

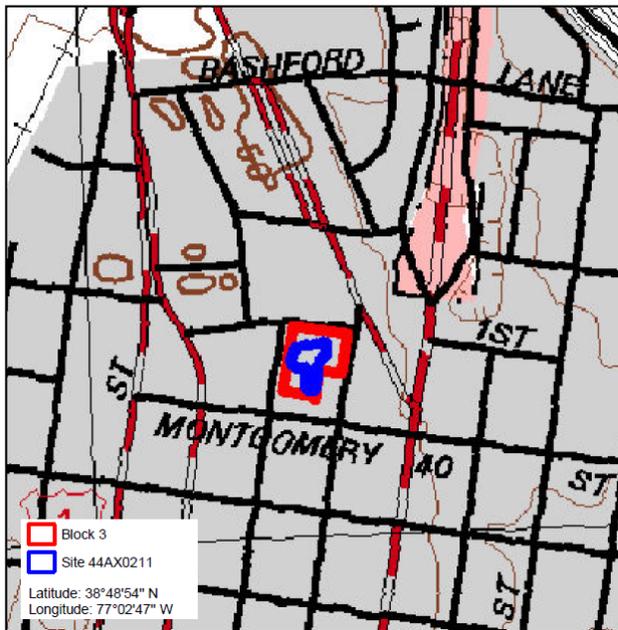
**JAMES BLAND DEVELOPMENT PROPERTY (Block 3)
ARCHEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF SITE 44AX0211
CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA**

WSSI #21548.08

Report Summary by Andres Garzon-Oechsle

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 of the block bounded by Montgomery, N. Alfred, N. Columbus, and First Streets were required under the Archeology Protection Code, located within the City of Alexandria Zoning Ordinance. A Documentary Study for the block containing the site was completed in 2009 as part of a larger study on the James Bland Development property. The James Bland property is composed of two entire city blocks and three partial city blocks bounded by First, N. Patrick, Madison, N. Alfred, Wythe and N. Columbus Streets in Alexandria, Virginia. Two phases of archeological investigation were conducted within site 44AX0211. The Phase I survey that initially identified site 44AX0211 was conducted in 2009 and a Phase II archeological evaluation, to determine the National Register of Historic Places eligibility of the site, was conducted in November 2012. Both investigations were conducted by Thunderbird Archeology, a division of Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc.



Location of Project Area

The north end of the city historically has been a mixed industrial and residential area. Documented evidence for residential development within the city block bounded by Montgomery, N. Alfred, N. Columbus, and First Streets goes back to the third quarter of 19th century and continued in to the 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 the 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.

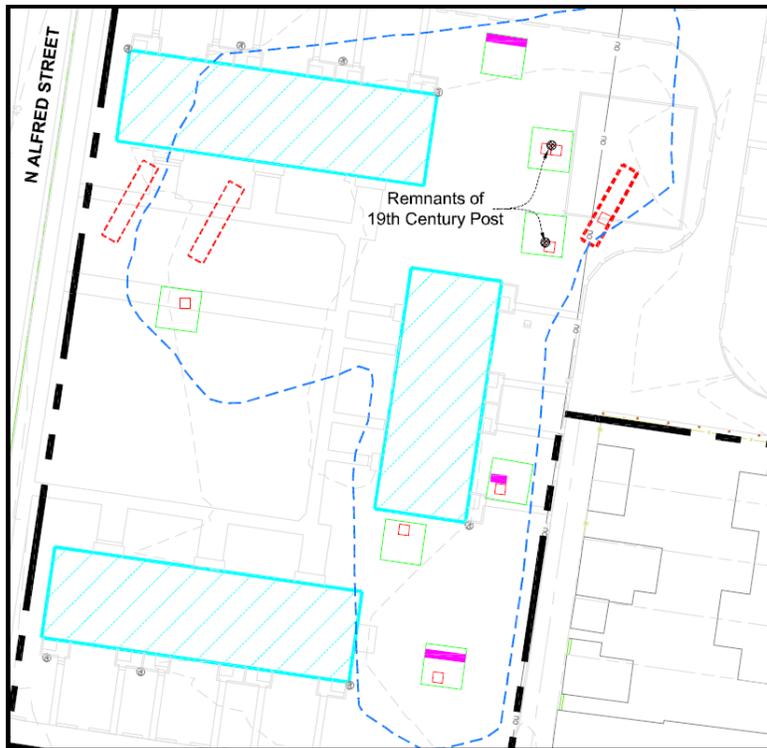
In the latter part of the 1930s and 1940s, a greater public awareness of substandard housing (often called slums) and of the need for public housing had arisen. A number of public housing projects, which were generally segregated, were constructed in the City of Alexandria. Some of them include the “whites” 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 Madison Street

