

**CULTURAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT
FOR THE
MOUNT VERNON DOWNTOWN FLOOD PROTECTION PROJECT
MOUNT VERNON, SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

BY
MARGARET BERGER
AND
SUSAN MEDVILLE

GLENN D. HARTMANN, PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

PREPARED FOR:
PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL ENGINEERING
PO BOX 1599
EDMONDS, WA 98020

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CRC PROJECT #0711I

CULTURAL RESOURCE CONSULTANTS, INC.
8001 DAY ROAD WEST, SUITE B
BAINBRIDGE ISLAND, WA 98110

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Cultural Resource Consultants, Inc.

Executive Summary

This report describes a cultural resources assessment for the Mount Vernon Downtown Flood Protection Project, in Mount Vernon, Skagit County, Washington. This assessment was conducted at the request of the City of Mount Vernon. This report is intended to serve as a component of preconstruction environmental review in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), as amended. The project consists of modifications to the existing flood protection system. Project plans include raising the existing earthen levee, installing new levee and floodwall segments in some locations, and a new ring dike around the Mount Vernon Wastewater Treatment Plant. To accommodate levee improvements, seven downtown commercial buildings and a residence will be razed. Assessment methods included a review of relevant background literature and maps, archaeological field reconnaissance survey and testing, and a historic building survey.

There are no archaeological sites recorded within the project. Archaeological testing conducted using a backhoe revealed thick alluvial deposits overlain, in places, by fill. No indications of buried archaeological sites were observed, and the project is considered to have a low potential to affect as-yet unknown cultural resources. No further archaeological investigations are recommended prior to commencement of the project.

One historic property (36CFR800.16 (1)(1)), the Laughlin/Eddy building, was previously recorded within the area of potential effects (APE) and recommended eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). CRC identified a total of 44 previously unrecorded historic buildings in the APE, and these have been recorded on Washington State Historic Property Inventory Forms to be submitted to the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). CRC recommends that a Determination of Eligibility (DOE) be obtained for the Laughlin/Eddy building, and that effects to the Laughlin/Eddy building be mitigated. The 44 buildings inventoried by CRC are not anticipated to be impacted by the project and, therefore, no further historical investigations of those buildings is recommended prior to commencement of the project.

**Cultural Resources Assessment
for the Mount Vernon Downtown Flood Protection Project,
Mount Vernon, Skagit County, Washington**

Author: Margaret Berger and Susan Medville
 Date: February 28, 2008
 Location: Mount Vernon, Skagit County, Washington
 USGS Quad: Mount Vernon, WA (1998) 7.5'
 T, R, S: Township 34 North, Range 4 East, Sections 19 and 30, Willamette Meridian.

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Introduction

This report describes a cultural resources assessment for the proposed Mount Vernon Downtown Flood Protection Project located in Mount Vernon, Skagit County, Washington (hereinafter “the project”). The City of Mount Vernon, as designee of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) plans to modify existing flood protection measures in order to decrease the possibility of flood damage to properties within the City. The City has determined the project to be an undertaking (36CFR800.16 (y)), which must comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), as amended. Section 106 requires federal agencies to determine the effects of their undertakings on archaeological sites and historic properties.

Cultural Resource Consultants, Inc. (CRC) was retained to conduct a cultural resources assessment for the project. The assessment was developed with the intention of ensuring no recorded archaeological or historical sites would be affected during activities related to project construction, and to determine the potential for any as-yet unrecorded cultural resources within the project. This was accomplished by searching records held at the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) of known archaeological and historical sites in the immediate project vicinity; reviewing past ethnographic, archaeological, and historical investigations in the local area; technical correspondence with cultural resources staff of the Upper Skagit Tribal Council, Swinomish Indian Senate, and Samish Tribe of Indians (G. Hartmann to J. Washington, letter, 19 December 2007, on file at CRC; G. Hartmann to B. Cladoosby, letter, 19 December 2007, on file at CRC; G. Hartmann to T. Wooten, letter, 19 December 2007, on file at CRC); examining pertinent background literature; conducting field survey; and production of this report. Field investigations consisted of an archaeological field reconnaissance survey throughout the APE and subsurface testing in select locations, subject to landowner permission. Research design for this assessment considered previous studies, the magnitude and nature of the undertaking, the nature and extent of potential effects on historic properties, and the likely nature and location of historic properties within the area of potential effects, as well as other applicable laws, standards, and guidelines (per 36CFR800.4 (b)(1)).

Project Information

The project is located on the left (east) bank of the Skagit River in Sections 19 and 30, T. 34 N., R. 4 E., Willamette Meridian (Figure 1) in Mount Vernon, Skagit County, Washington. Project plans include areas near the waterfront from the intersection of River Bend Road and Freeway Drive on the north, to Riverview Lane at the southwestern corner of the proposed improvements. The project area currently contains a park, parking lots, a boardwalk, vacant parcels, and many commercial buildings. Seven buildings on the west side of Main Street as well as the Moose Lodge and the northernmost building on the Commercial Cold Storage property would need to be torn down to accommodate alterations to the existing levee and construction of a new levee, promenade, and floodwall.

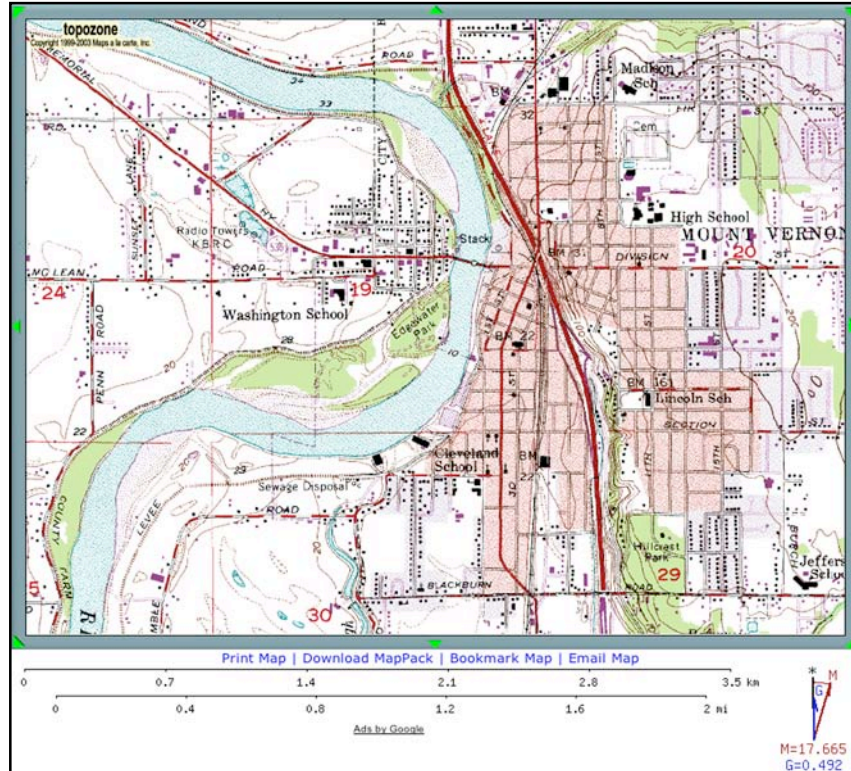


Figure 1. Portion of Mount Vernon (USGS 1998) topographic quadrangle showing the greater project area.

