

CULTURAL RESOURCES REPORT COVER SHEET

DAHP Project Number: 2021-09-06633

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Title of Report: City of Port Townsend Evans Vista Affordable Housing, Additional Investigations.

Date of Report: December 15, 2022

County(ies): Jefferson Section: 9 Township: T30N Range: 1W

Quad: Port Townsend South Acres: ~3.5

PDF of report submitted (REQUIRED) Yes

Historic Property Inventory Forms to be Approved Online? Yes No

Archaeological Site(s)/Isolate(s) Found or Amended? Yes No

TCP(s) found? Yes No

Replace a draft? Yes No

Satisfy a DAHP Archaeological Excavation Permit requirement? Yes # No

Were Human Remains Found? Yes DAHP Case # No

DAHP Archaeological Site #:
JE 433

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- Please be sure that any PDF submitted to DAHP has its cover sheet, figures, graphics, appendices, attachments, correspondence, etc., compiled into one single PDF file.
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Technical Memorandum

City of Port Townsend Evans Vista Affordable Housing, Additional Investigations

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December 15, 2022

Management Summary

The City of Port Townsend (City) has purchased an approximately 14-acre parcel to be developed with affordable housing (Project). Willamette Cultural Resource Associates, Ltd. (WillametteCRA) completed a cultural resources assessment for the Project in 2021 and found that a portion of the property was once purchased by the State for use as a State Pest House—a quarantine facility for contagious individuals, which was in use at least from the 1870s to the 1890s (Valentino and Roush 2021). The City requested additional investigations of approximately 3.5 acres of the parcel (Figure 1 and Figure 2) to assess for the presence of human burials associated with the Pest House, as on-site burial at these facilities was common practice in the 1800s. This technical memorandum summarizes the results of additional background research regarding the subject property, as well as the results of additional subsurface investigations.

Historic Background

Background research included the research with historic newspapers, online repositories, and materials at the University of Washington, the Jefferson County Historical Museum, the Jefferson County Genealogical Society, and the Washington State Archives.

Many towns and cities had pest houses, often located near poor houses, near cemeteries, or, most often, on the outskirts of town (Boles 2017; Greenham 2021; Kriebel 2019). Some were reportedly in private homes, boarding houses, or were

outbuildings. In the 1880s, the term “pest house” went out of use in favor of “quarantine hospitals” (Boles 2017).

Although the history of the Port Townsend Pest House is incomplete, several facts are clearly established: the pest house was associated with the Marine Hospital, it was located on land originally owned by James G. Swan (1818-1900), and it was developed by Dr. Thomas T. Minor (1844-1899). Further, it is clear that the land was under state ownership from 1877 to at least the 1950s.

The Marine Hospital was established in Port Townsend by 1856 (McCurdy 1937; Becker 2007); a pest house or pest houses were likely established at the same time, since sailors frequently required quarantine. It is likely that Port Townsend utilized temporary pest houses during outbreaks of disease. Between 1862 and 1866 the Marine Hospital was located in Port Angeles. The Marine Hospital returned to Port Townsend in 1866. At the time it was advertised as the largest hospital north of San Francisco (Becker 2007). The Marine Hospital went through several owners following its establishment. Dr. George Calhoun invited Dr. Thomas T. Minor to work at the Marine Hospital in 1868. Dr. Minor purchased the hospital in 1870 (Oldham 2004).

James G. Swan, a man who “lived one of the most varied and colorful lives in the early history of Washington Territory” (Oldham 2003), moved to Port Townsend in 1859. Swan spent the next several years splitting his time between Port Townsend and Neah Bay. He settled more permanently in Port Townsend in 1866. Swan’s land patent of May 2, 1870 was for 112.66 acres, including Lot 1, S09 T30N R1W and the W $\frac{1}{2}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of S09 T30N R1W; this includes the subject property. In December 1877 Swan sold approximately 5 acres to the Washington Territory for use as a Pest House. According to his will, Swan still owned portions of the original 112.66 acres when he died (Montana State University Library, Archives and Special Collections, Bozeman, Montana: Ivan Doig Archive – Digital Collection, Research Notes on James G. Swan, 1978-1980).

