

**REVISED MANAGEMENT SUMMARY FOR
PHASE II ARCHAEOLOGICAL TESTING AND EVALUATION
PERFORMED FOR
GREAT ST. JAMES HISTORIC VILLAGE SITE
GREAT ST JAMES, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS**

Prepared for:

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Soltec International Inc. (Soltec) has completed the field work for the Phase II Archaeological Testing and Evaluation (Study) for the Great St. James Historic Village Site (Figure 1). The Study was performed on behalf of Mr. Kevin D'Amour, Esq., as Attorney in Fact for the owners of Great St. James Island, as part of the compliance requirements for the proposed subdivision and development of the island.

One of the primary objectives of this study was to obtain accurate spatial site data for use in the planning and design of the proposed development's infrastructure components with the intent of avoiding and/or minimizing adverse effects to significant cultural resources. The Study was performed according to the Research Plan approved by your office on November 17, 2006.

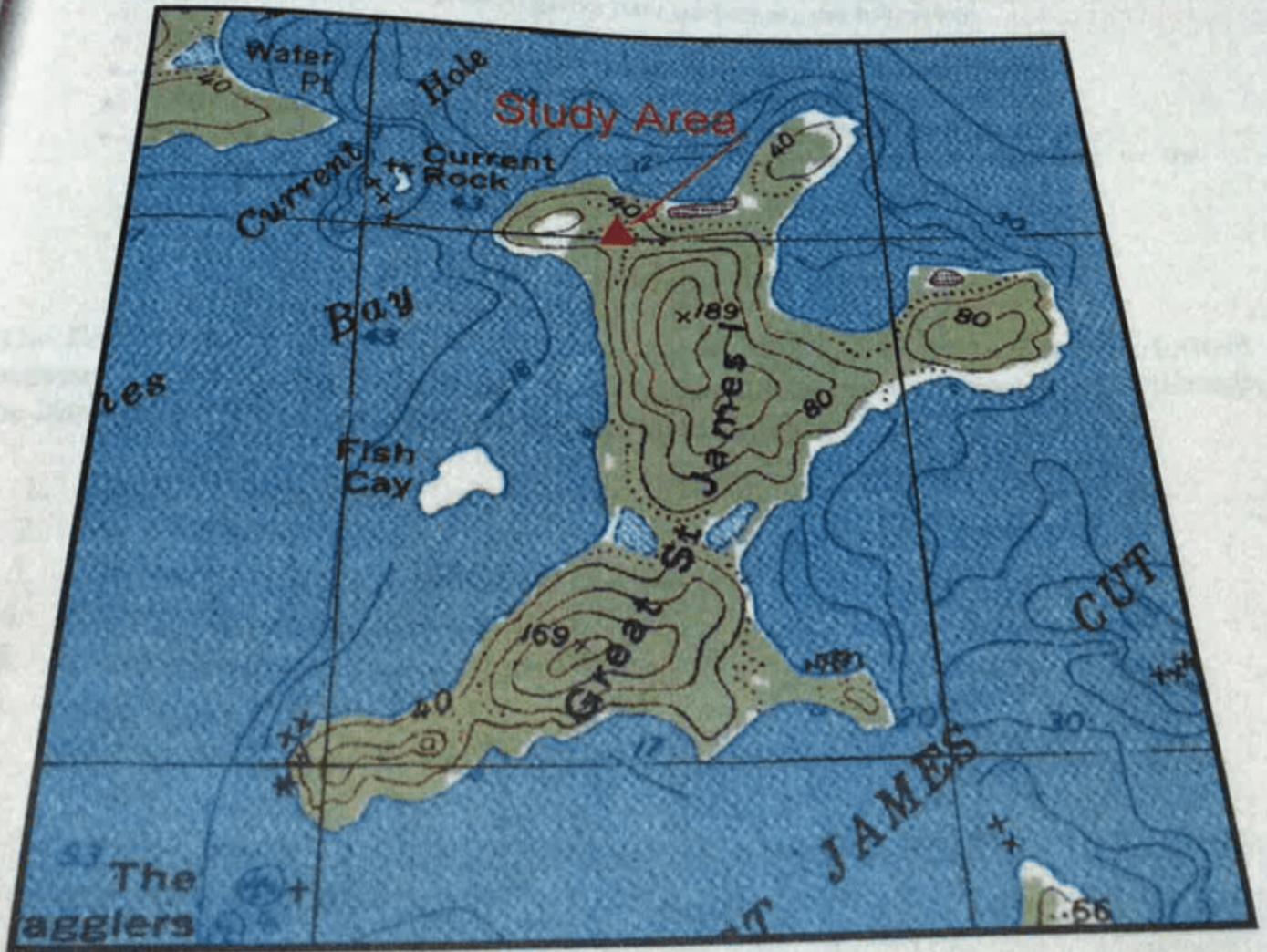


Figure 1: USGS Quadrangle: Eastern St. Thomas depicting the location of Study Area

2.0 BACKGROUND

A Phase I Archaeological Survey was performed for the island of Great St. James in 2005 by Ms. Elizabeth Rieger of Archeolink. The Archeolink study resulted in the identification of a complex of historic ruins and associated archaeological contexts located on the northern parts of the island, herein referred to as the Historic Great St. James Village. The Archeolink study also identified a well, dry laid stone/coral walls, and what they describe as a grave site, located in close proximity but outside of the Great St. James Village.

The primary objective of the current Phase II Archaeological Testing and Evaluation was to gather additional site data to assist in the development of site plans that avoid or minimize adverse impacts to significant cultural resources. To accomplish the stated objective, the Study was designed to gather data concerning the following:

- The horizontal and vertical limits of the Great St. James Village Site.
- The contextual integrity of the archaeological deposits
- The existing conditions of the historic architectural resources
- The potential of the cultural resource to meet criteria of eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)

3.0 FIELD WORK

The field work for the Phase II Archaeological Testing and Evaluation was performed between December 1 and December 21, 2006. The field work was accomplished through the implementation of the seven tasks enumerated below:

