

Blockhouse Hill Development

Archaeological Resource Impact Assessment

Heritage Research Permit A2023NS192

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BLOCKHOUSE HILL DEVELOPMENT:
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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Category C

Davis MacIntyre & Associates Limited
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Cover: The southwest end of the study area, facing east towards Back Harbour.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2023, Davis MacIntyre & Associates Limited was contracted by MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple Architects Limited to conduct an archaeological assessment for Blockhouse Hill in Lunenburg County. The assessment included a historic background study, predictive modelling and field reconnaissance in order to determine the potential for archaeological resources in the impact area and to provide recommendations for further mitigation, if necessary.

The historic background study indicates that the Mi'kmaq and their ancestors have lived in the Lunenburg area since time immemorial, with direct archaeological evidence dating back at least 4000 years. The archaeological and historic record attest to a long-standing tradition of land use and occupation in the general area, as well as a reliance on the waterways in and near the study area for transportation, hunting, fishing, and gathering. Portages connecting present-day LaHave River to Mahone Bay are documented on historic maps and one precontact L'nuk archaeological site has been recorded within 5km of the study area, with numerous other sites recorded around nearby Mahone Bay, near the Ovens, along the LaHave River and in interior Lunenburg County, representing a rich cultural landscape.

In the historic period, Euro-Canadian settlement began with the arrival of French and Acadians in the 17th century. In 1753, the British founding of the town of Lunenburg resulted in the construction of the eastern blockhouse along the south end of the study area. The 18th century military property around the blockhouse was approximately 3 acres, including a small portion of the study area. The blockhouse fell into disrepair and was refurbished in 1812. This was the last major refurbishment of the fortification, and it remained standing and mainly used for storage throughout the 19th century, on a 1-acre military property, until it was reportedly damaged in an 1871 storm and later burned. The exact date that the blockhouse was demolished is unclear but it appears to have been gone by 1887.

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, the majority of the study area consisted of public common lands used for pasturing animals. Additionally, the study area was likely cleared and maintained in order to provide unobstructed military views of the Front and Back Harbours. Leases were permitted in the Common beginning in the 1820s although very little documentation about the agricultural use of the Common could be located. While the designation of the area as a common lands at Lunenburg had prevented the development of the land for residential structures, the short-lived Lunenburg County Jail was constructed within the study area.

The overall results of the reconnaissance and desktop study indicate that most of the study area is of low potential for archaeological resources. The currently undeveloped portion of the study area contains terrain that is sloped, rough, and wet in low lying areas. Past disturbance has also occurred along the Bay to Bay Trail, along the back of the

Hopson Street properties, and along the edge of the lower campground and Harbour View Haven, as well as along a power line running through the study area. The areas of the upper and lower campgrounds have been extensively disturbed and contain numerous buried utilities. There are no navigable watercourses within the study area, nor were any areas evaluated to be of elevated potential for L'nuk archaeological resources encountered. Hunting or gathering activity may have occurred within the study area but are unlikely to have created significant archaeological deposits. Additionally, agricultural or pastoral activity associated with the Common are unlikely to leave significant archaeological deposits.

One archaeological resource was identified within the study area during the reconnaissance. Feature 1 consists of a concrete and stone foundation associated with the Lunenburg County Jail (1893 to sometime after 1931). This feature has likely been partially impacted by a nearby private house lot.

Additionally, the results of the desktop study and reconnaissance indicate that the original 18th century military property for the eastern blockhouse (approximately 3 acres according to georeferencing) likely extended into a small portion of the study area. As such, a portion of the study area has been flagged as high potential for archaeological resources related to military activities.

Based on the results of this assessment, one archaeological feature (the former Lunenburg County Jail foundation), and one area of elevated potential for military archaeological resources were identified. Three cultural depressions were also noted but were evaluated to be of low archaeological significance. The remainder of the study area was evaluated to be of low potential for archaeological resources and there are no further recommendations for the low potential areas.

It is recommended that the Lunenburg County Jail foundation and the elevated potential area be avoided during any future ground disturbance. From an archaeological perspective, ground disturbance includes but is not limited to excavation, trenching, levelling/grading, grubbing of vegetation, drilling/coring, as well as infilling and use of the area for laydown/staging. If avoidance is not possible, then the following recommendations are made:

1. In the event that any ground disturbance is planned within a 30m buffer of the jail foundation, a mitigation plan should be developed and implemented. This may include additional surface cleaning and recording, archaeological testing or excavation, and monitoring.

2. In the event that any ground disturbance is planned within the high potential area, undisturbed portions should be subjected to shovel testing at 5m intervals. Previously disturbed areas within the high potential area (Blockhouse Hill Road and the lower campground) should be subjected to archaeological monitoring during ground disturbance activities.

Should development plans change, then a qualified archaeologist should be contracted to conduct an additional assessment on any new areas outside the project boundaries identified in this report.

In the unlikely event that any archaeological resources are encountered during ground disturbance and an archaeologist is not already on site, it is required that all activity cease and the Coordinator of Special Places (902-229-3159) be contacted immediately regarding a suitable method of mitigation.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In June 2023, Davis MacIntyre & Associates Limited was contracted by MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple Architects Limited to conduct an archaeological assessment for Blockhouse Hill in Lunenburg County. The assessment included a historic background study, predictive modelling and field reconnaissance in order to determine the potential for archaeological resources in the impact area and to provide recommendations for further mitigation, if necessary.

The current assessment was conducted under Category C (Archaeological Resource Impact Assessment) Heritage Research Permit A2023NS192 issued by the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage. This report conforms to the standards required by the Culture and Heritage Development Division under the Special Places Protection Act (*R.S., c. 438, s. 1*).

2.0 STUDY AREA

Blockhouse Hill is located in Lunenburg, Lunenburg County (Figure 2-1). A development feasibility study is being proposed at Blockhouse Hill for a mixed use, residential development. The purpose of the feasibility study is to develop potential design options through a public engagement process and ultimately recommend a final design scheme to Town Council. The study area consists of 22.53 acres adjacent to Old Town Lunenburg, including PIDs 60057015, 60057007, 60056991, 60056892, 60056900 and 60671427. The study area borders the Bay to Bay Trail, Sawpit Road, Blockhouse Hill Road, and Hopson Street (Figure 2-2).



Figure 2-1: General location of the Blockhouse Hill study area.



Figure 2-2: The Blockhouse Hill study area in Lunenburg.

2.1 Palaeoecology

Understanding the changing ecology of the early Holocene is paramount to understanding the archaeological record and the course of human history in our region from its beginnings. Processes associated with glacial advance and retreat have made a lasting impression on our province. During the most recent ice age, Atlantic Canada lay beneath the kilometre thick Laurentide Ice Sheet, which at the last glacial maximum (24 ka BP) extended its reach across the continental shelf to ocean depths of 800m.¹ The modern landscape bears the scars and relics of the Wisconsinan glaciation, in the form of drumlins, moraines, glacial erratics, lakes and drainage systems.

Deglaciation in the northeastern United States and the Atlantic Provinces began in earnest by 20 ka BP. Significant ice streams, draining vast areas of the Laurentide Ice Sheet, delivered large volumes of ice to the ocean and it was along these ice streams that calving occurred. The opening of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence in 14 ka BP accelerated this process, and calving ice margins eventually isolated a Newfoundland ice cap.² Glaciers were largely land-bound by 13 ka, and reduction continued through melting and climatic conditions rather than calving. In the wake of retreating glaciers, a mixed spruce woodland consisting of sedge, spruce, birch, and pine migrated northwards into Nova Scotia and created an environment suitable for large herds of migratory caribou. It is believed Sa'qiwe'k L'nu'k bands followed these herds into the region by at least 10,900 BP (12,900 cal BP).³

Deglaciation was not a unilinear process, as climate variables caused glaciers to retreat at different rates at different times. The Younger Dryas Cooling event took place between 10,900 and 10,600 BP (or 12,900 – 11,600 cal BP) and had a profound effect on vegetation.⁴ Land-bound glaciers reactivated and the advance of forested regions was reversed, with areas of open shrub tundra expanding southwards. A rapid warming period followed the Younger Dryas, and with it, the environment changed again to a more closed, mixed deciduous forest of oak and pine.⁵ Unburdened by the Laurentide Ice Sheet, the continental crust rebounded in isostatic uplift, resulting in a drop of relative sea level. At the same time, large volumes of water held in glacial ice was released back to the oceans, resulting in eustatic change. The pace of eustatic change was initially rapid, following a low sea level stand of -65m at 11.3-11.7 ka BP. Sea level rise slowed after 11 ka BP and was outpaced by isostatic change. By about 9.5 ka BP, the pace of land rise diminished and sea levels again began to overtake exposed shores in most areas.⁶

Glacial isostasy and eustasy changed habitable coastlines over the millennia following deglaciation (Figure 2-3). Significant landforms, subaerially exposed through isostatic

¹ Fader 2005, 2; Lothrop et al. 2011, 549.

² Shaw et al. 2006, 2069, 2072.

³ Ellis 2004, 244; Newby et al. 2005, 151.

⁴ Fader 2005, 5; Lothrop et al. 2011, 550.

⁵ Newby et al. 2005, 151; Deal et al. 2006, 256.

⁶ Shaw et al. 2002a, 1867; Fader 2005, 2.

uplift were subsequently submerged by rising seas.⁷ Most ancient shorelines have been reclaimed by the sea or reshaped by powerful erosional forces. However, some sheltered or interior areas may hold the potential for relatively intact palaeoshores. Evidence of human occupation from submerged sites has been found offshore. Artifacts like ridged ulus have turned up as unexpected catches of scallop draggers in the Bay of Fundy, Gulf of Maine, and off the coast of Prince Edward Island.⁸

More generally, by 6 ka BP, the geographical setting of the Atlantic region nearly matched conditions today. The inundation of the Northumberland Strait finally isolated what is now Prince Edward Island from the mainland as sea levels continued to rise, reaching within 5m of their present depth off the Atlantic coast by 3,000.⁹

⁷ Fader 2005, 5.

⁸ Fader 2005, 6; Shaw et al. 2009, 24.

⁹ Shaw et al. 2002a, 1872.

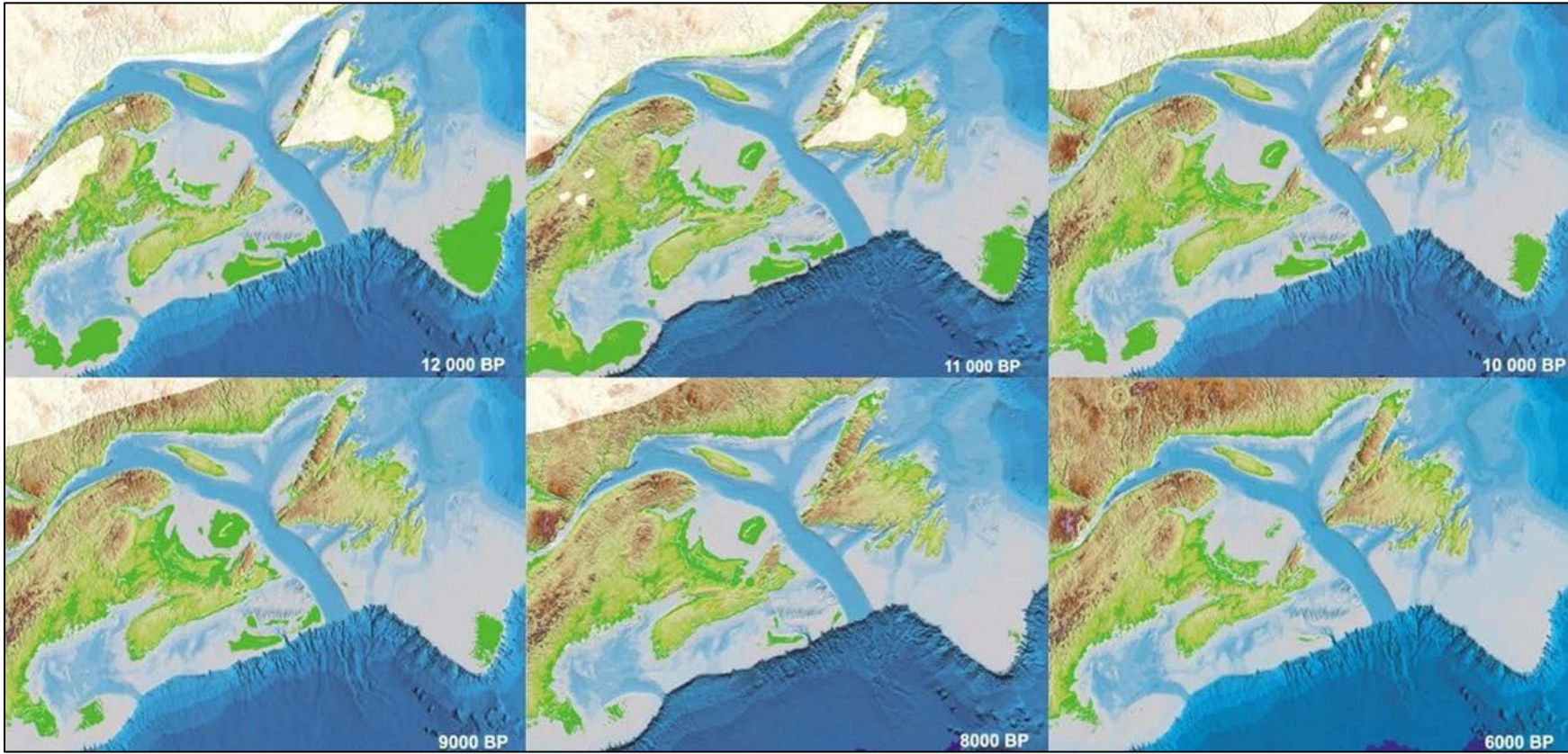


Figure 2-3: Palaeogeography of Maine and the Atlantic Provinces, depicting how emergent landforms on the continental shelf were gradually submerged.¹⁰

¹⁰ From Shaw et al. 2002a.

2.2 Natural Environment

The study area is located in the South Shore ecodistrict (#830) and the Lahave Drumlin unit (Natural Theme Region #832). The South Shore ecodistrict contains bays, inlets, headlands, and islands along the Atlantic Ocean. The topography is generally composed of low hills, hummocks, and flats and drumlins.¹¹

The bedrock across the community of Lunenburg is mostly Meguma Group Halifax Formation, which typically contains slate, siltstone and sandstone with some metamorphization to schist. The surficial geology across the study area is glacially deposited ground moraine that is described as a silty till composed of distant sources and drumlins on the western extent, and a stony, sandy matrix from local bedrock sources and surface boulders on the eastern extent.¹² Generally across the ecodistrict, soils are often derived from gravelly sandy loam till from local bedrock sources and are often shallow.¹³

Black spruce, white spruce, and fir are often found along the coast, with mixed wood forest inland, including red maple, white birch, red oak and white pine. The warmer temperatures in southwest Nova Scotia, coupled with the warmer waters from the Gulf Stream allow for increased forest diversity. Higher winds along the coast, however, often stunt tree growth unless sheltered from the exposure by natural topography. Forest growth is also hindered by exposure to hurricanes and imperfectly drained soils which make trees vulnerable to windthrow, and human activity such as forestry.¹⁴ Additionally poor soils, high winds, and abundance of shrubs/coniferous needles across the ecodistrict make forests susceptible to fire.¹⁵

The ecodistrict contains a relatively high proportion of wetlands in comparison to the rest of the Atlantic Coast, with a significant presence of peatland, shrub swamps and salt marshes. Beaches are also frequently white sand and backed by fine-grained sand dunes.¹⁶ The region is an important habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds including black duck, common goldeneye, long-tailed duck, red-necked grebe, piping plovers, Atlantic puffin, Leach's storm-petrel, razorbill and black guillemot. Gulls, cormorants, terns, and the great blue heron also breed on islands along the coast. The LaHave River contains many brackish water species. Warm water species such as seahorses, blue crabs and sharks are also sometimes found.¹⁷

¹¹ Neily et al. 2017, 235.

¹² Department of Energy and Mines n.d.

¹³ Neily et al. 2017, 236.

¹⁴ Neily et al. 2017, 235–6.

¹⁵ Neily et al. 2017, 239.

¹⁶ Neily et al. 2017, 239.

¹⁷ Davis and Browne 1996, 196–7.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

A historic background study was conducted by Davis MacIntyre & Associates Limited in October 2023. Historic maps and manuscripts and published literature were consulted from the Nova Scotia Archives and other online sources. LiDAR and air photos were also examined. The Maritime Archaeological Resource Inventory (MARI), a database of known archaeological resources in the Maritime region, was searched to understand prior archaeological research and known archaeological resources neighbouring the study area.

The Archaeological Research Division at Kwiłmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office (KMKNO-ARD) was contacted in September 2023 to inquire whether traditional Mi'kmaw land use is known in or near the study area. A response was received on 5 October 2023. While the traditional use information provided is confidential, it has been taken into consideration during this assessment. KMKNO-ARD also provided historical references from their database which has been incorporated into the historical background below. Wasoqopa'q First Nation was also contacted in September 2023.

A field reconnaissance of the study area was conducted in October 2023, with particular attention paid to areas anticipated to be impacted. Detailed notes and photographs were collected, with tracklogs recorded via handheld GPS units. Archaeological features/areas of potential were recorded using handheld GPS.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Maritime Archaeological Resource Inventory

The Maritime Archaeological Resource Inventory was accessed on 15 September in order to determine if known archaeological sites or resources exist within or near the study area. A search radius of 5 kms from the study area was examined.

A general provenience Borden number has been assigned for a collection of mid-19th century artifacts which were recovered within the town limits. Three other sites have been identified within a five-kilometer radius. Museum curator Harry Piers indicated that many of these artifacts were of native copper.¹⁸ Amateur archaeologist John Erskine reported in 1969 that the site had eroded away.

The fourth recorded archaeological site is located at the Lunenburg Academy (**BcDb-09**),

¹⁸ Leonard 1996, 87–8.

where the Academy building overlies a British military site once known as Gallows Hill. Geophysical testing was conducted in 2013, which indicated the presence of a linear anomaly. Subsequently, this anomaly was investigated during a public archaeology excavation project in 2016, which revealed that the anomaly was a cobblestone drain or swale, potentially associated with the military history of the site.

The lack of archaeological data for the immediate area likely reflects a lack of extensive archaeological survey rather than an absence of archaeological sites. This is compounded by poor site preservation and visibility due to historic land development as well as steadily rising sea levels over the last several thousand years.

4.2 Historic Background

4.2.1 L'nuk Settlement During the Precontact and Historic Periods

Spatially and geographically, L'nuk land use throughout Mi'kma'ki is not considered in the same sense that European occupation is recorded in historic times. Colonialism has had a significant impact on Mi'kmaw lifeways but prior to European contact, the Mi'kmaq and their ancestors had a very dynamic relationship with the land which was reflected in their language, legends, songs, dances, and oral tradition. The landscape was viewed as "sentient, ever-changing, and in a continual process of becoming".¹⁹ Therefore, the euro-centric view of the land as discrete and definitive land parcels does not reflect the Mi'kmaw world view and references to site-specific pre-contact land use from the first-hand perspective of the Mi'kmaq (through oral tradition) are difficult to ascertain. However, historic references by Europeans do exist, although they must be carefully considered due to their inherent bias, and Mi'kmaw land use and occupation is reflected in the archaeological record.

Nova Scotia has been home to the Mi'kmaq and their ancestors for at least 13,000 years. A legacy of experience built over millennia shaped cultural beliefs and practices, creating an intimate relationship between populations and the land itself. The complexity of this history, culturally and ecologically, is still being explored.

The earliest period is Saqiwe'k L'nuk (the Ancient People) or the Palaeoindian period (13,000 - 9,000 cal BP). The changing ecology following deglaciation allowed the entrance of large herds of migratory caribou into Nova Scotia, followed by Palaeoindian groups from the south.²⁰ Currently, the Debert/Belmont Sites provides the most extensive evidence of Palaeoindian settlement in the province, with isolated finds from this period also present throughout the province. Commonly believed to be big-game hunters, research is now aimed at exploring the diverse subsistence patterns that may have

¹⁹ Sable and Francis 2012, 18.

²⁰ Newby et al. 2005, 151.

supported populations, and what adaptations were made when the environment shifted once again in the early Holocene.²¹

Succeeding the Saqiwe'k L'nuk is the Mu Awsami Kejikawe'k L'nuk (the Not so Recent People) or the Archaic Period (9,000-3,000 cal BP). This time saw a reorientation to a more maritime subsistence, with settlement pivoting more towards coastal areas, lakes, and bountiful riverine resources.²² Remnants of these sites along the coast have largely been engulfed by rising seas or battered by wind and wave, though interior sites are increasingly being discovered.²³ Ground stone tools, specialized for woodworking, appear at this time and may have been used to create dug-out canoes. Numerous traditions and distinct technologies have been documented throughout Maine and the Atlantic provinces. A growing catalogue of exotic cultural components demonstrates that groups within Nova Scotia were engaged in spheres of interaction spanning hundreds of kilometers. Unfortunately, a lack of formally excavated sites within Nova Scotia still obscures the degree to which these traditions were present.

By the Kejikawe'k L'nuk (the Recent People) or Woodland/Ceramic period (3,000-550 cal BP), the Mi'kmaq were a maritime people, with known sites concentrating along coastal shorelines and navigable watercourses.²⁴ Migration of ideas and people introduced new worldviews and technologies from groups originating in places like northern New England and the Great Lakes area, to local populations, including the earliest ceramic forms. Harvesting of marine molluscs and shellfish appears in this period, and substantial shell-middens have gifted archaeologists with well-preserved records of these past lives.²⁵ Fish weirs populating the province's rivers and streams speak to the importance of migrating fish species to Mi'kmaw life. Terrestrial hunting and foraging were practiced with varying degrees of intensity depending on seasonality and region. A generally stable cultural form is believed to have developed by 2,000 cal BP, forming the way of life first encountered by Europeans arriving on our shores.²⁶

Mi'kmaw life was substantially altered in the Kiskukewe'k L'nuk (Today's People) or Contact Period (500 BP- Present). Trade and European settlement introduced change and upheaval to the traditional way of Mi'kmaw life. Mobile hunting and gathering still defined Mi'kmaw life, with identity residing within family households.²⁷ Trading posts and fishing villages became intersections of European and Mi'kmaq interaction, affecting traditional seasonal rounds and access to land. The hunting of fur-bearing mammals intensified to satisfy the mutual exchange of skins for European goods.²⁸ It is not accurate,

²¹ Lothrop et al. 2011, 562.

