

GEOTECHNICAL EVALUATION  
PROPOSED MCDONALD'S RESTAURANT  
DEWITT SERVICE AREA  
NEW YORK STATE THRUWAY

Prepared For:  
C.T. MALE ASSOCIATES, P.C.  
50 CENTURY HILL DRIVE  
LATHAM, N.Y. 12110



Prepared By:  
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BALLSTON SPA, NEW YORK 12020

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GEOTECHNICAL EVALUATION  
PROPOSED MCDONALDS RESTAURANT  
DEWITT SERVICE AREA  
NEW YORK STATE THRUWAY

I. INTRODUCTION

An investigation and evaluation of the proposed McDonald's Restaurant site at the New York State Thruway Dewitt Service Area was conducted as authorized by C.T. Male Associates, P.C.. The purpose of our work was to evaluate the existing subsurface conditions and provide recommendations for the design and construction of building and sign foundations, and surrounding pavements. Topographic site survey and general layout information was provided by C.T. Male Associates, P.C. The final location of the new restaurant building has not been established at the time of the report. However, the general layout provided shows the new building to be in close proximity to the existing restaurant.

II. PROJECT AND SITE DESCRIPTION

We understand that the existing restaurant building and adjacent pavements located at this site will be demolished and replaced with a new two-story McDonald's Restaurant building, with surrounding parking areas. We also understand that the existing restaurant building contains a partial basement area. It is assumed that the proposed new McDonald's building will not require a basement and will be constructed with typical slab on grade construction at the

same approximate elevation as the existing building's finished floor. The proposed new building will also require higher than normal column load capacities due to its different architectural features. For the purpose of estimating foundation settlement, a maximum column load of 100 kips was assumed.

The site is relatively flat in the vicinity of the proposed building location and adjacent parking area. The service area is approximately two (2) to four (4) feet higher in elevation compared to the adjacent east bound lane of the thruway.

### III. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The site's subsurface conditions were investigated through the advancement of test borings and visual classification of the recovered soil samples. A total of five (5) test borings were advanced from 6 to 20 feet in depth below existing grades. A technician from our staff established their locations in the field through tape measurements from the existing building and structures. The locations of these borings were selected to be in close proximity to the proposed building and adjacent parking areas. Their locations are illustrated on the Subsurface Investigation Plan contained in Appendix A.

Soil samples were recovered on a nearly continuous basis to a depth of 10 feet and at intervals of 5 feet or less thereafter. The samples were obtained according to ASTM D-1586, Standard Method for Penetration Test and Split-Barrel Sampling of Soils. A truck mounted drill rig equipped with hollow stem augers was used to advance the test borings.

Representative portions of the soils samples recovered in the field were placed in jars and transported to our office for visual classification by a geotechnical engineer. On the basis of these classifications and the driller's field records and observations, a log was prepared for each test boring. The logs are presented in Appendix B together with a sheet which explains the terms and symbols used in their preparation.

#### **IV. RESULTS OF INVESTIGATIONS**

Each of the test borings penetrated through existing pavements or topsoil and disclosed an underlying stratum of fine to coarse sand and gravel. These soils contained some silt in the surficial one (1) to two (2) feet, and little to trace amounts of silt thereafter. Their relative density typically varied from firm to compact.

Beginning at a depth of 4 to 6 feet test boring B-1 through B-4 revealed lacustrine deposits of silt and clayey silt. In test boring B-5 these soils were encountered at a depth of about 2 feet. Surficially the lacustrine soils were

firm, but at depths of about 8 feet they became loose. Upon completion of drilling groundwater was measured at depths of 17.5 and 8.0 feet in test borings B-1 and B-2, respectively. However, based upon the soils color and apparent degree of wetness, it is expected that the groundwater level may seasonally be found at depths of 4 to 6 feet near the interface between the surficial granular soils and underlying silt and clay. Groundwater may also be found temporarily perched within the granular soils during wet periods. A petroleum odor was sensed in test boring B-2 during drilling operations.

