

**Nealley-Gile Burial Ground Archaeological Trenching Results
Gile Road Residential Development Project
Nottingham (Rockingham County), New Hampshire
IAC Report #1508**

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In the fall of 2020, property owner Mr. Joseph Falzone contacted Independent Archaeological Consulting, LLC (IAC) to locate the unmarked eighteenth-century Nealley-Giles Burial Ground on a 61-acre parcel of land along Gile Road in Nottingham (Rockingham County), New Hampshire (Figure 1). Mr. Falzone proposes to subdivide the Gile Road parcel into seven residential house lots, and prior to conducting the site work, he contracted Monadnock Archaeological Consulting, LLC to complete a Phase IA archeological sensitivity assessment of the project area (Figure 2).

Monadnock Archaeologist Matthew Labbe's background research for the Gile Road subdivision project revealed the 61-acre parcel encompasses the eighteenth-century farmstead of the Nealley and Giles families (Labbe, 2019). The farmstead consisted of a sprawling farmhouse and a large freestanding barn, additional historic features included a small fieldstone marked burial ground where members of the Nealley and Giles family were buried. Genealogical research and a review of twentieth-century deeds showed the farm was sold out of the family by a Giles descendent in the 1970s and according to oral history, prior to the sale, the house and barn were razed and the burial ground was "bulldozed" (Labbe, 2019).

Mr. Falzone contracted IAC to locate the Nealley-Gile family burial plot to ensure it would not be inadvertently disturbed during proposed construction. Principal Investigator Jessica Cofelice, MA, RPA completed a walkover survey of the property, followed mechanical trenching. Severino Trucking, Inc. complete the trenching under the supervision of Ms. Cofelice on two separate occasions: November 12th and December 3rd, 2020. For the initial November 12th effort, Severino excavated two trenches (Trenches 1 and 2) in the highest probability location and one trench (Trench 3) where IAC observed push piles of displaced soil (Figure 3; Table 1). After failing to identify any evidence of funerary features in Trenches 1 and 2, Severino and IAC returned on December 3rd to excavate an additional 10 trenches in the following locations:

- Within the footprint of the proposed driveways to the proposed houses on Lots 1 and 2
- Within the footprint of the proposed Lot 1 septic and leach field
- Within the probable location of the Lot 1 house (which occupies a raised, level landform with broad sweeping view of the surrounding fields)
- On level landforms within 150 m (497 feet) of the former Nealley-Giles farmhouse

