



Technical Memorandum
100 Sockanosset Cross Road
Cranston, Rhode Island

*Archaeological Cemetery Delineation: State
Farm Cemetery (Cranston Historical
Cemetery No. 60)*

Submitted to:

January 7, 2020
Revised January 17, 2020

Carpionato Group, LLC
1414 Atwood Avenue
Johnston, Rhode Island 02919

The Carpionato Group, LLC (Carpionato) is proposing to redevelop the former Citizens Bank operations facility at 100 Sockanosset Cross Road in Cranston, Rhode Island as a mixed-use development (The Project) that includes a Topgolf sports entertainment complex (Figure 1). The approximate 23-acre site between Route 37 and Sockanosset Cross Road is currently occupied by a building and paved parking lot. Proposed plans include demolition of a portion of the building and removal of all pavement.

Project construction is proposed in proximity to the State Farm Cemetery (Cranston Historical Cemetery CR060) located south of the parking lot and beneath Route 37. In 2006, heavy rains and a failed drainage system parallel to Route 37 resulted in the exposure of human remains associated with the late nineteenth- to early twentieth-century State Farm Cemetery, the final resting place of individuals who passed away while held at one of the various state institutions (e.g. Almshouse, State Infirmary, Workhouse, House of Corrections) at the Howard Institutional Complex and whose remains went unclaimed by family members at the time of their death. The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) contracted with The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. (PAL) to provide cultural resource services to address the removal and analysis of the human remains exposed by rainwaters and contained within a drainage alteration improvement designed to alleviate stormwater runoff off of Route 37 within the state's right-of-way corridor behind 100 Sockanosset Cross Road. Archaeological investigations resulted in the recovery of 61 individuals from 52 grave shafts and showed that unmarked graves remained beneath Route 37 and might continue north of the limits of the state's highway right-of-way corridor onto private property.

The Rhode Island Cemeteries Act (R.I. General Law 23-18-11 *et seq.*) and the City of Cranston's Historic Cemetery Ordinance (Chapter 15.20 Historical and Archeological Burial Sites) conditionally prohibit construction, excavation or ground disturbing activity within 25 feet (ft) of a recorded historic cemetery or human burial site unless the "boundaries of the cemetery are adequately documented and there is no reason to believe additional graves exist outside the recorded cemetery and the proposed construction or excavation activity will not damage or destructively alter the historic cemetery." Chapter 15.20 Subsection 15.20.010 D requires a property owner to have an archaeologist approved by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) to establish the boundaries of a cemetery or burial site when previously unknown burials have been located.

Carpionato, in accordance with the Cranston Municipal Code and the Rhode Island Cemeteries Act, requested that PAL conduct an archaeological cemetery delineation to determine if unmarked burials are present under existing pavement within the 25-ft buffer around the established boundary of the State Farm Cemetery. The archaeological cemetery delineation was completed in December 2019 under permit to conduct archaeological field investigations No. 19-27 issued by the RIHPHC on December 4, 2019 and in consultation with the Cranston Historical Cemetery Commission and the Rhode Island Historical Cemetery Commission. All tasks associated with the project were undertaken in accordance with the Rhode Island Cemeteries Act, Cranston Municipal Code Chapter 15.20, and the RIHPHC's (2012) *Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Registration and Protection of Historic Cemeteries*. This technical memorandum summarizes the results of cemetery delineation and offers recommendations for further consideration based on the results of the field investigations.

State Farm Cemetery

The State Institution "Potters Field" coincides with the 3.4-acre parcel of land referred to as the State Farm Cemetery on the Latham (1887) *Map of the Rhode Island State Farm Cranston* and on the later 1895 Everts and Richard's map of Cranston (Figures 2 and 3). The absence of the cemetery on the D.G. Aerial photographs of Cranston demonstrate the cemetery was abandoned and forgotten not long after it ceased being used, as it appears to be an active farm field and is not visible next to State Institution Cemetery Site No. 1 (Cranston Historical Cemetery CR061) on the 1939 historical aerial photograph of Cranston (Figure 4).