²² Tuck 1975.

²³ Deal et al. 2006.

²⁴ Davis 1993, 100.

²⁵ Davis 2005, 18.

²⁶ Wicken 2004, 26.

²⁷ Wicken 2004, 30.

²⁸ Whitehead 1993, 89.

however, to say that Mi'kmaq *adopted* European goods and culture, but rather *adapted* to it. The Mi'kmaq remained an influential social and political force forming a triadic narrative of contention with the English and French in the 18th century. However, disease, conflict, and alienation from the land wreaked a ruinous effect on the Mi'kmaq by the 19th century, pushing people to the margins of colonial society.²⁹

Table 4-1: Mi'kmaw/Archaeological Cultural Periods.³⁰

Mi'kmaw Period	Archaeological Period	Years (C ¹⁴ Uncalibrated)	Calendar Years (Calibrated)
Saqiwe'k L'nuk (the Ancient People)	Palaeoindian	11,500 – 9,000 BP	13,000 – 9,000 cal BP
	<i>Early/Middle</i>	<i>11,500 – 10,000 BP</i>	<i>13,000 – 11,600 cal BP</i>
	<i>Late</i>	<i>10,000 – ~9,000 BP</i>	<i>11,600 – 9,000 cal BP</i>
Mu Awsami Kejikawe'k L'nuk (the Not so Recent People)	Archaic	9,000 – 3,000 BP	9,500 – 3000 cal BP
	<i>Early/Middle</i>	<i>9,000 – 5,000 BP</i>	<i>9500 – 5,500 cal BP</i>
	<i>Late/Transitional</i>	<i>5,000 – 2,500 BP</i>	<i>5,500 – 3,000 cal BP</i>
Kejikawe'k L'nuk (the Recent People)	Woodland/Ceramic	3,000 – 500 BP	3,000 – 550 cal BP
	<i>Early</i>	<i>3,000 – 2,400 BP</i>	<i>3,000 – 2200 cal BP</i>
	<i>Middle</i>	<i>2,400 – 1,700 BP</i>	<i>2,200 – 1,300 cal BP</i>
	<i>Late</i>	<i>1,700 – 500 BP</i>	<i>1,300 – 550 cal BP</i>
Kiskukewe'k L'nuk (Today's People)	Protohistoric	500 BP – 350 BP	550 – 350 cal BP
	Historic/Modern	500 BP – present	350 cal BP – present

The Mi'kmaq inhabited the territory known as Mi'kma'ki or Megumaage, which included all of Nova Scotia including Cape Breton, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick (north of the Saint John River), the Gaspé region of Quebec, part of Aroostook County in northern Maine and southwestern Newfoundland (Figure 4-1). The study area is located within the Mi'kmaw territory known as Sipekne'katik meaning “wild potato area” or “place of groundnuts.” Sipekne'katik encompasses parts of what today are Hants, Lunenburg, Kings, Colchester, Halifax and Cumberland Counties. Historic European records suggest there were three summer villages within the territory, located at Shubenacadie, Truro, and Tatamagouche. Several villages are also recorded in and around Kjiptuk/Halifax.³¹ More villages were likely established throughout Sipekne'katik, but either fell outside of the knowledge of European sources or were simply not recorded.

²⁹ Reid 2009.

³⁰ Lewis 2006b; Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq 2007, 3; Davis 2011, 22; Betts and Hyrnick 2021, 19.

³¹ Hoffman 1955, 534-35.

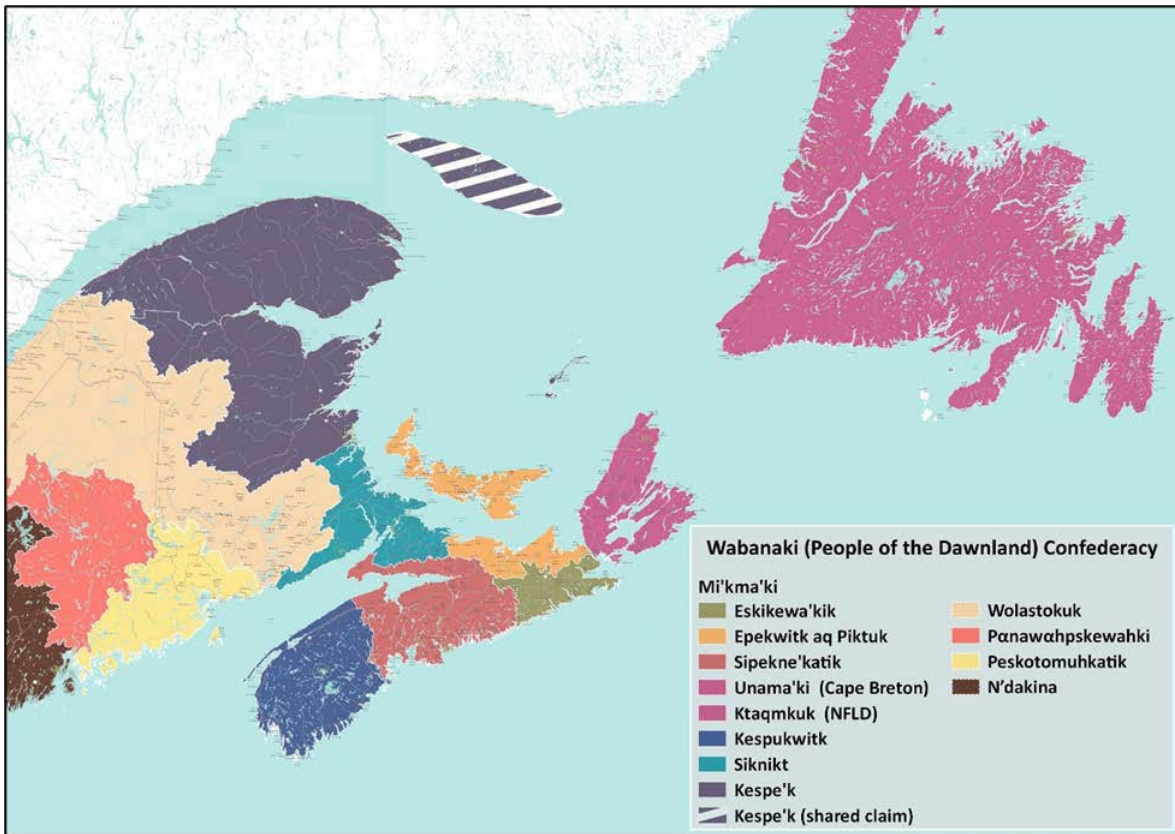


Figure 4-1: The districts of Mi'kma'ki and Wabanaki Traditional Territories.³²

The cultural significance of the study area to the Mi'kmaq and their ancestors is recorded in the Mi'kmaw language. The Mi'kmaw language, inseparable from Mi'kma'ki, is embedded with knowledge of the land and a unique way of understanding the world, reflected in both oral traditions and place names.³³ For archaeologists, the Mi'kmaw language can provide powerful insights into traditional land-use, available resources, and how these places were perceived. Lunenburg, or E'se'katik in the Mi'kmaw language, refers to "the place of clams".³⁴ In the 17th and 18th centuries, the Lunenburg area was known as Merligueche or Merligueche or Malegash, a name of Mi'kmaw origin that was adopted by the French and which means "milky bay".³⁵ DesBrisay, however, suggests that

³² Adapted from Sable et al. 2012; Maliseet Nation Conservation Council 2009; Johnson 2020; Membertou Geomatics Solutions (MGS) and Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR) 2016; EPA 2015; and Abbe Museum. Some traditional territory overlap exists in western New Brunswick, Quebec and Northern New England. This adaptation is based upon modern watershed delineations. Boundaries within modern territories were likely fluid during periods of landscape and climactic changes. Current delineations are more reflective of series of treaties, negotiated between various Wabanaki nations and contemporary indigenous groups, and post contact treaties with the French, English, and federal governments of Canada and USA.

³³ Sable and Francis 2012, 26.

³⁴ Ta'n Weji-sqalia'tiek.

³⁵ DesBrisay 1895, 18; Fergusson 1967, 384.

the translation of “milky bay” is incorrect and that the Mi’kmaw name for the Lunenburg area was Malliggeak meaning “loose”.³⁶ The Ovens is referred to as Lamso’ql and relates to a legend of a Mi’kmaq who entered the Ovens and emerged on the other side of the province. The LaHave River is referred to as Pijinuiskaq meaning “River of long joints/river branches”.³⁷

Archaeological evidence supports a precontact occupation of coastal Lunenburg County and the surrounding landscape by the Mi’kmaq and their ancestors for at least 5,000 years and almost certainly much longer. The Mi’kmaq and their ancestors would have harvested marine birds and animals at the coast, gone to interior rivers and lakes for seasonal migrations of fish, eel, and opportunities to hunt larger game animals. Plants were also harvested from different interior and coastal environments. Movement from the coast to the interior may have followed a generalized winter-interior, summer-coastal migration round suggested by ethnohistoric sources.³⁸ However, mobility across Mi’kma’ki was likely more complex.³⁹ Use of rivers and long inlets allowed more fluid movement between coastal and interior camps.⁴⁰ Movement between the coast and interior may have been dependant on weather and availability of valued resources, as suggested by other sites found throughout Nova Scotia.⁴¹

Shell middens have been found at various sites around Mahone Bay, further indications of Mi’kmaw occupation.⁴² Two shell middens were discovered in the vicinity of Lunenburg Harbour in 1753, although it was not clear whether they had been created by the Mi’kmaq or the Acadians. One was located at the head of the harbour near the French Burying Ground and the second was located near Rous’ Brook.⁴³

Seventeenth century European documentation points to Mi’kmaw villages in the general Lunenburg area. Champlain noted two Mi’kmaw settlements at LaHave River in 1604 (Figure 4-2).⁴⁴ His map depicts a Mi’kmaw settlement consisting of wigwams and longhouses on the eastern side of the LaHave River and another Mi’kmaw settlement on the west of the LaHave at Petite Rivière.

³⁶ DesBrisay 1895, 18.

³⁷ Ta’n Weji-sqalia’tiek.

³⁸ Hoffman 1955, 153–4.

³⁹ Wicken 1994, 63.

⁴⁰ Lewis 2006a, 58.

⁴¹ Sheldon 1988, 134.

⁴² Davis and Browne 1996, 89.

⁴³ DesBrisay 1895, 28.

⁴⁴ Wicken 1994, 101–3.

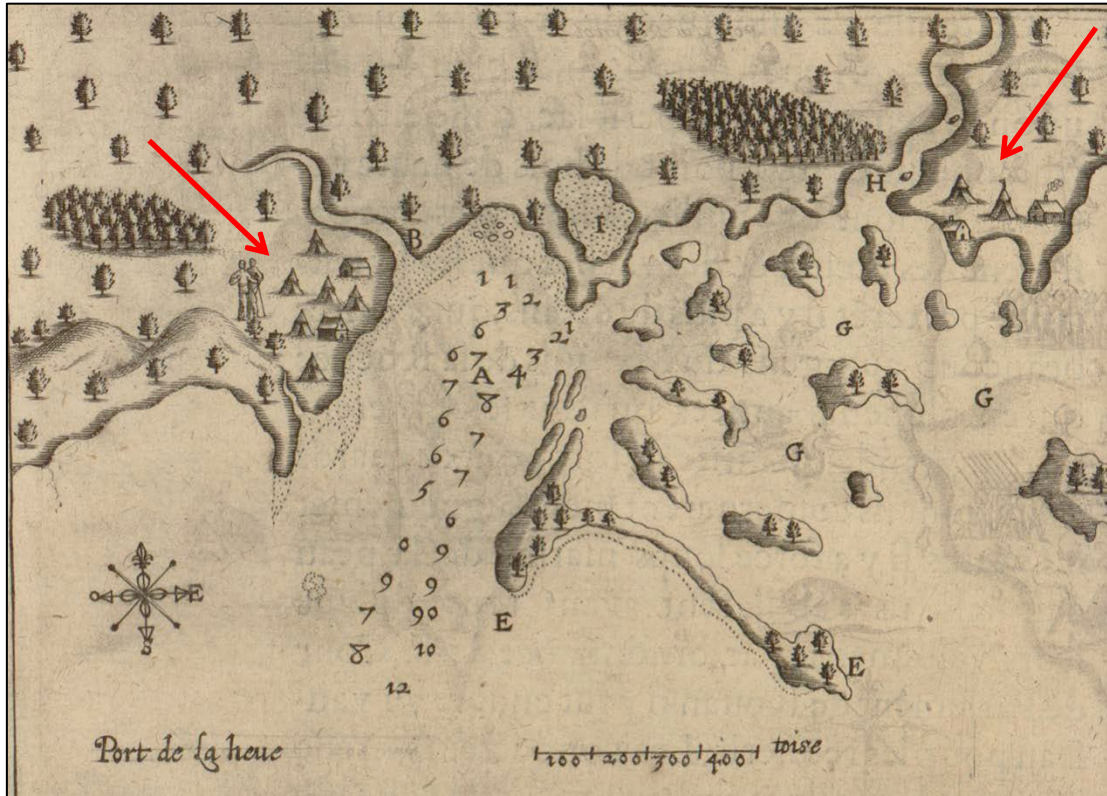


Figure 4-2: Champlain's 1604 map of Port de La heue showing the LaHave River (marked by H) and two Mi'kmaw settlements (red).⁴⁵

The Mi'kmaw were known to have had a summer settlement on the east side of the mouth of the LaHave River.⁴⁶ This area served as an entry point for the portage route between LaHave River and Lunenburg Bay, depicted on Bellin's 1744 map and labelled as "*Riviere où est le Portage qui va à Mirligueche*" (Figure 4-3).⁴⁷ This original portage route is also reflected in the name "Indian Path Road".⁴⁸ A second, undated map, shows the area after the settlement of Lunenburg and makes note of three portages or "carrying places" – one from LaHave River to Indian Path Harbour, a second from Lunenburg near the French Burying Ground to Deans Corner; and the third crossing Second Peninsula from Martin Cove (Figure 4-4). Documents related to French settlement at LaHave in the 17th century provide references to Mi'kmaw working and trading with the French in this area. Nicholas Denys, for example, employed Mi'kmaw children to collect berries for his men at his lumber camp, which was located somewhere near the Merligueche side of the portage between LaHave River and Merligueche.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Champlain 1878.

⁴⁶ Champlain 1878.

⁴⁷ Bellin 1744.

⁴⁸ Dawson 2004.

⁴⁹ Denys 1672 as cited in Dawson 1996.

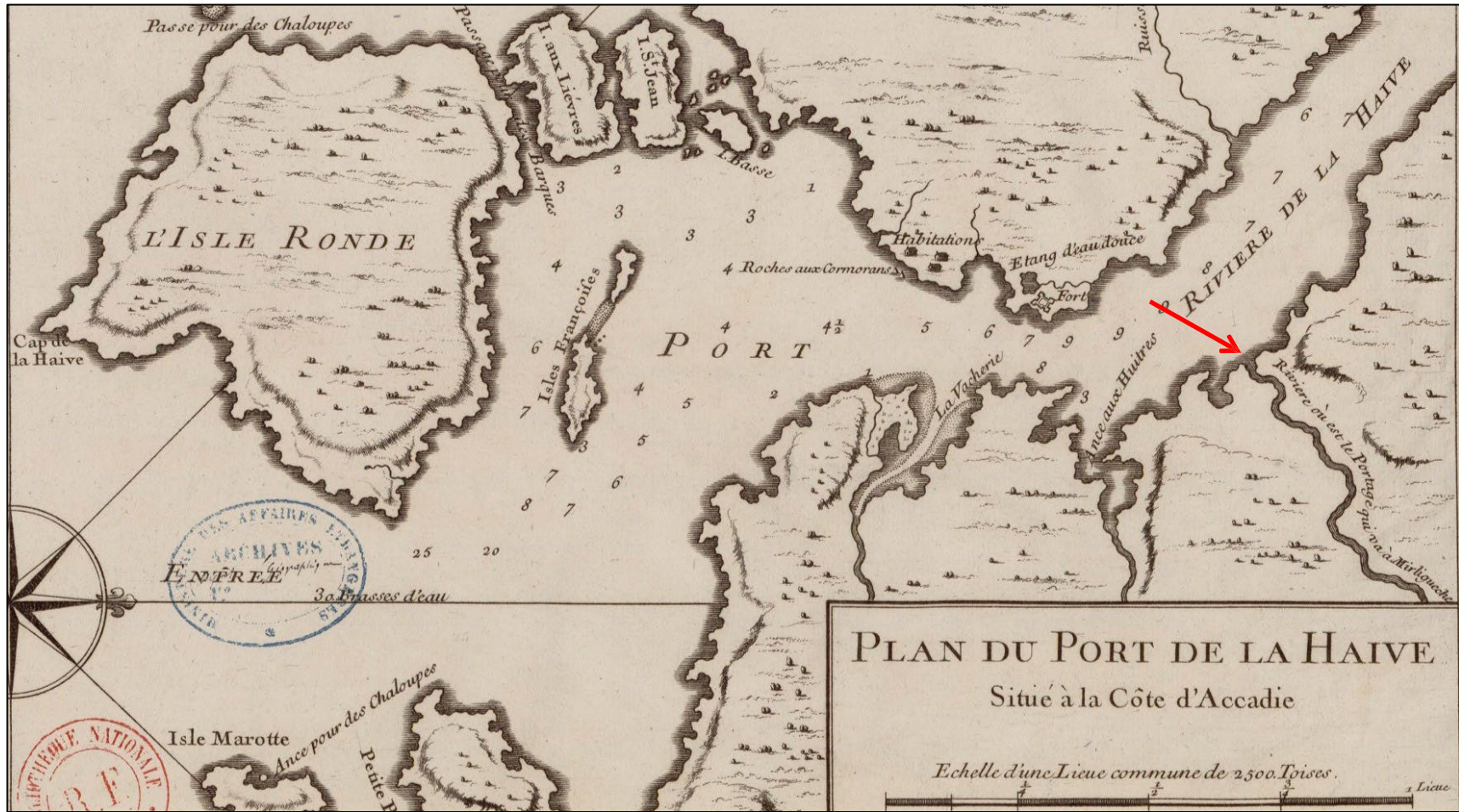


Figure 4-3: Bellin’s 1744 map of Port de la Haive showing the entrance to the river and portage leading from LaHave River to Lunenburg (Mirligueche).⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Bellin 1744.



Figure 4-4: An undated map of the LaHave to Lunenburg area showing three portages (I, G, and H, blue), as well as the fortification at Blockhouse Hill (D, red).⁵¹ A red arrow marks the approximate location of the eastern blockhouse.

⁵¹ Anonymous Undated.

During the eighteenth century, tensions escalated between fishing parties from New England and local Mi'kmaw groups along the south shore, partially due to the refusal of the Governor of Massachusetts to return Mi'kmaw prisoners. In 1723, following the capture of seventeen fishing ships at Canso by the Mi'kmaq, twenty prisoners were brought to Merligueche before eventually being ransomed. In August 1726, Mi'kmaw inhabitants of Merligueche attacked an English fishing vessel in the hopes of capturing prisoners who could be exchanged for the imprisoned Mi'kmaq in Boston.⁵² In the 1740s, the English avoided using this part of the south shore for drying fish, fearing attacks by the local Mi'kmaq.⁵³

After the founding of Lunenburg in 1753 and the beginning of a more permanent Euro-Canadian settlement, the Mi'kmaq continued to reside in their traditional territory around Lunenburg. In April of 1753, a Mi'kmaw man named Claude Gisigash, who was described as the governor of LaHave, met with the British Governor and council to make peace.⁵⁴ On another occasion, a letter by Colonel Charles Lawrence, founder of Lunenburg, explains in November 1753 that the two Mi'kmaw Chiefs from Cape Sable Island, near Pubnico, had arrived in Lunenburg proposing peace and requesting provisions.⁵⁵ On November 9th, 1761, a peace treaty was signed with Francis Mius, known as the "chief of the tribe of LaHave".⁵⁶ In 1785, Solomon Geremy, from "the Tribe of La Have" successfully petitioned for a license to occupy an "uninhabited spot of land to the rear of the English settlement at La Have" where he had been living with his family.⁵⁷

In 1801, three Mi'kmaw families, all with the surname Labradore, were listed as living at "Mussamus".⁵⁸ Mushamush is the name of the river that empties into Mahone Bay, as well as several lakes inland and was also used to refer to the general Blockhouse-Mahone Bay area. The name is believed to derive from the Mi'kmaw name for the area. Eight years later in 1809, Benjamin Labradore and Paul Nowel of Lunenburg made an application for 300 to 400 acres of land in the township of Lunenburg in the first division on which they had made considerable improvements. The land was located at Mushamush on the shore of a lake.⁵⁹

In the late 18th to early 19th century, several Mi'kmaw families lived near Mahone Bay and Blockhouse, possibly at the place referred to as Mushamush where the Labradore and Nowel families were living, near where a Mi'kmaw burial ground is reportedly located. According to DesBrisay, after several members of the community died from smallpox, the

⁵² Wicken 1994, 150.

⁵³ Murdoch 1866, 81–2; DesBrisay 1895, 19.

⁵⁴ Murdoch 1866, 219.

⁵⁵ Paul 2000, 138.

⁵⁶ Murdoch 1866, 407.

⁵⁷ Geremy 1784.

⁵⁸ Anon 1801.

