



STATE OF MICHIGAN

MICHIGAN STATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

EARL J. POLESKI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

May 2, 2017

Johnathan Phillips
Saugatuck Township Supervisor
3461 Blue Star Hwy
P.O. Box 100
Saugatuck, MI 49453

Dear Mr. Phillips:

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has issued a permit to North Shores of Saugatuck, LLC to construct approximately 8,200 feet of new private road, including associated utilities and storm water infrastructure. The work is proposed to take place in Sections 3 and 4, T3N-R16W, on the north side of the Kalamazoo River near the east end of the new channel. The permit states that the development location "encompasses the archaeologically sensitive location of the historical town of Singapore (state historical site ID 20AE619)." The permit instructs the permittee to contact the State Archaeologist in the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) if archaeological remains or deposits are encountered. Beyond the requirements of the DEQ permit, the SHPO will also review the proposed development project if it receives federal assistance, whether through funding or permitting, under the authority of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended.

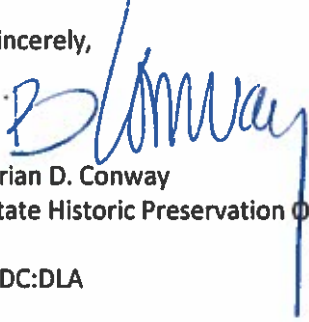
The DEQ permit condition is intended to limit damage to the Singapore site if it is encountered during construction. However, preventing damage to the archaeological site would be much better served if an archaeological investigation took place prior to construction so the location and extent of the site could be determined beforehand, and taken into account during project planning. Today, there are no visible surface remnants of Singapore, and there has been no archaeological investigation of the site. As a result, we do not know the precise location of the former town site, nor do we know whether structure foundations and other archaeological features related to Singapore are preserved beneath the dune sand.

These circumstances make the Singapore site vulnerable to damage during construction excavation. Because so little is known about what remains of Singapore beneath the ground surface, mechanized excavation can disturb the site and destroy archaeological evidence before it is recognized. The permit condition requiring evaluation of archaeological remains encountered during construction is helpful, but it would be better if the site were found through archaeological investigation rather than during construction excavation.

Why is it important to investigate and evaluate the archaeological potential of the Singapore site? As a 19th-century lumber town, Singapore offers an opportunity to learn about people who lived and worked during this important era in Michigan's history. Documentary information for Singapore exists; however, archaeological data may provide information about the people who lived in Singapore that is not available in documents. Remains of structures can inform us about methods of construction and the structural quality of housing in Singapore. Structural evidence can also provide insight into the commercial buildings that were established in Singapore. Artifacts document the local, regional, national, and even global sources of supply to which Singapore residents had access. Artifacts can also signal wealth and status differences among different households across Singapore neighborhoods.

In the interest of protecting a potential source of important information about Michigan's past, it is our recommendation that proactive archaeological investigation to define the site of Singapore take place before construction excavation begins. If you have any questions, please contact State Archaeologist Dr. Dean Anderson at andersond15@michigan.gov or at (517) 373-1618. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "B. Conway". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long vertical line extending downwards from the end of the name.

Brian D. Conway
State Historic Preservation Officer

BDC:DLA

Copy: Brad Rudich
Kathleen Miller-Cook