

MSU Campus Archaeology Program Project Summary Sheet



Report No. # 40 and #41

Date of Survey: October 8th – 14th 2013

Site Name: Cowles House / Music Building Sidewalks 2013

Principal Investigators: Lynne Goldstein and Kate Frederick

Physical Plant Project Name: N/A



Project Justification: This project was conducted as part of the Campus Archaeology Program's efforts to identify and mitigate disturbance to archaeological features and deposits associated with the early days of Michigan State University's campus. This area is of particular significance to such efforts, given its proximity to some of the first buildings constructed at the University.

Location: Sidewalks southeast of Cowles House, east of the Music and Music Practice buildings.

Campus Zone: Sacred Space/West Circle Zone

Survey Type: Shovel Testing

Methodology: A series of shovel test pits were placed opportunistically along walking paths in areas east of Cowles House and the Music and Music Practice buildings.

Summary/Conclusions: A total of 34 shovel test pits, divided between four sweeps, were excavated. In Sweep 1, in the locality of the Cowles House, many test pits encountered slabs and chunks of concrete preventing excavation to 50cm. Sweeps 2, 3, and 4 all encountered substantial layers of gravelly fill (surface to ~25-30cm in depth) overlaying sterile sand. Each sweep encountered modest amounts of historic material culture associated with early campus, including ceramics, glass, and structural materials (nails, bricks, etc.)

Recommendations and Priority: While no specific historic deposits or features were encountered in this undertaking, the area investigated remains a high priority zone. As this region is within of the most archaeologically sensitive areas of campus and contains archaeological deposits associated with the earliest buildings constructed on campus, it is critical that any future ground disturbance in this area (even tree plantings) be preceded

by archaeological survey. Survey should then be followed by close monitoring of any work being conducted.

Field Notes:

Notebook: Frederick August 2013 to July 2014
Starting on page 32

Cowles House Sidewalks
Oct. 8th 2013

Sweep 1:

1-1-1:

- Concrete slabs just below the surface.
- Artifacts: found 1 tiny, glazed ceramic (bag #25)
 - **I believe the bag number was never written in full, inconsistent with bag numbering for rest of project

1-1-2:

- Concrete slabs just below surface

1-1-3:

- Concrete slabs just below surface

1-1-4:

- Concrete slabs just below surface

1-1-5:

- Concrete at surface, skipped

1-1-6:

- 25cm depth
- Still hit hard concretions
- No artifacts

1-1-7:

- 35cm depth
- Mostly fill
- No artifacts

1-1-8:

- Cement chunks at surface

Sweep 2:

2-1-1:

- 15cm depth
- Extremely gravelly fill, cobbles are too big to dig through
- Artifacts: one piece of whiteware (Bag #C258)

2-1-2:

- 42cm depth
- 0-32cm fill, 32-42 sterile sand
- Artifacts: bottle glass (Bag #C259)

2-1-3:

- 45 cm depth
- 0-30cm fill, 30-45cm sterile sand

2-1-4:

- 32cm depth
- 0-26cm fill, 26-32 sterile sand
- Artifacts: one wire nail (Bag #C260)

Afternoon 2:30pm

2-1-5:

- 22cm depth
- Strata: all fill
- Artifacts: one nail (Bag #C261)

2-1-6:

- 12cm depth
- Could not get through dense gravel fill
- No artifacts

—*Sidewalk curves to right*

Music Building Sidewalks 10/08/2013

**given continuity of sweep numbers, likely in same project as Cowles house survey

2-2-1:

- 25cm depth
- Hit large rock
- Found one piece beveled colorless glass (Bag #C262)

2-2-2:

- 50cm depth
- Several layers of fill, then a silty clay layer
- Artifacts: one glazed brick (Bag #C263)

Sweep 2 seemed to be in a topographically low area between the Music Building and Beaumont Tower and dude to that is probably filled with several feet of fill. My shovel probes have not been able to get below 50cm due to the dense fill.

2-1-7:

- Depth: 48cm
- 0-45cm fill, 45-48cm sterile sand
- Artifacts: glass, nails (Bag #C264)

2-1-8:

- Depth: 45cm
- 0-14cm gravelly fill, 14-28cm ash + charcoal layer – probably sidewalk fill, 28-45cm sandy
- Artifacts: none, but whole layer of charcoal

2-1-9:

- Depth: 30cm
- 0-30cm fill, could not get past the decaying tree root @30cm
- Artifacts: window glass and a tiny piece of porcelain (Bag #C265)

2-1-10:

- Depth: 32cm
- 0-19cm fill, 19-32cm sterile sand
- Artifacts: one brick (Bag #C266), see reverse page
 - **refers to pg. 37 drawing of brick with partially intact (**molded?) words



2-1-11:

- Depth: 37cm
- 0-37cm dense fill
- Artifacts: none

2-1-12:

- Depth: 40cm
- 0-40cm dense fill
- Artifacts: none

2-1-13:

- Depth: 50cm
- 0-30cm sandy fill, 30-50cm darker brown fill
- Artifacts: ceramics (Bag #C267)

10/14/13

Sidewalks on the east side of the Music Building

Weather: cool mid 50s and sunny

3-1-1:

- Depth: 17cm
- All fill
- Artifacts: none

3-1-2:

- Depth: 32cm
- 0-9cm sandy fill, 9-16cm light sandy fill, 16-32cm darker fill with debris
- Artifacts: none

3-1-3:

- Depth: 48cm
- 0-32cm dark fill, 32-48cm light sand
- Artifacts: nails, glass, metal (Bag #C268)

3-1-4:

- Depth: 51cm
- 0-22cm dark fill, 25-51 light sand
- Artifacts: none

3-1-5:

- Depth: 44cm
- 0-26cm fill, 26-44cm natural (**??) sand
- Artifacts: nail (Bag #C269)

3-1-6:

- Depth: 54cm
- 0-12cm fill, 12-54cm light sand
- Artifacts: none

3-2-1:

- Depth: 40cm

- Artifacts: none

3-2-2:

- Depth: 45cm
- Artifacts: none

4-1-1:

- Depth: 42cm
- All sandy fill
- Artifacts: none

4-1-2:

- Depth: 12cm
- Too gravelly and cobbly to dig

4-1-3:

- Depth: 15cm
- Took out a larger area in order to try to get through the debris, but it is so dense and deep, it would require more than a shovel test can offer
- Artifacts: lots of brick (not in any ordered pattern)

Pg. 41 map

**doesn't really help to establish location of sweeps

