

## **EXHIBIT A**

State Environmental Quality Review

**AMENDED NEGATIVE DECLARATION**

Notice of Determination of Non-Significance

**TOWN OF SAUGERTIES, NEW YORK**

**DATE:** June 18, 2024

This Notice is issued pursuant to Part 617 of the implementing regulation pertaining to Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review Act) of the Environmental Conservation Law.

The Planning Board of the Town of Saugerties, as Lead Agency, has determined that the proposed action described below will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment and a Draft Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

**Name of Action:** The Villa Residences

**SEQR Status:** Type I

**Conditioned Negative Declaration:** No

**Project Sponsor:** Dominican Convent of Our Lady of the Rosary

**Description of Action:** Construction of an 80-unit, 115-bedroom, affordable housing development including 59 rental units of age-restricted (senior) affordable housing and a mix of 21 condominium single-family attached (townhomes) and flat units available to families on ±29 acres. The proposed affordable rental units for seniors would be comprised of 11 studio units, 43 one-bedroom units, and 5 two-bedroom units to be clustered into two apartment-style buildings. The proposed attached townhomes would consist of 12 two-bedroom units and 9 three-bedroom units. Access will be provided from Spaulding Lane and will also provide access for a parking area serving the Falling Waters preserve now owned by Scenic Hudson, and previously donated by the project sponsor as open space.

The action includes the following agency actions:

- Site Plan approval by the Saugerties Town Planning Board
- Subdivision approval by the Saugerties Town Planning Board
- Zoning Amendment by the Saugerties Town Board
- Building Permit and MS4 SWPPP Acceptance by the Town Building Department
- Curbcut Permit by the Town Highway Department
- Water and Sewer connections by the Glasco Water and Sewer Departments
- Water and Sewer approval by Ulster County Health Department
- Funding from NYS Department of Homes and Community Renewal
- SPDES permit from NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
- Coastal Zone Assessment by NYS Department of State
- Section 106 Review by NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
- Wetlands permit by US Army Corps of Engineers (not subject to SEQR)

**Location of Action:** At the eastern terminus of Spaulding Lane in the Town of Saugerties on a parcel designated on the Town of Saugerties Tax Map as 29.5-5-13.100.

**Reasons Supporting the Determination:**

The Proposed Action is not anticipated to result in any potential adverse environmental impacts based on the following:

1. On or about September 1, 2022 the project sponsor submitted zoning petition to the Saugerties Town Board and a site plan application to the Planning Board including a Full EAF Part 1.
2. On or about October 19, 2022 the Town of Saugerties Planning Board distributed a Notice of Intent to Declare Lead Agency to the following involved and potentially interested agencies and institutions:
  - a. Saugerties Town Board
  - b. Town of Saugerties Zoning Board of Appeals
  - c. Town of Saugerties Building Inspector
  - d. Town of Saugerties Highway Department
  - e. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
  - f. Ulster County Health Department
  - g. United State Army Corps of Engineers
  - h. Ulster County Planning Commission\
  - i. New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
  - j. New York State Department of Homes and Community Renewal
  - k. New York State Department of State
  - l. Town of Saugerties Police Department
  - m. Town of Saugerties Water/Sewer Department
  - n. Glasco Fire Department
  - o. Diaz Memorial Ambulance Service
  - p. Town of Saugerties Historic Preservation Commission
  - q. Town of Saugerties Conservation Advisory Commission
  - r. Scenic Hudson
3. On or about November 19, 2022, the Planning Board assumed the role of Lead Agency having received no objection from involved agencies. The Board and its consultants further reviewed the site plans and accompanying documentation and submissions; and
4. On April 18, 2023 the Lead Agency reviewed and approved a long form Part 2 EAF which identified the following moderate to large impacts:
  - a. Impact on Land:
    - i. May involve construction on slopes of 15% or greater
    - ii. May involve construction on land where bedrock is exposed or within 5 feet of existing ground surface
    - iii. May involve construction that continues for more than one year or in multiple phases
    - iv. May result in increased erosion, whether from physical disturbances or vegetation removal (including from treatments by herbicide)
    - v. May be located within a Coastal Erosion hazard area
  - b. Impacts on surface water
    - i. May involve construction within or adjoining a freshwater or tidal wetland, or in the bed or banks of any other water body.

- ii. May create turbidity in a waterbody, either from upland erosion, runoff or by disturbing bottom sediments
    - iii. May cause soil erosion, or otherwise create a source of stormwater discharge that may lead to siltation or other degradation of receiving water bodies.
    - iv. May affect the water quality of any water bodies within or downstream of the site of the proposed actions.
  - c. Impacts on Plants and Animals
    - i. May cause reduction in population, or loss of individuals, of any species of special concern or conservation need as listed by New York State or the Federal government, that use the site or are found on, over or near the site.
    - ii. May result in a reduction or degradation of any habitat used by any species of special concern and conservation need as listed by New York State or the Federal government.
    - iii. May substantially interfere with nesting/breeding, foraging or over-wintering habitat for the predominant species that occupy or use the project site.
  - d. Impact on Aesthetic Resources
    - i. May be visible from any designated federal, state or local scenic or aesthetic resource.
    - ii. May be visible from publicly accessible vantage points both seasonally and year-round.
    - iii. The situation or activity in which viewers are engaged while viewing the proposed actions are during recreational or tourism-based activities.
    - iv. There are similar projects visible within 0-5 miles of the proposed project.
  - e. Impact on Historic and Archeological Resource
    - i. Project occurs wholly or partially within, or substantially contiguous to an area designated as sensitive for archaeological sites on the NY State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) archaeological site inventory.
    - ii. May result in the destruction or alteration of all or part of the site or property and in the introduction of visual elements which are out of character with the site or property or may alter its setting.
  - f. Impact on Transportation
    - i. Projected traffic increase may exceed capacity of existing road network
    - ii. Proposed project may result in significantly more traffic on Spaulding Lane
  - g. Impact on Noise, Odor or Light
    - i. May result in light shining onto adjoining properties
    - ii. May result in lighting creating sky-glow brighter than existing area conditions.
  - h. Consistency with Community Plans
    - i. May be different from, or in sharp contrast to, current surrounding land use pattern(s)
    - ii. Inconsistent with local land use plans or zoning regulations
  - i. Consistency with Community Character
    - i. May create a demand for additional community services (e.g. schools, police and fire)
- 5. On or about June 20, 2023, the Lead Agency adopted a Part 3 EAF comprised of the following documents:
  - a. Full Environmental Assessment Form Part 3 Supplemental Narrative prepared by AKRF, Inc. dated May 2, 2023

- b. Memorandum from Aaron Werner, AICP to the Town of Saugerties Planning Board dated June 5, 2023
6. Based on the foregoing it has been further determined that the Project will not result in the following potential large impacts:
- a. a substantial adverse change in existing air quality, ground or surface water quality or quantity, traffic or noise levels; a substantial increase in solid waste production; a substantial increase in potential for erosion, flooding, leaching or drainage problems.
  - b. the removal or destruction of large quantities of vegetation or fauna; substantial interference with the movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species; impacts on a significant habitat area; substantial adverse impacts on a threatened or endangered species of animal or plant, or the habitat of such a species; or other significant adverse impacts to natural resources;
  - c. the impairment of the environmental characteristics of a critical environmental area as designated pursuant to section 617.14(g) of this Part;
  - d. the creation of a material conflict with a community's current plans or goals as officially approved or adopted;
  - e. the impairment of the character or quality of important historical, archeological, architectural, or aesthetic resources or of existing community or neighborhood character;
  - f. a major change in the use of either the quantity or type of energy;
  - g. the creation of a hazard to human health;
  - h. a substantial change in the use, or intensity of use, of land including agricultural, open space or recreational resources, or in its capacity to support existing uses;
  - i. the encouraging or attracting of a large number of people to a place or places for more than a few days, compared to the number of people who would come to such place absent the action;
  - j. the creation of a material demand for other actions that would result in one of the above consequences;
  - k. changes in two or more elements of the environment, no one of which has a significant impact on the environment, but when considered together result in a substantial adverse impact on the environment; or
  - l. two or more related actions undertaken, funded or approved by an agency, none of which has or would have a significant impact on the environment, but when considered cumulatively would meet one or more of the criteria in this subdivision.
7. On or about June 20, 2023, the Lead Agency issued a Negative Declaration of Environmental Significance indicating that the proposed action would not have a significant adverse impact on the environment and that an Environmental Impact Statement would not be prepared.
8. On or about September 6, 2023, at a public hearing being held by the Town of Saugerties Town Board, information was received from members of the public that the Full Environmental Assessment Form provided by the Project Sponsor erroneously indicated that the that the project site was not located within 1,500 feet of a facility serving people with disabilities, when in fact the property was located directly adjacent to a residential facility for persons with Cerebral Palsy ("Lasher House"). Several members of the public including residents and employees of the Lasher House indicated that the proposed project could have significant impact on the residence, particularly during construction from air and noise impacts.
9. On or about September 18<sup>th</sup>, the Planning Board received a Memorandum from Aaron Werner, AICP of AKRF consultant to the project sponsor, explaining the new information and clarifying that the project sponsor does not intend to blast on the site. Based on this, the applicant

suggested that the Part 2 Environmental Assessment Form would remain unchanged, since the nearby presence of a facility for disabled persons is only relevant to questions 15 (regarding the Noise impacts of blasting where no blasting is proposed) and 16 (regarding exposure to hazardous substances where no hazardous substances are known to exist). The project sponsor further suggested that the standard controls on construction should be adequate to mitigate impacts to the Lasher House.

10. On or about September 19, 2023, the Planning Board met at its regularly scheduled monthly meeting to discuss the new information. The Planning Board reviewed the input provided by the project sponsor. The Planning Board resumed Lead Agency status for the purpose of issuing a notice to all involved and interested agencies inviting input on the matter. The Lead Agency reserved decision on Amendment or Rescission of the Negative Declaration and indicated that it remained concerned about construction noise, and air quality effects on residents of the adjacent facility.
11. On or about September 22, 2023, the Lead Agency circulated a "SEQR Notice of New Information" to all involved and interested parties, detailing the new information discovered.
12. On or about October 3, 2023, the Lead Agency received a memorandum from Aaron Werner, AICP informing the Lead Agency that the project sponsor had met with "Wraparound Services of the Hudson Valley," the operators of the Lasher House. The memorandum detailed the discussions between the project sponsor and the operator, indicating that the Project Sponsor had committed to certain minor project changes and construction practices in response to input by the operator of the Lasher House, and that the Project Sponsor would be adding map notes and details to the site plan to memorialize these commitments.
13. On or about October 17, 2023, the operator of the Lasher House indicated that they had received the memorandum documenting the agreements, did not indicate any disagreement with the account contained in the memorandum, and indicated that they were confident that the Planning Board would complete their due diligence and comply with all regulations.
14. On or about October 17, 2023, the Lead Agency further discussed the new information discovered, the materials that had been received from the project sponsor and the Lasher House Operator. No other input was received from involved or interested agencies. The Lead Agency concluded that a significant adverse impact was not likely to occur based on the presence of the Lasher House in proximity to the project site.
15. On or about October 17, 2023, the Lead Agency adopted an Amended Declaration of Environmental Significance.

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16. On or about December 5, 2023, the Lead Agency received a statement from Jeffrey Anzevino, AICP on behalf of Scenic Hudson, indicating that the project is located in the Ulster North Scenic Area of Statewide Significance and that his organization had concerns regarding the proposed zoning amendment and the impact it could have to views from the Hudson River, area historic resources and Scenic Hudson's neighboring property.
17. On or about December 5, 2023, and by follow up letter on January 23, 2024, the Lead Agency received a letter from the Town's Historic Preservation Commission, indicating that the, "listed Spalding Stone House is almost completely intact within the structure of the Villa," and that the "Negative declaration for historic resources be corrected to a positive declaration."
18. On or about February 28, 2023, the Planning Board's consulting Planner met with the Chairman of the Historic Preservation Committee to determine the status of the Spalding House/Van Leuven House, purportedly located intact within the structure of the Villa of St. Joseph. Based on a review of materials and information available, the Spalding House/Van Leuven House was identified as a potential historic resource on a Reconnaissance-Level Historic Resources Survey but was never designated as a Local Landmark. Additionally, a resolution adopted by the HPC

- that, “forwarded” the survey to various Town Boards and agencies for “their edification and/or action,” also was not a designation of landmarks, because:
- a. Nothing in that resolution indicated that the properties on the Historic Resources Survey were being designated as Local Landmarks.
  - b. The necessary steps for landmark designation were not taken, including among other steps, notification of property owners or public hearing.
  - c. The landmarks were not recorded in the office of the Town Clerk or County Clerk as is required by the Town Code.
19. On or about May 7, 2024, the applicant submitted a revised scope of the project to include seeking re-zoning, future site plan approval, and future subdivision approval to redevelop the parcel into a smaller development totaling 80 units; 59 units of which would be affordable rental housing units for seniors, and 21 units of which would be attached townhomes available for purchase as affordable homeownership units. This proposed project changed constituted the following significant project changes:
- a. Reduction by 42 units
  - b. Reduction by 15 bedrooms
  - c. Change from all senior units to 26% family units
  - d. Change from all rental units to 26% owned units
  - e. Change from all flats to 24% single-family attached units
  - f. Reduction in height for the southerly half of the project.
  - g. Reduction in footprint for the southerly half of the site.
  - h. Reduction in impervious surfaces, and area of disturbance.
20. On or about May 7, 2024, the project sponsor submitted a letter from the New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (SHPO) dated May 5, 2024, indicating that upon reviewing a Historical Architectural Evaluation of the Villa of St. Joseph (which identified that remnants of the Spalding/Van Leuven Houses remained intact within the walls of the Villa), SHPO concluded that the Villa of St. Joseph is not eligible for the State or National Registers of Historic Places due to a loss of integrity.
21. Although not required by SEQR, on or about May 21, 2024, the Lead Agency issued a “SEQR Notice of Project Change,” describing the changed proposal and circulating the Part 1 Full EAF and revised project submissions to all interested and involved agencies, requesting that such agencies report any new concerns regarding the proposed project by June 18, 2024.
22. The Lead Agency finds that regarding the Scenic Area of Statewide Significance, that the conclusions of its original Negative Declaration remained valid and the project would not have a significant adverse impact to views from the Hudson River and historic resources further east (such as Tivoli Landing), and that the amended proposal would have reduced visual impacts as compared to the earlier proposal.
23. The Lead Agency finds that the conclusions of its original Negative Declaration regarding historic or archeological resources remain valid and the project will not have a significant adverse impact.
24. The Lead Agency has reviewed the revised proposal regarding potential traffic impacts and finds that impacts will be similar to the previous proposal and not pose a significant adverse impact.
25. The Lead Agency finds that with an anticipated nine public school students, there will not be significant adverse impacts to community services including educational services.
26. The Lead Agency finds that in most other respects, the currently proposed project will result in reduced impacts as compared to the project that received an Amended Negative Declaration on October 17, 2023.
27. No other impacts have been identified in connection with the proposed action.

**Circulation:** This notice is being sent to the following Involved Agencies and Interested Parties and will be filed in the Town of Saugerties Planning and Zoning Office:

Mr. Fred Costello, Supervisor  
Town of Saugerties  
4 High Street  
Saugerties, New York 12477

NYS Homes and Community Renewal  
Hampton Plaza  
38-40 State Street  
Albany, NY 12207

Town of Saugerties Town Board  
4 High Street  
Saugerties, NY 12477  
845-246-2800 ext. 345

NYS Department of State Coastal Management  
Program  
One Commerce Plaza,  
99 Washington Ave.  
Albany, NY 12231

Town of Saugerties Zoning Board of Appeals  
Mr. William Schirmer, Chair  
Town Hall  
4 High Street  
Saugerties, New York 12477

New York State Department of Transportation  
David Corrigan, PE  
11 Quarry Street  
Kingston, New York 12401

Town of Saugerties Highway Department  
Raymond Mayone, Superintendent  
4 High Street  
Saugerties, New York 12477

Ulster County Health Department  
Carol M. Smith, MD, MPH, Commissioner  
Golden Hill Office Building  
239 Golden Hill Lane  
Kingston, New York 12402

Town of Saugerties Water/Sewer Department  
Mark Resso, Superintendent  
PO Box 177  
234 Lower Hudson Street  
Glasco, New York 12432

Ulster County Planning Board  
Mr. Dennis Doyle, Director  
County Office Building  
PO Box 1800  
Kingston, New York 12402

New York State Department of Environmental  
Conservation  
Ms. Kelly Turturro, Region 3 Director  
21 South Putt Corners Road  
New Paltz, New York 12561

Town of Saugerties Police Department  
Robert Nuzzo, Chief of Police  
4 High Street  
Saugerties, New York 12477

NYS Historic Preservation Office  
Chelsea Towers  
PO Box 189,  
Waterford, NY 12188

United States Army Corps of Engineers  
New York District  
Western Permits Section  
Mr. Brian Orzel  
26 Federal Plaza  
New York, New York 10278-0090

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation,  
and Historic Preservation  
Mr. Daniel Mackay  
625 Broadway  
Albany, New York 12207

Glasco Fire Dept.  
c/o Chief Raymond Mayone Jr.  
PO Box 611  
Glasco, NY 12432



Diaz Memorial Ambulance Service  
1 Main Street  
Saugerties, New York, 12477

Town of Saugerties Historic Preservation  
Commission  
c/o Stefan Yarabek, Chair  
Town Hall  
4 High Street  
Saugerties, New York 12477

Town of Saugerties Conservation Advisory  
Commission  
c/o Mary O'Donnell, Chair  
Town Hall  
4 High Street  
Saugerties, New York 12477

Scenic Hudson  
c/o Jeffrey Anzevino  
1 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 200  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

## **EXHIBIT B**



**Environmental, Planning, and Engineering Consultants**  
34 South Broadway  
Suite 300  
White Plains, NY 10601  
tel: 914 949-7336  
fax: 929 284-1085  
[www.akrf.com](http://www.akrf.com)

## Memorandum

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**To:** Town of Saugerties Planning Board  
**From:** AKRF, Inc. (Aaron Werner, AICP)  
**Date:** May 7, 2024  
**Re:** **The Villa Residences -- 49 Spaulding Lane**  
**Response to 2/6/24 Email sent to NYS Officials Regarding Historic Architectural and Archaeological Resources**

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AKRF, Inc. (AKRF) has reviewed the comments contained in a February 6, 2024 email sent from several concerned citizens to New York State officials with the subject line "Protect Van Leuvan House and Cemetery, Spaulding Lane, Saugerties" related to the proposed Villa Residences project (the "Proposed Project") at 49 Spaulding Lane (the "Project Site"). This memorandum contains responses from AKRF to several comments raised in the email, for your consideration.

The following materials are also attached to this memorandum for reference:

- 1) Letter from OPRHP dated May 5, 2024 indicating that the Villa St. Joseph building is not State or National Register eligible due to loss of integrity;
- 2) Historic Architectural Evaluation of the Villa St. Joseph Building, prepared by AKRF (April 2024); and
- 3) Copy of the above-referenced February email to NYS Officials

### **February 6, 2024 email - Architectural Comments:**

*"The Saugerties Historic Preservation Commission has confirmed the existence of a c.1735 Dutch stone house at the end of Spaulding Lane in Saugerties, N.Y., on property known as 'Falling Waters'. The stone house, on a height of land overlooking the Hudson River, is incorporated within Villa St. Joseph, a structure which is owned by the Dominican Convent of Our Lady of the Rosary in Sparkill, N.Y. and was long used as a retreat center for the Sisters."*

*"Concerns regarding this unique 18th century structure, built by John and Andrus Van Leuven circa 1735, and the importance of keeping it intact and in situ have been raised. The State Historic Preservation Office / Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic*

*Preservation (OPRHP) stated that ‘The history of these buildings -- their additions and alterations, and outbuildings, and the history of the landscape itself warrant further study.’”*

*“Removing the Van Leuven home, an 18th century Dutch stone house that has been carefully and thoughtfully enclosed and protected for many years, and the cultural narrative that it represents, contravenes the spirit of the demarcation of this site.”*

**AKRF Response:**

Potential impacts on architectural resources were assessed on pages 22 to 23 of the Full Environmental Assessment Form (FEAF) Part 3 Supplemental Narrative prepared by AKRF in May 2023 and adopted by the Town of Saugerties Planning Board (as Lead Agency) through issuance of a Negative Declaration under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

In October 2021, AKRF initiated consultation with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). Information and descriptions of the Project Site’s existing improvements, including photographs of all structures on the Project Site, were provided to OPRHP as part of the above-referenced consultation through OPRHP’s Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS). In comments issued through CRIS on November 9, 2021, **OPRHP did not identify any of the structures on the Project Site as known or potential historic architectural resources.** In a Resource Evaluation dated November 9, 2021 OPRHP determined that that the structures on the Project site that compose Dominican Sisters of Sparkill Summer Retreat do not meet eligibility criteria for listing on the State/National Register of Historic Places. Therefore, no further consultation on the Project Site’s standing structures was required by OPRHP and it was concluded that no significant adverse impacts would result from the demolition of any of these structures. The record for the Project Site within CRIS indicates a “not eligible” finding for all of the Project Site’s standing structures.

The statement included in email that the *“State Historic Preservation Office / Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) stated that ‘The history of these buildings -- their additions and alterations, and outbuildings, and the history of the landscape itself warrant further study’”* **appears to be quoting text from a 2005 historical resources survey prepared for the Town of Saugerties through grant funding and this is not a quote from OPRHP. As noted above, OPRHP determined on November 9, 2021 that the property does not meet State/National Register eligibility.**

However, in response to the February 6, 2024 email from concerned citizens, OPRHP issued a request through CRIS as follows:

*“Please provide an architectural survey of the former Van Leuven Residence/Villa St. Joseph (USN#:11115.000266). An architectural historian should conduct a thorough assessment of the interior of the structure to look for Dutch architectural elements and provide an architectural survey report with historic context, timeline of additions/alterations and analysis of original features.”*

In April 2024, AKRF’s architectural historian prepared and submitted to OPRHP the requested report titled “Historic Architectural Evaluation of the Villa St. Joseph Building”

(attached). Following a review of AKRF's report, OPRHP issued a letter through CRIS dated May 5, 2024 (also attached), stating the following:

**"SHPO has completed our review of the Historic Architectural Evaluation of the Villa St. Joseph Building, submitted on April 25, 2024. Based on the information provided, we concur that Villa St. Joseph Building (USN 11115.000266) is not eligible for the State or National Registers of Historic Places due to loss of integrity."**

Based on the above-referenced documentation and multiple rounds of review of the Project Site's existing architecture by OPRHP, **the Proposed Project will have no significant adverse impacts on historic architectural resources and no further analysis is required.**

While there would be no impacts on architectural resources, OPRHP indicated that the Project Site is situated in an area of potential archaeological sensitivity and requested additional archaeological analysis to determine if areas of potential archaeological sensitivity exist on the Project Site (this is discussed chronologically below).

#### **Archaeological Comments:**

*"The Phase 1A survey references the census records showing that the Van Leuven family were slave owners in the mid-18th and early 19th century and enslaved persons of African descent are likely buried next to or in close proximity to the burial ground where the Van Leuven / Overbaugh family members are interred. The burial ground is adjacent to the c. 1735 stone house. OPRHP has suggested using Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) to identify additional grave sites. It is hoped that the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill and the developers will comply with OPRHP and that observers be permitted to witness the evaluation of the site that requires testing at least 50 feet beyond the perimeter of the burial ground."*

*"Burial sites for enslaved persons were typically unmarked. Discovering these gravesites and protecting these gravesites was the main impetus for the African American Burial Grounds Preservation Act which was signed into law in 2023 as part of the FY2023 Omnibus Spending Package. Collectively we must respect the lives of these unknown, enslaved persons who lay forgotten in unmarked places."*

#### **AKRF Response:**

Potential impacts on archaeological resources were assessed on pages 23 to 25 of the FEAF Part 3 Supplemental Narrative prepared by AKRF in May 2023 and adopted by the Town of Saugerties Planning Board (as Lead Agency) through issuance of a Negative Declaration under SEQRA. The chronological text provided below is included in that report and describes AKRF's plan to conduct a Phase 1B Archaeological Investigation at the Project Site once the site plan has been finalized with the Planning Board, and in coordination with the requirements of an anticipated application for federal sources of funding for the project. For emphasis, specific findings and commitments are indicated with bold and underlined text.

In comments issued through CRIS on November 9, 2021, OPRHP indicated that the Project Site is situated in an area of potential archaeological sensitivity and requested additional

archaeological analysis to determine if areas of potential archaeological sensitivity exist on the Project Site.

In response to OPRHP's November 9, 2021 comments, A Phase 1A Archaeological Documentary Study ("Phase 1A Study") was prepared by AKRF in January 2022 to document the history of the Project Site's occupation and development during both the precontact (Native American) and historic periods. The Phase 1A Study concluded that those portions of the Project Site that are unpaved and outside of building footprints and wetlands and situated in areas with slopes of less than 12 percent have moderate to high sensitivity for archaeological resources associated with the precontact occupation of the Saugerties area. The Phase 1A Study also concluded that given the documented historical occupation of the Project Site beginning in the 17th century, undisturbed areas within the Project Site are therefore determined to have moderate to high sensitivity for archaeological resources associated with the historic period occupation of the Project Site.

The Proposed Project is being designed to avoid the Van Leuven Family Burial Ground, a historical cemetery located near the northwestern corner of the Project Site. The Phase 1A Study of the Project Site included a historical narrative regarding the Van Leuven family cemetery and identified all known or suspected burials within the family cemetery. Historical descriptions of the burial ground indicate that the cemetery may have been slightly larger than it is in the present day.

While there is no documentation of a burial place for enslaved persons on the Project Site, the Phase 1A Study confirmed that the Van Leuven family was responsible for enslaving people of African descent. The Phase 1A Study therefore concluded that it is possible—but not confirmed—that enslaved persons of African descent may have been interred on the property possibly in close proximity to the burial ground maintained by the Van Leuven family and their heirs.

The Phase 1A Study recommended a Phase 1B Archaeological Investigation of areas of archaeological sensitivity that would be impacted by the Proposed Project. The Phase 1A Study recommended that no Project impacts occur within 50 feet of the existing cemetery. In addition, a non-invasive subsurface investigation (e.g., ground penetrating radar [GPR]) was recommended to confirm the presence or absence of potential burials within a 50-foot-wide radius surrounding the cemetery's current boundary, including potentially unmarked burials of enslaved individuals. The Project Site's areas of archaeological sensitivity are depicted in Figure 9 of the Phase 1A Study included in FEAF Appendix D.

In comments issued through CRIS on February 22, 2022 (FEAF Appendix D), OPRHP concurred with the conclusions and recommendations of AKRF's Phase 1A Study.

Subsequent to OPRHP's concurrence with the Phase 1A Study, and in response to comments provided by the Town of Saugerties Historic Preservation Commission, the scope of the non-invasive GPR survey was modified to extend beyond the 50-foot buffer zone originally proposed around the cemetery. The existing cemetery and the location of the former residence are situated on the same level area as shown on modern topographical maps. The proposed expanded GPR survey area therefore includes the previously recommended 50-foot area surrounding the existing cemetery as well as that area within the Project's limits of disturbance that is situated on the same level landform as the existing Villa St. Joseph and cemetery and/or is within the footprint of the proposed north building cluster. These areas were determined to be the most likely locations of unmarked burials. The GPR investigation may be limited only to

**those areas suitable for such analysis (e.g., in areas free of trees or tree roots, dense vegetation or other potential sources of interference).**

The Proposed Project is planning to pursue affordable housing subsidy from New York State HCR, which will likely include federal sources of assistance originating from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), making the Proposed Project subject to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. **The Phase 1B Archaeological Investigation (including the GPR investigation for the cemetery described above) will proceed in accordance with the requirements of HCR's funding process and OPRHP aka State Historic Preservation Office's (SHPO) requirements under Section 106.** The Town of Saugerties, including the Planning Board and Historic Preservation Commission, will be provided with updates as the work under Section 106 proceeds, and may be invited to participate in the process as consulting parties. A review under Section 106 will exceed the typical scope of studies conducted as part of SEQRA. Consultation will also be required with federally-recognized Indigenous Nations as part of the Section 106 process.

