

M52 Renovation at Naval Station Norfolk Project Documentation

Background:

Naval Station Norfolk is proposing to renovate Building M52 to accommodate a new command tenant requiring both warehousing and training spaces to meet their unique operational mission. The Navy has determined that the proposed renovation of M52 is an undertaking as defined in 36 CFR 800.16(y) and is a type of activity with the potential to cause effects to historic properties. This is a federally funded undertaking which would occur on land owned by the Navy.

Area of Potential Effects

In determining the Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the proposed undertaking, possible visual, atmospheric, and/or physical impacts were considered that could diminish any characteristics qualifying historic properties for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The APE is defined by the footprint of M52 as well as the spatial extents of ground disturbance associated with the undertaking, including resurfacing of pavement, relocation of lighting, and excavation of utility trenches. There are no anticipated impacts to viewshed or setting due to the nature of the scope of work (e.g. limited to renovation of an existing facility, underground utility work, and relocation of an existing light fixture to another location within a close distance to its current location). Therefore, no viewshed or noise buffer was included in the APE.



Figure 1. Area of Potential Effects

Steps Taken to Identify Historic Properties

The Navy reviewed previous surveys and reports encompassing the project area, consulted the Virginia Cultural Resources Information System database, and collected and reviewed historic maps, aerial photographs, newspaper articles, and agency construction records. In addition, the Navy evaluated the eligibility of M52, a storage building constructed in 1963, for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 2024, as part of a Phase I architectural survey conducted pursuant to Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The survey was conducted in accordance with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) Guidelines for Conducting Cultural Resources Survey in Virginia. The report is pending security review. However, the Navy's qualified consultant recommended the building ineligible for listing on the NRHP due to lack of integrity and low significance. The excerpted section of the draft report is enclosed for review. The full draft report will be provided upon approval to release. No above-ground historic properties are present within the APE.

The APE is located near the former shoreline as shown on historic maps and appears to have been farmland in the 19th century (see Figure 2). Included in the formal landscaping design for the Jamestown Exposition of 1907, the APE encompassed parts of what was known as Raleigh Square and the Lagoon feature to the south of the Grand Basin and north of the auditorium, which was in the current footprint of Building N26. Portions of the APE overlap with Powhatan Street and the northern edge of the lagoon fronting the auditorium. The area does not appear to have been substantially built upon during the exposition aside from the excavation of the lagoon feature. The lagoon was infilled by 1920, following Navy acquisition of the property in 1917. The lagoon appears partially silted in in an undated photograph taken following the close of the exposition (see Figure 12).

After the Navy acquired the property in 1917, the Navy utilized the area as a drill field and constructed an athletic field to the west of the APE (see Figure 14). During the Cold War era, a small complex of structures was constructed to support communications operations and included one primary building (M51) and three support structures. Building M51 was built on a concrete slab foundation in 1953. M52 was completed in 1963, also on a concrete slab foundation. M125 and M113 were constructed in 1967 and 1974, respectively. The surrounding lots were paved with asphalt and a few underground utility lines installed. No further development has taken place on the lot. M52 is currently vacant.

No archaeological sites have been identified, and no surveys have been undertaken within the boundaries of the APE. The APE falls within Study Section 4 of R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates' Archaeological Resource Assessment and Predictive Model (VDHR File No. 2003-0035)(Markell and Grandine 2002). The assessment included limited ground truthing in selected areas, some of which were located near the APE. Four shovel tests placed at 15-meter intervals were excavated to the north of the APE and indicated the presence of an intact A horizon beneath fill layers. Based on a review of several geotechnical coring records and these shovel tests, Markell and Grandine (2002) suggested that "natural soils are relatively undisturbed" beneath fill deposits of varying depths across Study Section 4. In addition, one test unit was excavated to the south and east of this undertaking's APE, and a possible post feature was identified along with 19th-century domestic and architectural artifacts within the disturbed stratum above it. Markell and Grandine (2002) did not assign a site designation to the feature and cultural materials encountered in the test unit. The location and description of these site components are consistent with the plowed context noted by another team of researchers at an identified 19th-century domestic site (44NR0036), just to the south of this test unit (SEARCH Inc. 2011).