1. Site Reconnaissance
2. Site Clearing
3. Site mapping and establishment of a site grid
4. Recordation of constructed features
5. Controlled Surface Collection (CSC)
6. Excavation of Shovel Tests
7. Excavation of one by one meter test units

3.1 Site Reconnaissance

The first task performed was a reconnaissance of the site area to familiarize the team with the site area and its immediate environs. The reconnaissance also served to assist in the planning and scheduling of the other tasks.

3.2 Site Clearing

The site area was found to be heavily vegetated and required the cutting of large amounts of brushy and thorny species prior to or during the establishment of survey transects and to expose constructed features.

3.3 Mapping and Site Grid

Brian Moseley and Associates established the site grid baselines and mapped the constructed features.

3.4 Recordation of constructed features

The constructed features were photographed and measured sketches of the plan of each building made, examples are provided in later sections of this document.

3.5 Controlled Surface Collection (CSC)

A controlled surface collection (CSC) of the site area was made using collection units that measured 1.75 meters square and were established at 10 meter intervals.



Figure 2: Controlled surface collection activities in progress

3.6 Excavation of Shovel Tests

Shovel testing was performed at 10 meter intervals to define the horizontal and vertical limits of the site. Each test measured 30 by 30 centimeters and was excavated to artifactually sterile depths; all excavated soils were screened through ¼ inch mesh hardware.



Figure 3: Photograph of shovel testing activities in progress

3.7 Excavation of one by one meter test units

Five one by one meter units were excavated to test select areas of the site. The areas selected included thick midden deposits (Figure 4), general site contexts, discrete concentrations of artifacts and one area in the central part of the site that appeared to be devoid of materials. In addition to the test units, large areas were cleared of vegetation, rubble and colluvium to expose and record architectural features (Figure 6).



Figure 4: Surface of Test Unit 1. Note shell and artifacts

4.0 LABORATORY

The material recovered from the Phase II Archaeological Testing and Evaluation are being processed. We are scheduled to complete analysis by the end of January, 2007.