⁵⁹ Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forestry 1809.

remaining members moved away.⁶⁰ DesBrisay may be referring an outbreak in 1817, documented in a petition for funds to cover the cost of vaccinating a group of 45 Mi'kmaq who came from Halifax to the head of Mahone Bay. Most of the group was vaccinated but eleven individuals died of smallpox.⁶¹

In the mid-nineteenth century, reserves were established at New Germany, New Ross and Gold River.⁶² A return of Mi'kmaq within the county of Lunenburg in 1841 listed 45 Mi'kmaq between the settlements at Gold River and La Have.⁶³ Census records indicate that there were 50 Mi'kmaq living in all of Lunenburg County in 1881, with six of them living in Lunenburg proper. This is the only year between 1871 and 1921 that any Mi'kmaq were enumerated in the census for Lunenburg town.⁶⁴ The Gold River reserve included 960 acres fronting on the river.

Historic archaeological finds were made by amateur archaeologist J. B. Gilpin, at Lunenburg in 1877. His notes state that “from a recent deposit at Lunenburg we find copper knife blades and needles made from the native copper of the Bay of Fundy, hammered into shape.”⁶⁵ This is likely in reference to the Kejikawe'k L'nu'k period site at Bachman Beach (BcDb-04). Gilpin also notes a pipe bowl of sandstone found “at Lunenburg.”⁶⁶

Oral tradition provided in an anonymous letter written by a Mi'kmaw resident of Lunenburg, and published in full in *The MacDonald Notebook*, indicates that the Blockhouse Hill area was used as hunting grounds, as well as for winter encampments. The letter states in part:

*The main concern we have as a group is that the lands located at your newly proposed Blockhouse Hill Development were traditionally ancestral lands of the Mi'kmaq people. This was confirmed when the last development of the Lunenburg Academy was proposed, many years ago. On those lands located at the Lunenburg Academy, investigation showed that there was much historical artifacts located at that proposed development, which caused the development to be halted. It must be noted that the lands on Blockhouse Hill were our ancestral winter encampments, as well as our hunting grounds. It is believed that these lands may very well contain artifacts and even ancestral burial grounds, similar to those discovered at the Lunenburg Academy.*⁶⁷

⁶⁰ DesBrisay 1895, 347.

⁶¹ Nova Scotia Archives 1817.

⁶² Wicken 2010, 57.

⁶³ Anonymous 1841.

⁶⁴ Wicken 2010, 152.

⁶⁵ Gilpin 1877, 262.

⁶⁶ Gilpin 1873, 227.

⁶⁷ MacDonald 2023.

Based on records held by the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage, no archaeological investigation has occurred at the Lunenburg Academy, with the exception of the 2013 non-invasive geophysical survey and the 2016 public excavation to investigate the 2013 survey results. Unfortunately, a report is not available for the 2016 work but details in the MARI for the site indicate that both the 2013 and 2016 work was conducted as part of research-based or public archaeology projects, and not in advance of any proposed developments, including development of the Lunenburg Academy itself. Based on the MARI form, the results of the archaeological work at the Academy revealed a cobblestone drain or swale. Artifacts found during the excavation are not described in detail but the period of the site was identified as “Colonial” and “Early Post-Confederation” based on historical documents, maps, and artifacts. There is no information to indicate that L’nuk artifacts or burial grounds were located on the Lunenburg Academy grounds during any previous archaeological work.

4.2.2 Settler and Euro-Canadian Settlement

The earliest documented Euro-Canadian visitation to the general Lunenburg area was the arrival of de Monts and Champlain in 1604 to LaHave, when de Monts named the cape Cape La Hève. This name became associated with the river and the area was known as La Hève, La Haive and finally LaHave.

Throughout the early 17th century, there was French interest in establishing settlement and business in Nova Scotia. Isaac de Razilly, his nephew Claude de Razilly, his cousin Charles de Menou d’Aulnay and Nicholas Denys arrived at La Hève on 8 September 1632, to establish a settlement. De Razilly, acting as Governor for the French Government, chose to establish his settlement at the mouth of the LaHave River, near existing Mi’kmaw settlements.⁶⁸ His settlement included Fort Sainte-Marie-de-Grâce, located on the west shore of the LaHave River, opposite the Mi’kmaw portage at Parks Creek. Nicolas Denys provided the following description of the LaHave River at the time of de Razilly’s arrival:

The river runs five or six leagues into the country, as far as one is able to go with boats; this being passed, it is necessary to make use of canoes. All along this river are fine and good lands, with abundance of good woods of the kinds of which I have already named. But the Oaks and the Elms there are most abundant on both banks of the river, in which there is an infinity of Scallops, [conniffle] which are huge shells like those which the pilgrims bring from Saint Michel and Saint Jacques. It is good to eat. The eel there is excellent, as are the Shad, Salmon, Cod and other kinds of good fishes. The hunting throughout the year is no less abundant for all kinds of birds

⁶⁸ Landry 2011a.

*which I have already named. This was the place which Commander de Razilly had chosen for his retreat.*⁶⁹

The de Razilly settlement at *La Hève* included de Razilly's residence, a store, a chapel for the Capuchin Monks and buildings for the families and unmarried men. The Capuchins also opened a boarding school for the colonists' and Mi'kmaw children. De Razilly reported a good relationship between his French settlers and the local Mi'kmaq, some of whom were employed by the La Hève settlement as guides and in other capacities. Mi'kmaw women are known to have married French settlers and many of these families stayed in the area after the settlement was moved to Port Royal.⁷⁰

After Isaac de Razilly's death in 1635, his brother Claude became responsible for the colony. Claude remained in France, however, and appointed d'Aulnay to act for him in Acadie, finally selling his interests directly to d'Aulnay in 1642.⁷¹ Sometime between 1635 and 1640, d'Aulnay moved the settlement at La Have to Port Royal.⁷² After being abandoned by d'Aulnay, Fort Sainte-Marie-de-Grâce was burned down in 1653 by Emmanuel Le Borgne, to whom d'Aulnay owed money. Interestingly, it was Le Borgne's son who rebuilt and re-occupied Fort Sainte-Marie-de-Grâce just a few years later in 1658 when he arrived with fifty men and a merchant, Guilbaut. Despite the fact that LaHave was within territory that was, at this time, under the control of the English, the French Government granted Le Borgne a seignury at LaHave. This occupation was brief, however, and the fort was surrendered to English forces.⁷³ Some minimal settlement continued in the LaHave-Merligueche area for decades, but it continued to be subjected to periodic attacks by privateering parties. One such attack occurred in 1705 when Boston privateers burned dwelling houses at LaHave.⁷⁴

Acadian settlement at Merligueche itself was present at least as early as 1686, when the census notes the presence of nineteen individuals at Port La Haive and Merligueche. Two families are listed as living at Merligueche; Laverdure, his wife and child, and Petitpas and his wife.⁷⁵ A census the following year noted one Acadian family at Merligueche, as well as two Mi'kmaw families who lived in wigwams in the area. The lack of cattle owned by the Acadian family suggests that they were chiefly involved in the fur trade.⁷⁶ According to Dawson, the "Laverdure" family refers to Claude Guedry, dit LaVerdure and his wife Marguerite Petitpas. It seems likely that another family at Merligueche referenced in the 1686 census, Petitpas, was related to Marguerite. The couple's first child, listed in the 1686 census, was named Jean-Baptiste. A second son, Paul, was born in 1701 at

⁶⁹ Denys 1908, 148–9.

⁷⁰ Dawson 2004.

⁷¹ MacBeath 1966.

⁷² Murdoch 1865, 103; Landry 2011a.

⁷³ Murdoch 1865, 81–2, 127–8; Landry 2011b.

⁷⁴ Murdoch 1865, 280.

⁷⁵ Hebert 1997.

⁷⁶ Dawson 1996, 7–8.

Merligueche. Jean-Baptiste married Madeleine Mieuss, a half-Mi'kmaw woman in 1708, while Paul married Madeleine's sister Anne. Both brothers appear to have remained in the Merligueche area. Jean-Baptiste and his son participated in an attack on an English vessel in the Merligueche harbour in 1726, alongside a group of Acadians and Mi'kmaq. Both were captured and eventually hanged in Boston. Paul, however, was not involved in this altercation and remained at Merligueche, working as a fisherman and sometimes employed as a coastal pilot.⁷⁷

The Merligueche area Acadians, including Paul, left their settlement and moved to Ile Royale (Cape Breton) when tensions between the French and English began to increase in the 1740s. Paul returned to his property at some point prior to 1753.⁷⁸ By 1745, there was little European settlement in the Lunenburg area, with only eight settlers at Merligueche itself and two at Petite Rivière.⁷⁹ In 1749, Edward Cornwallis stopped at Merligueche on his way to Halifax. He observed that there were only a few families living in wooden houses covered with bark and “a good many Cattle and Sheep, and clear ground more than serves themselves.”⁸⁰ According to DesBrisay, traces of French cellars were found in Lunenburg in the 19th century and the French cemetery at the west end of Bluenose Drive has its origins in the Acadian period.⁸¹

On 8 June 1753, Colonel Charles Lawrence and almost 1500 Foreign Protestants arrived in Merligueche Harbour to form the settlement of Lunenburg. When they arrived, they found several hundred acres of previously cleared land—the remains of the work of the previous Acadian settlement—and one remaining Acadian man and his family; Paul Guedry dit LaVerdure, recorded in the English records as Paul Labradore or Old Labradore. Paul remained in the area for several years and his farm is depicted on maps of Lunenburg from the 1750s (Figure 4-5). In 1762, his property was granted to Patrick Sutherland. Dawson suggests that Paul's extended family included Mi'kmaq in the area.⁸²

⁷⁷ Dawson 2020.

⁷⁸ Dawson 2020.

⁷⁹ Murdoch 1865, 81–2, 127–8; Landry 2011b.

⁸⁰ Bell 1961, 403–4.

⁸¹ DesBrisay 1895, 20.

⁸² Plaskett 1982, ii; Dawson 2020.



Figure 4-5: c. 1756 map of Lunenburg, with Paul Geudry dit LaVerdure's farm labelled as "c".⁸³ The study area is located north of the blockhouse, which is labelled "b".

Lunenburg was named after the Duke of Brunswick-Lunenburg, one of the titles of King George II.⁸⁴ The town had already been laid out on paper, in a rectangular grid, with six divisions and seven blocks within each division. Each block contained 14 town lots which were 40 feet wide and 60 feet deep. Colonel Lawrence was directed to lay out the town on the existing cleared land and to grant parcels to the settlers by lot. Each settler was granted a town lot, a garden lot, a 30-acre farm lot and a 300-acre farm lot. In 1753, Montague Street ran along the waterfront, with partial lots located between the road and the water. These lots were initially associated with the town lots located on the opposite side of Montague Street but eventually became distinct water lots.⁸⁵ Early maps make it clear that the shoreline in 1753 was much further inland than it is today.

From the earliest days of settlement at Lunenburg, Colonel Lawrence emphasized the importance of fortifications to defend from potential attack by French or Mi'kmaw forces. Lawrence explained that "...without such a blockhouse I am convinced ye Settlement may receive such a stroke as would be fatal to it."⁸⁶ On 8 June 1753, the same day that Lawrence and the settlers arrived, he explained in his journal that prefabricated components of the blockhouses were "towed up to ye proper landing places" and the next morning "Settlers carried up on their Shoulder the timbers of one blockhouse, (the

⁸³ Anonymous 1756.

⁸⁴ Fergusson 1967, 384.

⁸⁵ Murdoch 1866, 220–1; Plaskett 1982, ii.

⁸⁶ Lawrence 1953, 28.

distance being near half a mile) by 10 in ye morning, during which time ye carpenters set up nearly ye first story.”⁸⁷

The eastern blockhouse was to be constructed on a hill to the east of the town. In numerous secondary history sources (including Lunenburg Academy *The Seagull* Yearbook essays, DesBrisay’s *History of the County of Lunenburg*, and Whiteley’s 1961 report, the hill was reportedly the site of an 18th century windmill used for grinding corn.⁸⁸ However, no 18th century primary source related to this windmill was located, although the name was mentioned in several of the mid-19th century military reports on blockhouses, including Ince’s 1856 report, suggesting the name dates back at least as far as the mid-19th century.⁸⁹

On 27 June 1753, Lawrence reported that Charles Morris, Chief Surveyor of Nova Scotia, had produced a map of the fortifications at Lunenburg. Winthrop Pickard Bell, a Canadian historian, hypothesizes that this map produced by Morris may be the same as an anonymous map that was reportedly published in 1770 (Figure 4-6). If Bell’s hypothesis is correct, this map could be considered the earliest plan showing the fortifications at Lunenburg. The explanations associated with this map detail that the western fortifications included “a pentagon fort”, “a tetragon [sic] fort” and “two final blockhouses” along a line of pickets. Researchers of Lunenburg history have noted that the pentagon fort likely represents the “star-shaped fort”, which is frequently referenced as the barracks for the western fortifications, while there are no primary sources suggesting the tetragon fort was constructed.⁹⁰ Regardless of whether the map was published in 1753 or 1770, most researchers concur that the map likely portrayed the fortifications at Lunenburg based on Lawrence’s intended plans, rather than reflecting the actual fortifications that were constructed at that time.⁹¹

The implications of the 1753/1770 map representing Lawrence’s intended plan, rather than the actual fortifications, have an impact on our understanding of the construction of the eastern blockhouse on Blockhouse Hill, located just south of the study area. This leads to a fundamental question to the history of Blockhouse Hill: was the eastern blockhouse built in 1753, or was this merely Lawrence’s intention? Fortunately, several 18th century primary accounts and maps provide insight into this inquiry.

Another map dated to 1753, which can be definitively attributed to Charles Morris, depicts the town of Lunenburg and Garden Lots, containing white squares that presumably indicate the location of military property on the west and east extents of the town (Figure 4-7). This would suggest there was a military presence on Blockhouse Hill in 1753. Further, Lawrence writes in his journal on 18 August 1753 that

⁸⁷ Lawrence 1953, 5.

⁸⁸ DesBrisay 1895, 76; Romkey and Tobin 1953, 24; Whiteley 1961.

⁸⁹ Ince 1856.

⁹⁰ Bell 1961, 428–9; Fraser 2015, 35.

⁹¹ Bell 1961, 428.

“Yesterday came in ye Biddeford Donnell master & ye Meddford Nichols with provisions, part of ye blockhouse for ye East end of ye Town, and some other articles,” suggesting the eastern blockhouse was under construction at that time.⁹²

An account in December 1753 suggests that the eastern blockhouse had been completed by that time. Growing tensions in Lunenburg between the foreign Protestants and the British Government culminated in what would be called “The Insurrection of December 1753”. On 15 December 1753, a French man, John Peterquin was rumoured to have received a letter from London asking how the citizens of Lunenburg had been treated and if they had received the provisions they were owed, as well as five pounds cash. Peterquin would not produce the letter, however, and was believed by other members of the town to be suppressing it. This culminated in the citizens of Lunenburg imprisoning him in the cellar of the eastern blockhouse.⁹³ Lunenburg officials learned of Peterquin’s capture and released him. However, Peterquin was recaptured and placed in the cellar of the eastern blockhouse once more. The eastern blockhouse and the arms stored there were maintained by the local militia, which consisted of Lunenburg settlers. The number of weapons stored at this blockhouse, combined with the settlers outnumbering the troops, compelled Lunenburg officials to settle the situation peacefully. Tensions had been largely diffused four days later, by 19 December.⁹⁴ The accounts of the riot in Lunenburg not only confirm that the eastern blockhouse was extant and functioning by December 1753, but also reveal that there was a cellar within the eastern blockhouse on Blockhouse Hill.

In Lawrence’s journal, several features of the blockhouses at Lunenburg are described. For instance, on 16 June 1753, Lawrence noted, “We are in want of 4 pair of iron hinges for ye trapdoors of ye blockhouses, which were forgotten as were ye doors themselves.”⁹⁵ Additionally, the foundations of the blockhouses were composed of local stones as Lawrence wrote on 7 July 1753 that “Having searched round ye Harbour for stones fit for underpinning [foundations]; we have at last fallen on a Sufficiency that may be got at a reasonable rate; so the sooner Mr. Bulkeley sends ye masons ye better, As that sort of work requires some time to settle before ye setting in of ye weather.”⁹⁶ Finally, on 8 August 1753, he wrote, “Out of the 21 casks of lime sent for ye blockhouse Chimneys I have made 7 serve as we have strong clay.”⁹⁷ Bell notes that the 1754 report describes the fortifications as “two small Forts picketed, of about 100 feet square”.⁹⁸ Taken together, the various descriptions of the blockhouses suggest that the eastern blockhouse contained a cellar, a stone foundation, and at least one brick chimney, which was enclosed within a picket fence.

⁹² Lawrence 1953, 42.

⁹³ DesBrisay 1895, 32.

⁹⁴ Bell 1961, 454.

⁹⁵ Lawrence 1953, 20.

⁹⁶ Lawrence 1953, 35.

⁹⁷ Lawrence 1953, 41.

⁹⁸ Bell 1961, 428.



Figure 4-6: Georeferenced anonymous map of the fortifications at Lunenburg which Bell (1961) hypothesizes is Charles Morris' 1753 map. Inset (left) provides a legend of letters included on the map. The study area (yellow) is shown in proximity to the eastern blockhouse (red arrow).



Figure 4-7: Charles Morris' 1753 map of Lunenburg presumably depicting military property (white squares) in proximity to the study area (yellow).⁹⁹

Inferences can also be made regarding the physical appearance of the blockhouses at Lunenburg as many of the blockhouses constructed by eighteenth-century British settlers in Nova Scotia, including those at Lunenburg, were prefabricated in Halifax. Fort Edward, built in Windsor in 1750, is the oldest still-standing blockhouse in Canada and like the Lunenburg blockhouses, was prefabricated in Halifax.¹⁰⁰ Fort Edward is a square blockhouse with a pyramidal roof, measuring 18 feet in the lower story and has an overhang of 17 inches on four sides.¹⁰¹ The blockhouse has 23 single rifle loopholes on the lower story, and 24 loopholes and four portholes on the upper story.¹⁰²

Although it cannot be said with certainty that the Lunenburg blockhouses resembled the one at Fort Edward, an anonymous illustration, circa 1800 portrays a square blockhouse, with a pyramidal roof and an overhanging upper story (Figure 4-8). Unfortunately, due to the lack of artist accreditation or creation date for this illustration, it cannot be definitively concluded that it accurately represents an eighteenth-century blockhouse at Lunenburg.

⁹⁹ Morris 1753.

¹⁰⁰ Young 1980, 9, 13.

¹⁰¹ Young 1980, 13, 17.

¹⁰² Young 1980, 16, 17.

It is also possible this illustration could be depicting the later blockhouse that was constructed in 1812, which will be discussed below.



Figure 4-8: Anonymous artist's rendition of "The Old Blockhouse" at Lunenburg, circa 1800.¹⁰³

Along the western extent of the settlement, the blockhouses and forts were connected by a picket line, or palisade, which was constructed across the isthmus in the summer of 1753 to defend peninsular Lunenburg from landward attacks. Lawrence estimated the palisade would need approximately 3000 wooden pickets and would be held together by spike nails and the gates with iron hardware.¹⁰⁴ A palisade running from Front Harbour to Back Harbour does not appear to have existed along the eastern side of the town. Eighteenth century maps consistently depict a palisade only along the west side of the town and 19th century artistic renditions of the eastern blockhouse never depict a palisade or line of pickets, but it is possible this may have been an aesthetic choice by the artists to omit this feature. Therefore, based on the current documentary and artistic evidence there is no definitive suggestion that a palisade was erected on the eastern front despite ambiguous wording from secondary histories which vaguely suggest that a palisade existed around Lunenburg's entire perimeter.¹⁰⁵ The lack of palisade on the eastern extent of Lunenburg may reflect the varying defenses which the western versus eastern fronts were intended for. The western defenses divided peninsular Lunenburg from the mainland, preparing for landward attacks, while the eastern blockhouse had a

¹⁰³ Anon 1800.

¹⁰⁴ Lawrence 1953, 18.

¹⁰⁵ DesBrisay 1895, 30; Russell 1977, 72.

commanding view of the Front and Back Harbours, allowing for seaward defense. It may have simply been an unnecessary use of labour to erect a palisade or picket line along the eastern front.

The eastern blockhouse may also have forgone a palisade due to the use of the surrounding land as part of the town common, much of which was cleared when the settlers arrived. Originally, the plan for the cleared land left by earlier Acadian settlers was for it to be divided and lots drawn by settlers. However, Lawrence later wrote: “The more I consider ye uses of ye Common... I discover ye disadvantages of dividing ye cleared land.”¹⁰⁶ For instance, if the land was subdivided “one third of the land would be wasted in roads, the rest consist of such small portions as would be useless, the whole would soon fall into the hands of a few”.¹⁰⁷ The news of this change in plans was not a welcome one among the Lunenburg settlers and Lawrence reported to Governor Hopkins that it “occasioned such insolence and outrage as produced at least almost a Rebellion”. The issue of the Common came on heels of other logistical and supply issues and that may have contributed to the fierceness of the resistance Lawrence encountered from some who “put themselves in arms”. Ultimately, however, Lawrence convinced the settlers of his plan, although he provides few details in his report, writing “say no more upon it than that I have prevailed for the Commons.”¹⁰⁸

1754 saw the arrival of the first livestock to the new settlement, with hundreds of sheep, pigs, goats, and cows arriving and distributed to settlers. There were several requirements for receiving livestock, however, including the perceived industriousness and merit of the settlers, although eventually, even the “bad singlemen” were granted animals, albeit at different quantities and types. Additionally, Lawrence also expected “that each family partaking of this lie Stock clears a Quarter of an Acre of the Common by the end of August, which I am sure cannot much interrupt their business.”¹⁰⁹

Regulations of the common were developed by Lunenburg settlers before the arrival of the livestock. These regulations included a set number of animals which each settler had the right to pasture, with additional animals being allowed at additional cost. These fees would then be distributed to settlers who had pastured fewer than their allotted number of animals. Early each year, the common was to be evaluated to determine what number of animals could be sustained on the land for that year. No dogs were allowed, except when leashed.¹¹⁰

Although there had been discontent from the community about the creation of the common, by the 1760 Statutes of Nova Scotia, Lawrence, then Governor of Nova Scotia officially “granted and set apart, a tract of land lying in the peninsula of Lunenburg, to

¹⁰⁶ Lawrence 1953, 19.