Markell and Grandine's (2002:71) overlay of a ca. 1840 map suggests the APE encompasses the location of a farmstead. The report also includes an overlay of a ca. 1862 map identifying the approximate location of a Civil War rifle gun battery directly east of the APE. Both the ca. 1840 map and the ca. 1862 map were drawn with low specificity, and the projected locations of depicted landscape features are likely to be imprecise. The documented 19th-century domestic site in the vicinity of the APE (44NR0036), was in the former parade field to the south. Shovel testing at 30-meter intervals in this area resulted in the

identification of a sparse scatter of 19th-century domestic refuse within plowed context (SEARCH Inc. 2011). Typical stratigraphic profiles recorded an approximately 20 cm thick plow zone overtopping a developed E horizon over subsoil. While researchers concluded that the site lacked research potential due to previous disturbance by plowing and use as a parade field, this typical profile raises the possibility of encountering intact subsurface features beneath plow zone in the former drill field to the north which sits in this undertaking's APE.

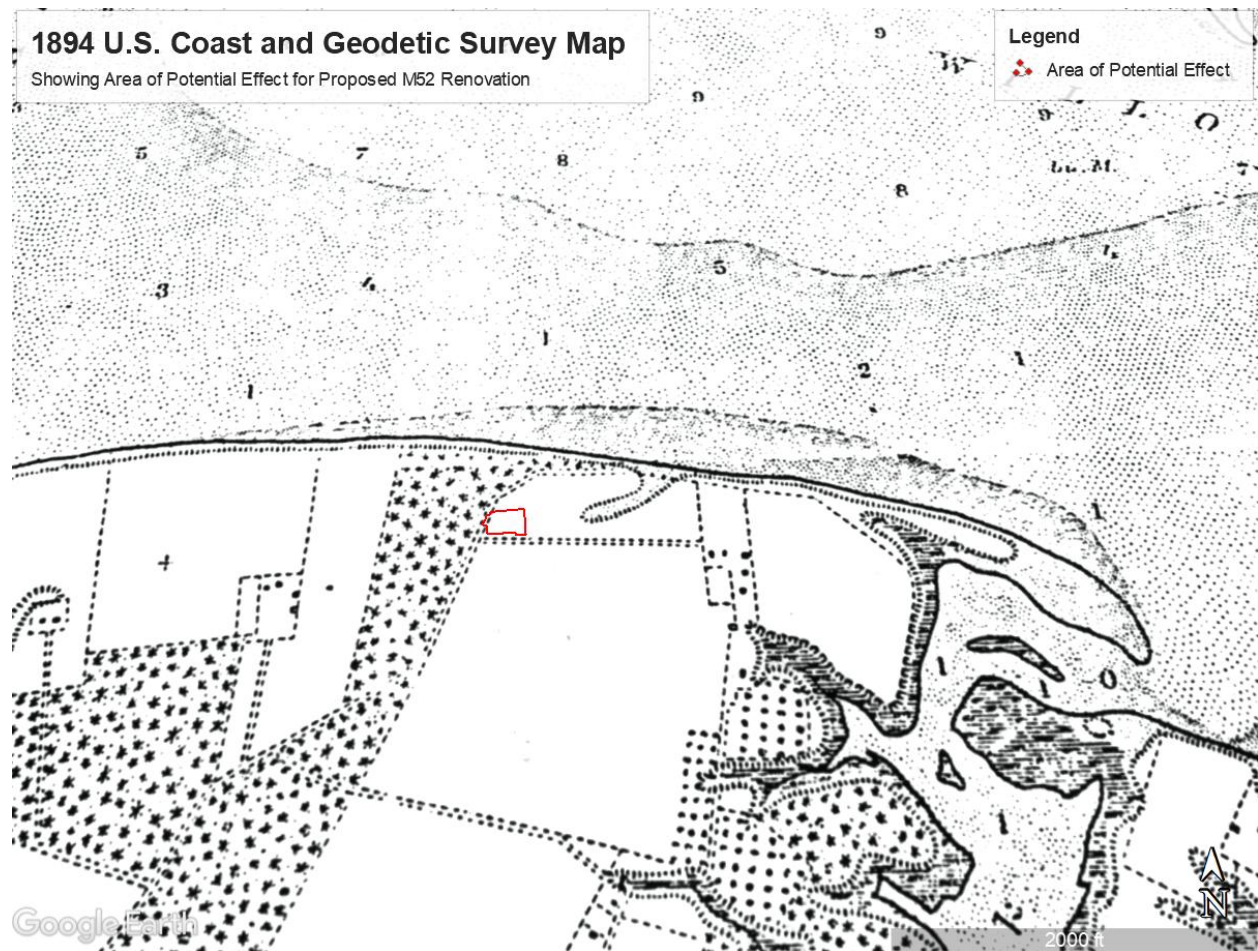


Figure 2. 1894 U.S. Coast and Geodetic Map Showing APE

An article in the *Virginian-Pilot* dated 2 August 1922 reports the disturbance of human remains of Indigenous origin during excavation of a steam trench in the Naval Training Station area of what is now Naval Station Norfolk, and describes a previous disturbance of additional burials during excavations for an artificial lake for the Jamestown Exposition of 1907. The article also notes that the six burials discovered in the steam trench occurred near the Powhatan Oak tree and the station's receiving ship and on the rim of the artificial lake. Presumed locations of each landmark is shown in Figure 11 and places the approximate location of the burials near the center of the installation along the historic shoreline (vicinity of Building N26). The report of bodies disturbed by the excavation of the artificial lake, presumably the lagoon feature to the north of the auditorium, suggests there is elevated potential to encounter human remains within this undertaking's APE, which sits on the northern boundary of the former lagoon feature.