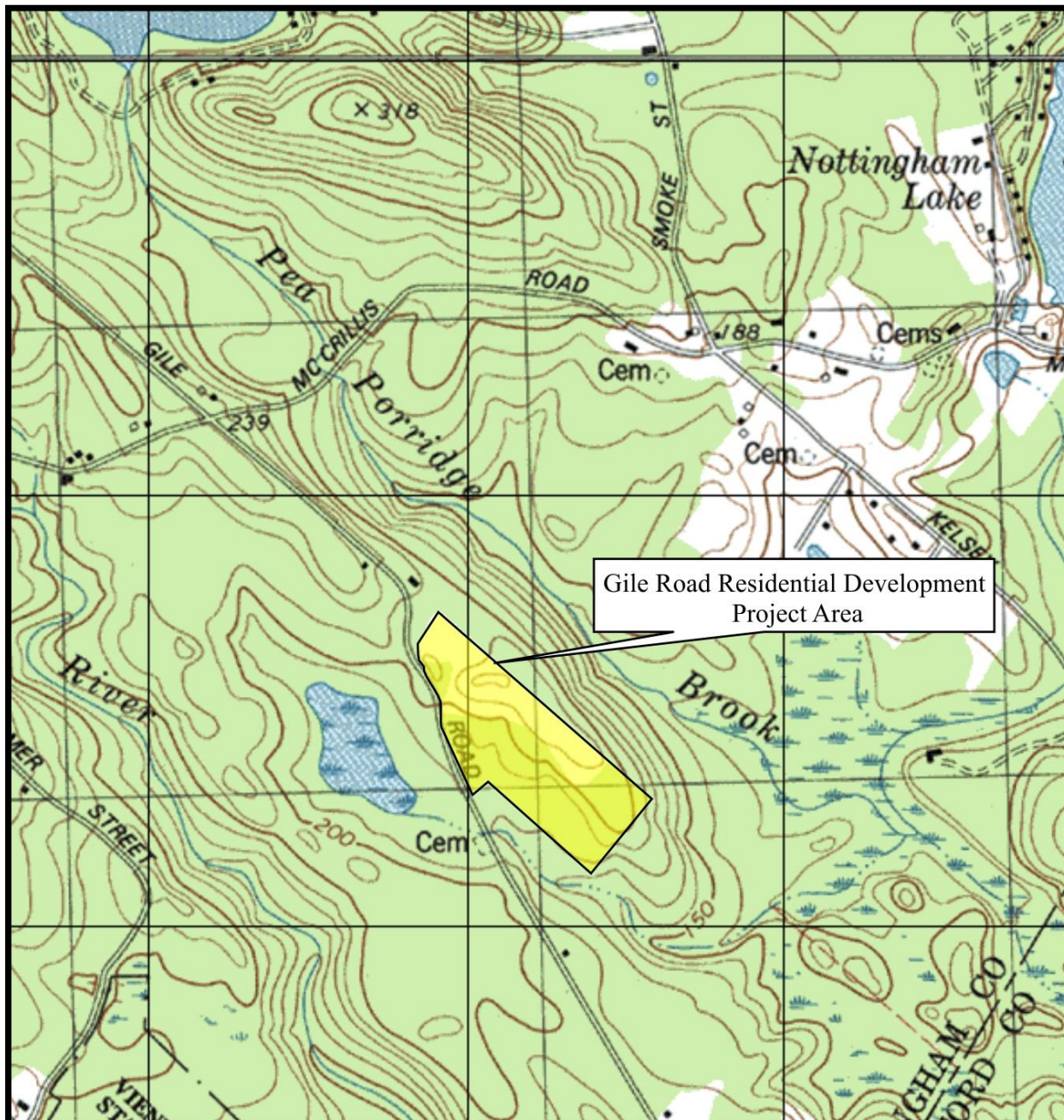
In total, Severino mechanically excavated an area encompassing 879 m² (9,461.5 ft²). Upon completion of the trench work, IAC found no evidence of the burial ground. Based on the results of the survey, IAC hypothesizes the following:

- The burial ground is located elsewhere on the 61-acre property
- Bulldozing in the 1970s eradicated any evidence of the burial ground and may have resulted in the disinterment or removal of burials from the property

Given the lack of definitive evidence, IAC recommends the client work closely with NHDHR to establish a protocol satisfactory to both parties that ensures the proposed impacts do not affect unmarked human burials. Prior to the commencement of construction, IAC recommends the client appoint a “Competent Person” who will serve as the cultural liaison between the client, contractor, the Principal Investigator and NHDHR. Ideally, this person will be on site daily and present during all ground disturbing activity. IAC proposes to use a PowerPoint presentation to train the Competent Person and key members of the construction team (e.g. equipment operators and laborers) on how to identify funerary features such as grave shafts. A key role of the Competent Person will be to initiate the notification process in the event of an unanticipated discovery.

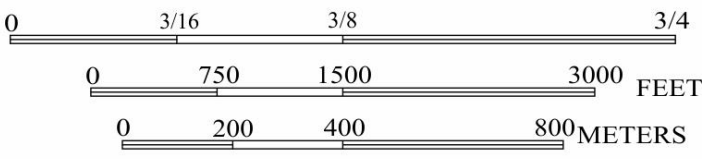
In addition, IAC will provide the client with an “unanticipated discoveries plan” (UDP) for the Gile Road project to ensure the proposed impacts do not affect unmarked human burials. The UDP is designed to meet state and federal regulations governing the discovery of archaeological resources and human remains. Applicable state and federal regulations include Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHAP) (16 U.S.C 470 et seq.), the Archaeological Resource Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.) and New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated (RSA) 227-C:8 a-I, RSAs 289-290 and RSA 635.

An *Unanticipated Discovery* is defined as a previously unknown or unrecorded archaeological resource discovered while completing any ground disturbance, which includes work performed as part of pre-construction preparations, construction and post-construction activity (such as landscape restoration). The objective of the proposed UDP plan is to promote avoidance and minimize the impact to any potential archaeological resources through the preservation and/or archaeological recordation of archaeological resources. The UDP plan will outline the steps the contractor is required to follow in the event an unanticipated discovery is made within the Gile Road project area, and includes a contact list of key personnel who will require notification in the event an unanticipated discovery is made.



