 survey for the Harriman State Office Campus (Berger, 2008) (see Figure 2). This consisted of the archaeological survey of an approximately 8.2-acre block on the Harriman Campus located approximately 150 feet southeast of the proposed duct bank route. Berger (2008) identified one prehistoric site during their Phase 1 archaeological survey, which is discussed below. According to NYSOPRHPR's online Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS) files, an additional eight archaeological surveys have been conducted within 1-mile (1.6-km) of the current Project site between 2000 and 2015. None of these previous surveys overlap with the current Project site.

EDR reviewed Berger's (2008) report and the CRIS files during background research for the current archaeological assessment. Nine previously recorded archaeological sites occur within 1-mile of the current Project site. They consist of two eligible historic railroad berms (USNs 00140.000325 and 00140.004836), one unevaluated prehistoric site (USN 00140.001794), one unevaluated historic site (USN 00140.002093 – the 1851 Water Conduit), three ineligible prehistoric sites (USNs 00140.004752, 00140.004753, and 00140.004777), and a prehistoric site identified by Berger (2008) which was recommended as ineligible and is not currently included in the CRIS database (Berger Temporary Site 4192-01). Berger Temporary Site 4192-01 is the closest site to the current Project and it is located approximately 150 feet (46 m) away from the proposed duct bank route (see Figure 2). All the other previously recorded archaeological sites are at least 2,000 feet (762 m) away from the current Project site.

To summarize, none of the previously conducted archaeological surveys overlap with the current Project site, and none of the previously recorded archaeological sites occur within the area of potential effect (APE) for the current Project.

Given the density of historic and prehistoric archaeological sites within the area, EDR considers the current Project site to be of moderate sensitivity for both historic and prehistoric archaeology. However, the majority of the Project site has been disturbed by road construction and the installation of buried utilities (Figure 3) to the extent that it is highly unlikely that significant intact archaeological materials are present in these disturbed areas.

### **Historic Map Review**

EDR reviewed historic United States Geological Survey (USGS) maps covering the area as part of background research for the Project. Three map-documented structures occur in close proximity to the proposed duct route, but not within the Project site itself:

- The 1895 United States Geological Survey (USGS) *Topographic Map of Albany, NY* depicts two northwest/southeast-trending roads crossing through the central portion of the proposed duct bank. One of these roads corresponds to the present day alignment of Washington Avenue. No structures are depicted within the Project site (USGS, 1895).

- The 1927 USGS *Topographic Map of Albany, NY* shows similar road alignments as well as three buildings just north of the proposed duct bank route in the vicinity of the present day New York State Police Department and New York State Emergency Management Office Buildings on the University at Albany Campus (USGS, 1927).
- The 1950 USGS *Albany, NY* Topographic map depicts Washington Avenue trending northwest/southeast across the east-central portion of the proposed duct bank, as well as the three buildings immediately north of the Project near the west end of the Project route (USGS, 1950).

### **Archaeological Survey**

An archaeological field investigation for the current Project was conducted on December 4, 2015. Nicholas Freeland, RPA served as field supervisor and Russell Farchione, Heather Little, and Emily Stanfill acted as Field Assistants. The archaeological fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the NYAC *Standards for Archaeological Investigations* (NYAC, 1994). The fieldwork consisted of a field reconnaissance of the entire proposed duct bank route and a limited Phase 1 level survey of a small portion of the proposed route (Figure 3). The field reconnaissance concluded that the majority of the proposed Project route occurs within areas that have been previously disturbed by buried utilities and/or construction of the Campus Loop Road and other roadways (Photographs 1-5). Visible evidence for previous disturbance includes paved roadways and parking areas, graded and/or otherwise engineered landforms (such as drainage ditches, swales, and berms), culverts, and buried utility markers. EDR archaeologists did not excavate shovel tests in any areas of obvious previous disturbance (including existing paved roadways). Shovel testing was restricted to a small portion of the proposed Project route (approximately 450 linear feet) located within a relatively undisturbed area of second-growth forest between a parking lot to the northeast and the SUNY Campus Road to the southwest (see Figure 3; Photographs 6-7).

EDR personnel excavated nine shovel tests within a single transect at 50-foot intervals within the selected area. Shovel tests were approximately 12-20 inches (30-50 cm) in diameter and excavated to sterile subsoil or the limits of practical hand excavation. Each shovel test was identified with standard provenience information consisting of a transect letter followed by a period and sequential number (e.g. shovel tests A.01, A.02, A.03, etc...). The locations of all shovel tests were recorded with professional-grade GPS equipment, and noted on field maps. All soils excavated from shovel tests were screened through 0.25-inch hardware cloth to ensure uniform recovery of cultural materials (if present). Stratigraphic profiles, including depth, soil color, and texture, for all shovel tests were recorded on standardized field record sheets.

The locations of the nine shovel tests excavated within the limits of disturbance for the proposed substation are shown on Figure 3 (attached). Soils observed in shovel tests are summarized in Table 1 (attached to this letter). Shovel tests were excavated to depths between 42 and 75 cm (or 17 to 30 inches) below the ground surface (bgs). Soils observed in shovel tests varied slightly throughout the Project site and typically included dark brown to dark yellowish brown (with occasional yellowish brown mottling) silty loam to silty sandy loam between 0 and 8 to 50 cm below ground surface (bgs), underlain by yellowish brown to dark yellowish brown silty sandy loam in some shovel tests between 8 to 50 and 26 to 61 cmbgs. The lowest stratum encountered consisted of dark yellowish brown fine sand to silty sandy loam between 20 to 50 and 42 to 75 cmbgs. Additionally, two shovel tests (A.03 and A. 05) contained a stratum of very dark brown silty sandy loam (see attached Table 1).