Before the advent of the modern-day welfare system, the institutionalism of social services was the preferred mechanism for state sponsored social care. Institutionalization rested on the belief that the criminal, impoverished, ignorant, and mentally ill could be rehabilitated. Rehabilitation typically involved removing an individual from "corrupting, tempting and distracting influences" believed to contribute to their abject station (typically urban environments) and relocating them to rural farms (Katz 1984:111). On October 5, 1839, the Town of Cranston purchased the 67-acre Rebecca Jenckes farm along Oaklawn Avenue for a town farm (Brayton 1976; Campopiano 2000). Here the needy poor would perform the daily tasks associated with maintaining the farm in a partially self-sustaining setting. Not long afterward, the State of Rhode Island sought to centralize its institutional services and purchased the 417.7-acre Stukeley Westcott and William A. Howard farms in Cranston for \$32,000 for the purposes of a "State Farm" and new state prison (Bayles 1891; RIHPC 1980). The Howard Institutional Complex grew to include a state Workhouse and House of Correction (1868), State Asylum (1870), and Almshouse (1869) (Bayles 1891). The Sockanosset School for Boys and the Oaklawn School for Girls were added in the 1880s with many of the boys serving as a labor force during institution construction projects and learning trades such as carpentry and masonry. Howard eventually developed into a self-sufficient community complete with a carpenter, blacksmith, dwellings for staff, "accommodations" for the inmates, a reservoir, barn, cathedral, as well as, other shops and buildings. Much of the labor at Howard such as vegetable harvesting of vegetables, construction projects, laundering, cooking, tailoring, carpentry, masonry, etc. was provided by the residents, many of whom were foreign born. The Cranston town farm closed not long after the state established the State Farm at Howard (Taylor 1951).

The optimistic goals of the institution system were in stark contrast to reality. Overcrowding was a constant problem at the State Asylum and Almshouse throughout the late nineteenth- and early-twentieth centuries. Unsanitary living conditions and overcrowding contributed to the spread of

communicable diseases, chiefly tuberculosis, which came to Howard in 1887 (Bayles 1891:766.). It was not uncommon for about one-third of the Almshouse residents to die at the State Farm each year. The state tried to curtail the spread of this disease among the general population at Howard by constructing a male “consumption hospital” or tuberculosis ward in 1896 (Campopiano 2000). A woman’s consumption ward followed a year later. With so many sick at the State Farm, the state soon realized that “the State Almshouse had outgrown its function as such [a poorhouse] and had, in fact, become a State Hospital” (Jones n.d. [1944]:41) and officially changed the name of the Almshouse to the State Infirmary in 1917.

With so much death at Howard, it became necessary to support places of burial for those who died while in state care and who had no family or family that could afford to pay for burial elsewhere. The unclaimed deceased were buried in one of three “Potters fields” between 1875 and 1954; the State Farm Cemetery being the earliest of the potters fields receiving an estimated 1,031 interments between 1875 and 1916 (Anonymous 2002). The 1961 state highway plat maps show Route 37 over “Parcel No. 8,” which is the same 3.4-acre cemetery parcel shown the Latham (1887) and the later Everts and Richards (1895) maps of Howard and Cranston (see Figures 2 and 3). Although there is no mention of this burial ground in the Cranston City Hall Land Evidence records, the lands from which the State Farm Cemetery would eventually be established appear to have been included in the conveyances of land from either David Anthony or William and J. Lippett Snow to the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations dated June 16, 1869 (City of Cranston n.d., Book 53:115) and June 22, 1869 (City of Cranston n.d., Book 52:103), respectively. The Anthony deed mentions the sale of land next to or partly intruding into Abby Stone’s property, who abuts the burial plot on both the Latham (1887) and Everts and Richard’s (1895) maps. Charles Stone, who was presumably related to Abby Stone, sold a portion of his estate to the State of Rhode Island in 1896 (City of Cranston n.d., Book 90:128). One Hundred Sockanosset LLC (part of Carpionato Corporation’s present-day landholdings) bought this parcel from Davol Inc. on December 23, 1997, who had acquired the property from the State of Rhode Island on July 18, 1969.

In 2006, PAL excavated 61 individuals from 52 graves within a portion of the State Farm Cemetery for a proposed drainage alteration project on state property immediately south of the existing parking lot at 100 Sockanosset Cross Road. The project was planned to manage drainage issues associated with Route 37 and the parking lot at 100 Sockanosset Cross Road. The archaeological investigations demonstrated additional unmarked graves extended beyond the limits of the Route 37 drainage alteration project.

