

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

A. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND SCOPE-OF-WORK

This report presents the results of a cultural resource survey carried out for Clinton Township Board of Education in connection with the proposed new middle school on Gray Rock Road in Clinton Township, Hunterdon County, New Jersey (Figures 1.1 and 1.2). Cultural resource services are required in this instance under Executive Order 215 and for project compliance with New Jersey freshwater wetlands permitting rules and regulations (Stream Encroachment and Freshwater Wetlands Statewide General Permit 10B application, N.J.A.C. 7:13 and 7:7A). The initial investigation of the 27+/- acre project site entailed an intensive level survey of the historic buildings on the property and a Phase IA archaeological consideration of all areas of likely ground disturbance within the project site. The principal focus of this phase of work was the historic Christoffel Vought Farm Site (28Hu550) farmhouse, its related outbuildings and the farm setting on Gray Rock Road close to the western edge of the project area (Plates 1.1 and 1.2).

This initial survey was commenced on February 14, 2005, and an assessment provided to the Clinton Township Board of Education on March 9. This assessment identified the Christoffel Vought Farmhouse as a significant historic property meeting several National and State Register Criteria. Recommendations were made for additional recordation of the house, and for its protection during construction and for its long-term preservation. The survey also identified the potential for archaeological resources contributing to the importance of the prop-

erty in the immediate area of the farmstead. The remainder of the site was held to have low archaeological potential.

The results of the initial survey were discussed with the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office on March 14, 2005. It was agreed that the immediate requirements were for a Phase IB/II identification and evaluation investigation of the archaeologically sensitive area around the farm, including the alignment of the proposed access road from Gray Rock Road. This work was commenced on March 21, 2005.

The following tasks were completed during these investigations:

Background Research

Historical, archaeological and land use data were gathered from the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, the New Jersey State Museum, the New Jersey State Library, the Hunterdon County Historical Society, and selected local libraries and government agencies. A chain of title was established for the historic farm property on Gray Rock Road in order to trace 18th- through 20th-century land use and ownership. This task involved research into primary archival sources (deeds, surrogates records, tax records)

Fieldwork

Historic architectural fieldwork entailed completion of a thorough examination and intensive-level recording of the interior and exterior of the farmhouse and outbuildings. This work was completed at the intensive survey level includes photography, note-taking, sketches and measurements. In addition, Hunter