In the event that the Phase 1B Archaeological Investigation confirms that archaeological sites are present within the Project Site, additional phases of analysis (e.g., a Phase 2 Archaeological Survey/Evaluation and/or a Phase 3 Data Recovery) may be required through consultation with, and oversight by, the SHPO. Continued consultation and coordination with the SHPO would occur during all phases of archaeological work.

**Any measures to be required by the SHPO and other involved parties in the Section 106 process will serve to ensure no significant adverse impacts related to historic or cultural resources will result from the Proposed Project. With the commitment to these measures by the Applicant included as part of the Proposed Project, and required through conditions of any site plan approval by the Town, no significant adverse impacts on historic archaeological resources will occur.**



**New York State  
Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation**

**KATHY HOCHUL**  
Governor

**RANDY SIMONS**  
Commissioner *Pro Tempore*

May 5, 2024

Claudia Cooney  
Senior Vice President  
AKRF, Inc.  
440 Park Avenue South  
New York, NY 10016

Re: NYSHCR  
DSS Saugerties Housing  
49 Spaulding Ln, Saugerties, NY 12477  
21PR07342

Dear Claudia Cooney:

Thank you for requesting the comments of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). We have reviewed the information in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. These comments are those of the SHPO and relate only to Historic/Cultural resources. They do not include potential environmental impacts to New York State Parkland that may be involved in or near your project. Such impacts must be considered as part of the environmental review of the project pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and/or the State Environmental Quality Review Act (New York Environmental Conservation Law Article 8).

SHPO has completed our review of the *Historic Architectural Evaluation of the Villa St. Joseph Building*, submitted on April 25, 2024. Based on the information provided, we concur that Villa St. Joseph Building (USN 1115.000266) is not eligible for the State or National Registers of Historic Places due to loss of integrity.

If you have any questions, please contact me at [Chelsea.Towers@parks.ny.gov](mailto:Chelsea.Towers@parks.ny.gov) or 518.268.2129.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chelsea Towers".

Chelsea Towers  
Survey & National Register Coordinator

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**Division for Historic Preservation**

P.O. Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189 • (518) 237-8643 • [parks.ny.gov](http://parks.ny.gov)



# **The Villa Residences**

**49 Spaulding Lane (Tax Parcel 29.5-5-13.100)**

**TOWN OF SAUGERTIES, ULSTER COUNTY, NEW YORK**

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## **Historic Architectural Evaluation of the Villa St. Joseph Building**

**Prepared for:**

Dominican Convent of Our Lady of the Rosary  
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Dattner Architects  
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**APRIL 2024**

## Historic Documentation of the St. Joseph's Villa Building

The Villa St. Joseph building is located within an approximately 29.3-acre property (the "Property") located at 49 Spaulding Lane (tax parcel 29.5-5-13.100) in the Town of Saugerties, Ulster County, New York (see **Figure 1**). The property is owned by the Dominican Convent of Our Lady of The Rosary, also known as the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill (DSS). This document includes a physical description of the Villa St. Joseph building, a historical narrative, an analysis of the physical development of the building over time, and an evaluation of the historic significance and integrity of the building in the context of the National Register of Historic Places (NR) eligibility criteria. The report was prepared by architectural historians and historians at AKRF, Inc., with contributions by Claudia Cooney, MS, Molly McDonald, MA, and Elizabeth D. Meade, PhD.

The Dominican Sisters have operated the Property as a religious and spiritual retreat since the 1930s and it is currently developed for that use (see **Figure 2**). DSS is seeking, among other actions, a zoning map/text amendment and site plan approval from the Town to facilitate the redevelopment of portions of the Property with affordable rental and for-purchase housing for seniors and families. Pursuant to SEQRA and Section 14.09, consultation regarding the Proposed Project was initiated with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). In comments issued through the New York State Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS) on November 9, 2021, OPRHP determined the DSS Summer Retreat property (Unique Site Number [USN] 11115.0000378) as being Not Eligible for the State and National Registers of Historic Places (S/NR).

The three-story Villa St. Joseph, the largest building on the property, has evolved over time, and is currently used for lodging, meeting and dining space for DSS. The Property was historically associated with the Van Leuven family and several references have suggested that the Villa St. Joseph building was constructed upon the site of, and may have encapsulated elements of, the 18th century former residence of the Van Leuven family, which was later occupied by the Spalding (also spelled Spaulding) family. On February 2, 2024, OPRHP requested the following additional information regarding Villa St. Joseph via CRIS:

*"Please provide an architectural survey of the former Van Leuven Residence/Village St. Joseph (USN#: 11115.000266). An architectural historian should conduct a thorough assessment of the interior of the structure to look for Dutch architectural elements and provide an architectural survey report with historic context, timeline of additions/alterations and analysis of original features."*

This Architectural Resources Survey has been prepared to satisfy ORPHP's latest request. It presents the results of historic research, a site visit, and analysis by an architectural historian familiar with the vernacular building traditions of the region.

The report concludes that the physical fabric of the building represents several building campaigns, the earliest of which is likely 18<sup>th</sup> century in date. Several other construction campaigns of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, late 19<sup>th</sup> century, early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and mid- and late 20<sup>th</sup> century are also evidenced in the fabric of the building. The extensive modifications and expansions that occurred over time have essentially reduced the early vernacular components of the building to minimal fragments. The building lacks sufficient historic integrity to effectively convey any one period or periods of history or architecture. Despite its early origins and compelling history, therefore, the building does not appear to meet the S/NR eligibility criteria.

### 1. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

This section provides a physical description of the Villa St. Joseph building located within the approximately 29.3-acre Property at 49 Spaulding Lane (see **Figures 1 and 2**). It is based on a site visit

conducted by Molly McDonald on March 21, 2024, in which the interior and exterior were fully accessible. Photograph keys and photographs are included in the **Photographs** section.

### *SETTING*

As described above, the Property is currently utilized as a retreat and vacation home for DSS. A 50-foot-wide trail easement runs through the western side of the Property and connects Spaulding Lane with the Falling Waters Preserve to the south. The Property is currently improved with five buildings connected by a meandering internal driveway beginning at the terminus of Spaulding Lane and extending in a southeasterly direction through the Property (see **Figure 2**). The Property's internal driveway and footpaths cross an east-west-oriented stream on concrete culverts at multiple locations.

The two-and-a-half-story building known as Villa St. Joseph is the Property's largest structure and is located on the northern half of the Property. The building is located on a high promontory and faces east, enjoying clear and proximate views of the Hudson River. A two-story convent, believed to have been constructed by the Spaulding family as a guest house ca. 1870, is immediately adjacent to Villa St. Joseph to the east. Although the two buildings are physically connected by a 20<sup>th</sup> century roof that forms a portecochere, for the purposes of this document, the convent is considered a separate building and is not described in detail herein.

The following buildings and structures are also located on the Property, described from north to south following the alignment of the Property's main driveway:

- The Van Leuven Family Burial Ground near the northwest corner of the Property, south of the driveway. The cemetery contains burials from the 18th and 19th centuries and has been subdivided into its own separate tax parcel.
- A gazebo located within a meadow area at the northern end of the Property, east of a small parking area.
- A single-story building south of Villa St. Joseph and the convent, at the approximate center of the Property, known as Mater Christi Hall. This building, constructed ca. 1911, was historically used as a carriage house, garage, and storage building for farming operations. It was later called the "recreation hall" for use by DSS.
- A stone grotto located to the north of Mater Christi Hall.
- A two-story farmhouse, known as Imelda House, located to the southwest of Mater Christi Hall and currently used for supplemental lodging. In the early 1900s, it was occupied by a caretaker for the farm that operated on the property prior to DSS acquiring it in the early 1930s.
- A single-story building known as the Bath House, located south of Imelda House, was built in 1969. It formerly served as a guest/rooming house and is now vacant. Adjacent to it is a former in-ground pool, equipment shed, and open-air pavilion, built circa 1969.

### *BUILDING EXTERIOR*

Villa St. Joseph is a large two-and-a-half-story building which is oriented to face east towards the entry drive and the Hudson River. At the north end of the building, there is a statue of St. Joseph and a low wooden sign inscribed with "Villa St. Joseph." A rear access road runs along the west side of the building. The building is clad in vinyl siding and the roof is covered in asphalt shingles.

The building is composed of several sections, which were added in stages over time. To facilitate the description and analysis of the building, the main sections of the building have been given letters.

- Section A: The core two-and-a-half-story rectangular-plan section of the building (see **Photos 1 through 3**). It has a gable roof with a wood cornice and returns and continuous shed-roofed dormers on each roof slope. The section measures approximately 67 feet long by 25 feet wide.
- The Chapel: A two-and-a-half-story rectangular-plan gable-roofed section that extends north from Section A (see **Photos 3, 4, and 5**). It measures approximately 80 feet long by 40 feet wide. While the Chapel was built on roughly the same alignment as Section A and functions as a northern extension of the latter, the Chapel's east and west exterior walls and roof ridge are off-set slightly to the west of Section A and its roof ridge is slightly higher than that of Section A.
- Enclosed Porch: A single-story former porch, now enclosed, projects from the front (east) façade of Section A and the south end of the façade of the Chapel section (see **Photos 1, 2, and 3**). The flat-roofed Enclosed Porch section is approximately 67 feet long and 22 feet wide.
- Section B: A two-and-a-half-story ell that projects from the west elevation of Section A (see **Photos 6 and 7**). It has a gable roof with a wood cornice and returns; shed-roofed dormers rise from each roof slope. The section measures approximately 33 feet by 28 feet.
- East Kitchen Wing: A single-story flat-roofed kitchen wing extends from the south elevation of Section A (see **Photo 1**). It measures approximately 28 feet by 24 feet.
- West Kitchen Wing: A single-story flat-roofed kitchen wing extends from the south elevation of Section B (see **Photo 8**). It measures approximately 28 feet by 26 feet and has an angled southwest corner.
- Rear Entry Porch: A small single-story shed-roofed enclosed entry porch projects from the rear (west) elevation of Section A between Chapel and Section A (see **Photo 6**). It measures approximately 7 feet by 7 feet.

The east elevation of Villa St. Joseph, historically the front façade, consists of the two-and-a-half-story core of the building (Section A), the Chapel section extending to the north, and the flat-roofed Enclosed Porch along the first story of the façade. The single-story flat-roofed East Kitchen Wing extends from the south end of the Section A. The kitchen wing contains an entry, a modern window, a large metal vent, and a metal ladder leading to the roof. A modern wooden deck with wood railing is situated in the angle formed by the East Kitchen Wing and the Enclosed Porch. The Enclosed Porch contains entries on its south elevation (accessed via the wooden deck) and on its east façade. The east façade of the Enclosed Porch is lined with windows: four to the south of the entry and nine to the north of the entry. All of these contain modern one-over-one-light sash. The first story of the front façade of Section A is obscured by the Enclosed Porch. At the second-story level, Section A contains five bays, evenly spaced, each containing a window. Some of the windows appear to contain wood casement sash. Similar windows occupy each of the five bays of the shed-roofed dormer that rises from the eastern roof slope of Section A. The east façade of the Chapel section is divided into eight bays. Each of these also contains modern windows at the first and second story the attic dormer level; the spacing of the windows is not even nor is it consistent between story levels. The southern two bays of the ground story of this section are obscured by the Enclosed Porch.

The north elevation of the building is chiefly comprised of the gable end of the Chapel section. This is five bays deep and includes a window in each bay at the second story level. At the first-story level, a small on-bay-deep single-story flat-roofed projection occupies the center three bays of the elevation. At the attic level, a single door is located centrally in the gable field with a metal fire escape and ladder providing egress to the roof of the single-story projection.

The west elevation of the Chapel section is similar in character to the east elevation, including two doors and windows unevenly spaced at each story level. At the southern end of the east elevation, a rear ell (Section B) projects. The shallow gable roof of this section has a molded cornice with returns. While Section B, like the others, is clad with vinyl siding and chiefly contains modern one-over-one-light sash, a few historic windows are visible. They include (on the west elevation) multiple six-over-six-light wood windows at first-story level and wood casement-sash windows at second story level; and (on the north elevation) a projecting bay window (typical of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century) at second-story level. A small

rectangular window is placed off-center in the gable field on the west elevation. In the gap between Section B and the Chapel, a single-story enclosed Rear Entry Porch projects from Section A. This feature contains a central entry flanked by narrow one-over-one-light windows. A wide red brick chimney laid in running bond is appended to the west elevation of Section A (obscured by the Rear Entry Porch at first-story level). An eight-over-eight-light wood window occupies the bay immediately south of the chimney at second story level on the west elevation of Section A. At the south end of the west elevation of the building, the West Kitchen Wing projects. This later 20<sup>th</sup> century single-story addition has a concrete block foundation and is connected to the adjacent convent building with a flat roof, which effectively forms a port-cochere between the two buildings.

The south elevation of the building includes the south gable end of Section A, which is obscured at the first-story level by the projecting East and West Kitchen Wings. The shallow gable roof of Section A has a wood molded cornice with returns. In the gable field, two paired windows with smaller square windows above them appear to contain multi-light wood sash. The paired windows also provide egress to a metal fire escape which consists of a landing and a stair which leads to the roof of the East Kitchen Wing.

#### *BUILDING INTERIOR*

The interior of the basement, first, second, and third story (attic) conditions are described in this section; less detail is provided in the description regarding the 20th century sections of the building such as the Kitchen Wings. Photograph keys and photographs are included in the Photographs section. Recent plans of the building are included in **Attachment A**.

The interior of the building revealed evidence of several building campaigns and periods of remodeling and redecorating. The primary structural materials of the various sections were only discernable from the interior and this information, combined with interior detailing provided important clues regarding the construction chronology of the building. While sheetrock, plaster, and other wall surfaces obscured these building materials in most locations, the structural materials were visible in discrete locations such as closets. These glimpses confirmed that the walls of Section A are constructed of stone and are well over one foot thick in some locations (based on the site visit and building plans). Stone walls were observed at the first-story level and at the attic story level, terminating immediately below the rafters. The walls of Section B are constructed of red brick, observed at first, second and attic stories. The wall between Sections A and B is thick, consistent with the stone construction of Section A rather than the slightly thinner brick construction of Section B. This indicates that Section B was constructed as a brick ell onto an existing stone Section A. The remaining sections of the building appeared to be of wood-frame construction.

On the ground story, Section A includes a Dining Room to the south, a Hall which runs east-west through the central bay, and a Great Room to the north. The Great Room as currently configured is contained partly within Section A and partly within the Chapel addition. Within the ground floor of Section A, most of the detailing appears to have been the product of one or more late 19<sup>th</sup> century remodeling campaigns, including double-leaf pocket doors with etched glass between each of the three rooms, wood baseboard and chair rail moldings and door surrounds (see **Photos 9 and 10**). Exposed wood joists are visible in the ceiling of the hall. The Great Room features a coffered ceiling and decorative elements that chiefly reflect a Colonial Revival/ Neoclassical-style aesthetic emblematic of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (see **Photos 11 and 12**). Examples include attenuated pilasters and friezes with ellipses and swag ornamentation surrounding windows that line the east wall between the Great Room and the Enclosed Porch. The windows contain double-leaf casement sash. The decorative surrounds are echoed on the west wall around blind panels, creating a formal symmetry. The connections between Section A and the Enclosed Porch include two doorways at the southern end of the Great Room, which have prominent molded surrounds and contain glazed double-leaf casements (see Photo 11). A wider doorway provides another connection between Section A and the Enclosed Porch (see **Photos 13 and 14**). This is distinguished with a rope-molded surround and paneled jambs and soffit—these decorative elements appear to relate to the Italianate style of the later 19<sup>th</sup> century. The thickness of the window and door openings, however, reflects the stone

construction of the walls encased in the later finish work. The door that occupies the opening between Section A and the Enclosed Porch is a massive paneled oak door with bulls-eye glass (crown glass) lights in the upper portion. This door appears to be an example of the Arts and Crafts style and likely dates to the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Enclosed Porch section is carpeted and has a dropped ceiling (see **Photo 15**). The north, east, and west walls are lined with windows which contain one-over-one-light sash. A line of wood columns with simple bases and capitals, remain within the room. These are the only clear visible remnant of this section's origin as a Victorian porch before it was expanded and enclosed.

The Chapel section, which dates to the late 1950s, is of wood-frame construction and features carpeted wood floors, vertical-board wainscoting, simple pilasters, attenuated metal columns, and regularly placed windows containing one-over-one-light sash (see **Photo 16**).

Section B, at the rear of the building, can be accessed from several points: from Section A, the West Kitchen Wing, and the enclosed Rear Entry Porch. At first-story level, Section B contains two identically sized bedrooms to the west and a hallway (oriented north-south) along the east wall. The hall also contains a stair to the second story. The doorways in Section B have shouldered surrounds emblematic of the Greek Revival style (see **Photo 17**). The doorway that communicates between Section B and the West Kitchen Wing features a three-light transom (see **Photo 18**). The doorway between Section B and the Rear Entry Porch is flanked with sidelights (see **Photo 19**). Both of these latter entryways would likely have communicated with the exterior when Section B was constructed. The two bedrooms have dropped ceilings and carpeted floors but several early windows are retained some of which contain twelve-over-twelve-light sash (see **Photo 20**). The doorways have molded surrounds and contain six-panel wood doors. The stair in the hall of Section B is of recent construction and does not appear to include original components.

At the second-story level, molded wood window surrounds and 19<sup>th</sup> century casement sash remain in some locations within Sections A and B. The projecting bay window on the north elevation of Section B retains wood sash (see **Photo 21**). Six-panel and four-panel wood doors are also in place in some locations. Little other detailing pre-dating the 20<sup>th</sup> century was observed at the second story level. Most of the rooms have dropped ceilings and relatively recent flooring or carpeting. In one of the second-story rooms in Section B, the brick walls are visible (see **Photo 22**). The brick is relatively large and irregular in shape with shades of brown, red and orange. It appears to have been laid in common bond. In some locations, wood nailers are laid between courses of brick.

At the third (attic) story level, Sections A and B retain some 19<sup>th</sup> century wood windows, but little else in terms of pre-20<sup>th</sup> century detailing (see **Photo 23**). Many of the rooms have been made full height at third-story level only through the 20<sup>th</sup> century addition of shed-roofed wall dormers. In general, the roof structure is obscured within the ceiling and is not visible. In two locations within closets in the third story, however, views are afforded the upper portions of the masonry walls of Sections A and B and parts of the roof structures of the two sections. In one of these locations (see **Photos 24 through 26**), at the south junction of Sections A and B, the upper portion of the stone wall and brick wall, respectively, are visible; they rise a little over a foot above floor level. The lower portions of the roof structures of each section are also visible. The bottom of the rear roof slope of Section A. A large hewn timber wall plate lies atop the stone wall. Hewn rafters are secured to the plate with nails. Sheathing boards are affixed to them, though the lower courses have been dislocated. Smaller-scantling sawn timbers are visible beneath the sheathing projecting toward the wall plate. The function of these is not clear; however, it is possible that they once secured an exterior cornice that was later removed when the brick ell (Section B) was added. The intersecting roof structure of Section B is also partly visible from the same closet space. It extends from the eastern portion of Section B over the western end of Section A and consists of sawn hemlock rafters and irregular sheathing boards. Another portion of the roof structure of Section A is visible from a second closet at third story level (see **Photo 27**). Here too, the upper portions of the stone wall are visible as well as a hewn wall plate, hewn rafters, and wide sheathing boards.

The basement of the building, accessed from the East Kitchen Wing, includes a full stone basement beneath the Kitchen Wing, Section A, and the Chapel. Section B does not have a basement and limited views into the shallow crawl space beneath this section were available. An early batten door with a smaller hinged board within it (the function of this feature is not clear) occupies the doorway to the basement of Section A (see **Photo 28**). The basement walls are stone and large hewn joists span its width (see **Photos 29 and 30**). While these were not systematically measured, they appeared to be approximately a foot in depth. In addition to a few concrete block supports and brick partition walls, two brick features were observed within the basement of Section A. A semi-circular brick wall feature in the western portion of the Section A may represent the remnants of a cistern (see **Photo 31**). An arched brick feature at the south end of Section A appears to be a relatively narrow hearth support, possibly dating to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (see **Photo 32**). The section of the basement beneath the Chapel also featured stone walls and lighter sawn joists with cross bracing.

## 2. HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The following background history of the property and its vicinity is largely abstracted from the Phase 1A Archaeological Study prepared for this project (AKRF 2022). Also reviewed was an unpublished manuscript detailing the history of the property prepared by Peigi Mulligan in 2022.

### *Early History of the Property & Vicinity*

European colonization of the Ulster County area was largely started by the Dutch in the 1620s and intensified after the English took control of the colony in the 1660s. Among the first colonial occupiers of the area around the Property were George Meals and Richard Hayes, English colonists who “secured from the colonial authorities four considerable parcels of land in the town of Saugerties” in 1685 (Brink 1902: 18). These parcels were gradually divided into smaller land grants and were sold to many of the families of European descent who would occupy the Saugerties area for generations. In 1731 and 1747, respectively, parcels between the Esopus Creek and the settlement of Glasco—including the Property—were granted to a father and son pair, Peter van Leuven (1676-1767) and Andries van Leuven (1705-1760), respectively (ibid).<sup>1</sup> The Van Leuven family would own their land for nearly a century and Andries van Leuven is believed to have built a house on the site of what is now the Villa St. Joseph (Miller 1957; DSS, personal communication 2021). Andries van Leuven died in 1760 and was buried in a small family cemetery that remains extant within the Property, as described in greater detail below (Miller 1957). The Van Leuven family would own the land including the Property through the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1810, a small ferry that crossed the Hudson River was established by William McCaffrey on the Van Leuven property that would remain in use for many decades (Brink 1910).

What is now the Town of Saugerties was included within the town of Kingston until 1811, when it was established as a distinct municipality (Brink 1902). Three households associated with the surname Van Leuven were recorded within Kingston in the 1790 U.S. Census, including the households of Andrew, John, and Martin van Leuven. Of these, all recorded individuals were of European descent with the exception of three enslaved persons of African descent who were recorded within the household of John van Leuven. The three Van Leuven households also appear in the 1800 census, at which time John van Leuven’s household included five enslaved persons and Andrew van Leuven’s included one enslaved person. The 1810 census includes only the household of Peter A. van Leuven in the community of Kingston, which comprised seven individuals of European descent and one enslaved individual of African descent. The 1820 federal census identifies only the home of Margaret van Leuven within the community of Saugerties, which included a total of four persons of European descent.

The Van Leuven Family Burial Ground appears to have been established on the Property by 1760 and was in use by the related Van Leuven, Overbagh, and DeWitt families through at least 1844. The cemetery is

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<sup>1</sup> Peter’s father, Andries Pieterse van Leuven, is believed to have constructed the earliest components of what is now known as the Bevier House, currently the home of the Ulster County Historical Society, in the 1680s (UCHS 2021).

located approximately 300 feet northwest of the modern Villa St. Joseph, believed to be located on the site of the former Van Leuven house. At least fourteen individuals are known to have been interred in the cemetery based on tombstone inscriptions copied by Dr. J. Wilson Poucher on November 10, 1930, and later supplemented by Lila James Roney (Poucher 1931; Roney 1936).

Peter A. van Leuven died intestate in 1817 (Ancestry.com 2015). In 1824, several properties representing hundreds of acres of land owned by his descendants John A. Peter A. Clarissa, Isaac, Andrew, and Abraham van Leuven were sold in multiple transactions to Peter A. Overbogh and Samuel Legg by Sherriff John Deyo to settle unpaid debts and other claims owed by the Van Leuven estate (Ulster County Liber 26, Page 490; Ulster County Liber 27, Page 247). Peter A. Overbogh already owned land in the area at the time of his 1824 purchase and was related to the Van Leuven family by marriage. Overbogh (1779-1842), a reverend, had married Marytie "Polly" van Leuven (1783-1832), the second of his three wives, around the turn of the 19th century (Smith 2004). Polly was the daughter of John and Rachel van Leuven (Smith 2004). John van Leuven (1754-1805), a veteran of the American War of Independence, was the son of Peter van Leuven and his wife (ibid). Polly and Peter Overbogh had five children: John van Leuven Overbogh (1806-1853); Rachel Ann Marie Overbogh (1810-1865); Titus Overbogh (1813-1828); Sarah Margaret Overbogh Osterhout (1818-1874); and Louisa Overbogh DuBois (1821-1842) (ibid).

Following the death of Peter A. Overbogh in 1842, his oldest surviving child, John van Leuven Overbogh, sold a 199.1-acre portion of the Overbogh estate to a group of individuals that included John's sister, Sarah M. Osterhout and Elijah DuBois, who was both the brother-in-law and son-in-law of John V.L. Overbogh through his marriages to Louisa and Elena Overbogh (Ulster County Liber 66, Page 153; Smith 2004). The sale of the property reserved ownership of the Van Leuven/Overbogh family burial ground for the Overbogh family and also included an easement granting the Overbogh family and its heirs the right of passage to access both the cemetery and the ferry that Peter Overbogh had continued to maintain on the Hudson River waterfront.

Following a mortgage default, a 102-acre parcel believed to include the Property was sold by a referee to Russell N. Isaacs in 1852. Once again, the deed recording the sale reaffirmed the Overbogh family's ownership of the family cemetery. The 1853 and 1854 Tillson and Brinks maps of Ulster County are among the first to clearly depict the approximate locations of buildings and identify their owners (see **Figure 3**). The maps identify "R.N. Isaacs" as the owner of what appears to be two structures located within the Property at the end of a precursor to what is now Spaulding Lane.

Property records indicate that the land of Henry Cruger was located to the south of the Isaacs property, which would appear to indicate that the Cruger house as depicted on the 1853/1854 maps was south of the present DSS Property. This appears to be consistent with later maps of property boundaries in the collection of the New York State Archives.<sup>2</sup> The Cruger estate was a 97-acre farm that was historically the southern part of the farm of Peter A. Overbogh. The farm was later transferred to John Rathbone, who in turn sold it to Lewis Cruger in 1848 (Ulster County Liber 71, Page 80). Lewis Cruger defaulted on a mortgage payment and the property was later purchased by his brother, Henry Douglas Cruger, at public auction in 1858 (Ulster County Liber 105, Page 433). Many of these individuals were also involved in the sale of the parcel that included the Property in 1852, when the land was sold to Isaacs.

Isaacs sold the land that included the Property to John R. Livingston in 1854 and following a mortgage default, an 89-acre portion was later transferred first to Stephen C. Williams and then to John Smedberg in separate transactions in 1858. "J.G. Smedberg" is identified as the owner of the land in the vicinity of the Property on the 1858 French map of Ulster County (see **Figure 4**).