Archaeological Cemetery Delineation

In cases where a cemetery’s boundaries are uncertain or unknown, machine-assisted topsoil removal can effectively identify unmarked graves and clearly delineate the limits of cemetery interments. Prior to the commencement of fieldwork, PAL support staff overlaid the historical boundaries of the State Farm Cemetery onto project design plans (Figure 5). Machine-assisted removal of asphalt and topsoil was then conducted within 25-feet (ft) of the State Farm Cemetery’s recorded northern boundary east and west of the small wetland drainage outfall within the southeast corner of 100 Sockanosset Cross Road (Figure 6). Parker construction provided a JCB 3CX backhoe equipped with a 4-ft wide grading bucket to remove asphalt, fills, and topsoils (Figure 7). PAL archaeologists directed and followed the backhoe using square shovels and masonry trowels to clean the topsoil/subsoil interface and inspect exposed trench floors for indications of graves or other cultural features (Figure 8). Identified remnant grave shafts were photographed and drawn to scale and the



delineated limits of interments were recorded using a Trimble submeter Global Positioning System handheld receiver for overlay onto the master site plan (see Figure 6).

Machine-assisted topsoil established that the ground surfaces north of the State Farm Cemetery and west of the drainage outfall were disturbed by parking lot construction. Thick asphalt overlaid a prepared crushed pea stone gravel bed to approximately 20 centimeters below surface (cmbs) (Figure 9). The prepared parking lot surface is underlain by a mottled dark brown, dark gray, and dark yellowish brown sand and silt fill. Buried electric lines to power overhead lamps within the parking lot and drainage trenches transect PAL's test area. Mottle fills overlaid a gray clay C horizon subsoil at about 60 cmbs. The absence of an A horizon topsoils and B horizon subsoils within the 25-ft buffer show that much of the original soils from this area were graded and removed during previous construction. No grave shafts or mortuary artifacts were recovered from the State Farm Cemetery 25-ft protection buffer west of the drainage outfall.

Ground surfaces beneath the asphalt exhibited varying degrees of disturbance within the State Farm Cemetery and 25-ft protection buffer east of the drainage channel in the southeast corner of the property. Cement curbing and asphalt overlaid fills that extended from 20 to 155 cmbs into natural light yellowish brown B₂ or dark gray C horizon subsoils. Natural soils were mixtures of silts and sands. PAL documented two remnant parallel grave shafts (Features 01 and 02) within this area (Figure 10). Grave shafts appeared as parallel rectangular outlines of mottled very dark grayish brown (10YR 3/2) and olive brown (2.5Y 4/4) silty fine to medium textured sands with gravel that intruded into the natural light yellowish brown (2.5Y 6/3) underlying subsoils (Figure 11). The exposed grave shafts ranged from 50 – 60 cm wide and 194 – 220 cm long. An examination of the profiles suggests that several feet of original topsoils had previously been removed from this area and that only 10–15 cm of these grave shafts remain. As these grave shafts are located within the defined boundaries of the State Farm Cemetery PAL did not excavate the identified grave shafts and their content is unknown. No burial markers were associated with either of these graves.

Summary and Recommendations

Machine-assisted archaeological delineation of the State Farm Cemetery (CR60) and 25-ft protection buffer at 100 Sockanosset Cross Road in Cranston demonstrated that much of PAL's study area has been disturbed by parking lot construction, the installation of subsurface utilities, ground recontouring, and drainage modifications of the property. It must be noted that these improvements occurred subsequent to 1997 when Carpionato acquired the property from Davol, Inc., and before the cemetery was "rediscovered" and properly identified in 2006. No unmarked graves were identified within the 25-ft protection buffer, although PAL did identify two remnant grave shafts within the northeastern limits of known graves depicted on the Latham (1887) *Map of Cemetery at State Farm* beneath the parking lot and east of the small drainage feature within the southeast corner of the property (see Figure 6). The unmarked grave shafts have been partially disturbed by previous construction with only a small portion of the original burial shaft remaining intact. The identification of unmarked graves within the mapped boundaries of the State Farm Cemetery suggest the potential for additional graves within the limits of the cemetery.

The archaeological cemetery delineation demonstrated that the northern limits of the State Farm Cemetery as currently mapped are accurate. PAL recommends that the cemetery and its boundaries be overlaid and clearly labeled on Project design plans. PAL also recommends that the cemetery's



boundaries be surveyed and permanently marked in the field and that the Project proponents identify the cemetery boundary with high visibility fencing during construction.