Gile Road Residential Development Project Area

Gile Road Residential Development Project Area Plotted on
 Portion of Epping 7.5' USGS Quadrangle 1995
 INDEPENDENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTING, LLC



Scale 1:24,000 Contour Interval 10 Feet

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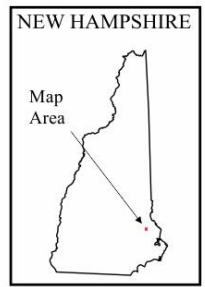
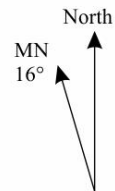


Figure 1. Gile Road Residential Development location plotted on USGS map of Nottingham, New Hampshire (after USGS 1995).

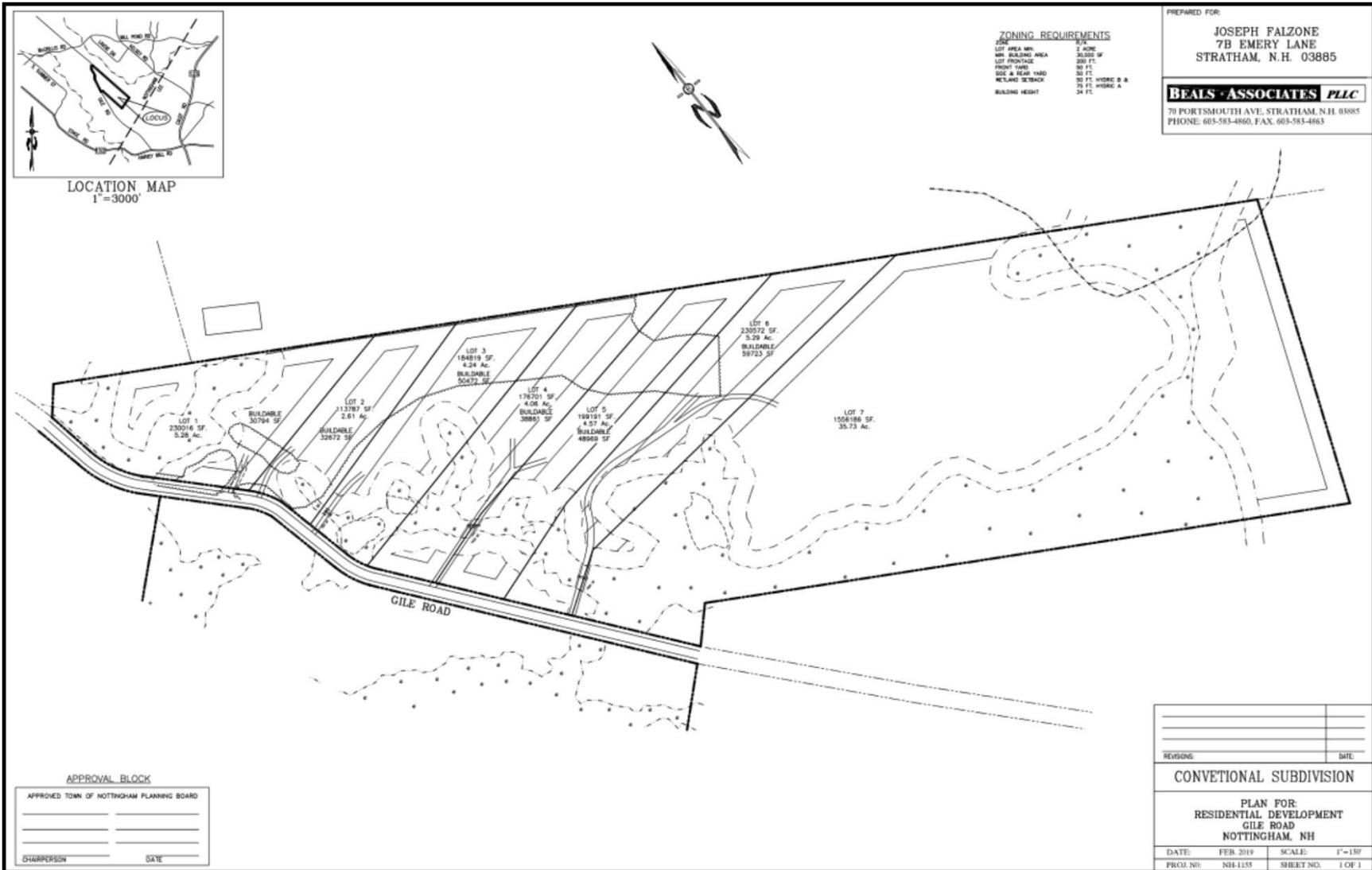


Figure 2. Subdivision Plan for the Gile Road Residential Development Project.

Summary of Background Research

The proposed 61-acre Gile Road Residential Subdivision project area encompasses the eighteenth-century farmstead of the Nealley and Gile families. Both the Nealley and Giles families settled along Gile Road during the mid-eighteenth century and their family histories are intertwined. John Gile (b. 1740) is reputed to be the first Euroamerican settler along the road later named for his family. Gile married Mary Nealley, daughter of William Nealley, and the couple established a farmstead in 1763. The farmstead still stands at 152 Gile Road and consists of a stately farmhouse, outbuildings and a small family burial ground (Plate 1). John and Mary Giles had ten children, including a daughter named Abigail, who married Andrew Nealley (Cogswell 1878; 204-205). Andrew Nealley (1755-1833) was the grandson of William Nealley and is likely the first occupant of the Falzone property.



Plate 1. The circa 1763 John Gile House located at 152 Gile Road in Nottingham.

After Andrew Nealley served in the Revolutionary War, he married Abigail Gile and likely either purchased land adjacent to the Gile land or was deeded property as part of his wife's dower. The exact location of his homestead is unknown, however, IAC speculates the extant cellarhole marks the location of the Nealley house (Plates 2 and 3). A review of US Federal Census data shows that by 1790, the Nealley household consisted of eight individuals, including three white males under the age of sixteen (presumably male children) and four free females (Mrs Abigail. Nealley and three daughters), suggesting the Nealley's had at least six children. Andrew and Abigail Nealley lived out the duration of their lives on the Gile Road property and were presumably buried within the family plot.