The City of Mount Vernon, as designee of the lead federal agency (HUD), has initiated government-to-government consultation with the Upper Skagit Tribal Council, Swinomish Indian Senate, and Samish Tribe of Indians (J. Hanson to J. Washington, letter, 28 November 2007, on file at CRC; J. Hanson to B. Cladoosby, letter, 28 November 2007, on file at CRC; J. Hanson to T. Wooten, letter, 28 November 2007, on file at CRC), and with the office of the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) (J. Hanson to A. Brooks, letter, 28 November 2007, on file at CRC). The office of the SHPO has concurred with the City's definition of the project's area of potential effects (APE) (R. Holter to J. Hanson, letter, 18 December 2007, on file at CRC).

Project details summarized here were provided by Pacific International Engineering (M. Garrett to M. Berger, electronic transmittal, 14 December 2007). The alignment of the finished flood protection system would follow the alignment of the existing levee except in three locations: from Division Street to Myrtle Street, on the Commercial Cold Storage property, and around the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). In the three-block area between Division and Myrtle Streets, the alignment would follow the alignment used for placement of temporary sandbags, which is closer to the river than the existing levee alignment. At the Commercial Cold Storage plant, the flood protection system would be located on the river side of the property. The new alignment would diverge from the existing levee alignment starting at Pine Street and continue generally along the top of the river bank and reconnect with the existing levee alignment near the Darivalley plant on South First Street. The new alignment would then follow the existing levee alignment to a point north of the WWTP. A new ring dike around the WWTP would provide protection for the existing plant and designated expansion area.

The north end of the project is at the north end of Lions Park. The existing floodwall along Lions Park would be raised, and two 25-foot openings in the floodwall would be provided to maintain access to Lions Park and the Skagit River shoreline. From Lions Park south to the Division Street Bridge, the existing earthen levee would be raised and widened. The proposed raised levee segment would tie into a new floodwall that would pass beneath the Division Street Bridge in front of the existing abutment, which would eliminate vehicle access under the bridge. Portions of the existing levee may need to be rebuilt to ensure that the structure conforms to Corps requirements for structural stability. In this case, existing fill material would be temporarily removed, and the levee rebuilt to the new height and width. It is expected that the majority of the existing levee fill material could be re-used in the reconstructed levee.

From Division Street south to Kincaid Street, a new levee is proposed along the alignment where sandbag barriers have been placed in past flood fights. This alignment is closer to the river than the existing levee. The riverward levee slope would be 2:1 and the landward slope would be 3:1. The top of the levee in this area would be six to eight feet above existing grade. It is possible that portions of the new flood protection system between Division and Kincaid Streets would consist of a concrete or sheetpile floodwall instead of an earthen levee. In the event that sheetpile is used, it could extend 12 to 18 feet below existing grade. This determination would be made at final design.

The area west of Main Street from just south of Kincaid Street to the Commercial Cold Storage facility would be filled to an elevation of +28.5 feet. A floodwall is proposed to tie into the southern end of the fill and continue along the west side of the Commercial Cold Storage buildings. Beginning at the southern end of the Commercial Cold Storage facility, a new levee segment would angle southeast to rejoin the existing levee alignment at the end of Park Street. From Park Street to Riverview Lane, the existing levee would be raised and widened. A ring dike will be constructed around the WWTP. Depending on the results of detailed geotechnical investigations, portions of the existing levee from Park Street to Riverview Lane may also need to be rebuilt.

In addition to the levee and floodwall construction described above, other project actions are proposed to include demolition of structures, levee stabilization, and a non-motorized path and promenade. All existing buildings located west of Main Street between Division and Kincaid Streets, the Moose Lodge, and the northernmost building on the Commercial Cold Storage property would be removed. The existing boardwalk and cantilevered parking structure that run from just south of the Division Street Bridge to Kincaid Street would also be removed and replaced with a pedestrian promenade. This would involve removal of the existing boardwalk, the flat concrete panels that form the parking structure, and concrete support pilings. New support pilings would be installed landward of the existing pilings, at an elevation above the OHW mark on the Skagit River. The specific method used to install the new pilings would be determined once detailed geotechnical investigation of the site was completed. The elevated portion of the new promenade would be 24 feet wide and approximately 1,300 feet long. The surface of the promenade would consist of pre-cast concrete panels supported along the riverward edge by cast-in-place concrete piling caps and approximately 60 new concrete pilings.

The riverward slope of the new levee segments and modified levee would be stabilized as needed with rock riprap. The landward slope would be seeded with a mixture of grasses. Native woody vegetation would be established on the waterward levee slopes, consistent with Corps of Engineers guidelines under the PL 84-99 program.

A pathway dedicated to non-motorized use is proposed along the top of the modified levee from Lions Park to Division Street. The pathway would be 12 feet wide with 2-foot wide gravel shoulders on both sides. This pathway would extend in front of the new floodwall under the Division Street Bridge and return to the top of the levee south of the bridge. South of Kincaid Street, the pathway would run along the top of the existing levee on the east side of the Commercial Cold Storage Plant and then be routed along the top of the modified levee from Park Street to Riverview Lane.

Area of Potential Effects (APE)

The APE for the Mount Vernon Downtown Flood Protection project has been defined by the City of Mount Vernon, as designee of the lead federal agency (HUD), in consultation with the office of the SHPO (J. Hanson to A. Brooks, letter, 28 November 2007, on file at CRC; R. Holter to J. Hanson, letter, 18 December 2007, on file at CRC). The APE for the project consists of one tax parcel on either side adjacent to the footprint of the proposed flood system improvements (Figures 2 and 3). This was the area under consideration for effects to cultural resources, and served as survey boundaries for the archaeological and historic fieldwork conducted in this assessment.

Environmental Context

The landforms and soils present in the project area have been directly influenced by local glacial activity over the last tens of thousands of years. The project area is situated within the Puget Lowland physiographic province, which is characterized by the wide “trough” between the Coast and Cascade Ranges (Franklin and Dyrness 1973; McKee 1972:290). Regional geomorphology here was shaped during the late Pleistocene by episodes of erosion and deposition by the Puget Lobe of the Cordilleran glacier, followed by Holocene fluvial processes such as stream incision, delta progradation, channel migration, and flooding (Kruckeberg 1991:12). The final glaciation that extended into the Puget Sound area, the Vashon Stade of the Fraser Glaciation, was responsible for the contemporary topography and soils present in the project area.

The Vashon glacier originated within British Columbia and extended as far south as Olympia (Thorson 1981). As the glacier retreated, glacial till was deposited and glacial runoff carved drainage channels in areas of non-resistant tills and deposited outwash throughout the landscape. Immediately following deglaciation, isostatic rebound and eustatic sea level rise caused a relative increase in local sea levels, inundating the northern Puget Lowland and drowning early Holocene shorelines (Dragovich et al. 1994). This marine transgression occurred between about 13,600 and 11,600 years ago and is termed the Everson interval (Dethier et al. 1995). At this time, the Skagit delta began to prograde from near the town of Hamilton.