Figure 3. 1906 U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Map Showing APE



Figure 4. Undated Photograph Showing Domestic Structure in Likely Vicinity of Current N26 and 44NR0036. Demolished prior to Jamestown Exposition in 1907 (Source: The Official Bluebook of the Jamestown Ter-Centennial Exposition (1909:77))

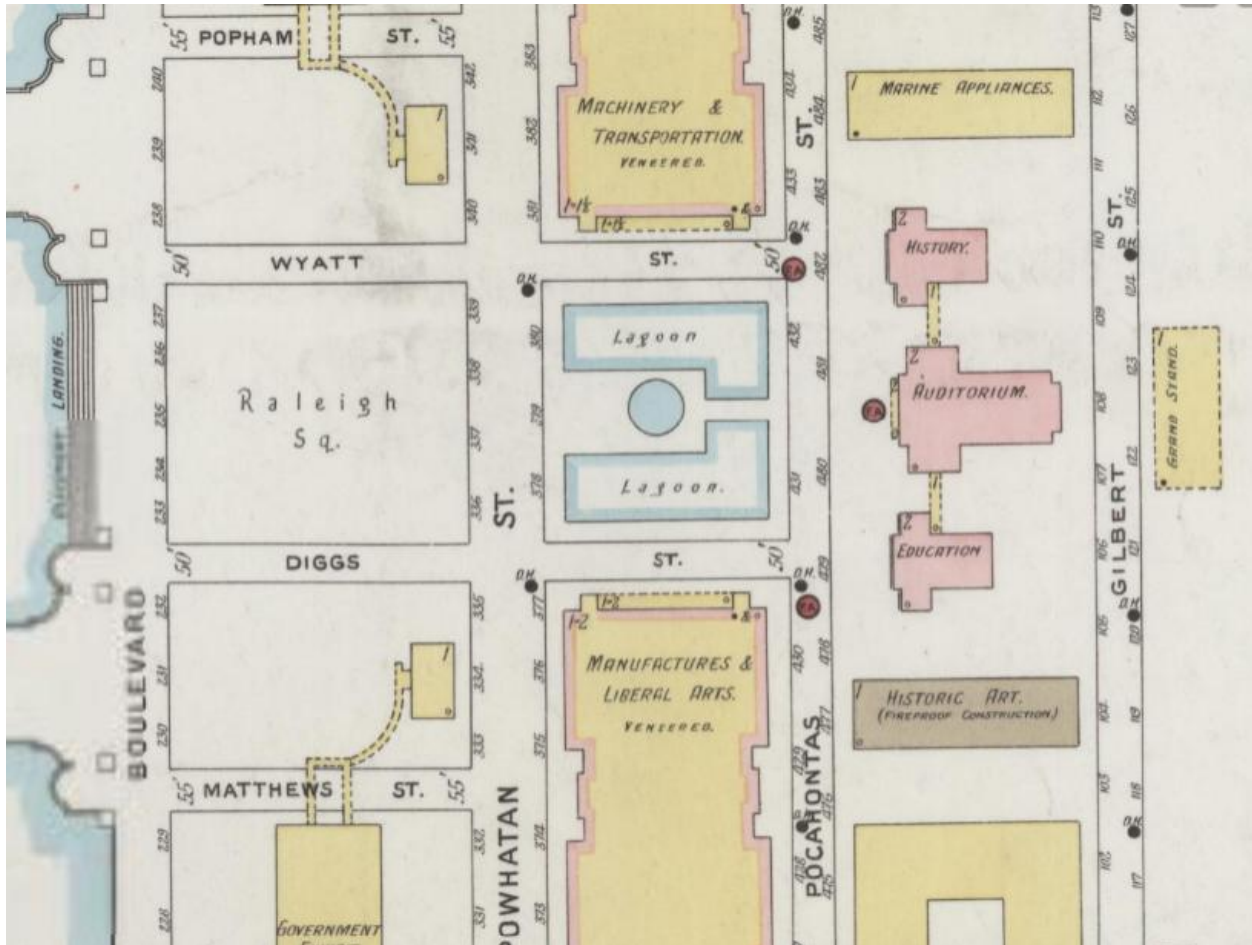


Figure 5. 1907 Sanborn Map Showing Project Area (Source: Library of Congress online archives)