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#### V. CONCLUSIONS

From a geotechnical standpoint the project site is considered suitable for the planned development. Conventional spread foundations and slab on grade construction may be used. However, a relatively modest foundation design bearing pressure will be required to limit settlements within tolerable limits due to the loose silt substratum and seasonally high groundwater table.

Assuming that finished floor is established at or above elevation 395.0 feet, the building's foundation bearing grades are generally expected to consist of firm sand and gravel. In some areas, however, loose silt and clay bearing grades may be encountered. These soils will easily soften and lose strength should they become saturated and dis-

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turbed. Accordingly every effort should be made to maintain the excavations in a dry and stable condition.

Depending on prevailing weather conditions at the time of construction, perched groundwater may be encountered in foundation excavations and the true groundwater table may be within a few feet of foundation bearing grade elevation. Accordingly, dewatering may be required and, should silt or silt and clay soils be encountered, it may be necessary to undercut the bearing grades and place a granular base course to facilitate dewatering and provide a stable working platform for foundation construction.

Based on a visual classification of the surficial 4 to 6 feet of granular soils, it appears that they are generally suitable for reuse as structural fill.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. Site Preparation

The existing building structure should be demolished and all demolition debris removed together with foundation walls to a minimum of two (2) feet below grade level in existing slab areas and to top of existing footing levels. Existing pavements should be broken and removed to below the base course levels at a minimum. The finished floor elevation for the new restaurant should be approximately equal to the existing building's elevation or a minimum of six (6) inches above abutting pavements. A select granular material as

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specified in paragraph E should be used to complete any grade increases and backfill areas where foundations were removed. In areas where loose fills are encountered below foundation grade, they should be removed and backfilled with a select granular material according to specifications outlined in paragraph E. Due to the petroleum odor detected at test boring location B-2, possible subsurface contamination should be further investigated and considered in selecting the final building locations and design for excavations.

#### **B. Foundation Design and Construction**

Conventional spread foundations proportioned for a net allowable bearing pressure of 1500 pounds per square foot may be used to support the structure. All foundations should have a minimum width of twenty four (24) inches even if this results in a bearing pressure less than the recommended allowable. Exterior foundations should be seated at least four (4) feet below final exterior grades to provide frost protection. Interior foundations may bear at two (2) feet below the top of the floor slab if permitted by local building codes.

The sliding and overturning stability of foundations for any retaining walls, road signs or utility poles should be determined. Assuming adequate drainage provisions and a level backfill, the following parameters may be used for the stability analyses together with a factor of safety of 1.50:

o Maximum Allowable Foundation Edge Pressure = 2,000 psf

o Equivalent Fluid Weight of Level Backfill

Active Pressure = 30 pcf

Passive Pressure = 250 pcf

o Coefficient of Sliding Friction  
Along Base of Foundation = 0.35

Depth of embedment for pole foundations may be analyzed utilizing the following parameters:

o Maximum allowable Lateral Soil Bearing Capacity =  
200 psf/ft. of depth

o Allowable Horizontal subgrade reaction constant ( $n_h$ ) = 8  
tons/ft<sup>3</sup>

The foundation bearing grades should be manually trimmed to remove soil loosened or left in ridges by the excavation equipment. Compaction the bearing grades is not recommended as underlying sensitive silt soils may be disturbed in this manner. Any water which enters the excavations should be promptly removed using standard sump and pump methods of dewatering. If saturated and/or soft silt or silt and clay bearing grades are encountered they should be undercut by at least eight (8) inches. Planned foundation bearing grade should then be reestablished by placing a geotextile filter fabric and a base course of No. 1 and No. 2 size crushed stone. The stone should be "lightly" chinked together using vibratory plate compactor. All final bearing grades should be firm, stable and free of any loose soil, mud, water or frost.

Select Granular material, as specified in paragraph E, should be used to backfill the foundations. Backfilling should be performed simultaneously on either side of foundation walls to avoid creating any unbalanced lateral earth pressures.

Foundation settlements are not expected to exceed one (1) inch. The settlement should occur within a few days after the application of each load increment.