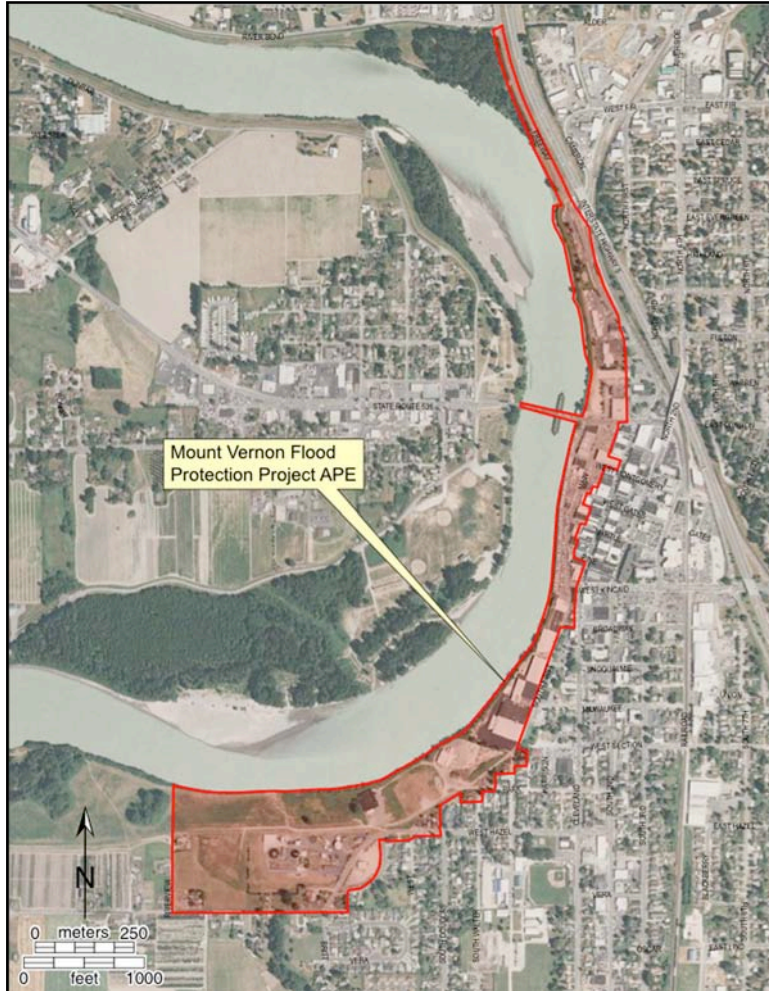


Figure 2. APE, as defined by the City of Mount Vernon through consultation with DAHP, displayed on aerial image, provided by Pacific International Engineering.

By about 9000 years ago, the delta front had reached Burlington (Thompson 1978:64), and by about 5000 years ago, the delta front, and thus the shoreline of Puget Sound, would have been near Mount Vernon (Dragovich et al. 2001). In the early and middle Holocene, the Skagit River drained alternately into Samish Bay, Padilla Bay, and Skagit Bay. Streams incised rapidly in valleys filled with glacial sediments, which lowered the valley floors and created terraces, river mainstems, floodplain sloughs, and moderate-gradient tributaries on terraces. Voluminous lahars from Glacier Peak approximately 5500 years before present created an extensive low-gradient delta on the Skagit River (Dragovich et al. 2001; Pringle and Scott 2001). Land surfaces in the Padilla and Skagit lobes of the delta are thought to have formed over the past 3000 years (Thompson 1978:64). Typical regional soils include sandy-loams, gravels and sands developed upon weakly cemented glacial tills (Franklin and Dyrness 1973:17; Kruckeberg 1991). Surface geology mapped for the APE includes modified land and Quaternary alluvium (Pessl et al. 1989). Modified land consists of fill, graded areas, and industrial or construction debris used in site preparation for industrial, levee, and road projects; in the APE, the present levee alignment consists of modified land. Alluvium in the APE dates to the Holocene and includes moderate- to

well-sorted clays, silts, and sands with some gravels, and some layers or lenses of organic materials (Pessl et al. 1989).



Figure 3. APE, as defined by the City of Mount Vernon in consultation with DAHP, displayed on portion of Mount Vernon (USGS 1998) topographic map, provided by Pacific International Engineering.

During the post-glacial period (13,000-7000 Before Present [BP]), temperatures began to increase dramatically (Leopold et al. 1982). Initially, climatic conditions were cooler and supported a sparse vegetal environment of subalpine grasses and sedges. After the climate began to warm, the subalpine vegetation was replaced with Douglas fir, western fir and western hemlock (Leopold et al. 1982; Suttles 1990). With the exception of minor fluctuations, due in part to extensive land clearing in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, regional vegetational communities have remained stable for the past 5000 years (Leopold et al. 1982).

The regional geological and environmental changes that have occurred throughout prehistory have greatly influenced the suitability of past land usage. Once the last glaciation had begun to retreat and vegetation had become established, adequate resources were available to support a variety of animal populations. Early Holocene populations were likely located along shorelines

and riverbanks and in the highlands where resources were abundant. Following the retreat of the glaciers, sea levels rose and inundated many pre-Holocene cultural sites. Resource plentiful areas along this new shoreline were again settled subsequent to the stabilization of the sea level as early as 5,000 years ago.

Cultural Context

Regional and local studies have provided an archaeological and historical synthesis of approximately the last 10,000 years of human occupation in Puget Sound (Nelson 1990). Archeologists have identified broad similarities in site and lithic assemblages dated to between 9000-5000 BP. Many of these early archaeological sites comprise the Olcott Phase in Western Washington and are contemporaneous with similar Cascade Phase sites identified east of Cascade Mountains. The Olcott Phase is characterized by lithic workshops and temporary hunting camps that contain a wide variety of flaked basalt tools suggestive of large game hunting, butchering and processing, laurel-leaf-shaped bifaces and occupation sites located upland or atop upper river terraces (Morgan et al. 1999). Several Olcott sites have been documented and studied throughout Western Washington and the Olympic Peninsula (e.g. Dancy 1968; Greengo and Houston 1970; Morgan et al. 1999; Samuels 1993).

Generally, changes in subsistence economy and occupation patterns are reflected in archaeological assemblages that date between 5000-3000 BP. During this time, an increasing number of tools were manufactured by grinding stone, and more antler and bone were utilized for tools. This period is also indicated by the occurrence of smaller triangular projectile points. Living floors, evidence of structural supports and hearths are more common during this period in contrast to the Olcott Phase. On Puget Sound, evidence of task-specific, year-round, broad-based activities, including salmon and clam processing, woodworking, basket and tool manufacture, date from approximately 4200 BP (Larson and Lewarch 1995).

Characteristic of the ethnographic pattern in Puget Sound, seasonal residence and logistical mobility occurred from about 3000 BP. Organic materials, including basketry, wood and food stuffs, are more likely to be preserved in sites of this period, both in submerged, anaerobic sites and in sealed storage pits. Sites dating from this period represent specialized seasonal spring and summer fishing and root-gathering campsites and winter village locations. Sites of this type have been identified in the Puget Sound lowlands, typically located adjacent to, or near, river or marine transportation routes. Fish weirs and other permanent constructions are often associated with large occupation sites. Common artifact assemblages consist of a range of hunting, fishing and food processing tools, bone and shell implements and midden deposits. Similar economic and occupational trends persisted throughout the Puget Sound region until the arrival of European explorers.

The project area is situated within the traditional territory of the Upper Skagit Tribe, a Salish-speaking group that occupied lands along the Skagit River from the Puget Sound, upriver to the Cultus Mountain range (Ruby and Brown 1992; Spier 1936; Suttles and Lane 1990:486; Swanton 1969). The contemporary Upper Skagit Tribe is a confederation of four of eleven bands that occupied land around the Skagit River (Ruby and Brown 1992:252). The Mount Vernon area is just upstream from the territory of the Lower Skagit, who occupied the area around the mouth of the Skagit River on Camano and Whidbey Islands, and the Kikiallus, who

occupied lands on the South Fork Skagit River (Spier 1936:36). The proximity of the area to riverine and woodland environments provided a rich subsistence base of salmon, shellfish, deer, waterfowl, roots and berries.