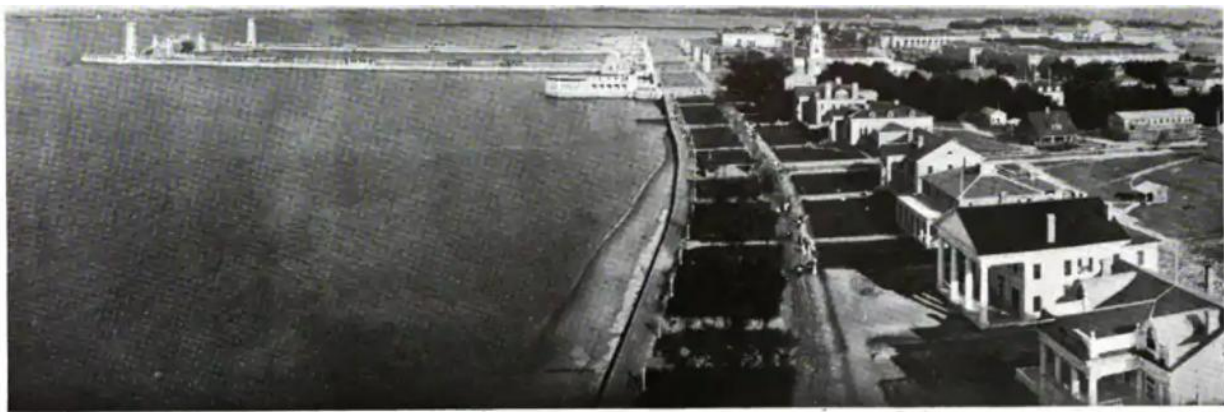


Figure 6. Ca. 1907 Photograph Showing Project Area (Source: The Official Bluebook of the Jamestown Ter-Centennial Exposition (1909:24))

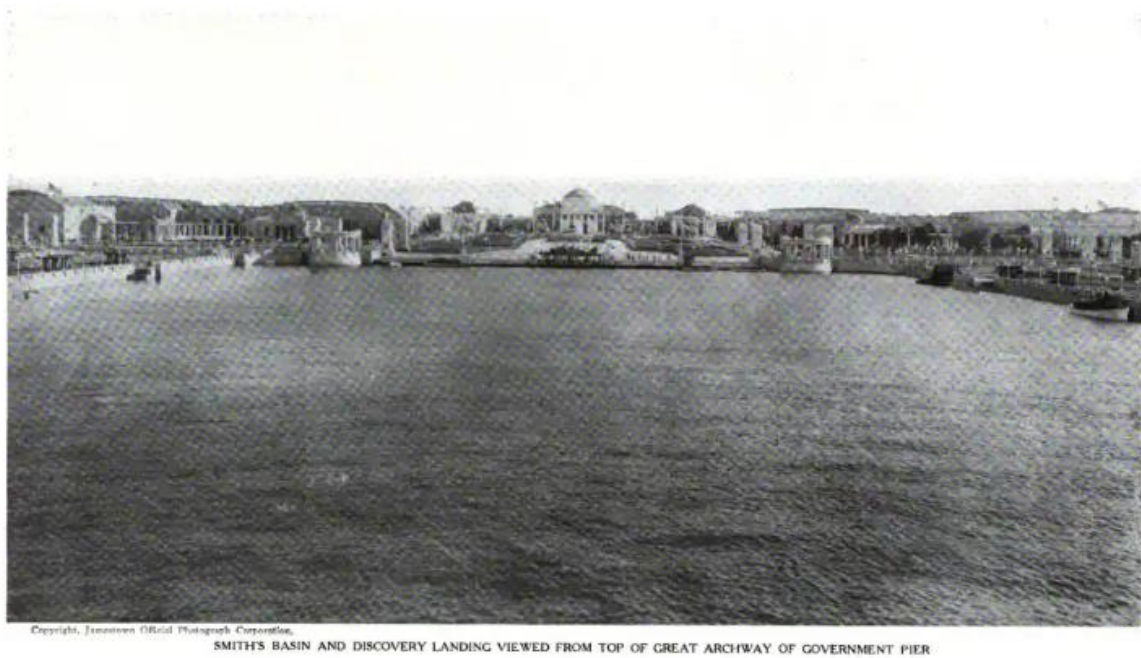


Figure 7. Ca. 1907 Photograph Showing Project Area (Source: The Official Bluebook of the Jamestown Ter-Centennial Exposition (1909:34))



Figure 8. Ca. 1907 Photograph Showing Lagoon (Source: The Official Bluebook of the Jamestown Ter-Centennial Exposition (1909:88))

Remains of Six Bodies Unearthed at Naval Base

Workmen Excavating For Pipe Line Make Gruesome Find

Remains of six human bodies were uncovered yesterday at the Naval Training Station near the receiving ship, by men who were excavating for a steam pipe line. Trees had been growing over the bodies, and naval doctors who examined the bones expressed the opinion they had been buried for a hundred years.