Based on details gleaned from newspapers, maps, local histories, and historic documents it seems likely that a more permanent location for a dedicated pest house was not established until the early 1870s. This dedicated location of the Port Townsend Pest House is variously described as two miles from town (McCurdy 1937) and three miles from town (*Port Townsend Puget Sound Weekly Argus* 1877). It appears that Swan allowed the pest house on his property without compensation, however as noted in Minor’s correspondence with the Washington Territorial Governor Elijah Ferry, “The

ground now used [as a pest house] I have been notified will after Jan'y 1st [1877] be only subject to my use by lease and payment of rental" (Minor 1876). Based on the organization of this 1876 letter with the sales agreement of the subject property by Swan to the Washington Territory in Territorial Governor Ferry's paper in the Washington State Archives, WillametteCRA considers it quite likely that "the ground now used" was Swan's.

Various sources indicate that the pest house was of poor construction and unsuitable for winter occupation (McCurdy 1937; Minor 1876). They further indicate that there would be at least two buildings—"one for convalescents and one for the sick" (Minor 1876). Newspaper accounts note that "The Board [of Health] is...renovating the pest-house buildings and making a new road directly to the quarantine grounds..." (*The Washington Standard* 1881) and describe "the log house on the premises" being used to house those actively ill with smallpox (*Port Townsend Puget Sound Weekly Argus* 1888c). Newspapers later note a series of admissions from shipboard individuals for smallpox (*Port Townsend Puget Sound Weekly Argus* 1888a, 1888b, 1888d, 1889). Dr. Minkler, who had taken over operations following Dr. Minor's tenure, lamented the lack of nurses to care for patients in the pest house facility (*Port Townsend Puget Sound Weekly Argus* 1888c). Finally, an expense list submitted by the Board of Health at Port Townsend itemized costs for tents, repairing the pest house, a clerk, and printing stationary (Reed 1892).

In 1893 a Federal Maritime Quarantine Station associated with the Marine Hospital was established on 156 acres at Diamond Point. The subject property continued to be owned by Washington State until at least 1952 (Metsker 1952). It is not clear if the State Pest House continued to be used after Diamond Point opened. In 1933 Marine Hospital services in Port Townsend ended; services were transferred to a new facility in Seattle (Becker 2007). Quarantine services at Diamond Point ceased in 1936 (Garfield 1989).

Our research has not identified any photographs or maps depicting the location of pest house buildings within the original five-acre parcel. Based on the years that the pest house was active, an outhouse would have been in use.

The property is labeled "State Pest House" on multiple maps (Kroll 1928; Metsker 1925, 1943, 1952; Seavey 1877).

Records at Jefferson County Historical Museum reference a pest house on an invoice for hauling a rig to find a location for a pest house, groceries, bedding, etc. (J.A. Clark 1909). The following year, the home of J.A. Clark, at the corner of Tyler and Washington

Streets, was put into quarantine due to an outbreak of scarlet fever (*Port Townsend Leader* 1910b)—at-home quarantine was a common practice when possible. This suggests that the subject property was no longer in use, or was not an exclusive quarantine location.

Methods and Expectations

As WillametteCRA had previously conducted an archaeological survey of the larger City-owned parcel without identifying cultural resources, a methodology specific to identify potential grave shafts or remains of pest house structures, including a privy, was developed. WillametteCRA expected that any evidence of grave shafts or structural remains would be shallow; an approach using mechanical skimming was employed.

Results of Fieldwork

WillametteCRA conducted monitoring of archaeologically-directed ground-skimming at the project location on April 14, 15, 18, and 19, 2022. The goal of the archaeological monitoring was to identify and document potential grave shafts or any subsurface cultural resources present within the target area—the former Pest House property, an L-shaped area of about 5.10 acres (Figure 1). No potential grave shafts were identified, but one historic debris scatter was encountered.

