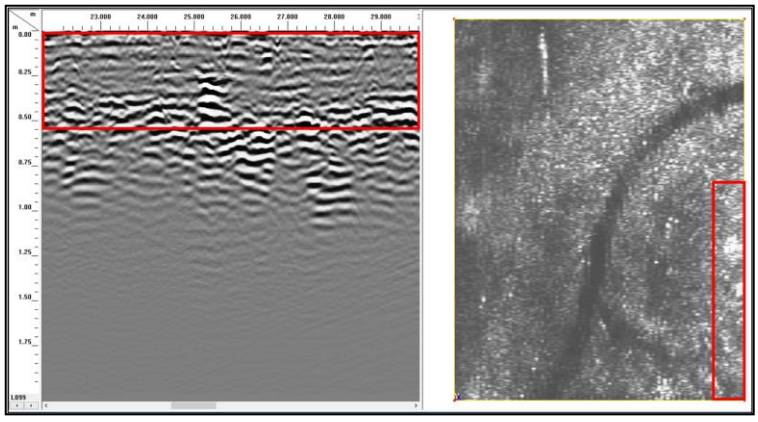
Old North Cemetery
Ground Penetrating Radar Prospection Survey
West Hartford, Connecticut

The Town of West Hartford is considering a plan to develop a land parcel within the Old North Cemetery, established in 1790. Under contract to the Town, AHS completed a Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) prospection survey to determine if any unmarked grave shafts or human remains lay within the project area. AHS reviewed information on the cemetery and project vicinity, including town histories, historical maps, and aerial photographs. The background research also included consultation with individuals and organizations with information relevant to understanding the archaeological or cultural sensitivity of the project area.

AHS next conducted a GPR survey over marked graves to establish a control sample of what typical graves look like, or whether the depth, size, and orientation of graves are variable. This provided an idea of the below-ground "signature" of the graves. AHS then surveyed the project area by GPR to determine if any anomalies present are likely indicators of burials.

No clear GPR anomalies consistent with grave shaft morphology were identified in the three-dimensional grid views or individual profile transects of the project area grid. Anomalies that were identified during the survey include several shallow depressions (likely tree-related), buried utilities, a sewer drain, and the paved driveway within the cemetery. Several shallow disturbed sequences were noted adjacent to several rows of standing headstones; these depressions appear to coincide with grave plots recorded during the 1934 Works Progress Administration survey of the cemetery. These disturbed sequences may represent burial shafts or some other GPR anomaly, but it is possible that intact grave shafts remain in this portion of the project area. AHS recommended avoiding ground disturbance in the eastern portion of the project area, if possible.

Aerial view of project area (in red), with superimposed 1934 burial plot map.



Transect profile (left) and 3D view (at 68 cm below surface) of project area grid. Shallow disturbed soil sequences are indicated in red.

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