5.0 REPORTING

The report of the investigations will be submitted to the VISHPO for review on or before March 9, 2007

6.0 PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

6.1 VILLAGE PLAN

The Phase II Archaeological Testing and Evaluation performed for the Great St. James Historic Village resulted in the identification of 17 structures of varying forms and likely function within the historic village. We note that this number of structures is six less than reported by Righter in 2005. The village proper exhibits a symmetrical plan that is rectilinear in form (Figure 7) with what are likely to be small domestic structures and associated features aligned along the north edge of the saddle. The larger structures are located on the west side of the village and generally trend along a north to south axis. Two small structures are located to the west of the village core area (P and Q); these two structures may represent earlier construction or perhaps specific function buildings separated from the core village area. Additional possible associated features include a number of cart paths, a well at Christmas Cove to the west of the village, and constructed features to the northeast of the village, including one that was considered by Righter (2005) to represent a grave.



Figure 7: Map depicting the location of the Great St. James Historic Village Structures

6.1.1 Village Architectural Remains

The remains of seventeen readily definable structures were located and recorded by measured drawings and photography, examples of the level of documentation is shown in Figures 8-10. We note that 23 structures were recorded by Righter; the discrepancy between our findings and Righter's may be in part attributable to the level of exposure made for each structure; we suspect that because of the thick vegetation and considerable disarticulation of building materials, some structures may have been considered by Righter to represent more than one structure.

The domestic and store buildings are represented by rubble masonry foundation walls that supported timber superstructures. An exception to this pattern is a small building (M) that contained a full elevation of stone. Interestingly, no evidence for the use of wattle and lime plaster was noted at the site. Significant amount of the recycling of building materials appears to have been made in the late 19th-century as evidenced by ground level foundation walls, an absence of surrounding rubble and artifact scatters in the building's interiors. Other structures include a large rectangular cistern with a vaulted roof and catchment basin (Figure 10), other cisterns, bathhouse and a water trough.

The buildings are generally poorly to moderately well preserved, the surviving walls contain numerous diagonal fissures or disarticulated wall [redacted]. However, their plan is readily discernable.