The bodies were uncovered a short distance from the historic Powhatan Oak, which is said to be 300 years old and beneath which legend has it Indian ceremonies were held and Indian schemes were hatched. Examination of the bodies uncovered there yesterday showed that at least one of them was an Indian. Another body was that of a woman, but the other four were so far advanced in disintegration that they did not lend themselves easily to scientific investigation.

There was nothing to mark the spot at which the bodies were found as a grave. No arrowheads were found among the bones, and no pieces of metal, which might have indicated that the men were Indian warriors laid there to await transition to the Happy Hunting Grounds, or white soldiers who had died on the field of battle and had been given an honored grave.

The bodies are going to be placed separately in proper receptacles and reburied near the spot where they

were unearthed, according to Capt. R. Z. Johnston, commandant of the Naval Training Station. Admiral Hugh Rodman, commandant of the Fifth Naval District, went to view the strange sight yesterday, and gave orders that the bodies be reinterred as closely as possible to the grave in which the bodies have lain for nearly a century, if not longer.

The naval authorities will replace the bodies there because they feel there might be some history attached to them, and they do not want to disturb the historic spot, if such it is.

When excavations were being made for the artificial lake at the Jamestown Exposition grounds, which are now the Naval Base, a number of bodies were unearthed. The spot at which the bodies were found yesterday is only a short distance from this lake, practically on its rim.

Speculation arose yesterday over the finding of the remains, and the possibility they might indicate some great burying ground in that vicinity, where the Indians, perhaps, brought their dead, or where the early settlers of Virginia plotted off the sacred enclosure in which to lay their departed members.

Naval authorities are going back into history of early Virginia in an effort to ascertain if the finding of these bodies can indicate anything of particular historic significance.

Figure 9. Excerpted News Article from the Virginian-Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, Volume 89, Number 33, 2 August 1922