#### **C. Floor Slab Design and Construction**

The building's floor slabs should be constructed over a base course of processed sand and gravel which conforms to the gradation requirements specified for Type 4 material in Section 304-2.02 of the NYSDOT Standard Specifications. The base course layer should be at least six (6) inches in depth and compacted according to the 95 percent density specification, ASTM D-1557.

The slabs on grade may be designed and constructed following the procedures of the American Concrete Institute or Portland Cement Association using 300 pounds per cubic inch as the vertical modulus of subgrade reaction.

#### **D. Pavement Design**

The entrance drive and parking lot for the new restaurant may be constructed as flexible pavements. Assuming any truck traffic is confined to a specific area and will not cross parking lot areas, two pavement sections may be employed; a light section for areas restricted to automobile

parking and a heavy section for areas subject to truck traffic.

The following materials and specifications are recommended for each:

<u>COURSE</u>	<u>MATERIAL DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>THICKNESS</u>	<u>NYSDOT SPECS</u>
<u>*Truck Traffic - Entrance Drives</u>			
Top	Asphaltic Concrete	1 1/2"	Section 401 Type 6
Binder	Asphaltic Concrete	3"	Section 401 Type 3
Base	Crusher-Run Stone	6"	Section 304 Type 2
Subbase	Processed Sand & Gravel	12"	Section 304 Type 4

\*Auto Traffic - Parking Lot

Top	Asphaltic Concrete	1 1/2"	Section 401 Type 6
Binder	Asphaltic Concrete	2 1/2"	Section 401 Type 3
Base	Processed Sand & Gravel	12"	Section 304 Type 4

\*Assumes that pavement areas will be developed over existing fill. If silt and clay subgrades are encountered, an additional two feet of undercut will be required. Backfill should be placed over Amoco Propex 2006 fabric or equivalent.

Prior to constructing the pavement sections the subgrade should be regraded to remove ruts and any loose soil. The base and subbase courses should be compacted to the 95 percent ASTM D-1557 density specification. Placement and compaction of the asphaltic concrete should be in accordance with the requirements of Section 400 of the NYSDOT Standard Specifications.

**E. Site Fill and Backfill Requirements**

Fill and backfill for the site should meet the following specifications:

<u>Type</u>	<u>Application</u>	<u>Compaction</u>
Select Granular Fill NYSDOT Section 203-2.02C	Under foundations and adjacent to structure	Compact in maximum 6" lifts to 95%
Select Granular Fill NYSDOT Section 203-2.02C	Under grassed areas	Compact in maximum 12" lifts to 90% ASTM D-1557
Select Granular Fill NYSDOT Section 203-2.02C	Under pavements and building floor slabs	Compact in maximum 8" lifts to 95% ASTM D-1557

**Notes:**

- 1) Excavated on-site soils and base course material may be considered for use as Select Granular Fill provided they meet the gradation requirements specified in NYSDOT Section 203-2.02C.

**VII. CLOSURE**

This report has been prepared to assist in the design and construction of a McDonald's Restaurant at the Dewitt Service area of the NYS Thruway. The recommendations are presented on the basis of our understanding of the project as described herein and through the application of generally accepted soil and foundation engineering practices. No other warranties, expressed or implied, are made. Should there be any modifications in the building location as presented on the Subsurface Investigation Plan, we should be notified so

that we may review the changes and modify our recommendations as required.

It is recommended that the Geotechnical Engineer by provided the opportunity to review the final design and specification to ascertain that the recommendation presented herein have been properly interpreted and applied.

Important information which should be reviewed concerning the use and interpretation of this report is contained in Appendix C.

Submitted by:

EMPIRE SOILS INVESTIGATIONS, INC.

*Edward C. Gravelle*

Edward C. Gravelle, P.E.  
Geotechnical Engineer

Reviewed by:

Paul DeStefano, P.E.  
Geotechnical Engineering Manager  
Eastern Region

ECG:PD:ks

1223dewi

SUBSURFACE INVESTIGATION PLAN

*Dewitt S.A.*



B-5

394 x 16

ASPHALT  
PARKING

392 x 65

PROPOSED  
BUILDING

← DRIVEWAY

B-3

B-4

392 x 94

ASPHALT  
PARKING

EXISTING  
BUILDING  
F.F. ELEV. 395.00

PUMP  
ISLANDS

TEST BORING  
(TYP.)