Future ground disturbance or construction beyond the cemetery's boundary will not impact unmarked graves or the State Farm Cemetery. Nevertheless, PAL recommends maintaining a 25-ft protection buffer around the boundaries of the burial ground in accordance with R.I.G.L. 23-18-11 *et seq.* and Cranston City Ordinance Chapter 15.20: Historical and Archeological Burial Sites. If construction is proposed to encroach upon the 25-ft cemetery buffer, project proponents must consult with the Cranston Historical Cemetery Commission and the Rhode Island Historical Cemetery Commission and petition the City of Cranston for a variance to ensure compliance with state and municipal law.

References Cited

Anonymous

2002 MHRH to Restore and Maintain State-Owned Burial Sites. *pRIde: The Newsletter by and for Rhode Island State Employees*. Spring 2002:1, 4.

Bayles, Richard M.

1891 *History of Providence County, Rhode Island*. W.W. Preston & Co., New York, NY.

Brayton, Gladys W.

1976 Early Welfare and Cranston's Town Poor Farm. In *Other Ways and Other Days*. Globe Printing Company, East Providence, RI.

Campopiano, John J.

2000 *Almshouse to Center General*, edited by Nancy L. Lawrence. Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, Providence, RI.

City of Cranston

n.d. Cranston Land Evidence Records. On file, City of Cranston, Cranston, RI.

Everts and Richards

1895 Town of Cranston, Providence County, Rhode Island. *New Topographical Atlas of Surveys Providence County Rhode Island*. On file Rhode Island Historical Society Library, Providence, RI.

Jones, Henry A.

n.d. [1944] *The Dark Days of Social Welfare at the State Institutions at Howard, Rhode Island*. Department of Social Welfare, RI.

Katz, Michael B.

1984 Poorhouses and the Origins of the Public Old Age Home. *The Milbank Memorial Funder Quarterly. Health and Society* 62(1):110-140.

Latham, J.L.

1887 *Map of the Rhode Island State Farm, Cranston*. State publication.



Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission

2012 *Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Registration and Protection of Historic Cemeteries.*
http://www.preservation.ri.gov/pdfs_zips_downloads/archaeology_pdfs/120509cemetery-regs.pdf. Web site accessed March 18, 2019.

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

1980 *Statewide Historical Preservation Report P-C-1: Cranston, Rhode Island.* Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Providence, RI.

