

Archaeological Survey  
of Residential Construction Lots in  
the Municipality of Kuujjuarapik,  
Nunavik

Presented to:  
Société d'Habitation du Québec

By:  
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## Summary

During July the Avataq Cultural Institute carried out an emergency archaeological survey of proposed residential construction lots in the Municipality of Kuujjuarapik. This project, sponsored by the Société d'Habitation du Québec, was oriented toward the mitigation of construction impacts on archaeological sites or burials possibly located in the lots concerned.

The lots surveyed occur in 4 separate zones of various dimensions. Two of these zones are situated in close proximity to the eastern and northern boundaries of the village cemetery. As each zone has been disturbed by previous developments in the municipality, the survey work involved, primarily, the intensive visual inspection of the surface of the lots. These inspections were complemented by selective test-pitting in portions of 3 zones.

The field activities failed to yield any evidence of archaeological sites or burials in the zones surveyed and, hence, allowed construction work to proceed as planned. However, in the case of the lots adjacent to the cemetery, it was recommended that this work be restricted to a minimum distance of 10 m from the cemetery limit. It is further recommended that all future construction projects in Nunavik be preceded by an archaeological impact study.



## RÉSUMÉ

En juillet, l'Institut culturel Avataq a effectué un inventaire archéologique d'urgence sur les lots retenus pour la construction de résidences dans la municipalité de Kuujjuarapik. Ce projet, réalisé pour le compte de la Société d'habitation du Québec, visait l'atténuation des impacts du projet de construction sur d'éventuels sites archéologiques ou sur des tombes qui auraient pu être localisés sur les lots choisis.

Les lots inventoriés sont divisés en 4 zones de dimensions variables. Deux de ces zones sont situées à proximité des limites est et nord du cimetière du village. Comme chaque zone avait déjà été perturbée par des projets de développement antérieurs, l'inventaire impliquait, d'abord, une inspection visuelle intensive de chacun des lots. Cette inspection a été complétée par la réalisation de sondages ponctuels sur des portions de 3 zones.

Les activités de terrain ont permis d'établir que les lots choisis n'affecteraient aucun site archéologique ou tombeau. Ainsi, les travaux de construction peuvent se poursuivre. Cependant, concernant les lots situés en périphérie immédiate du cimetière, il est recommandé que les travaux de construction laisse une distance minimale de 10m entre les limites du cimetière et les résidences. Il est aussi recommandé que tout projet de construction éventuel soit précédé d'une étude d'impact sur les ressources archéologiques.

## Acknowledgments

We wish to express our gratitude to Mr. Myva Niviixie, Mayor of Kuujjuarapik, Mr. Pierre Roussel, municipal treasurer, Mr. Peter Papirluk, administrative assistant, Mr. Robert Fleming, president of the Sakkuq Landholding Corporation, and Mr. Lucassie Cookie, manager of the same corporation, for their assistance in arranging logistics and in implementing the field work. Too, our thanks to Mrs. Mina Kukkiapik, who provided accommodations for the Avataq archaeologist during his stay in Kuujjuarapik. Also, special thanks are due to Mr. Claude Tremblay, Director, Habitation autochtone, of the Société d'Habitation du Québec, whose understanding and co-operation greatly facilitated the organization and execution of the survey.

The Avataq Cultural Institute gratefully acknowledges the contribution of each of these individuals to the present archaeological project.



## 1.0 Introduction

The present report describes the results of an emergency archaeological survey of residential construction lots in the Municipality of Kuujjuarapik, Nunavik. This municipality is located on the southeastern coast of Hudson Bay, in Ungava County (Fig. 1). It is situated on the north side of the mouth of the Great Whale River, at 55° 17'N, 77° 45'W.

The necessity of undertaking this survey was brought to the attention of Avataq during the third week of June by Mr. Myva Niviaxie, Mayor of Kuujjuarapik. At that time he expressed the concern of the local community and the Anglican vestry regarding the construction of new residential units on lots adjacent to the village cemetery. He also requested that these lots as well as all others selected for Inuit housing development in the municipality during 1988 be archaeologically surveyed.