Archeological Investigations

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. One new archeological site (44AX0211) was recorded within the city block with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources as a result of the Phase I archeological work carried out in 2009. The designation as 44AX0211 represents this site as the 211th archeological site (0211) recorded in the City of Alexandria (AX) in the Commonwealth of Virginia (44). The site was recommended for a Phase II evaluation due to the presence of intact 19th century buried deposits. The Phase II was conducted in accordance with a 2009 Programmatic Agreement in addition to the previously mentioned act and ordinance.



--- 44AX0211
 --- Project Area Boundary
 --- Machine Excavated Test Trenches
 [Cyan Hatched] James Bland Housing
 [Green] Machine Excavated Blocks
 [Red] Hand Excavated Test Units

Details of Phase II Archeological Testing

dwellings previously located on the block, but also of the level of preservation and destruction left by the construction of the James Bland Homes. The Phase II evaluation utilized a combination of machine excavated trenches and hand excavated test units in order to expose and evaluate the buried sealed 19th century deposits found during the Phase I investigation.

Archeological fieldwork at site 44AX0211 exposed the locations where two posts once stood and thoroughly analyzed the remaining pockets of a 19th century plowed surface containing artifacts from the era. The excavations at site 44AX0211 resulted in the recovery of an assemblage of 19th century artifacts indicative of a domestic occupation, likely associated with a nearby, domestic structure or structures; artifacts included historic ceramics, glass, metal, and miscellaneous artifacts such as brick, mortar, and faunal bone and shell. Based on the artifacts recovered from the preserved buried plowed surface, the entire assemblage supports an interpretation of a primary occupation at site 44AX0211 beginning in the late first quarter/early second quarter of the 19th century and continuing into the early 1880s.

Site 44AX0211 represents tangible evidence of the occupation of this city block during the 19th century and first half of the 20th century prior to the 1954 construction of the James Bland Homes public housing development. The Phase II archeological investigation was concentrated mainly on the 19th century component of the site as other temporal contexts were deemed non-eligible during the Phase I investigation. The majority of the site encompasses the northwestern quadrant of the block, with a portion extending into the southern half of the block. The site boundary is a reflection not only of the limits of structural and cultural evidence from the

The archeological investigations identified three concentrations of historic artifacts within the site: one in the northeastern portion of the site, another in the western portion of the site, and the third in the southern portion of the site. The northeastern concentration yielded the highest quantity of historic artifacts from the buried plowed surface, in comparison to the other two concentrations. Based on this data, it appears that the former domestic dwelling associated with the occupation of site 44AX0211 was in close proximity to the northeastern portion of the site; however, no archeological evidence of a domestic structure, aside from the recovered artifact