B-2

B-1

393 x 11

EXIST. BLDG.  
ISLAND

SPOT ELEV.  
(TYP.)

391 x 09

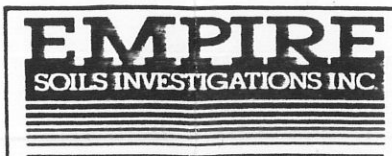
← DRIVEWAY

394 x 15

GRASS

NYS THRUWAY I-90

(EAST BOUND LANES)



SUBSURFACE  
INVESTIGATION PLAN

PROPOSED McDONALD'S RESTAURANT  
NYS THRUWAY  
DEWITT SERVICE AREA

DR. BY: JH	SCALE: 1" = 40'	PROJ. NO.: ATA-91-192
REV'D. BY:	DATE: 12/91	DRWG. NO.: 6

BASE MAP PREPARED BY G.T. MALE ASSOCIATES, P.C.

SUBSURFACE LOGS

APPENDIX B

PAGE 1 OF 1



G. W. DEPTH See Note

NYS Thruway (I-90)

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION 4 1/2" I.D. Hollow Stem Augers

STARTED 12/11/91  
FINISHED 12/11/91  
SHEET 1 OF 1



HOLE NO. B-2  
SURF. ELEV. ±394.4'  
G. W. DEPTH See Note

LOCATION Dewitt Service Area  
NYS Thruway (I-90)

[illegible]

No. blows to drive 2" spoon 12" with 140 lb. pin wt. falling 30" per blow. CLASSIFICATION Visual by Geotechnical  
= No. blows to drive \_\_\_\_\_" casing \_\_\_\_\_" with \_\_\_\_\_lb. weight falling \_\_\_\_\_" per blow. \_\_\_\_\_Engineer  
METHOD OF INVESTIGATION 4 1/2" I.D. Hollow Stem Augers

DATE

STARTED 12/11/91

FINISHED 12/11/91

SHEET 1 OF 1



## SUBSURFACE LOG

HOLE NO. B-3

SURF. ELEV. +394'

G. W. DEPTH See Note

PROJECT Proposed McDonald's  
RestaurantLOCATION Dewitt Service Area  
NYS Thruway (I-90)

DEPTH-FT.	SAMPLES	SAMPLE NO.	BLOWS ON SAMPLER					BLOW ON CASING C	SOIL OR ROCK CLASSIFICATION	NOTES
			0	6	12	18	N			
0	/	1	1	1			3		Brown fine to coarse SAND, Some Silt, trace gravel	No measurable ground-water in augers upon completion of drilling
		2	2							
	/	2	7	7			13		grades to "little" gravel, "little" silt	
		6	8							
5	/	3	2	2			6		(Moist to Wet-Loose to Firm)	
		4	5						Mottled SILT and CLAY (Moist-Medium)	
	/	4	7	10			22		Mottled SILT, little fine sand, trace clay	
			12	13					Grades to "trace" fine sand, becomes wet	
	/	5	3	5			10			
-10			5	6						
	/	6	1	1			2			
15			1	1					(Moist to Wet-Firm to Loose)	
									Boring Terminated @ 15.0'	

No. blows to drive 2" spoon 12" with 140 lb. pin wt. falling 30" per blow. CLASSIFICATION Visual by Geotechnical Engineer

= No. blows to drive " casing " with lb. weight falling " per blow.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION 4 1/2" I.D. Hollow Stem Augers

DATE  
STARTED 12/10/91  
FINISHED 12/10/91  
SHEET 1 OF 1



## SUBSURFACE LOG

HOLE NO. B-4  
SURF. ELEV. +393.5'  
G. W. DEPTH See Note

PROJECT Proposed McDonald's  
Restaurant

LOCATION Dewitt Service Area  
NYS Thruway (I-90)