In subsequent telephone conversations with Mr. Ian Badgley, Resident Archaeologist of Avataq, Mayor Niviaxie clarified both the scope and the urgency of the requested survey. In particular, he emphasized that several unregistered graves possibly located outside of the cemetery enclosure could, conceivably, be disturbed by the construction work. He further stressed that the survey need be conducted prior to mid-July, the scheduled beginning date of this work.

As the Avataq archaeology staff was then fully involved in field projects planned earlier, Mr. Luc Litwinionek, archaeological consultant formerly employed by the institute, was contracted to organize and implement the survey. Accordingly, Mr. Litwinionek rapidly prepared and submitted to Mr. Claude Tremblay, Director of Habitation autochtone, Société d'Habitation du Québec, a proposal for the survey project. Shortly thereafter, on July 7, Mr. Tremblay confirmed his acceptance of the proposal and agreed that his organization would sponsor the project.

Consequently, the archaeological survey of the residential construction lots concerned was carried out under the supervision of Mr. Litwinionek between July 12 and 15. Mr. Litwinionek was assisted in the field by Mr. Isaac Fleming of Kuujjuarapik, engaged as archaeological assistant.

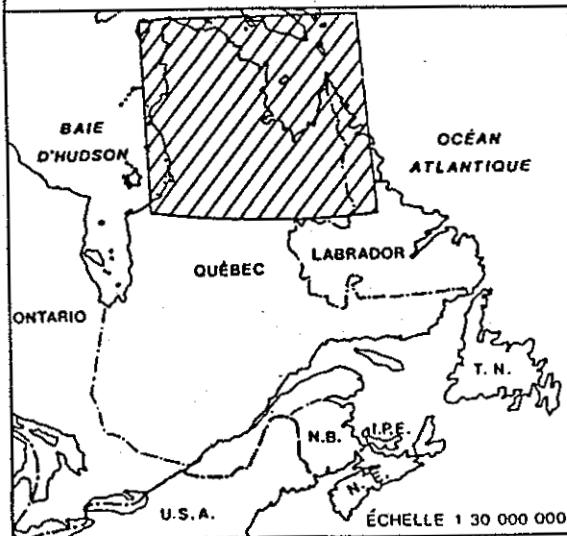
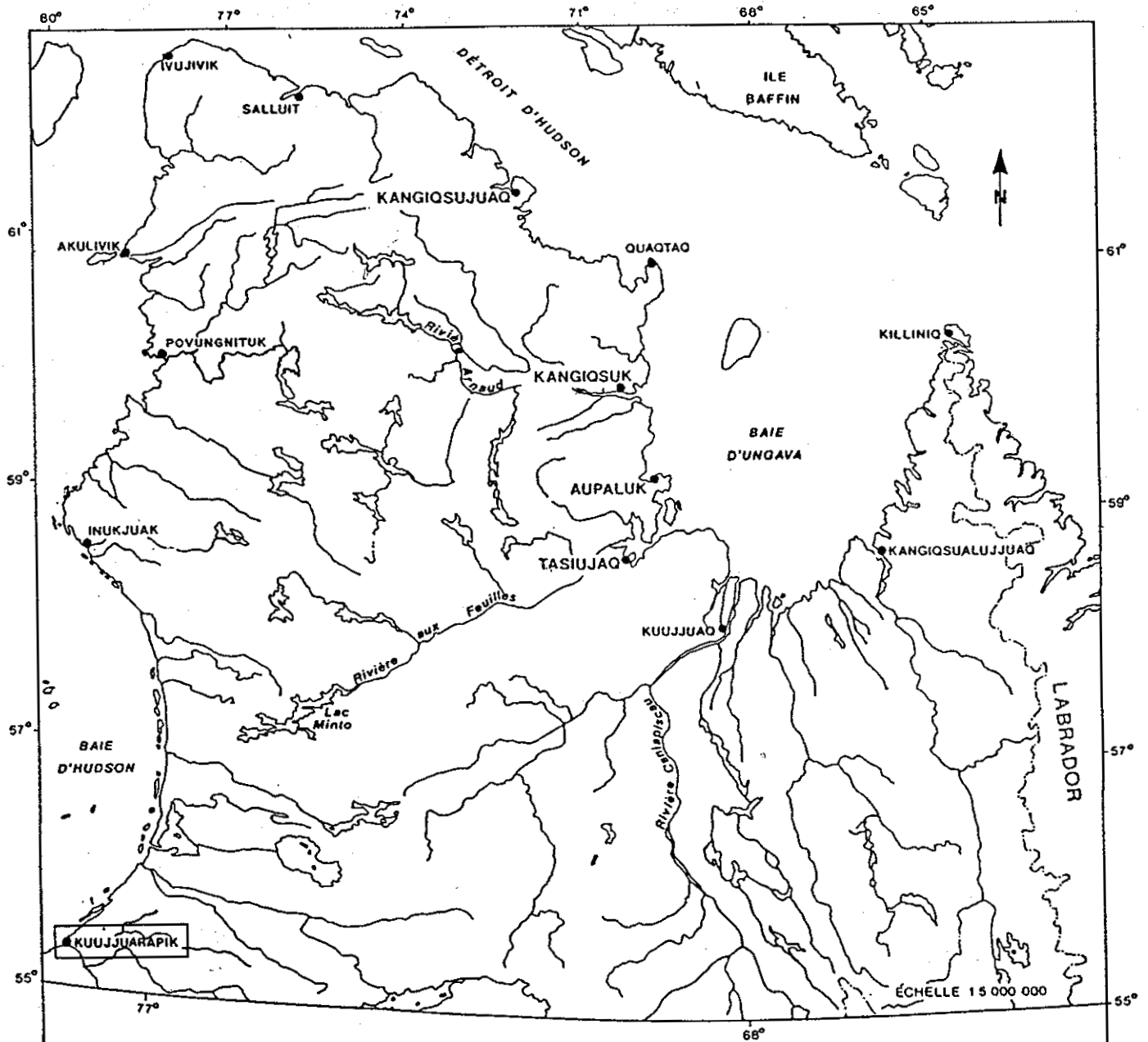