No artifacts were recovered during the archaeological survey fieldwork and no archaeological sites were identified within the limits of disturbance for the proposed duct bank.

### **Architectural/Historic Resources**

The CRIS database identified 78 architectural USNs, 1 NRHP-listed building district, and three NRHP-listed buildings within 1-mile of the Project site. The proposed Project will not physically impact any of these structures, and the duct bank will be installed completely underground so there will be no permanent visual impacts. Furthermore, the proposed Project will not impact any previously unrecorded historic architectural resources. Therefore, there will be no direct or indirect impacts to historic architectural resources from the proposed Project.

### **Conclusions**

The results of the archaeological assessment for the proposed University at Albany duct bank project are as follows:

- No previously reported archaeological sites were identified within the limits of disturbance for the Project.
- Historic map review did not identify any map-documented structures within the Project site.
- No S/NRHP-listed or eligible historic-architectural resources are located within, or immediately adjacent to the proposed duct bank. The proposed Project will be located entirely underground so there will be no visual impacts (or other indirect effects) to any historic-architectural resources.
- Most portions of the proposed duct bank are located in previously disturbed areas. Visible evidence for previous disturbance includes paved roadways and parking areas, graded and/or otherwise engineered landforms (such as drainage ditches, swales, and berms), culverts, and buried utility markers.
- The portions of the proposed duct bank to be located in existing roadways (or road crossings) will be installed via directional bore.
- EDR personnel excavated nine shovel tests within a single transect at 50-foot intervals within a portion of the Project site where the extent of previous disturbance was not readily apparent. No artifacts were recovered from these shovel tests.
- No archaeological sites were identified within the limits of disturbance for the Project. The proposed Project will not affect archaeological resources.
- Based on EDR's review of available data, field reconnaissance, and the results of our archaeological survey in December, 2015, it is our opinion that the proposed University at Albany – New Duct Bank will not affect any archaeological sites or historic architectural resources. Therefore, no additional cultural resources investigations and/or mitigation measures are warranted or proposed.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the results of the archaeological assessment, please contact Nick Freeland at [nfreeland@edrdpc.com](mailto:nfreeland@edrdpc.com) or Patrick Heaton at [pheaton@edrdpc.com](mailto:pheaton@edrdpc.com), or (315) 471-0688.

Sincerely,



Patrick Heaton, RPA  
Principal, Director of Cultural Resources

**List of Attachments:**

- Table 1. Summary of Archaeological Testing within the University at Albany – New Duct Bank Project Site
- Figure 1. Project Location
- Figure 2. Previous Archaeological Surveys
- Figure 3. Archaeological Survey Results
- Photographs

**References Cited**

New York Archaeological Council (NYAC). 1994. *Standards for Cultural Resources Investigations and the Curation of Archaeological Collections in New York State*. New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Waterford, NY.

Louis Berger Group. 2008. *Phase I Archaeological Survey Harriman State Office Campus*. The Louis Berger Group, Inc., Albany, NY.

United States Geological Survey (USGS). 1895. *Albany, NY*. U.S. Geological Survey, Reston, VA.

USGS. 1927. *Albany, NY*. U.S. Geological Survey, Reston, VA.

USGS. 1950. *Albany, NY*. U.S. Geological Survey, Reston, VA.

Table 1. Summary of Archaeological Testing – University at Albany Duct Bank

Shovel Test	Depth (cm)	Soil Color	Soil Texture	Comments/Artifacts
A.01	0-30	10YR 3/4	SiSaLo	No cultural material (NCM)
	30-42	10YR 5/6	SiSaLo	
	Root Impasse			
A.02	0-20	10YR 3/4	SiSaLo	NCM
	20-60	10YR 5/6	SiSaLo	
	Rock Impasse			
A.03	0-24	10YR 3/4	SiSaLo	NCM
	24-61	10YR 2/2 mottled with 10YR 5/6	SiSaLo	
	61-75	10YR 2/2	SiSaLo	
A.04	0-26	10YR 3/4	SiSaLo	NCM
	26-65	10YR 5/4	SiSaLo	
	Root Impasse			
A.05	0-25	10YR 4/3	SiSaLo	NCM
	25-50	10YR 3/4 mottled with 10YR 5/6	SiSaLo	
	50-61	10YR 5/8	SiSaLo	
	61-75	10YR 2/2	SiSaLo	
A.06	0-35	10YR 3/4	SiLo	NCM
	35-43	10YR 5/6	SiLo	
	Root Impasse			
A.07	0-23	10YR 3/4	SiSaLo	NCM
	23-50	10YR 5/6	SiSaLo	
	Root Impasse			
A.08	0-30	10YR 3/4	SiSaLo	NCM
	30-51	10YR 5/6	SiSaLo	
	51-65	10YR 5/8	SiSaLo	
	Root Impasse			
A.09	0-8	10YR 3/3	Fine SaLo	NCM
	8-26	10YR 4/4	Fine Sa	
	26-44	10YR 5/6	Fine Sa	