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<sup>2</sup> <https://digitalcollections.archives.nysed.gov/index.php/Detail/objects/69082>



### THE SPAULDING ESTATE

The ownership of the Property after 1858 is unclear, but by 1870 it once again was under the control of the Overbagh family, as Peter T. Overbagh purchased the 89-acre parcel at a public auction in August of that year (Ulster County Liber 163, Page 620). While once again retaining ownership of the cemetery for his family, Overbagh would almost immediately sell the parcel to Gilbert Reynolds Spalding,<sup>3</sup> whose heirs would retain ownership of the land for decades following the purchase (Overbagh family, as Peter T. Overbagh purchased the 89-acre parcel at a public auction in August of that year (Ulster County Liber 165, Page 310). G.R. Spalding is identified as the owner of the Property on the 1875 Beers atlas (see **Figure 5**), which depicts two separate buildings on the land, at least one of which was used as a residence. These buildings are presumed to be the buildings that were later modified and now serve as Villa St. Joseph and the adjacent convent. The convent is believed to have been constructed by the Spalding family as a guest house (DSS, personal communication 2021).

Spalding was born in Albany in 1812 and initially entered the pharmaceutical business, working as a druggist and later as a doctor (*St. Louis Post Dispatch* 1880). As a result of an unsuccessful investment, he inadvertently became the owner of a traveling circus, eventually “manag[ing] it with such enterprise, liberality, and prudence that he became known as the leading circus manager of the country” (ibid: 3). Spalding was described as a “man of war than peace and fond of the fray,” becoming “hated” by his competitors, who referred to him as “Pills” (Day 1907: SM10). Following his initial investment in 1845, Spalding teamed with fellow circus manager Charles J. Rogers, and the Spalding & Rogers circus grew increasingly popular throughout the 1840s (ibid). As one of the first circuses to travel by rail, the circus almost exclusively toured large American cities and featured both large parades and musical performances (ibid). After Spalding’s acquisition of a cargo ship, the circus also toured internationally in South America and the Caribbean as well as in the rapidly settling American west, where their “Floating Palace” entertained new settlers along the frontier (ibid).

Spalding amassed a large fortune, large tracts of property in multiple states, and a number of theaters or performance venues (*St. Louis Post Dispatch* 1880). The Saugerties property remained his primary residence, and he and his wife, Cornelia, “spent most of their time improving and beautifying it” (ibid: 3). Before his death, the Spalding family named the estate “Falling Waters,” which was considered one of the most beautiful on the banks of the Hudson,” containing streams, waterfalls, and pear orchards all designed by Spalding (*Times Picayune* 1871). Much of the landscape design of the Property as it currently exists may therefore be the result of Spalding’s property improvements. In 1880, Spalding died of kidney disease and was interred in a family cemetery in Albany, where his wife, Cornelia, would be buried several months later (*St. Louis Post Dispatch* 1880). At the time of his death, Spalding was believed to be the richest man in Saugerties (*Putnam County Courier* 1880).

Spalding’s only surviving child, Charles A. Spalding, and his family would continue to occupy the Saugerties estate, named “Falling Waters,” as summer home for decades following Gilbert’s death (*Kingston Daily Freeman* 1912). The 1891 Beers atlas (see **Figure 6**) identifies “C.A. Spalding” as the Property’s owner, and depicts two buildings on the Spalding property, which may be the buildings now known as Villa St. Joseph and Imelda House. Spalding also had an automobile garage constructed on the property by George McNalley in 1911 (*Kingston Daily Freeman* 1911). *Picturesque Ulster*, a book first published in 1895, includes a photograph and extended description of the building: “A little further down the river, is located the home of Mr. Charles A. Spalding, ‘Falling Waters.’ We have heard and read so much about the old Dutch houses along the Hudson, that it gives me a deal of pleasure to write of one that was built two hundred yrs. ago and find it just as our old ancestors left it. This is the case with Mr. Spaldings home, build of stone with walls four feet thick, with heavy artistic beams just as they were built, large rooms, hospitable piazza, a place where one wants to lounge and enjoy the magnificent view...” (De Lissis

<sup>3</sup> While the name is also spelled “Spaulding,” the name now attached to modern Spaulding Lane, most historical records identify the family’s surname as “Spalding.”

1896). Charles A. Spalding died at his residence in Washington, D.C. in 1930 (*New York Herald Tribune* 1930).

#### *DOMINICAN SISTERS RETREAT AT FALLING WATERS*

Following Charles A. Spalding's death, the "Falling Waters" estate was sold for the first time since it was purchased by his father five decades earlier. The property was sold by Harold Deming—acting as the executor of the estate of Charles Spalding—and purchased by the DSS, also known as the Dominican Convent of Our Lady of the Rosary (*Kingston Daily Freeman* 1931). The Dominican Sisters of Sparkill is a branch of the Dominican Order, a collection of nuns and friars also known as the Order of Preachers ("OP"), or *Ordinis Praedicatorum* (McGreal 1997). In the late-19th century, the Sparkill motherhouse grew out of a larger New York City-based order, which was rapidly evolving to meet the needs of an expanding and urban population (*ibid*). In 1876, a pair of English sisters, Alice Mary Thorpe and Lucy Thorpe, founded the order that would later become the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill (*ibid*; Dominican Sisters of Sparkill n.d.; Thompson 1989). Known as the "Congregation of Our Lady of the Rosary," the order was devoted specifically to the care of impoverished women and orphaned children (McGreal 1997). By the 20th century, the order was increasingly focused on a mission of education (Dominican Sisters of Sparkill n.d.).

As the order grew in the early decades of the 20th century, it was able to purchase additional tracts of land in the Saugerties and Glasco areas. The purchase of the Falling Waters estate in 1931 was initiated by Mother Benigna Kelley (born Elizabeth Kelly) who saw a need for a vacation home where the sisters could find a retreat away from the pressures of their teaching and childcare duties (Dunning 2021). The order accordingly purchased two estates from the Spalding and Mulford families—the sites of what are now Villa St. Joseph and Villa Saint Dominic, respectively—to build their retreat on a combined total of 186-acres with varied ecological settings for the sisters to enjoy, including woodlands and waterways (*ibid*). Following the purchase of Falling Waters, the DSS planned "alterations and additions to the large residence in order to accommodate a large number of the sisters during the...summer" months (*Kingston Daily Freeman* 1931:2).

Over several decades, the Sisters made numerous improvements to the Property. Villa St. Joseph was renovated and expanded first in 1959 and again in 1976 (Dunning 2001). These expansions were designed to accommodate the growing needs of the Sisters as well as to support their expanding programming and support initiatives, including retreat programs, counseling services, and social justice initiatives (*ibid*). In 2010, the Sisters signed a conservation easement agreement with Scenic Hudson and to provide public access to portions of the estate through the construction of hiking trails and parking areas (*ibid*; Bolitzer 2011). The initial conservation easement involved nearly 194 acres of land (Ulster County Document Number 2010-00009972). In 2015, the easement was amended to formally sell approximately 149 acres of the Falling Waters property—now known as the Falling Waters Preserve—to Scenic Hudson while subdividing the Property from the larger estate to remain under the ownership of the DSS (Ulster County Document Number 2015-0000755).

### **3. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT**

This section presents a brief overview of conclusions regarding the development of the building based on the evaluation of the physical characteristics of the Property and the results of the documentary research. In the broadest terms, the evaluation finds that the earliest extant section of the building is the stone-constructed core block (Section A) followed by the brick section (Section B) which forms a rear ell projecting from the west elevation of Section A. A number of changes were made to the building in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries during the period in which the Spaldings owned the property, including the addition of a front porch and a northern section which has now been subsumed into the 20<sup>th</sup> century Chapel section. Following the transfer of the property to the DSS in the early 1930s, additional changes were made during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These included the addition of the Chapel, the Kitchen Wings, and the Rear Porch as well as the enclosure of the front porch.

The core block itself (Section A) appears to have evolved over time. The massive hewn timbers and stone foundation walls visible in the basement suggest that the basement and possibly the first story may date as early as the 1730s (as suggested by secondary documentary sources) or to a date later in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is unlikely, however, that the 18<sup>th</sup> century iteration of the house rose to its current two-and-a-half-story height. The building almost certainly began as a story-and-a-half stone house similar to other examples of the same period in the immediate vicinity such as the Kiersted House (1727), the Schoonmaker House (1727), and the Wynkoop House (ca. 1740). At some point, possibly in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the stone house was likely raised an additional story and given its current roof configuration. The 18<sup>th</sup> century form of the building was a story and a half, probably with the same steeply pitched gable roof typical of its contemporaries. The building may have been constructed as a five-bay structure; or may have begun as a smaller (perhaps three-bay) building and been expanded in the decades that followed its original construction. No specific evidence of an expansion was observed in the current basement which underlies the five-bay stone portion of the building (Section A).

The earliest known photograph of the building, which dates to ca. 1895 (see **Figure 7**), shows the roof pitch and cornice in the same configuration as they are currently. This configuration, shallowly pitched with cornice returns, is Classical rather than vernacular in character, probably dating to the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is likely, therefore, that at some point during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the 18<sup>th</sup> century stone house was either rebuilt from the basement up or (perhaps more likely) an additional story was built atop the story-and-a-half house and the roof form was altered.

Another major change that would have occurred in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century was the addition of the brick ell on the rear of the building (Section B). This section was likely constructed between the 1830s and 1850s based on its Greek Revival-style architectural characteristics, including its roof configuration, window frames, shouldered door surrounds, and some of the extant windows and doors. The sawn roof framing members of Section B are consistent with a structure of this period. The junction of the roof frames observed between Sections A and B suggest that the roof of Section A was likely already present and in its current configuration before Section B was added. In this junction area it can be seen that the relatively large hewn roof timbers and roof sheathing of Section A were subsequently overlain by the Section B roof. In addition, smaller wood members projecting from an opening in the eaves of the Section A roof sheathing may have functioned to fasten a cornice that would have been in place on the rear eaves before they were subsumed within the interior of the Section B roof. If this is the case, Section A may have been raised to its current height during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and Section B may have been added shortly after, in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

The late 19<sup>th</sup> century photograph of the south and east elevations of the building, referenced above, shows that the Section A gable was entirely constructed of masonry at that time. In contrast to present conditions, there was a brick end chimney and no windows in the gable field (**Figure 7**). A single-story masonry addition with a brick chimney projected from the west end of the south elevation of Section A. A glass greenhouse projected from the west end. The rear brick addition (Section B) is visible in the photograph with a gable dormer (unlike the shed dormers in place today). A front porch with Classical columns is visible along the front façade and a two-story porch appears to be on the north side, barely visible in the photograph. The porch was likely added during the ownership of the Spalding family; and based on its Neoclassical architectural character, it probably only slightly predated the photograph. The northern wing (now subsumed within the Chapel) and the porches were likely built at the same time, possibly in the early to mid-1890s.

Based on several early 20<sup>th</sup> century photographs of the building, Section A appears to be parged with stucco or limewashed, obscuring the stonework and any irregular horizontal scarring that may have existed at the junction between the original lower section and the later upper section (see **Figures 8 through 11**). Shed dormers had not yet been added to either section. The conservatory that had been appended to the south elevation in the ca. 1895 photograph had been removed by ca. 1930 (see **Figures 10 and 11**). In some of the photographs (see **Figures 8 and 9**), a two-story northern addition is visible that appears to be three or

four bays wide and three bays deep with a canted three-sided northern elevation. The front porch wraps around the north elevation and an upper-story porch with columns and wood railing stands atop it. The location of this addition is now subsumed within the Chapel section. During the site visit, a change in the flooring in the interior of the southern Chapel space was noticeable despite it being obscured from view by carpeting. This change corresponds to the canted northern end of the former porch. The open, colonnaded front porch was later extended and enclosed during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; the original columns of the porch are still visible within this interior space of the Enclosed Porch.

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century images show that the five bays of the front façade of Section A are wide and long, functioning as entries communicating with the porch. These openings, which would originally have consisted of a central entry flanked by two smaller windows, were likely enlarged and transformed into doorways in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The rope molding and casement sash currently visible on the interior are consistent with this period. The projecting bay window on the north elevation of Section B, a typical Victorian feature, was also likely added in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century-- this feature is visible in **Figure 8**.

A number of other changes were made to the interior of the building in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Section A was extensively reconfigured and redecorated. The south end chimney was removed and a series of windows were inserted into the gable end, which still exist today (see **Figure 10**). Based on the interior walls in the rooms containing these windows on the upper story, the masonry in the gable was removed along with the chimney.

The current Great Room on the ground floor interior is formed partly by Section A and partly by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century northern extension, which was in turn subsumed within the Chapel section in the late 1950s. As reflected in the house plans, the original stone walls at the northern end of Section A were demolished in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to accommodate the northern addition and the Great Room was formed within this enlarged space. The coffered ceiling treatment in this room was likely created in the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the Neoclassical treatment on the walls was likely added during the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century during the ownership of Charles A. Spalding. The space was later used as a chapel by the DSS until the Chapel extension was constructed.

Further changes made after the DSS took ownership in the 1930s were extensive. In connection with the construction of the Chapel section, much of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century northern addition were removed including the northern porches. The front porch was subsumed within the Enclosed Porch, with its long rows of modern windows. The single-story masonry wing was removed from the south elevation and the two modern kitchen wings were added. Continuous shed-roofed dormers were added to Section A, Section B, and the Chapel. Vinyl siding was added to the entirety of the exterior in 1981, obscuring the construction materials of all of the sections.

No evidence of historic fire mantels within the house was observed on the site visit. These may have been removed when the end chimneys were removed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The stone arched hearth support, which exists in a semi-ruinous state at the south end of Section A in the basement appears to be a late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century feature which would have supported a jambed fireplace. No 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century trim or finish work of any kind was observed within the earliest section of the house (Section A). The only components that appear to remain intact from this period are the stone walls and the hewn timbers in the basement. The earliest finish work that appears to remain in the house is the Greek Revival-style window and door surrounds in the rear brick ell (Section B).

#### **4. STATE/NATIONAL REGISTERS OF HISTORIC PLACES**

The National Register of Historic Places was created by the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 and is administered by the National Park Service within the U.S. Department of Interior. Administration occurs on the state level through federally mandated State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs).

Properties are evaluated for eligibility for listing on the National Register according to specific criteria laid out in NHPA (see **Table 1**). These criteria are intended as guidelines for determining the historic significance of buildings, sites, structures, and objects.

<b>Table 1</b> <b>National Register of Historic Places: Criteria for Evaluation</b>
<p>The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:</p> <p><b>A.</b> That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or</p> <p><b>B.</b> That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or</p> <p><b>C.</b> That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or</p> <p><b>D.</b> That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.</p>

In order to qualify for listing on the State and/or National Registers of Historic Places (S/NR), a property must not only possess historic significance according to the above criteria; but must also retain sufficient character-defining historic features, otherwise known as historic integrity. The National Register recognizes the historic integrity through seven qualities, including integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

It should be noted that a formal listing on the S/NR requires property owner consent. Furthermore, neither listing on the S/NR nor determination of eligibility for the S/NR provide any protection or regulation of the property unless a State or Federal action is involved, pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the New York State Historic Preservation Act (SHPA), the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), and other federal and state regulations governing historic properties.

## **6. EVALUATION OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE BASED ON NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA**

This report presented an analysis of the construction evolution of the Villa St. Joseph building. The building has long been suspected of incorporating components of the Van Leuven House, believed to have been constructed ca. 1735; subsequently owned by the Overbagh family and others in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the later 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was known as Falling Waters and was owned by the prominent Spalding family, before being purchased by the DSS in 1930.

The analysis concludes that portions of an early stone house do exist within the current building; however, the building has been modified and expanded numerous times over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries to the extent that the early components of the house are limited to the thick stone walls of the basement and first story of the core section (Section A) and large hewn floor joists visible in the basement of this section. This original section was also likely raised a story, probably in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Apart from the basic plan and configuration of Section A and the stone and hewn timber members of the lower story, no evidence of other early features commonly associated with New World Dutch building traditions were observed, such as jambless fireplaces or early vernacular finish work. While jambed fireplaces doubtless existed in the building at one time, the chimneys and mantels have been removed and no evidence of them remains apart from the ruins of a hearth support in the basement. The five-bay configuration of Section A, possibly original to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, is decipherable on close inspection but has been altered with the removal of the northern end of the Section A and its expansion in two subsequent building campaigns. The original window and door apertures on the front façade of Section A have been enlarged and several windows have been converted to doors. A brick ell on the rear of the building, likely added ca. 1850, retains some mid-19<sup>th</sup> century trim, windows, and doors on the interior. Apart from this, the interior reflects the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century periods.

From the exterior, the building is not readily recognizable as a building with early vernacular components. Modern additions and alterations dominate the north, south, east, and west elevations. The addition of continuous shed-roofed wall dormers on all sections greatly alters the overall form and appearance of the building. The addition of vinyl siding and modern windows obscures the original construction materials of the various sections of the buildings.

The house is possessed of an interesting and complex history and retains some basic physical components of its 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century construction periods. However, the house was so dramatically altered and expanded in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and in multiple 20<sup>th</sup> century building campaigns, that it has experienced a dramatic loss of historic integrity. Neither the exterior nor the interior of the building effectively communicate distinctive characteristics of a period or style due to the extensive nature of alterations over time. Distinctive features associated with 18<sup>th</sup> century vernacular buildings of the Hudson Valley have been largely obliterated by subsequent modifications. Changes made to the visual character of the house during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have entirely altered its historic appearance. The building lacks integrity of design, workmanship, materials, association and feeling as a standing structure and does not meet the S/NR eligibility criteria despite the long and compelling history of the Property.

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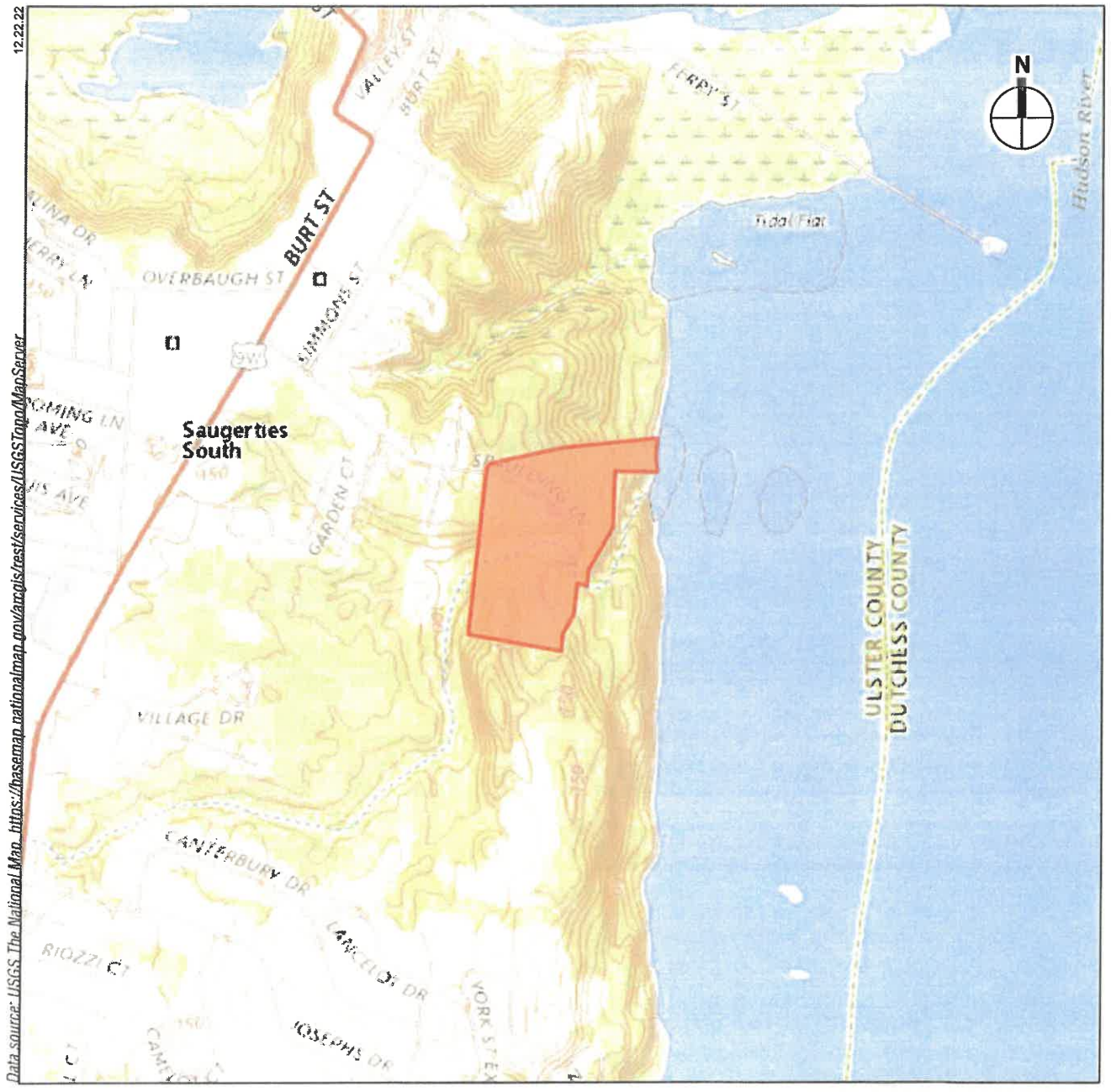
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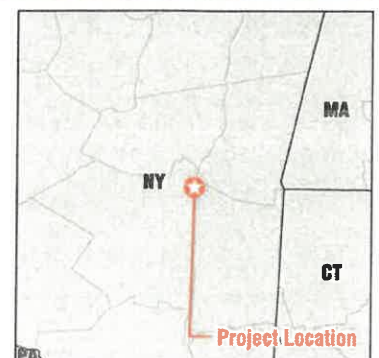


## **Figures**



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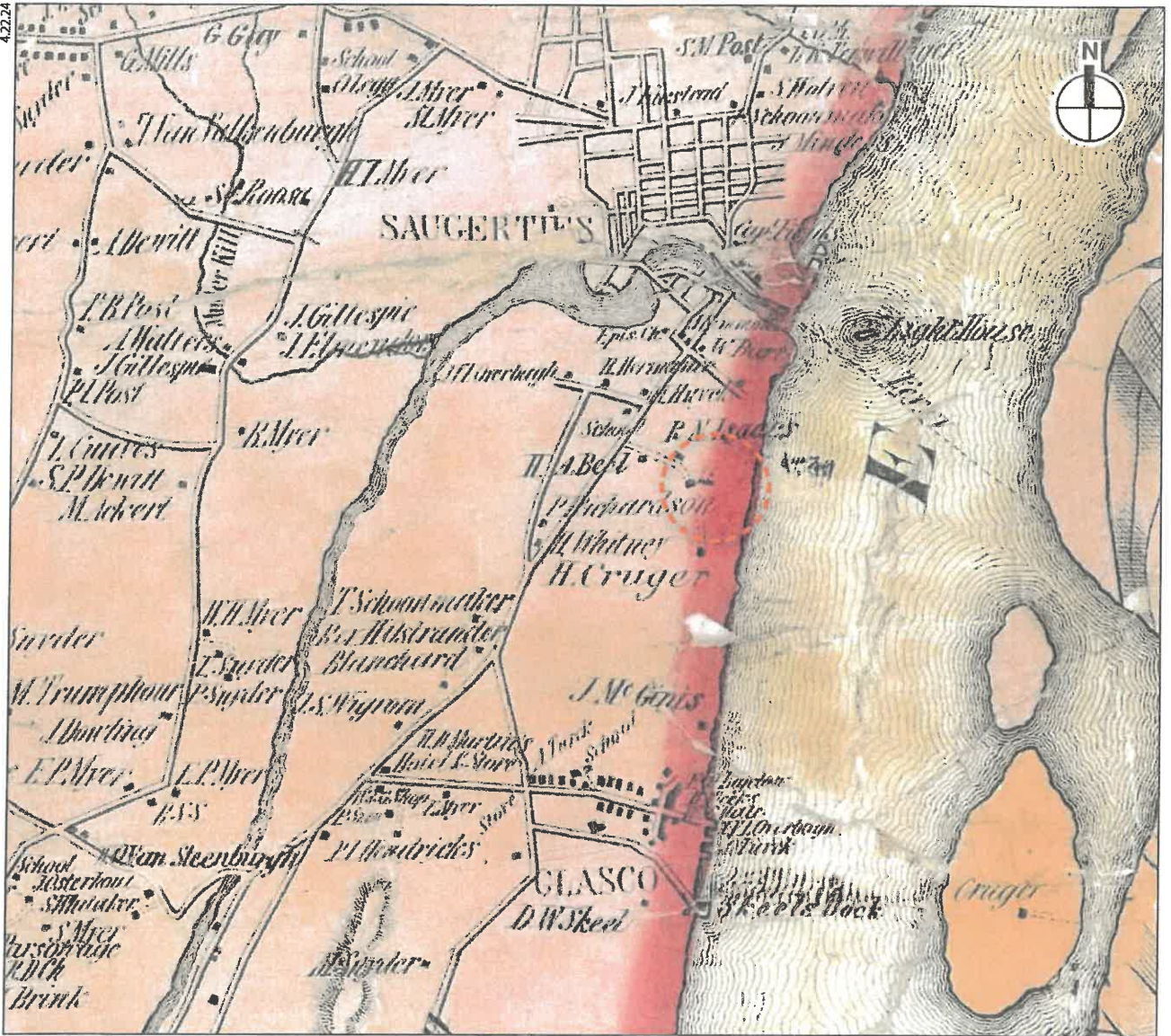
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USGS Topographic Map – Saugerties Quadrangle