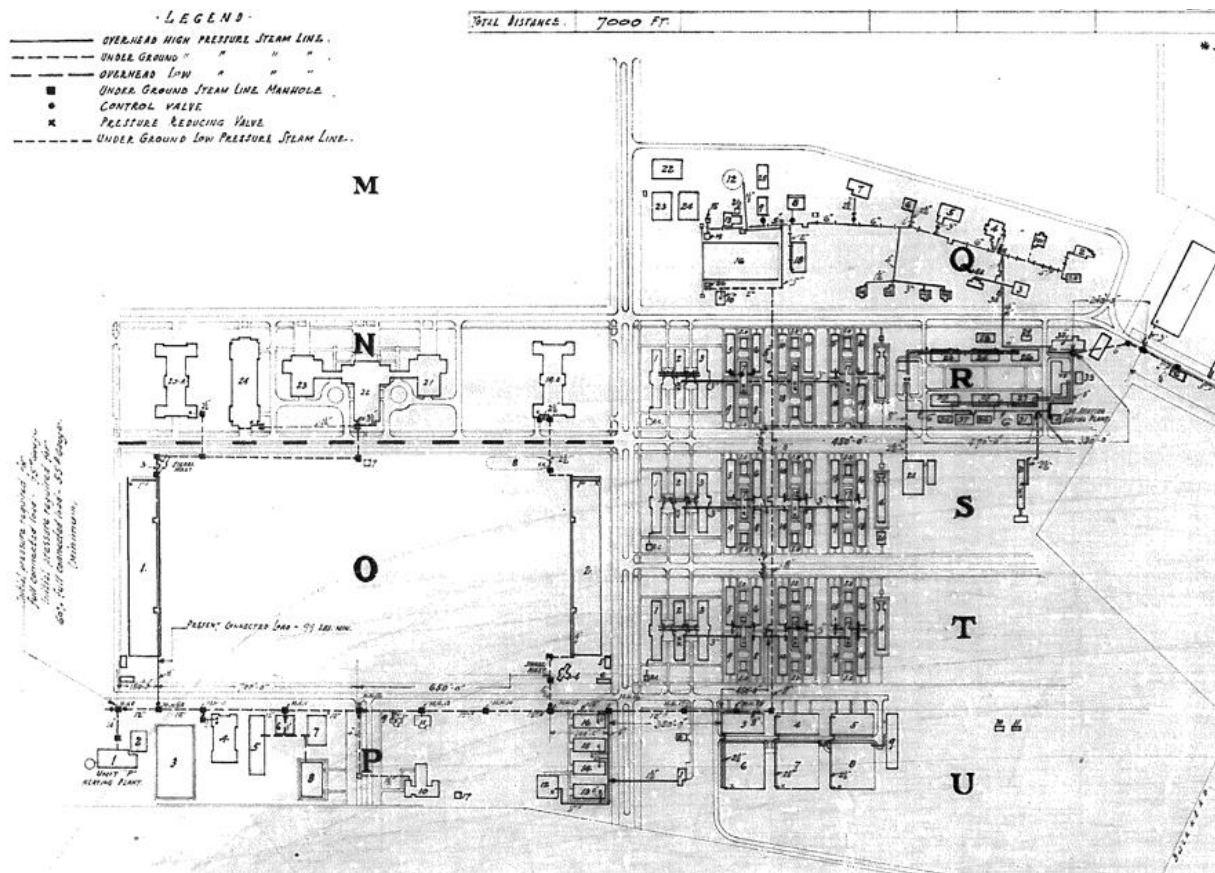


Figure 10. Excerpt of 1927 Steam Distribution Map Showing M Block (No Steam Lines)

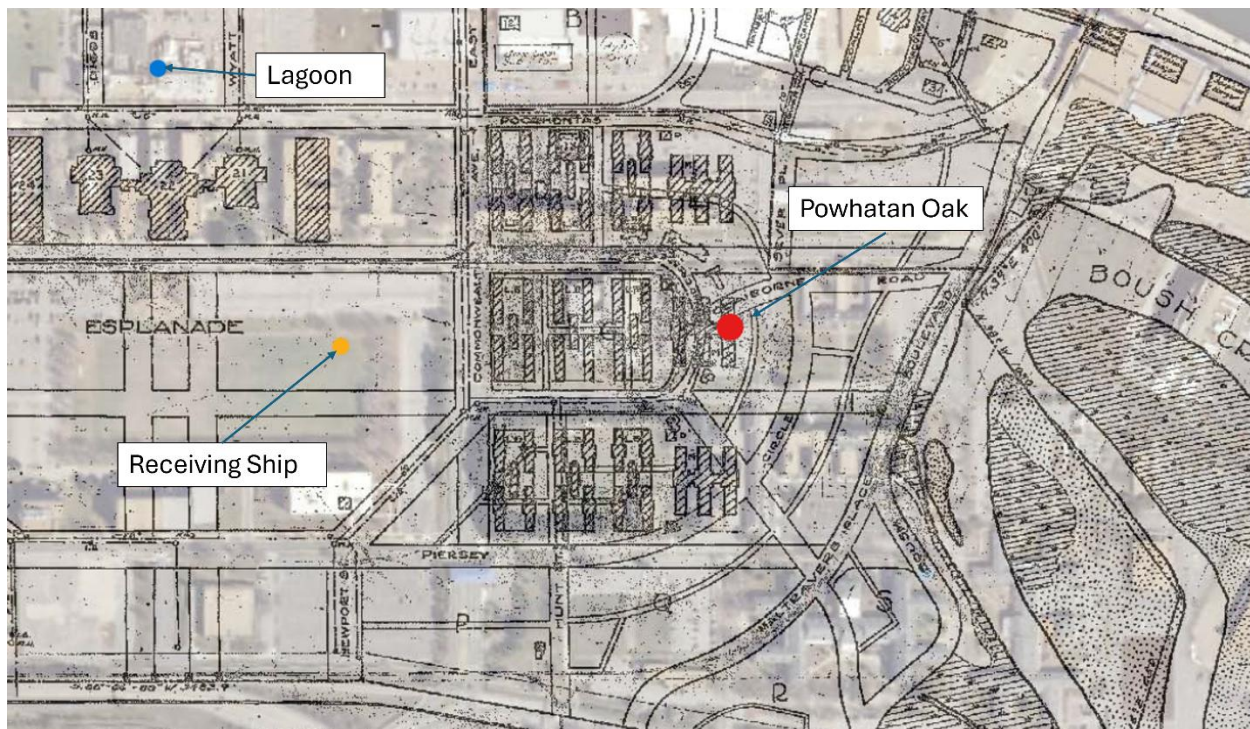


Figure 11. Approximate Locations of Landmarks Referenced in 1922 News Article



Auditorium and Annexes. (Educational Buildings and Fire Proof History Building, erected by the Exposition Company at a cost of \$300,000.)