FIGURE 1

LOCATION OF  
THE MUNICIPALITY OF  
KUJJUARAPIK

## 2.0 Description of the Survey Zones

Four zones of varying dimensions and different location in the village were surveyed (Fig. 2). The 3 zones identified by alphabetical letters correspond to proposed construction lots while the fourth, designated "Alternate Site", represents a second option for residential units. Each has been affected to various extents by previous developments in the municipality and the contemporary activities of the local population.

The survey zones, encompassing a combined area of roughly 14,000 m<sup>2</sup>, are summarized as follows:

### Zone A

Zone A is situated directly on the northern boundary of the cemetery. Its maximum dimensions are approximately 90 x 75 m. The ground surface is irregular in relief and consists of generally fine sand deposits. Vegetation is of varied composition and density, with tall, often sparse grasses predominating throughout the zone. Thick mosses intermixed with grass and isolated shrubs occur sporadically.

### Zone B

The second zone is located immediately east of the cemetery. It is bounded to the west by the cemetery road and, to the east, by residential units; other roads define its northern and southern limits. Zone B measures roughly 185 m in length and about 35 m in maximum width. The vegetation and topography are similar to those described for Zone A.

### Zone C

This zone is situated approximately 100 m south of Zone B, on the southeastern side of the access road leading to the petroleum tanks. It occupies a rolling sandy terrace which, interrupted by aeolian deflation areas, forms the north bank of the Great Whale River. The vegetation cover is composed, variously, of relatively continuous mosses mixed with grass and dense grasses. Zone C measures approximately 170 and 35 m in maximum length and width respectively.



