

BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE REPORT

SUBJECT: Monthly SHPO-FHWA-ACOE-NHDOT Cultural Resources Meeting

DATE OF CONFERENCES: November 18, 2021

LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: John O. Morton Building

Due to the Covid 19 Event, this meeting was a scheduled Zoom Meeting

ATTENDED BY:

NHDOT

Sheila Charles

Jill Edelmann

Jon Evans

Ron Kleiner

NHDHR/NHDNCR

Laura Black

David Trubey

TOWN OF ANTRIM

Jim Plourde

PRESERVATION CO.

Lynne Monroe

Reagan Ruedig

QUANTUM

Sam Cheney

Anna Giraldi

Projects/Presentations Reviewed this Month

Antrim 14942 (No federal number) – High Street Bridge over Great Brook (174/070) 1

Antrim 14942 (No federal number) – High Street Bridge over Great Brook (174/070)

Participants: Samuel Cheney, Anna Giraldi, Quantum Construction Consultants; Jim Plourde, Town of Antrim; Lynne Monroe, Reagan Ruedig, Preservation Company; Ron Kleiner, NHDOT

Continued consultation following the previous October 14th, 2021 Cultural Resources Agency Coordination Meeting.

Anna Giraldi, Quantum Construction Consultants, LLC, (QCC) provided an overview of the project, via Zoom link, which proposes to rehabilitate/replace the High Street Bridge over Great Brook. As previously discussed at the October 14, 2021 Cultural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting, the existing bridge is a 13-foot span Metal Pipe Arch (MPA) founded on stone abutments with concrete caps and built in 1960. The purpose of this project is to correct structural deficiencies of the existing bridge crossing and provide safe, year-round, vehicular passage on High Street over Great Brook. This project is being funded through the NHDOT State-Bridge-Aid (SBA) program, and construction is authorized for fiscal year 2023. The bridge is currently on the NHDOT Municipal Redlist and is in need of rehabilitation or replacement.

Anna presented the draft engineering study plans that identify the proposed 15-foot span structure, which will either be a concrete rigid frame or a precast concrete slab bridge. Anna noted a bridge alternative will be selected once the cost estimates for each option have been finalized. The proposed roadway geometrics will replicate the horizontal and vertical alignment of the existing roadway, as shown on the roadway profile. Downstream elevation and section views of the bridge (depicted as a rigid frame) were also shown. It was noted that due to the existing constraints of the site, there is not a lot of room to increase the bridge span.

Lynne Monroe, Preservation Company, presented the findings of her supplemental report to QCC's Request for Project Review (RPR) that was submitted to the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources (NHDHR) in September 2021. She went over the project location, which is situated within the Antrim Town Center, and the Antrim Village Historical District (AVHD). The AVHD does not have established boundaries, but Lynne noted that the 1981 Inter-Department Communication Letter provided by the NHDHR is a good description of the approximate AVHD boundaries. For the purposes of the RPR supplemental report, Preservation Company focused on the industrial section of the AVHD, which the High Street over Great Brook bridge crossing is a part of.

Lynne presented historical photographs of the area around the bridge, including the former Poor Saw and Grist Mill, which was owned by the Poor family, an early industrial family that lived within the AVHD. This former Saw and Grist Mill was located on the northeast side of the crossing. The Poor family homestead, located at 3 High Street, could be seen in the background of one of the photographs. Another photograph showed the bridge crossing in the foreground. The Goodell Company Cutlery Shop was located north of the bridge crossing, on the east side of the former mill pond. The Goodell Company also constructed the building at 34 Main Street, the Goodell Company Handle Shop, just south of the High Street Bridge.

There are stone training walls lining the sides of the upstream channel, and it's believed these stone training walls were once part of the former Poor Saw and Grist Mill. Historical maps show there has been industry in the area of the High Street Bridge for a long time. Lynne presented historical maps of the area that dated from 1858 to 1927. The maps depicted the previously discussed historical structures, including the Goodell Company Cutlery & Handle Shops, as well as the Poor Saw and Grist Mill. By the 1927 Sanborn map, the Poor Saw and Grist Mill had been removed from the map following its demolition.

Lynne concluded her presentation by sharing current existing condition photographs taken during her field visit. This included photographs of the Poor homestead, The Great Brook Handle Shop Dam and its impoundment area, the former Goodell Company Handle Shop, and the former Goodell Company building north of the bridge crossing. After sharing a photograph of the High Street Bridge with the Poor homestead in the background, Lynne asked Anna if QCC had considered replacing the structure with a similar arch bridge design as opposed to a slab or rigid frame. Anna responded that QCC can look into this as an option, however it will probably be the most expensive alternative. Waterway opening size and freeboard are not currently issues at the existing crossing, so hydraulically a similar arch bridge should work. Lynne appreciated that scenic and historic considerations would be taken into account.