Plate 2. The Nealley-Gile cellarhole, view south.



Plate 3. The Nealley-Gile barn foundation, view west.

According to the documents provided to Monadnock Archaeologist Matthew Labbe by the Nottingham Historical Society, the Nealley burial ground contained approximately 12 to 15 fieldstone marked graves, with an inscription on only one of the stones, which read “Robert Nealley – July 1790, the son of Andrew Nealley” (personal communication between Matthew Labbe and Leanne Gast, February 21, 2021). The identity of the remaining individuals remains undetermined.

The burial ground is not illustrated on the Chace (1857) or Hurd (1892) maps of Nottingham, and the only known documents describing the location of the burial ground dates to 1957, when local historian Ed Foss drafted a plan showing known historic resources along Gile Road. The map shows house (labeled as the “Mildred Jones Place”) and the “Gile-Nealley Cem” which is described as being “150 yd ENE of house.” A review of the Nealley-Gile genealogy suggests a familial connection between the Gile and Jones families. It is reputed that after Mildred Jones death in 1964, her descendants sold the property and the house, barn and burial ground were bulldozed (Labbe, 2019).

Methodology and Results

Based on the description provided by Ed Foss in 1957, Monadnock identified the probable location of the burial ground to be along the eastern edge of the historic alignment of Gile Road (a review of USGS quad maps show the road was realigned during the early twentieth-century). The “high probability” area is situated along the periphery of a broad undulating agricultural field and is bound to the west by a fieldstone retaining wall and a row of mature Maple trees which separates the historic Gile Road alignment from the field (Figure 3; Plate 4). The spot is level, slightly raised and visible from the farmhouse cellarhole.

To confirm the presence or absence of graves in the “high probability” location, Severino mechanically excavated two trenches (Trenches 1 and 2) (Figure 3; Table 1;). The initial trenching occurred on November 12, 2020 under the direction of Principal Investigator Jessica Cofelice. Archaeological Technician Crystina Friese assisted Ms. Cofelice throughout the duration of the trenching effort. IAC photographed the trenching efforts and utilized Trimble’s® handheld Juno data collector and Pro 6H GPS receiver to map in all trench locations.

