



The Archaeological Conservancy

Eastern Regional Office
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October 3, 2024

Planning and Zoning Commission
Town of Ledyard, Connecticut
741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, CT 06339-1511

Dear Commission:

My name is Kelley Berliner, and I am the Eastern Regional Director of The Archaeological Conservancy, the only national nonprofit organization dedicated to the permanent preservation of archaeological sites. In our over 40-year history we have protected nearly 600 properties containing this nation's most important archaeological sites. These properties are protected in perpetuity so they will forever be available for research and educational access.

I am reaching out to you regarding the permit application submitted by Gales Ferry Intermodal, LLC (GFI) for their property that contains the site of Fort Decatur, one of Connecticut's most important War of 1812 sites. Fort Decatur is a unique resource--there are few fort sites surviving from this time period, and this is among the best preserved. These sites are often the only resource we have for understanding the lives of people at war, and this site's association with U.S. Navy icon Commodore Stephen Decatur Jr., is not only important for Connecticut history, but for the United States more broadly.

I am pleased to share that representatives of GFI have graciously agreed to donate 3.44 acres of their property, which contains the main portion of the site of Fort Decatur, to the Conservancy for permanent preservation. This has been outlined in a signed agreement that further stipulates that an additional 5.87 acres, located to the south of the Eversource corridor on the property, will also be donated to the Conservancy if GFI is able to secure approvals for proceeding with their plans to engage in the Industrial re-grading of its property. In addition to the protection of this additional acreage, which contains deposits associated with the use of Fort Decatur, GFI has also committed to a number of preservation-minded stipulations, including the preparation of a nomination of the site to the National Register of Historic Places, funding for educational materials, and more, which will be implemented if a permit is granted.

It can be challenging to balance the rights and goals of private property owners with preservation aims, and we are satisfied that our agreement with GFI protects the most critical resources associated with Fort Decatur. To us, this is a win for preservation.

The Conservancy is appreciative of GFI's engagement of Heritage Consultants to survey the cultural resources on their property, their ongoing negotiations with the State Historic Preservation Office, and their commitment to seeing the site of Fort Decatur preserved for the benefit of the people of Connecticut and this country. At this time, I suggest that the Planning and Zoning Commission consider these preservation benefits when evaluating GFI's permit application.

Thank you,

Kelley Berliner
Eastern Regional Director
The Archaeological Conservancy