

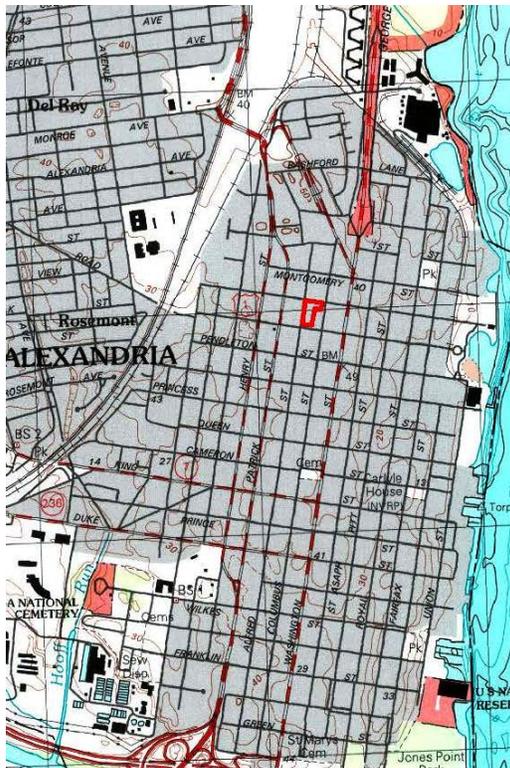
**JAMES BLAND DEVELOPMENT PROPERTY (BLOCK 1)
ARCHEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS OF SITE 44AX0214
CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA**

WSSI #21548.04

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Introduction

The north end of the City of Alexandria is currently being redeveloped on a large scale, with new mixed residential/commercial developments now replacing entire city blocks. Documentary research and archeological investigations were conducted in anticipation of the redevelopment of a large portion of the block bounded by Madison, N. Columbus, Wythe, and N. Alfred Streets. The work was conducted by Thunderbird Archeology, a division of Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc.



Location of Project Area

To a lesser extent, the north end of the city has also historically been a mixed industrial and residential area. Residential development within the project area started in the third quarter of 19th century and continued in to the early 20th century.

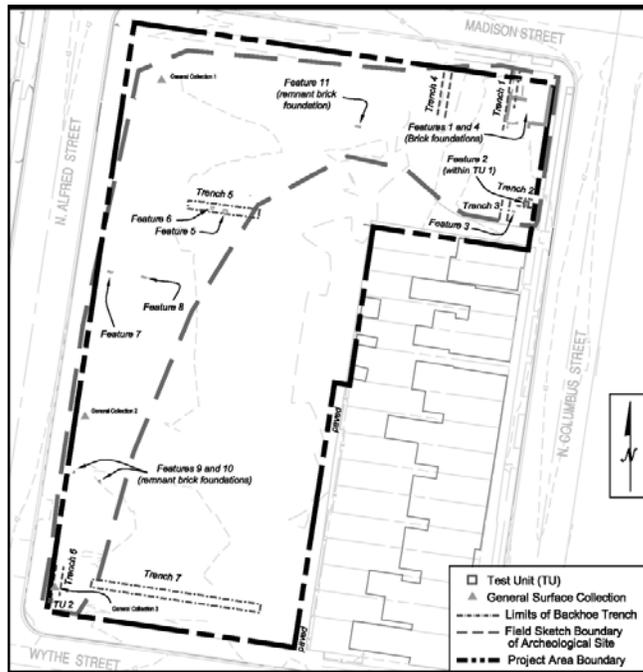
During the colonial period, the lands may have been utilized for the cultivation of tobacco or other crops or as pasture; however, archival records provided little detailed information. By the third quarter of 19th century however, records show residential development in the vicinity of the project area. Approximately 20 dwellings are present across the five city blocks by 1877. As the project area is located within the historic African American neighborhood known as the Hump, and based on trends in later property history, it is likely that many residents of the project area during this period were African Americans.

In the latter part of the 1930s and 1940s, a greater public awareness of substandard housing (often called slums) and of the need for public housing had arisen. A number of public housing projects, which were generally segregated, were constructed in the City of Alexandria. Some of them include the "whites" only John Roberts Homes as well as the George Parker Homes and the Samuel Madden Homes for African Americans. In 1941, the original houses within the project area were condemned, and in 1954 the James Bland homes were constructed within the project area over the foundations of these aforementioned condemned and destroyed properties.