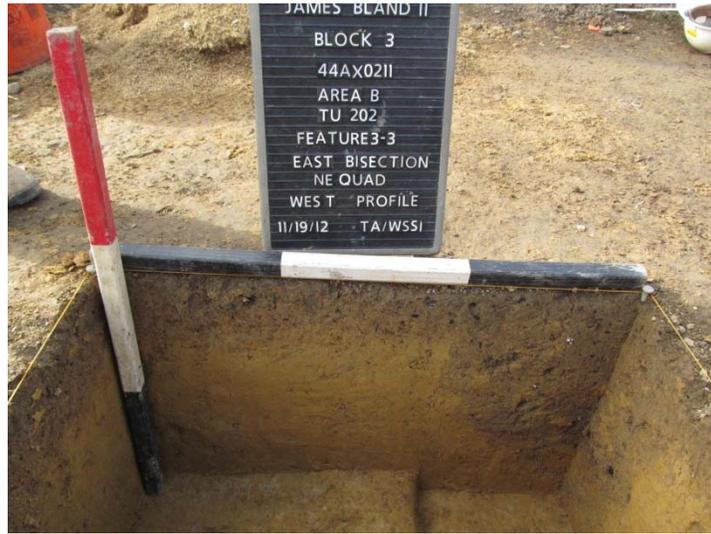


Image of Post Remnants

assemblage and the location of the two former posts, was identified during Phase II excavations. Although 19th century maps do show domestic dwellings along the northeastern corner of the block, the parcel boundaries for these properties do not extend into the site; which is recorded within the central portion of the block. While it is likely the artifacts are related to these dwellings, it is equally possible they are associated with other unrecorded structures within the central lots; however, this remains speculative as no archival evidence showing dwellings within the central portion of the block has been recovered to date.

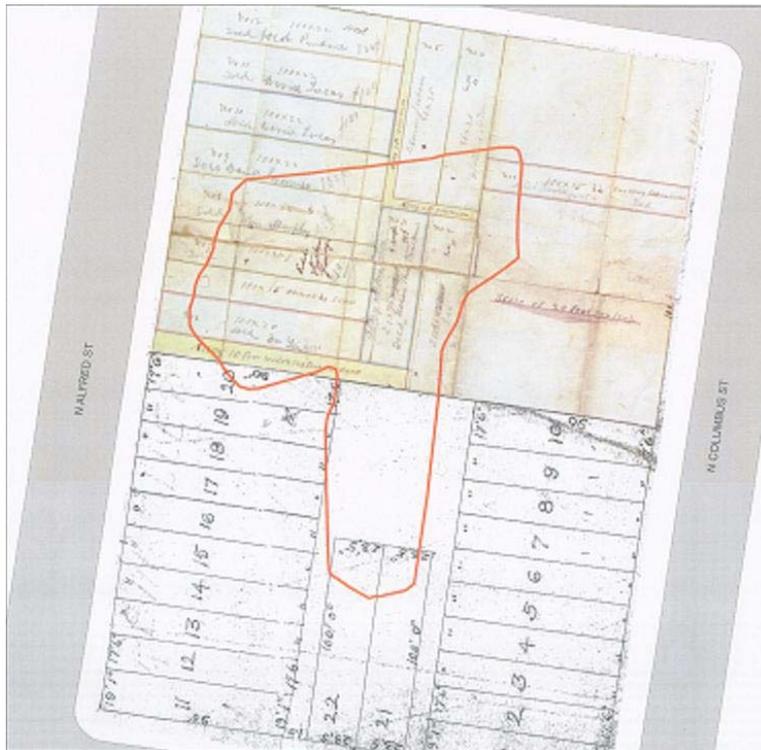
Documentary Research into the Occupants/Owners

Documentary research indicates that the land including site 44AX0211 was owned by members of the Alexander family from the late 17th century; it was part of an estate bequeathed by Robert Alexander to his daughter Sarah Alexander before 1736. Sarah Alexander was the wife of Baldwin Dade. Although the property had been subdivided by the late 18th century, portions of the property remained in Alexander hands into the 19th century. During the colonial and early national periods, the land including the site lay outside the city limits; during this period, several properties in the vicinity of the site were used as farms, pasture and household or market gardens by the various landowners or lessees, although little detailed information is available regarding the use of the site property itself at this time. Domestic use of the project area by enslaved laborers or tenants in the 18th century must be considered a possibility; however, to date no documentary evidence of such use has been found.

The property history for 44AX0211 in the 19th century follows from Richard Conway's acquisition of what had been Robert Alexander's 160 acre property from William Lyles in the late 18th century.

One tract represents the bulk of the block bounded by Montgomery, Columbus, First and Alfred streets that includes site 44AX0211. This tract was conveyed by a deed dated October 1, 1812 to Joseph Smith from Richard Conway's Executors.