DEPTH-FT.	SAMPLES	SAMPLE NO.	BLOWS ON SAMPLER					BLOW ON CASING C	SOIL OR ROCK CLASSIFICATION	NOTES
			0	6	12	18	N			
0		1	2	5			12		Brown fine to coarse SAND, Some Gravel, Some Silt Grades to "little" silt  (Moist-Firm)	No measurable ground-water in augers upon completion of drilling
			7	18						
		2	8	45			69			
			24	20						
5		3	11	8			30			
			22	29						
		4	5	6			12		Brown SILT, little clay, trace fine sand  (Moist to Damp-Firm to Loose)	
			6	8						
		5	4	4			9			
10			5	5						
									Brown SILT, trace fine sand (Wet-Loose)	
		6	2	2			4			
15			2	2					Boring Terminated @ 15.0'	

No. blows to drive 2 " spoon 12 " with 140 lb. pin wt. falling 30 " per blow. CLASSIFICATION Visual by Geotechnical

= No. blows to drive \_\_\_\_\_ " casing \_\_\_\_\_ " with \_\_\_\_\_ lb. weight falling \_\_\_\_\_ " per blow. Engineer

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION 4 1/2" I.D. Hollow Stem Augers

STARTED 12/11/91  
FINISHED 12/11/91  
FEET 1 OF 1



HOLE NO. B-5  
SURF. ELEV. ±394.5  
G. W. DEPTH See Note

LOCATION Dewitt Service Area  
NYS Thruway (I-90)

[illegible]

= No. blows to drive \_\_\_\_\_" casing \_\_\_\_\_" with \_\_\_\_\_lb. weight falling \_\_\_\_\_" per blow. \_\_\_\_\_ Engineer

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION 4 1/2" I.D. Hollow Stem Augers

STARTED 12/11/91  
FINISHED 12/11/91  
SHEET 1 OF 1



HOLE NO. B-5  
SURF. ELEV. ±394.5  
G. W. DEPTH See Note

LOCATION Dewitt Service Area  
NYS Thruway (I-90)

[illegible]

No. blows to drive 2 " spoon 12 " with 140 lb. pin wt. falling 30 " per blow. CLASSIFICATION Visual by Geotechnical  
 = No. blows to drive \_\_\_\_\_ " casing \_\_\_\_\_ " with \_\_\_\_\_ lb. weight falling \_\_\_\_\_ " per blow. \_\_\_\_\_ Engineer  
 METHOD OF INVESTIGATION 4 1/2" I.D. Hollow Stem Augers

DATE

STARTED 5-1-86

FINISHED 5-1-86

SHEET 1 OF 1



## SUBSURFACE LOG

HOLE NO. B-175

SURF. ELEV. 325.6

G. W. DEPTH See Note #1

Project \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION \_\_\_\_\_

DEPTH-FT	SAMPLES	SAMPLE NO	BLOWS ON SAMPLER					BLOW ON CASING C	SOIL OR ROCK CLASSIFICATION	NOTES
			0	6	12	18	N			
0		1	2	2	3		5	10	TOPSOIL 3"	NOTE #1 G.W. at 2.0' completion G.W. at 2.2' 24 hrs. after completion
								15	Brown SILT, some Sand, trace clay (Moist - Loose)	
								50/5'	Gray SHALE, medium hard weathered, thin bedded some fractures	Run #1, 2.5' - 5.0' 95% Recovery 50% RQD
5										
	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩

TABLE I

	Split Spoon Sample
	Shelby Tube Sample
	Auger or Test Pit Sample
	Rock Core

TABLE II

Identification of soil type is made on basis of an estimate of particle sizes, and in the case of fine grained soils also on basis of plasticity.

Soil Type	Soil Particle Size	
Boulder	> 12"	Coarse Grained (Granular)
Cobble	3" - 12"	
Gravel - Coarse	3/4" - 3/8"	
- Fine	3/8" - #4	
Sand - Coarse	#4 - #10	
- Medium	#10 - #40	Fine Grained
- Fine	#40 - #200	
Silt-Non Plastic (Granular)	<#200	
Clay-Plastic (Cohesive)		

TABLE III

The following terms are used in classifying soils consisting of mixtures of two or more soil types. The estimate is based on weight of total sample.