The skimming was accomplished by using two track hoe machines equipped with flat edge buckets: a Hitachi 85 USB with a 42-inch -wide bucket and a Yanmar vio35 with a 32-inch-wide bucket. The track hoes and operators were provided by the City of Port Townsend. Skimming extended beyond the sod and fill layers to reach intact sediments—sediments that would have been present during the Pest House operation. The overlying material was between 10 and 45 cm (4-18 inches) thick.

Areas available for skimming were restricted by vegetation and standing water. Those areas where skimming did not occur include:

- a small portion of the western part of the Pest House property is second-growth forest of conifer and deciduous trees with dense shrub understory covering the ground-surface (Figure 2),
- the northeast corner of the area where a large berm was built at the end of Evans Vista Road (Figure 3),
- the southeast end of the area where a large pond for drainage and filtration was built, and

- where a gravel road traverses the southern boundary of the area, as this had been previously disturbed by sewer infrastructure.

Skimming was attempted in the vegetated area at the northern part of the area near the debris scatter, but it was abandoned after proving inefficient and yielding poor visibility.

Daily documentation included recording notes and observations on standard forms and photographing the various stages of excavation. A Handheld R1 global positioning system (GPS) was used to record the skimmed areas and any cultural resources or features of interest.

To keep the skimmed area clear for inspection, the operators scraped the topsoil in two to three passes using the maximum reach of the machine arm and piled the spoils on the previously skimmed areas (see Figure 3). Sediments generally consisted of 5 to 45 cm (2-18 inches) of dark brown silty fine to medium sand—a developing A-horizon mixed with logging residue. The Bw-horizon was poorly expressed and undefined in most of the open field except for the far west end where thin remnants of brown ashy silty fine sand were observed underling the A-horizon (Figure 4). At the base, the machine exposed dense light gray clayey, silty gravelly fine to medium sand C-horizon glacial till. Throughout the open field, some burnt soil, woody debris and charcoal staining were observed at the C-horizon contact (see Figure 4; Figure 5, Figure 6).

At the north end, a skimmed area about 10 square meters consisted mainly of logging residue over gray pebbly gravelly silty fine to medium sand that seemed to be a reworked C-horizon (Figure 7).

Potential for Burials

WillametteCRA monitored mechanical skimming and observed the compact glacial till C horizon at 15-45 cmbs (6 to 18 inches). No evidence of grave shafts was observed; based on the shallow depth of the glacial till, any grave shafts would have been highly visible. The shallow depth of glacial till also suggests that hand excavation of graves would have been quite challenging during the years the property was in use as a Pest House, much as we encountered attempting to dig shovel probes.

Historic Debris Scatter (45JE433)

The historic debris scatter observed during skimming consisted of 49 items, including a mammal longbone, seven bottle fragments, a variety of earthenware tableware sherds,

a canning jar liner, an eyeglass lens, a jug, a milk bottle, window glass, and eight medicine bottles.

On September 7, 2022, Valentino returned to the site with WillametteCRA archaeologists Julia Kunas and Mai McMurdie to delineate the historic debris scatter and obtain better subsurface coverage of the wooded part of the property. At the time of this supplemental field survey, several transient camps were encountered in the areas planned for investigation, and therefore, only four shovel probes (#47-50) were able to be excavated (Table 1).

Shovel probes (SP) measured 40 cm (1.3 feet) in diameter and were excavated in 20 cm (8 inch) arbitrary levels. Excavated spoils were screened through ¼-inch mesh. Shovel probes were terminated upon reaching desired geologic context, or when obstructions/compaction prevented further excavation. The survey methods employed were documented with digital photographs, notes describing the environmental setting, field conditions, and the presence/absence of cultural materials. All notes and electronic data are on file at the WillametteCRA Seattle office.