### **Alternate Site**

The alternate site is located in the southeastern section of the municipality, a short distance east of the Anglican mission and about 65 m generally northwest of the river bank. The maximum dimensions of the site, triangular in configuration, are 53 and 50 m. This zone is characterized by broad, exposed sandy areas interspersed with dense patches of long grass.

### **3.0 Project Orientations and Procedures**

#### **3.1 Survey Objectives**

The present archaeological survey was oriented specifically toward the mitigation of potential construction impacts on cultural heritage resources possibly located in the proposed residential lots. Within this context the immediate objectives of the survey were two-fold:

- to locate and delineate any unregistered graves situated outside of the cemetery enclosure in or near the adjacent residential construction lots;
- to identify and evaluate any archaeological sites located either partially or entirely in the survey zones as defined.

These objectives were organized in accordance with the expressed wishes of the Municipality of Kuujjuarapik. The full concern of the community regarding the possible disturbance of burials is readily apparent and requires no explanation. Similar considerations apply to the conservation of archaeological sites. These sites and the artifacts they contain represent the concrete physical manifestation of traditional lifeways ancestral to the local population. The ultimate objective of the survey, then, was to propose measures for the protection of any cultural heritage resources endangered by the planned construction work.

#### **3.2 Community Consultation**

Meetings with representatives of the Municipality of Kuujjuarapik were held prior to initiating and immediately following completion of field activities. The first of these meetings was convened on July 12 in order to clarify the extent of the survey zones and to explain the field methods and techniques. The second meeting, held on July 15, focused on the presentation of the results of the survey and preliminary recommendations.

The initial meeting was attended by Mr. Myva Niviixie, Mayor of Kuujjuarapik, Mr. Peter Papiuluk, administrative assistant, Mr. Robert Fleming, President of the Sakuq Landholding Corporation, and Mr. Lucassie Cookie, Manager of the corporation; the second was attended by Mayor Niviixie and Mr. Papiuluk.

Also, Mr. André Drolet of the Direction nordique du Bâtiment of the Société d'Habitation du Québec, then in Kuujjuarapik, was informed of the survey results and recommendations immediately following the completion of field activities. This information was transmitted to Mr. Drolet in the interest of allowing the planned construction work to proceed without delay.

### **3.3 Field Techniques**

Field survey techniques comprised the intensive visual inspection of the entirety of each zone and the test-pitting of selected localities in 3 zones. The extent of previous landscape alteration in the Alternate Site precluded the sampling of this zone.

Of the 32 test pits excavated, 15 were carried out in Zone A, 11 in Zone B, and 6 in Zone C. The majority of these excavations measured 50 x 50 cm and extended to a depth of no less than 35 cm. However, in the case of Zones A and B, several test pits excavated in proximity to the cemetery were enlarged to 1 x 1 m and, in depth, exceeded 90 cm.

Representative stratigraphic profiles in each zone were recorded at a scale of 1:10. Additionally, all zones were photographed in colour using a 35 mm camera.

#### 4.0 Survey Results

The field activities carried out yielded no evidence of cultural heritage resources in the survey zones. Neither graves nor archaeological sites were identified in or near the proposed residential construction lots.

The lack of archaeological materials in the survey zones is presumed to be related both to the sedimentary composition and the character of the zones. For example, of the numerous archaeological sites known in the vicinity of Kuujjuarapik, only several occur on or in association with sand formations. These circumstances suggest that sandy deposits generally were not favoured by past populations in the region for settlement purposes and, hence, tend to confirm a low archaeological potential for such deposits in the area. Also, as already noted, each of the survey zones has undergone surface disturbance related to previous developments in the village. As observed in the field, the extent of this disturbance precludes the possibility of locating "in site" archaeological materials which may have existed earlier in these zones.