Term	Percent of Total Sample
"and"	35 - 50
"some"	20 - 35
"little"	10 - 20
"trace"	less than 10

(When sampling gravelly soils with a standard split spoon, the true percentage of gravel is often not recovered due to the relatively small sampler diameter.)

TABLE IV

The relative compactness or consistency is described in accord with the following terms.

Granular Soils		Cohesive Soils	
Term	Blows per Foot, N	Term	Blows per Foot, N
Loose	< 11	Very Soft	< 3
Firm	11 - 30	Soft	3 - 5
Compact	31 - 50	Medium	6 - 15
Very Compact	> 51	Stiff	16 - 25
		Hard	> 26

(Large particles in the soils will often significantly influence the blows per foot recorded during the Penetration Test.)

TABLE V

Varved	- Horizontal uniform layers or seams of soil(s).
Layer	- Soil deposit more than 6" thick.
Seam	- Soil deposit less than 6" thick.
Parting	- Soil deposit less than 1/8" thick.
Laminated	- Irregular, horizontal and angled seams and partings of soil(s).

TABLE VI

Rock Classification Terms		Meaning
Term		
Hardness	Soft Medium Hard Hard Very Hard	Scratched by fingernail Scratched easily by penknife Scratched with difficulty by penknife Cannot be scratched by penknife
Weathering	Very Weathered Weathered Sound	Judged from the relative amounts of disintegration iron staining, core recovery, clay seams, etc.
Bedding	Laminated Thin bedded Bedded Thick bedded Massive	Natural breaks in Rock Layers ( < 1" ) ( 1" - 4" ) ( 4" - 12" ) ( 12" - 36" ) ( > 36" )
(Fracturing refers to natural breaks in the rock oriented at some angle to the rock layers.)		

## GENERAL INFORMATION & KEY TO SUBSURFACE LOGS

The Subsurface Logs attached to this report present the observations and mechanical data collected by the driller at the site, supplemented by classification of the material removed from the borings as determined through visual identification by technicians in the laboratory. It is cautioned that the materials removed from the borings represent only a fraction of the total volume of the deposits at the site and may not necessarily be representative of the subsurface conditions between adjacent borings or between the sampled intervals. The data presented on the Subsurface Logs together with the recovered samples will provide a basis for evaluating the character of the subsurface conditions relative to the project. The evaluation must consider all the recorded details and their significance relative to each other. Often analyses of standard boring data indicate the need for additional testing or sampling procedures to more accurately evaluate the subsurface conditions. Any evaluation of the contents of this report and the recovered samples must be performed by Professionals. The information presented in the following defines some of the procedures and terms used on the Subsurface Logs to describe the conditions encountered.