¹⁰⁷ Lawrence cited in Bell 1961, 441.

¹⁰⁸ Lawrence cited in Bell 1961, 442.

¹⁰⁹ Lawrence cited in Bell 1961, 478–9.

¹¹⁰ Bell 1961, 479.

serve as a Common for the inhabitant of said Town... for the common benefit of the said inhabitants".¹¹¹

Following the settling of Halifax in 1749, there were regular attacks by the Mi'kmaq and Acadians as they defended their land from encroaching British settlement. After the Acadian Deportation in 1755, there was a notable increase in fighting in the Lunenburg area, especially during the years 1756-1758.¹¹² During this period of conflict, blockhouses were a crucial part of the British defenses. In response to a major raid on two islands in the Mahone Bay area in 1756, additional blockhouses were constructed in the vicinity of Lunenburg, including ones at the La Have River, Mushamush and the Northwest Range (Blockhouse).¹¹³ While historical accounts often do not explicitly specify the location of fighting, the strategic importance of blockhouses to the British military suggests that the eastern blockhouse would likely have been actively manned or in combat during this time.

After the British siege of Louisbourg in 1758, fighting slowed as the French military presence in Nova Scotia waned, leading to the cessation of supply of arms and ammunition to the Mi'kmaq.¹¹⁴ Following this, treaties written between February 1760 into 1761, known as the Peace and Friendship Treaties, codified peace between the British and the Mi'kmaq. However, as Mi'kmaw historian Daniel Paul explains, the Mi'kmaq had little choice other than to sign "Because of their poverty-stricken circumstances and abandonment by their French ally the Mi'kmaq were forced to accept an unjust and demeaning peace."¹¹⁵

In 1782, after a brief period of peace between the French and English, fighting returned to the blockhouses at Lunenburg. On 1 July 1782, one hundred American Privateers approached Lunenburg in the early hours of the morning. At the eastern blockhouse, the night guard had retired just before the morning guard took his place as raiders arrived at Lunenburg to loot the settlement before most residents had awoken. The changing of the guard, coupled with the lack of notice and small number of stationed troops made the residents ill-prepared for the attack.¹¹⁶ The existence of multiple accounts and multiple blockhouses has made it difficult to determine which blockhouses and forts were still in existence by the time of this raid, however it is generally agreed upon that the eastern blockhouse played a central role in the defense of the town during this attack.¹¹⁷

Early that morning, one of Colonel John Creighton's servants had seen the privateers crossing the Common and warned Creighton of the impending attack. Creighton, along with several men, were able to reach the eastern blockhouse where they began their

¹¹¹ Public Archives of Nova Scotia 1760, chap. XII, 62–3.

¹¹² Bell 1961, 508–9.

¹¹³ Bell 1961, 507.

¹¹⁴ Paul 2000, 147.

¹¹⁵ Paul 2000, 149–51.

¹¹⁶ Russell 1977, 74–5.

¹¹⁷ Russell 1977, 74.

defense and held the fort for two to three hours before being forced to surrender. Some reports say that a cannon had been fired at the eastern blockhouse, while others say it was simply brought ashore. Homes were plundered, loot was collected, and Creighton's home was burned.¹¹⁸

While Creighton and other military officials' roles in the 1782 raids have been well documented and commemorated, other contributions have gone untold until recently. Sylvia, an enslaved Black woman at the Creighton household, is said to have protected Creighton's son from gunfire with her own body and hid the family's valuables in the backyard well during the raid. Further, it was reported that as the eastern blockhouse defenders ran low on ammunition, Sylvia filled her apron with cartridges and made her way to the blockhouse to resupply them.¹¹⁹ Sylvia's contributions to the protection of Lunenburg have started to gain recognition with the renaming of Blockhouse Hill Park to Sylvia Park in the winter of 2023.¹²⁰

Three years after the Sack of Lunenburg, Captain William Booth, a British military engineer, visited Lunenburg and described in his journal the accounts of the sack by several Lunenburg residents.¹²¹ At this time, Booth also produced a watercolour of Lunenburg depicting the eastern blockhouse and a blockhouse at Jesser's Point, today called Battery Point (Figure 4-9). This painting depicts a linear feature on the south of the eastern blockhouse, which may have been a battery, a fence or a redoubt.

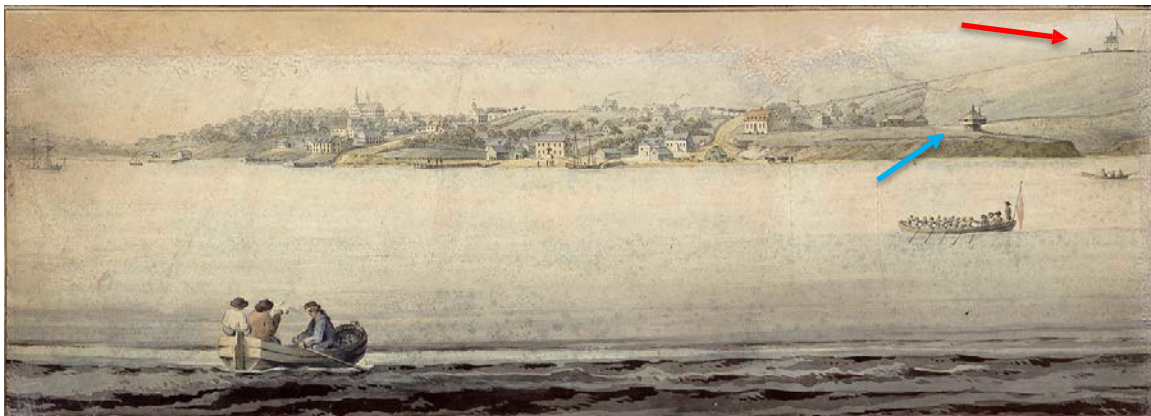


Figure 4-9: William Booth's 1785 artist's rendition of Lunenburg. See the eastern blockhouse on Blockhouse Hill (red arrow) and the Jesser's Point blockhouse (blue arrow).¹²²

After the Sack of Lunenburg in 1782, the condition of the fortifications is uncertain due to the varying accounts. The eastern blockhouse, which was centered in the fighting, almost

¹¹⁸ Russell 1977, 76–7.

¹¹⁹ DesBrisay 1895, 67.

¹²⁰ Ward 2023.

¹²¹ Booth 1933.

¹²² Booth 1785.

certainly took some damage but is depicted as standing in Booth's 1785 watercolour (as is Jesser's Point blockhouse). The fortifications at the western front, however, were no longer shown in Booth's painting, although it is possible they were simply not visible from his vantage point.

Booth's visit, in the summer of 1785, was several months after a deed of 2000 acres of land were formally granted in trust to several Lunenburg residents, becoming the trustees of the Common, on 7 February 1785.¹²³ His painting shows the open and cleared area of the newly formalized common lands surrounding the blockhouse. Although only the view from the Front Harbour is visible, the area to the north of the blockhouse down to Back Harbour would have similarly been cleared. The Common surrounding the blockhouse, including the study area, would have been kept clear when the military importance of the blockhouse was high.

Around the year 1812, Lunenburg faced renewed concerns of a seaward attack as Britain entered into war with its American neighbours. Fearing attack by American privateers, it was voted on 25 July 1812 that £8000 would be granted for the erection of blockhouses and other military essentials across Nova Scotia. By autumn 1812, two blockhouses were erected at Lunenburg, one on Blockhouse Hill and another at Jesser's Point.¹²⁴ However, it remains uncertain whether these blockhouses were entirely new constructions or if they incorporated existing foundations or cellars from the eighteenth-century blockhouses. It is conceivable that, for the sake of expedience, some of the components might have been repurposed in the construction process. At Blockhouse Hill, it was reported that the new 1812 blockhouse was "two storeys high, loopholed and picketed in and immediately in front of it a battery was constructed. The guns mounted in the battery were three iron 12-pounders, one iron nine-pounder and two brass six-pounders."¹²⁵ The nineteenth-century blockhouses at Lunenburg have corresponding architectural plans which confirm the architectural composition of the structure (Figure 4-10). These plans reveal features like the stone foundation, a central hatch and location of stairs to access the upper level (Figure 4-11).

A watercolour produced in 1816 soon after the construction of the blockhouse shows what it may have looked like, in relation to Lunenburg (Figure 4-12). This watercolour includes a structure surrounding the blockhouse, which may represent a stone wall, palisade or earthwork. In 1818, another act was published in addition to the 1760 act, to ascertain and renew the boundaries of the Common and allow money to be raised for this expense.¹²⁶

¹²³ Bulkeley 1785.

¹²⁴ Young 1980, 27.

¹²⁵ Young 1980, 27.

¹²⁶ Public Archives of Nova Scotia 1818, chap. XXXIV, 38–9.

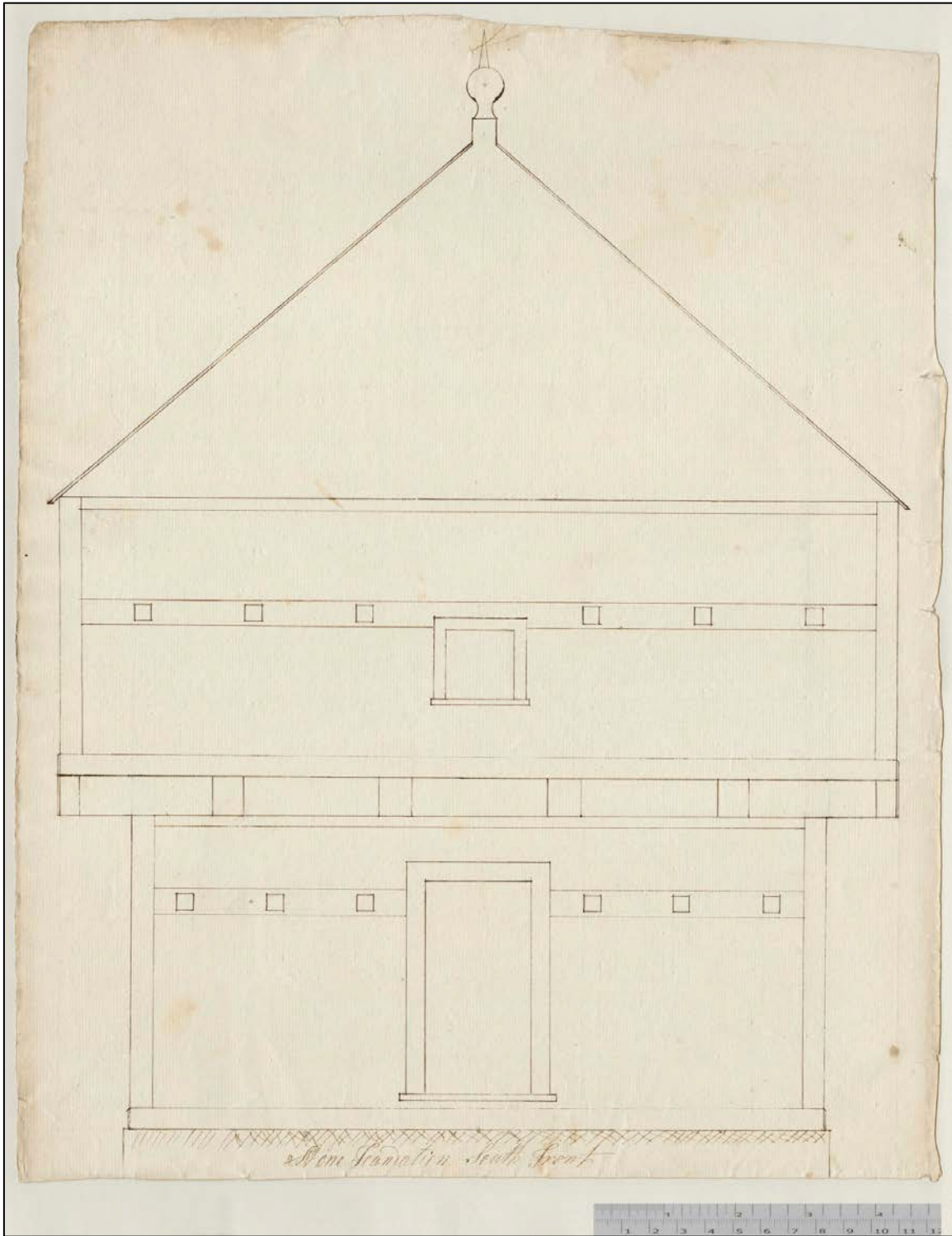


Figure 4-10: 1812 architectural plan showing the profile view of presumably the eastern blockhouse on Blockhouse Hill. Note the stone foundation labeled at the bottom of the photo.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ Sherbrooke 1812.

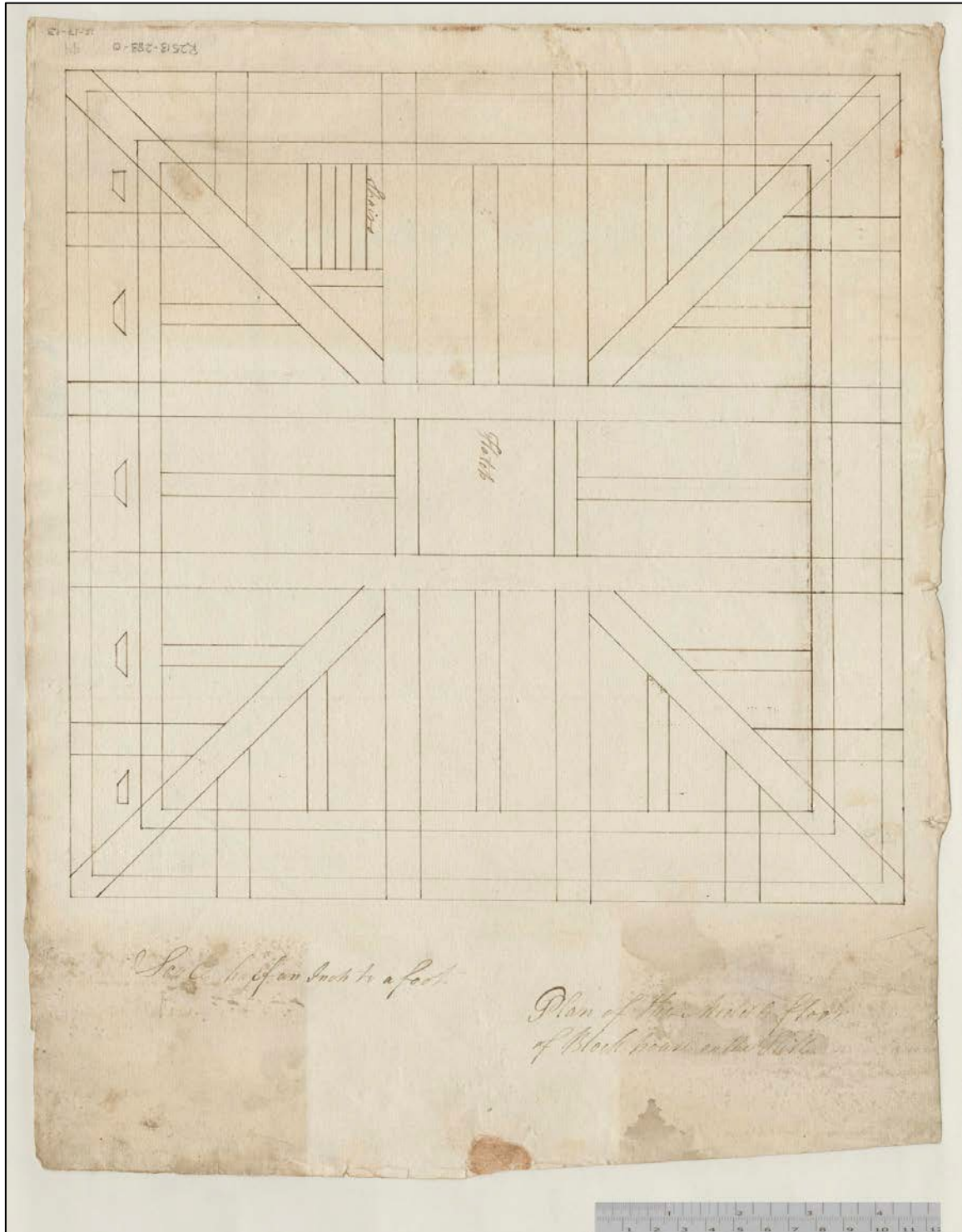


Figure 4-11: 1812 architectural "Plan of the Middle floor of Blockhouse on the Hill".¹²⁸ Note stairs at the top and a hatch at the center.

¹²⁸ Sherbrooke 1812.

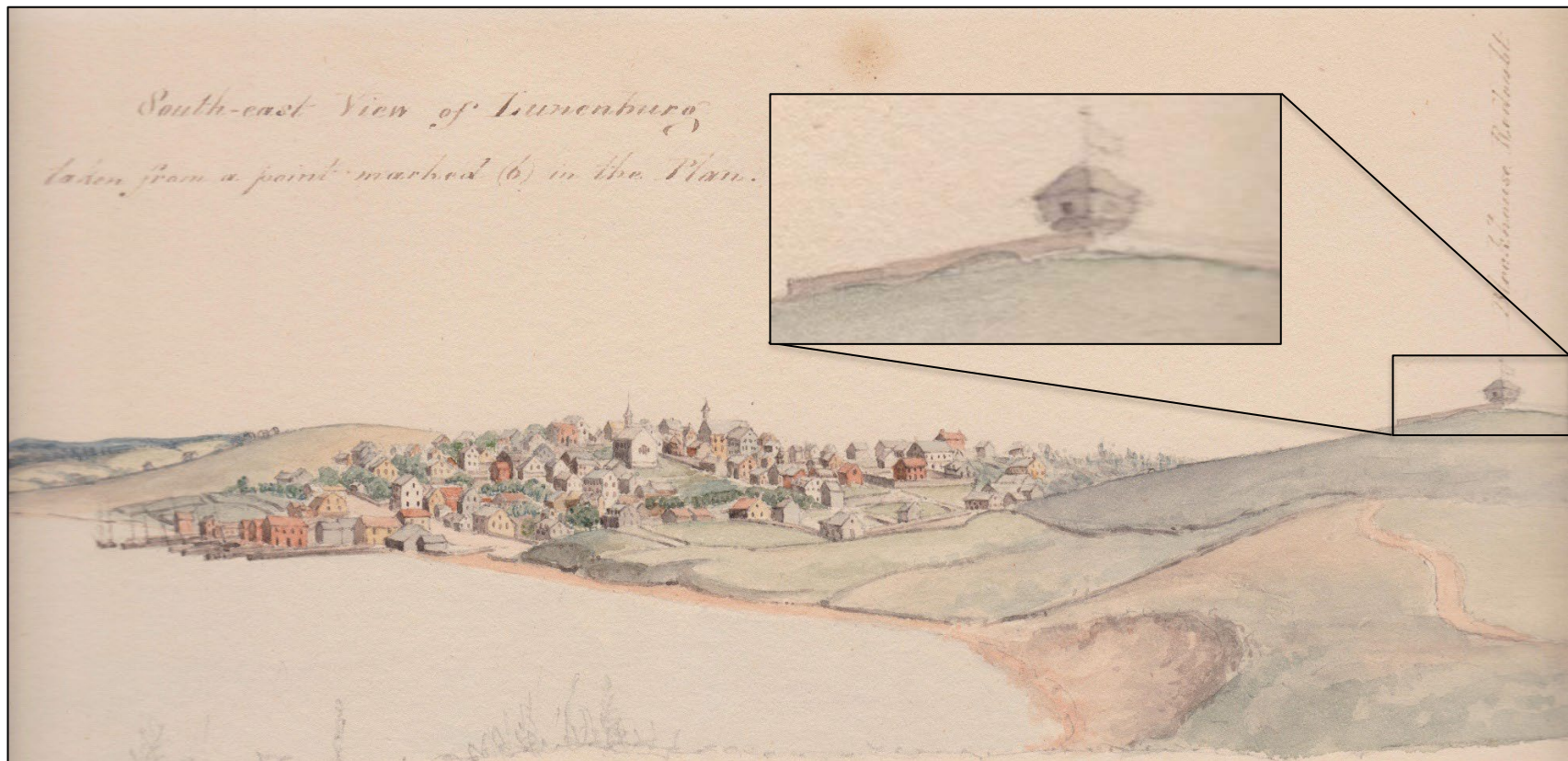


Figure 4-12: 1816 watercolour by H. Pooley of Lunenburg, inset showing closer view of the eastern blockhouse, labeled “Blockhouse Redoubt”.
Courtesy Special Collections, Killam Library, Dalhousie University.¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Pooley 1816.

Proceeding annual reports also gave updates on the blockhouses at Lunenburg. On 1 July 1814, it was reported there was “near the Town a Blockhouse and a Battery Mount,” and the “Ammunition Carriages and Stores of every kind are quite Complete and in excellent order.” This 1814 report also confirmed the presence of several cannons at both Blockhouse Hill and Jesser’s Point.¹³⁰ Another report in January 1817 confirmed the blockhouses at Blockhouse Hill and Jesser’s Point and explained that “A pensioned Gunner of the Royal Artillery is in charge of Stores at the Post” and noted that the cannons remained in place and that the ammunitions and stores were complete and in good order.¹³¹

While the battery at Blockhouse Hill is often included in the military reports, it was not included in the architectural drawings as shown above. A c. 1820 map, however, depicts the eastern blockhouse enclosed with a dashed line (possibly a fence or palisade), and at the south, a battery (Figure 4-13). Resembling the 1820 layout of the battery and blockhouse, a diagram produced circa 1859 of the military property at nearby Jesser’s Point depicts a curved battery south of the blockhouse (Figure 4-14). Since both the batteries at the eastern blockhouse and Jesser’s Point were either constructed or refurbished at the same time and appear identically depicted on the c. 1820 Royal Engineer map, it is probable that the diagram of Jesser’s Point resembles the eastern blockhouse.