On the other hand, the absence of unregistered graves in the survey zones adjacent to the cemetery is more problematical. This is not to imply that the field activities carried out were insufficient to the present project. Rather, it may be indicative of the difficulty inherent to archaeology in locating specific and unconfirmed cultural features within a limited temporal context. Consequently, in view of the advice of the local community regarding the presence of graves outside of the cemetery enclosure, the possibility that burials may be found in the zones concerned requires further attention.



## 5.0 Recommendations

Survey results tend to indicate that no cultural heritage resources were threatened by work related to the construction of new residential units on the proposed lots in the Municipality of Kuujjuarapik. As these results eliminated the need for any further archaeological research in these lots, it was therefore recommended that this construction work proceed as planned. This recommendation as well as others were orally presented to representatives of the Municipality of Kuujjuarapik and Mr. André Drolet of the Société d'Habitation du Québec immediately following the completion of the field survey. These other recommendations are as follows:

- that construction work and related activities in Zones A and B be restricted to areas no closer than 10 m minimum from the northern and eastern boundaries of the cemetery respectively;

The prohibiting of work activities within a 10-metre wide margin is suggested in order to avoid any inadvertent damage to the cemetery enclosure or disturbance of the cemetery during the construction of residences in the adjacent lots. In this sense, it is also recommended that the work in these lots be periodically monitored. Such monitoring also will assure the protection of any unregistered graves that may be situated in or near the lots concerned. As stressed earlier, the negative results of the surface inspections and test-pitting carried out do not necessarily confirm the absence of such burials in Zones A and B.

- that all future construction projects in Nunavik, regardless of scope, be preceded by an archaeological impact study;

This recommendation is forwarded in the interest of protecting archaeological sites throughout the whole of Nunavik. Basically, the studies proposed would involve a preliminary phase focused on the evaluation of the archaeological potential of the designated construction localities and, results depending, subsequent field survey of these localities. The preliminary phase is essential not only to the identification of known and possible sites but to the determination of the necessity of undertaking survey in the area concerned. Certain zones already subjected to extensive landscape alteration such as previously developed housing lots in the villages generally need not be surveyed. In such cases, verification of these circumstances through consultation of the pertinent documents may be sufficient to the requirements of the developer and the local community. Conversely, all zones of high and moderate archaeological potential determined from the preliminary phase should be thoroughly surveyed.

In order to be of use, the recommended studies should be carried out at least one year prior to the beginning of construction work. This scheduling is necessary to the coherent organization of any surveys required and, additionally, to the implementation of archaeological impact mitigation activities that may result from survey.

## 6.0 Personnel

The present field survey was carried out by Mr. Luc Litwinionek, Project Director, and Mr. Isaac Fleming of Kuujjuarapik, archaeological assistant. This report has been written by Mr. Litwinionek and revised by Mr. Ian Badgley, Resident Archaeologist of Avataq. The Inuktitut version of the summary was prepared by Mr. Lucassie Inqumia of the institute's History Project and the figures by Mr. Barry Doherty, of NAR Design. The text of the report has been word-processed by Miss Martha Palliser, Avataq secretary.