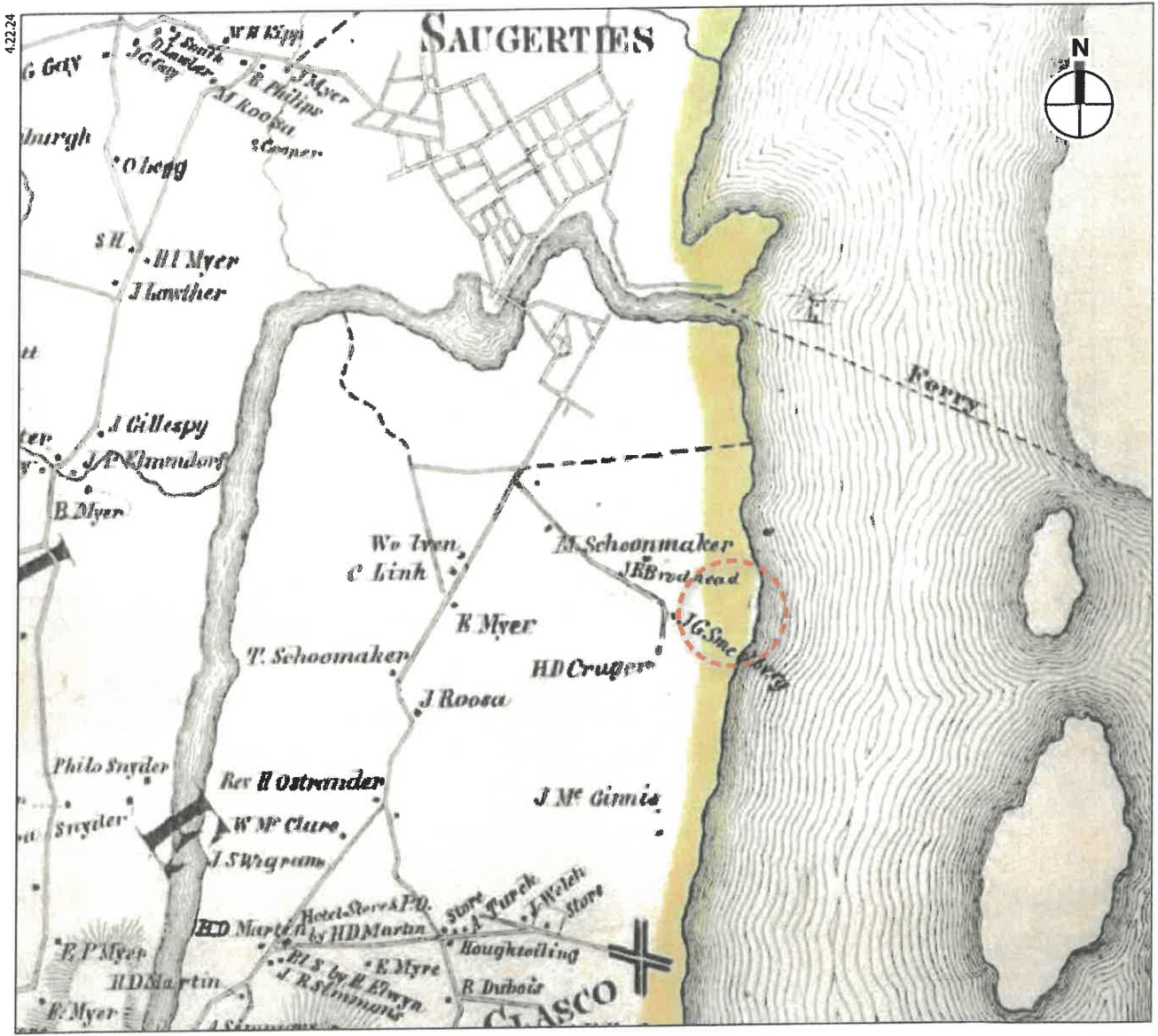


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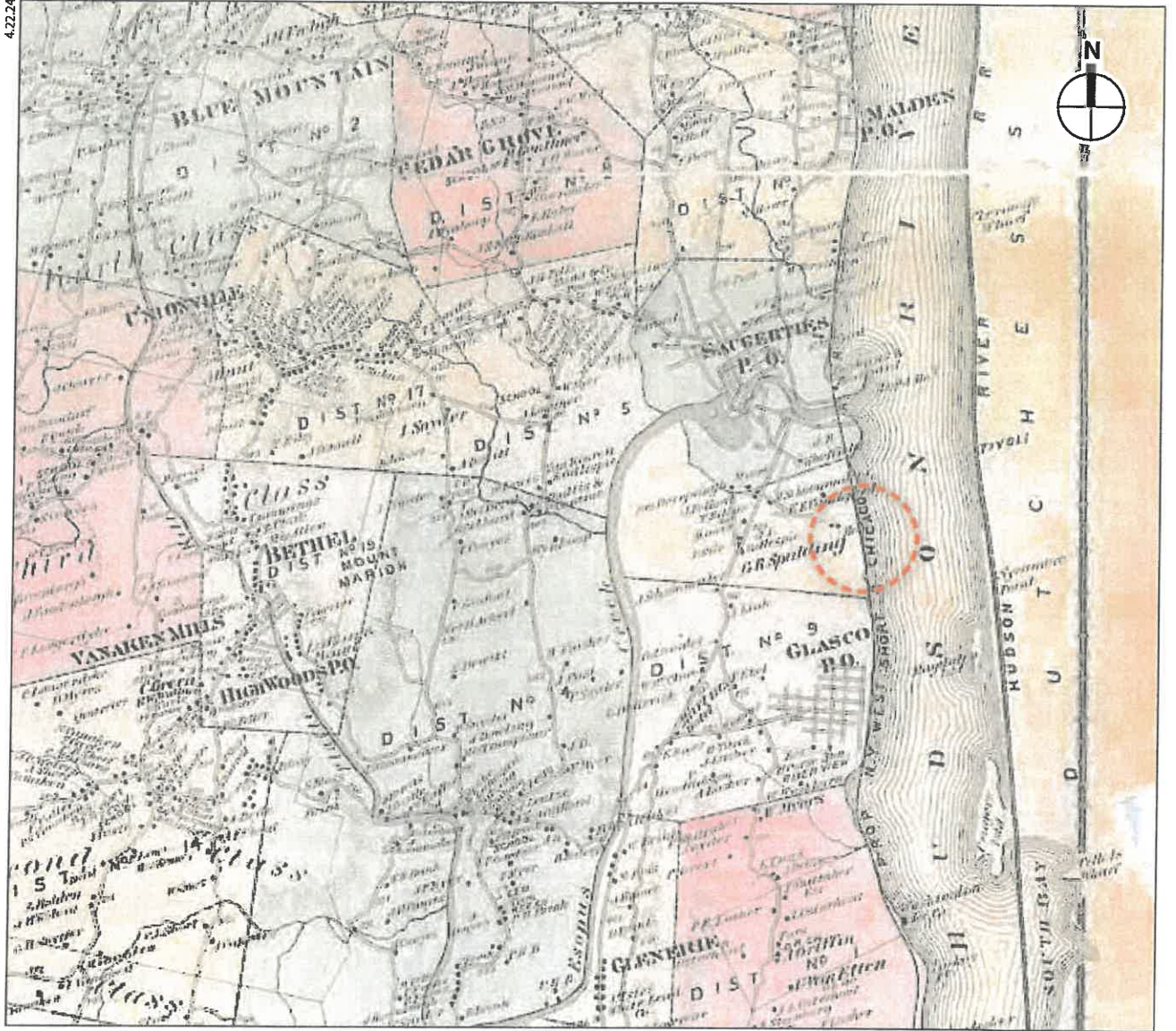
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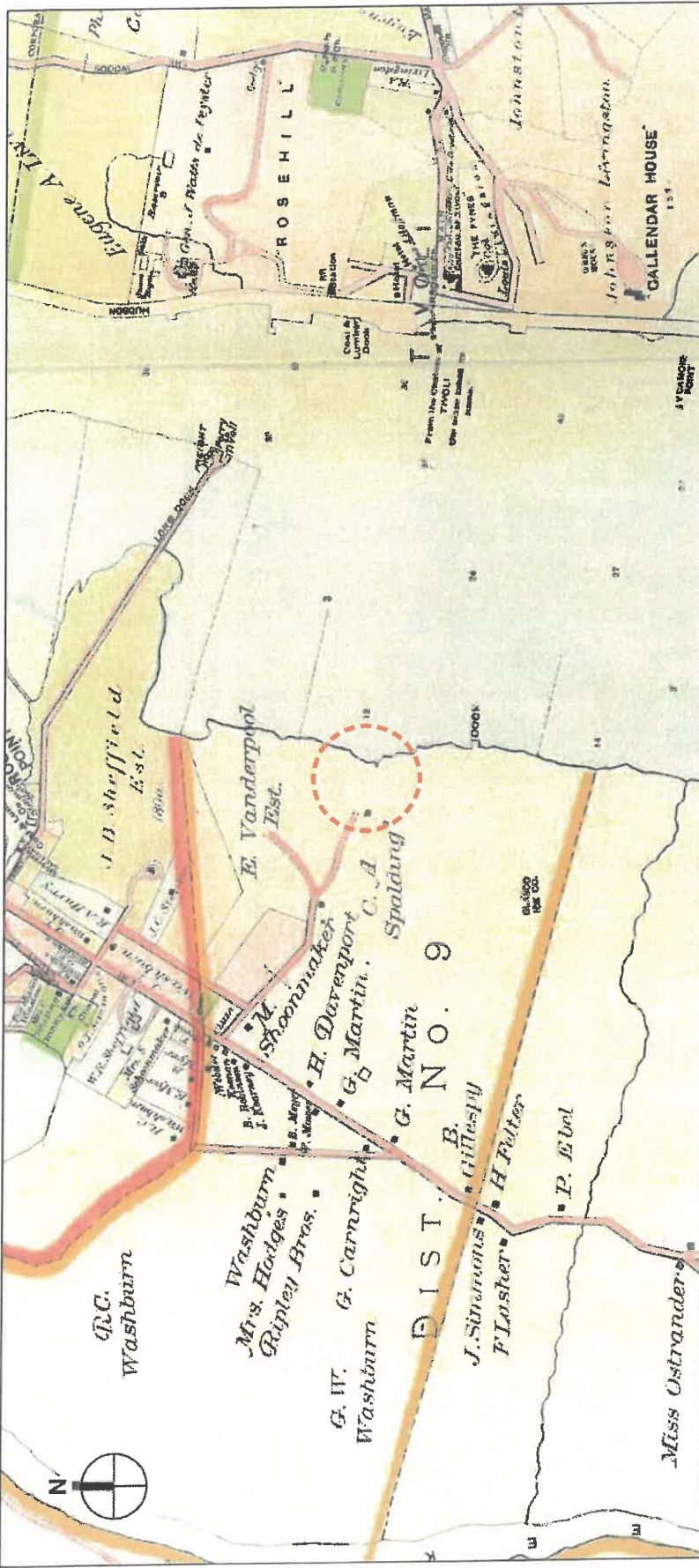
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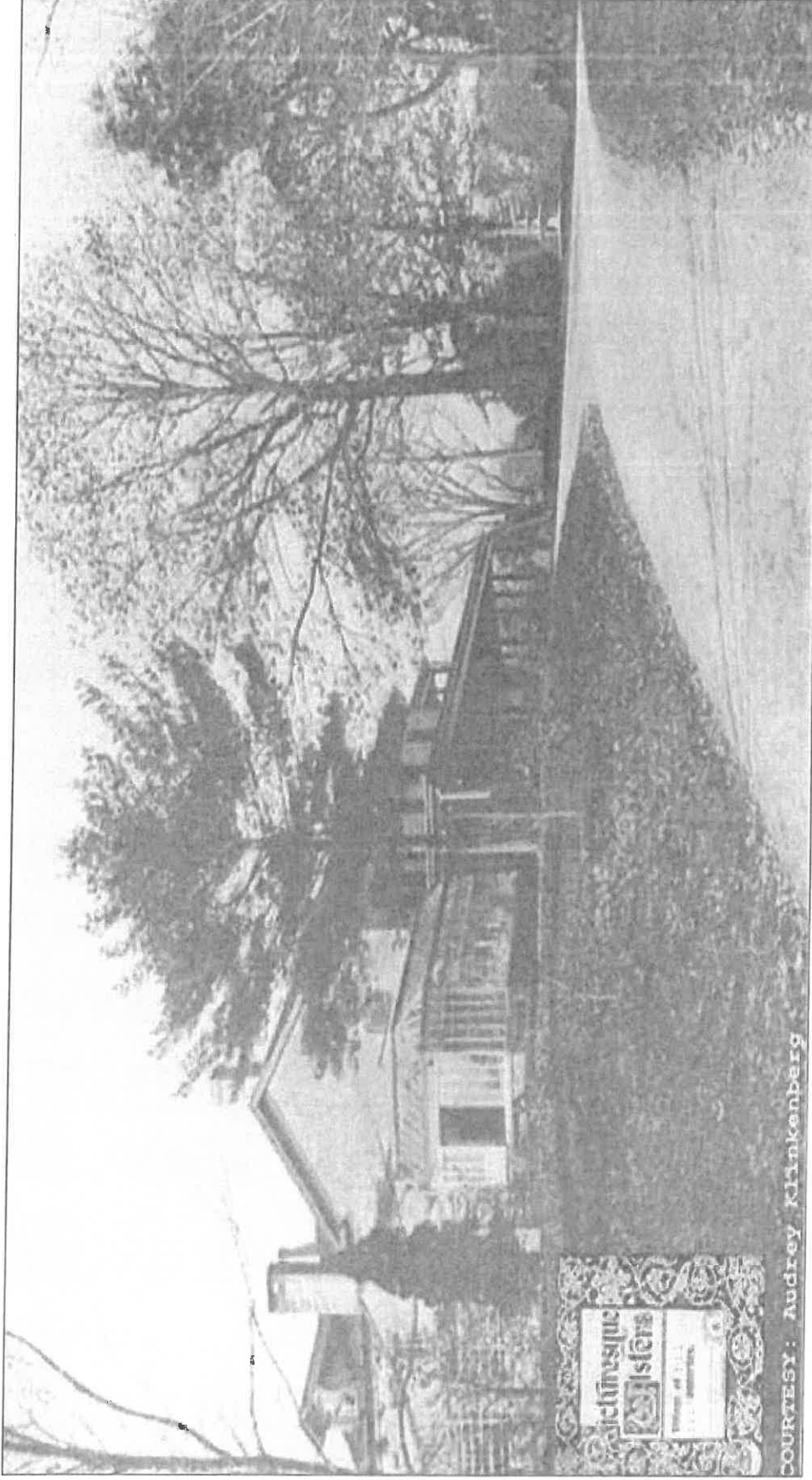
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 Approximate Location of the Property

1891 Beers Atlas  
Figure 6



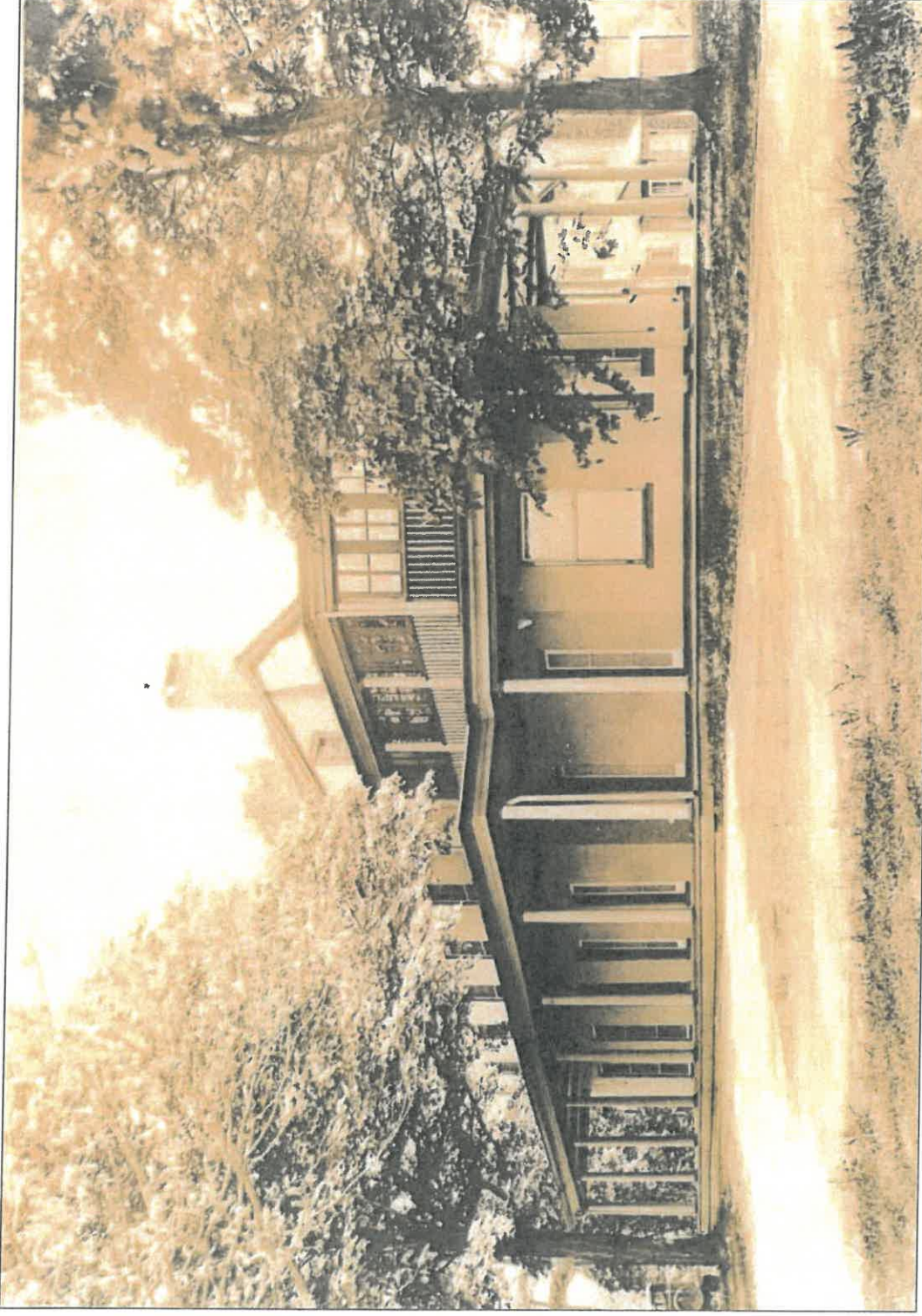
A view of the south elevation and front (east) façade of the house, ca. 1895 (This photograph appeared in Picturesque Ulster [De Lissis 1896]; this copy is reproduced from Mulligan 2022).



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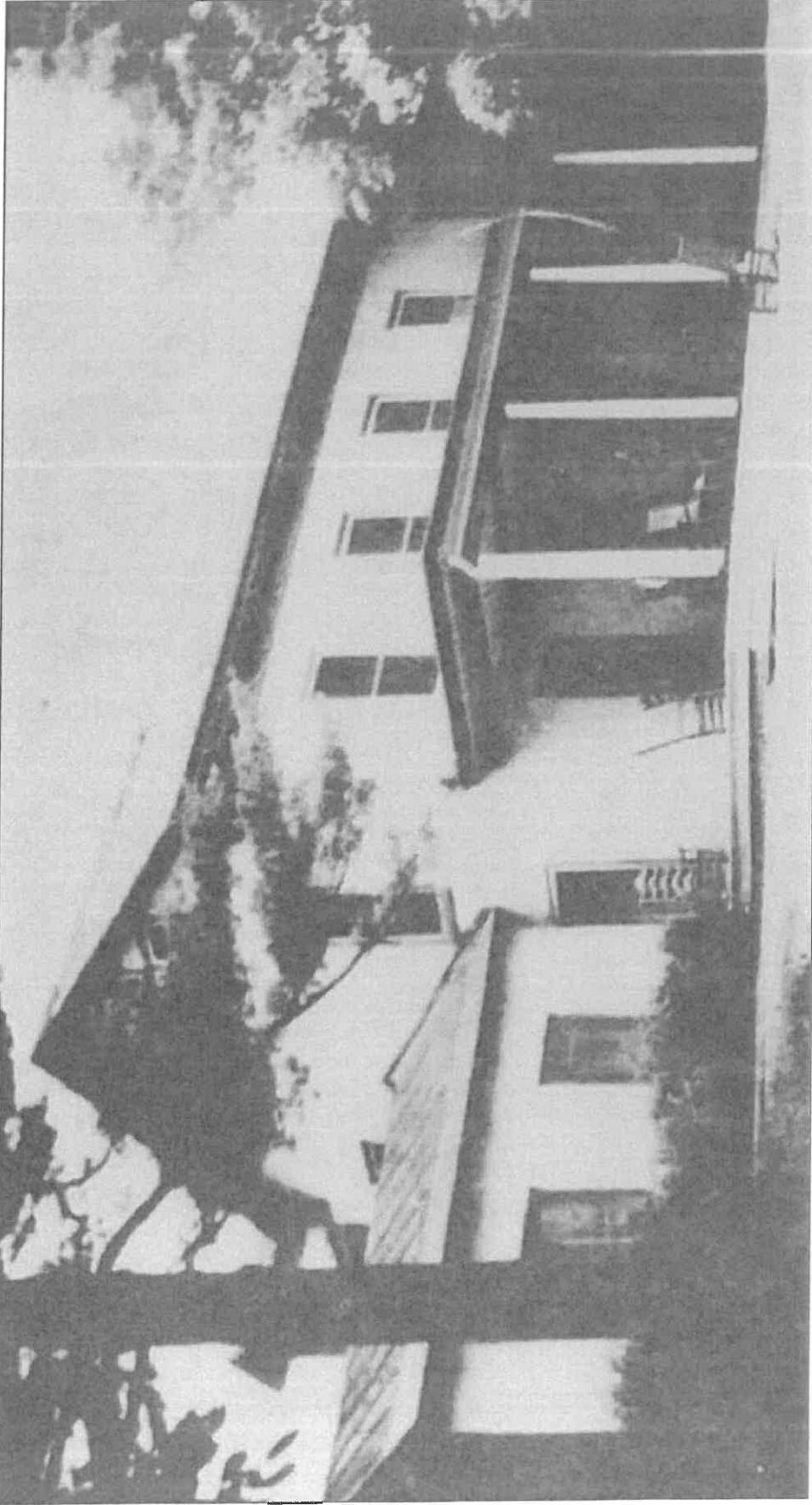


Undated photograph of the north elevation of the building, likely ca. 1930 (DSS Collection)

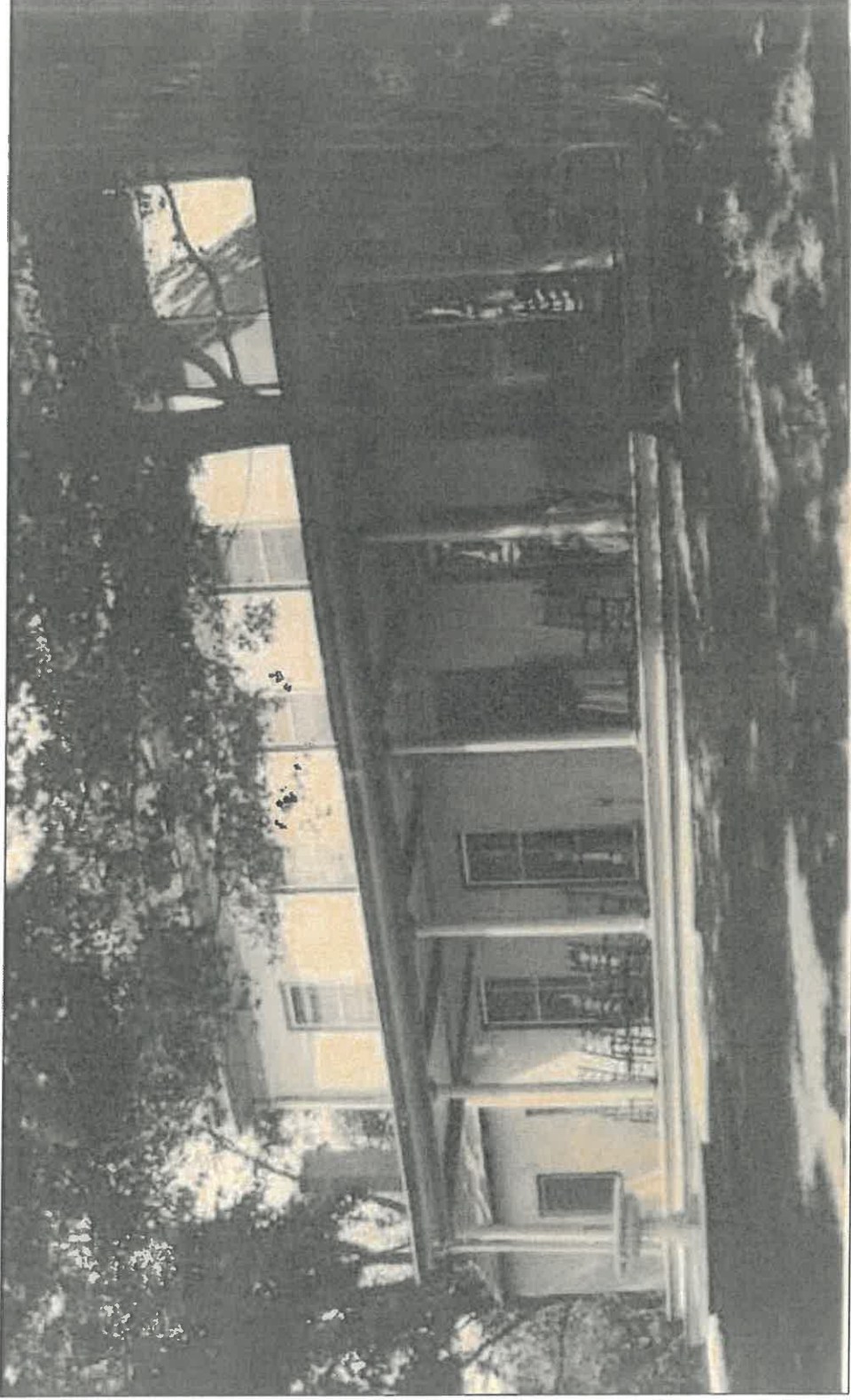


A 1931 photograph of the east and north elevations of the building (DSS Collection)

42224



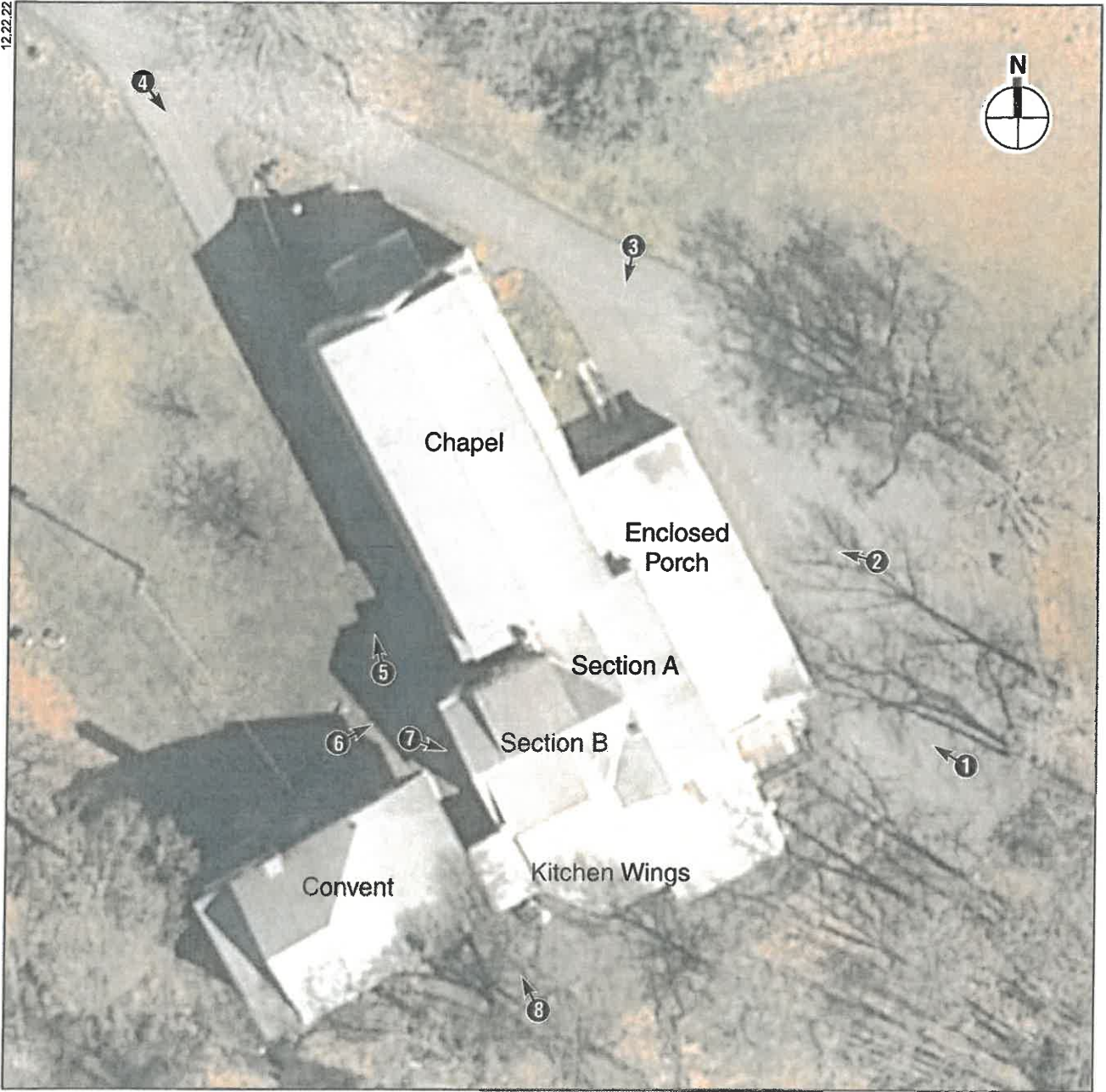
A ca. 1930 photograph of the south elevation and front (east) façade of the building (Old Stone Houses of Saugerties Township).