Smith (1941:210) places Mount Vernon more specifically in the area occupied by the Nookachamps or *da'qwatcabs* subdivision of the Skagit, who lived around the "Skagit River from Mt. Vernon to Sedro Woolley and Nookachamps River drainage including Big Lake." Collins (1974:16) transcribes the name of this group as *deqwecab?s*, translated as "people of the dukwac River." Permanent Skagit villages consisted of groups of cedar plank houses distributed over relatively broad areas along rivers. Temporary camps were utilized while traveling for seasonal food sources. Village locations near the current project include an unnamed village "back of Mt. Vernon just below the concrete bridge" (Smith 1941:210), which may be the area identified by Collins (1974) as the site of a house on the south bank of the Skagit River, south of present-day Burlington and east of the railroad bridge. Smith (1941:210) refers to another village, *tslátlabc*, on Big Lake (Smith 1941:210). A large winter house was located on the Skagit River, northwest of the Mount Vernon cemetery (Collins 1974). Smith (1941) describes another Upper Skagit village, on the west or north bank of the Skagit River across from the mouth of Nookachamps Creek, which was the principal village and ceremonial center for people between Mt Vernon and Sedro Woolley, and in the Nookachamps Creek drainage (Blukis Onat et al. 1980).

The first exploration and mapping of the Puget Sound is credited to Captain George Vancouver in 1792, under the auspices of the British Royal Navy. Vancouver surveyed much of the Sound, but the exploration did not extend inland and failed to recognize several waterways including the Columbia, Puyallup, Nisqually and Fraser rivers (Morgan 1979:16). Decades later, in 1841, the Wilkes Expedition traveled to chart what was then called Oregon Territory. The territory was jointly occupied by the United States and Britain, particularly the British Hudson Bay Company. In an attempt to increase the American presence in Oregon Territory, the Wilkes Expedition produced the first detailed map of the area and commercialized the potential for economic development. Four years after the arrival of the Wilkes party, more Americans began to settle in the area.

By the mid-1850s, British and American settlement in the Northwest had drastically impacted local Native American groups and their traditions. Many Indian families were relocated and interned during this period. In 1855, following the signing of the Point Elliot Treaty by the Upper Skagit, Swinomish, Lower Skagit and other neighboring tribes, Indians were forced to abandon most of their Northern Puget Sound villages and relocate to reservation. The treaty dissolved Indian title to their traditional lands and by 1855-1856 the federal government used military force to contain Indian people dissatisfied with the poor quality of reservation lands. Many Upper Skagit peoples are contemporarily affiliated with the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community on the Swinomish Reservation located between Mount Vernon and Anacortes.

The General Land Office (GLO) conducted its cadastral survey of the area in 1872, with the goal of establishing legal boundaries. In 1877, the town of Mount Vernon was officially established around the banks of the Skagit River, following the opening of the first general store by E. C. English and Harrison Clothier that same year (Willis 1975:62). The store was located along the

riverfront and provided a last stop for travelers going north up the river before encountering several logjams. In 1891, the Great Northern Railway reached Mount Vernon, and there was a passenger depot the next year, at 3rd and Kincaid. Downtown Mount Vernon was on the waterfront, with Main Street a block to the east (Sanborn Map Company 1892; Willis 1975:62). In 1891, there was a fire that destroyed stores, hotels, and wharves on the waterfront. This, along with the eroding riverbank, encouraged redevelopment to the east, with the business district centered on First Street (Willis 1975). Front Street and portions of Main Street washed away (Sanborn Map Company 1892, 1921). Another fire burned buildings on Front and Main between Montgomery Street and Main Street in 1900.

Since non-Native American settlers came to the Mount Vernon area in the mid-1800s, there have been numerous changes to the Skagit valley landscape. There was a large (nearly a mile in length) and persistent complex of logjams in the Skagit River near the town of Mount Vernon, and a slough previously passed through the WWTP in the southwestern portion of the project (Figure 4). The logjams along the river prevented accessibility and commerce beyond Mount Vernon, and in 1879 work was underway to remove them (Kirk and Alexander 1990:238). The logjams were successfully removed, but shortly thereafter, the river began to flood and the channel eroded away the earliest waterfront portion of the town and adjacent farms. More changes were initiated, including diking, ditching, and dredging of streams on the floodplains and deltas, in an effort to limit flood risks (Beechie et al. 2001; Collins 1998). Early twentieth-century maps show early flood protection measures (Figure 5) and a slough in Section 30, in the southwestern portion of the APE, that has since been filled (Figures 4, 5, and 6).

Logging became an important local industry, as trees were abundant in the area and the lumber could be quickly processed and transported to ports via the Skagit River. Several rail lines were constructed throughout the Skagit Valley to assist in the distribution of timber from the surrounding forests. Those nearest to the current project were the Puget Sound and Cascade, and the Slosson Logging Company lines (Thompson 1989). From the end of the Slosson Logging Company railroad at the edge of Lincoln Hill, about 0.25 miles east of the project, logs were carried by horse-drawn wagons through downtown Mount Vernon to the Skagit River (Thompson 1989:235). There were mills located on the waterfront, including Siwash Shingle Mill near present-day Lions Park (Willis 1975:115). By June of 1916, the PS&C line had been extended to the southwest from Skagit Junction into Mount Vernon, where harvested lumber and other supplies were transported to a river dump located the western terminus of the railroad, over one mile west of the north end of the current project (Thompson 1989:148). When local timber resources became depleted, the industry suffered greatly, and farming eventually replaced the local economy of Mount Vernon. Dairy farming came to dominate rural areas around Mount Vernon (Willis 1975:102-103), and creameries and condensaries were established in town in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Willis 1975:105).

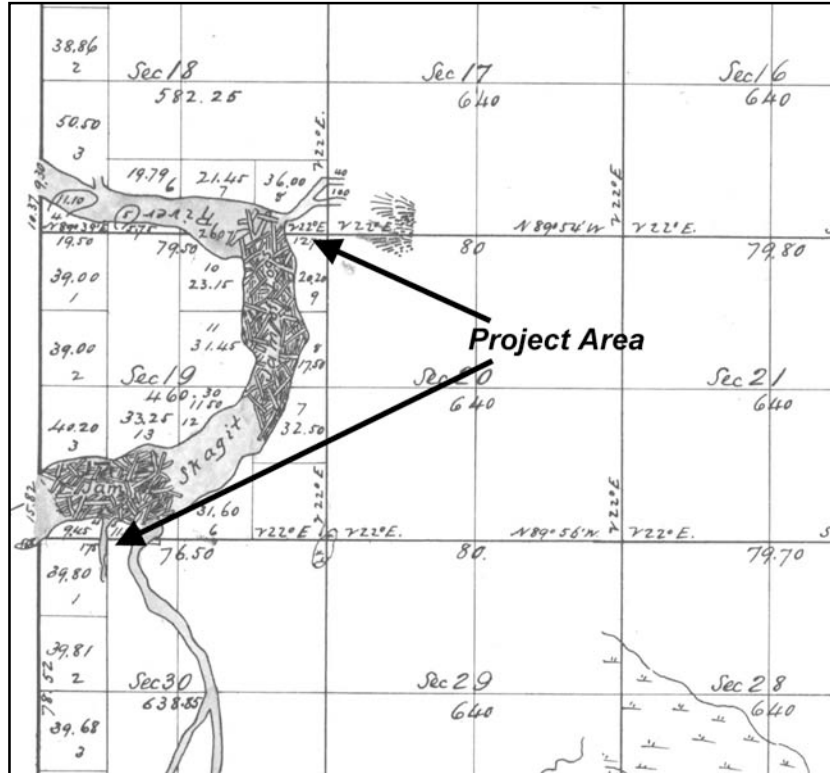


Figure 4. Portion of the GLO map (USSG 1872) marked with the approximate limits of the current project. Logjams were common and persistent in the Skagit River channel adjacent to the project.



Figure 5. Portion of an early topographic map (USGS 1911) showing the project area. Levees shown as dashed lines on left bank of Skagit River.