Figure 4-13: An 1820 map of Nova Scotia showing the eastern blockhouse (red square).¹³²The semi-circular infrastructure on the south side of the blockhouse represents a battery.

¹³⁰ Royal Engineers Nova Scotia.

¹³¹ Royal Engineers Nova Scotia.

¹³² Pooley 1820.

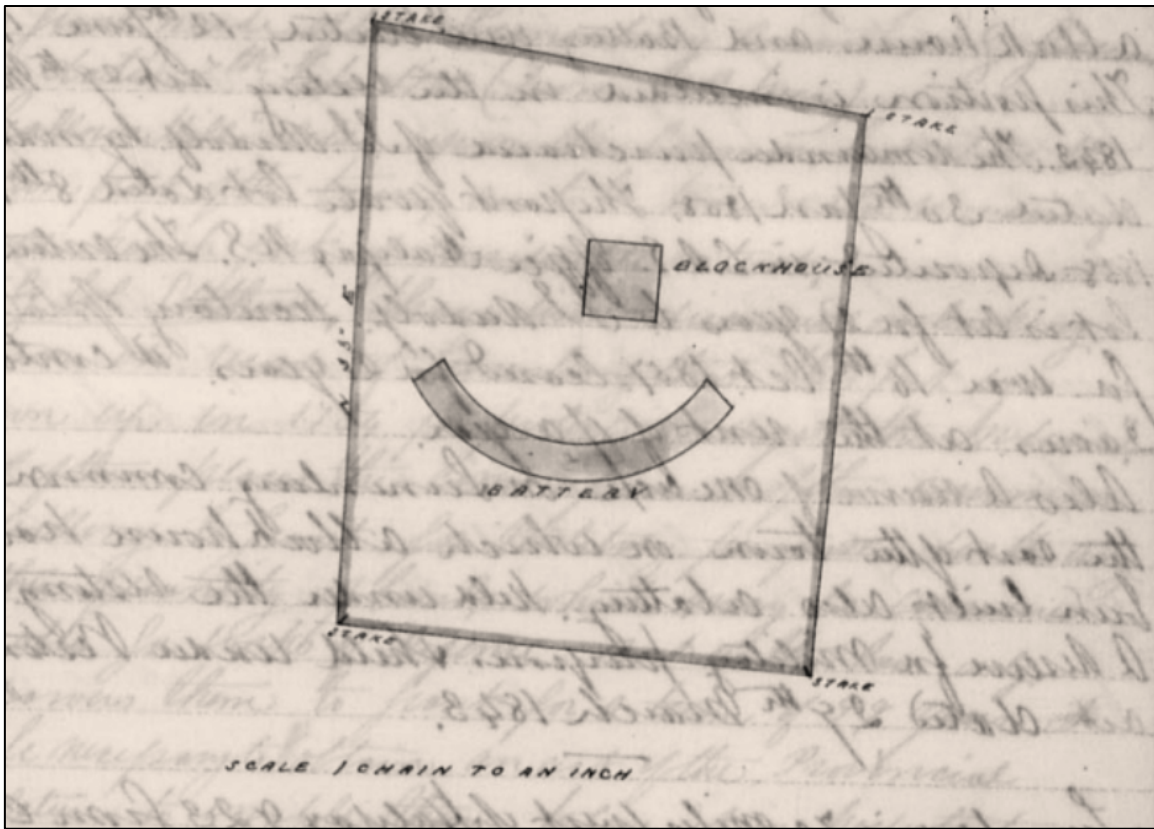


Figure 4-14: A diagram of the British Military property at Jesser's Point circa 1859.¹³³

Into the mid-nineteenth century, after fears of American privateer attacks faded, the blockhouses at Lunenburg slowly fell into disuse. As early as 1834, a Royal Engineers report explains that at Lunenburg, “Two Blockhouses of two stones each with batteries in front not kept up.”¹³⁴ Perhaps correspondingly, leases began to be permitted on the common lands, with an 1826 statute permitting ten-year leases and an 1828 statute extending the lease length to 99 years. The leases were also prompted by the deteriorating condition of the Common, with the 1826 act noted that “the Common belonging to the Township of Lunenburg has run to waste, and become of little value from want of cultivation”.¹³⁵

In 1847, a survey was completed and subsequently published in 1851 showing the boundaries of the ordinance property (Figure 4-15). Measuring one acre, the property was marked at four corners by “stake & stones,” with the southernmost boundary running roughly parallel to Townsend Street. Interestingly, the 1847 map depicts a military property that is smaller than the 18th century property (which extended to Kempt Street,

¹³³ War Department 1864, 441.

¹³⁴ Royal Engineers Nova Scotia.

¹³⁵ Public Archives of Nova Scotia 1826, chap. XV, 261; 1828, chap. IX, 28.

see Figure 4-7), suggesting that portions of the original 18th century military property may have previously been consumed by the Common.



Figure 4-15: The 1847 survey of Ordinance Property at Lunenburg, showing the eastern blockhouse property in yellow.¹³⁶

Subsequent reports into the mid-nineteenth century continue to make mention of the status of the blockhouse and what remained of its boundary markers. In November 1855, “The Blockhouse on Lunenburg Common” was reported to be:

in fair order, and contains 2 Brass field pieces, in charge of Mr. William Rudolph who has the key. It stands in a reserve of one acre, the boundaries of which are well marked by piles of stones at the angles, and by an old lockspitted line. The Blockhouse is surrounded by an Earthen Breastwork, behind which [two] 12-pounders and [two] 9-pounders were mounted, but which are now sold and removed.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Parsons 1851b.

¹³⁷ War Department 1864, 66.

In 1859, the lockspitted line, or trench, was used for boundary marking and was reported to be 6 inches deep, with piles of stone at the four corners. At that time, it was also reported there was evidence of “stumps of an old wooden fence” and that “The Blockhouse seems in a fair state & could be made defensible, if & the battery, or rather small redoubt are in a tolerable condition.” The author of this report does note that “the ground should be inclosed [sic] or at least marked with stone” but they “doubt if it could be inclosed [sic] if not wanted for defensive purposes as it appears to form part of the commons.”¹³⁸

Despite allowing 99-year leases of the Common in the 1820s, the issue of the condition of the land does not seem to have been solved. By 1862, a portion of the Common located “from the Pound-gate, so-called, westerly to Leonard Young’s, including the strip of land below the Garden lots has become a mere waste and unproductive”.¹³⁹ This seems to refer to land on the east side of the town, given the reference to Garden Lots. The 1862 statute gave trustees the power to sell portions of the Common if necessary, provided they reserved any portions that would be useful for public purposes. Portions of the Common were laid out into 70 by 79-foot building lots and sold by auction at that time.¹⁴⁰ The 1862 statute also permitted any Common land, outside of the area described above, to be sold or leased if deemed advisable by the trustees, although in order to do so, a public meeting would be required with two-thirds of the meeting attendees agreeing to the lease or sale.¹⁴¹

Local Lunenburg history has often stated that in October 1871 a “great gale” moved the blockhouse on Blockhouse Hill from its foundation and three years later it was apparently set fire by local boys.¹⁴² Historian W. H. Whiteley explains that apparently an older resident of Lunenburg recalled that when the blockhouse was burned down, it “contained an iron swivel gun about four feet long mounted in a fixed position. He thinks that probably the gun was a one pounder and that originally there were four of them.”¹⁴³ The resident’s account of four cannons at Blockhouse Hill does correspond to the 1855 Royal Engineer’s report as stated above. Although there has yet to be a primary source to corroborate the accounts of the blockhouse’s destruction, a hurricane did make landfall in Nova Scotia on 13 October 1871 which inflicted significant damage in Lunenburg County according to newspaper accounts.¹⁴⁴

While the exact date for the destruction of the blockhouse remains ambiguous, the blockhouse was almost certainly not in existence by the 1880s. In November 1886, a Lunenburg resident, Aubrey B. Coldwell sent a letter to the Department of Militia and

¹³⁸ War Department 1864, 320–2.

¹³⁹ Public Archives of Nova Scotia 1862, chaps. 55, 108–12.

¹⁴⁰ Plaskett 1982, ii; Cuthbertson 1996, 11.

¹⁴¹ Public Archives of Nova Scotia 1862, chaps. 55, 108–12.

¹⁴² DesBrisay 1895, 76; Whiteley 1961, 77–8; Plaskett 1982, 33.

¹⁴³ Whiteley 1961, 78.

¹⁴⁴ Anon 1871.

Defence in Ottawa requesting that the “Three acres of Land on Blockhouse Hill... belonging to the British War Department” could be leased so that the “young men of the town [could] plant forest trees and otherwise beautify the grounds so as to make it a pleasant place of resort.” After several letters back and forth, in May 1887, the land was to be rented at one dollar a year for the purposes of establishing a park.¹⁴⁵ An undated photograph of some kind of event at Blockhouse Hill shows a number of tents in the vicinity of the current tourist bureau and campground, as well as young trees with wooden supports, possibly newly planted, around the outside edge of an earthen berm (Figure 4-16). No blockhouse is visible within the berm, where bleachers and a large tent are present. This photo may represent the results of Aubrey Coldwell’s campaign to “beautify” the grounds.



Figure 4-16: An undated photograph of Blockhouse Hill showing the berm (right), with young trees planted around the outside of it. Courtesy Ralph Getson via Henry Cary.

As residents were able to turn Blockhouse Hill into a park in the 1880s, it is almost certain that at this time there was no longer a blockhouse on the hill. Around the same time as these landscaping efforts, Lunenburg historian Mather Byles DesBrisay reported in 1889 that a cellar was excavated for Captain F. Geldert’s house and “about four feet below the surface, a ladder and cask, supposed to have been put there by persons in charge of the block-house”.¹⁴⁶ No primary evidence has been located yet to verify this claim.

¹⁴⁵ Department of Militia and Defence 1886.

¹⁴⁶ DesBrisay 1895, 77.

A photo taken over 20 years after the request to turn Blockhouse Hill into a park, confirms the lack of a blockhouse on the hill, and the presence of landscaping, with trees planted in a circle (Figure 4-17). The trees which surround an earthwork at the park on Blockhouse Hill in the 1908 photo appear to be the same earthwork present at Sylvia Park today. While it is not confirmed that this earthwork is the “Earthen Breastwork” that was described in 1855, such a connection remains plausible.¹⁴⁷ Communication with staff at the Lunenburg Board of Trade indicated that the current earthworks were implemented as a protective measure some time ago. They suggested that originally, the berm was constructed of stone and in response to concerns that the stone features on Blockhouse Hill were being moved by the public, this prompted the decision to cover them with grass to safeguard their preservation.¹⁴⁸ A stone berm around the blockhouse is not clearly described in the primary sources, however, nor visible in early photos, which appear to show an earthen berm.

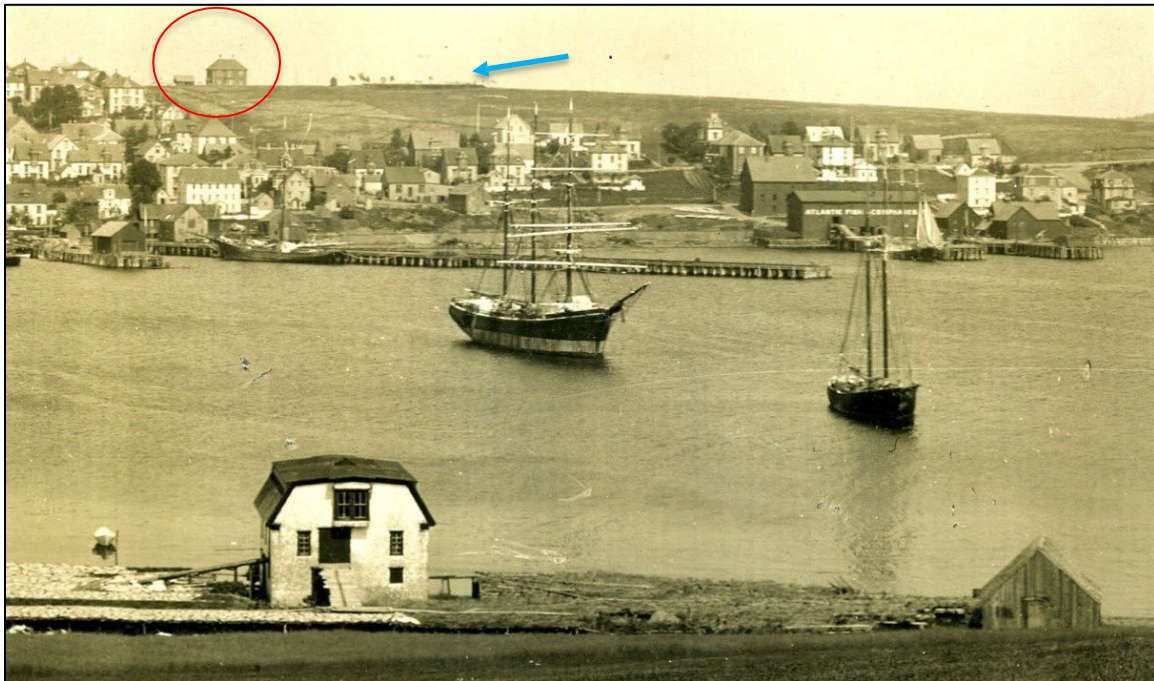


Figure 4-17: 1908 photo of the jail (red circle) with the earthworks (blue). Courtesy Ralph Getson via South Shore Genealogical Society.

Another feature showcased in the 1908 photograph is the Lunenburg County Jail which was erected just east of the park in 1894. The first jail in Lunenburg was constructed in 1754 and was a wooden structure called the “King’s Prison”, which was not located within the study area. Lunenburg’s second jail, built in 1816, was located near the center of the town, also outside the study area.¹⁴⁹ This jail had become inadequate, as the jail’s Sheriff

¹⁴⁷ War Department 1864, 66.

¹⁴⁸ Lunenburg Board of Trade 2023.

¹⁴⁹ Hewitt s.d. (circa 1920s), 39.

wrote in 1886 to the Attorney General of Nova Scotia that “the enclosure around the jail is only high enough for a man to look over, most of the doors are of two one inch boards, Window frames are so decayed that a prisoner with Hand Cuffs upon him reached out the Iron Grating and made his escape.”¹⁵⁰

Therefore, on 3 October 1893, a deed between the Trustees of Common Lands and the County of Lunenburg was “conveyed for the purpose of erecting the County Jail and other Buildings thereon.”¹⁵¹ The jail built on Blockhouse Hill in 1894 was two stories high and made of brick and wood, serving as both the jail and jailer’s residence. Outside the jail, the jailer kept a small barn for cows (Figure 4-18). On 18 March 1931, a fire broke out at the jail. A local newspaper reported that the jailer, “Daniel Frittenburg, his family and four prisoners got out safely,” as did the cow in the barn. The paper also explained that “The cause of the fire is not known but it is believed to have started under the floor of the kitchen. It was reported at first that it had started in one of the cells. An investigation will be held to determine, if possible, the cause.”¹⁵²

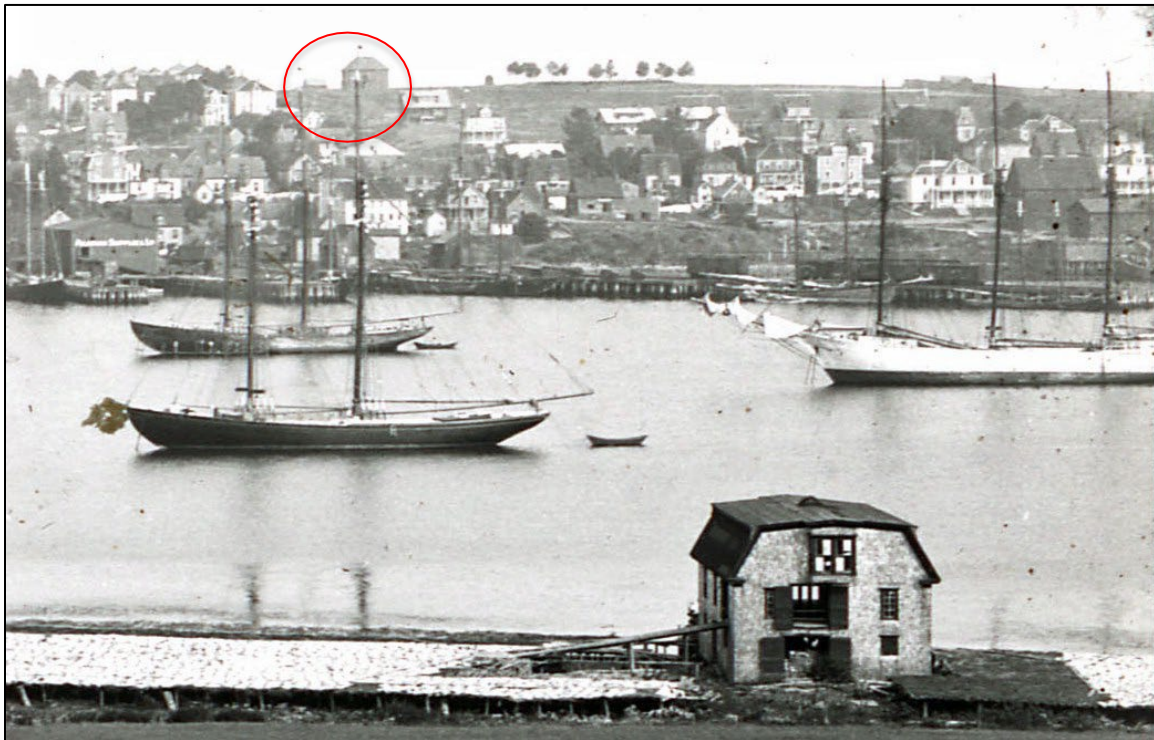


Figure 4-18: 1926 photo of the jail with its associated barn (red circle). Courtesy Ralph Getson via South Shore Genealogical Society.

¹⁵⁰ Provincial Secretary 1886.

¹⁵¹ Registry of Deeds 1893.

¹⁵² Getson 2023.

Also featured on the 1908 and 1926 photos of Blockhouse Hill is a small structure or shed, adjacent to the earthworks. Ralph D. Getson, former curator of the Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic, now a volunteer with the South Shore Genealogical Society explained that:

In 1908 a 40ft signal mast was erected on the hill as a weather warning to vessels in port. Next to the mast the drum and cone were kept in this small shed. By hoisting a combination of the drum and cone mariners had a form of a local marine weather forecast. The mast blew down in a storm in 1940 and was not replaced as by that time radio forecasts were in well established. The shed was still there in 1943.¹⁵³

An oblique aerial photograph of Blockhouse Hill in 1946 suggests that the shed may have no longer been standing by this time (Figure 4-19). It does, however, seem to suggest a structure was located just north of the earthworks. It is unclear if this is the remains of the old jail that had not been torn down yet after the fire, or if this was a new structure. However, from photos in 1955 and 1966 the structure no longer appears to be standing (Figure 4-20, Figure 4-21). The 1946 photo does show a newer development on Blockhouse Hill - the establishment of a baseball diamond – reflecting the increasing recreational use of the area. The diamond had been constructed in 1921, using a steam roller to level the ground (Figure 4-22).

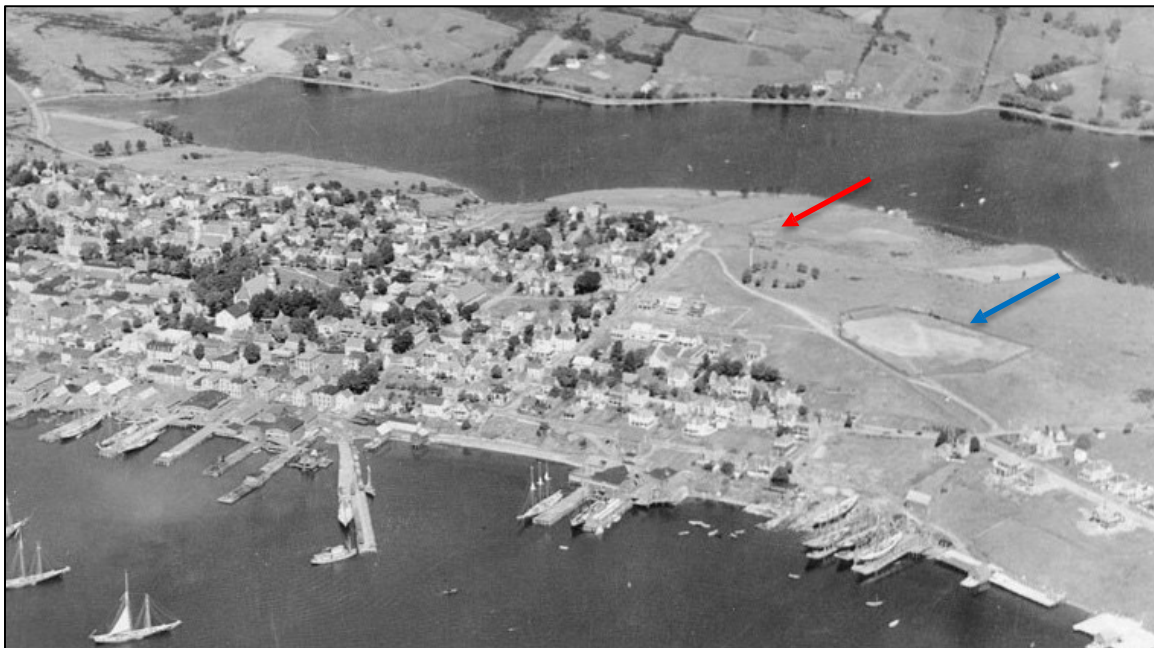


Figure 4-19: 1946 oblique aerial photo of Lunenburg with potential structure (red arrow). Note the baseball diamond, by this time over 20 years old (blue).¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Getson 2023.