Ca. 1930 view of the front (east) façade of the building (DSS Collection)

## **Photographs**

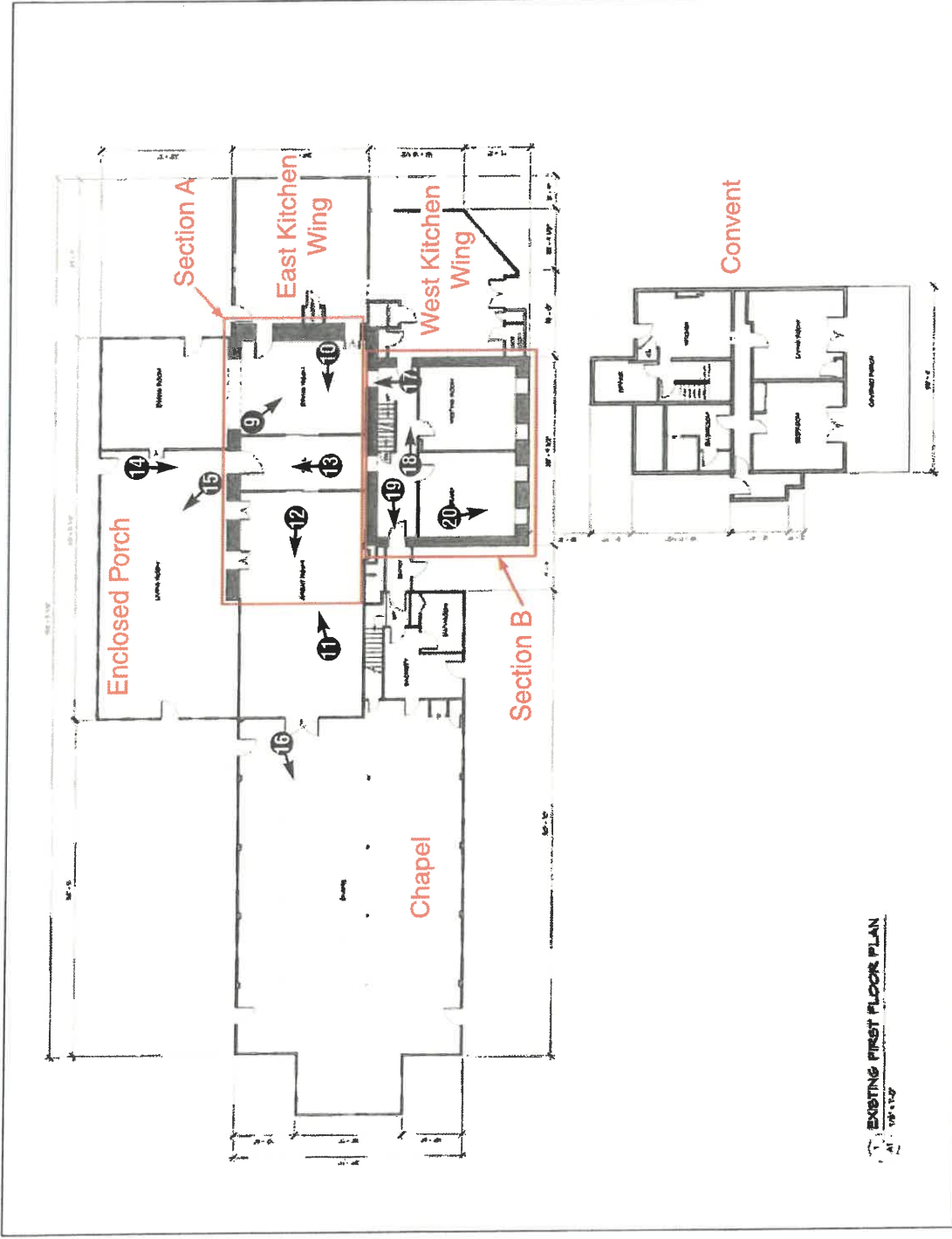
12.22.22



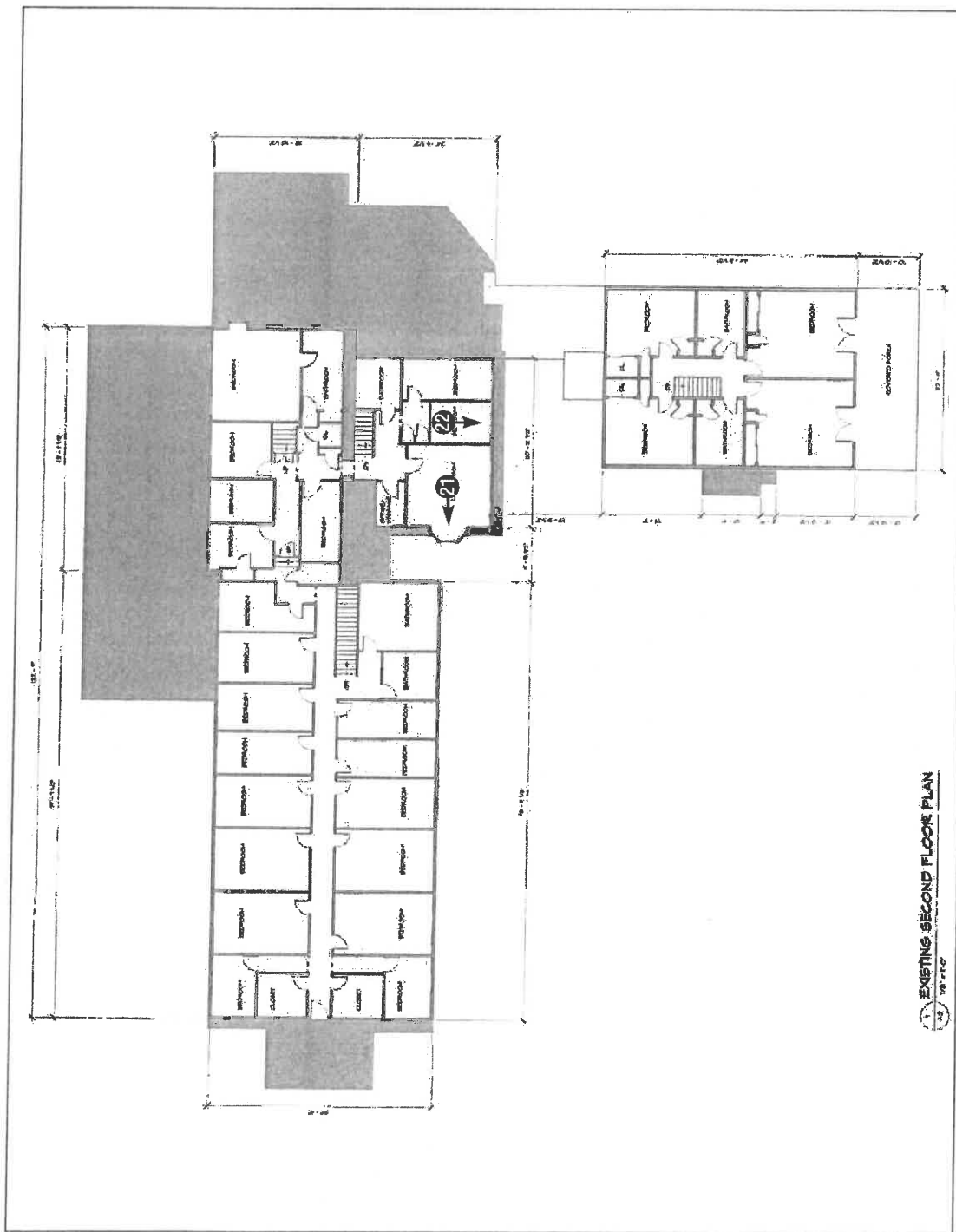
 Project Site

0  100 FEET

 Photograph View Direction and Reference Number

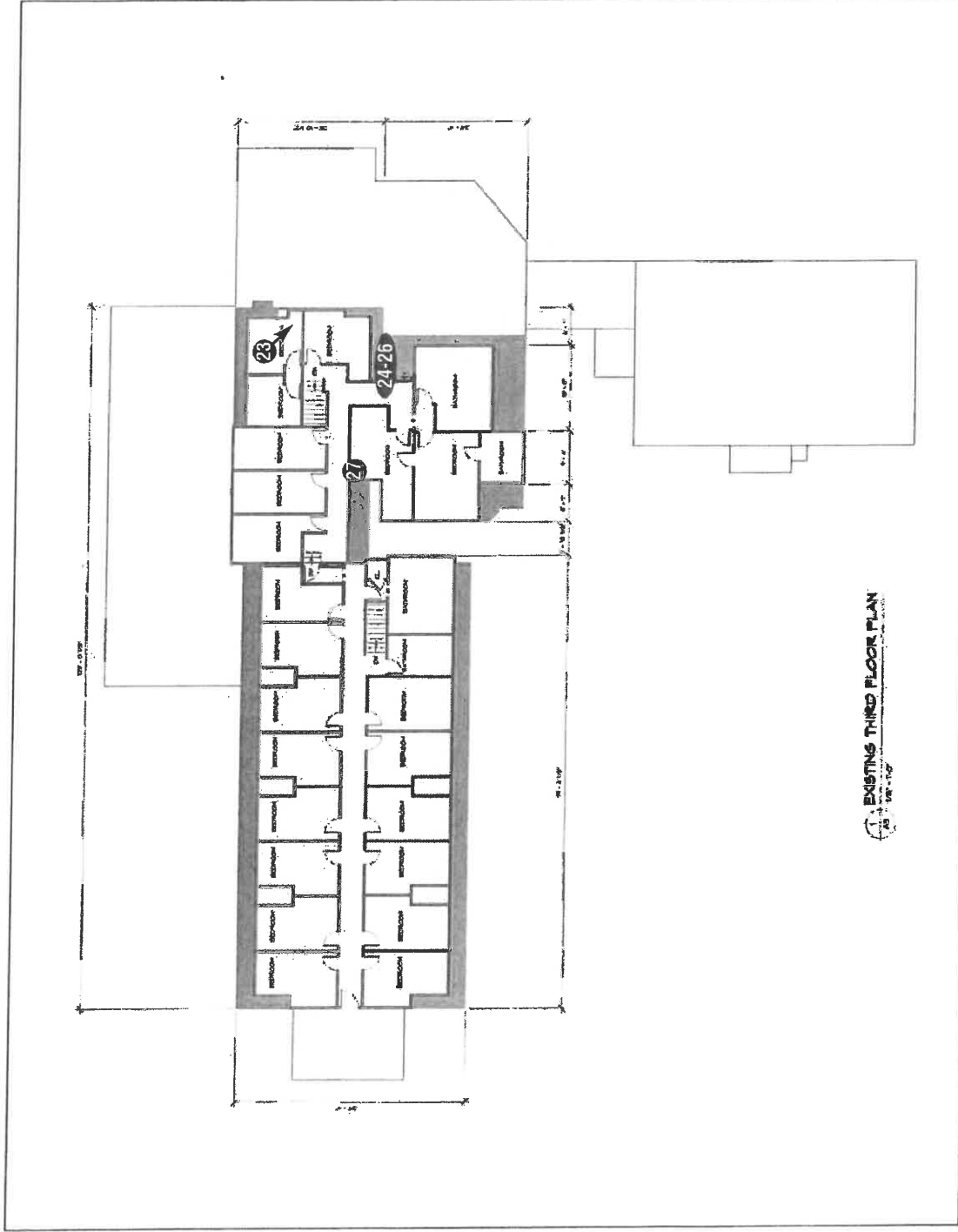


**1** → Photograph View Direction and Reference Number



**1** Photograph View Direction and Reference Number





① Photograph View Direction and Reference Number



**Photo 1.** The south and east elevations of Villa St. Joseph. The east kitchen wing is visible on the left. The former porch is visible at the right.



**Photo 2.** The east facade of Villa St. Joseph.



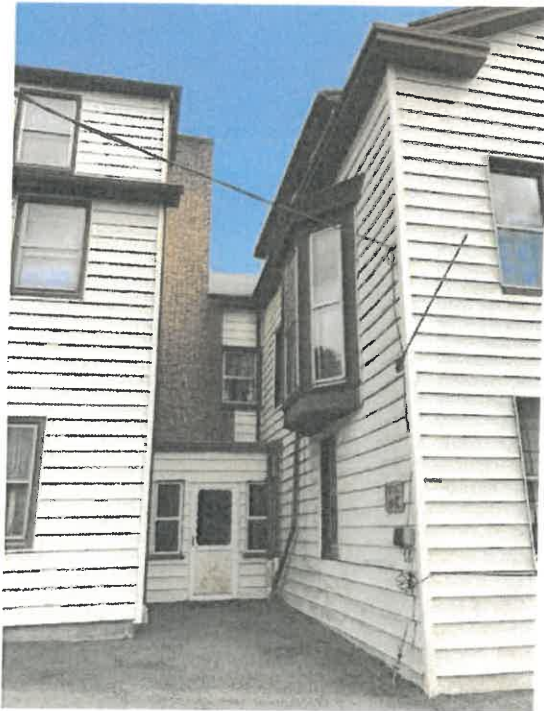
**Photo 3.** Another view of the east facade of Villa St. Joseph.



**Photo 4.** The north and west elevations of Villa St. Joseph.



**Photo 5.** The northern portion of the west elevation of Villa St. Joseph.



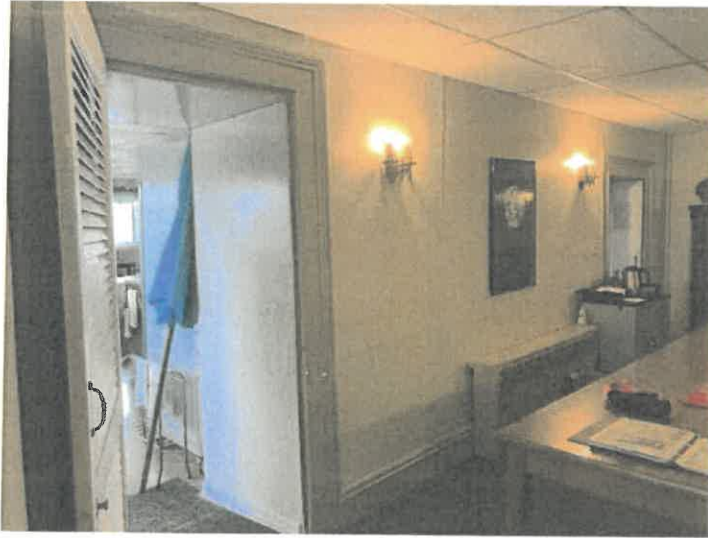
**Photo 6.** The west elevations of Villa St. Joseph showing the two-story ell to the right and a small entry foyer at center.



**Photo 7.** The west elevation of the two-story ell towards the south end of Villa St. Joseph.



**Photo 8.** The south elevation of Villa St. Joseph. At left-center is the port-cochere roof, which connects Villa St. Joseph to the convent building (far left). The kitchen wing is visible at right.



**Photo 9.** A view from the dining room within Section A, looking southwest towards the East Kitchen Wing.



**Photo 10.** A view from the dining room within Section A, looking north towards the Hall and Great Room within Section A.



**Photo 11.** Looking southeast within the Great Room towards two doorways (left) providing access to the Enclosed Porch.



**Photo 12.** A view looking north of the Great Room, which is contained partly within Section A and partly within the Chapel addition. The decorative elements of the room, such as the pilasters and swags on the walls, are Colonial Revival-style additions that likely date to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.



**Photo 13.** A view looking east at the door and doorway between the Hall within Section A and the Enclosed Porch.



**Photo 14.** The same doorway, looking west from the Enclosed Porch to the Hall within Section A.





**Photo 15.** A view from within the Enclosed Porch looking northeast.



**Photo 16.** A view within the Chapel, looking northwest.



**Photo 17.** From within Section B, looking east to the dining room in Section A. The doorways of Section B have shouldered surrounds. The wall between Section A and Section B is thick, suggesting the stone construction of Section A.



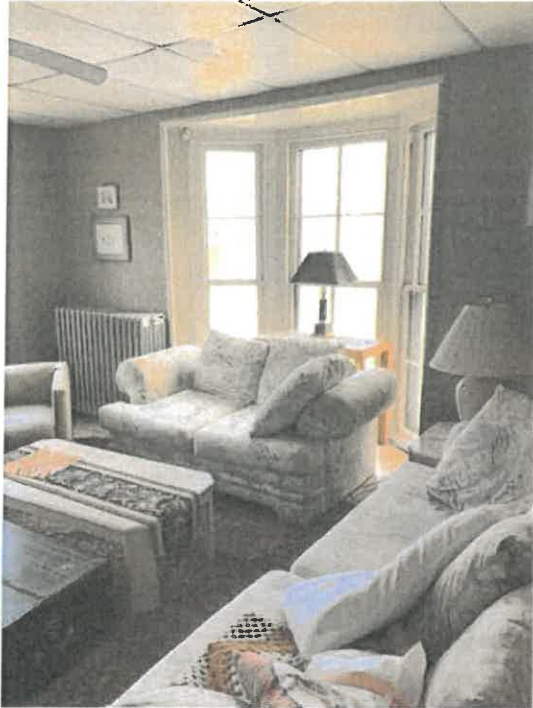
**Photo 18.** A view from within Section B, looking south toward the West Kitchen Wing. This doorway, which would likely have originally been an exterior entry, has a transom and a shouldered surround.



**Photo 19.** A view from within Section B, looking north toward the Rear Entry Porch. This would likely have been an exterior entry when this section was built.



**Photo 20.** One of the rooms on the first story of Section B. While largely remodeled, the room retains windows with twelve-over-twelve-light wood sash.



**Photo 21.** On the second story, the northwestern room in Section B includes a projecting bay window.



**Photo 22.** On the second story, the west wall of the small central bedroom of Section B affords a view of one of the brick walls that defines this section.



**Photo 23.** At attic story level, the south (gable end) wall of Section A within a bedroom at the southeast corner of the building.



**Photo 24.** A small closet at attic story level at the junction of Sections A and B provides a window into the construction of these two sections of the building. At center is the upper portion of the stone wall of Section A with the timber wall plate and earlier roof structure. To the extreme right, the intersecting brick wall of Section B is visible and a later roof structure above.



**Photo 25.** The same attic-level view of the intersection of the stone wall of Section A (left) and brick wall of Section B (right).



**Photo 26.** The same location as above, showing the rafters and sheathing that appear to represent the structure of the roof that connects Section B to Section A; this was laid over the original rafters and sheathing of Section A (at bottom).



**Photo 27.** Another glimpse into the roof structure of Section A is found in another small closet in the upper story of the building. Shown here is sheathing atop rafters seated on a timber wall plate set on the top of the stone wall of this section of the house.



**Photo 28.** A batten door in the basement of Section A.



**Photo 29.** A view within the basement of Section A, showing the stone foundation walls, a brick partition to left, and large hewn beams.



**Photo 30.** Another view of the large hewn beams within the basement of Section A.





**Photo 31.** A curved brick feature within the basement of Section A, possibly the remnant of a cistern.



**Photo 32.** An arched feature at the south end of the basement of Section A, likely a hearth support.

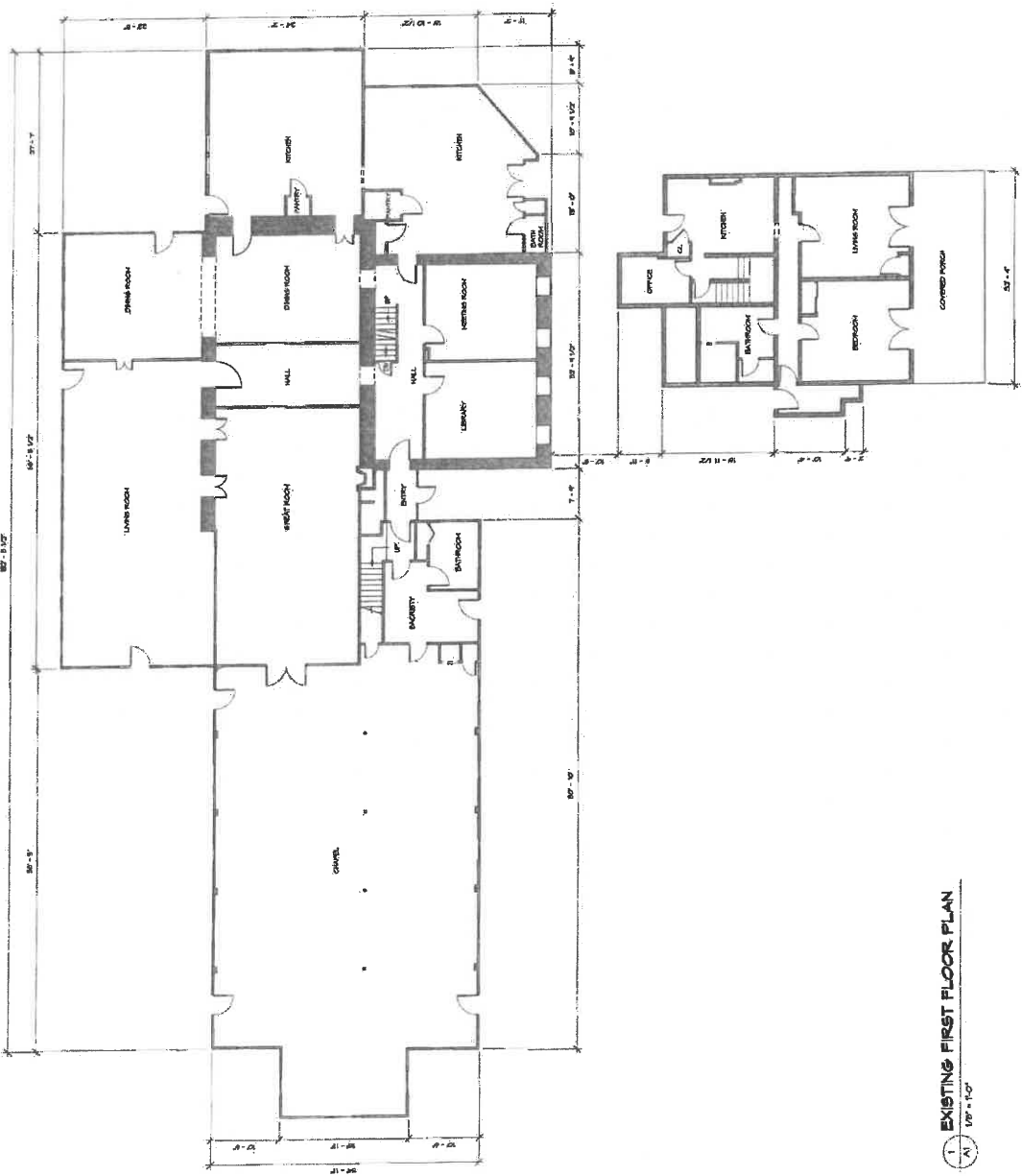
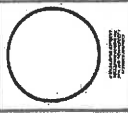
**Attachment A:  
Floorplans**

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 201 MAIN STREET, SUITE 201  
 NEW YORK, NY 10011  
 WWW.ALFANDRE.COM  
 PHONE (212) 512-4174

**VILLA ST. JOSEPH & CONVENT**  
 49 SPALDING LANE, SAUGERTON, NY 12471  
 EXISTING CONDITIONS  
 EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN

DATE: APRIL 8, 2019  
 PROJECT: SAUGERTON  
 SHEET: A1

**A1**



**EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN**  
 1/8" = 1'-0"

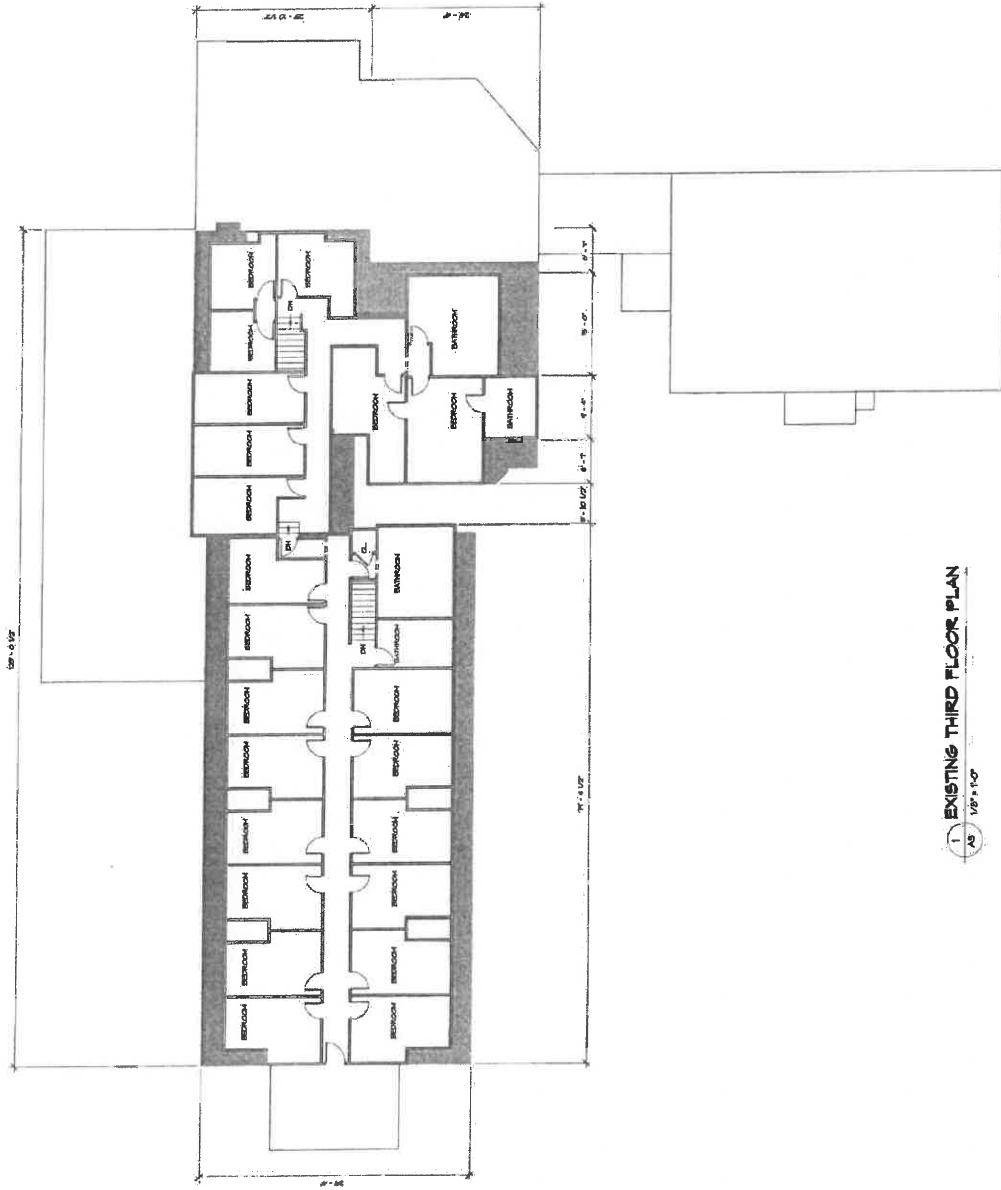
PROCESSED PER NY NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION



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 WWW.ALEXANDREARCH.COM

**VILLA ST. JOSEPH & CONVENT**  
 EXISTING CONDITIONS  
 49 SPALDING LANE, SUGARBROS, NY 12477  
 EXISTING THIRD FLOOR PLAN

DATE: APRIL 6, 2015  
 DRAWING: 15-103  
 SHEET: A3



1 EXISTING THIRD FLOOR PLAN  
 A3 1/8" = 1'-0"

PROPOSED FRONT FACED CONTRIBUTION

**Herter, Nancy (PARKS)**

---

**Subject:** FW: Protect Van Leuvan House & Cemetery, Spaulding Lane, Saugerties

---

**From:** Amanda DeSantis <[Amanda.DeSantis@exec.ny.gov](mailto:Amanda.DeSantis@exec.ny.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 7, 2024 12:05 PM  
**To:** Simons, Randy (PARKS) <[Randy.Simons@parks.ny.gov](mailto:Randy.Simons@parks.ny.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: Protect Van Leuvan House & Cemetery, Spaulding Lane, Saugerties

FYI

**From:** Stephen Q. Shafer <[sqs1@columbia.edu](mailto:sqs1@columbia.edu)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 7, 2024 7:51 AM  
**To:** [ulsterhistorian@aol.com](mailto:ulsterhistorian@aol.com)  
**Cc:** Office of the Lieutenant Governor Antonio Delgado <[LGNY@exec.ny.gov](mailto:LGNY@exec.ny.gov)>; [hinchey@nysenate.gov](mailto:hinchey@nysenate.gov); Erik Kulleseid (parks.ny.gov) <[erik.kulleseid@parks.ny.gov](mailto:erik.kulleseid@parks.ny.gov)>; [exec@co.ulster.ny.us](mailto:exec@co.ulster.ny.us); Fred Costello <[fcostello@saugertiesny.gov](mailto:fcostello@saugertiesny.gov)>; Leeanne Thornton <[leeanne.thornton@yahoo.com](mailto:leeanne.thornton@yahoo.com)>; Zach Horton <[zhorton@saugertiesny.gov](mailto:zhorton@saugertiesny.gov)>; Mike Ivino <[mivino@centervillefiredistrict.com](mailto:mivino@centervillefiredistrict.com)>; Peg Nau <[pnau@saugertiesny.gov](mailto:pnau@saugertiesny.gov)>; Mayor <[mayor@tivolinyny.org](mailto:mayor@tivolinyny.org)>; [janzevino@scenichudson.org](mailto:janzevino@scenichudson.org); [info@sparkill.org](mailto:info@sparkill.org); Stephen Yarabek <[styarabek@yahoo.com](mailto:styarabek@yahoo.com)>; [puretzs@newpaltz.edu](mailto:puretzs@newpaltz.edu); Jeremy Russell <[jeremy@thingsrelevant.com](mailto:jeremy@thingsrelevant.com)>; Ken Myer <[kmj098@hvc.rr.com](mailto:kmj098@hvc.rr.com)>; Peigi Mulligan <[themulliganstwo@gmail.com](mailto:themulliganstwo@gmail.com)>; Cat <[catnipmail@gmail.com](mailto:catnipmail@gmail.com)>; Darlene Moore <[mdarle7@aol.com](mailto:mdarle7@aol.com)>; Noelle Schmidt <[noelle\\_lynn@yahoo.com](mailto:noelle_lynn@yahoo.com)>; [clerk@tivolinyny.org](mailto:clerk@tivolinyny.org); [elspeth212@earthlink.net](mailto:elspeth212@earthlink.net); Tammi Lawson <[tammilawson@nypl.org](mailto:tammilawson@nypl.org)>; Mark and Belinda Sinnott <[belmark44@yahoo.com](mailto:belmark44@yahoo.com)>; Barbara Hancock <[barbarahancock@mskk.com](mailto:barbarahancock@mskk.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: Protect Van Leuvan House & Cemetery, Spaulding Lane, Saugerties

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the Executive Chamber. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Wow, what a letter of history and preservation! I hope Saugerties will take care of this properly, that no intervention from on high will be needed, but it's a wonderful summary. It emphasizes the importance of the fates of enslaved persons in our history by pointing to the law.