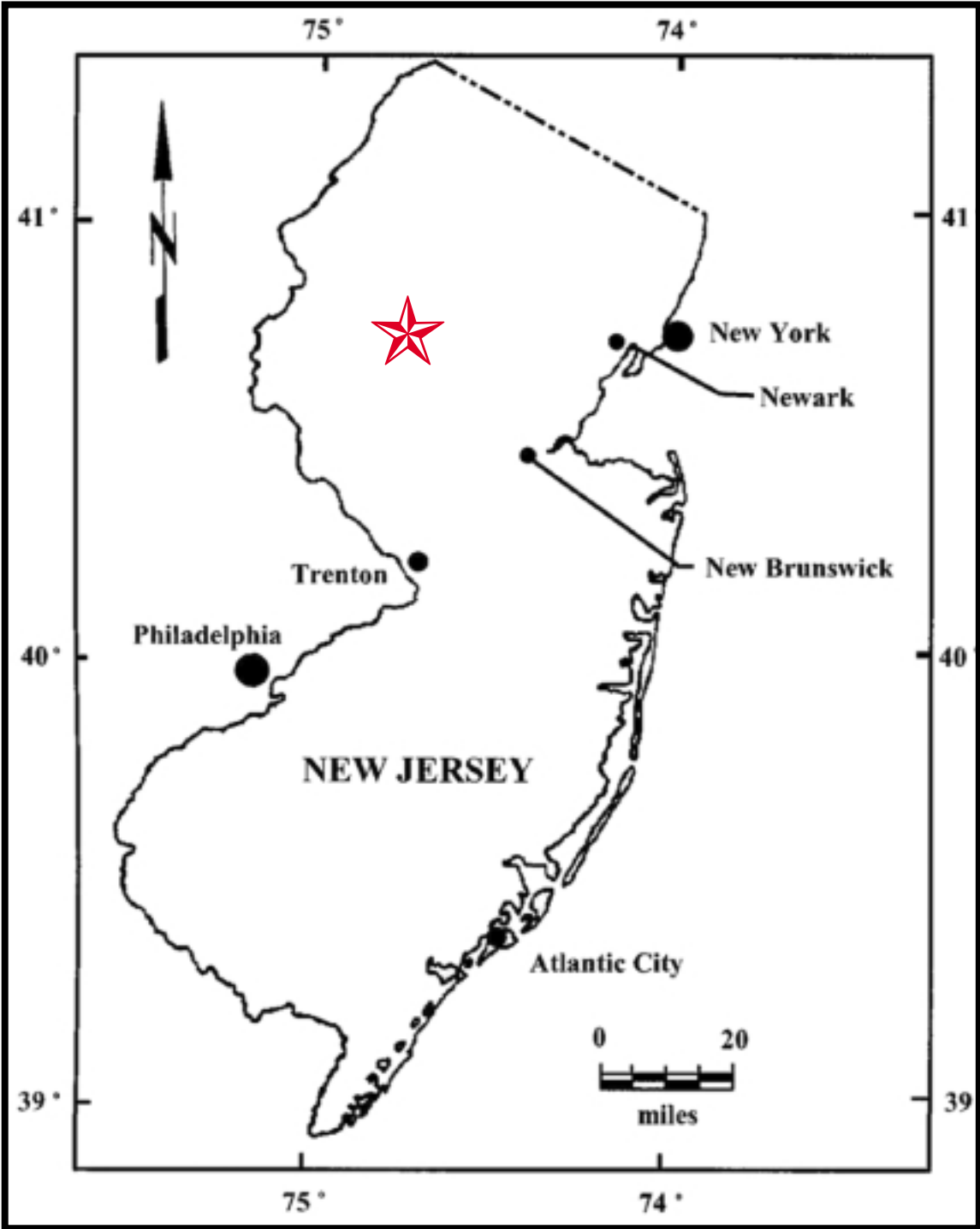


Figure 1.1. General Location of Study Area (Starred).