Shovel probes (SP) 47 and 48 were placed to delineate the historic debris scatter. SP 48 was positive for cultural materials in the upper 20 centimeters, and the site boundary was increased to include this area, making it roughly 60-by-60 feet (Figure 8). Between the original monitoring and the supplemental shovel probe survey, a total of 60 artifacts were observed, representing 44 items—four of which were temporally diagnostic and indicate a date c.1910-1920s. Items include:

- Two milkglass canning jar liners (1869-1960s) (Lindsay 2022),
- Phillips Milk of Magnesia bottle (n=2) (1906-c.1915) (Lockhart et al. 2018),
- Hand painted, blue and white porcelain sherd,
- Phenolax Wafers jar (1915-1929) (Lockhart et al. 2005), and
- Hazel Atlas medicine bottle (1923-c.1982) (Lindsay 2022).

Other items include a saw-cut mammal longbone, five glass bottles (n=7), an ironstone bowl and cup, eyeglass lens, six flatware vessels (n=9), three hollowware vessels, a jug (n=2), seven medicine bottles (n=12), a milk bottle, ceramic pitcher, six plates (n=9), three clam shells, and two shards of window glass. The depth of the deposit was no more than six inches (15 cm).

SP 49 and 50 were excavated in an accessible portion of the wooded area to obtain better coverage of this locality. Parent material with little likelihood of containing cultural

materials was encountered at shallow depths in these probes, which is consistent with the previous observations across the property.

Further investigations to the north or west were inhibited by active transient camps.

This historic debris scatter is a discrete deposit, but it cannot be associated with any known people or past events. While the property was purchased by the State in 1877 and is mapped as a State Pest House from the 1920s into the 1950s, the artifacts post-date the primary time period that the Pest House was in use from c. 1870s-1893. Therefore, it is recommended not eligible under Criterion A. The deposit has no known association with important people in our past, and does not demonstrate any unique or innovative constructed elements. Therefore, it is recommended not eligible under Criteria B or C. Finally, the artifacts are temporally bounded and located in a discrete area, although they were found surrounded by disturbed deposits, they could potentially extend to the north into the wooded portion of the parcel that was not investigated. These artifacts are clearly associated with the period of state ownership of the property. While the assemblage includes fairly common material, a large proportion of the artifacts are medically related. There is not enough information to evaluate whether the site can provide information important to history; therefore, until such time that the site can be further evaluated, WillametteCRA recommends the site may be eligible under Criterion D.

Therefore, at this time the site is recommended Eligible under Criterion D.

Conclusions and Recommendations

WillametteCRA conducted supplementary research, monitored ground clearing across much of the former Pest House property, and excavated supplemental shovel probes. No evidence of grave shafts or burials were identified, but an historic debris scatter dating to the early 1900s was encountered; the site was recorded as 45JE433. Circumstances prevented the site from being delineated to the north. Thorough site delineation will help determine if the site can address important research questions (e.g., frontier life; operations of medical facilities), or determine the presence/absence a medical facility on site. Based on the results of fieldwork, WillametteCRA recommends the following:

- The historic debris scatter contains materials that date to the early 1900s, and appears to be in a well-bounded, discrete location despite being in disturbed

deposits. The deposit warrants additional delineation to determine significance and association.

- If the Project lacks federal nexus, an Archaeological Site Alteration and Excavation Permit from DAHP will be required to conduct ground disturbance within the site boundaries. On-site archaeological monitoring is recommended for those areas of the former Pest House property that were not examined during fieldwork; specifically, the forested/vegetated area (see Figure 1). An archaeological monitor should be on-site to monitor ground-disturbance after the vegetation has been removed, and until excavations reach the B- or C-horizons.
- An Archaeological Monitoring and Discovery Plan (MDP) should be prepared to provide plans and protocols to follow in the event of a cultural resource discovery during ground disturbance. This plan should be kept on site and available for all personnel.
- Should unanticipated archaeological or historical resources be encountered during project activities, all ground-disturbing activity in the vicinity of the find should be halted and the Washington DAHP should be notified immediately.
- Should the proposed work or Project Area change, these recommendations may not apply, and additional work may be necessary.