Severino used a Kubota KX080-4 excavator equipped with a four-foot wide grading bucket to mechanically scrape the area to an average depth of 40 cm (16 inches) (Plate 5). When the crew observed potential soil anomalies (such as plow scars), excavations halted and archaeologists hand shovel skimmed to define and confirm the nature of the anomaly (Plate 6). Excavations within Trenches 1 and 2 (and all subsequent trenches) revealed a fairly uniform stratigraphic profile consisting of an agricultural plowzone overlying a truncated B Horizon which terminated at an average depth of 30 cm (12 inches) below ground surface (Plate 7).

Prior to departing on November 12th, Severino excavated Trench 3 along the southern edge of the field, near the tree line where IAC observed several push piles of soil in an attempt to determine if fieldstone headstones or any other evidence of funerary items could be identified within the displaced soil.

Table 1. List of mechanically excavated trenches.

Trench #	Length (m)	Width (m)	Length (ft)	Width (ft)	Square Meters
1	48	2.5	157	8.2	120 m ²
2	12	11.5	39.3	37.7	138 m ²
3	7.3	6.6	24	21.6	48.1 m ²
4	3.75	4.8	12.3	15.7	18 m ²
5	4.3	3.57	14.1	11.7	15.4 m ²
6	68	2.5	223	8.2	170 m ²
7	2.9	22.7	9.5	74.5	65.8 m ²
8	7	2.5	23	8.2	17.5 m ²
9	25	2.5	82	8.2	62.5 m ²
10	22.5	2.5	73.8	8.2	56.25 m ²
11	2.5	13	8.2	42.6	32.5 m ²
12	2.5	43	8.2	141	107.5 m ²
13	5.5	5	18	16.4	27.5 m ²
				Total	879 m²