Best

Stephen Shafer, long-ago member HPC

On Tue, Feb 6, 2024 at 5:14 PM [ulsterhistorian@aol.com](mailto:ulsterhistorian@aol.com) <[ulsterhistorian@aol.com](mailto:ulsterhistorian@aol.com)> wrote:

To: The Honorable Antonio Delgado, Lt. Gov. of New York State  
Michelle Hinchey, New York State Senator  
Erik Kulleseid, Commissioner, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation  
Jen Metzger, County Executive of Ulster County  
Fred Costello, Supervisor, Town of Saugerties & Town Board Members  
Joel R. Griffith, Mayor, Village of Tivoli

Dominican Convent of Our Lady of the Rosary, Sparkill, NY  
Jeff Anzevino, Director of Land Use Advocacy, Scenic Hudson  
Stefan Yarabek, Chairman, Saugerties Historic Preservation Commission

The Saugerties Historic Preservation Commission has confirmed the existence of a c.1735 Dutch stone house at the end of Spaulding Lane in Saugerties, N.Y., on property known as 'Falling Waters'. The stone house, on a height of land overlooking the Hudson River, is incorporated within Villa St. Joseph, a structure which is owned by the Dominican Convent of Our Lady of the Rosary in Sparkill, N.Y. and was long used as a retreat center for the Sisters. The Sisters, together with Matthew B. Wexler, developer for National Development Council (Grow America), propose to construct a 3-story, 122 unit housing development at this location and plan to demolish both the stone house and its surrounding structure in addition to other buildings on the site.

Concerns regarding this unique 18th century structure, built by John and Andrus Van Leuven circa 1735, and the importance of keeping it intact and in situ have been raised. The State Historic Preservation Office / Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) stated that "The history of these buildings -- their additions and alterations, and outbuildings, and the history of the landscape itself warrant further study." That office has also recommended a Phase 1A/1B archaeological survey based on evidence that the project is in an archaeologically sensitive area. Phase 1A was conducted. Based on those findings, OPRHP stated that Phase 1B survey was also warranted. This has *not* been done.

The Phase 1A survey references the census records showing that the Van Leuven family were slave owners in the mid-18th and early 19th century and enslaved persons of African descent are likely buried next to or in close proximity to the burial ground where the Van Leuven / Overbaugh family members are interred. The burial ground is adjacent to the c. 1735 stone house. OPRHP has suggested using Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) to identify additional grave sites. It is hoped that the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill and the developers will comply with OPRHP and that observers be permitted to witness the evaluation of the site that requires testing at least 50 feet beyond the perimeter of the burial ground.

Burial sites for enslaved persons were typically unmarked. Discovering these gravesites and protecting these gravesites was the main impetus for the *African American Burial Grounds Preservation Act* which was signed into law in 2023 as part of the FY2023 Omnibus Spending Package. Collectively we must respect the lives of these unknown, enslaved persons who lay forgotten in unmarked places.

Removing the Van Leuven home, an 18th century Dutch stone house that has been carefully and thoughtfully enclosed and protected for many years, and the cultural narrative that it represents, contravenes the spirit of the demarcation of this site. Ignoring site testing of the sacred burial ground where there may be remains of enslaved persons of African descent would be equally unjust and profoundly insensitive to those who toiled in servitude and bondage. New York State regulations should not be treated as if they are arbitrary, to be disregarded, or selectively enforced. With these issues in mind a fuller assessment of this project must be undertaken.

Sincerely,

Karlyn Knaust Elia  
11 Main Street  
Saugerties, NY 12477

--  
"Instructions for living a life:  
Pay attention.

| Be astonished.

Tell about it."

Mary Oliver, "*Sometimes*"





34 South Broadway, Suite 300  
White Plains, NY 10601  
tel: 914.949.7336  
www.akrf.com

Town of Saugerties Town Board  
4 High Street  
Saugerties, NY 12477

10.1.2024

**Re: Villa St. Joseph – 49 Spaulding Lane, Saugerties, NY  
Response to Historic Landmark Designation Nomination Request**

Dear Members of the Town Board:

AKRF has received the Town of Saugerties Historic Landmark Designation Nomination Request Form for “The Villa St. Joseph Complex” prepared by Karlyn Knaust Elia in August 2024. The form appropriates and misinterprets materials prepared by AKRF regarding the archaeological and architectural resources analyses of the property at 49 Spaulding Lane in Saugerties, New York. AKRF has prepared this letter in an attempt to correct those misinterpretations and to ensure that AKRF’s work is properly acknowledged. In addition to the sections of Appendix A of the Town of Saugerties Historic Landmark Designation Nomination Request Form that are specifically discussed below, extensive language from the Phase 1A Archaeological Documentary Study (“Phase 1A Study”) prepared by AKRF in 2022<sup>1</sup> has been copied and pasted into the draft designation report without proper attribution or indication that the material is a direct quote (e.g., the majority of pages 6 and 7).

**Exhibit A, page 3: “The Archaeological Study states that ‘none of the sites included in Table 2-2 were excavated by professional archaeologists according to modern standards and little is known about most of these sites.’ This statement is misleading and demonstrably inaccurate.”**

The quoted statement from the Phase 1A Study is accurate. The most recent archaeological investigations referenced in the draft designation report occurred in the 1960s through the 1980s. As noted, some were completed by avocational archaeologists, who are not professionally trained. While these individuals contributed to the early study of archaeology in New York State, their work did not comply with modern standards and, more importantly, modern ethical practices. More recent legislation—most notably the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) as passed in the early 1990s—outline the processes that must be followed in the event that Indigenous human remains and sacred objects/objects of cultural patrimony are encountered by archaeologists. These laws also dictate the legal requirements for the repatriation of human remains and cultural objects inappropriately housed in museum collections, many of which were excavated by collectors and both avocational and professional archaeologists in the early and mid-20th century. Furthermore, technical reports summarizing the results of the referenced investigations are not widely available via the New York State Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS). Archaeological investigations completed prior to the passage of this and other relevant legislation and associated ethical standards are therefore not considered modern.

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<sup>1</sup> AKRF, Inc. (2022) “DSS Saugerties Senior Housing 49 Spaulding Lane (Tax Parcel 29.5-5-13.100); Town of Saugerties, Ulster County, New York: Phase 1A Archaeological Documentary Study.” Prepared for: Dattner Architects, New York, NY.

**Exhibit A, page 3: “We acknowledge our understandings of the past may change as new methods and techniques are developed and applied in archaeological analyses. However, this does not preclude the fact that Dr. Arthur C. Parker, Dr. William A. Ritchie, and Dr. Robert Funk, who had been employed as leading archaeologists by New York State, developed ‘the most influential conceptualization of New York’s past in the twentieth century.’”**

Though the quote in the text above is unattributed in the nomination form—it was copied from a chapter in an edited volume authored by Christina Rieth and John P. Hart (2011)<sup>2</sup>—and is presented out of context. In its original context, the quote specifically referred to the fact that a method of taxonomically classifying artifacts as the “influential conceptualization” attributed to early New York State archaeologists such as Parker, Ritchie, and Funk. If one reads the remainder of Rieth and Hart’s paper, it is clear that the authors refer to numerous “critiques and calls for abandonment of all or portions of the Parker-Ritchie-Funk scheme based on trait analyses and new suites of radiocarbon dates” (ibid: 2). Many of the papers published or referenced in the edited volume advocate for the abandonment or modification of biased taxonomic and hierarchical classification systems generated in the early 20th century in favor of new and modern methods that do not present culture as a hierarchical ladder, which has historically been used to perpetuate racist stereotypes in Anthropology. Rieth and Hart (2011) further state, “our understandings of the past change as new methods and techniques are developed and applied in archaeological analyses” (ibid: 2). We suggest that anyone interested in understanding Parker’s contributions to New York State archaeology as interpreted in the modern age, read *Inheriting the Past: The Making of Arthur C. Parker and Indigenous Archaeology* by Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh (2009).<sup>3</sup>

**Exhibit A, page 3: “The sites mentioned in Table 2-2 are more important than what was reported by AKRF.”**

The precontact archaeological resources chapter of the Phase 1A Study follows the mandatory format required by the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) as issued in 2005.<sup>4</sup> Archaeological sites that have been identified within one mile are identified as one component of a larger model to determine the likelihood that a given area was occupied by Indigenous populations prior to European colonization. Using these standard models, the Phase 1A Study concluded that the site has moderate to high archaeological sensitivity in areas with level slope. The Phase 1A Study recommended archaeological testing to confirm the presence or absence of archaeological resources within the project site.

Furthermore, archaeological sites are not assigned a level of “importance” by archaeologists and information regarding specific sites is often not disclosed in Phase 1A Studies to ensure the protection of archaeologically sensitive areas. The extent to which information regarding the specific locations and content of previous archaeological sites that is included in the draft designation report may violate SHPO or New York State Museum (NYSM) guidance and make those sites subject to possible looting or desecration.

**Exhibit A, pages 4–5: “Table 2-2 showing Pre-Contact Archaeological sites within 1 mile of the proposed project indicates a Precontact village site NYSM Site 8378, only 600 feet from the project. Additionally, although not listed on Table 2-2 is Site NYSM #5044 ACP ULST-9 – ‘Village site at Glasco [Saugerties] on the shore of the Hudson’ that is relevant and important because of its proximity to the proposed Villa Affordable Housing site. The principal investigator was Arthur C. Parker, 1922, and it is covered in his book *The Archaeology of New York*.”**

Site 5044 is located more than one mile from the project site and as such, was not included in the table identifying previously identified archaeological sites within one mile. The term “principal investigator” is a modern archaeological term that was not utilized in the early 20th century when Parker completed the

<sup>2</sup> Rieth, Christina B. and John P. Hart (2011): “Introduction to Current Research in New York Archaeology: A.D. 700–1300.” *Current Research in New York Archaeology: A.D. 700–1300*, Christina B. Rieth and John P. Hart, editors: pages 1-6. Albany, NY: New York State Museum Record 2.

<sup>3</sup> Colwell-Chanthaphonh, Chip (2009): *Inheriting the Past: The Making of Arthur C. Parker and Indigenous Archaeology*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.

<sup>4</sup> <https://parks.ny.gov/documents/shpo/environmental-review/PhaseIReportStandards.pdf>

majority of his investigations. Furthermore, Parker's 1920/1922 work was an edited volume of archaeological information that included information collected by other early professional and avocational archaeologists;<sup>5</sup> Parker was not responsible for excavating all of the sites referenced in the book.

**Exhibit A, page 6: “These resources could provide new insight into the precontact occupation of the general Saugerties area, the transition from Native American to European settlement, and / or the historic period occupation of the land. The Indigenous history must not be ignored, destroyed, or dishonored.”**

AKRF concurs with the first statement, which is copied directly from the Phase 1A Study. As described previously, the Phase 1A Study identified level areas of the project site as having moderate to high sensitivity for archaeological resources associated with the precontact occupation of the project site and recommended a Phase 1B Archaeological Investigation to confirm the presence or absence of archaeological resources on the site and to determine the need for further archaeological investigations as necessary and appropriate.

**Exhibit A, pages 7–8: “Will the remains of these enslaved persons be searched for? How thorough of a search will be conducted? There is the possibility that the non-invasive Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) recommended in the Phase 1A Archeological Survey might not be conducted around the burial ground where enslaved persons of African descent may be interred. Bradley [sic] Russell, PhD, archeologist in the NYS OPRHP, stated that spade testing will be conducted every 15 meters near the cemetery. If nothing is found then Ground Penetrating Radar will not be required.”**

The Phase 1A Study was the first history of the Van Leuven house or property reviewed by the authors that acknowledged that the Van Leuven family were enslavers and it is the first study to identify the potential for the site to contain graves associated with enslaved individuals. Previous historical assessments of the house and property excluded the enslaved individuals whose labor was used to operate the farms and homes on the property from the historical narrative of the house. The Phase 1A Study recommended both a ground-penetrating radar investigation and shovel testing as part of a Phase 1B Archaeological Investigation; the use of GPR is independent of shovel testing and not dependent on it.

**Exhibit A, page 26: “The Villa St. Joseph building was constructed to encapsulate the c.1735 former residence of the Van Leuven family, which was then occupied by the Spalding (sometimes spelled Spaulding) family.”**

While portions of an early (likely 18th century) house remain within the extant building, the building has undergone numerous episodes of substantial alteration. It is incorrect to suggest that an intact 18th century house is subsumed within the current building. These early features are essentially limited to the stone walls of the basement and first story and possibly the floor joists of the basement. The fragmentary remnants of the early stone house that have been incorporated into the current building do not have sufficient integrity to be considered eligible for listing on the State and National Register of Historic Places, as confirmed by the SHPO.

**Exhibit A, page 26: “The developers [sic] report written by AKRF contradicts the findings of the Saugerties Historic Preservation Commission. Stefan Yarabek, Chairman of the Commission, and Keven [sic] Durkin, an authority on stone house restoration, and members of his team conducted a site visit of Villa St. Joseph in 2023 concluding that Villa St. Joseph contains the structure of the 1735 Van Leuven stone house. Mr. Yarabek [sic] presented his findings in a letter to the Saugerties Town Supervisor and Town Board members on December 5, 2023, stating that the stone house retains much of its original fabric.”**

AKRF has reviewed correspondence from Stefan Yarabek to the Town Board dated December 5, 2023. The correspondence, which references a site visit performed by Mr. Yarabek and Mr. Durkin and includes annotated photographs, states that:

---

<sup>5</sup> Parker, Arthur C. (1920): *The Archaeological History of New York*. Albany: The University of the State of New York.

*The Villa of St. Joseph contains the entire structure of the 1735 Spalding Stone House which is listed on our Town Inventory. The Stone House retains much of its original fabric including pre 1735 and early 18th century architectural features.*

Based on AKRF's site visit and analysis of the building, we dispute the assertion that an entire 18th century stone house exists within the present building. Observed architectural components that indicate a possible 18th century date were limited to the stone walls of the foundation and first story of the main section of the building and the floor joists observable in the basement. It is not likely that the upper story walls date to the 18th century and the form or framing of the roof of the main section does not suggest an 18th century date. Furthermore, there is no evidence that these early components of the building date to the 1730s or earlier rather than the late 18th century.

The December 2023 correspondence from Mr. Yarabek includes a photograph of an arched feature in the basement of the building identified by Mr. Yarabek as an "18th century (possibly earlier) Chambliss [sic] Fireplace at each end of basement." The feature shown in the photograph is identified in AKRF's report but was identified by AKRF not as a New World Dutch-style jambless fireplace, but as a hearth support for a relatively narrow first-floor English-style fireplace. Based on AKRF's analysis, the feature does not appear to represent a feature associated with the New World Dutch nor does it suggest an 18th century date. AKRF did not observe a hearth support or fireplace feature at the other end of the basement. An apparent cistern was noted in another area within the main section of the basement, however.

Mr. Yarabek's correspondence also includes a photograph of a first-story doorway with rope molding identifying it as "Early 19th century trim work at front now interior door." This doorway treatment is characterized by AKRF as Italianate in style, unlikely to pre-date the third quarter of the 19th century.

We thank the Town of Saugerties Town Board for providing us with an opportunity to present this response and to ensure that our work is properly interpreted and represented. We look forward to continuing our work to document archaeological resources on the site and further documenting the people who occupied the site in the past. Should you have any questions about the information we have provided above or if you require further information regarding our past work, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,  
AKRF, Inc.



Elizabeth Meade, PhD, RPA  
Senior Technical Director  
Archaeologist



Molly McDonald, RPA  
Senior Technical Director  
Architectural Historian and  
Archaeologist

cc: Town of Saugerties Planning Board  
Town of Saugerties Historic Preservation Commission  
NYS OPRHP  
Aaron Werner, AICP (AKRF)  
Claudia Cooney (AKRF)  
Dominican Sisters of Sparkill  
Grow America



34 South Broadway, Suite 300  
White Plains, NY 10601  
tel: 914.949.7336  
www.akrf.com

January 16, 2025

Stephen Yarabek, Chair  
Town of Saugerties Historic Preservation Commission  
4 High Street  
Saugerties, NY 12477

**Re: Villa St. Joseph Property – 49 Spaulding Lane, Saugerties, NY  
Response to 1/2/25 Assessment by Neil Larson & Associates**

Dear Mr. Yarabek:

AKRF, Inc. (AKRF) has been assisting the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill with cultural resources and environmental tasks associated with the proposed affordable and senior housing development known as the Villa Residences for several years. In compliance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and Section 14.09 of the New York State Historic Preservation Act, AKRF first submitted information regarding the entirety of the property to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in October of 2021.

The submittal included photographs of the overall landscape, information about the history of the property, and photographs and brief historical narratives for each building on the property. Based on that initial submission, SHPO determined the property was Not Eligible for the State and National Registers of Historic Places (S/NR). After being contacted by a member of the public, SHPO followed up in February of 2024 to request that an architectural historian “conduct a thorough assessment of the interior of the Villa St. Joseph structure to look for *Dutch* architectural elements and provide an architectural survey report.” AKRF subsequently prepared the requested Architectural Resources Survey report for Villa St. Joseph, which AKRF produced in April of 2024.

In order to prepare the report, a qualified architectural historian with knowledge of the vernacular building traditions of the region conducted a site visit during which the interior and exterior of the building were comprehensively examined. The Dominican Sisters allowed AKRF full access to the building and encouraged us to be honest and objective in our evaluation. Based on physical inspection of the building and historical research, AKRF’s report concluded that while the building retains some fabric from several periods of development from the 18th through the 20th centuries, it does not meet the National Register criteria. The subject matter experts at the SHPO agreed with this determination for the second time.

In January 2025, Neil Larson & Associates prepared an “assessment of the historic conditions of the property” formatted as a letter addressed to the Town’s Historic Preservation Commission. The letter, written with the intention of providing an alternative opinion to AKRF’s assessment of the property, acknowledges the review of AKRF’s earlier report. Mr. Larson’s reassessment essentially concurs with the conclusions of AKRF’s Architectural Resources Survey insofar as it acknowledges that the Villa St. Joseph building has been extensively altered to the point that it does not meet the National Register criteria as an individual building. It should also be noted that neither Mr. Larson nor his associate entered the Villa St. Joseph building as part of the site visit, which was attended by members of the Applicant team. The report goes on to suggest, however, that the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill property as a whole may be eligible for the National Register as a “cultural landscape.”

AKRF strongly disagrees with the contention that the property meets the National Register eligibility criteria as a cultural landscape. Mr. Larson provides no new information on the property that has not already been reviewed by the SHPO. First of all, Mr. Larson’s report states that “The cultural landscape category was recently added by the National Register to broaden the program’s traditional focus on buildings and address the significance of landscapes as places.” Mr. Larson’s assertion is misleading. Cultural landscapes are not a National Register category in the sense that buildings, districts, sites, structures or objects are, and no

new language has been recently added to the National Register criteria regarding cultural landscapes. Rather, in the context of the National Register, a cultural landscape is a descriptive term that can be applied to various categories of historic property, including historic sites or historic districts. Cultural landscapes are defined by the National Park Service as “a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.”<sup>1</sup> National Park Service guidance also states of cultural landscapes: “Their authenticity is measured by historical integrity, or the presence and condition of physical characteristics that remain from the historic period.”<sup>2</sup> Using Mr. Larson’s assessment, any property located along the banks of the Hudson River could be a “cultural landscape.”

As described below, Mr. Larson’s report contradicts itself with regard to the eligibility and integrity of the landscape. As Mr. Larson’s report repeatedly emphasizes, the historic landscape and buildings that comprise the property have lost their historic integrity as a result of dramatic alterations during and after the second quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Mr. Larson’s report states that the Dominican Sisters’ “contribution to the landscape history was to obliterate it in much the same manner as their treatment of the house.” He goes on to state that “all evidence of plantings, built features, and circulation patterns has been lost; much of the landscape has been permitted to reforest with immature trees.” Given Mr. Larson’s acknowledgement that Villa St. Joseph building has been too extensively altered to meet the National Register criteria individually, his statement that the Dominican Sisters’ period of occupation does not contribute to the historic character of the property; and his assertion that their post-1931 modifications “obliterated” the historic landscape, it seems that everyone should be in agreement that the property does not meet the National Register criteria, either as a historic district, “cultural landscape,” or as a series of individual buildings and sites. Mr. Larson contradicts his own assertions when he suggests that the property should be considered to meet National Register Criteria A and C despite its lack of historic integrity. The SHPO has previously evaluated the property, both as a whole and as a collection of buildings and found them not eligible for the National Register; and Mr. Larson has presented no new substantive information that would alter SHPO’s opinion.

In terms of the proposed project’s review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, unless the SHPO provides a determination of eligibility for the property or components and determines that the proposed project would have adverse effects on National Register-eligible architectural resources, the Dominican Sisters appear to have no further compliance obligations in regard to above-ground historic properties. As discussed in previous documentation and correspondence, the archaeological compliance process is a separate ongoing matter and the Dominican Sisters have steadily expressed their intention to proceed with this process with all due diligence in consultation with the SHPO, as mandated by the anticipated sources of subsidy in connection with the project’s construction.

In conclusion, based on the foregoing, Mr. Larson’s report does not support any local landmark designation, or designation as a State or National Register-eligible historic resource or district.

Sincerely,  
AKRF, Inc.



Molly McDonald, RPA  
Sr. Architectural Historian &  
Archaeologist

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<sup>1</sup> Charles A. Birnbaum *Preservation Brief No. 36: Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes*. Washington, DC: National Park Service. 1994.1.

<sup>2</sup> “Cultural Landscapes 101,” National Park Service <https://www.nps.gov/articles/cultural-landscapes-101.htm> July 12, 2023; accessed January 9, 2025.

**Town of Saugerties Historic Preservation Commission**

**January 16, 2025**

cc: Sister Irene Ellis (Dominican Sisters of Sparkill)  
Matt Wexler (Grow America)  
Lino Sciarretta, Esq. (Bleakley Platt & Schmidt, LLP)

**Aaron Werner, AICP  
Senior Technical Director, AKRF, Inc.**

**Statement to be read at Town of Saugerties Historic Preservation Commission Public  
Hearing – Villa Residences, 49 Spaulding Lane**

**February 27, 2025, 6PM**

My name is Aaron Werner and I am a certified planner and Senior Technical Director with the consulting firm AKRF. I earned a bachelor's degree in environmental studies and a master's degree in land use planning. I have 20 years of experience in the field of environmental and land use planning, 16 of which have been heavily focused on state and federal environmental review requirements for construction and preservation of affordable housing in New York, including the requirements of funding agencies like New York State Housing and Community Renewal (HCR) and the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In addition to representing applicants, I also serve as a consulting planner to several municipal land use boards throughout the Hudson Valley.

On behalf of the Applicant, the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, I serve as the project manager for the environmental review aspects of this project's rezoning and site plan applications currently in front of both the Saugerties Town Board and Planning Board. As this board is aware, the Town's Planning Board served as the lead agency for this project's review under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). The actions that were subject to SEQRA include both the rezoning and site plan review. In addition to the involvement of the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), HCR was involved due to the anticipated affordable housing subsidy. The Planning Board has made their Determination of Significance under SEQRA, through the issuance of the amended Negative Declaration adopted on June 18, 2024. This determination was based on AKRF's detailed report and supporting studies prepared in response to the Planning Board's Full Environmental Assessment Form, Part 2, which involved several rounds of revisions in response to comments from the involved agencies (including SHPO) as well as the Planning Board and its consulting planner. A local landmark designation by the HPC at this point in the process, aside from being inappropriate and unsupported by the record, would go against all of the work and deliberations undertaken by the Planning Board over the course of a SEQRA review that spanned several years.