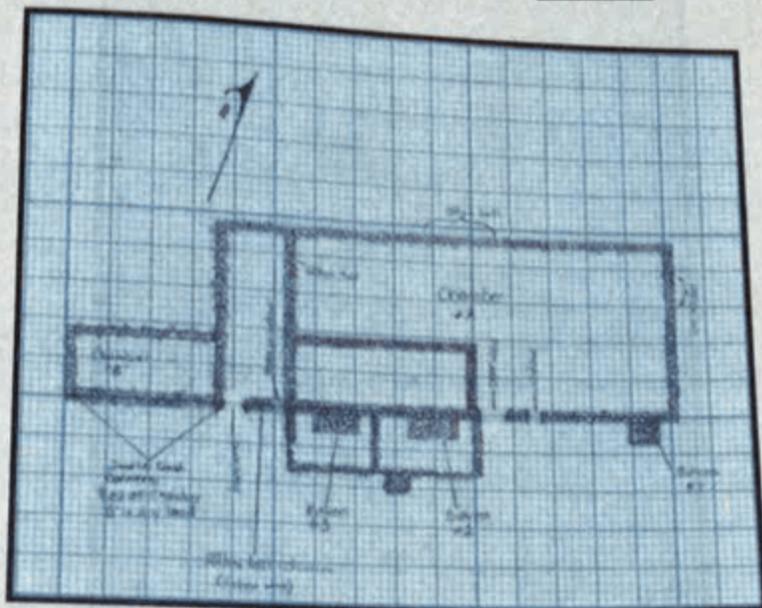


Figure 8: Example of plan view for Structure A



Figure 9: Photograph of Structure M

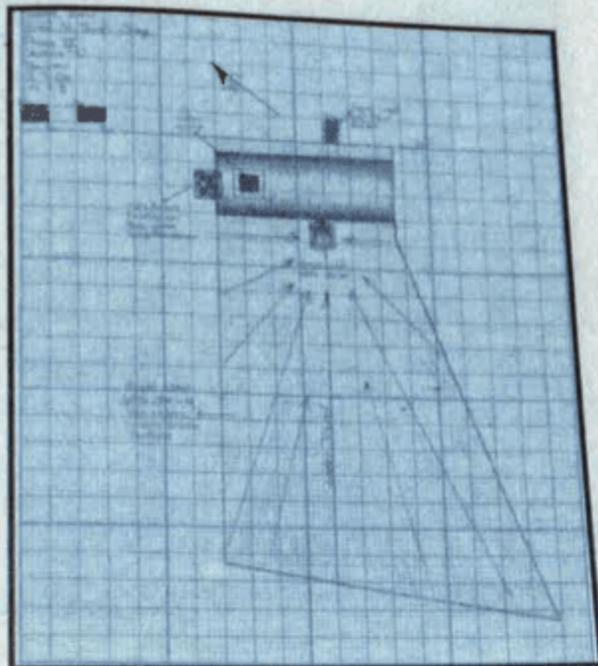


Figure 10: Plan View of Structure L, cistern and catchment basin

6.2 ARTIFACT BEARING MATRICES

We had initially hypothesized in our research proposal that the artifact bearing matrices would be restricted to surface or very near-surface contexts. This proposition was largely refuted as artifact bearing matrices were found to extend to depths as much as 18 to 20 centimeters below surface (cubs). An exception to this general pattern is an area near the center of the site that appears to have been regularly swept, as evidenced by the absence of top soil and artifacts. The most extensive midden deposits are located along the edges of the settlement and largely down slope from the structures.

6.3 GRAVES

Two graves were found present in between Structures A and B (Figure 7); both graves are defined by arrangements of rocks and conch shells.



Figure 11: Plan view of graves recorded between Structures A and B

6.4 OTHER CONSTRUCTED FEATURES

Other constructed features that are likely associated with the Great St. James Historic Village were reported by Righter (2005) are located quite some distance from the village proper, to the west on Christmas Cove and to the northeast of the village. These features were visited by us during the course of our presence on Great St. James and were recorded by photography.

6.4.1 The Features at Christmas Cove

The well at Christmas Cove contains a dry laid rubble casing that is well preserved. The well was constructed at a location where it intercepts a small gut descending from the slopes above the well.



Figure 12: Well at Christmas Cove

6.4.2 Features to the northeast of the Village

The features to the northeast of the village are in, or in close proximity to, the large salt pond located on the extreme north part of the island. These features include a dry laid rubble wall constructed with rock and coral was identified by Righter in 2005. The purpose of this wall remains undetermined. Similar additional walls are reported by Righter in this same general area.



Figure 13: Dry laid coral and rock wall

A causeway of loose rock and coral crosses the eastern end of a salt pond on the northern part of the island. The rock alignment (in the form of a stone lined path) continues on the slopes above, to a location that remains undetermined.



Figure 14: Photograph of causeway



Figure 15: Stone lined path (continuation of causeway)

The grave site defined by Righter is interesting in that it appears to be a constructed feature that has been partially disarticulated (Figure 16). [REDACTED] larger faceted coral and stone blocks are found scattered in an area measuring approximately 10 meters in diameter and along the edges of a large, roughly circular depression.



Figure 16: Grave platform identified by Righter (2005:44)

[REDACTED] Righter (2005:43 and 44) suggests that the disarticulated coral and stone represents the remains of a monument that was set on top of the grave and the depression to be a robbed grave. We are not entirely convinced that this is a grave site, as the amount of worked rock and coral appears to be far greater than necessary for a monument (s), and the depression is far larger than necessary to rob a grave. Additionally, neither Righter nor our team reports seeing loose skeletal remains that are characteristic of robbed grave contexts (although we did not screen the soils).

We did however, note an additional constructed feature to the south of the grave platform described by Righter (Figure 17). Additionally, a number of leveled areas and the features described above (dry laid walls, causeway, stone lined path) were noted by Righter and us in close proximity to the putative grave.



Figure 17: Photograph showing relationship of grave platform and additional constructed feature (north arrow sits on top of additional constructed feature)

7.0 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The Great St. James Historic Village

The Phase II Archaeological Testing and Evaluation performed for the Great St. James Historic Village resulted in the identification of a settlement that contains some evidence of having been occupied in the late 18th-century; however, the preponderance of the artifacts appear to date to the 19th-Century with some minor amounts dating to the 20th-century. The settlement contains the remains of 17 rubble masonry structures in varying states of preservation.

The artifact bearing matrices appear well preserved with contextual integrity. Faunal remains in the form of large amounts of whelk and moderate amounts of conch predominate; additionally, the remains of fish, birds, large and small mammals were also recovered. The Great St. James Historic Village is considered to meet the criteria for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion D which is defined as having yielded or may be likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history.

