

MSU Campus Archaeology Program Project Summary Sheet



Report No. 38

Date of Survey: 9/17/13(STP) and 12/16/13 (Monitoring)

Site Name: Olin Health Center

Principal Investigator: Kate Frederick

Physical Plant Project Name: Olin Chiller Replacement

Project Justification: In order to replace Olin Health Center's chiller, a trench will be dug from the back of Olin (north side) to Ramp 6.

Additionally, a large hole will be dug on the north side of Olin to remove the old chiller. Given the location near the original campus, a shovel test survey was done.



Map of Olin Health Center Survey

Location: North side of Olin Health Center

Campus Zone: West Circle

Survey Type: STP survey and monitoring

Methodology: Three rows of STPs excavated directly behind Olin (north side) in the grassy area. Additionally, the area was monitored during the trenching.

Summary/Conclusions: Only a few artifacts were recovered during the survey, 4 nails, a few pieces of glass (1 bottle glass), and a couple pieces of ceramic. Nothing was found during the monitoring.

Recommendations and Priority: Any construction or disturbance in this area must be surveyed. This is a high priority area despite the lack of finds.

Additional Details:

Physical Setting and History:

Michigan State University straddles the bank of the Red Cedar River in the city of East Lansing, Michigan. The Olin Health Center is located in the historic north end of campus, bordered by Grand River Avenue to the north and East Circle Drive to the south. To the east

and slightly south is Berkey Hall and to the west is Ramp #6 (Grand River). Olin currently serves as student health clinic, providing immunizations, checkups, and counseling for the student body.

The university had gone through a series of insufficient health faculties, before the construction of the Olin Memorial Health Center in 1939. Frequent outbreaks of contagious diseases had long been a detriment to the student body. In February 1939 an outbreak of undulant fever in the Bacteriology Building would hospitalize thirty veterinary students and leave one dead. When completed the health center was said to be “one of the most modern health facilities nationwide”.

Dr. Richard M. Olin who had come aboard in April 1925 as the college’s first full time physician spearheaded the effort for a new hospital. Dr. Olin had received his training at Bellevue Hospital Medical College and New York University, before coming to Michigan to serve as the state’s first health commissioner. The President’s House (located at the site of present-day Gilchrist Hall) had served as a hospital since 1916 but was ill equipped for this purpose. Dr. Olin began pushing for a health center adequate to meet the demands of a quickly growing student body.

Although Dr. Olin would witness the groundbreaking of the health center in 1938, he would pass away on October 6th of that year. When the facility opened, it was prepared to serve 6,000 students with an outpatient clinic, 60 beds, two surgical operating rooms, and ancillary services. Olin would be expanded in 1957 and 1968. The 1957 addition cost \$2 million dollars and provided more space for surgeons and staff. The 1968 addition would be to the building’s north end and increase the building’s space by 5,000 feet. This would include a new diagnostic laboratory, expanded emergency receiving rooms, and new offices and examination rooms. The 1968 addition employed “prefabricated modular rooms that were suspended from trusses by steel bands and then ‘plugged’ into main utility lines. This quick assemblage method lowered building costs to \$438,000.

Adorning the south entryway to Olin is a series of limestone sculpture reliefs sculpted by Samuel A. Cashwan as part of the Works Progress Administration’s Federal Art Project in the late 1930’. The imagery depicts the history of medicine and features several themes from Greek mythology. Cashwan is responsible for several sculptures across campus, including ones located at the Abbot Road Entrance, the MSU Union, and the Music Building.

In 1981 Olin ceased to be a fully functioning hospital and became the outpatient health center that we know today. Renovations in 1983 would convert inpatient and surgery space to offices and waiting rooms.

Investigation Details:

Shovel testing at the Olin Health Center was conducted on September 17th, 2013 beginning at 10:00 AM. The day’s weather was sunny and in the mid 60’s. A transect grid was laid out along an East-West trajectory paralleling Grand River Avenue.

The first sweep began in the corner of the parking lot and continued 70 meters to the East. Thirteen holes were dug with depths between 20 and 38 cm. The strata of these holes typically consisted of a top layer of soil going to about 20cm below surface, capping a layer of sandy soil and compacted fill.

Of the thirteen holes, eight produced artifacts. These included shards of red, clear and bottle glass, nails, ceramic sherds, glazed ware, and cut bone. Hole 1-1-11 was expanded 20 cm south to investigate a possible feature.

Following this first initial sweep a second sweep was conducted five meters north. This sweep would consist of eight designated points, with seven being dug. Point 1-2-5 was skipped due to trees. Depth was between 26 and 40 cm, with a stratigraphy of mainly topsoil capping sand. Of the seven holes, four contained artifacts. These comprised nails, whiteware ceramic, and glass.

Shovel Test Pit Number (sweep-row-shovel test)	Depth (cm)	Strata (cm)	Artifacts
1-1-1	32	0-19 Topsoil 19-32 Sandy/Fill	Shard of red glass
1-1-2	30	0-20 Topsoil 20-30 Sandy	None
1-1-3	32	0-26 Topsoil 26-32 Compacted Fill	Nail, Uncollected Slate
1-1-4	30	0-20 Topsoil 20-30 Compacted Fill	Nail, Ceramic
1-1-5	26	0-18 Topsoil 18-26 Sand	Bottle Glass
1-1-6	30	0-20 Topsoil 20-30 Sand	Glazed Ware, Clear Glass
1-1-7	22	0-19 Topsoil 10-22 Compacted Fill	Artifacts uncovered, unknown type
1-1-8	25	0-16 Topsoil 16-25 Compacted Soil	None
1-1-9	20	0-20 Hit cemented fill	None
1-1-10	25	0-20 Topsoil 20-25 Compacted Fill	None
1-1-11	36	0-29 Topsoil 29-36 Sand	Cut Bone
1-1-12	38	0-20 Topsoil 20-38 Sand	Ceramic
1-1-13	20	0-20 Hit Compacted Fill	None

Shovel Test Pit Number (sweep-row-shovel test)	Depth (cm)	Strata (cm)	Artifacts
1-2-1	26	0-17 Topsoil 17-26 Sand	Two Wire Nails
1-2-2	20	0-14 Topsoil 14-20 Sand	Whiteware, Glass
1-2-3	26	0-26 Topsoil	None
1-2-4	32	0-20 Topsoil 20-32 Sand	None
1-2-5	-	-	-
1-2-6	29	0-21 Topsoil 21-29 Sand	Nail
1-2-7	40	0-40 Fill	Glass sherd
1-2-8	29	0-17 Topsoil 17-29 Sand	None