The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. (PAL) is assisting South Mountain Company and its client The Island Grown Initiative Ltd. (IGI) with cultural resource management services at the proposed Island Grown Farm Master Plan Phase 1 project area on Stoney Hill Road in Tisbury, Massachusetts. All the investigations have been conducted under review by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) and under a State Archaeologist’s permit. In December 2021, PAL conducted an intensive (locational) archaeological survey within the approximately 6-acre building envelope. The survey resulted in the collection of both pre-contact (ancient Native American) and post-contact (eighteenth through twentieth century) cultural materials. Based on the results of the survey, PAL recommended that machine-assisted topsoil excavation be completed within the areas proposed for ground disturbance at the locations of the two new dwellings. PAL also recommended that no additional archaeological investigations are necessary within the remainder of the project impact areas.

PAL submitted a management memorandum to MHC in December 2021 summarizing the intensive survey results and recommendations and requesting an amendment to State Archaeologist’s permit no. 4147 to conduct the machine-assisted excavation. The MHC reviewed the memorandum, concurred with PAL’s recommendations, and amended and extended the State Archaeologist’s permit to allow for the completion of the machine-assisted excavation in the new dwelling area.

In January 2022 PAL completed the machine-assisted removal of topsoils within the approximately 11,800 square foot (sq ft) (1,100 sq m) new residence project impact area. The excavation resulted in the exposure of five cultural features that may be part of the previously identified Native American site. PAL recommended that an Archaeological Site Avoidance and Protection Plan be developed to formalize the short- and long-term protective measures to be implemented for cultural features that can be avoided and protected in place. If one or more of the features cannot be feasibly avoided as part of the construction, PAL recommended that an archaeological site examination be completed to entirely excavate any features that cannot be avoided, in order to collect information about their function and temporal association.

Once IGI determines how many of the five features can be avoided, PAL will submit a request to MHC to amend the State Archaeologist’s permit to complete the Archaeological Site Avoidance and Protection Plan and site examination. PAL will continue to consult with MHC on behalf of the proponent and any additional written comments received by the MHC will be forwarded to the MVC.