

Phase IA Archaeological Survey Rentschler Field Redevelopment East Hartford, Connecticut



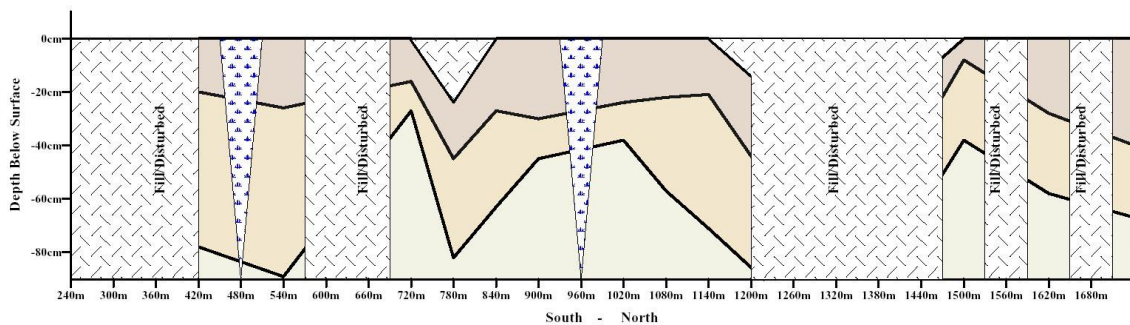
USGS survey, 1952-1953, showing the original runway layout.

AHS performed a Phase I(A) Reconnaissance Survey of Rentschler Field, East Hartford, CT, and wrote the historical/archaeological sections of the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) document in connection with the conversion of the former airfield for educational (magnet school) and commercial development. Rentschler Field was built by Pratt and Whitney Aircraft Company during World War II. Although a privately owned airport, it was a large state-of-the-art facility with multiple 5,000-foot concrete runways, taxiways, and control tower. The airfield continued to be developed in the postwar period, so that even the largest commercial jets could be accommodated there; the airport had approach lights, runway markers, blast shields, and other appurtenances more typical of commercial airports than corporate airfields.

The Phase I(A) report included a reconstruction of the pre-airport topography using archival sources, soil-probe testing to distinguish disturbed portions from undisturbed portions, and a complete inventory of nearby historic buildings and sites that could be impacted by associated roadway improvements. The report mapped areas of disturbance in detail and concluded that approximately 25% of the development parcel had intact soils that were archaeologically sensitive.



Aerial photograph, 1990, showing one runway lengthened so that it could accommodate 747s and other modern aircraft.



Cross-section schematic derived from soil probes.