¹⁵⁴ RCAF 1946.

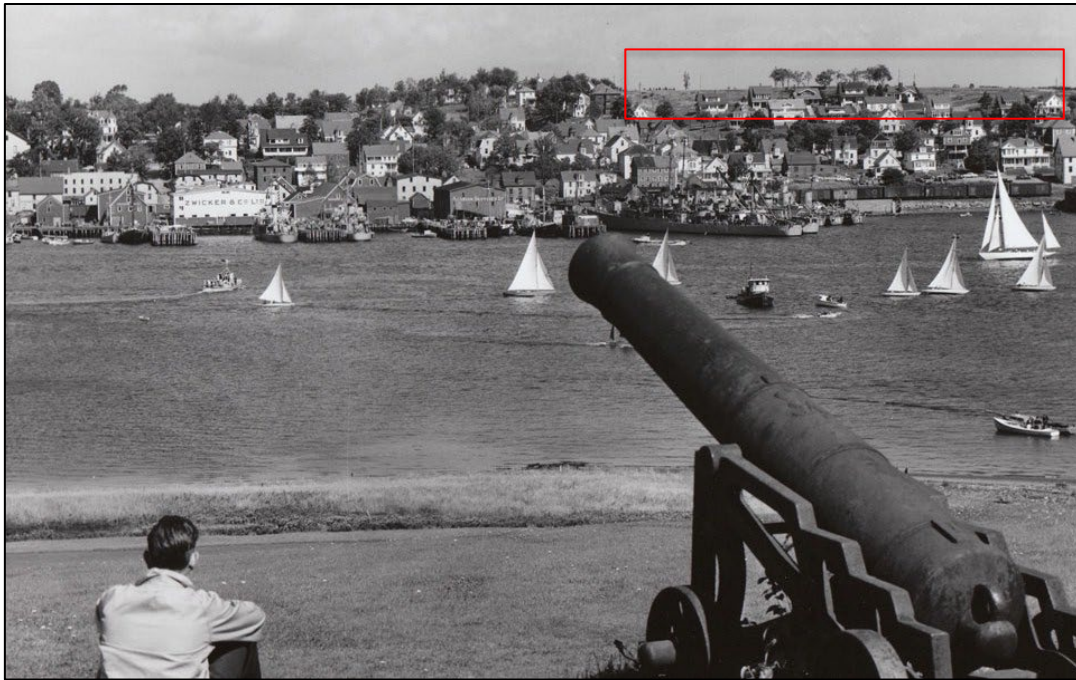


Figure 4-20: 1955 photo of Blockhouse Hill (red) suggesting there were no structures in the vicinity of the earthworks.¹⁵⁵

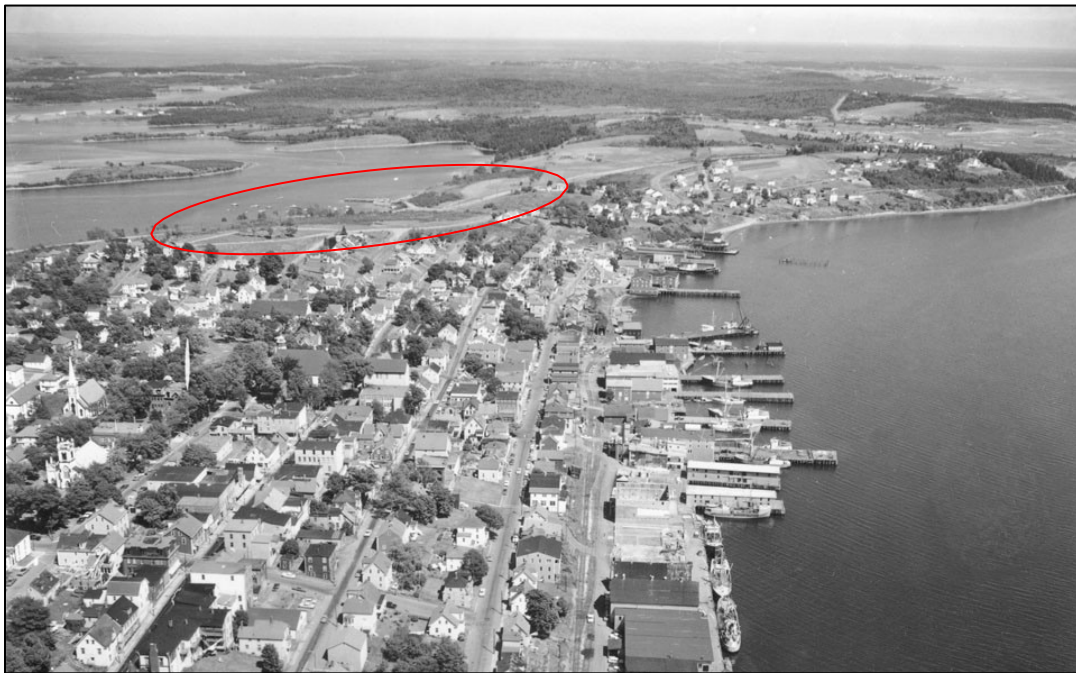


Figure 4-21: 1966 oblique aerial photo of Blockhouse Hill suggesting there were no structures in the vicinity of the earthworks.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ Nova Scotia Information Service 1955.

¹⁵⁶ Nova Scotia Information Service 1966.

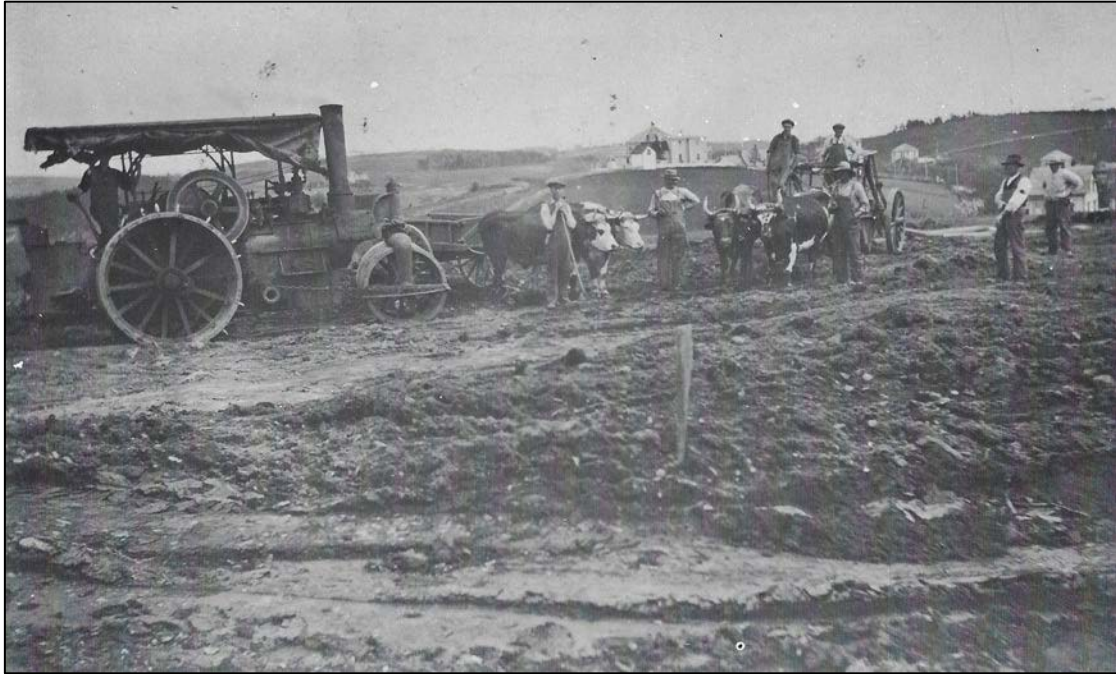


Figure 4-22: Steamroller at Blockhouse Hill in 1921 for the construction of a baseball diamond.¹⁵⁷

Into the mid-twentieth century there was increasing interest in preserving the history of Blockhouse Hill through the establishment of new infrastructure on the Common. The hill was routinely featured and discussed in *The Seagull* articles (the Lunenburg Academy yearbook). As early as 1946, discussions of developing Blockhouse Hill into a tourist attraction had emerged. The Lunenburg Board of Trade suggested that a replica blockhouse, a first settler's home, and an archive would be suitable for the top of Blockhouse Hill, although nothing was constructed at that time.¹⁵⁸ Blockhouse Hill was still regularly maintained, as in 1948, the Public Improvement Committee removed "the rusty machinery and other objects which detracted from the natural scenery at the top of the hill." In 1953, the committee explained that "Many favorable comments have been made about the improvements to Blockhouse Hill during the past two years. We suggest that this area should have some improvement every year as circumstances permit."¹⁵⁹

In the 1960s there was a nomination and subsequent installation of a Historic Sites and Monuments Board plaque detailing the 1782 Sack of Lunenburg.¹⁶⁰ In 1963 students from the Lunenburg Academy explained that the local Lions Club had intentions of turning the entirety of Blockhouse Hill into a park, including a museum shaped like the original blockhouse, an observation tower, camping grounds, a swimming facility, and a playground. However, the installation of the railway along the Back Harbour in the mid-

¹⁵⁷ Cuthbertson 1996.

¹⁵⁸ Lunenburg Board of Trade 1946.

¹⁵⁹ Whynacht 1953.

¹⁶⁰ Whiteley 1961.

twentieth century disconnected the hill from the shoreline and the Lion’s Club changed their plans. Instead, the Club decided to focus their efforts on landscaping the shoreline, clearing rocks and stones, and bringing in sand. They also levelled parts of Blockhouse Hill approximately 15m back from the shoreline.¹⁶¹

After using a small tourist booth in Lunenburg throughout most of the twentieth century, the Lunenburg Board of Trade began construction on a tourist bureau on Blockhouse Hill on 14 February 1972.¹⁶² This initial building was shaped like a lighthouse, and a corresponding campground was built to the east, likely resulting in significant ground disturbance.¹⁶³ By the mid-1990s, the Tourist Bureau had fallen into a state of disrepair and had become too small for the “more than 30,000 tourists who visit each year.”¹⁶⁴ In late 1995, the lighthouse Tourist Bureau was removed and a new foundation was poured for the blockhouse-shaped Visitor Information Center (VIC) that still stands today.

After the new VIC was built, the Board of Trade completed major upgrades to the campground between 1997 and 1999. The renovations focused on the existing section of the campground to the east of the VIC, as the expansion of the campground to the north had not yet taken place. These upgrades included changing the serviced sites’ power from 15A to 30A, installing a hot water boiler for the washrooms, adding additional showers and installing further sewage infrastructure.¹⁶⁵ Photographs taken during these upgrades in 1999 demonstrate the extent of ground disturbance that occurred during their installation, as well as provide a glimpse of the area where the north extension to the campground would later be constructed (Figure 4-23, Figure 4-24, Figure 4-25). Photographs appear to indicate a steep slope along the north edge of the east campground.

¹⁶¹ Bailly and Spindler 1963.

¹⁶² Lunenburg Town Council 1972.

¹⁶³ Lunenburg Board of Trade 1999.

¹⁶⁴ Corkum-Greek 1995.

¹⁶⁵ Lunenburg Board of Trade 1999.



Figure 4-23: Electrical upgrades in November/December 1999 just west of the showers, looking west toward Sylvia Park. Photo courtesy Lunenburg Board of Trade. Note the earthworks in the background.



Figure 4-24: Electrical upgrades in November/December 1999 showing showers at top right and the Back Harbour in background, looking north.



Figure 4-25: Sewer improvements in November/December 1999 on the southeast side of the VIC, looking northeast. Courtesy of Lunenburg Board of Trade.

The northern expansion of the campground was completed in the summer of 2000 which included the construction of a 6m-wide road, parking spaces, culverts, and tent sites. The tent sites were graded with earth fill and topped with 5cm of crusher dust. The surrounding lawn area was also graded for future grass seeding.¹⁶⁶ According to the modern site plan for the campground, there are three types of campgrounds: Unserviced, Electric/Water and Electric/Water/Sewer (Figure 4-26). None of the campsites constructed during the expansion in 2000 contained any sewer lines.

¹⁶⁶ Fogarty 1999.

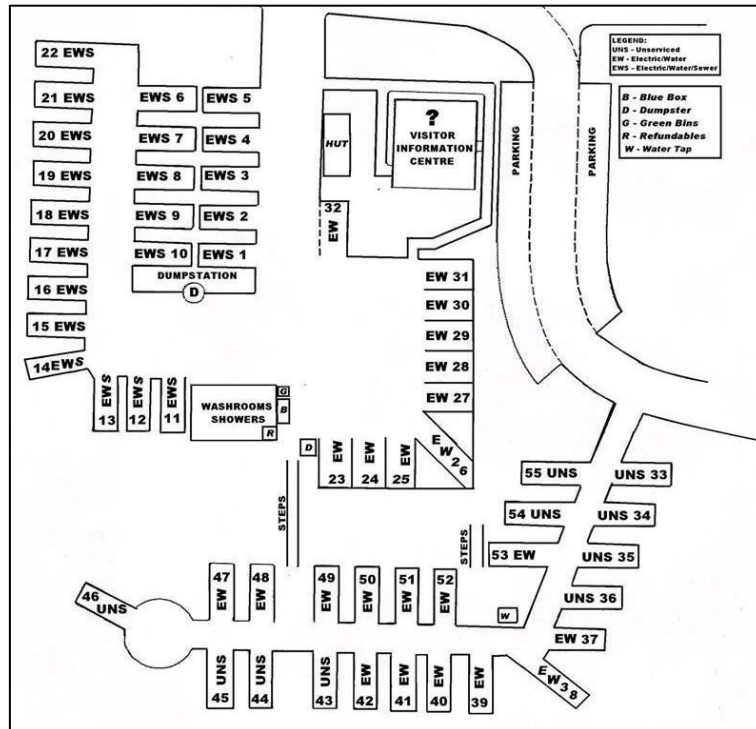


Figure 4-26: Today's layout of sites at the campground. Courtesy Lunenburg Board of Trade. Note lack of sewer hookups (S) for the campsites at the bottom of the layout.

The earliest air photos of the study area, in 1945, suggest that Blockhouse Hill was sporadically vegetated with both cleared and forested sections. Several potential fields are visible in the changes in vegetation, although it is not clear if they are pasture or being used as a hay field or for some other crop (Figure 4-27). There appears to be one structure in the study area, roughly in the same location as the Lunenburg County Jail. Whether this feature is the remnants of the old jail which burned in 1931, or a structure built in the same location is unclear. Along Blockhouse Hill Road, southeast of the earthworks at Sylvia Park, there is an area of exposed soil which may be the baseball diamond built in 1921. There also seems to be a small footpath from Fox Street, leading across the earthworks and east towards Sawpit Road.

By 1955, Blockhouse Hill shows signs of vegetation regrowth with increased presence of tree cover (Figure 4-28). The field outlines are still visible. The structure in the location of the old Lunenburg County Jail appears to still be present, and there may be another structure that was constructed north of Kempt Street just northwest of the old jail. The area of exposed soil which may be the old baseball diamond is still present, as is the footpath.

In 1965 there is further signs of vegetation regrowth, although the field outlines are still visible (Figure 4-29). The location of the old jail and the potential old baseball diamond both show signs of revegetation, suggesting they were no longer used at this time. Further,

what appeared as a potential structure north of Kempt Street in 1955 is no longer present. There also appears to be some exposed soil just east of Sylvia Park, potentially suggesting some construction activity. Just north of the study area, the railway appears to have been constructed along the shoreline of the Back Harbour.

The 1986 photo shows the most significant changes to the study area (Figure 4-30). The northernmost extent is mostly vegetated with some small trails or possibly roads. Oral history provided by attendees at the October 2023 community meeting indicated that cars may have been driven back in this area. These may be human trails, or simply game or cattle trails more present in a drier season. At the southernmost extent, the exposed soil as seen in 1965 is now a parking lot and the campground had been established, as was the tourist information center. In 1992, the study area appears very similar to 1986 (Figure 4-31). The trails are no longer present, but the study area is vegetated in the north with the camping ground and tourist information center at the south.



Figure 4-27: 1945 air photo of the study area (yellow). The red circle indicates a structure.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁹ Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forestry 1965.



Figure 4-28: 1955 air photo of the study area (yellow). The red circle indicates a dstructure.¹⁶⁸



Figure 4-29: 1965 air photo of the study area (yellow).¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forestry 1955.

¹⁶⁹ Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forestry 1965.

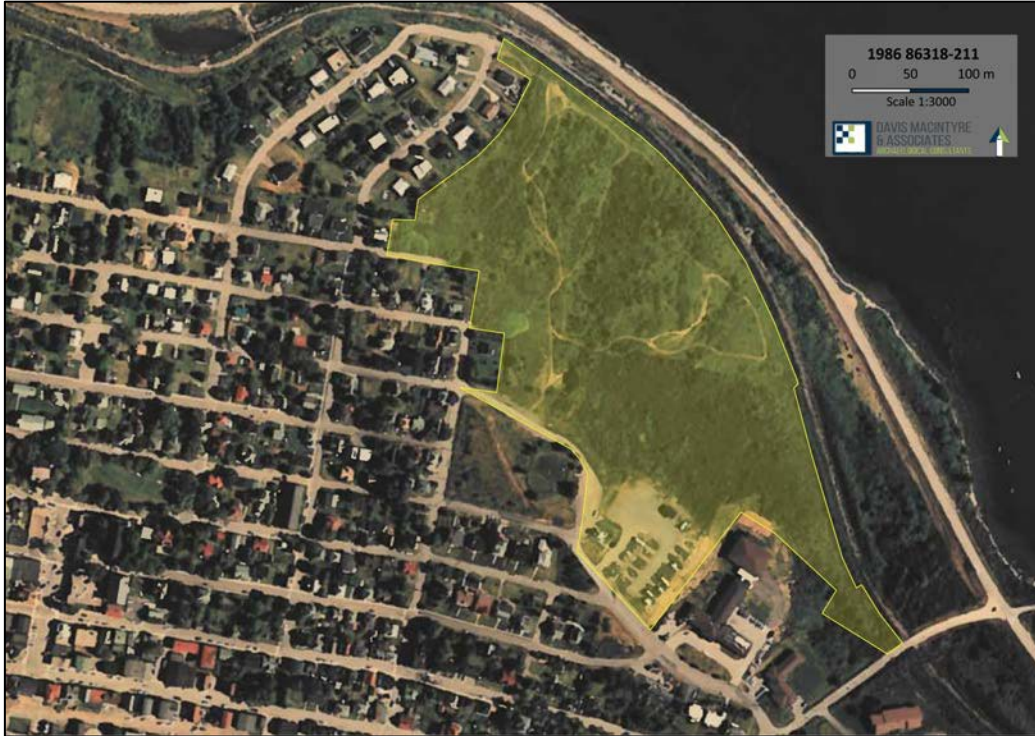


Figure 4-30: 1986 air photo of the study (yellow).¹⁷⁰



Figure 4-31: 1992 air photo of the study (yellow).¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forestry 1986.

¹⁷¹ Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forestry 1992.

4.3 Predictive Modelling

4.3.1 L'nuk Archaeological Resources

Predicting the occurrence of L'nuk heritage resources during the Late Pleistocene to the Holocene is a complicated task. Understanding localized geomorphological factors that influenced this rapidly evolving landscape and how the landscape may have been utilized by the ancestors is paramount for the prediction of potential site locations. Often, face value modern visual interpretations of these landscapes are not sufficient. This may lead to unintentionally overlooked resources for this expansive time period.¹⁷² However, human movement is seldom tied solely to resource collection and to the ease of passage between resource collection areas. Exchange networks, familial histories, traditions, and ceremonial practices are also important factors to consider when seeking the relationships of past peoples and a given landscape.¹⁷³ Nevertheless, the prediction of past resource collection areas and travel corridors, such as the evolution of individual watercourses, can help narrow down potential activity areas. Difficulty in predicting landscape use for a specific study area is also compounded by the lack of localized geomorphological, climactic, and archaeological research. Historic anthropogenic landscape alterations further complicate desktop models. This is additionally muddied by innumerable unknown factors. However, broader regional trends and statistical modeling may offer insight into how the landscape may have been utilized as it evolved, thus, predicting the occurrence of previously unknown resources with greater accuracy and efficiency.

The earliest known occupation of the Maritime Peninsula occurred just before, and roughly overlapping with, the Younger Dryas cooling event that occurred from ~11,000 ¹⁴C to 10,000 BP (12,900 to 11,500 cal BP). The open spruce landscape typical of the region reverted to a dry, cold, treeless shrub tundra with the onset of colder temperatures.¹⁷⁴ During this time glaciers residing in the Highlands of Nova Scotia were reinvigorated, blocking several river systems near these areas with sediments and ice. New glacial lakes and outflows were formed throughout the province (See Section 2.1).¹⁷⁵ It is uncertain if these glaciers had significant impact on the watercourses of southern Nova Scotia. Coastal lowstands of the at this time sat around -65 m from modern sea levels offering early peoples open corridors for moving freely about the greater lowland region unimpeded by modern ocean extents.¹⁷⁶ Archaeological evidence for Early Palaeo peoples moving deep into the interior of southern Nova Scotia comes from isolated finds recorded in Yarmouth, Sable River, and within the Annapolis Valley region from Blomidon, a quarry site at

¹⁷² Suttie et al. 2007.

¹⁷³ Lacroix 2015, 31.

¹⁷⁴ Stea and R.J. Mott 1989, 172.

¹⁷⁵ Stea 2011.

¹⁷⁶ Shaw et al. 1993, 223.

