

PUBLIC SUMMARY OF
WEICKING PROPERTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS
701, 702, 704, and 705 ARELL COURT,
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

KCI Technologies, Inc. (KCI) conducted Phase I archaeological survey and monitoring of residential lots 701, 702, 704, and 705 in Arell Court, in west Alexandria. These lots are collectively referred to as the Weicking Property and are proposed for development of single-family houses. Background information indicated that the area had archaeological potential that might provide insight into Civil War-era life and activities in west Alexandria. Therefore, this investigation was undertaken to determine if significant archaeological resources existed on the Weicking Property.

Investigations consisted of background archival research and field survey including systematic metal detection, shovel testing, and test unit excavation, followed by archaeological monitoring of land-clearing activities.

Archaeological Survey

Phase I survey of the Weicking Property was carried out in November 2004 and included metal detecting, shovel testing, and test unit excavation. This work resulted in recovery of historic artifacts, some of which were associated with Civil War-era activities. However, no cultural features were identified.



Artifacts recovered during this survey, including the silver German coin below left, and the .58 caliber Minie balls below right, are interpreted to be associated with archaeological sites 44AX193 and 44AX195, Civil War encampments. 44AX193 was identified in 2004 during a survey of the parcel north of the Weicking Property. The site consisted of a scatter of Civil War-period artifacts and a single feature, a brick structure identified as a Crimean oven. 44AX195, another Civil War encampment, was identified in 2005 during a survey of the property south of the current project area. This site also consisted of a Civil War-era artifact assemblage and also identified a Crimean oven feature.

Due to the known historic use of the area, the presence of substantial historic



archaeological deposits on neighboring parcels, and following consultation with Alexandria Archaeology, KCI recommended monitoring of clearing and grading activities in the project area. The task required an archaeological technician, with knowledge of the neighboring resources and the potential for cultural features, to observe all mechanical clearing and grading of soil within the project area. The technician had the responsibility of halting clearing and grading activity should a cultural feature be encountered. Any identified feature would have been tested by means decided in consultation with Alexandria Archaeology.

Archaeological Monitoring

Monitoring of clearing activities was carried out in October 2005.



Close visual inspection was combined with further systematic metal detecting. The historic artifacts recovered, as with the initial survey assemblage, were consistent with historic, specifically, Civil War-era, use of the land. The recovered artifacts included several bullets, a button (a Union Army, New York regiment button), and an axe head. These artifacts, like the survey assemblage, support the interpretation of association with archaeological sites 44AX193 and 44AX195, the Union encampment(s) identified on parcels surrounding the current project area in previous investigations. No features were identified during monitoring.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Intensive Phase I archaeological survey and subsequent archaeological monitoring of the Weicking Property resulted in the discovery of a low-density historic artifact scatter in disturbed context (fill and Ap horizon). No cultural features were identified. The artifact assemblage represents mid-late nineteenth century activity. Of specific interest are artifacts representative of Civil War-era military activities. Archival research found that two previously recorded sites, 44AX193 and 44AX195 – both Civil War encampments, were located to the north and south, respectively, of the current project area.

Based on the proximity of this (these) recorded Civil War encampment(s) to the current project area, the artifact assemblage recovered during the current study is interpreted to be associated with both. Further, sites 44AX193 and 44AX195 appear to be part of the same encampment, the remains of a single, large military encampment, which includes the area of the current study area.

The current project area is interpreted to have experienced low to moderate historic use, and the archaeological deposit is not intact. This is likely the result of three main factors. First, the Weicking Property is primarily located on sloping land, which may have discouraged construction of substantial features such as Crimean ovens. Second, intermittent drainages and seeps exist across the current project area creating wet ground that would likely have been avoided. Third, local informants have indicated that the surrounding area, including the current project area, has been heavily collected through the years. Based on the results of this investigation, it is the opinion of KCI that the potential to encounter significant intact archaeological deposits in the Weicking Property is low. KCI recommends no further archaeological work.