1. The figures in the Depth column defines the scale of the Subsurface Log.
2. The sample column shows, graphically, the depth range from which a sample was recovered. See Table 1 for a description of the symbols used to signify the various types of samples.
3. The Sample No. is used for identification on sample containers and/or Laboratory Test Reports.
4. Blows on Sampler — shows the results of the "Penetration Test", recording the number of blows required to drive a split spoon sampler into the soil. The number of blows required for each six inches of penetration is recorded. The first 6 inches of penetration is considered to be a seating drive. The number of blows required for the second and third 6 inches of penetration is termed the penetration resistance, *N*. The outside diameter of the sampler, the hammer weight and the length of drop are noted at the bottom of the Subsurface Log.
5. Blows on Casing — shows the number of blows required to advance the casing a distance of 12 inches. The casing size, the hammer weight and the length of drop are noted at the bottom of the Subsurface Log. If the casing is advanced by means other than driving, the method of advancement will be indicated in the Notes column or under the Method of Investigation at the bottom of the Subsurface Log.
6. All recovered soil samples are reviewed in the laboratory by an engineering technician, geologist or geotechnical engineer, unless note otherwise. The visual descriptions are made on the basis of a combination of the driller's field descriptions and observations and the sample as received in the laboratory. The method of visual classification is based primarily on the Unified Soil Classification (ASTM D 2487-83) with regard to the particle size and plasticity. (See Table No. II) Additionally, the relative portion, by weight, of two or more soil types is described for granular soils in accordance with "Suggested Methods of Test for Identification of Soils" by D. M. Burmister, ASTM Special Technical Publication 479, June 1970. (See Table No. III) The description of the relative soil density or consistency is based upon the penetration records as defined on Table No. IV. The description of the soil moisture is based upon the relative wetness of the soil as recovered and is described as dry, moist, wet and saturated. Water introduced in the boring either naturally or during drilling may have affected the moisture condition of the recovered sample. Special terms are used as required to describe materials in greater detail; several such terms are listed in Table V. When sampling gravelly soils with a standard two inch diameter split spoon, the true percentage of gravel is often not recovered due to the relatively small sampler diameter. The presence of boulders and large gravel is sometimes, but not necessarily, detected by an evaluation of the casing and samplers blows or through the "action" of the drill rig as reported by the driller.
7. The description of the rock shown is based on the recovered rock core and the driller's observations. The terms frequently used in the description are included in Table VI.
8. The stratification lines represent the approximate boundary between soil types and the transition may be gradual. Solid stratification lines are based on the driller's field observations.
9. Miscellaneous observations and procedures noted by the driller are shown in this column, including water level observations. It is important to realize the reliability of the water level observations depends upon the soil type (water does not readily stabilize in a hole through fine grained soils), and that drill water used to advance the boring may have influenced the observations. The ground water level typically will fluctuate seasonally. One or more perched or trapped water levels may exist in the ground seasonally. All the available readings should be evaluated. If definite conclusions cannot be made, it is often prudent to examine the conditions more thoroughly through test pit excavations or water observation wells.
10. The length of core run is defined as the length of penetration of the core barrel. Core recovery is the length of core recovered divided by the core run. The RQD (Rock Quality Designation) is the total pieces of NX core exceeding 4 inches in length divided by the core run. The size core barrel used is also noted.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION CONCERNING  
YOUR GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEERING REPORT

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APPENDIX C

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION

## ABOUT YOUR GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEERING REPORT

More construction problems are caused by site subsurface conditions than any other factor. As troublesome as subsurface problems can be, their frequency and extent have been lessened considerably in recent years, due in large measure to programs and publications of ASFE/ The Association of Engineering Firms Practicing in the Geosciences.

The following suggestions and observations are offered to help you reduce the geotechnical-related delays, cost-overruns and other costly headaches that can occur during a construction project.

### A GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEERING REPORT IS BASED ON A UNIQUE SET OF PROJECT-SPECIFIC FACTORS

A geotechnical engineering report is based on a subsurface exploration plan designed to incorporate a unique set of project-specific factors. These typically include: the general nature of the structure involved, its size and configuration; the location of the structure on the site and its orientation; physical concomitants such as access roads, parking lots, and underground utilities, and the level of additional risk which the client assumed by virtue of limitations imposed upon the exploratory program. To help avoid costly problems, consult the geotechnical engineer to determine how any factors which change subsequent to the date of the report may affect its recommendations.

Unless your consulting geotechnical engineer indicates otherwise, *your geotechnical engineering report should not be used:*

- When the nature of the proposed structure is changed, for example, if an office building will be erected instead of a parking garage, or if a refrigerated warehouse will be built instead of an unrefrigerated one;
- when the size or configuration of the proposed structure is altered;
- when the location or orientation of the proposed structure is modified;
- when there is a change of ownership, or
- for application to an adjacent site.

*Geotechnical engineers cannot accept responsibility for problems which may develop if they are not consulted after factors considered in their report's development have changed.*

### MOST GEOTECHNICAL "FINDINGS" ARE PROFESSIONAL ESTIMATES

Site exploration identifies actual subsurface conditions only at those points where samples are taken, when they are taken. Data derived through sampling and subsequent laboratory testing are extrapolated by geo-

technical engineers who then render an opinion about overall subsurface conditions, their likely reaction to proposed construction activity, and appropriate foundation design. Even under optimal circumstances actual conditions may differ from those inferred to exist, because no geotechnical engineer, no matter how qualified, and no subsurface exploration program, no matter how comprehensive, can reveal what is hidden by earth, rock and time. The actual interface between materials may be far more gradual or abrupt than a report indicates. Actual conditions in areas not sampled may differ from predictions. *Nothing can be done to prevent the unanticipated, but steps can be taken to help minimize their impact.* For this reason, *most experienced owners retain their geotechnical consultants through the construction stage*, to identify variances, conduct additional tests which may be needed, and to recommend solutions to problems encountered on site.