Taylor, Harold Murdock

1951 The Old Poor Farm. *The Cranston Herald*, May 17, 1951.

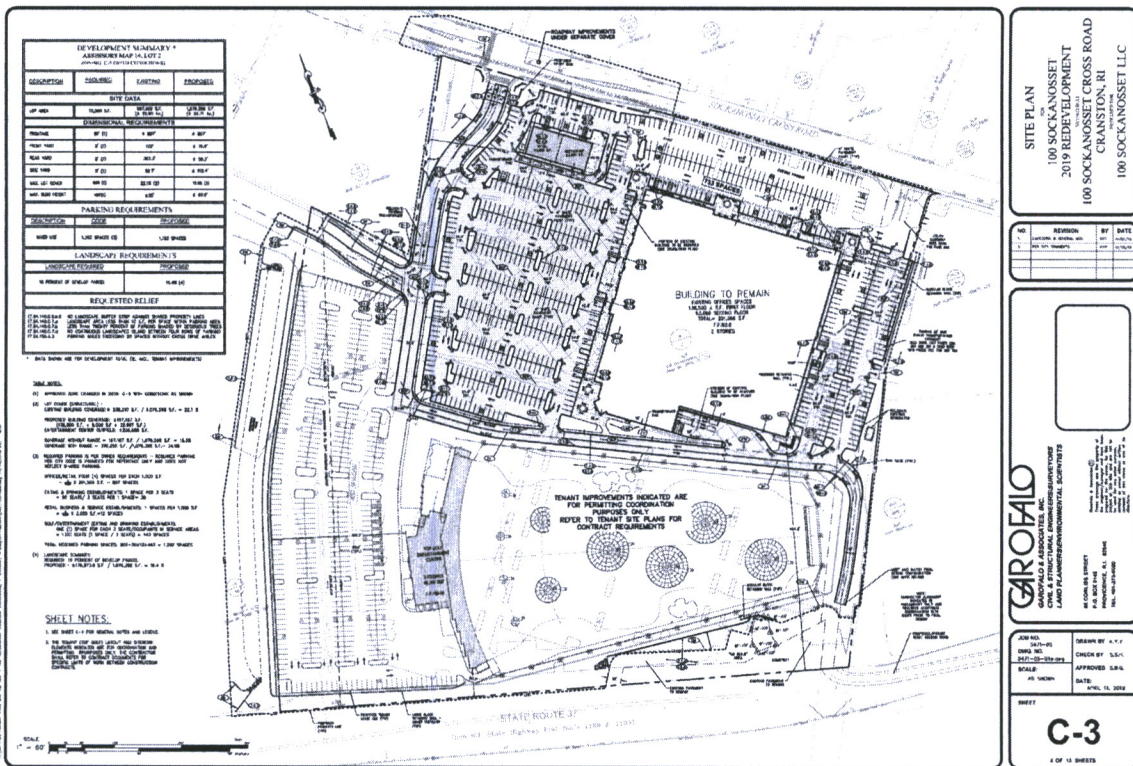


Figure 1. 100 Sockanosset Cross Road proposed development plan.

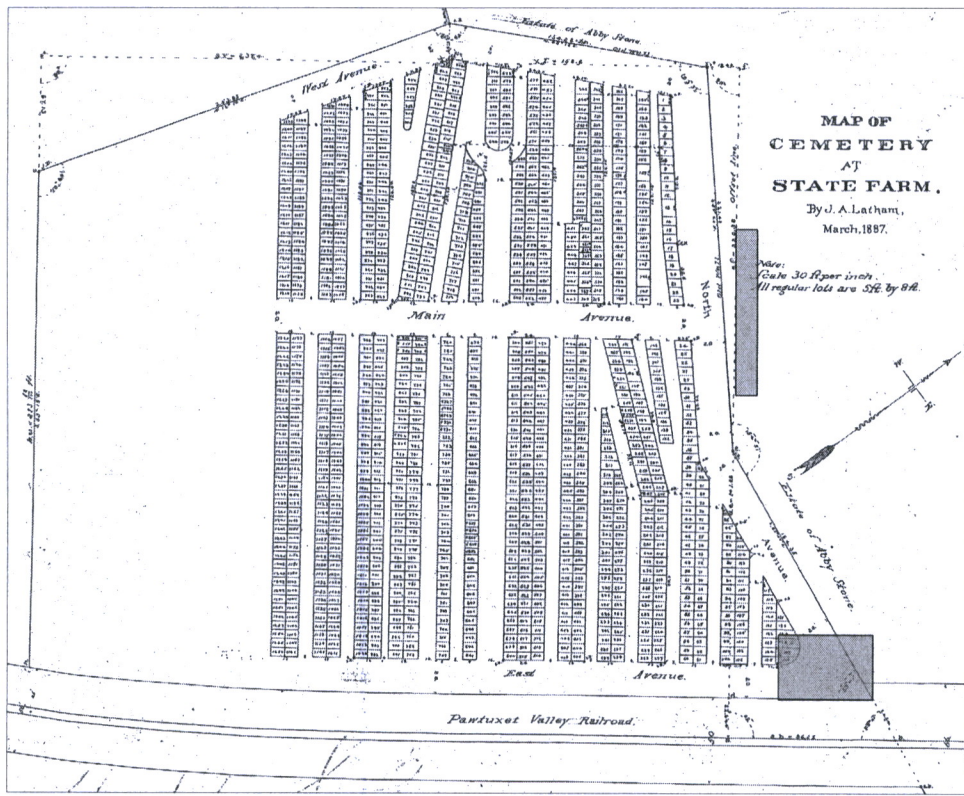


Figure 2. Latham (1887) Map of the Rhode Island State Farm, Cranston with areas of archaeological testing.