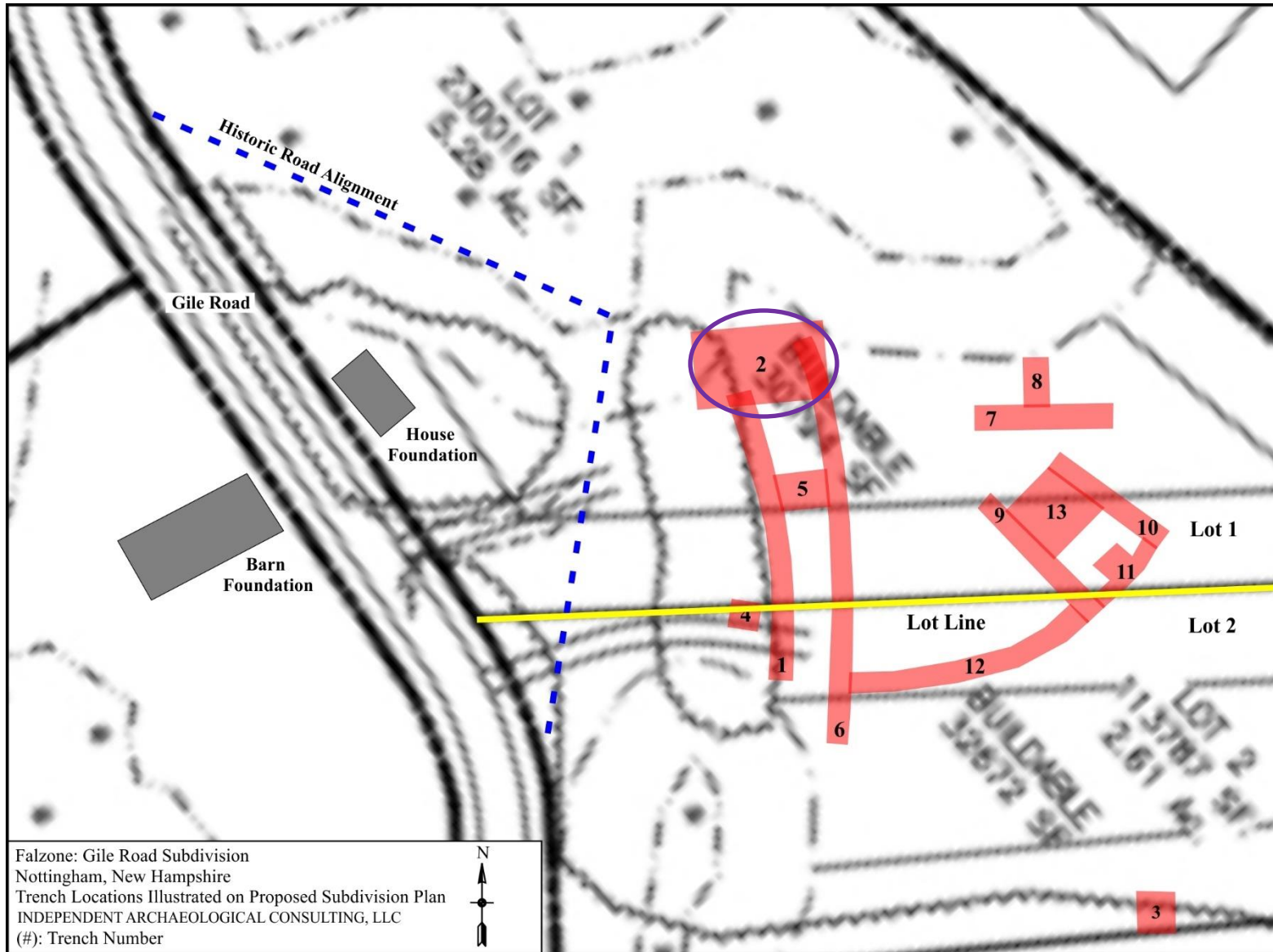


Figure 3. Location of mechanically excavated trenches illustrated on proposed subdivision plan (“high probability” area circled in purple).