Figure 12. Undated Photograph Showing Lagoon Silting in Following Close of Exposition

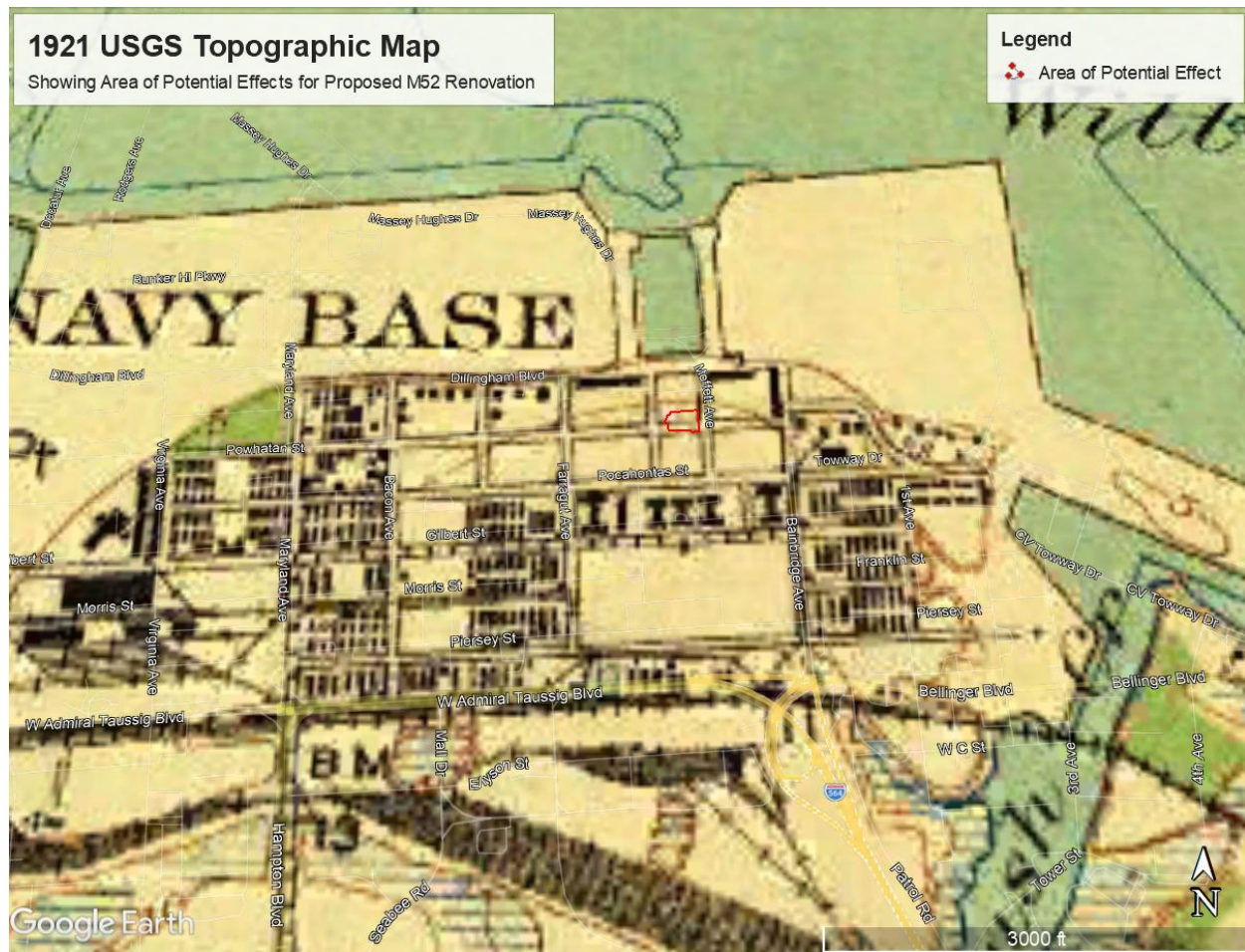


Figure 13. 1921 USGS Topographic Map Showing APE

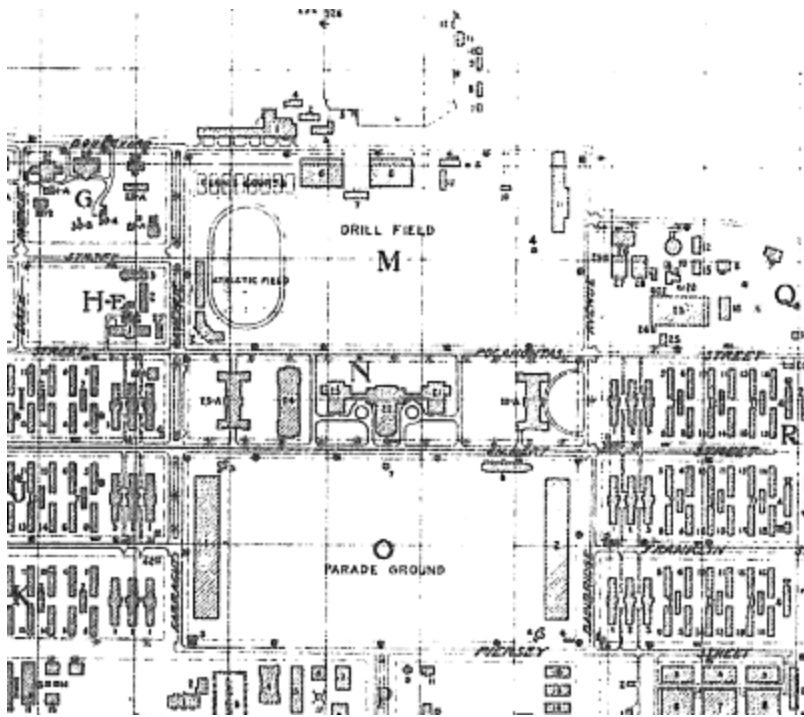


Figure 14. 1920 Development Map Showing project area is Drill Field

Description of Historic Properties Affected

The Navy is proposing consultation to determine the scope of identification efforts and regarding the location, boundaries, and National Register of Historic Places eligibility of any archaeological resources within the APE. Identification efforts such as ground penetrating radar testing and archaeological monitoring would likely be funded by the project and therefore the nature of effects on historic properties cannot be known prior to approval of the undertaking. The Navy proposes to continue consultation to develop and implement a Programmatic Agreement pursuant to 36 CFR 800.14(b)(ii). Previous shovel testing and test unit excavation in the vicinity of the APE, including the documentation of a buried A horizon to the north and developed E horizon beneath plow zone to the south (with identified subsurface features) in an area of similar land use history suggests there may be potential for intact deposits (particularly deeply buried features) beneath the asphalt and concrete slab foundation of the M52 building and parking area, possibly buried under indeterminate or variable amounts of fill. Because the nature and extent of ground disturbance associated with the undertaking is limited to utility line excavation and relocation of a light pole, the Navy is proposing to undertake Ground Penetrating Radar survey to identify the presence of any intact burial features, followed by archaeological monitoring during ground disturbing activities.

Description of the Undertaking

The undertaking will adapt warehouse space to include administrative functions required of its new tenant. The Navy proposes to partition and finish administrative and office spaces within the currently open footprint of M52, as well as create electrical and mechanical rooms. Trenching will take place beneath the slab foundation of the existing building to connect new utilities to existing infrastructure. Some new utility connections are required and are shown on the enclosed plans.

Nature of the Effects on Historic Properties