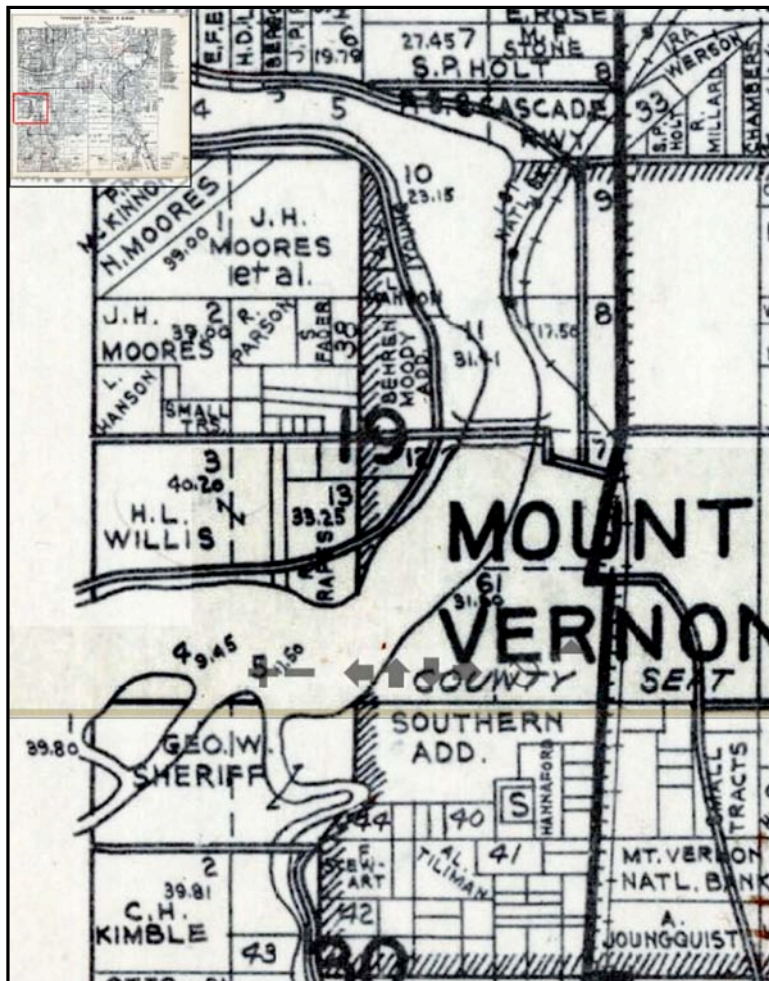


Figure 6. Excerpt from Metsker (1925) map showing land ownership, roads, railroads, the Skagit River, and sloughs in the project area.

Previously Recorded Sites and Surveys

A site files search was conducted by Margaret Berger (CRC) at DAHP on 18 December 2007 to identify previously recorded cultural resource surveys, archaeological sites, and historical sites in the APE and immediate vicinity. The site recorded nearest to the project APE is the historic town of Mount Vernon (45SK112). Site 45SK112 is recorded along the east bank of the Skagit River. This was the initial location of the town of Mount Vernon in 1877. Little evidence of the original town remains today, as fire and river channel erosion destroyed much of the settlement (Bennett 1978a). However, no archaeological testing has been conducted in the site's recorded location. Floods, diking and shoreline armoring, and subsequent use have likely disturbed waterfront remains of the townsite that may have been present in or near the APE.

One historic property (NRHP 1991) has been recorded just east of the present APE. The Lincoln Theater and Commercial Block (45SK261) was nominated for listing on the NRHP in 1987. The Theater served as a community entertainment center, featuring live shows as well as movies,

since the late 1920s and is considered historically significant at the local level (Beckes and Pederson 1987). The project is not anticipated to affect this cultural resource. Site 45SK125, at the old Davis Homestead, is located 0.75 miles northeast of the north end of the APE (Bennett 1978b). Here, a historic Native American house was located near the Seattle and Montana railroad bridge on the east side of the river. Prior to homesteading of the property around 1872, the site was reported to have been the location of an “Indian cemetery” and fishing grounds near where the railroad bridge crossed the river (Bennett 1978b). No other archaeological sites are recorded within the APE or within a one-mile radius.

Seven cultural resource studies have previously been conducted within a one-mile radius of the APE. Two of these studies (DeJoseph et al. 2005; Hudson 2007) surveyed portions of the current APE, and three others (Blukis Onat et al. 1979, 1980a; Kent 2004) covered areas immediately adjacent to the APE.

In 1978, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) sponsored a cultural resources assessment for proposed channel and levee improvements on the Skagit River (Blukis Onat et al. 1979, 1980a). Blukis Onat and others (1979) performed background research and field reconnaissance, and conducted some subsurface testing to evaluate eight sites in the greater Mount Vernon area for NRHP eligibility (Blukis Onat et al. 1980a). No archaeological or historic sites were identified within the present APE. The sites recorded nearest to the current APE, in the course of those investigations, were site 45SK112 (see above), site SCC-78-6, and site SCC-78-15. Site SCC-78-6, located across the river from Lions Park, is a known fishing location of the Upper Skagit Tribe (Collins 1974:16) where there was reported to be a shell midden, but no midden or other archaeological evidence was found by the survey in this location (Blukis Onat et al. 1979:109). Site SCC-78-15 is the former location of a house and barn associated with the ca. 1890 Storrs’ Farm, within 0.5 miles southwest of the southern end of the current APE, where Blukis Onat et al. (1979:139) found shell midden exposed along the right (west) bank of the Skagit River. The site has not, however, been recorded in the State of Washington Archaeological Site Inventory maintained by DAHP.

Sheridan (2002) prepared a cultural resources assessment of a bridge replacement project just east of the present APE in downtown Mount Vernon. The assessment included review of archaeological, historical, and ethnographic background information, and a historic property survey. No buildings eligible for listing on the NRHP were identified in the survey, and it was determined that the proposed project would not affect any recorded archaeological or historic sites. However, archaeological monitoring was recommended for project excavations with the potential to impact native sediments (Sheridan 2002:10).

In 2004, the USACE carried out cultural resources investigations and developed a monitoring plan for several levee rehabilitation projects on the Skagit River in the Mount Vernon area, including two projects immediately west of the north end of the current APE. No archaeological sites were found in archaeological survey of this location, and subsurface testing was not conducted. Due to the extensive history of occupation along the Skagit River, the area was considered to be archaeologically sensitive, and monitoring of construction by a professional archaeologist was recommended (Kent 2004).

DeJoseph et al. (2005) conducted a cultural resources assessment for the expansion of the City of Mount Vernon's Wastewater Treatment Plant, located within the southwestern portion of the present APE. That assessment included background research, a historic property survey, archaeological survey, and subsurface testing. Two historic buildings in the present APE were recorded on State of Washington Historic Property Inventory forms (Miller 2005a, 2005b) but the buildings were not thought to be eligible for the NRHP, nor was it expected that the WWTP would affect them. Test pits reached a maximum of 296 centimeters below ground surface and no archaeological deposits were found. Results of the assessment suggested that any archaeology was likely "deeply buried" and would not be affected by the WWTP expansion, since that project was "not expected to impact subsurface native soils deeper than five to fifteen feet" (DeJoseph et al. 2005:20).

Just over 0.5 miles east of the APE, White and Gillis (2006) prepared a cultural resources assessment for potential transportation improvements associated with expansion of Skagit Valley Hospital. The project area was considered to be in a location that may have been attractive to human occupation as early as 6000 years ago, but twentieth-century development had likely obscured or removed any evidence of earlier use of the area. Field investigations consisted of pedestrian survey. No archaeological sites or historic properties were recorded but seven early- to mid-twentieth century residential structures were identified. No further cultural resource investigations were recommended for that project (White and Gillis 2006:19).