Laura Black, NHDHR, stated that she would like to discuss the scope of work for determining potential historical inventory needs, picking up where the previous Cultural Resource Meeting had left off. Laura noted that the team/agencies need to know the exact historical resources within the Area of Potential Effect (APE), including the delineated boundaries and whether or not there are contributing/non-contributing components in the APE to the as yet undefined AVHD. Note that the AVHD was only preliminarily assessed in 1981, 40 years ago, and would need to undergo evaluation using current standard methods if Preservation Company's initial assessment here is that the APE is surely encompassed by the potential/likely district. Lynne reiterated that Preservation Company had focused on the industrial section of the AVHD to prepare their RPR supplemental report. Lynne noted that the 1981 Inter-Department Communication Letter is good starting point for defining the boundaries. Both Lynne and Laura agreed that the resources in Antrim are beautiful and should be preserved to the extent practicable, with Laura noting the importance of completing the Section 106 identification step to support any community advocacy for sensitive design of the new bridge.

Laura stated that historic district area forms will have to be prepared for any resource areas that the bridge is situated in. Based upon this discussion it appears at this time that one would be the larger AVHD, and one might be the smaller industrial area. It was intended that the supplemental information for this meeting would make

that scope of work recommendation but preparation of an area form for the smaller industrial resource seems to still be in question. It seems that there is a significant history in this area, so if there is also enough extant physical integrity to convey the history a second area form would be recommended. Lynne responded by saying that if the historic district area form requirements were met verbatim, it would require an extremely lengthy report to document. To this end, Preservation Company would like written direction from the NHDOT and NHDHR that clearly defines the scope of work and what tasks need to be accomplished.

Jill Edelmann, NHDOT, stated that she and Lynne could have a meeting to determine the methodology that should be followed prior to the start of any fieldwork. Laura added that the AV historic district should be discussed holistically and broadly (i.e. history, contexts, boundary). The form would include an overarching description of the district and property types etc. in various areas outside of the APE. The only area within the AVHD that should be evaluated in depth (detailed descriptions and contributing/non-contributing) is the area within the APE. In this way an informed evaluation of the resource as an entity can be made, while labor intensive aspects of area form fieldwork and preparation is limited. Laura then asked the archaeologists what their thoughts were relative to the proposed project.

David Trubey, NHDHR, stated that his opinion on archaeological requirements had not changed much since the October 14th Cultural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting. He reiterated that there are not a lot of areas along Great Brook that can be tested for archaeological significance. Areas of particular archaeological significance are located upstream from the bridge crossing, outside of the proposed APE. David asked Sheila if she concurred with his assessment.

Sheila Charles, NHDOT Cultural Resources Program Archaeologist, stated that she is particularly interested in what bridge type is selected as the proposed alternative may have associated impacts. Sheila said that while she mostly agrees with David's assessment, she has concerns about use of former mill yard areas and where the staging location would be during construction. Anna replied that the staging area would most likely be the vacant paved parking lot northeast of the bridge crossing, where the former saw and grist mill used to be. Both David & Sheila agreed that the plans need to be more finalized before they make an official determination on whether further archaeological work is needed for the project.

Jill will work with Lynne and Reagan Ruedig (Preservation Company) to determine a methodology approach going forward. Once a methodology has been finalized, it will be sent to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) for approval. Jill will keep both Anna and NHDOT Project Manager Ron Kleiner in the loop on how the methodology is progressing. Lynne added that once a methodology has been determined, she will draft a proposal and forward to QCC and NHDOT for review. Lynne asked for a timeline on when the work needs to be completed, to which Anna replied that the Engineering Study was scheduled to be complete in January. Lynne responded that most likely that could not happen.

Laura suggested that QCC begin now to evaluate other bridge rehabilitation/replacement alternatives, and look into other ways potential historical impacts can be mitigated/avoided all together in order to keep the project schedule moving forward, assuming at this point that National Register eligible resources are in the APE and that the community may have an interest in a bridge designed sensitively to the historical aesthetic of the area. It was noted that the NHDOT has the final say in what guardrail will be used for the project, but the NHDHR would like to see that aesthetical value was at least considered during design choices. Jill added that because the Town of Antrim is the one who ultimately has to maintain the guardrail, they need to be involved in the discussion and have the ability to provide input on what guardrail is chosen.

Anna concluded the meeting by stating that she and Ron will set up a meeting to discuss contract amendments and how to best proceed with the design. Jill will discuss methodology with Lynne and Reagan, and define an exact scope of work.