Davidson Cove (Scots Bay), and the Melanson site on Gaspereau River as well as at Medford.¹⁷⁷

As the climate again warmed at the end of this stadial, ice dammed lakes breached as glaciers retreated. Vegetational expanse continued into the Late Palaeo period. Core samples analyzed from Pleasant River Fen, located in Lunenburg County, provide a sample of the extreme environmental variability that has occurred over the last 10,000 years in a single wetland Southwestern Nova Scotia.¹⁷⁸ This study offers insight on how the landscape of the broader region may have evolved and how the landscape could have been utilized. This study suggests that prior to 10,400 BP, the fen was once an unenriched open water lake that transitioned sharply into a wetland into the early Holocene as the climate warmed and sedimentation increased.¹⁷⁹ This suggest post glaciation, many former lake basins, that are now largely wetlands in the region, may have once been open water lakes with minimal productivity during the Early to Middle Palaeo Period. Relative sea level reached approximately 40 m below modern levels by 10,000 BP.¹⁸⁰ Artifacts with post glacial Late Palaeo attributes have been found along the Lower Mersey and at Gaspereau Lake. Indications of continuing occupation into the Late Palaeo and Transitional Archaic Period in the region have been found in private collections, including those from Gaspereau Lake, Tusket and the Mersey River.¹⁸¹

Predictive modeling for the early Holocene Archaic Period presents a unique set of challenges for archaeologists. Over this approximately 3,000-year period post deglaciation, riverine systems and coastlines of the Maritime Peninsula experienced a series of dramatic changes influenced by numerous factors including localized isostatic rebound, lake formation and collapse, changes in relative sea levels, and rapid sediment depositions.¹⁸² Recent studies, following examples from Northern Maine suggest that during the period between 9,000 BP and 7,000 BP, river systems in the region were largely unstable, with near continual gradation and reworking due to accelerated sea level rise. Often, inland archaeological sites from this period are masked by deep aggraded deposits of alluvium. The small fraction of isolated finds representing this period are likely “dislodged” by a multitude of natural and unnatural disturbances.¹⁸³ By 6,000 BP, sea level rise had steadied inundating drainage systems, including the Bras d’Or Lakes, and presently continues to rise approximately 0.36m/100 years.¹⁸⁴ Consequently by 5,000 to 4,000 BP, the lake and river systems in Nova Scotia largely stabilized in their current

¹⁷⁷ Davis and Christianson 1988; Bonnicksen et al. 1991, 14; Erskine 1998, 14; Laybolt 1999, 22; Betts et al. 2018.

¹⁷⁸ Spooner et al. 2014.

¹⁷⁹ Spooner et al. 2014, 1155.

¹⁸⁰ Fader and Miller 2008.

¹⁸¹ Laybolt 1999, 22–3; Pentz 2008, 167.

¹⁸² Murphy 1998, 93.

¹⁸³ Murphy 1998, 93.

¹⁸⁴ Baechler 2017, 394.

configurations coinciding with the latter half of the Late Archaic Period.¹⁸⁵ A large portion of the known precontact sites in Southern Nova Scotia are from the Middle to Late Archaic period. These sites may have been discovered due in part to erosional forces caused by the extreme fluctuations in water levels by anthropomorphic changes by damming major river systems for milling and power generation, and by agriculturally influenced soil erosion. The natural effects of chronological shingling may also add to the representation bias of these early isolated finds recovered from shorelines and streambeds. By 3,000 BP, the Halifax Harbour had resembled current conditions with the shoreline residing less than 5m from modern levels.¹⁸⁶

The general location of Woodland to Historic period occupation sites along the river systems and coastlines of Southwest Nova Scotia are largely predictable owing, in part, to river stabilization and the characteristic slow predictable sea level rise of this period. Though the increasing pace of mid-20th century sea level rise has left near coastal sites from this period vulnerable to rapid erosion and loss. Sea level rise and increasing storm severity will undoubtedly affect upstream watercourse alignments and sediment depositions, especially in low lying areas. The upper limit of SLR projections is predicted to be at +1.3m over the next 100 years.¹⁸⁷ This rapid change in rising trends has submerged known L'nuik cultural resources first recorded in the early 20th century and will continue to cause the exposure and eventual loss of numerous unknown sites along the coastlines and river systems of the Maritime Peninsula. Shell middens and associated encampment sites that dot the coastline of Lunenburg County are at accelerated risk of exposure and loss.

Understanding the geomorphological changes of shorelines and individual river systems and is paramount in the prediction L'nuik cultural resource potential due to the strong connections between Mi'kmaq, waterways, and bodies of water.¹⁸⁸ Yet, modeling landscape change and its subsequent landscape usage is a challenge that is often limited to the amount of prior localized geological and archaeological research. Historic alterations can further complicate these interpretations. However, the use of ground-truthed archeological potential buffers can be used to statistically highlight areas to inform interpretations in the field for archaeological potential when previous research is unavailable. In 2020, Davis MacIntyre & Associates developed a desktop level predictive model for the probability of encountering L'nuik culture resources for the lower Mersey River watershed. Currently, there are over 300 recorded sites within the Mersey River corridor, which is located roughly 50km northwest of the Blockhouse Hill study area. This equals to nearly one quarter of all known precontact sites in the province. It also provides a large data snapshot for the broader region. An analysis of known sites on the Mersey River resulted in 91% of known sites being located within 50m of the historic shoreline.

¹⁸⁵ Shaw et al. 2002b, 143.

¹⁸⁶ Fader and Miller 2008.

¹⁸⁷ Forbes et al. 2009.

¹⁸⁸ Thwaites 1896.

The remaining 9% of known sites are located within 110m of historic water levels. Mean site distance is 21m from the shoreline of the pre-dam watercourse. It is important to note that many of these sites were recorded before the implication of handheld GPS and their locations rely on human transcription, and therefore may not be exact. Rather, site locations are reflective of overall mobility trends.¹⁸⁹

With this known data, a potential model can be created for the likelihood of encountering L'nuk cultural resources for the Blockhouse Hill study area using the Mersey model. Within 50m of modern water levels should be considered high potential for encountering Mi'kmaq cultural resources. Between 50 and 110m from modern water levels should be considered as moderate potential for encountering L'nuk cultural resources. Moderate potential areas should also include areas within the high potential buffers that have factors that lessen their desktop elevated potential. This may include areas of significant slope, boulder fields, and unsheltered areas with poor shoreline access. Similar on the ground limiting factors should be considered within the moderate potential buffer when assessing an area's overall cultural resource potential. L'nuk archaeological potential buffers were created for the modern study area shoreline (Figure 4-32).

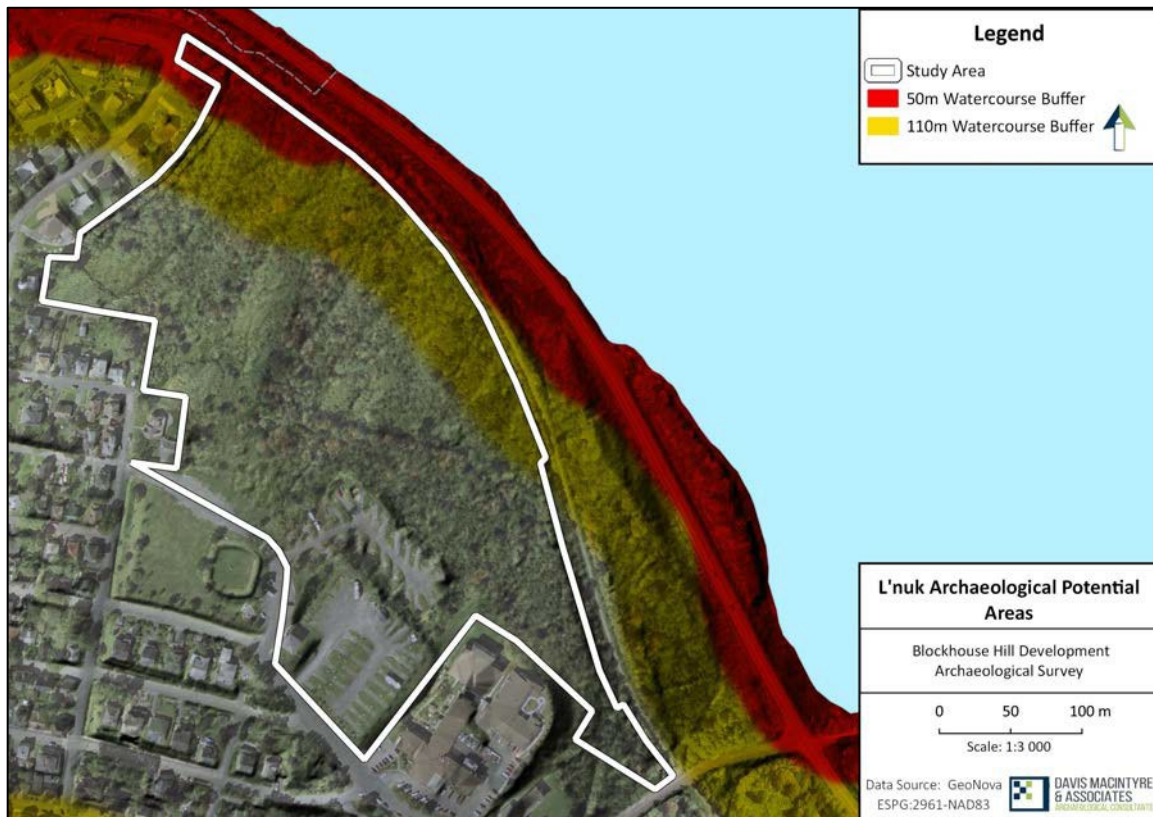


Figure 4-32: The study area with watercourses and L'nuk archaeological potential buffers, based on desktop modelling.

¹⁸⁹ Davis MacIntyre & Associates Ltd. 2020, 24.

4.3.2 Historic Archaeological Resources

Historically, two main types of activity (military and agricultural/common lands) have taken place within or near the study area. Unfortunately, there is a lack of detailed mapping of the study area in the historic period. While some maps depict the eastern blockhouse or general outline of the military property, later and more detailed 19th century maps tend to omit this area. For example, Blockhouse Hill is just out of frame on the 1879 bird's eye view of Lunenburg, while it is partially in view but not depicted in detail on the A. F. Church 1883 map insert of Lunenburg. Similarly, the 1880s fire insurance plan of Lunenburg does not include the hill.

Given the lack of detailed mapping, only a small number of 18th and mid-19th century maps were georeferenced. There is a degree of error when georeferencing hand-drawn maps, particularly when there has been significant change to the landscape or roads since the date of map's creation. Despite this limitation, georeferencing was attempted for three maps, including the 1753 map by Charles Morris, an undated map that was likely based on Morris's map, and the 1847 survey plan.¹⁹⁰ The property does appear to decrease in size over time. Morris's 18th century map and the undated map depict the property as roughly 3 acres. Interestingly, this is the size given by Aubrey Coldwell in his 1886 letter to the Minister of Militia and Defense, perhaps reflecting earlier documentation that he had access to. Internal communication in response to Coldwell's letter indicated that it was, at that time (1887), only 1 acre in size.¹⁹¹ In 1847, the property is depicted and described as 1 acre in size. Additionally, Ince's 1856 report on the property states that the blockhouse was located in the centre of a clearly defined and marked 1 acre of land.¹⁹² If it is presumed that the existing earthworks are located in the same area as the historic earthworks/blockhouse, then it can be used as an estimate of the center point of the 1-acre parcel (Figure 4-33).

In general, georeferencing suggests that the military property was located in roughly the same area as the existing earthworks within Sylvia Park, and, particularly in the 18th century, the property may have extended slightly north and east into the study area itself. While the blockhouse was likely located just outside the study area in Sylvia Park, other buildings or areas of activity (such as privies, middens, wells, etc.) could have been located in the vicinity of the blockhouse. Therefore, the approximate outline of the 1 to 3 acres of military property at the top of Blockhouse Hill is generally of high potential for archaeological resources related to military activity.

¹⁹⁰ Morris 1753; Parsons 1851a; Anonymous n.d.

¹⁹¹ Department of Militia and Defence 1886.

¹⁹² Ince 1856.



Figure 4-33: The approximate outlines of the military property at the top of Blockhouse Hill, based on georeferencing of historic maps and text descriptions.

In addition to examination of historic maps, LiDAR was analyzed to identify any surface anomalies that would warrant investigation in the field (Figure 4-34). Several anomalies were noted, including one in the vicinity of the former Lunenburg County Jail building. Additionally, LiDAR suggests a trail, old road, or field boundary may be present along the south edge of the fields noted on the 1945 to 1965 air photos. Another trail may lead to the top of Blockhouse Hill.

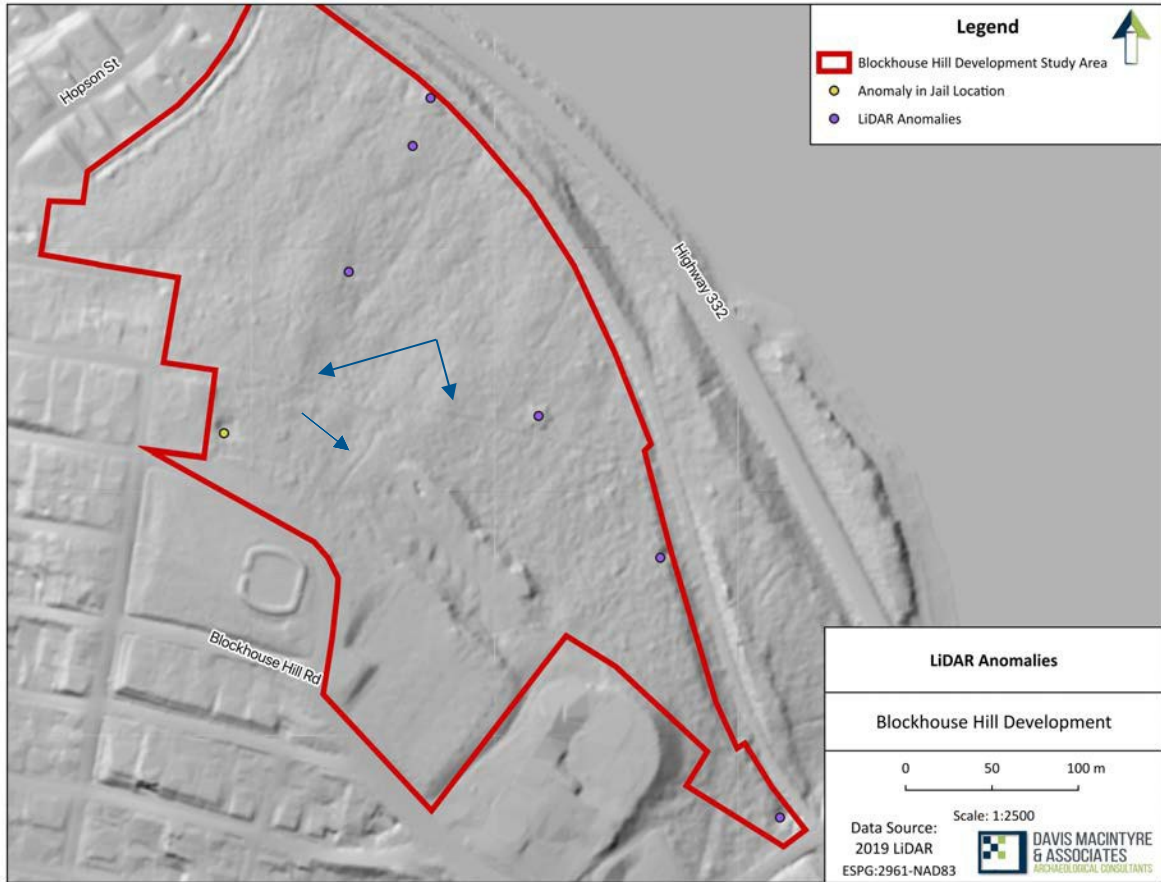


Figure 4-34: Anomalies identified on 2019 LiDAR within the study area, including one in the vicinity of the former Lunenburg County Jail. Also note the faint trails or field boundary walls (blue).

4.4 Field Reconnaissance

An archaeological reconnaissance was conducted on 11 October 2023 by Courtney Glen, Johanna Cole, and Allan Nickerson, under cloudy and sunny skies (Figure 4-35). The reconnaissance began by noting the view plains from the berm at Sylvia Park, which include a view of both the Front and Back Harbours. The park itself is located just outside the study area and contains potential military earthworks (a berm). Mature trees are present around the outside of the berm. Granite steps are embedded into the berm, and a cannon is present in the center (Plate 1).

Sylvia Park is separated from the study area by Blockhouse Hill Road, a paved road with wide gravel shoulders (Plate 2). Utility poles are present along the north side of the road, with an electric meter indicating the presence of buried electrical lines in this vicinity as well.

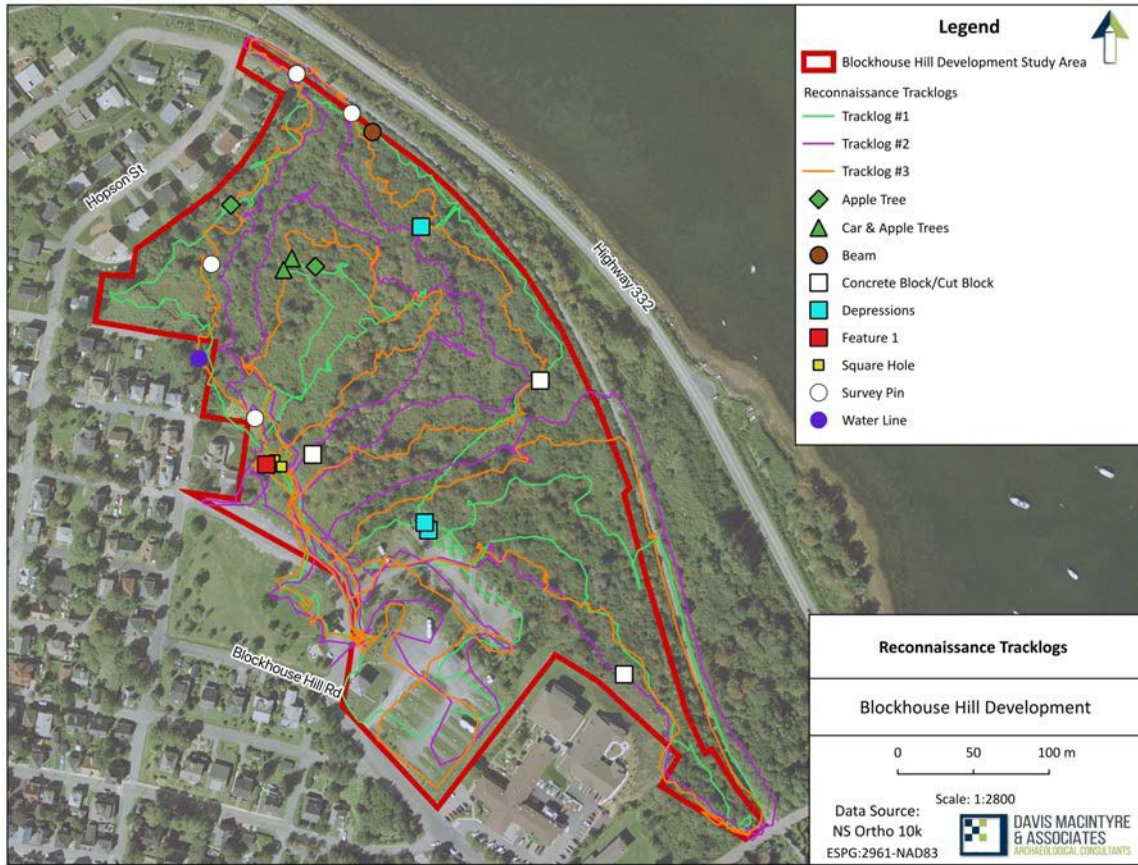


Figure 4-35: Tracklogs and points of interest collected during the 2023 reconnaissance.



Plate 1: The existing earthworks in Sylvia Park, located south of the study area. Note the granite steps embedded in the berm.



Plate 2: Blockhouse Hill Road, an asphalt road with wide gravel shoulders which separates Sylvia Park from the study area (located to the right), facing northwest towards the intersection of York Street and Kempt Street.



Plate 3: An electric meter along the edge of the study area and Blockhouse Hill Road, indicating the presence of buried utilities, facing northeast.

The south end of the study area consists of the only portion of the study area that is currently developed. In this area, a replica blockhouse is present, which houses the Visitor Information Centre (Plate 4). The VIC is surrounded by an upper campground on the east and a lower campground to the north. The upper campground has been excavated below the grade of the VIC and consists of a level gravel parking lot with several buildings, buried utilities, and landscaped grass lawn (Plate 5, Plate 6). The lower parking lot has also been excavated into the slope, and is lower than the upper campground, with a set of wooden stairs connecting the two campground areas (Plate 7). The terrain slopes down from Blockhouse Hill Road before becoming relatively flat at the bottom, with utility poles, buried utilities, and gravel pads present throughout (Plate 8). Gravel drains are also present along the slope (Plate 9) and two rock, heavily overgrown depressions are present, possibly old flower beds or footings for a campground facility (such as an outhouse) (Plate 10). The north edge of the lower campground consists of a densely vegetated and rocky slope, dominated by thorn bushes and shrubs in most places (Plate 11). This slope appears to be at least partially artificial, likely created by pushout from the construction of the lower campground (Plate 12).



Plate 4: The existing Visitor Information Centre building, with the gravel parking lot of the upper campground in the foreground, facing southwest.



Plate 5: Looking northeast over the bathroom facilities located on the northeast edge of the upper campground.



Plate 6: Signs of buried utilities throughout the upper campground, facing southwest.



Plate 7: The lower campground, connected to the upper campground by the wooden steps on the left, looking west. Note the presence of utility poles.



Plate 8: The slope and road leading down to the lower campground from Blockhouse Hill Road, facing west.



Plate 9: Gravel drains in the slope of the lower campground, facing south.



Plate 10: One of the overgrown depressions in the lower campground.



Plate 11: Facing north over outlets of buried utilities in the lower campground towards the densely vegetated slope at the northeast edge of the campground.



Plate 12: The steep and rocky slope at the northeast edge of the campground, facing south. At least some of the rock appears to have been pushed down from the lower campground.

