

The Times

Gusciora calls for further study of Princeton historic tract **Site linked to battle is being eyed for housing plan**

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BY ROBERT STERN

PRINCETON TOWNSHIP -- Assemblyman Reed Gusciora, D- Princeton Borough, called for more extensive research and analysis of a potential battle site next to Princeton Battlefield State Park where the Institute for Advanced Study wants to build faculty housing

There are indications that the housing project might encroach on land where the Revolutionary War Battle of Princeton unfolded on Jan. 3, 1777, five archeologists have concluded independently of each other in recent months. The institute plans housing for 15 families.

The archeologists -- David Orr of Temple University, Richard Veit of Monmouth University and David Starbuck of Plymouth State University in New Hampshire, along with two professional historical archeologists -- based their conclusions on a study of the site published in June by The Louis Berger Group.

The quintet recommended that, at a minimum, more detailed analysis of the land and any battle-related artifacts it contains is warranted before any construction is allowed.

The five agreed the property was a significant part of the battlefield because of the types of artifacts previously discovered there even without a thorough archaeological excavation.

One archeologist even suggested that previous research suggests the land in question may hold human remains from the historic battle, Gusciora noted.

"Once construction begins on the land around Princeton Battlefield Park, there is no turning back," Gusciora said in a statement.

"We need to make sure that we take all the precautions necessary in preventing the destruction of this historic piece of land."

Institute spokeswoman Christine Ferrara said in an e-mail yesterday that the institute is awaiting final permission from the state Department of Environmental Protection before proceeding with further stages of project approval for the housing plan.

Ferrara noted that the Berger report completed last June "marked the fourth metal detection survey conducted on the land since 1989 and ensured complete testing of the entire area. Their elaborate methodology, executed under archeologists and surveyors, included controlled shovel testing and other detailed fieldwork."

The institute has not yet submitted its housing plan for consideration by local planning officials, according to the planning office for Princeton Borough and Princeton Township.