The USACE prepared cultural resource studies for a number of emergency levee repairs on the Skagit River in 2007. That project included areas upriver from the current project, located 1 to 1.5 miles from the northern extent of the APE. Archaeological investigations consisted review of background information and pedestrian survey, including examination of river cutbank exposures when safety conditions allowed. No archaeological or historic sites were recorded in that survey, but construction monitoring by a professional archaeologist was recommended for repairs in four locations due to their proximity to recorded and ethnographically reported sites (Kent 2007:27).

An environmental impact statement (EIS) was prepared under the State Environmental Policy Act for the current project by the City of Mount Vernon. That report included a detailed discussion of the history of downtown Mount Vernon. Hudson (2007:Figure 6) evaluated the thirteen buildings between Division Street and Virginia Street that lie within the project footprint and would be directly affected by project construction. The buildings were recorded on State of Washington Historic Property Inventory forms, and one property (Laughlin/Eddy building) was recommended as eligible for the NRHP. Hudson's (2007:Figure 6) entire survey area and the inventoried structures are located within the present APE. It was recommended that mitigation measures be developed in the event that project plans involve impacts to the building such as removal, demolition, or other alterations (Hudson 2007:17). No archaeological investigations were conducted for the EIS.

Archaeological Survey: Methodology and Results

The dynamic riverine environment in which the APE is situated, and the local area's geological history of development have implications for what archaeological evidence may be present. Over time, deltaic channel, marsh, and tide prairie environments were all pushed gradually

seaward suggesting that older sites (greater than 5000 years old) as far from the modern Puget Sound shoreline as Mount Vernon could reflect use of coastal resources. However, since the Skagit delta has also been repeatedly flooded, older sites are probably buried by alluvium, leaving only younger sites (less than 3000 years old) exposed on the ground surface (Thompson 1978:70). The project is situated on the cutbank side of a meander bend in the Skagit River. The channel has likely eroded older land surfaces that once were nearer to the river than the present APE. It is possible that such erosion, prior to contemporary and historic-period revetments, has removed archaeological deposits from the area. However, the extent of such erosion is unknown and complicated by the area's history of floods, which can rapidly deposit large amounts of sediment. Archaeological deposits may be buried beneath the flood deposits.

Background research suggests that the APE retains the potential to contain pre-contact and historic-period archaeological sites. Archaeological deposits associated with the original Mount Vernon townsite may be present, as well as historic-period archaeological materials related to homestead, logging, mill, creamery, or railroad operations. Pre-contact archaeological site types, as suggested by the local ethnographic and archaeological records, may include camps, villages, trails, lithic materials, or other features.

Archaeological field investigations were carried out by Margaret Berger on December 13, 2007, and January 17, 2008. Field notes and photographs are on file at CRC. Investigations included a pedestrian reconnaissance survey and subsurface testing. Pedestrian survey was conducted with the goal of identifying any aboveground evidence of archaeological sites in the APE, and to identify locations suitable for subsurface testing. Weather conditions were cold and cloudy, and visibility of mineral soils was found to be compromised by vegetation, shoreline armoring, buildings, and impervious surfaces such as asphalt in all portions of the APE inspected (Figures 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11). Some portions of the APE were inaccessible due to ongoing construction (e.g., the WWTP expansion project), commercial operations, and safety considerations such as the high water level in the River. Given these restrictions, an estimated 75 percent of the APE was examined in reconnaissance survey.



Figure 7. Typical conditions observed at the north end of the APE, west of Freeway Drive (road visible in background).



Figure 8. Typical conditions in Lions Park portion of the APE. Photograph faces north.



Figure 9. Conditions observed in archaeological survey of downtown Mount Vernon. Photograph faces north along boardwalk on Skagit River shoreline.

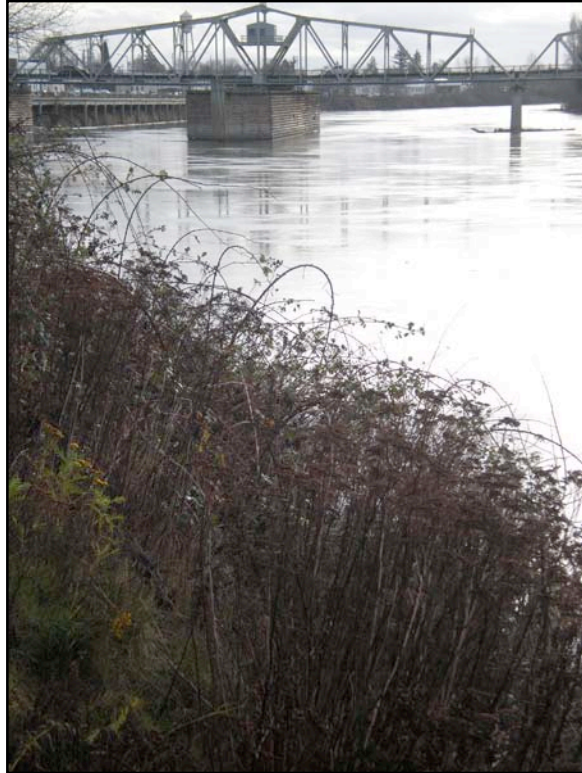


Figure 10. Photograph showing typical bank conditions as seen in archaeological survey for the project. Steep, vegetated banks (foreground) were common, and the shoreline adjacent to the downtown business district contained pilings (under bridge at left).



Figure 11. Existing levee north of the WWTP in the southwestern portion of the APE.

Archaeological testing was conducted using a small backhoe. The goal of subsurface testing was to characterize depositional locations in select locations, and to determine the potential for buried archaeological sites to be present in the APE. A backhoe was provided and operated by City of Mount Vernon personnel. Prior to testing, CRC coordinated with the City of Mount Vernon Department of Public Works to locate test trenches to avoid buried utilities and existing flood protection features. Only City-owned parcels were accessible for testing, and a total of nine trenches were excavated (Figures 12 and 13; Table 1). Specific locations of subsurface impacts of the project (e.g., sheetpile) will not be known until final design.