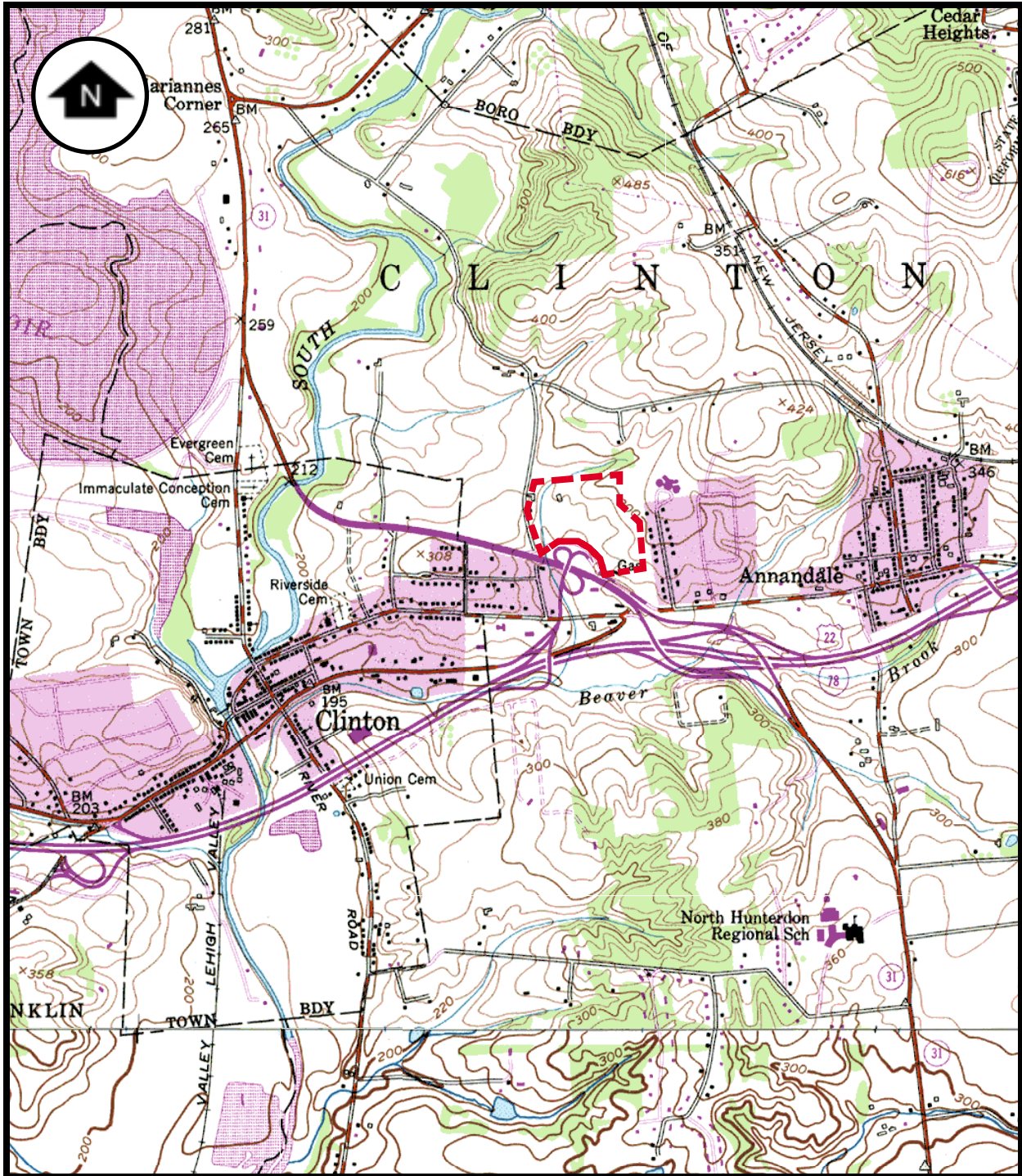


Figure 1.2. Detailed Location of Project Site Source: USGS 7.5' Topographic Series. High Bridge, N.J. 1954(Photorevised 1970). Scale: 1 inch = 2000 feet (approximately).



Plate 1.1. View looking northeast across Gray Rock Road toward the Christoffel Vought Farmstead (Photographer: James Lee, February 2005)[HRI Neg. # 05008/D2:57].

Research, Inc. engaged the services of a specialist in historic plasterwork in order to provide an authoritative assessment of the date and significance of the plasterwork in the house, and to give a preliminary evaluation of treatment options for the plaster.

Preliminary archaeological fieldwork involved thorough inspection of the ground surface by a qualified archaeologist familiar with the local area. No detailed archaeological inspection took place in protected wetland areas or wetland buffer zones, except for the area immediately around the house and outbuildings (since ground disturbance could ensue from building relocation or demolition). The Phase IB/II testing involved the excavation of close interval shovel tests and excavation units.

The data from both stages of the investigation has been incorporated into this consolidated report.

B. DEFINITION OF AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS

For the purposes of this survey the definition of Area of Potential Effects (“APE”) contained in *36CFR Part 800.16(d) Protection of Historic Properties (Federal Register, Tuesday May 18th 1999)* has been used as a guide. Under this definition, the APE is the geographic area or areas within which an Undertaking may directly or indirectly cause alterations in the character or use of Historic Properties, if any such properties exist. The area of potential effects is influenced by the scale and nature of an undertaking, and may be different for different kinds of effects caused by the undertaking.

A distinction is made between direct and indirect (or visual) effects. The most recent definition of these categories is published in the *Nationwide Programmatic Agreement For Review Of Effects On Historic Properties For Certain Undertakings*

Approved By The Federal Communications Commission (September 2004). The APE for direct effects is limited to the area of potential ground disturbance and any property, or any portion thereof, that will be physically altered or destroyed by the Undertaking. The APE for visual effects is the geographic area in which the Undertaking has the potential to introduce visual elements that diminish or alter the setting, including the landscape, where the setting is a character-defining feature of a Historic Property that makes it eligible for listing on the National Register.

This project does not fall within the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, under which the use of these definitions would be mandatory. In this state-regulated instance, therefore, they have been used as tools, and have been somewhat modified for the specific circumstance of the project. Figure 1.3 identifies an Archaeological Area of Direct Effects, corresponding to the area of school construction and associated activities, including the currently preferred alignment for the access road from Gray Rock Road to the proposed school site. Within this area, extensive ground disturbance is anticipated which could have an adverse effect on significant archaeological resources. The entire project site within the green line is also considered to be an Area of Direct Effects because of the potential for other direct effects on the Vought Farmstead Complex including but not necessarily limited to the potential impacts of vibration and other ground disturbing activities resulting from construction related activities, impact of the proposed demolition of the Dairy Barn and the construction of the access road on the historic integrity of the farm and farmstead complex and the long term physical and environmental impacts associated with the construction of the new school access road.

Consideration of the issue of indirect effects has been extended to the farm fields to the west of the Vought Farmstead that were formerly part of the farm proper-

ty and, in a wider context, to a survey of adjacent surrounding areas in order to identify the absence or presence of other historic properties in near proximity to the construction site. These areas are shown on Figure 3.7 below. The scope of the indirect and direct effects is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

A primary purpose of this survey is to establish whether there are adverse effects on significant historic properties. Adverse effects are those which alter, directly or indirectly, any of the characteristics of a historic property that qualify it for inclusion in the National Register, in such a way as diminish the integrity of the property's location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling or association (36CFR800.5(a)(1)).