Data from the Phase II Study provides a sufficient amount of resolution as to the location of structures and archaeological contexts to assist in the planning for the development in this part of the island. A proposed road on the western side of the village has been redesigned to avoid impacts to historic structures. Figure 17 shows the location of the proposed road alignment (highlighted in deep blue).

7.1.2 Christmas Cove Features

The Christmas Cove features of concern include a well and a trough which appears to be of later construction. The well is most likely associated with the historic settlement and as Righter suggests, possibly also provided mariners with a water supply.

7.1.3 Features to the northeast of village

The walls, causeway, rock pathway, potential "grave site", and leveled areas, all within close proximity to each other strongly indicate this area to have been the locus for activities of as yet undetermined nature, most likely related to the village settlement, but quite possibly, independent of it.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Soltec recommends that the village structures be avoided and preserved in situ within a green spaced area. We recommend that consideration be afforded to developing the village area as an interpreted culturally sensitive park like setting.

The proposed road alignment to the west of the core of the ruins complex (Figure 18) will cut through midden deposits. Soltec will make specific recommendations for mitigating adverse impacts in the final report of investigations.

8.1 Christmas Cove Features

The well and trough located on Christmas Cove should be preserved *in situ* and incorporated into the overall landscape design for the development. We recommend that the location of the Christmas Cove features be mapped by a Virgin Islands licensed Surveyor. Additionally, we recommend that a grate be placed over the well opening as a safety measure.

U.S. Virgin Islands of the United States
Department of Tourism & Natural Resources
Virgin Islands State Historic Preservation Office
"Preserving The Past For The Future"

Dean C. Plaskett, Esq., Commissioner

Myron D. Jackson, Director

November 20, 2006

Memorandum

To: Victor Somme, Director, CZM

From: 
Myron D. Jackson, Director

Subject: **VISHPO Review and Comments regarding *Technical Proposal to Perform a Phase II Archaeological Testing and Evaluation Study for an Historical Archaeological Site Located on the Island of Great St. James, U.S. Virgin Islands* by Soltec International Inc. (11/15/06) for Major CZM Application No. CZT-12-06 / Christian Kjaer**

VISHPO has received the technical proposal referenced above and our comments are as follows:

- Pursuant to the Phase I Cultural Resources Survey investigations carried out by Ms. Holly Righter of Archaeolink in 2004, which resulted in the *Report of a Phase I Cultural Resources Survey of Great St. James Island, St. Thomas, USVI*, several significant cultural resources were identified.
- The significant cultural resources identified by Ms. Righter included the remains of at least 23 structures, refuse middens, a well, a grave, cart paths, and other landscape features.
- As a result of the identification of these significant cultural resources, and in light of the proposed development by Great St. James Properties for residential housing, further Phase II Testing and Evaluation Study is required to determine boundaries, depth, documentation, and level of significance for a determination of eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places for the resources identified. The sites are already considered significant for inclusion onto the local Virgin Islands Registry of Historic Buildings, Sites, and Places.

The results of the Phase II Testing and Evaluation will provide information for planning to either avoid the known resources, or determine further Phase III Mitigation studies, if needed, where cultural resources might be unavoidable with proposed development planning.