Condemned Housing: 800 Block of Wythe Street

Archeological Investigations



Locations of Archeological Features within Site 44AX0214

Archeological investigations were conducted within the project area in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) as well as with the City of Alexandria zoning ordinance. The work included a Phase I investigation in 2009, followed by archeological monitoring of the demolition and construction within the project area. One archeological site, 44AX0214, was identified; the alphanumeric designation indicates this site is the 214th archeological site (0214) recorded in the City of Alexandria (AX) in the Commonwealth of Virginia (44).

Site 44AX0214 represents tangible evidence of the occupation of this city block prior to the 1954 construction of the James Bland Homes public housing development. The site encompasses brick foundations associated with at least four

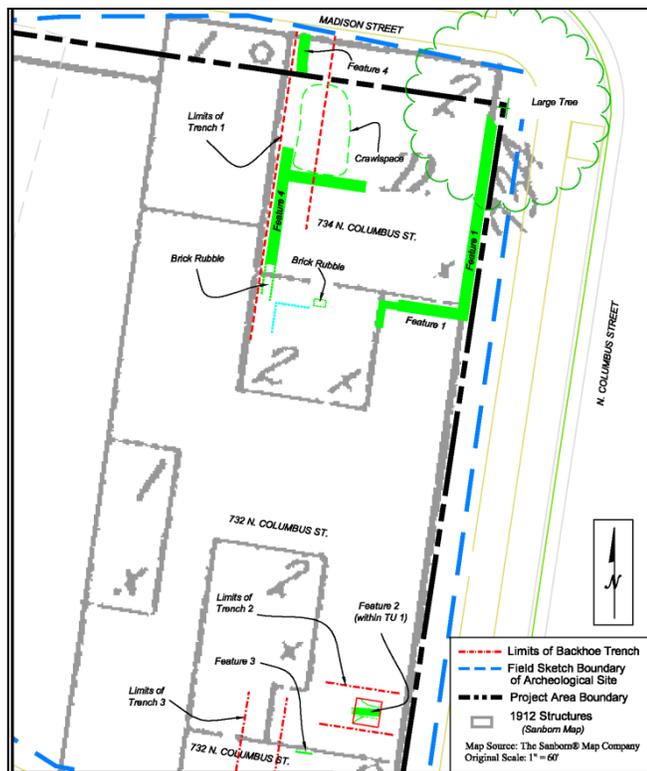
former dwelling locations, two pit features, and a remnant buried ground surface (Aph horizon) containing artifacts. The site measures 352 by 245 feet and dates primarily to the 19th and early 20th centuries.



Examples of Brick Foundation Features within Site 44AX0214

The structural remains of two row houses were recorded in the corner of N. Columbus and Madison Streets; the brick foundations appear to match the location of two dwellings shown on the 1912 Sanborn Map. The rear yard area of these buildings; however, appears to have been more thoroughly disturbed by utilities construction associated with the James Bland buildings.

Architectural foundations that corresponded to the approximate locations of several circa 1912 dwellings were also located in other parts of Block 1. Only one of these remnant foundations appears to be associated with a buried ground surface.



Locations of Features within Northeast Portion of 44AX0214, with 1912 Sanborn Overlay

In addition, two shallow pit features were found in the center of the property, which were filled with brick rubble, mortar and oyster shell fragments. These appear to date from the 19th century, as a pre-1860 bottle base and a whiteware sherd were recovered from the one of the pits. The second pit feature was partially destroyed by the 1954 construction of the Bland buildings. Finally, a buried ground surface that contained artifacts was located in the southwest corner of the block.

Two prehistoric artifacts were also recovered during the general archeological monitoring at the site. A quartz Halifax side-notched type projectile point fragment was recovered from the northwest corner of this city block; the projectile point fragment dates to the Middle Archaic (3500-2500 B.C.) time period. A second quartz biface fragment was recovered from the site, but could not be dated.



Representative Examples of Halifax Points Recovered from Northern Virginia Region

Conclusions

The structural remains of the row houses, associated remnant ground surfaces, and other features were recorded as site 44AX0214. The contexts at site 44AX0214 were limited. Although buried ground surfaces were identified, they were isolated remnants containing



few artifacts and/or foundations remnants. No backyard strata, middens, privies or wells were encountered and few artifacts were recovered. Therefore, the definition of activity areas and comparative research data into the use of space, and lifeways of the occupants of this city block were limited. Alexandria Archaeology indicated that no additional archeological work was required beyond the documentation completed during the monitoring phase.

Because of the extensive disturbance surrounding the site and the limited research potential of the features at the site, site 44AX0214 was considered not eligible to the National Register of Historic Places. No additional archeological work was recommended and Alexandria Archaeology concurred with the eligibility recommendations.