**Appendices**

Appendix I

List of Photographs

## APPENDIX 1: List of Photographs.

| FILM     | NEGATIVE | SUBJECT                             | ORIENTATION | DATE     |
|----------|----------|-------------------------------------|-------------|----------|
| C88-3(1) | 3        | Zone B, test pit, north wall        | N           | 13/07/88 |
|          | 4        | Zone B, test pit, north wall        | N           | 13/07/88 |
|          | 5        | General view of Zone B              | N           | 13/07/88 |
|          | 6        | Zone B, planned location of sixplex | SE          | 13/07/88 |
|          | 7        | General view of Zone B              | SE          | 13/07/88 |
|          | 8        | Zone A                              | WNW         | 14/07/88 |
|          | 9        | Zone A                              | NNW         | 14/07/88 |
|          | 10       | Zone A                              | NW          | 14/07/88 |
|          | 11       | Zone A                              | SSE         | 14/07/88 |
|          | 12       | Zone A                              | SE          | 14/07/88 |
|          | 13       | Zone A                              | ESE         | 14/07/88 |
|          | 14       | Zone A                              | E           | 14/07/88 |
|          | 15       | Zone A                              | ENE         | 14/07/88 |
|          | 16       | Zone A                              | NE          | 14/07/88 |
|          | 17       | Zone A                              | NNE         | 14/07/88 |
|          | 18       | Zone C                              | NNE         | 15/07/88 |
|          | 19       | Zone C                              | NE          | 15/07/88 |
|          | 20       | Zone C                              | SSW         | 15/07/88 |
|          | 21       | Zone C                              | SW          | 15/07/88 |
|          | 22       | Alternate site                      | WNW         | 15/07/88 |
|          | 23       | Alternate site                      | W           | 15/07/88 |
|          | 24       | Alternate site                      | ENE         | 15/07/88 |
|          | 25       | Alternate site                      | E           | 15/07/88 |
|          | 26       | Alternate site                      | SE          | 15/07/88 |

Appendix 2

Photographs



Photo 1. Panoramic view of Zone A from west to north.



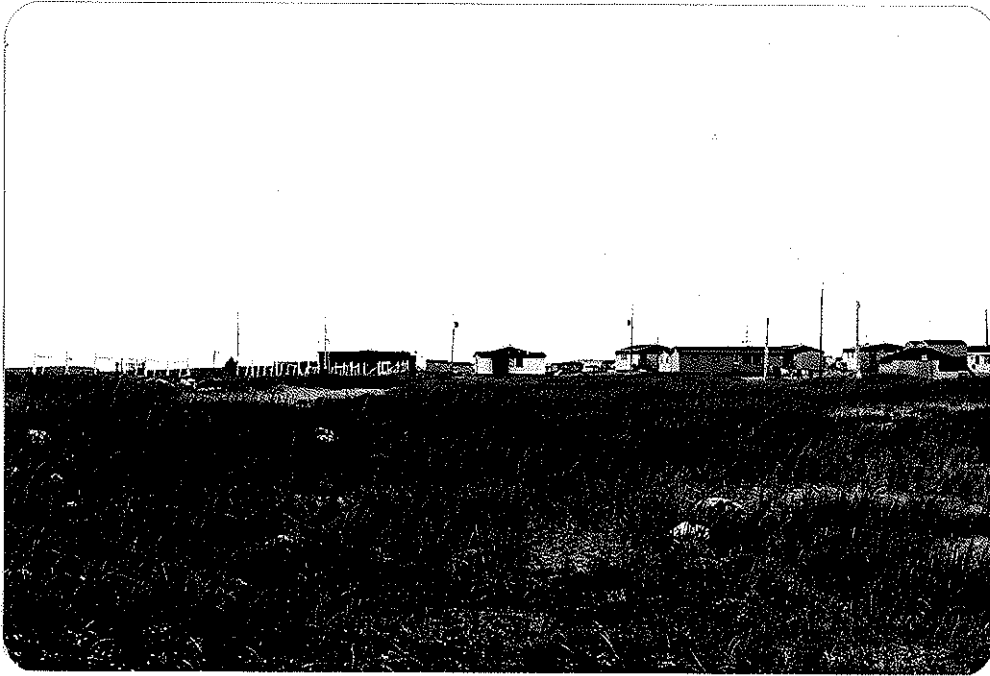


Photo 2. General view of Zone B towards the north.



Photo 3. Planned location of sixplex in Zone B. View towards the southeast.



Photo 4. General view of Zone C looking towards the northeast.



Photo 5. View towards the southeast of Zone C.



Photo 6. Alternate construction site towards the northwest.



Photo 7. View towards the west of the alternate construction site.