C. CRITERIA OF EVALUATION

The information generated by this survey was considered in terms of the criteria for evaluation outlined by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Register Program:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and:

- A. that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. 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

- D. that have yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Ordinarily, cemeteries, birthplaces or graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, properties primarily commemorative in nature, and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years shall not be considered eligible for the National Register. However, such properties will qualify if they are integral parts of districts that do meet the criteria or if they fall within the following categories:

- A. a religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or
- B. a building or structure removed from its original location but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event; or
- C. a birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no other appropriate site or building directly associated with his productive life; or
- D. a cemetery which derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events; or
- E. a reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived; or
- F. a property primarily commemorative in intent of design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own historic significance; or
- G. a property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.

D. DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following definitions are from the Department of the Interior, National Register of Historic Places 36 C.F.R. 63 (Federal Register, Vol. 42, No. 183, Wed. Sept. 21, 1977, pp. 47666-67):

1. A “district” is a geographically definable area, urban or rural, possessing a significant concentration, linkage or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects which are united by past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development. A district may also be comprised of individual elements which are separated geographically but are linked by associations or history.
2. A “site” is the location of a significant event, or prehistoric or historic occupation or activity or a building or structure whether standing, ruined, or vanished where the location itself maintains historical or archaeological value regardless of the value of any existing structures.
3. A “building” is a structure created to shelter and form of human activity such as a house, barn, church, hotel or similar structure. “Buildings” may refer to a historically related complex, such as a courthouse and jail or a house and barn.
4. A “structure” is a work make up of interdependent and interrelated parts in a definite pattern or organization. Constructed by man, it is often an engineering project large in scale.
5. An “object” is a material thing of functional, aesthetic, cultural, historical, or scientific value that may be, by nature or design, movable yet related to a specific setting or environment.

E. PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND PRINCIPLE INFORMATION SOURCES

The Christoffel Vought Farmhouse (previously referred to as the J.C. Johnson House and Farmstead) has been identified as of historic interest since at least 1978, when it was included in the Hunterdon County Historic Sites Survey. The connection with the Loyalist Vought family was apparently first noted in 1984 in *The Faithful and the Bold, the story of the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Oldwick, New Jersey* by Norman C. Wittwer.

A New Jersey Historic Preservation Office individual structure survey form was completed for the house in 1999 (Brecknell 1999), together with a six page narrative description by the same researcher. The New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office issued an officer opinion letter on November 12, 1999 stating that the house appeared to meet National Register eligibility standards (Craig to Brecknell, November 12, 1999). A documentary study of the property was produced in 2004 (Sisser 2004). Limited documentation of the buildings was undertaken in recent months by Adam Wengryn and Michael Margulies. The New Jersey Historic Preservation Office issued a formal opinion of the National Register eligibility of the Christoffel Vought Farmhouse on January 14, 2005 (Guzzo to Wright).

The environmental impact statement prepared for the property for the Township of Clinton reported that no historic or archaeological sites were observed on the site (Schoor DePalma, Inc. 2004:11). This report appears to have relied on a response from the New Jersey State Museum that reported that no archaeological sites had been recorded on or near the property on the New Jersey State Museum site files. The Museum response stressed, however, that professional archaeological survey would be required on the

property in order to assess the project impact on archaeological resources (Lattanzi to DiLella, March 22, 2004).

The general historic background of the Clinton vicinity is most recently covered, with supporting references, in the National Register nomination forms for the Clinton Historic District (Brecknell 1994; National Register 1995) and for the Annandale Historic District (Dennis Bertland Associates 1993; National Register 1994). There are several earlier general histories of the county, including Snell (1881) and Stanton (1963).

Chapter 2

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

The project area lies within the New Jersey Highland province of New Jersey, close to its southern boundary with the Piedmont Lowlands (Wolfe 1977) (Figure 2.1). The Environmental Impact Statement for this project incorrectly ascribes the project area to the Valley and Ridge Province, which lies some miles to the north (Schoor DePalma, Inc. 2004:5). The solid geology of the general area is composed of Precambrian gneisses and schists with some marble and crystalline limestone. Paleozoic Kittatinny limestone is present in the valleys (Wolfe, *op. cit.*).

The property lies on either side of a small stream-fed tributary stream that emerges about 1200 feet northeast of the farm, and drains into Beaver Brook about a half-mile to the south. Beaver Brook in turn flows into the South Branch of the Raritan River within the Town of Clinton. The rolling topography ranges from about 235 feet above sea level (asl) at the southwest to more than 300 feet at the northeast corner of the property. The land continues to rise to the northeast, reaching more than 400 feet asl within 1.5 miles. To the west is the valley of the South Branch, at less than 200 feet asl. In broad terms, the property is set on the east flank of the valley and overlooks the town of Clinton, an important mill location from the 18th century.

