

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

The documentary research and field reconnaissance conducted for the investigation indicate the Maritime Charter School improvements project area is very sensitive for archaeological resources. The project APE was the former site of the 1833 Seneca Mission House, which was in turn built near the locations of two earlier mission schools (built in ca. 1819 and 1822, respectively). The project area is also very near to the Buffum Street archaeological site centered on Seneca Indian Park – a site that includes earthworks, dense deposits of artifacts, and human burials. The extent of the site is unknown, but the fact that materials likely related to it have been found on the former Strickler farm and at 99 Buffum Street, indicates it is not limited to the above-ground features mapped by Squier and it very probably includes at least part of the project area. No indications of significant below-ground disturbances that may have affected any archaeological resources in the APE were noted during the field reconnaissance.

Therefore, Panamerican recommends a Phase 1B investigation for the project to determine if, and to what extent, archaeological resources are present in the APE. The study should include an initial remote sensing survey followed by subsurface investigation. Possible techniques for the remote sensing survey include ground-penetrating radar, resistivity, and magnetometry. The results will provide information concerning the presence and configuration of archaeological features, among which could be: remains related to the mission house schools (including foundations, the possible tunnel, filled wells or privies, and other features); and deposits and features associated with the Buffum Street site (which can include burials, earthwork remains, filled pits, hearths, and other features). The remote sensing effort could also yield data about the twentieth-century circular cut-stone feature northeast of the school and the presence of below-ground utilities and disturbances that might have affected archaeological resources. Finally, the remote sensing survey has the additional benefit of being able to provide information concerning buried features below the paved portions of the project area.

Panamerican recommends the subsurface investigation include a combination of shovel test pits (STPs) and eight to 12 one-meter-by-one-meter test units. The STPs will be dug at a 7.5-meter interval across the project area and will provide information concerning archaeological deposits that are difficult to detect with remote sensing techniques, such as features with diffuse boundaries and moderate-density clusters of artifacts. Asphalt pavement in the APE should be removed prior to the fieldwork to insure the investigation covers the entirety of the project area. Finally, the test units should be distributed on the basis of the results of the STP and remote sensing surveys to investigate a sample of areas with possible features and/or elevated artifact densities.

The results of the Phase 1B study will be sufficient to determine if the Buffum Street site extends into the project area or whether any other archaeological resources are present. If archaeological deposits are identified, consultation among the NYSHPO, the Seneca Nation of Indians THPO, the Tonawanda Seneca Nation Council of Chiefs, and the charter school is recommended to assess: (1) if the project can be redesigned to avoid the resource(s); and /or (2) the level(s) of effort that are needed to determine whether the resource(s) are eligible for listing in the S/NRHP and/or how the effects of the projects on them will be mitigated.