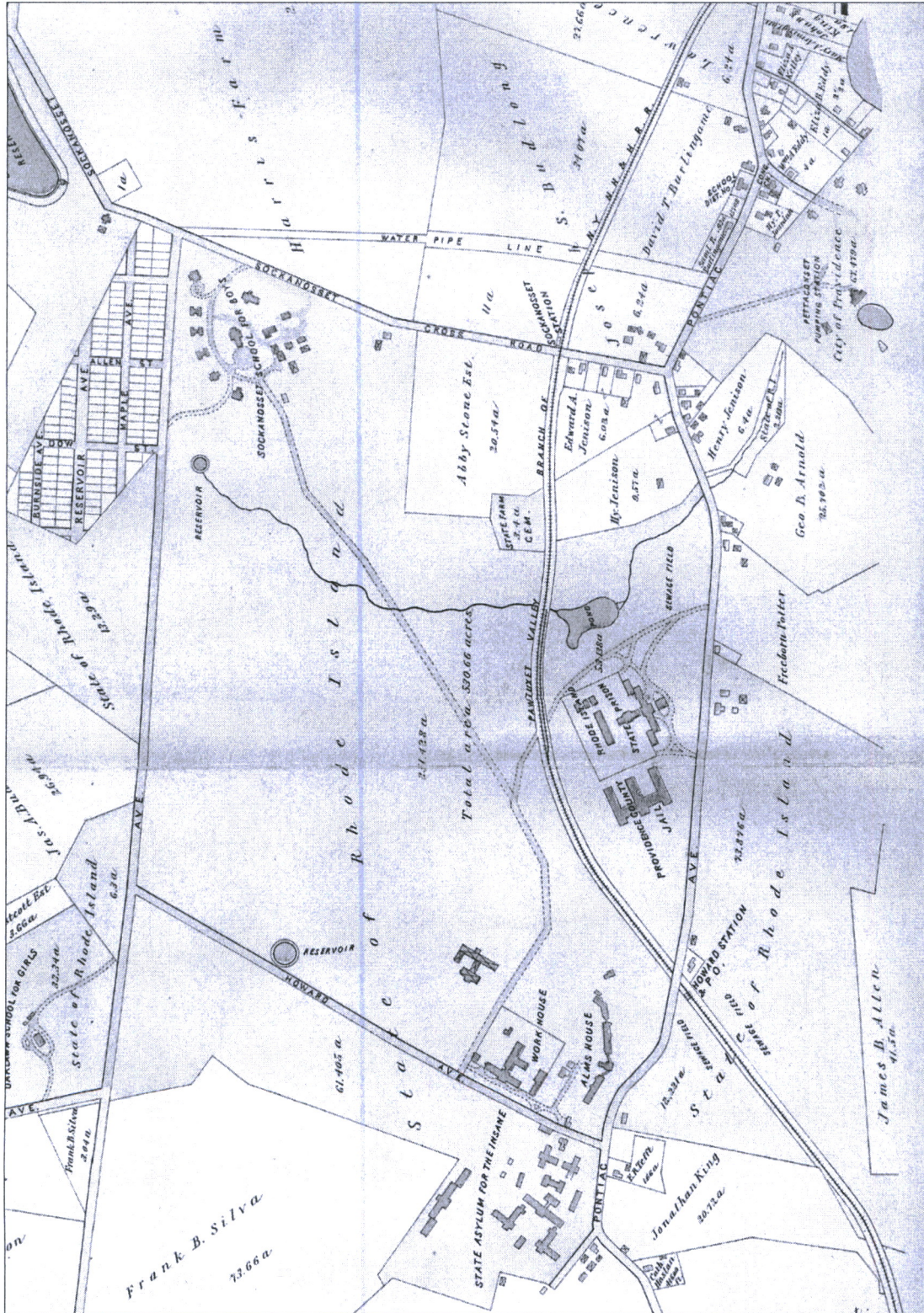


Figure 3. State Farm Cemetery and Abby Stone Estate (100 Sockanosset Cross Road) on the Everts and Richards (1895) map of Cranston.



Figure 4. 100 Sockanosset Cross Road and State Farm Cemetery on the 1939 aerial photography of Cranston, Rhode Island.