The larger portion of the project site is mapped as Edneyville Gravelly Loam, a deep, well-drained acidic soil. The zone along Gray Rock Road is mapped as the less acidic Duffield Silt Loam, also deep and well-drained. The zone of either side of the stream is wet alluvial land (Jablonski 1974). The area has been in agricultural use until recently, with pasture and arable land both present. The barns and silo indicate that dairying was part of the 20th-century farm economy.

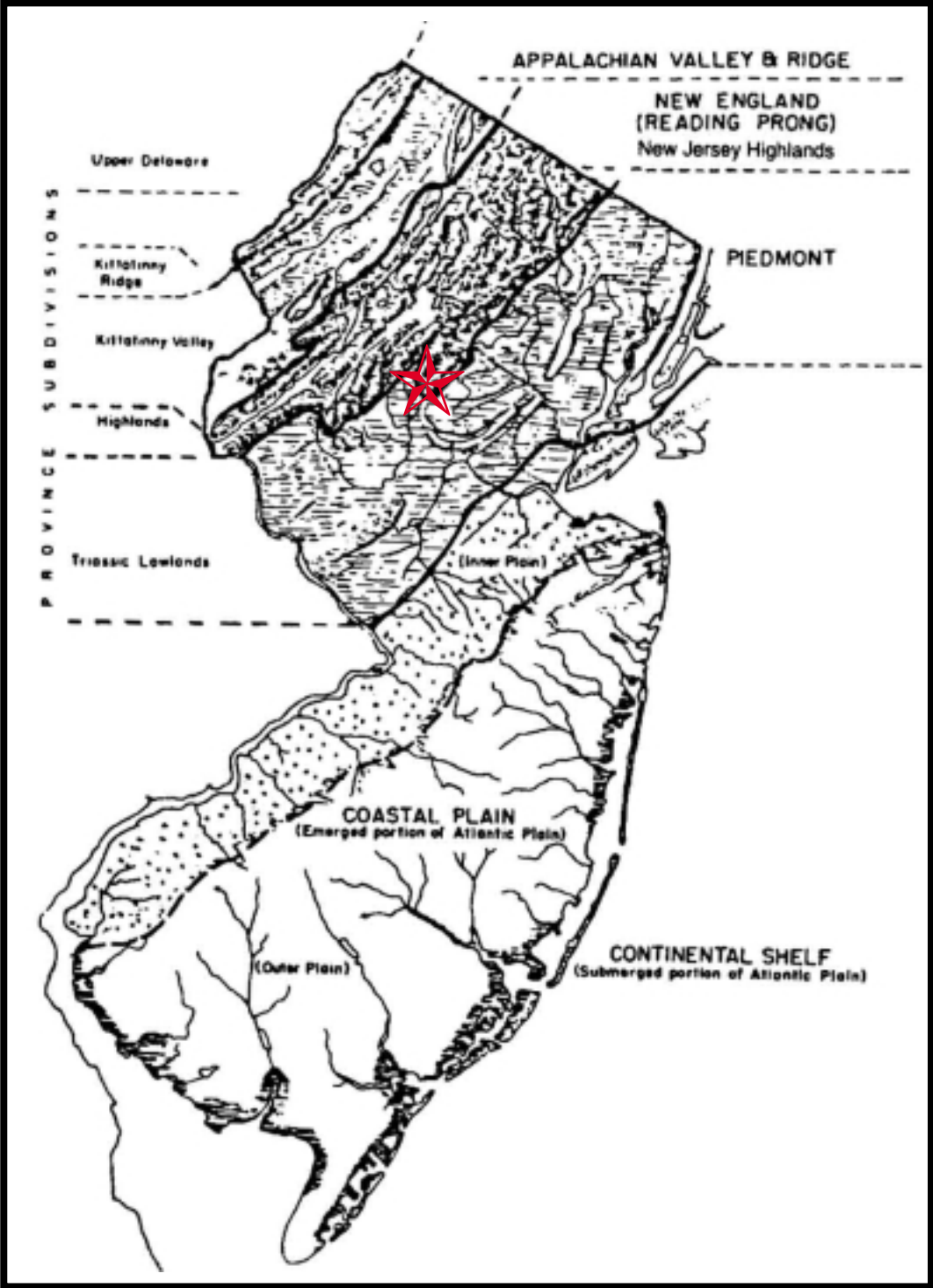


Figure 2.1. Physiographic Map of New Jersey Showing the Location of the Project Site (Starred). Source: Wolfe 1977:227.