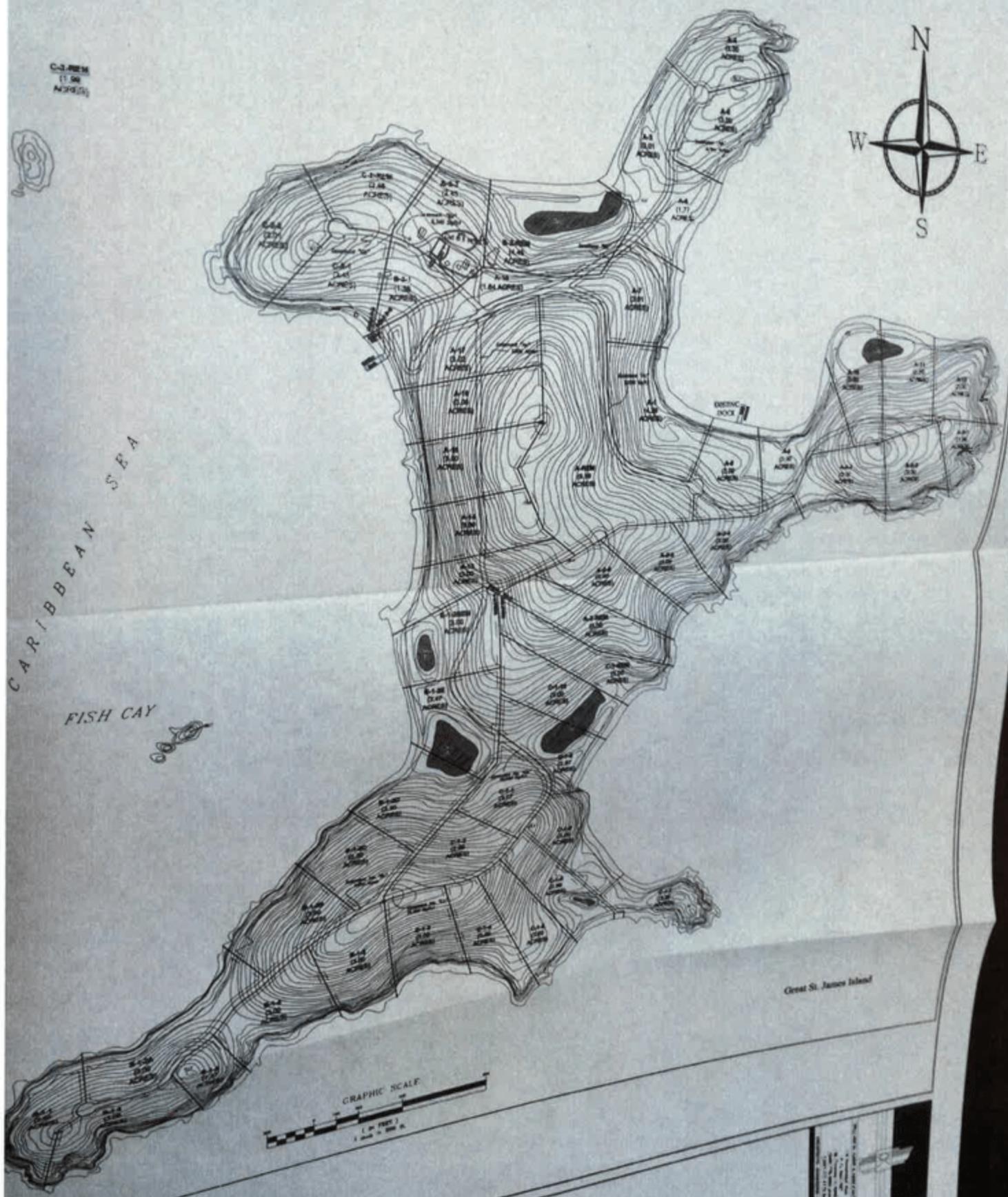
- Based on the review of the Phase II Technical Proposal submitted by Soltec, it appears that it meets the recommendations necessary to assess and evaluate the identified cultural resources as per VISHPO requirements.

The VISHPO also notes that "as a preliminary concept, the culturally significant site area will be developed as an interpreted, culturally sensitive, passive park-like setting that maintains the site's inherent archaeological character", and it is our wish that this concept is supported throughout the planning process; at the same time, we applaud the developer for this foresight and sensitivity.

- Our only further concern regarding the Phase II Testing and Evaluation is that the historic well, which is outside the described "culturally significant site area" be documented and preserved, with any mitigative testing to be discussed with the VISHPO prior to disturbance, and the grave site, already identified, be preserved in place, restored as a marked place of burial, and fenced in, with access allowed. If either of these alternatives is not conducive to planning and development, the VISHPO is to be contacted and consulted prior to any measures that may impact the site.
- As discussed in the proposal (Reporting, p. 5) a Management Summary report will be prepared for submittal to the VISHPO within three days of the conclusion of field activities, and as a result this document will be sufficient to issue a conditioned finding for the purposes of the CZM permitting process. Should further work be necessary, once agreed-upon and signed, a Memorandum of Agreement can be put in place to allow the permitting to proceed.

c: Dean C. Plaskett, Esq., Commissioner and
Virgin Islands State Historic Preservation Officer

Manny C. Ramos, CZM Environmental Engineer



Great St. James Island