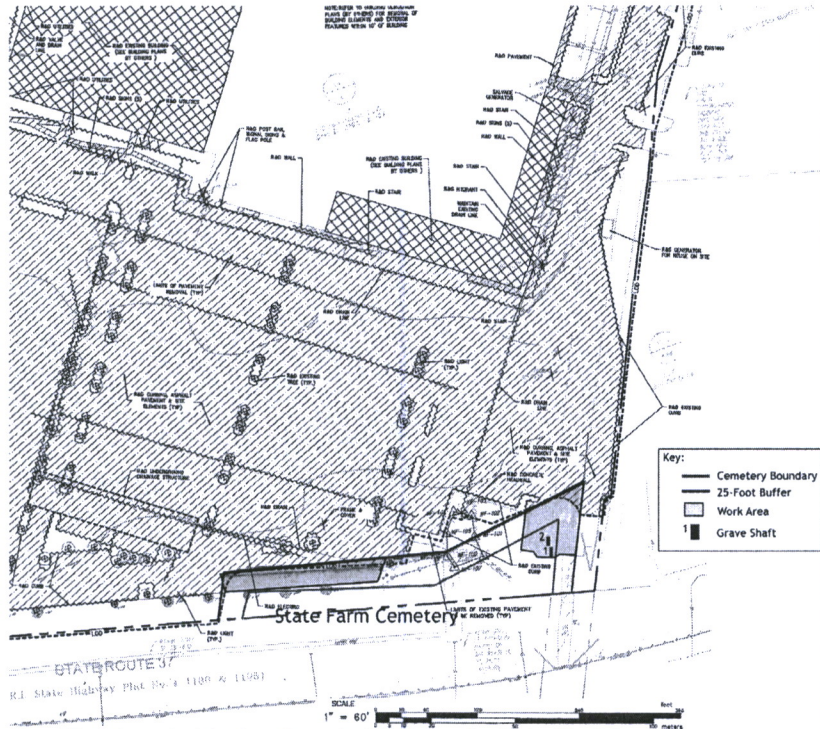


Figure 6. Detail of areas of asphalt and topsoil removal at 100 Sockanosset Cross Road and identified grave shafts.

GAROFALO
 GAROFALO & ASSOCIATES, INC.
 CIVIL & STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS/SURVEYORS
 LAND PLANNERS/ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTISTS

Garofalo & Associates, Inc.
 250 Main Street, Suite 200
 Providence, Rhode Island 02903
 Telephone: (401) 863-1234
 Fax: (401) 863-1235
 Website: www.garofalo.com

85 CONLERS STREET
 P.O. BOX 6148
 PROVIDENCE, RI 02906
 TEL: (401) 272-4400

JOB NO. 5471-05	DRAWN BY N.J.M.
DWG. NO. 5471-05-DEMO	CHECK BY S.S.H.
SCALE: AS SHOWN	APPROVED S.B.G.
	DATE: APRIL 11, 2019

C-2

3 OF 13 SHEETS



Figure 7. Asphalt and topsoil removal work in progress, view north.



Figure 8. PAL staff inspecting exposed ground surfaces during machine-assisted asphalt and topsoil removal at 100 Sockanosset Cross Road.



Figure 9. 100 Sockanosset Cross Road west trench, view east.

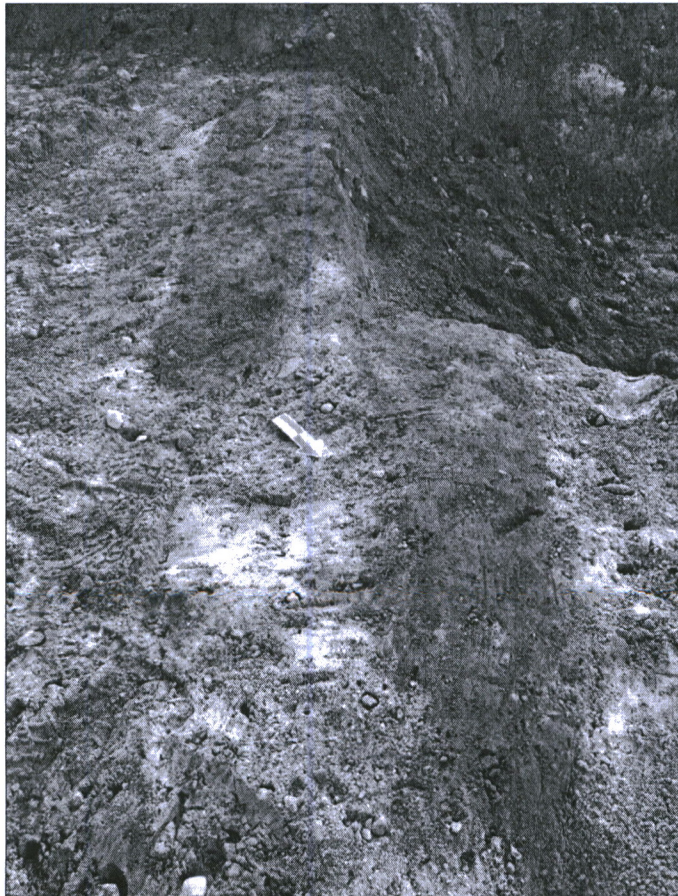


Figure 10. Grave shaft Features 1 and 2 exposed within the Sockanosset Cross Road eastern test area, view southwest.