As my colleagues and cultural resource experts Molly McDonald and Elizabeth Meade will reiterate, the SHPO has determined, more than once, that pursuant to Section 14.09 of the New York State Historic Preservation Law, the property is not eligible for listing on the State or National registers.



AKRF's cultural resources team submitted a letter to the Town Board dated October 1, 2024 that contained our response to the Nomination Report. We have also recently submitted a letter to this board that contains our response to the January 2, 2025 assessment of the property submitted by Neil Larson. I will be resubmitting both of those letters tonight for the record, along with written copies of the testimony you'll hear from AKRF tonight.

I also want to clarify for the record the commitments made by the Applicant as part of the SEQRA record regarding the archaeological testing. The misconception exists that the Applicant is not taking the Phase 1B requirement seriously and should be doing the investigation now. On the contrary, because the Applicant intends to apply to HCR for subsidy, which will likely involve some federal subsidy subject to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the Phase 1B Investigation and any subsequent phases of archaeological analysis that may be necessary will be completed after the initiation of the Section 106 process with the funding agency(s). The Section 106 process, which falls under the purview of the SHPO, simply cannot commence without an application to HCR, and such application to HCR cannot commence without approval of the rezoning and site plan from the Town. For the last three years, the Applicant has made it clear at public hearings and within the written SEQRA record that they will accept, as a condition of any site plan approval, the Town requiring the completion of the Section 106-compliant Phase 1B (and any subsequent archaeological investigations) prior to the start of construction. The SHPO is also aware of the future funding and related Section 106 requirements.

Furthermore, because the Section 106 process as prescribed requires consultation with Indigenous Nations with cultural and ancestral ties to Ulster County, and any other identified consulting parties as appropriate, there will be future opportunities for the Town to participate in the archaeological review. For all these reasons, the Applicant is committed to following the law rather than proceeding at this time with the testing without proper oversight from the SHPO and Section 106 consulting parties.

Thank you.

**Architectural Resources Evaluation Summary—Statement of Molly McDonald, Senior Technical Director, AKRF, Inc.**

**Villa Residences, 49 Spaulding Lane**

**Town of Saugerties Historic Preservation Commission Public Hearing**

**February 27, 2025 6PM**

- I am an architectural historian with 25 years of experience in the field. I am a native of New York, I hold two Masters degrees in Archaeology of Buildings and Historic Preservation. My area of particular interest has been the vernacular architecture of this region. I served as the primary author of the Architectural Resources Survey report for Villa St. Joseph, which AKRF produced in April 2024.
- AKRF first submitted information regarding the property to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in October 2021. Based on that submission, SHPO determined the property was **Not Eligible for the State and National Registers of Historic Places**. After being contacted by a member of the public, SHPO followed up in February 2024 to request that an architectural historian “conduct a thorough assessment of the interior of the Villa St. Joseph structure to look for *Dutch* architectural elements and provide an architectural survey report.”
- I was brought into the project at that time as a subject matter expert to evaluate the building and to produce the Architectural Resources Survey.
- The Dominican Sisters allowed me full access to investigate and photograph every floor of the building, including the basement, and encouraged me to be honest and objective in my evaluation.
- Based on this physical inspection and historical research, I concluded that while the building retains some fabric from several periods of development from the 18th through the 20th centuries, it does not retain sufficient historic integrity to meet the National Register criteria. The subject matter experts at the SHPO agreed with this determination **for the second time**.
- Far from representing “an intact 18th century house,” the 18th century fabric I observed could be described as fragmentary. It was limited to parts of one core section of the building and consisted of portions of the stone walls, and the wood sills and joists that form the ceiling of the basement. I saw no evidence of a jambless fireplace or other features uniquely associated with early New World Dutch houses. I saw only remnants of a brick cistern and a hearth support of a slightly later period in the basement. I saw no other features of 18th century architecture and no 18th century finish work of any kind in the building.
- The building has been altered extensively over several different periods. During the 19th century, the north wall of the original section was demolished, multiple extensions were added, the roof was replaced, and the interior finish work was completely updated. The building then underwent another series of extensive changes after 1931, including several new large additions, changes to the finishes and layout, and addition of the modern siding and windows.
- As a result of these 20th century changes, the building cannot be clearly recognized from the exterior as an example of 18th or 19th century architecture.
- While any property that has been occupied over a long period of time possesses some degree of historical interest, the National Register eligibility criteria require that a building also possess historic integrity, meaning that the building must be sufficiently intact to communicate its significance. National Park Service guidance emphasizes that “the essential physical features” that characterized a property during its period of significance must be present and “visible enough to convey their significance.” A property must retain “the majority of features that illustrate its style” such as “massing... proportion, pattern of windows and doors, texture of materials and ornamentation.” As discussed, Villa St. Joseph

in its current condition retains only fragments of its 18th and 19th century history and primarily conveys a 20th century appearance.

- In January 2025, Neil Larson & Associates were hired to prepare an alternative “assessment of the historic conditions of the property.” Mr. Larson’s report essentially concurs with the conclusions of AKRF’s Architectural Resources Survey insofar as it acknowledges that the Villa St. Joseph building has been too extensively altered to meet the National Register criteria as an individual building. The report goes on to suggest, however, that the property as a whole may be eligible for the National Register as a “cultural landscape.”
- My colleagues and I disagree and presented our response in a letter to the HPC dated January 16, 2025. *It is critical to note* that a “cultural landscape” is not a National Register category per se but is a descriptive term that can be applied to historic districts or sites. NPS guidance states that the authenticity of cultural landscapes “is measured by historical integrity, or the presence and condition of physical characteristics that remain from the historic period.” As Mr. Larson’s own report repeatedly emphasizes, the landscape and buildings that comprise the property have lost their historic integrity as a result of dramatic 20th century alterations.
- SHPO reviewed Mr. Larson’s report and responded in a letter dated January 23, 2025, in which they reiterated **for the third time** their opinion that the property is not eligible for the National Register--whether as a house, a ruin, a district, or a landscape.
- In regards to the proposed project’s review under Section 106, the Dominican Sisters appear to have no further compliance obligations as regards to above-ground historic properties.

**Elizabeth D. Meade, PhD, RPA**  
**Senior Technical Director, AKRF, Inc.**

**Statement to be read at Town of Saugerties Historic Preservation Commission Public Hearing – Villa Residences, 49 Spaulding Lane**

**February 27, 2025**

Good evening; I am Elizabeth Meade, a Senior Technical Director at AKRF. I am responsible for AKRF's archaeological analysis in association with the proposed development. I am a registered professional archaeologist with more than twenty years' experience completing archaeological investigations in New York State and across the northeast. I earned a bachelor's degree, two master's degrees, and a PhD in anthropological archaeology and I exceed the qualifications established for archaeologists as outlined by the Secretary of the Interior.

Pursuant to Section 14.09 of the New York State Historic Preservation Act and in consultation with the New York State Historic Preservation Office (commonly known as the SHPO), AKRF prepared a Phase 1A Archaeological Documentary Study of the property at 49 Spaulding Lane. The Phase 1A Study documented the occupation and development of the property in order to identify areas of potential archaeological sensitivity associated with both the Indigenous and historic period occupation of the area. The Phase 1A Study complies with the professional standards as issued or adopted by SHPO.

Using standard archaeological models, the Phase 1A Study concluded that because of the property's pre-development topography and the presence of previously documented archaeological sites within a one-mile radius, undeveloped portions of the property with slopes less than 12 percent were classified as moderately to highly sensitive for archaeological resources associated with the Indigenous occupation of the area. Undisturbed portions of the property were determined to have moderate to high sensitivity for archaeological resources associated with the historic period occupation of the property, specifically in association with the occupation of the Van Leuven and Spaulding families in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Van Leuven Family Cemetery is located on a separate tax parcel and would not be impacted by the proposed project. The possibility exists that unmarked burials associated with the Van Leuven family may be present outside the modern mapped limits of the cemetery. Furthermore, the Van Leuven family enslaved individuals of African descent. As the burial places of most enslaved people were never recorded, there is no formal documentation that enslaved people were ever buried on the property. However, in my doctoral dissertation, I developed an archaeological model designed to identify possible burial places of enslaved people to compensate for the lack of historical records. It

was a common practice to bury enslaved people in unmarked graves around or near the perimeter of the burial place of the enslaving family. As such, properties owned by enslavers on which family cemeteries were protected and preserved can be used to identify of the *potential* presence of burial places for enslaved people. Only through further investigation can the presence or absence of unmarked graves be determined.

The Phase 1A Study recommended a Phase 1B Archaeological Investigation of all areas of archaeological sensitivity that would be impacted by the construction of the project, including areas that could potentially contain unmarked graves. The Phase 1B investigation will include a ground penetrating radar survey of a buffer area surrounding the family cemetery to determine if unmarked graves are present so that they can be documented and protected. In the event that archaeological resources are identified, additional archaeological analysis and documentation potentially including Phase 2 or Phase 3 archaeological investigations will be completed in consultation with SHPO.

Thank you.

## **EXHIBIT C**



**New York State  
Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation**

**KATHY HOCHUL**  
Governor

**RANDY SIMONS**  
Commissioner Pro Tempore

January 23, 2025

Stefan Yarabek  
Town of Saugerties Historic Preservation Commission  
Town Hall  
4 High Street, Saugerties, NY 12477

Re: NYSHCR  
DSS Saugerties Housing/St. Joseph's Villa  
49 Spaulding Ln, Saugerties, NY 12477  
21PR07342

Dear Stefan:

The NY State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has reviewed the document, *Assessment of Historic Conditions of St. Joseph's Retreat, Spalding Lane, Saugerties*, provided by Neil Larson & Associates on January 7, 2025. The document aims to contextualize and analyze both the remnants of the former 18<sup>th</sup> century stone structure and the surrounding landscape. After carefully reviewing the document, the SHPO maintains the opinion that the property known as the St. Joseph's Villa is not eligible for the State or National Registers of Historic Places. An explanation of our review is as follows:

Regarding the evaluation of the house, Mr. Larson writes, "Mentally stripping away what the Dominican Sisters have built, a compromised but largely intact object remains" (page 4). The SHPO must evaluate buildings based on their current conditions, and although the author makes an interesting case for the house as a relic of its early history, the building is too altered to be able to understand this history in its current condition. If there were a plan to physically strip away the existing alterations, SHPO could reevaluate the remains at that time, but there is no guarantee that what is uncovered would ultimately be determined eligible. The property is also not considered a ruin in its current configuration.

The discussion of the property as a cultural landscape is another interesting analysis, however, the assessment fails to identify existing character defining features that convey the property's significance and integrity. To be defined as a cultural landscape there must be tangible remains of historic processes or patterns, and as Mr. Larson writes, "The terrain may be intact but all evidence of plantings, built features and circulation patterns has been lost; much of the landscape has been permitted to reforest with immature trees" (page 5). The longevity of human interaction at the site does not hold significance if the character defining features, as outlined by the National Park Service, do not exist. This directly contradicts the designation of a cultural landscape, and as such, the SHPO has determined that the St. Joseph's Villa property does not meet these criteria.

If you have any questions about this letter or the determination, please feel free to contact me at 518-268-2129 or at [Chelsea.towers@parks.ny.gov](mailto:Chelsea.towers@parks.ny.gov).



**New York State  
Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation**

**KATHY HOCHUL**  
Governor

**RANDY SIMONS**  
Commissioner Pro Tempore

Sincerely,

Chelsea Towers  
Survey & National Register Coordinator

Ecc: Neil Larson, *Neil Larson & Associates*  
Claudia Cooney, *AKRF, Inc.*  
Nancy Herter, *SHPO*



## **EXHIBIT D**

**TOWN OF SAUGERTIES**  
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Town Hall, 4 High Street  
Saugerties, New York 12477  
Tel: (845) 246-2800  
Fax: (845)247-0355  
[www.saugerties.ny.us](http://www.saugerties.ny.us)  
Fred Costello, Town Supervisor



Town Board Liaison to the SHPC  
Peg Nau

Commissioners:  
Stefan Yarabek, Chair  
Susan Puretz, Vice-Chair  
Ken Myers, jr.  
Peigi Mulligan  
Jason Nelson.  
Phyllis Clark  
Audrey Klinkenberg,  
Town Historian, ex officio  
Jeremy Russell, Secretary

**Notice is hereby given, that the Town Of Saugerties Historic Preservation Commission will be holding a public hearing on February 27, 2025 beginning at 6:00 pm at the Greco Senior Center (207 Market Street, Saugerties, NY). The meeting will be conducted via the Town Webex.**

**The purpose of the public hearing is to receive comments about an application under consideration by the Commission to designate the Property known as The Villa of St. Joseph as a local historic landmark. The designation includes the Villa, the historic stone house within the Villa as well as the historic cultural landscape of the property.**

**At the Public Hearing all representatives of the applicant, the property owners, and the general public will be heard.**

**All speakers MUST also provide in writing a copy of their verbal presentation and be given to the Commission at the time that said individuals publicly speak.**

**All comments at the public hearing will be addressed by the Commission and a decision is made as soon as possible. In the event that the public hearing needs to be extended the Commission will schedule a date no later than March 17,2025.**

**Any and all changes or extensions will be published on the Town website ([https:// saugerties.ny.us](https://saugerties.ny.us)).**

## **EXHIBIT E**

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** neillarson8@gmail.com

**Date:** November 15, 2024 at 1:46:04 PM EST

**To:** Stephen Yarabek <styarabek@yahoo.com>

**Subject:** RE: Architectural Historians/ Hudson Valley

I've looked over the stuff and have now a beginning understanding of the issue. I think we may be able to make a case for eligibility. However, I would like to see the SHPO letter determining the property not eligible for the National Register and also the AKRF architectural survey before making a proposal.

Neil

Neil Larson  
Neil Larson & Associates  
60 Noone Lane #2  
Kingston, NY 12401  
845-706-9897

## **EXHIBIT F**

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** Jeremy Russell <[jeremy@thingsrelevant.com](mailto:jeremy@thingsrelevant.com)>  
**To:** [ulsterhistorian@aol.com](mailto:ulsterhistorian@aol.com) <[ulsterhistorian@aol.com](mailto:ulsterhistorian@aol.com)>  
**Cc:** Cat <[catnipsmail@gmail.com](mailto:catnipsmail@gmail.com)>; Darlene Moore <[mdarle7@aol.com](mailto:mdarle7@aol.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 17, 2024 at 03:24:39 PM EDT  
**Subject:** Re: Villa St. Joseph NOMINATION

I believe that Peg will be announcing, at the Planning Board meeting, that the HPC moved to hold the first of two public hearings to consider the nomination of the Villas Complex at last night's meeting. The HPC is supposed to send copies, by certified mail, to the property owner, to the building department, the assessor's office, and the Town Board/Town Clerk. While the planning board is not a legally required department that it must be sent to, I'm going to send courtesy copies of the Nomination as a DRAFT to all parties, and the associated planning groups. Ultimately, the building department is the direct authority that issues or does not issue permits to do things, and a planning board, theoretically, can grant things, it would just get stopped at the next juncture.

No process was written into the law on how things are done, and for the first 10-15 years, the HPC members actually did all this legal work. God bless Barry, Michael, Elizabeth, and so on...in the last 7 or so years, I've been secretary, and read through everything, then realized that the HPC was relying on the Town Clerk and Building Department to do a lot of this, and they never were. Now I'm at a law office where I almost never get free time, and things have declined. Unfortunately, we don't get help from the Town Attorneys because, essentially, they hate the "power-tripping Commission." I took a day off and printed the last nomination, stuck certified labels on, then walked it around to each department and made sure someone signed, and took the rest to the post office. The Assessor's office told me I had the wrong office. I demanded they sign for it and file it. They've never read the law and have never received a nomination or a designation, and there is a law on the books that designated properties get local tax breaks. Nobody has ever applied for it, and the office itself doesn't even know about it.

That said, I do not need all of the accompanying letters at this time, because it can't possibly be finalized into a Designation until the public hearings are held and a determination is made. The Designation will be the finalized Nomination booklet. Right now, I need to inform people, with the capacity to prove what they are being told, so that it moves along while we cover our legal bases. We can work on a finalized version simultaneously. A nomination, must, by definition, be able to have something altered before it becomes a Designation. I'll need to add the dates of the

meetings, the result of the vote, and so on. I must forward this stuff as quickly as possible.

That said, can you send me your latest draft of the nomination? I'm going to mark the pages as "Draft." I have all the supporting documentation you mentioned except for the signature pages, at least at this time. I will add those. I will try my hardest to send everything I have tonight, and it really should go out tomorrow morning. Then, we can work on finalizing the main, lasting document....

I read through the Amended Negative Declaration document that I e-mailed yesterday (I Bcc'd Karlyn, along with the Google drive link, feel free to forward) and found mention of a letter from Scenic Hudson I was never made aware of, and have asked Scenic Hudson for what they have. I will also be asking for the documentation from the Section 106 review that SHPO is currently holding, although it's likely been uploaded in the CRIS system, which I'll be checking shortly.

If the property box to check you've mentioned is on the local form, then it makes sense to me, but, I don't remember it being there....I feel like I would have checked that one myself. It may be on a State nomination form, but the local form is different. Remember, although it is undefined, the Town Board can "Disapprove" any designation of the HPC if they do so within 60 days of receipt, with Findings. It's the "with Findings" part that frightens me. The more boxes that are checkmarked, it may be the more opportunity for opposition to develop or conjure up findings, and I don't know if they need to provide findings for each box or just one. I have a bad feeling that the developers will "assist" the town board with findings, and then move to disapprove and hope that nobody files an Article 78 Petition against the Town.

Have to run now.....  
Jeremy

On Tue, Sep 17, 2024 at 2:02 PM [ulsterhistorian@aol.com](mailto:ulsterhistorian@aol.com) <[ulsterhistorian@aol.com](mailto:ulsterhistorian@aol.com)> wrote:

Hello Jeremy,

Thank you for your email. I am so glad you liked the canceled envelope of the 200th anniversary of Lafayette's last voyage on the Hudson.

I have some questions about the nomination and the public hearings.

These are the documents that need to be attached to the Villa St. Joseph Nomination Form as we spoke about at the meeting we had with you at the library:

- Letter of Support from Elizabeth Shafer
- Letter of Support from Stephen Shafer, MD
- The signature pages (over 200 names) of those who are in favor of landmark designation. I have two more pages to add.
- The [savespauldinglane.com](http://savespauldinglane.com) website

## **EXHIBIT G**



**February 27, 2025**

**Saugerties Historic Preservation Commission**

**Public Hearing**

**Submitted by Sister Irene Ellis, Prioress of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill**

Good Evening Members of the Saugerties Historic Preservation Commission.

I am Sister Irene Ellis, the Prioress of the Dominican Convent of Our Lady of the Rosary, known by most as the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill. As you know, the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill have owned, cared for and lived our Mission on the parcel of land located at 49 Spaulding Lane in Saugerties for over 90 years, since 1931. We have cared for this land well. As Dominican Sisters, women committed to living the Gospel of Christ, we take seriously the mandate to do justice, to care about and for those vulnerable among us and to care for all of Creation.

We hold strong beliefs about the care of Earth, our Common Home. This includes care of those lands entrusted to us during our life on this planet. It was out of this commitment that we worked with Scenic Hudson for many years and eventually passed on 150 acres of prime real estate along the shoreline of the Hudson to them to ensure that this land would be preserved in its natural state in perpetuity.

We held onto 29.3 acres of our land on the Saugerties end of our property so that we might consider how to best continue our mission in service to the Gospel and in light of the needs of the times. This evening we are focused on this parcel of land, this portion of our property, where we propose to create affordable senior housing and a small development of town homes for families.

As Dominican Sisters we are very clear about what is motivating us. Our intention grew out of our sense of mission to service of peoples and to communities, and in response to the expressed need for housing in general and affordable senior housing in particular within the community of Saugerties and the broader Hudson Valley.

And now we find ourselves faced by a nomination put forth by Ms. Knaust Elia to the local Historic Preservation Commission, that our property be designated as a local historical landmark by the Town of Saugerties. This nomination clearly serves the intent and the will of those residents of Spaulding Lane who are opposed to the Dominican Sisters proposal to provide affordable housing for seniors and families on our property. We have proof of the connection between the author of the nomination publication because of email chains which included some of our sisters and our team members along with the residents of Spaulding Lane, on emails coming from Ms. Knaust Elia to this Commission and others. The very fact that the residents of Spaulding Lane are present tonight in such numbers at a hearing about historical matters in Saugerties gives testimony to what this nomination is really about. It is very curious that this issue

of the encapsulated stone house from the 1700's has all of a sudden risen to such importance. What is the honest motivation behind this nomination?

The Historic Preservation Commission has emphasized that this hearing tonight is to be a forum to discuss the nomination of our property as a historical landmark, not about the proposed senior and family housing. I have to say, Chairman Yarabek, that this is disingenuous and simply not fair given the fact the nomination itself mentions the proposed housing in its beginning and middle and end. It does this making negative and insulting references to the Dominican Sisters proposed plan to continue its Mission on our property. The nomination speaks of us, the DS of Sparkill as though we are finished living our Mission of service, finished creating our Legacy. We are not finished by any means. We are still here and have the intention of sharing our Saugerties land with others, others from within this very community of Saugerties and the surroundings who are in dire need of housing. You have every reason to trust us in this regard. We have founded, built and operated senior housing in Rockland County and in NYC, housing which is esteemed by many, and which continues to serve the needs of its residents.

Before the nomination under consideration came to be in its current form it focused on the existence of a fully intact stone house encapsulated within the current structure of St. Joseph's Villa. I believe that once it was understood that SHIPPO, the State regulatory agency charged with responsibility in such matters, ruled that the structure is not eligible for the National Registers of Historic Places due to loss of integrity, and once the report of a professional architectural historian, Molly McDonald, became available, the strategy of the author of the nomination shifted from focus on the presence of the imagined viable, in-tact stone house within the Villa to an attempt to categorize the entire property as a historical cultural landscape.

We heard from Molly McDonald earlier this evening; her professional report concludes that changes made to the house entirely altered its historic appearance; the building lacks integrity of design, workmanship, materials, association and ... does not meet the State/National Register eligibility criteria. Then we have the report from Mr. Larsen. Please read it carefully. Mr. Larsen's report emphasizes that the historic landscape and buildings that comprise the DS property have lost their historic integrity as a result of dramatic alterations during and after the second quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Mr. Larson acknowledges that the Villa St. Joseph building has been too extensively altered to meet the National Register criteria either as a historic district or cultural landscape. In spite of his clear and detailed assertions made in his report he contradicts his own conclusion in suggesting that the property should be considered to meet National Register Criteria. What is this about? SHHPO examined the report from Mr. Larsen and stated once again that the house does not meet eligibility criteria.

The nomination leaves the matter of the stone house and goes on to suggest that DS might not properly attend to the cemetery in our future planning. Such an assertion is again without substance since we have responsibly cared for cemeteries for 150 years. Additionally, and of particular note is that the cemetery in Saugerties is not owned by the Dominican Sisters. Rather the Van Leuven Family Trust continues to own it,

although we have done much of the maintenance over many years. Further, with our partners, we would certainly proceed with all appropriate legal, ethical, and scientifically appropriate diligence and have every intention of exploring around the cemetery; appropriate action will be taken out of respect for all life to ensure that any archeological remains are identified, protected, and respected. If remains of enslaved persons of African ancestry are found to be present, we are committed to ensuring proper identification, protection and respectful handling. We care deeply about the social sin that slavery represents, and we will make sure that respectful action is taken.

The nomination then raises the fact that indigenous peoples lived on or around our property. We know that the entire area along the river once sustained Indigenous peoples. These Native Americans were not confined to our small property, but made their homes and sustained their families all along the Hudson River, and in fact all across this Nation. Whatever artifacts might remain within the boundaries of 49 Spaulding Lane do not represent rare, localized cultural artifacts, but are probably similar to those left on properties to the north and south of ours, to those possibly buried in the backyards of our neighbors on Spaulding Lane. If artifacts of archeological or sacred significance were discovered during our proposed housing development, we remain committed and would be privileged to faithfully honor our long-standing values of respect and reverence for all Creation, especially as related those indigenous peoples who were victims of genocide at the hands of white American settlers. Dominican Sisters hold honored and treasured relationships with our Native American brothers and sisters of several tribal nations. One worth mentioning here is our relationship with our sisters and brothers of the Munsee-Lenape Nation living in the lower Hudson Valley region. We are currently engaged with Chief Perry of this Nation in supporting his people's struggle to be recognized as a tribal nation by the State of NY. We are committed to those vulnerable among us and are committed to aligning ourselves with them in their journey toward justice.

The nomination finally lands on the history and good works of the DS on our Saugerties property during the last 90 + years. Ms. Knaust Elia presents a rather superficial, sometimes accurate, often insulting and judgmental accounting of the presence of the DS of S as we lived and ministered on our land. What I take particular exception to is her ultimate use of our good works and spiritual contributions against us. She insinuates that we are part of history, like our indigenous brothers and sisters, and the Van Leuven and the Spauldings and Mr. Overbaugh, temperance preacher. I take exception to this notion because we, the DS of S are still here living our Mission on many levels and in many forms, in many places. It was after careful consideration and much prayerful reflection we moved with our partners, carefully chosen because of their integrity, expertise and commitment to affordable housing for vulnerable populations, to create affordable housing for those who need it within the community of Saugerties.

Ms. Knaust Elia's presentation of her account of the history of our property is terribly misguided as authentic history is always on the side of truth, not fear or self-interest. As Dominican Sisters, we are committed to justice and desire to pass on truth to the next generations. Attempts to delay our ability to help those in need by circumventing the

SHPO's assessment and misassigning our motives will be disproven, and the truth will set us all free. We stand ready to respectfully and truthfully continue to work with you to advance our affordable housing project and to serve our Mission and Saugerties' legacy of welcome.

With all due respect the members of this commission, I must ask that you deny this nomination as it represents an attempt to mislead and manipulate the majority of the citizens of Saugerties.



**Dominican Sisters**  
*of Sparkill*

*Women making a difference*

175 Route 340 • Sparkill, NY 10976  
PH: 845.359.6400 • WEB: [sparkill.org](http://sparkill.org)

Saugerties Town Board  
Saugerties Planning Board  
cc. recipients of email

February 24, 2025

Dear Members of the Town Boards,

More than fifty people and I received an email on February 6, 2025, from Karlyn Knaust Elia entitled, “The Fight for Villa St. Joseph: Will the People Be Heard?” The email rehashes numerous inaccuracies and falsehoods to which we have refuted repeatedly in good faith, transparency, and truthfulness for public record. It is particularly disingenuous that the author would not even consider the publicly available report by the New York State’s Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) written on May 5, 2024, which says that the “Villa St. Joseph Building (USN 11115, 00266) is not eligible for the State or National Registers of Historic Places due to loss of integrity.” It seems that the author of the 2-6-25 email is more concerned with being heard, rather than acknowledging the simple truth: Nothing remains of cultural, aesthetic, or sociological significance on the property of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill at the southeastern terminus of Spaulding Lane—most of all, no significant remnants of an 18<sup>th</sup> Century Dutch stone house.

And so, again, as the representative of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, I feel obligated to clarify several inaccurate assertions and points of conjecture, as well as incorrect and outrageous allegations. I am grateful for your time and ethical charge to be fair and truthful in your deliberations.