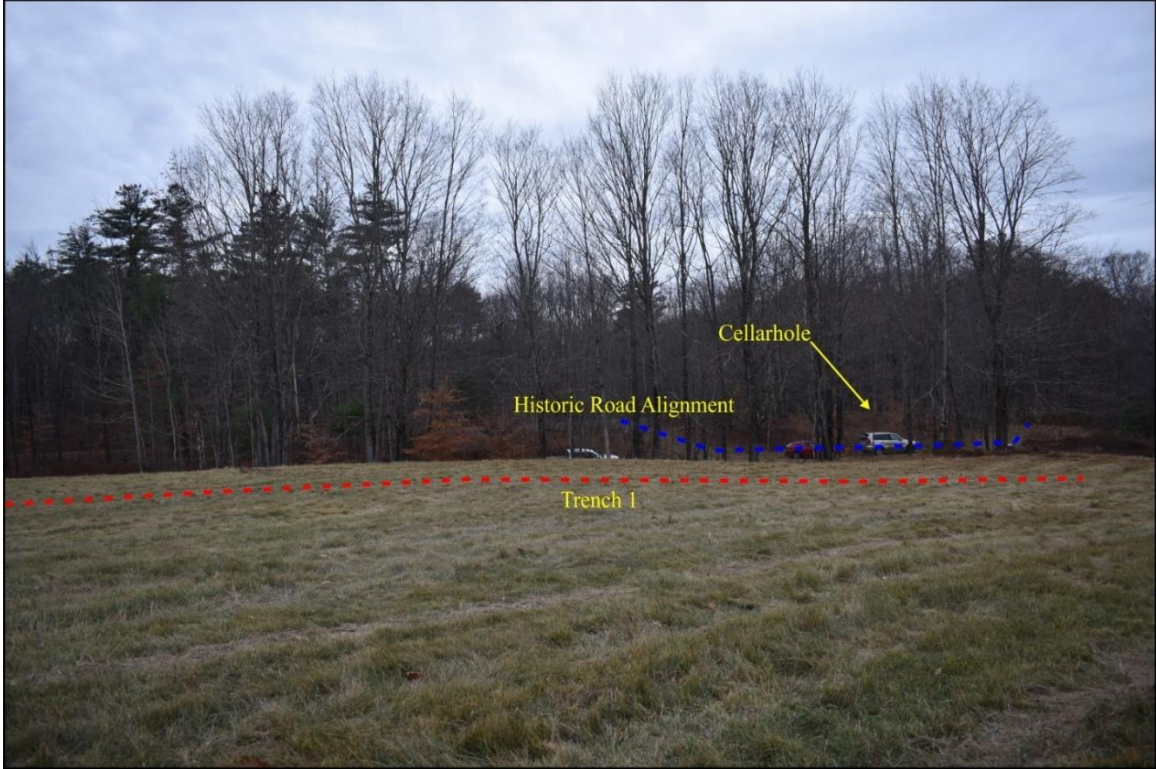


Plate 4. Overview of Trench 1 in relation to the farmstead cellarhole and historic alignment of Gile Road, view northwest.



Plate 5. Trench 1 workshot, view south.



Plate 6. Trench 1 workshot, shovel skimming, view south.



Plate 7. Typical soil profile observed in all 13 excavation trenches.

IAC returned on December 3rd to excavate ten additional trenches in the following locations (see Figure 3; Table 1; Plates 8 and 9):

- Within the footprint of the proposed driveways to the proposed houses on Lots 1 and 2
- Within the footprint of the proposed Lot 1 septic and leach field
- Within the probable location of the Lot 1 house (which occupies a raised, level landform with broad sweeping view of the surrounding fields)
- On level landforms within 150 m (497 feet) of the former Nealley-Giles farmhouse

In total, Severino excavated 879 m² (9,461.5 ft²) on Lots 1 and 2, exposing intact stratigraphy and no evidence of funerary features within the footprint of the proposed driveway, septic/leach field and probable Lot 1 house location as defined by Mr. Falzone in the field. Based on the results of the survey, IAC speculates the burial ground is either located elsewhere on the property or bulldozing in the 1970s eradicated any traces of the burials.



Plate 8. Trench 6 overview, view north.



Plate 9. Overview of the proposed Lot 1 house site, view northeast.

Summary and Conclusion

In 2019, Monadnock Archaeology completed a Phase IA Archaeological Sensitivity Assessment for the proposed subdivision and development of a 61-acre parcel of land in Nottingham (Rockingham County), New Hampshire. Research conducted for the Phase IA assessment revealed the property encompassed the eighteenth-century farmstead of the Nealley and Gile families, and in addition to a farmhouse cellarhole and barn foundation, a small fieldstone marked family burial ground was also located on the property. The farm remained in the Nealley-Gile family for approximately two centuries, until the 1970s when it was sold out of the family. It is reputed that prior to the sale, the house, barn and burial ground were bulldozed (Labbe, 2019).

The burial ground location was never illustrated on Town of Nottingham maps or plans, however, the Nottingham Historical Society provided a hand drawn sketch map drafted in 1957 by Ed Foss which showed the location of historic features along Gile Road. The Foss plan depicts the burial ground as being 150 yds ENE of the house. Using aerial images of the property, Monadnock and IAC ascertained this area was fairly low and wet and not consistent with a burial ground location. Instead, archaeologists identified an area roughly 150 *feet* ENE of the house as the highest probability location. The area occupies a slight rise within eyesight of the house and is along the eastern edge of the historic Gile Road alignment.

To locate the burial ground, the developer Joseph Falzone, contracted IAC and Severino Trucking, Inc. to mechanically excavate a series of 13 trenches to confirm to confirm the presence or absence of the burial ground within the footprint of the speculated burial ground location and where project plans called for impacts on Lots 1 and 2 (proposed driveway, septic/leach field and probable Lot 1 house location). In total, IAC and Severino excavated 879 m² (9,461.5 ft²) and found no definitive evidence of the burial ground

within the footprints of the above mentioned impact locations as defined by Mr. Falzone in the field. Given the inconclusive results, IAC recommends the following:

- In lieu of construction phase monitoring, IAC proposes to meet with the contractor, equipment operator and labors who will be present during to construction to present a brief training session/PowerPoint presentation on how to identify funerary features.
- IAC will provide the contractor with an “Unanticipated Discovery Plan” or UDP. The UDP plan will outline the steps the contractor is required to follow in the event an unanticipated discovery (such as a grave) is made within the Gile Road project area, and includes a contact list of key personnel who will require notification in the event an unanticipated discovery is made.

REFERENCES

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

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