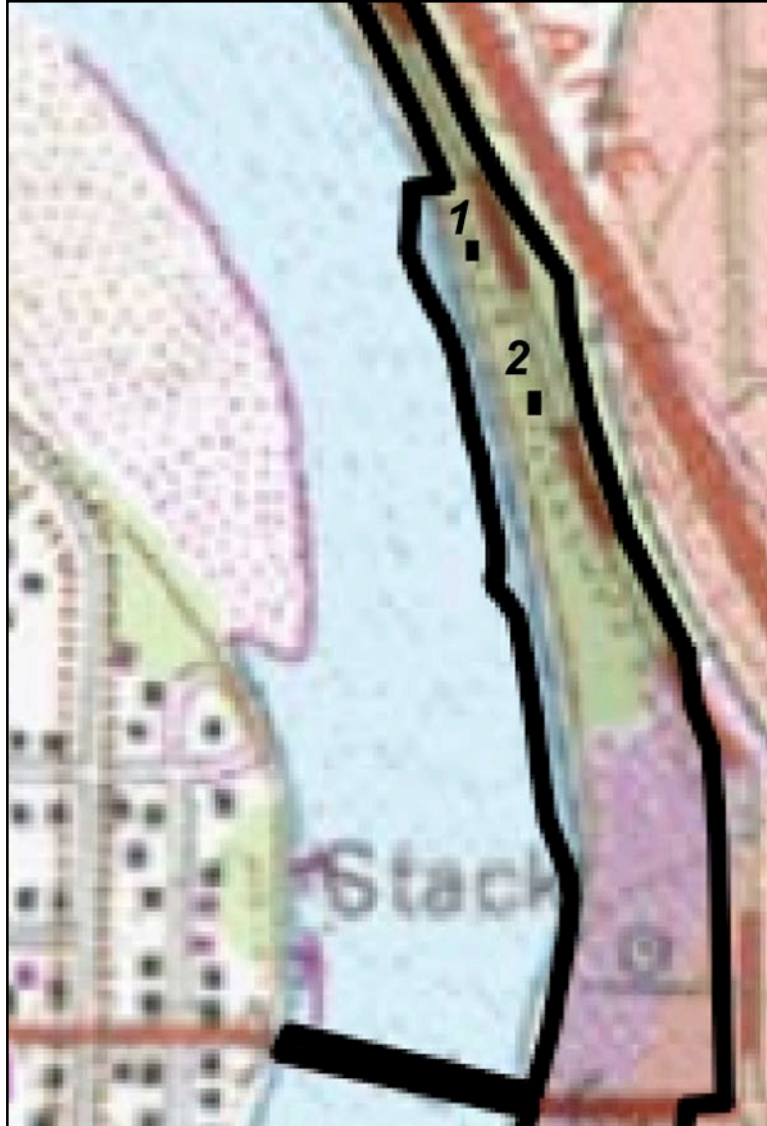


Figure 12. Locations of trenches 1 and 2, in Lions Park, near the north end of the APE.



Figure 13. Locations of test trenches in the southwestern portion of the APE, north and northeast of the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Table 1. Trenches excavated in CRC's testing for the Mount Vernon Downtown Flood Protection Project.

Trench No.	Orientation	Stratigraphic Description (cmbs=centimeters below surface)
1	N-S	0-20 cmbs: brown silt loam with rootlets and rounded gravels; 20-365 cmbs: dark grayish-brown gravelly sand with occasional concrete and wood fragments; 365-370 cmbs: blue-gray gravelly sand
2	N-S	0-20 cmbs: brown-gray gravelly silty sand; 20-55 cmbs: reddish brown gravelly sand; 55-130 cmbs: yellowish-gray clayey sand; 130-200 cmbs: blue-gray sandy clay; 200-220 cmbs: dark gray organic-rich clay with peat odor; 220-385 cmbs: light brown fine silty sand
3	NNW-SSE	0-20 cmbs: dark grayish-brown silt loam with one shotgun cartridge and plastic fragment; 20-32 cmbs: yellowish-gray gravelly sand with concrete, bottle glass, and brick fragments; 32-100 cmbs: brown-gray silty sand with round cobbles, plastic fragments, wood and metal debris; 100-310 cmbs: brown-gray gravelly silty sand with many plastic, glass, wood, brick, metal fragments

Trench No.	Orientation	Stratigraphic Description (cmbs=centimeters below surface)
4	NNW-SSE	0-20 cmbs: dark grayish-brown silt loam with plastic and metal fragments; 20-100 cmbs: brown silty sand with glass, wood, metal, brick, and plastic fragments; 100-220 cmbs: brown-gray gravelly silty sand with many plastic, glass, wood, brick, metal fragments; 220-250 cmbs: wood debris, logs, and tree branches in brown-gray gravelly silty sand; 250-360 cmbs: gray silty sand
5	E-W	0-5 cmbs: dark grayish-brown silt loam; 5-425 cmbs: gray fine silty sand
6	E-W	0-8 cmbs: dark grayish-brown silt loam; 8-436 cmbs: gray fine silty sand
7	E-W	0-20 cmbs: brown silt loam with dense rootlets; 20-115 cmbs: brown clay loam; 115-440 cmbs: brown-gray fine silty sand
8	E-W	0-25 cmbs: brown silt loam with dense rootlets; 25-395 cmbs: brown-gray fine silty sand
9	E-W	0-30 cmbs: brown silt loam with dense rootlets; 30-190 cmbs: brown-gray fine silty sands; 190-448 cmbs: brown-gray clay silt

Trenches measured roughly one meter wide by 2.5 meters long, and reached an average depth of 3.97 meters (13.02 feet) below existing grade. This depth was considered appropriate for the potential depth of project impacts (maximum of 12 to 18 feet below surface). Deeper excavations would require dewatering, due to the presence of the water table, and shoring to prevent slumping of sidewalls. Trenches 1 and 2 (Figure 14) were excavated in Lions Park near the north end of the APE. Fill episodes were apparent in the upper 1.85 meters of Trench 1 and in the upper 0.55 meters in Trench 2. Trenches 3 and 4 showed evidence of mid- to late-twentieth century waste disposal; refuse materials observed up to 3.1 meters below ground surface included plastic sheeting, aluminum cans, bottle and other glass fragments, concrete rubble, metal, and brick fragments. No potentially significant cultural materials were found. Trenches 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 contained an organic-rich sod layer up to 0.3 meters thick, underlain by gray-brown silty sands, up to 4.48 meters below surface (Figure 15). These silty sands are interpreted as flood deposits.



Figure 14. Sediments observed in Trench 2. Photograph faces south wall of trench. Fill material, consisting of mixed gravelly sands with occasional brick fragments and other debris, were found above alluvial deposits.



Figure 15. Thick flood deposits, seen here as gray-brown silty sands, were observed in test trenches excavated between the existing levee and the Skagit River, north of the WWTP.

Historic Resource Survey: Methodology and Results

A survey of the built environment was conducted by project historian Susan Medville to identify any historic properties in the APE. Medville visited the City of Mount Vernon Development Services Department. The Department provided the following maps: USGS Mount Vernon Quadrant, a plat map of the APE, a recent air photo of the area, an air photo taken in 1975 and Land Use Waterfront Development map dated March 29, 2006. Information regarding the current ownership of the structures and the dates of construction was obtained from the Skagit County Assessors Office web site.

Medville surveyed the built environment within the APE on December 17-19, 2007. She completed an initial foot and vehicle reconnaissance of the perimeter of the APE. She then completed a pedestrian survey of the APE and photographed each of the 45 structures that appeared older than 50 years within the APE. Since right-of-entry was not obtained from the home and property owners, the buildings were photographed and observed only from public right-of-ways. Medville identified 44 previously unrecorded structures that appeared to be over

the age of 50 years within the APE, and documented them on State of Washington Historic Property Inventory forms (see Attachment A).

Of the 44 historic structures inventoried, 31 appear to have potential to be historically significant. These structures were assessed as possible contributing elements to a National Register for Historic Places (NRHP) District (Table 2); however, they do not appear to be NRHP-eligible as individual properties. It should be noted some of these initial assessments might change, as CRC had access only to the exteriors of the buildings, and no in-depth research was conducted for any of the structures. The inventoried structures are located within the APE defined by the City in concurrence with the office of the SHPO; however, they are located outside the Flood Protection project footprint. Construction and operation of the project are not expected to visually, physically, or otherwise impact these buildings. Since the project will not affect these 31 structures, no further evaluative work is recommended prior to commencement of the project. CRC is aware that the City is currently working with the downtown merchants and the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) regarding the Main Street program. In addition, the City will be conducting an historic property inventory of downtown business district in the spring of 2008. Completion of the inventory is expected to provide a more robust evaluative context for assessing site significance.

The other 13 inventoried buildings do not appear to retain the integrity or physical characteristics that would express historical significance, nor do they appear to meet any of the four NRHP criteria of significance (NRHP 1991). No further evaluative work is recommended for these 13 buildings prior to commencement of the project.

Table 2. Historic buildings and structures inventoried in CRC's historic resource survey.