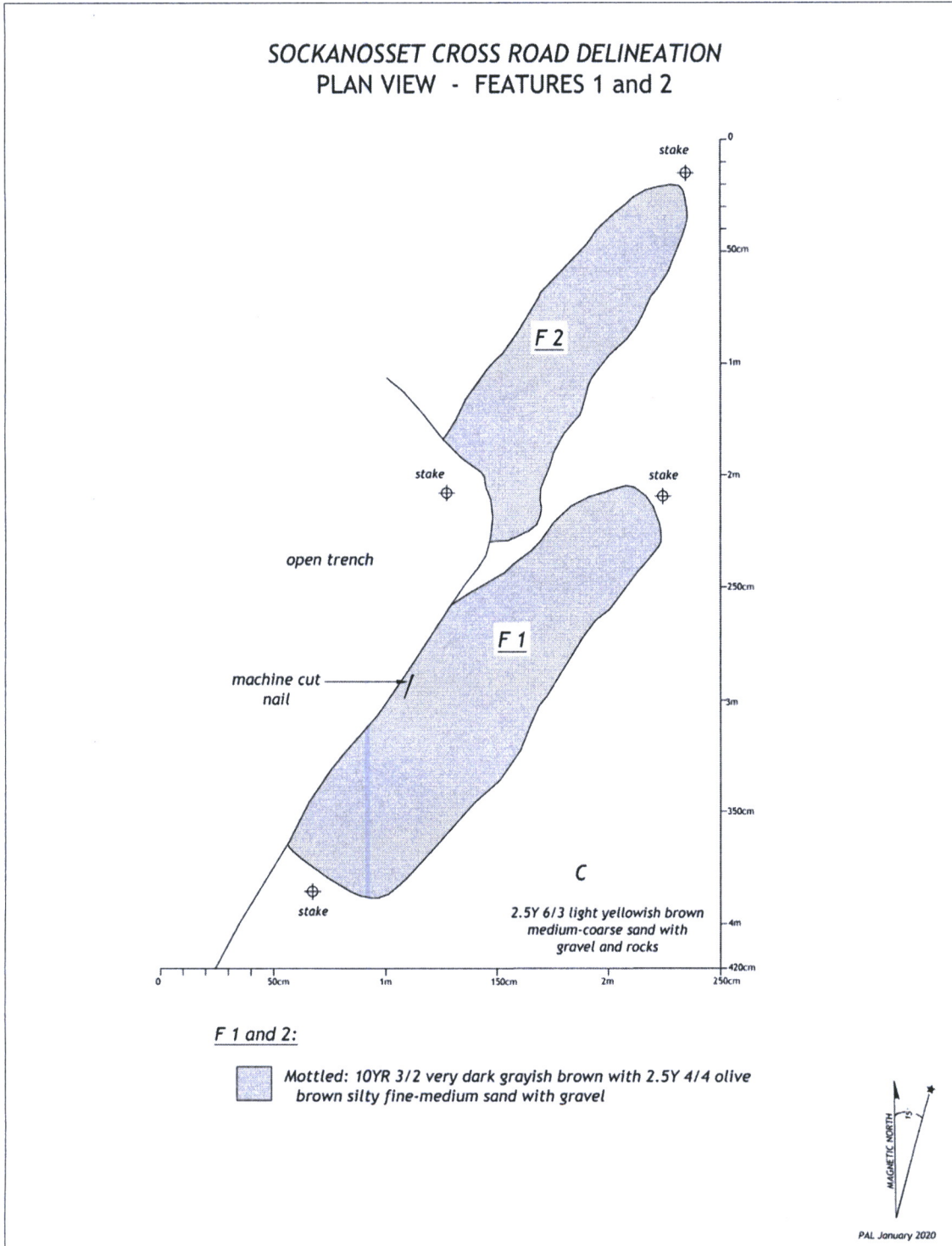


Figure 11. Plan of Grave shaft Features 1 and 2, 100 Sockanosset Cross Road.