The majority of the study area is currently undeveloped and vegetated. The southwest corner of the study area contains the archaeological remains of the former Lunenburg County Jail foundation (Plate 13). LiDAR analysis prior to the reconnaissance indicated the presence of a potential feature in this area, which was confirmed during the fieldwork. The feature consists of an approximately 10m by 8m concrete and stone foundation, with brick rubble inside (**Feature 1**). Some granite blocks with quarry marks were visible within the foundation (Plate 14). The west side of the feature is likely partially impacted or buried by the back yard of 82 Kempt Street (Plate 15). The foundation is overgrown with semi-mature trees, apple trees, and bushes. The area to the east and north of the foundation is covered in tall grass, which may be masking additional archaeological resources (Plate 16). Several concrete footings with square holes were noted within 5m of the foundation, possibly post bases (Plate 17). To the northwest of the foundation, an area of clearer vegetation may represent an older road extension leading east from Lawrence Street (Plate 18).



Plate 13: Feature 1, a concrete and stone foundation belonging to the former Lunenburg County Jail, facing south.



Plate 14: Brick rubble in the interior of Feature 1. Also note drill marks in a granite block in the foundation (yellow).



Plate 15: Looking southwest over the backyard of 82 Kempt Street, which has likely impacted the western portion of Feature 1.



Plate 16: Facing south over Feature 1 (approximately shown in yellow), surrounded by tall grass.



Plate 17: One of the concrete bases with a square hole in the tall grass surrounding Feature 1.



Plate 18: Looking west down a potential old access road to the jail, which lines up with Lawrence Street.

Much of the area north of Feature 1 is a relatively open, overgrown sloped field, with waist-high grass and shrubs (Plate 19). Japanese knotweed is present along the edge of Creighton Street, as well as near Lawrence Street (Plate 20). The west side of the study area abuts the back yards of several buildings fronting onto Hopson Street. Modern garbage is present throughout this area, which is also forested with semi-mature to mature trees, predominantly hardwood, and including some fruit or apple trees. Signs of deer were also noted, including droppings and prints, as well as two deer who ran from the area upon approach. Several private homes contain paths or bridges leading into the study area (Plate 21). A berm is present running parallel to the house lots, likely created by the construction of the housing lots or drainage for the lots (Plate 22). An overgrown ditch separates the berm from the house lots. The ditch becomes steeper and deeper, as it moves north, with a tall erosional face (Plate 23).



Plate 19: The sloped open field to the north of Feature 1, looking southwest up the hill towards Feature 1.

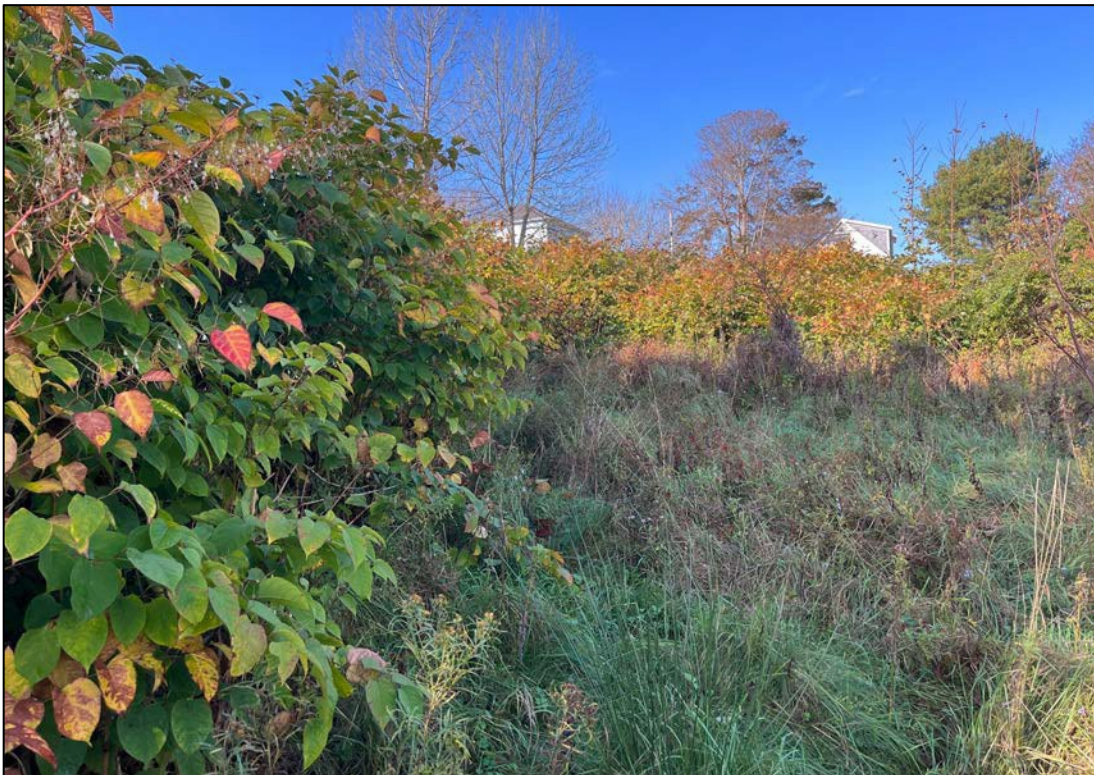


Plate 20: Japanese knotweed near Creighton Street, facing northwest.



Plate 21: A foot bridge leading into the study area from a private house lot, facing northwest.

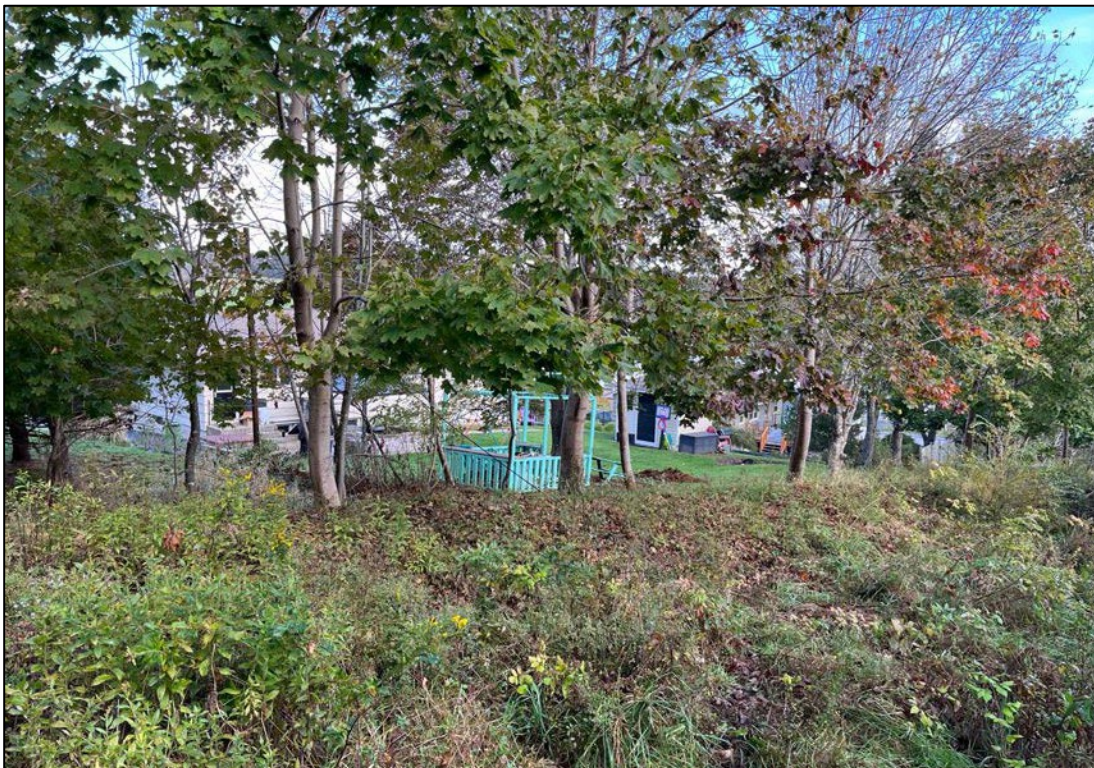


Plate 22: The berm along the edge of the study area and the Hopson Street house lot back yards, looking north.



Plate 23: Facing southwest up the drainage ditch which separates the Hopson Street house lots from the study area.

The north edge of the study area is bounded by a current trail, the Bay to Bay Trail, constructed along the old railway line. Disturbance from the railway line and trail is evident with buried beams, large rock, and ditching, as well as erosion present along the edge of the trail (Plate 24). This area is typically wet, with standing water and alders (Plate 25). A wide ditch is present in some areas and was the cause of one of the LiDAR anomalies identified in the desktop study (Plate 26). A short distance inland from the trail, a water filled, muddy depression was noted (Depression 3), approximately 3m by 3m in size. This depression was one of the LiDAR anomalies noted in the desktop study. The depression was not stone lined and was only 10cm deep (Plate 27).



Plate 24: Wooden beams along the edge of the current walking trail/historic railway bed, in the north end of the study area, facing northeast.



Plate 25: Wet terrain with alders near the north end of the study area, facing south.



Plate 26: A portion of the wide ditch near the trail/historic rail bed, facing east.



Plate 27: Facing northeast over Depression 3.

Between the overgrown field to the north of Feature 1 and the trail, the terrain is rough, sloped, and wet in places. Large boulders are present in some areas (Plate 28), as is erosion from drainage. Numerous apple trees are present in this area as well, as are several pieces of a car (Plate 29). The vegetation contains a few trees, with dense shrubs and thorn bushes (Plate 30). A third LiDAR anomaly had been flagged in this area but appeared to reflect a few stones along an eroding bank, potentially caused by seasonal drainage (Plate 31).

Moving southeast through the center of the study area, the terrain remains sloped and rough in most areas. Vegetation is less dense in the center of the study area, where a few apple trees are found within tall grass and bushes. Signs of erosion continue to be observed, however, including rock eroding from around one of the apple trees. One rock is square and could represent a cut block but there were no other signs of a structure in the area. The linear anomaly observed in the LiDAR data was also located within this area and may represent the remains of a trail. This trail also marks the edge of more open terrain and more densely vegetated terrain approaching the lower campground.



Plate 28: Large boulders, and rough, overgrown terrain within the study area.



Plate 29: Car pieces under an apple tree, facing west. Note the wet terrain.



Plate 30: Dense thorns and bushes characterize large portions of the study area.



Plate 31: The rocks and erosion which appear to represent a LiDAR anomaly flagged during the desktop study.



Plate 32: An apple tree in the center of an overgrown, sloped field, looking northwest.



Plate 33: Erosion along the slope by an apple tree, including a possible cut block, looking southwest up the slope.



Plate 34: A possible faint trail or track cutting roughly east-west along the study area, facing west.

A powerline also crosses the study area, running roughly parallel to the Bay to Bay Trail. This has resulted in disturbance under the powerline, particularly at the location of each pole. One such area of disturbance for a power pole was initially flagged as a LiDAR anomaly (Plate 35).

The southeast end of the study area becomes very narrow, being sandwiched between the Bay to Bay Trail, Sawpit Road, and the Harbour View Haven property. The terrain is also steep, very rough, and densely overgrown (Plate 36). There is a steep bank leading up to the Harbour View Haven property, with modern debris, including concrete, located near this slope (Plate 37, Plate 38). In the very southeast end of the study area, the terrain becomes low and wet (Plate 39). Both Sawpit Road and the Bay to Bay Trail are built up at least one meter above the study area (Plate 40), which resulted in a low wet area which was initially flagged as a LiDAR anomaly.



Plate 35: The powerline running through the study area, looking northwest.



Plate 36: Rough, rocky, and overgrown terrain in the southeast end of the study area, facing north.



Plate 37: The steep bank leading up to Harbour View Haven, facing west.



Plate 38: A concrete block found near the slope at the back of the Harbour View Haven property.



Plate 39: Wet, water-logged terrain located in the southeast end of the study area, facing southeast.



Plate 40: A low wet area bounded by Sawpit Road (background) and the Bay to Bay Trail (left).

5.0 RESOURCE INVENTORY

Feature 1 represents the remains of the former Lunenburg County Jail, which was constructed in 1893 and abandoned sometime after it caught fire in 1931. The building including living quarters for the jailor and his family, and a small barn was located nearby. There is very little archival information about the jail, although it does appear in the distance in a few 20th century photographs. The jail is also not well remembered within the local community as none of the attendees at the October Public Meeting who spoke to the archaeological team could recall hearing of a jail in this area before. The dense vegetation encountered during the reconnaissance may be obscuring additional components of the feature, as a number of square concrete bases with square holes were only just visible under the tall grass. Given these factors, Feature 1 has been evaluated to be of moderate archaeological significance, due to the relatively late age of the feature, as well as the uncertainty of the level of subsurface archaeological deposits remaining.

Depression 1 and 2 are located within the landscaped area of the lower campground. Both appear to have been created during the construction of the campground and may represent the footing of earlier campground infrastructure like a toilet or perhaps some kind of landscaping, such as flower beds. LiDAR indicates they are located well within the heavily disturbed and landscaped portion of the lower campground, constructed in 2000. These depressions have been evaluated to be of low archaeological significance.

Depression 3 consists of an approximately 3m by 3m water and mud-filled depression, which was 10cm deep. The depression was flagged on LiDAR and also appears to be visible on the 1955 air photo. There is no sign of a structure in this area on any air photos, and no sign of structural elements were noted during the reconnaissance, nor were any artifacts observed in the vicinity. Given its location within the historic Common, it is likely associated with agricultural or similar activity, perhaps a watering hole for animals in pasture, or the remains of a borrow pit or area where a large boulder or even stump was removed. Based on the results of this assessment, Depression 3 has been evaluated to be of low archaeological significance.

The area within the approximate military property boundary has been assessed as high potential for archaeological resources. Some portions of this area have been impacted by the development of the Visitor Information Centre and campground, as well as the Blockhouse Hill Road. However, the depth of impact is not clear, and the potential remains for archaeological resources under the disturbance. Sylvia Park, to the south of the study area, is of high potential for undisturbed archaeological resources. Additionally, a small portion of the study area overlaps with the 18th century military property and has been relatively undisturbed. As such, it has been evaluated as high potential for archaeological resources.

Table 5-1: A list of cultural features and areas of archaeological potential identified during the 2023 reconnaissance. Greyed-out items have been evaluated to be of low archaeological significance and have no further recommendations.

Feature Name	Description	Date Range	Archaeological Significance or Potential	Recommendation
Feature-01	Concrete and stone foundation	1893 to 1931	Moderate Significance	Avoidance, if possible. Develop and implement mitigation plan if feature will be impacted, or if impact will occur within 30m of the feature.
Depression 1	Small depression	Likely post 2000	Low Significance	No further recommendations
Depression 2	Small depression	Likely post 2000	Low Significance	No further recommendations
Depression 3	Small, water-filled depression	Indeterminate	Low Significance	No further recommendations
High Potential 01	Boundary of 18 th and 19 th century military property	1753 to post 1871	High Potential	Avoidance, if possible. Shovel testing of undisturbed areas that will be impacted; monitoring of disturbed areas that will be impacted.



Figure 5-1: Cultural features and area of potential identified in the 2023 assessment.

6.0 DISCUSSION

The historic background study indicates that the Mi'kmaq and their ancestors have lived in the Lunenburg area since time immemorial, with direct archaeological evidence dating back at least 4000 years. The archaeological and historic record attest to a long-standing tradition of land use and occupation in the general area, as well as a reliance on the waterways in and near the study area for transportation, hunting, fishing, and gathering. Portages connecting present-day LaHave River to Mahone Bay are documented on historic maps and one precontact L'nuk archaeological site has been recorded within 5km of the study area, with numerous other sites recorded around nearby Mahone Bay, near the Ovens, along the LaHave River and in interior Lunenburg County, representing a rich cultural landscape.

In the historic period, the French and Acadians arrived into this Mi'kmaw cultural landscape, with a small Acadian presence in the Lunenburg area as early as 1686. Acadians continued to occupy the Lunenburg area until 1753, when the British settlement of Lunenburg was founded. At this time, only one Acadian remained in the area. The Mi'kmaq continued to occupy the general area throughout the historic period, including through periods of intense conflict during the early years of the settling of the British town. This conflict resulted in the construction of military fortifications, including the eastern blockhouse in 1753, located just south of the study area. The 18th century military property around the blockhouse was approximately 3 acres, including a small portion of the study area. The eastern blockhouse was later involved in the American privateer attack on Lunenburg in 1782 but following this period, was allowed to fall into a state of disrepair and was repaired in 1812. This was the last major refurbishment of the fortification, and it remained standing and mainly used for storage throughout the 19th century, on a 1-acre military property, until it was reportedly damaged in an 1871 storm and later burned. The exact date that the blockhouse was demolished is unclear but it appears to have been gone by 1887.

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, the majority of the study area consisted of public common lands, used for pasturing animals. Additionally, the study area was likely cleared and maintained in order to provide unobstructed military views of the Front and Back Harbours. Leases were permitted in the Common beginning in the 1820s and the presence of some fields visible in the 20th century air photos suggests that some leases may have been made of portions of the study area. Very little documentation about the agricultural use of the Common could be located, although the reconnaissance results indicate that at some point, numerous apple trees were planted. Oral history from several residents suggested the study area was known to some as Apple Tree Hill in the 20th century.

The settlement of Lunenburg and the surrounding area pushed the Mi'kmaq from their traditional lands in the 18th and 19th century, but they remained living nearby at Mahone Bay and Blockhouse, LaHave, and Gold River. One current Mi'kmaw resident of Lunenburg provided oral tradition of the study area in a letter to Town Council.

While the designation of the study area as a public common had prevented the development of the land for residential structures, public institutions like the short-lived Lunenburg County Jail and a baseball diamond were established there. Recreational use of the Blockhouse Hill area began to increase in the late 19th century and into the 20th century. By the mid-20th century, discussions of constructing a replica blockhouse for use as a tourist bureau were common and it is likely that some level of landscaping of the earthworks at the top of Blockhouse Hill was conducted. Throughout this period, the study area itself appears to have remained forested or fields.

The overall results of the reconnaissance and desktop study indicate that most of the study area is of low potential for archaeological resources. The currently undeveloped portion of the study area contains terrain that is sloped, rough, and wet in low lying areas. Past disturbance has also occurred along the Bay to Bay Trail, along the back of the Hopson Street properties, and along the edge of the lower campground and Harbour View Haven, as well as along a power line running through the study area. The areas of the upper and lower campgrounds have been extensively disturbed and contain numerous buried utilities. There are no navigable watercourses within the study area, nor were any areas evaluated to be of elevated potential for L'nuk archaeological resources encountered. Hunting or gathering activity may have occurred within the study area but are unlikely to have created significant archaeological deposits. Additionally, agricultural or pastoral activity associated with the Common are unlikely to leave significant archaeological deposits.

One significant archaeological resource was identified within the study area during the reconnaissance. Feature 1 consists of a concrete and stone foundation associated with the Lunenburg County Jail (1893 to sometime after 1931). This feature has likely been partially impacted by a nearby private house lot.

Additionally, the results of the desktop study and reconnaissance indicate that the original 18th century military property for the eastern blockhouse (approximately 3 acres according to georeferencing) likely extended into a small portion of the study area. The blockhouse itself was likely located within the current Sylvia Park but associated features may have extended under the current Blockhouse Hill Road (a modern, mid-20th century re-alignment of the original road) or into the study area. As such, a portion of the study area has been flagged as high potential for archaeological resources related to military activities.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this assessment, one archaeological feature (the former Lunenburg County Jail foundation), and one area of elevated potential for military archaeological resources were identified. Three cultural depressions were also noted but were evaluated to be of low archaeological significance. The remainder of the study area was evaluated to be of low potential for archaeological resources and there are no further recommendations for the low potential areas.

It is recommended that the Lunenburg County Jail foundation and the elevated potential area be avoided during any future ground disturbance. From an archaeological perspective, ground disturbance includes but is not limited to excavation, trenching, levelling/grading, grubbing of vegetation, drilling/coring, as well as infilling and use of the area for laydown/staging. If avoidance is not possible, then the follow recommendations are made:

1. In the event that any ground disturbance is planned within a 30m buffer of the jail foundation, a mitigation plan should be developed and implemented. This may include additional surface cleaning and recording, archaeological testing or excavation, and monitoring.
2. In the event that any ground disturbance is planned within the high potential area, undisturbed portions should be subjected to shovel testing at 5m intervals. Previously disturbed areas within the high potential area (Blockhouse Hill Road and the lower campground) should be subjected to archaeological monitoring during ground disturbance activities.

Should development plans change, then a qualified archaeologist should be contracted to conduct an additional assessment on any new areas outside the project boundaries identified in this report.

In the unlikely event that any archaeological resources are encountered during ground disturbance and an archaeologist is not already on site, it is required that all activity cease and the Coordinator of Special Places (902-229-3159) be contacted immediately regarding a suitable method of mitigation.

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Appendix A: Heritage Research Permit



Heritage Research Permit (Archaeology)

Office Use Only
Permit Number:
A2023NS192

Special Places Protection Act 1989

(Original becomes Permit when approved by
Communities, Culture and Heritage)

Greyed out fields will be made publicly available. Please choose your project name accordingly

Site Number: Site Name: First Name:

Project Name:

Name of Organization:

Representing (if applicable):

Permit Start Date: Permit End Date:

General Location:

Specific Location: (cite Borden numbers and UTM designations where appropriate and as described separately in accordance with the attached Project Description. Please refer to the appropriate Archaeological Heritage Research Permit Guidelines for the appropriate Project Description format)

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Permit Category:

Please choose one

Category A - Archaeological Reconnaissance

Category B - Archaeological Research

Category C - Archaeological Resource Impact Assessment

I certify that I am familiar with the provisions of the *Special Places Protection Act* of Nova Scotia and that I have read, understand and will abide by the terms and conditions listed in the Heritage Research Permit Guidelines for the above noted category.

Signature of applicant

Date 19 September 2023

Approved by
Director

**Beth
Lewis**

Digitally signed by
Beth Lewis
Date: 2023.09.27
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