### SUBSURFACE CONDITIONS CAN CHANGE

Subsurface conditions may be modified by constantly-changing natural forces. Because a geotechnical engineering report is based on conditions which existed at the time of subsurface exploration, *construction decisions should not be based on a geotechnical engineering report whose adequacy may have been affected by time.* Speak with the geotechnical consultant to learn if additional tests are advisable before construction starts.

Construction operations at or adjacent to the site and natural events such as floods, earthquakes or ground-water fluctuations may also affect subsurface conditions and, thus, the continuing adequacy of a geotechnical report. The geotechnical engineer should be kept apprised of any such events, and should be consulted to determine if additional tests are necessary.

### GEOTECHNICAL SERVICES ARE PERFORMED FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES AND PERSONS

Geotechnical engineers' reports are prepared to meet the specific needs of specific individuals. A report prepared for a consulting civil engineer may not be adequate for a construction contractor, or even some other consulting civil engineer. Unless indicated otherwise, this report was prepared expressly for the client involved and expressly for purposes indicated by the client. Use by any other persons for any purpose, or by the client for a different purpose, may result in problems. *No individual other than the client should apply this report for its intended purpose without first conferring with the geotechnical engineer. No person should apply this report for any purpose other than that originally contemplated without first conferring with the geotechnical engineer.*

## A GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEERING REPORT IS SUBJECT TO MISINTERPRETATION

Costly problems can occur when other design professionals develop their plans based on misinterpretations of a geotechnical engineering report. To help avoid these problems, the geotechnical engineer should be retained to work with other appropriate design professionals to explain relevant geotechnical findings and to review the adequacy of their plans and specifications relative to geotechnical issues.

## BORING LOGS SHOULD NOT BE SEPARATED FROM THE ENGINEERING REPORT

Final boring logs are developed by geotechnical engineers based upon their interpretation of field logs (assembled by site personnel) and laboratory evaluation of field samples. Only final boring logs customarily are included in geotechnical engineering reports. *These logs should not under any circumstances be redrawn* for inclusion in architectural or other design drawings, because drafters may commit errors or omissions in the transfer process. Although photographic reproduction eliminates this problem, it does nothing to minimize the possibility of contractors misinterpreting the logs during bid preparation. When this occurs, delays, disputes and unanticipated costs are the all-too-frequent result.

To minimize the likelihood of boring log misinterpretation, *give contractors ready access to the complete geotechnical engineering report* prepared or authorized for their use. Those who do not provide such access may proceed un-

der the *mistaken* impression that simply disclaiming responsibility for the accuracy of subsurface information always insulates them from attendant liability. Providing the best available information to contractors helps prevent costly construction problems and the adversarial attitudes which aggravate them to disproportionate scale.

## READ RESPONSIBILITY CLAUSES CLOSELY

Because geotechnical engineering is based extensively on judgment and opinion, it is far less exact than other design disciplines. This situation has resulted in wholly unwarranted claims being lodged against geotechnical consultants. To help prevent this problem, geotechnical engineers have developed model clauses for use in written transmittals. These are *not* exculpatory clauses designed to foist geotechnical engineers' liabilities onto someone else. Rather, they are definitive clauses which identify where geotechnical engineers' responsibilities begin and end. Their use helps all parties involved recognize their individual responsibilities and take appropriate action. Some of these definitive clauses are likely to appear in your geotechnical engineering report, and you are encouraged to read them closely. Your geotechnical engineer will be pleased to give full and frank answers to your questions.

## OTHER STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO REDUCE RISK

Your consulting geotechnical engineer will be pleased to discuss other techniques which can be employed to mitigate risk. In addition, ASFE has developed a variety of materials which may be beneficial. Contact ASFE for a complimentary copy of its publications directory.

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