To be determined. No above-ground historic properties will be affected by the proposed undertaking.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures Considered

To date, the Navy has considered two measures to avoid potential impacts to historic properties within the APE: 1) relocation of the new tenant to another vacant or underutilized facility; and 2) housing the command functions within a trailer purchased and positioned at an alternate site. Neither of these approaches were determined feasible. This tenant requires warehouse space to support their operations, and there are no other vacant warehouse spaces on the installation aside from M52. X137 is an underutilized facility and was considered but is currently partially occupied by other tenants. The vacant spaces within X137 cannot be feasibly utilized by the requesting command because they have a need to expand into the full footprint of a building that operates at increased security posture due to the nature of their mission. They cannot operate alongside other tenants. According to installation planners, M52 is the only vacant space with a warehouse function where the rest of the command's administrative and academic instruction could be accommodated within the same facility. There is no other vacant facility that can meet this tenant's requirements. The Navy considered purchasing and siting trailers to accommodate the command's requirements at an alternate site in the P area near some other existing trailers. However, this option was considered cost prohibitive for a temporary solution and the available area for trailer siting is currently utilized by another command. That command utilizes the area for vehicle operator training and requires open space for that purpose.

References

Keiley, Charles, ed. The Official Blue Book of the Jamestown Ter-Centennial Exposition, A.D. 1907. Norfolk, VA: The Colonial Publishing Co., Inc., 1909.

Markell, Ann and Katherine Grandine. Archaeological Resource Assessment and Predictive Model, Norfolk Naval Base, Norfolk, Virginia. Report prepared by R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, Inc. 2002.

Phase I Archaeological Investigation of Approximately 190 Acres at Naval Station Norfolk, Norfolk, Virginia. Report prepared by Southeastern Archaeological Research, Inc., February 2011.