ABSTRACT

A Documentary Study and Archaeological Evaluation were conducted on the South Patrick Street Redevelopment Property within the City of Alexandria, Virginia. Thunderbird Archaeology, a division of Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc., of Gainesville, Virginia, conducted the research for Galena Capital Partners of Alexandria, Virginia. All work was required under the City of Alexandria Archaeological Protection Code prior to development of the property and followed a Scope of Work approved by Alexandria Archaeology.

The study area is located along the northwestern boundary of what has been identified as Alexandria’s earliest African-American neighborhoods, called the Bottoms. The residents within the study area and vicinity included a mixture of African-Americans tenants and white absentee landlords; although a few early white landowners resided within the study area. During the later 19th century and into the early 20th century, most of the property owners, primarily of European descent, also resided within the study area. The residents of 206-212 S. Patrick Street held a mixture of professional and service-oriented jobs; the railroad employed many of the male residents- and some women- as brakemen, conductors, hostlers, engineers or clerks, while other professionals were employed as electricians, chemists, machinists and jewelers.

Although research revealed that the majority of the landowners and occupants of 206-212 S. Patrick Street were not African American, the property was felt to have the potential to contain archeological deposits that could provide insight into the interactions between the residents of this ethnically diverse working class neighborhood during the late-18th and 19th centuries. An Archaeological Evaluation was subsequently conducted on the property in October 2014. The archeological fieldwork included the mechanical excavation of two trenches and the hand excavation of shovel test pits and resulted in the identification one new archeological site.

Site 44AX0227 consists of the intact foundations and cellar of the former dwelling at 212 S. Patrick Street, which was extant from at least 1877 and was demolished ca. 1961. The site limits correspond to the historic parcel boundary and includes the partial foundations of an late 20th-century outbuilding. Nineteenth-century artifacts were observed during the excavations within the site, but were found in disturbed fill contexts, likely associated with demolition of the former dwellings at 210 and 212 S. Patrick Street. Although intact, the basement was filled with brick rubble and mid-20th century trash scatter, apparently associated with the last occupants of the dwelling. Because of the late occupation/use of the dwelling and the disturbance surrounding the site, 44AX0227 appears to have limited research potential into the interactions of the inhabitants in the late 18th and 19th centuries. Beyond the presence of foundations, intact late 18th and 19th-century deposits and features are not expected. For these reasons, in our opinion, the site is not considered significant and no further archeological work is recommended on the site or within the study area. However, if in the event of the unexpected discovery of deep shaft features, such as wells or privies, Alexandria Archaeology should be notified.