In the event that human remains are encountered at any time, state law (RCW 27.44.055) requires all activity to cease that may cause further disturbance to those remains, and the area of the find secured and protected from further disturbance. The finding of human skeletal remains will be reported to the Jefferson County Sheriff in the most expeditious manner possible. The remains will not be touched, moved, or further disturbed. The County Coroner will assume jurisdiction over the human skeletal remains and determine whether those remains are forensic or non-forensic. If the Coroner determines the remains are non-forensic, they will report that finding to the DAHP, who will take jurisdiction over the remains. The DAHP will notify any appropriate cemeteries and all affected tribes of the find. The State Physical Anthropologist will determine whether the remains are Indian or Non-Indian, and report that finding to any appropriate cemeteries and the affected tribes. The DAHP will then handle all consultation with the affected parties as to the future preservation, excavation, and disposition of the remains.

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Figure 1. That portion of the Project Area monitored for Pest House remains.



Figure 3. Overview skimming west end of open field with dense vegetation on the background. View to the west.



Figure 4. Overview skimming on the northeast of the property avoiding the berm on the left. View to the south.



Figure 5. West end of the Project Area where remnant B horizon was observed at the contact to the C horizon. View to the east.



Figure 6. Western Transect at about halfway south. View to the south.



Figure 7. Overview from end of 1st Transect. Operator setting up to start the 2nd Transect back north. West Transect in progress on the left upper corner of the picture. View to the north.



Figure 8. Logging residue spoils on the left. Gray gravelly sands exposed on the right. Operator starting 3rd Transect at the northeast corner, south of the berm. View to the northeast.



Figure 9. North end of 1st Transect with pin flag on the right showing the location of collected artifacts. View to the south.



Figure 10. Phillips Milk of Magnesia bottle shard.



Figure 11. SP 48 artifacts (historic debris scatter), 0-20 cmbs.

Table 1. Shovel Probe Data from Supplemental Fieldwork.

SP #	Depth (cmbs)	Sediment Characteristics	Cultural Material	Reason for Termination
47	0-25	Grayish Brown Sandy Silt; Medium Coarse; Aggregated; Few (5-15%) Sub-Angular to Sub-Rounded Pebbles and Granules; Roots, Rootlets; Clear (2 - 5 Cm) Irregular Boundary; A/Disturbed Horizon.	No	Parent material
	25-55	Gray Silty Sand; Medium Coarse; Massive; Few (5-15%) Sub-Angular to Sub-Rounded Pebbles and Granules; Rootlets; Compact; Unknown Boundary; C Horizon; Glacial Outwash.	No	
48	0-15	Dark Brown Sandy Silt; Medium Fine; Very Few (<5%) Granules and Pebbles; Abrupt (0 - 2 Cm) Wavy Boundary; A Horizon.	Yes: 0-20 cmbs ceramic pieces n=4, bottle glass n=3, milk glass n=1	Compaction
	15-43	Gray Sandy Silt; Very Fine to Fine; No Gravels; Roots; Unknown Boundary; C Horizon; Glacial Outwash.	No	
49	0-45	Grayish Tan Silty Sand; Fine; Granular/Aggregated; Few (5-15%) Sub-Angular to Sub-Rounded Granules and Pebbles; Rootlets, Worms; Gets More Compact with Depth; Gradual (5 - 15 Cm) Irregular Boundary; A/Disturbed Horizon.	No	Parent material
	45-55	Gray Silty Sand; Fine; Aggregated; Few (5-15%) Sub-Angular to Sub-Rounded Pebbles and Granules; Trace Charcoal Flecks at Top Boundary; Compact; Unknown Boundary; C Horizon; Glacial Outwash.	No	
50	0-20	Dark Brown Sandy Silt; Medium Fine; Few (5-15%) Sub-Rounded Pebbles; Clear (2 - 5 Cm) Wavy Boundary; A Horizon.	No	Parent material
	20-28	Grey Sandy Silt; Fine to Very Fine; Few (5-15%) Sub-Rounded Pebbles; Clear (2 - 5 Cm) Smooth Boundary; B Horizon; Glacial Outwash.	No	
	28-40	Light Gray Silty Sand; Fine; Common (15-30%) Sub-Rounded Pebbles; Unknown Boundary; C Horizon; Glacial Outwash.	No	