For nearly 100 years, we have cared for a convent, chapel, retreat center, conference center, and the beautiful surrounding property. The Dominican Sisters of Sparkill have served as caretakers of this property, reverencing it as God’s Creation and intending that it will be used to foster peace and the common good into the future. As we have publicly shared, the demographics of our Congregation have changed, as has our use of the property. As a result, we have sought like-minded partners to work alongside us to develop and care for a mission-focused use of our property that will serve the documented needs of the community of Saugerties and the surrounding Hudson Valley. Our partner is not a “murky, not-for-profit development organization” (presumably Grow America) with “immense political connections and deep pockets.” This is ridiculous, malicious, and patently untrue.

Further, characterizing our conscientious efforts at contributing to the common good as merely a “drama” or a twisted David-versus-Goliath scenario is disingenuous and disgraceful. After passing on nearly 150 acres to Scenic Hudson, the remaining 29.5 acres can further serve the common good by providing affordable housing for the elderly and families in need—the true “Davids” among us. We are not what the email describes as “a Blob—a faceless, unresponsive force dictating what will be.” We have consistently been good caretakers for our property in Saugerties, good neighbors, and positive contributors to the community for as long as anyone can remember. We have been present, visible, and shared our hospitality unreservedly. Can the author of the email mentioned above claim the same?

Additionally, the needless suggestion that we might not properly attend to the cemetery in our future planning is again without substance since we have responsibly cared for cemeteries for 150 years. Further, with our partners, we would certainly proceed with all appropriate legal, ethical, and scientifically appropriate diligence and have every intention of exploring around the cemetery. Appropriate action will be taken out of respect for all life to ensure that any archeological remains are identified, protected, and respected.

Finally, we are grateful for the gift of Creation and God’s invitation to be caretakers in our time. We know that the entire area along the river once sustained Indigenous peoples who were not confined to our small property, thus neither creating nor leaving a rare, localized cultural artifact. However, suppose artifacts of archeological or sacred significance are discovered during our proposed housing development. In that case, we are committed to faithfully honoring our long-standing values of respect and reverence for all Creation. The same principle and actions would apply to the speciously speculated remains of enslaved persons of African ancestry who once lived in the area. All are God’s children.

In summary, authentic history is always on the side of truth, not fear or self-interest. As Dominican Sisters, we are committed to justice and desire to pass on truth to the next generations. Attempts to delay our ability to help those in need by circumventing the SHPO’s assessment and misassigning our motives will be disproven, and the truth will set us all free. We stand ready to respectfully and truthfully continue to work with you for approval of the zoning change required to serve our Mission and Saugerties’ legacy of welcome.

Sincerely,



Sister Irene Ellis, OP, Prioress

For the Leadership Team of the Dominican Convent of Our Lady of the Rosary

My name is Matthew Wexler and I work for Grow America. We are a national nonprofit with 50 years of experience in economic development and affordable housing. We have invested \$1.2 billion in affordable housing, creating 16,743 units and we stand proud of our record. We have partnered with the Dominican Sisters to help them continue their mission on the Spaulding Lane property which they have owned for more than 90 years. The Sisters have served as stewards of this land for generations and want to build affordable housing on their land to allow others to enjoy and respect this land that they hold dear.

Grow America and the Dominican Sisters are serving as developers of this affordable housing project. We plan to build 59 affordable rental units for seniors and 20 units for affordable homeownership. Once built, these units will be open to all qualified persons, based upon income. They are not restricted to the Dominican Sisters or any other group. The goal is to create new, safe, homes for low- and moderate-income households. We believe that many folks in Saugerties will find these attractive and apply for residency.

We have worked openly with the Saugerties Town Board and Saugerties Planning Board, submitting project documents, responding to questions, following up on requests for additional information. We have attended a dozen public meetings on the project, made presentations on the same, sharing the information openly and making sure that it is available to the public.

The Saugerties Planning Board, in their role as lead agency pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Review, issued a negative declaration to mean that the project would not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts. The Planning Board's SEQRA record and negative declaration describes in detail commitments made by the development team to address potential archeological resources at the property, in accordance with applicable regulations.

The State Historic Preservation Office ("SHPO") issued their opinion regarding the property, finding nothing that would make the property worthy of historic designation per their criteria.

In response to the local Historic Landmark Commission, we offered various names of additional architectural historians to conduct their own independent report about the property. The Historic Landmark Commission chose Mr. Neil Larson. Mr. Larson did not visit the property. He never went inside any building on the property. He sent an assistant to walk around and take pictures. We received Mr. Larson's report, which contains no photos, and no evidence of any particulars. The SHPO reviewed his report and repeated their earlier conclusion – there's nothing to merit placing this property on the National or State Registers of Historic Places.

The Dominican Sisters have been on this land for a very long time. In the 90+ years that they have served as its caretakers, there was never any proposal, suggestion or inclination to nominate this property as historic, to meet with Federal, State or local criteria. The current nomination before the Saugerties Historic Landmark Commission is a misguided attempt to derail the affordable housing project, nothing more. I respectfully ask this Commission to decline this nomination.

Saugerties Historical Preservation Hearing, February 27, 2025

Good evening,

My name is Sister Grace Hogan

I have been a Dominican Sister for over 50 years.

The Historic Landmark nomination has suggested that we might not properly attend to the burial grounds in our future planning. Such an assertion is again without substance since we have responsibly cared for numerous cemeteries for 150 years. Additionally, and of particular note is that the cemetery in Saugerties is not owned by the Dominican Sisters. Rather the Van Leuven Family Trust continues to own and maintain it.

Nonetheless, with our expert partners, we would certainly proceed with all appropriate legal, ethical, and scientifically appropriate diligence around the cemetery and appropriate action will be taken out of respect for all life to ensure that should any archeological remains be discovered, they would be properly identified, protected, and respected. Furthermore, we are committed to appropriate exploration of the site's archaeological sensitivity through testing. However, I must reject the nomination as invalid because the *potential for archaeological sensitivity* is not sufficient to support a landmark nomination as currently written.

Also, I reject the repeated falsehood that the Sisters do not value the importance of the possible remains of enslaved persons of African descent who once lived in the area. As my sister said earlier, all are God's children, and any such remains if discovered, would be responsibly adjudicated.

We are grateful for the gift of Creation and God's invitation to be caretakers in our time. We know that the entire area along the river once sustained Indigenous peoples and if during the course of our proposed development, artifacts of archeological or sacred significance are discovered, then we are committed to faithfully honoring our long-standing values of respect and reverence for all Creation, as we have demonstrated throughout our history. This was our impetus to transfer nearly 150 acres with Scenic Hudson for the enjoyment of others in the first place.

Thank you.

**9--Nothing of historical significance.**



Feb. 27, 2025

Place of Welcome

Good evening,

My name is Sister Margo Saich.

I have been a Dominican Sister for 55 years as Administrator of St. Joseph's Villa for 5 years and Housing for Elderly for 21 years.

I strongly object to this nomination because, despite its purported objectivity, the narrative wanders into drama and histrionics in an attempt to demean the integrity of the historical preservation process and malign our congregation, the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill.

Our Founding Mission has been to serve the most vulnerable and provide for those in need. This nomination's thinly veiled effort to cast aspersions on our motivations and nearly 100 years of responsible stewardship and contributions to the community <sup>is</sup> not borne out in fact and needlessly sows seeds of doubt and distrust.

February 27, 2025

Dear Members of the Board,

I have read a spurious nomination application for Villa Saint Joseph in Saugerties at 43 Spaulding Lane that purports to seek a historic landmark designation by someone other than the current owners and caretakers, the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, of which I am a member. The New York State's Historical Preservation Office in May of last year told us that the buildings have lost their historical integrity over the centuries and are not eligible for such recognition. In other words, although we have conscientiously cared for the property in Saugerties for nearly 100 years, and gratefully shared our ministry with those in need, no historical structure of significance remains.

Nonetheless, the author of this application has inexplicably pushed ahead to present an alternate reality without even extending the courtesy of speaking with those of us who know the property and programs best. Citing titles of talks without context or corroboration, this shoddy scholarship has resulted in inaccurate fairytales, conveniently incorrect time sequences, ill-informed analysis of decisions, and references that are questionable and as subjective as postcards.

In short, this nomination seeks to misuse the historical landmark designation application to stop our transparent mission of service. We have demonstrated our commitment to preservation and sustainability by contributing to the land trust and we have provided shelter and care for those in need since our founding in 1876. I hope that this Board will see this historical landmark nomination for what it is: a misguided attempt to legitimate a fantasy to save a mythical house that no longer exists. Further, this nomination raises the question as to the real motivation behind this effort.

Sincerely,



Sister Eileen Gannon, OP  
Member of Dominican Sisters of Our Lady of the Rosary

My name is Sister Valerie Lordi

I have been a Dominican Sister for over 50 years and I am a nurse currently serving in an elementary school in the Bronx. As Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, we have lived our Mission and been the caretakers for the property in Saugerties for nearly 100 years, hosting programs of prayer, study, and spiritual refreshment. To share our Mission, we built dozens of bedrooms and indoor and outdoor living spaces, as well as a labyrinth and a grotto. Even the Nuclear Free Zone designation and commitment were in concert with our life and Mission.

The property and grounds were once pristine, but the past decades have seen the property and its structures fall into bad disrepair. For example, the grotto in its day was a place of inspiration for prayer but today is not recognizable in its crumbling and unsafe condition. We cannot see the grotto beyond the brush. And the labyrinth that the Sisters created by hand with a few custodians was also a gathering place for prayer and meditation and has now sunk into the ground and is greatly obscured.

These elements and others are a part of the story of the life and Mission of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill. The reason for our retreats, lectures, and spiritual declarations was to live our lives in fidelity to the Gospel. Any historical significance is personal to us and is not part of some grand archetypal national history. And to be clear, I am not being modest.

The New York State's Historical Preservation Office in May of last year told us that the buildings have lost their integrity over the centuries and are not eligible for historical recognition. In other words, although we have conscientiously cared for the property in Saugerties for nearly 100 years, and gratefully shared our ministry with those in need, no historical structure of significance remains.

We are part of an 800-year Dominican tradition and we, the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, have been positive contributors to this community. **Therefore, I must oppose any effort to misconstrue our presence on 43 Spaulding Lane as one of historical significance beyond that which is our everyday life of service.** We seek to continue serving the common good and those in need as we have for almost 150 years as a Congregation and leave a legacy of generosity and service after we are physically gone. Thank you for your careful consideration.

Good evening,

My name is Sister Mary Shea. I have been a Dominican Sister for 56 years.

Early in my ministry, when I was a teacher, some of my summer vacation time was spent volunteering at Villa St. Joseph. Later, beginning in 1988, I served at Villa Saint Dominic as the administrator for 27 years. Suffice it to say, I am familiar with Saugerties, a good number of its residents, its businesses (both past and present) and the retreats and programs on the Dominican Sisters' property. This experience gave me a special love of Saugerties.

The Mission of our Congregation remains consistent with the life of service of our community at every place and time where we have served. We live our mission as "joyful women of prayer and compassion who proclaim the Reign of God through a ministry for justice and reverence for all creation." Our 2004 Land Ethic Statement helps to guide us in our deliberations of responsible stewardship of our properties. We were proclaiming that before Pope Francis became pope and before he wrote Laudato Si!

As caretakers for the property in Saugerties for nearly 100 years, the Dominican Sisters have adapted our ministry based on the needs of others as we discern God's will for us. We are grateful to individuals in the community for collaborating with us in our communal life and Mission. However, I must object to the nomination for historic landmark designation that seeks to distract, delay, and thus, misuse the process to stop us from continuing our Mission in Saugerties.

In our time and particularly In Saugerties, the Dominican Sisters remain consistent in our commitment to foster a legacy of ethical custodianship in the future with those who reverence the land as God's Creation and who seek to foster the common good.

*Feb 27, 2025*

2-27-2025

**Good Evening**

**My name is Sister Maureen Foy. I have been a Dominican Sister for 69 years.**

**As part of my ministry, I have served as archivist for our congregation. Our Dominican Congregation highly treasures the study and preservation of history which we see as a pathway to personal and spiritual growth, a greater social awareness, and ethical actions for others.**

**Our history began in 1876 in New York City. Our mission (a call) to respond to a need, especially for those in most need of help at that time. This has continued for all these years. This is now 2025. We, the Dominican Sisters are still in mission. A call now – how to best respond to a need in this area of Ulster County. After much study and advice from professionals, we knew that the ministry at Villa St. Joseph was to provide much needed affordable housing for our senior citizens.**

**I am here tonight to express my opposition to this nomination presented by Karlyn Knaust Elia, the author of this application. She has pushed ahead to propose an alternate reality. This application proposes more than a dozen hypothetical possibilities of discovery. Such speculations do not qualify the site as historic or significant. In short, this nomination seeks to misuse the historical landmark designation application process to stop our transparent mission of service to our senior citizens.**

Sister Nancy Richter, OP Dominican Sisters, Sparkill, NY

**February 27, 2025 – Saugerties Historical Preservation Committee Hearing**

My name is Sr. Nancy Richter. I currently serve on the Leadership Team of the Dominican Sisters. I have been a Dominican Sister for 57 years.

Throughout this evening, we have heard that the New York State Historical Preservation Office declared that no historical structure or land artifact of significance remains, and the buildings have lost their historical integrity over the centuries. Therefore, I strongly oppose this nomination.

Since our founding in 1876, almost 150 years ago, we the Dominican Sisters have valued our properties wherever they are located, reverencing their care as they were the basis of our ministries to serve the needs of those around us and to be faithful to the mission of our Order. To be clear...ministry is what we do, Mission is what we live and that remains our enduring value. Therefore, it perplexes me when communications regarding our Congregation are disseminated publicly stating:

“The concerted and purposeful lack of interest in the history of the property...is a perplexing condition where the narrative is one that supports a more lucrative outcome, rather than a more equitable and spiritual one.”

Belonging to a Congregation that holds study as one of the pillars of the Order and has supported and encouraged the education of sisters to the level of Doctorates in History, ministering as highly regarded professors at several Colleges and publishing various books and thesis, I find this conjecture of a lack of historical interest as a congregation, to be outrageous and the implication that it is for financial reasons is not only a falsehood but insulting as well.

It was only after the conscientious and prayerful deliberations of our congregation that we sought to engage with professionals, such as AKRF, a professional environmental and engineering services firm with a cultural resources division, to examine the historical records related to the property with an architectural historian who inspected the property to determine its historical significance. We the Dominican Sisters accepted their professional judgement, as has the New York State Historical Preservation Office (twice). We, the Dominican Sisters, along with our other partners have acted with integrity, professionalism and transparency throughout the process. So again, I strongly oppose this nomination.

This is but a flagrant attempt to thwart the proposed future project for our property which will serve a well-known need for many both in Saugerties and Ulster County and continue the mission we have dedicated our lives to for almost 150 years.

February 27, 2025 Saugerties Historic Preservation Board Public Hearing

My name is Sr. Cecilia LaPietra, and I am a Dominican Sister for 67 years.

**I cannot support this nomination.**

As with any property the Dominican Sisters steward, our priority and commitments are to care for others, which is inextricably connected to our care for the Earth. I believe we can learn much from history to help us to make informed choices, foster empathy in understanding others, offering context for the present, and valuable guidance for the future.

Many things have been said tonight, but the truth is that citing titles of talks without context or corroboration, this careless scholarship has resulted in inaccurate tales, incorrect time sequences, ill-informed analysis of decisions, inappropriate theological applications, and references that are questionable.

We have demonstrated our commitment to honest transparency, preservation, and sustainability by contributing to the land trust and we have provided shelter and care for those in need since our founding in 1876. I hope that the Saugerties community will see this historical landmark nomination for what it is: a misguided attempt to delay our efforts to help others and contribute to the common good.

Thank you.

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**My name is David Coppola.** I was educated by the Dominican Sisters of Caldwell, NJ, whose influence is still felt by me 60 years later. I hold a license to teach theology from the Pontifical University of Saint Mary's in Baltimore, MD, and a doctorate from Fordham University, NY. My scholarship focuses on history, philosophy, and inter-religious studies. I have given hundreds of lectures and published numerous articles and 4 books—none of which were best sellers, as you might expect. 😊 I have been a high school and college teacher, a high school principal, and a college president in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and currently work with the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill in communications and mission advancement. I am briefly speaking this evening to place some things in the historic landmark designation nomination in context.

To include the life and programs of the Dominican Sisters as part of the historical landmark designation is inappropriate. The Dominican Order was founded more than 800 years ago by Saint Dominic de Guzman to preach truth in the times in which he lived. The Sparkill Dominicans also have faithfully followed that call since 1876 and have shared their lives in Saugerties for nearly 100 years. <sup>(since 1931)</sup> The results of their efforts are inspirational, but their selfless living of the Gospel does not make them rare. Over the centuries, literally millions of religious sisters, brothers, and priests around the world have lived their Mission and Calling to follow the Gospel in similar ways.

And were the contributions of the Dominican Sisters on the banks of the Hudson River an indispensable part of American history? They were not. So, I invite us to be appropriate and truthful in these deliberations.

Additionally, hardworking ferrymen and freighters, soldiers in the American Revolutionary War, and even a Circus owner were good citizens and productive. But do they really call for a national or even regional historic designation? They do not.

Finally, stories in the nomination application of an early 19th-century temperance preacher [of whom there were hundreds at the time], are admirable but not historically significant. On the other hand, perhaps you studied in high school Benjamin Rush's 1784 Tract, (*An Inquiry Into the Effects of Ardent Spirits Upon the Human Body and Mind*), that held excessive use of alcohol was harmful to individuals and society. Rush's writing influenced about 200 farmers in Connecticut to form a temperance association in 1789, which inclined the Massachusetts legislature to pass a law (in 1838) restricting the sale of alcohol in quantities less than fifteen gallons. The point is that Benjamin Rush was consequential in his influence, not our Reverend Peter Overbaugh.

In summary, there are good and industrious people everywhere, including Saugerties. Do we need to seek a historic landmark designation to celebrate such virtue? No. So, I encourage you to kindly support the Dominican Sisters' opposition to this dubious nomination. Thank you. [drdavidcoppola@outlook.com](mailto:drdavidcoppola@outlook.com)



Good evening,

My name is Sister Christine Ferrar

I have been a Dominican Sister for 60 years, and for over 35 years worked with the Native American population on a reservation in Hayes Montana.

I came this evening to say that I oppose this nomination and the insinuations from public correspondence by the author that suggest false motivations for the in-depth discernment process of our Congregation that began in 2004. At that time, we developed our Land Ethic Statement to guide us in the careful stewardship of our properties. In this Statement, we say, "We have come to understand that the land is God's, that we are caretakers of the land, and we have come to understand that Earth's benefits are for everyone," [and] "that land should be conserved, restored, and shared equitably."

Such a Congregational commitment prompted us to transfer nearly 150 acres to Scenic Hudson for its responsible stewardship and mission to provide public access to the beauty we have gladly preserved. The Dominican Sister's decision to care for the earth and simultaneously care for those in need is exactly the sustainable **integral ecology** that Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical letter, *Laudato Si*, encourages. Thus, our true calling and motivation.

Unfortunately, I think the timing and motives of this nomination seek to misuse the historical landmark designation process to cloud and stop our transparent mission of service. We, the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, have demonstrated our commitment to preservation and sustainability by contributing to the land trust and we have provided shelter and care for those in need since our founding in 1876.

I hope that the Saugerties community will see this historical landmark nomination for what it is: A misguided attempt to prevent us from serving those in need by imagining a mythical house and property that no longer exists.

Thank you.

Feb. 27, 2025

**Good Evening,**

**My name is Sr. Joan Correia and I am a Dominican Sister of Sparkill**

**I believe that the lessons learned from history help us to make informed choices, to have empathy in understanding others and provide valuable guidance for decisions. History should not be cheapened by this attempt to camouflage an historical designation process for questionable motives.**

**I strongly oppose this nomination**

2/27/25

Good evening,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

and I am

→ Sr. Gloria Lowe

I cannot support this nomination.

As with any property the Dominican Sisters steward, our priority and commitments are to care for others, which is inextricably connected to our care for the Earth. The Dominican Sisters of Sparkill are opposed to the nomination of their property as a local historic landmark because this action represents a blatant attempt to prevent the Dominican Sisters from continuing their Mission.

February 27, 2025, Saugerties Public Hearing, Historic Nomination

Good evening. My name is Cheryl Burton. I have been associated with the Dominican Sisters for over 40 years.

During this time, I have participated in many beautiful experiences, to honor the sacredness of the earth, at Saugerties, as well as other places of natural beauty where they held such programs living out their commitment to reverence the earth and all of creation. They are women of integrity, faithful to the mission of St. Dominic, to recognize the signs of the times and respond.

In hearing about this nomination being put forth, I wondered why now? The sisters have been on the land for over 90 years. What makes this the optimum time to initiate this designation, when the Dominican Sisters true to their mission are seeing the signs of these times and seeking to respond.

I find the pursuit of this historical designation suspicious and due to that, and so I stand with the sisters in their efforts to block this nomination.

Thank you.

*Sr. Margaret Flaherty : Sparkill Dominican*

Flahertymargaret9@gmail.com

Good evening. My name is Sister Margret and I have been a Dominican Sister for 67 years.

Since 1960, I have been coming to the Villa Saint Joseph. Over the years, I have been a staff member in July and vacationed in August. During the year, I would come up for retreats and other specific events.

During the years, local friends from Saugerties and Glasco would walk our trails and attend Mass in our chapel. A few even had weddings and anniversary celebrations.

This past October I came up with a sister friend and we walked all our trails from Saugerties to Glasco. Along the way, we met many friendly people. I am most grateful to Scenic Hudson for their care of the trails . . . . .

I love our property and would love for Seniors to be able to enjoy our wonderful legacy. I am not able to support this nomination because it prevents us from serving so many people in the future.

Thank you.

**2/27/25**

**My name is Ed O'Leary**

**"I do not support the nomination to designate the property as an historical landmark. I do not believe there is strong enough evidence for such a designation."**

**Sister Kathleen O'Connor, Dominican Sister of Sparkill,**

**February 27, 2025**

**Good evening,**

**My name is Sister Kathleen O'Connor, and I am a Dominican Sister of Sparkill.**

**I am here to express opposition to the nomination of The Villa St. Joseph Complex as a Historic Landmark in the Town of Saugerties. The Nomination Statement submitted by Ms. Knaust Elia proposed that this property deserves such a distinction. I think she writes well and tells interesting stories, but the nomination is flawed due to suppositions in her report. The history of this property does not merit this designation. I cannot support this nomination.**

February 27, 2025

Saugerties Public Hearing regarding St. Joseph Villa's purpose

Good Evening.

My name is Carole Davide and I have been an Associate of the Dominican Sisters Congregation for 45 years.

I cannot support this nomination.

As with any property the Dominican Sisters steward, our priority and commitments are to care for others, which is inextricably connected to their care for the Earth. The Dominican Sisters of Sparkill are opposed to the nomination of their property as a local historic landmark because this action represents a blatant attempt to prevent the Dominican Sisters from continuing their Mission.

Thank you.



**2/27/25**

**My name is Patti McCallion.**

**"I do not support the nomination to designate the property as an historical landmark. I do not believe there is strong enough evidence for such a designation."**

Thank you for this opportunity to express our concerns about the future of the Villa property.

As a person who has lived in a 200 year old house for decades, you can be sure I fully appreciate the value of history. I have also been a person who has had a close relationship with the Dominican Sisters for many years & miss them in our community.

They have been good neighbors and environmentally sensitive. I fully trust their sincere desire to create affordable housing on their property for seniors.

By now we all recognize the need for affordable housing every where & for all people. But seniors are particularly vulnerable & often cannot continue to live in this area due to the exceedingly high cost of housing. Caring about these people & the basic human need of housing should be everyone's priority! What is more important? The lives of people, our neighbors, or perhaps a minor remnant of a former structure?

The Sisters seem to be expressing compassion and the desire to leave something worthwhile after their long presence here in Saugerties. For God's Sake, let us support them in their effort to do good.

Joan Monaldi  
157 Churchland Road  
Saugerties, NY 12477

November 25, 2024

2/27/25

Good evening,

My name is Sister Marie Peter. I have been a Dominican Sister for 60 years. I serve on the Leadership Team for the Congregation, and I am a Nursing Educator focused on healthcare needs which includes the provision of basic human needs.

As Dominican Sisters of Sparkill we describe ourselves as “joyful women of prayer and compassion who proclaim the Reign of God through ministry for justice and reverence for all Creation.” As a Congregation, we have an attitude of faith and confidence in making a positive difference in a troubled world. And yet, I am disheartened that the historic landmark nomination uses the occasion to suggest false and inappropriate motivations for the in-depth discernment process we began in 2004. We developed a Land Ethic Statement to guide us in the careful stewardship of our properties. We are committed to considering the effect that our decisions will have on the Earth Community now and for generations to come. Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* encourages us with the words *"There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions"* (LS 211)

In 2010, the Sisters entered into a partnership with Scenic Hudson to create a land preserve on the property owned by the Dominican Sisters to be preserved and for all to enjoy, and for the remaining property to serve those in need. In 2015, the property, now known as Falling Waters Preserve, was sold for a nominal price to Scenic Hudson for preservation into perpetuity, protecting this magnificent mile-long stretch of Hudson River shoreline.

Although there is great value in preservation and passing on of inspirational stories, art, and places of worship, similar to other Congregations of women religious, we did not construct buildings to be icons or monuments to be maintained for their own sake or for ours. As Sisters, our lives are given to serving the Gospel, our Mission, and living simply. Our properties and resources are also given for the purpose for which we were founded; namely, to improve the unmet needs of our neighbors and world.

It is difficult for us to understand the motivations for delaying our sincere hope to serve the common good and to entrust our Mission to the next generation in Saugerties. **So, I oppose this nomination for its misleading efforts at preventing us and that next generation from doing continued good and joyful work in Saugerties.**

Thank you.

Saugerties Meeting  
2/27/2025

Good evening. My name is Sr. Aileen Donovan. I am a member of the Sparkill Dominican Congregation. I come before you tonight because of my love of the Villa St. Joseph property and my commitment to the mission of my Dominican Congregation.

For almost 60 years, at different times, I have come to this property for rest and to make retreat, and for 11 of those years I lived and worked at the other end of the property, in Glasco.

My congregation has carefully cared for this gift of creation and welcomed others to share in its beauty. Our sisters have even volunteered for weekends to come, clean up, and restore the land after use by others who walk the paths, etc.

When the time came for the congregation to relook our ownership of the property, we did our best to, not “make money” as has been erroneously insinuated, but rather to look for ways to protect and preserve the waterfront and the largest portion of the combined property for our neighbors and future generations. Hence, by sale to Scenic Hudson, not developers, Falling Waters Preserve came into being. Hopefully, many in this room have been able to benefit from visits to the preserve.

The nomination document before you tonight refers many times to the stone house built in the 1700s. It states the house is contained in Villa St. Joseph, leading one to believe

that there is a whole or most of a house in the Villa structure. The nomination document is in error. Not once, but twice, the State has declared that there is not enough integrity left to that house for it to receive historic designation.

This is only one example of how the nomination document seems to misuse information, or point to irrelevant information, even using the spiritual life and ministry of our sisters as a reason for historical designation. The nomination document and other emails have insulted and questioned our sincerity and truthfulness and that of our partners.

As the Sparkill Dominicans have planned for the future of this property, we have acted with good faith and integrity, keeping before us the gift of this land for all and the needs of our sisters and brothers of this area. This is our mandate as we continue our mission to proclaim God's goodness, with justice, compassion and care of our common home.

I do not see this nomination document as other than a thinly disguised effort to stop my congregation's plans to address an important need in the Saugerties area and therefore a misuse of the nomination process itself. I strongly oppose Villa St. Joseph and the Sparkill Dominican property receiving Town of Saugerties Historic Landmark Designation.

*Sister Aileen Donovan, OP*

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