It remains uncertain how Joseph Smith disposed of the tract he purchased from Conway's executors. A possible conveyance from Smith to the Mechanics Bank of Alexandria circa July 1821 could not be verified due to several missing deed book pages. The Mechanics Bank clearly held title to the land by 1823 when, by a deed dated March 30, the same parcels were conveyed to William Wright Cohagen from the Mechanics Bank of Alexandria. Subsequently, William Cohagen died intestate and the land went to his father, John Cohagen. John Cohagen and his wife Elizabeth Cohagen conveyed the same parcels to William Veitch on October 1, 1835.



Plat Maps of Project Area Circa 1878

According to deeds, William Veitch owned the property for the next 26 years. It is unclear what exactly he did with the property while it was in his possession or whether there were any buildings or improvements made to the property. William and Mary Veitch conveyed the southern half of Lot 20 (containing a portion of site 44AX2011) to physician Orlando Fairfax on June 4, 1853.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, Orlando Fairfax left Alexandria and joined the Confederates at the City of Richmond, and did

not return until the war was over. Fairfax died prior to 1887 and, on June 4, 1887, his widow Mary sold the land to Michael B. Harlow and James R. Caton, who had formed the partnership of Harlow and Caton. Up until this period, there is no evidence of a dwelling or other improvements on the southern portion of the block.

A year later, Harlow and Caton conveyed several parcels of land, including the block containing the site, to the Alexandria Real Estate Investment Title & Trust Company, who subdivided the city blocks and sold the lots. The portion of Site 44AX2011 that lies within the southern portion of the block falls mainly within an area that was an interior courtyard for the block after the partition of lots circa 1890, and served as a sort of common space for the block residents. The majority of the site lay within the northern half of the block.

William and Mary Veitch conveyed the northern half of Lot 20 to William H. Muir on September 10 1852; Muir subsequently subdivided the northern half of the block and began selling off lots and large portions of the property. He conveyed the majority of the northwest quadrant of the block to Patrick McFarlane by deeds dated 9 June 1853, July 18, 1858 and March 6, 1860.

Patrick McFarlane died in 1860 and his wife Bridgett died in 1862 and, by 1872, the land the McFarlanes owned was parceled and sold in lots to various buyers. A chancery court case in 1871 indicates that McFarlane's property on the block was being rented to several unnamed tenants. Buyers of lots included Albert Churchill (Lot 1), John Chinn (Lot 2), Israel Marvel (Marble) (Lot 3), Mathew Miller (Lot 4), Dennis Jackson (Lot 5), William (Willard) Lee (Lot 6), Stephen Young (Lot 7), John Murphy (Lot 8), Daniel Grooms (Lot 9), David Lucas (Lots 10 and 11), and Jacob Pinkard (Lot 12). Some of the sales listed may not have been finalized, however, as in 1881, the special commissioner for the sale of McFarlane's property reports that Lots 2, 4 and 5 had not sold previously, and records the sale of Lots 4 and 5 to a John W. Reece and the transfer of Lot 2 to Mary Ann McNamara, granddaughter of Patrick McFarlane, as a buyer could not be found for the lot.

Two lots fall entirely or nearly entirely within the site: Lots 2 and 3, located centrally on the block and accessible from the street only by alleys indicated on the plats. Documents indicate that Lot 3 may have remained vacant until at least 1881, as the lot remained unsold until that year when its ownership was transferred to the granddaughter of Patrick McFarlane. Lot 2 was purchased circa 1871 by Israel Marvel (Marble) and subsequently sold to Addison Price.

Addison Price is listed in the 1880 Federal census records as a 47 year old African American brick molder living in Alexandria's Ward 3, which contains the project area, and is listed in association with other buyers of McFarlane's lots. His household included his wife Alice and his sons William Albert (who also worked at the brickyard) and Norman, who was attending school. The Price family likely occupied Lot 2 on the interior of the block from circa 1872 forward.

Conclusions

At the conclusion of the Phase II evaluation, it was evident that site 44AX0211 was eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as archival research failed to identify the occupants of the site, the artifacts cannot be assigned to any known individual or house lot and because of the limited research potential of the buried 19th century plowed surface.