Address	Year Built	Common Name (Historic Name, if known)	NRHP Eligibility Assessment: Potential to Contribute to a District?
813 S Main St	1920	Moose Lodge	No
506 Main St	1961	Mike Lewis and Ken Evans Attorneys	No
711 S 1st St	1900	Law Offices	No
1030 W Hazel St	1950	1030 W Hazel St	No
1205 Dike Rd	1900	1205 Dike Rd	No
901 S 1st St	1900	Commercial Cold Storage	Yes-Local
1011 S 1st St	1953	Commercial Cold Storage	Yes-Local
512 Main St	1949	River and Main Merchants (Frets)	Yes-Local
807 W Hazel St	1920	807 W Hazel St	Yes-Local
1410 Britt Rd	Pre-1975	City of Mount Vernon Sanitation Garage	No
901 W Hazel St	1915	901 W Hazel St	Yes-Local
813 W Hazel St	1900	815 W Hazel St	Yes-Local
416 Myrtle St	1993?	Sweetwater Bistro	No
702 Main St	1961	Legal Building	No
407½ Main St	1945?	Awakening Therapeutic Massage	Unable to determine
305 Freeway Dr	1950	Valley Farm Center	Yes-Local
117 N 1st St	1906	Carnation Building	Yes-Local
325 S 1st St	1947	Lyon's Furniture	Yes-Local

Address	Year Built	Common Name (Historic Name, if known)	NRHP Eligibility Assessment: Potential to Contribute to a District?
419 W Gates St	1952	Collins Office Supply (Minor Building)	Yes-Local
413 W Gates St	1923	Case's Ladder	Yes-Local
416 W Gates St	1900	Porterhouse Restaurant	Yes-Local
420 W Gates St	1940	Teamsters Local 231 (Teamsters Local 231)	Yes-Local
410 W Gates St	1900	Poor Siamese Cafe	Yes-Local
502 S Main St	1923	Antiques (Ritz Theater)	Yes-Local
410 Myrtle St	1940	410 Myrtle St	Yes-Local
418 Myrtle St	1920s	418 Myrtle St (Skagit River Bakery)	Yes-Local
701 S 1st St	1908	Helmer Music Building (Johnson Building)	Yes-Local
811 W Hazel St	1910	811 W Hazel St	Yes-Local
803 W Hazel St	1910	803 W Hazel St	Yes-Local
1515 Britt Rd	1901	1515 Britt Rd	Yes-Local
1517 Britt Rd	1901	1517 Britt Rd	Yes-Local
1301 S Walter St	1900	1301 S Walter St	Yes-Local
1303 S Walter St	1920	1303 S Walter St	Yes-Local
1315 S Walter St	1920	1315 S Walter St	Yes-Local
1310 S Walter St	1900	1310 S Walter St	Yes-Local
1302 S Walter St	1900	1302 S Walter St	Yes-Local
621 Park St	1915	621 Park St	Yes-Local
1213 Virginia St	1905	1213 Virginia St	Yes-Local
1211 Virginia St	1900	1211 Virginia St	Yes-Local
1206 Virginia St	1900	1206 Virginia St	Yes-Local
1525 Britt Rd	1958	1525 Britt Rd	Yes-Local
1005 W Hazel St	1952	Distribution Center	Yes-Local
1201 S 1st St	1900	Darigold Plant	Yes-Local
Division Street Bridge, SR 536	Early 1950s	Division Street Bridge	Yes-Local

Conclusions and Recommendations

No recorded or previously unrecorded archaeological sites were identified within the APE in background research or in field investigations. Results of archaeological survey and testing suggest that the project has a low potential to affect as-yet unknown archaeological sites. The APE has been greatly affected by urban development, levee construction, filling, and flood processes. No signs of potentially significant archaeological deposits were found in this assessment.

CRC's survey identified 44 structures that appear to be 50 years old or older within the APE, in addition to those previously recorded for the EIS (Hudson 2007:Table 1). These have been recorded on State of Washington Historic Property Inventory forms (Attachment A). A compact disc containing inventory data accompanies this report and should be submitted to DAHP for inclusion in its historic property database. The historic property inventory completed for the EIS (Hudson 2007) included recommendations regarding the NRHP eligibility of all buildings in the project footprint. The Laughlin/Eddy Furniture Building was recommended eligible for listing on the NRHP, and mitigation measures were proposed (Hudson 2007:17). CRC agrees that measures should be undertaken to mitigate the proposed project's adverse effects on the historic

property, and recommends that a request for a Determination of Eligibility (DOE) be prepared for submission to DAHP. No further historical investigations are recommended for the 44 buildings inventoried by CRC, since these properties are not expected to be altered, removed, or otherwise affected by construction or operation of the project.

In the event that any ground-disturbing or other construction activities result in the inadvertent discovery of archaeological resources, work should be halted in the immediate area, and contact made with county officials, the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), and tribal representatives. Work should be stopped until further investigation and appropriate consultation have concluded. In the unlikely event of the inadvertent discovery of human remains, work should immediately be halted in the discovery area, the remains covered and secured against further disturbance, and communication established with municipal administrative and law enforcement personnel, DAHP, and authorized tribal representatives.

This document should be submitted by the City of Mount Vernon to appropriate personnel at DAHP, the lead permitting agency, and other interested parties, for review prior to the initiation of any land-altering activities.

Limitations of This Assessment

No cultural resources study can wholly eliminate uncertainty regarding the potential for prehistoric sites, historic properties or traditional cultural properties (TCPs) to be associated with a project. The information presented in this report is based on professional opinions derived from our analysis and interpretation of available documents, records, literature, and information identified in this report, and on our field investigation and observations as described herein. Conclusions and recommendations presented apply to project conditions existing at the time of our study and those reasonably foreseeable. The data, conclusions, and interpretations in this report should not be construed as a warranty of subsurface conditions described in this report. They cannot necessarily apply to site changes of which CRC is not aware and has not had the opportunity to evaluate.

It should be recognized that this assessment was not intended to be a definitive investigation of potential cultural resources concerns within the project area of potential effect. Within the limitations of scope, schedule and budget, our analyses, conclusions and recommendations were prepared in accordance with generally accepted cultural resources management principles and practice in this area at the time the report was prepared. We make no other warranty, either express or implied. These conditions and recommendations were based on our understanding of the project as described in this report and the site conditions as observed at the time of our site visit.

This report was prepared by CRC for the sole use of the City of Mount Vernon. Our conclusions and recommendations are intended exclusively for the purpose outlined herein and the project indicated. The scope of services performed in execution of this investigation may not be appropriate to satisfy the needs of other users, and any use or re-use of this document, including findings, conclusions, and/or recommendations, is at the sole risk of said user. If there is a substantial lapse of time between the submission of this report and the start of construction, or if conditions have changed due to project (re)design, or appear to be different from those described

in this report, CRC should be notified so that we can review our report to determine the applicability of the conclusions and recommendations considering the changed conditions.

Contacts

Megan Jones, Museum/Cultural Center
Samish Nation
P.O. Box 217
Anacortes, WA 98221
360-293-6404

Scott Schuyler, Cultural Resources
Upper Skagit Tribe
25944 Community Plaza
Sedro Woolley, WA 98284
360-854-7009

Charlie O'Hara, Cultural Resources
Swinomish Tribe
P.O. Box 817
LaConner, WA 98257-0817
360-466-7203

Rob Whitlam, Ph.D., State Archaeologist
Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
1063 S. Capitol Way, Suite 106
Olympia, WA 98501
360-586-3080

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**CULTURAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT
FOR THE
MOUNT VERNON DOWNTOWN FLOOD PROTECTION PROJECT
MOUNT VERNON, SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

**ATTACHMENT A.
STATE OF WASHINGTON HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY FORMS**

~~File~~
~~Reference~~
PO Box 599
Bainbridge WA 98020

~~Title~~ #342-A
CRC #0711I

~~CRC Office~~
8001 DRYDEN ST
Bainbridge WA 98110

~~File~~, 2008