

MSU Campus Archaeology Program Project Summary Sheet

Report No. 43

Date of Survey: Summer 2014

Site Name: Agricultural Hall Foundation

Principal Investigator: Kate Frederick

Physical Plant Project Name: N/A

Project Justification: Construction in the area of Agriculture Hall discovered a foundation or stair feature and called CAP to examine it. CAP then stayed to monitor construction activities.

Location: Agricultural Hall

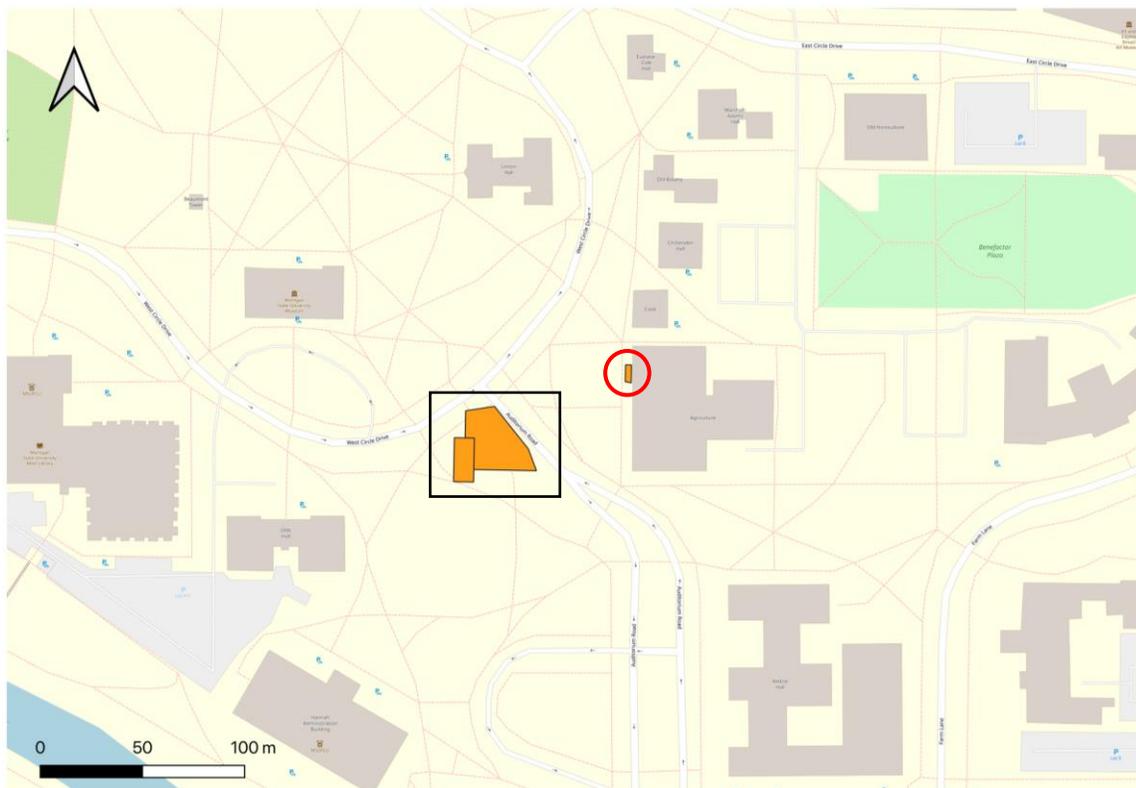


Figure 1: GIS map showing Ag Hall Foundation site (red circle) and Ag Hall South / Vet Lab site (black box), map displays their location relative to the rest of campus.



Campus Zone: West Circle

Survey Type: Monitoring

Methodology: Construction Monitoring – Photographed, measured, and mapped all features and collected artifacts when possible.

Summary/Conclusions: This project covers two days of construction monitoring at Morrill Hall of Agriculture (Agricultural Hall) on West Circle Drive (Figures 1 & 2). CAP crew were called to Agricultural Hall on May 5, 2014 by a construction crew who had disturbed an intact stone and concrete feature roughly two feet west of extant building foundation. Campus Archaeologist Kate Fredrick and CAP undergraduate employee Josh Schnell measured, mapped and photographed the feature and the surrounding context. The feature was described as a two-course stair structure¹ covered by a layer of concrete with a surface measuring 6ft. by 8ft. that rose 16in of the ground (figure 3). No artifacts were found other than rocks designated as rubble strewn throughout the feature area. CAP crew continued to monitor the area during construction, finding no additional features or artifacts. Most of the focus shifted towards Ag Hall – South / Vet Lab site after discovery of Old Vet Laboratory wall feature on May 7, 2014.

No indication of what CAP archaeologists believed the foundation feature may have been related to are given in the notes. However, it is likely that it relates either to an early incarnation of the facade Agricultural Hall, indicating repairs, renewal, etc. over the years or was the foundation of a structure that predated the construction of Agricultural Hall in 1909². It also could be related to an earlier structure its discovery shows that it is possible for the remains of past buildings to be preserved, despite intensive construction, which could deepen an understanding of life on the early phases of MSU's campus. A map dated to 1899 (figure 4) and a description of early campus by Kuhn in his book on the first 100 years of MSU³ indicate that a horse barn occupied this space prior to the construction of Agricultural Hall and a second, dated to 1915 (figure 5), shows that a horse barn and other structures for livestock were constructed in what was then the southern-most part of campus. The livestock were removed from a central location on campus to the outskirts in the early 20th century, provides some idea of how space and the University itself was being reconceptualized through these years of transition. Archeological data in the form of material culture would further deepen this understanding.

Recommendations and Priority:

Despite the lack of artifacts found during monitoring, the discovery of an intact stone foundation feature makes this area highly valuable for future archaeological research into MSU's historic campus. This feature, if related either to an earlier incarnation of Agricultural Hall, could give important insights into repairs and modifications to the building through time. If related to a structure that predated the construction of Agricultural Hall in 1909, this feature could give insights into early campus life and the school's expansion in the early 20th century. Construction and monitoring for this project has shown that the area directly west of Agricultural Hall, opposite of West Circle Drive, is

an area of high priority for CAP and construction and landscape modifications in the area have a high likelihood of encountering historic period material culture. Future work in this area and the area to the north, between Agricultural Hall and Chittenden Hall, outside of areas affected by construction in 2014, is a high priority area for future investigation or monitoring.

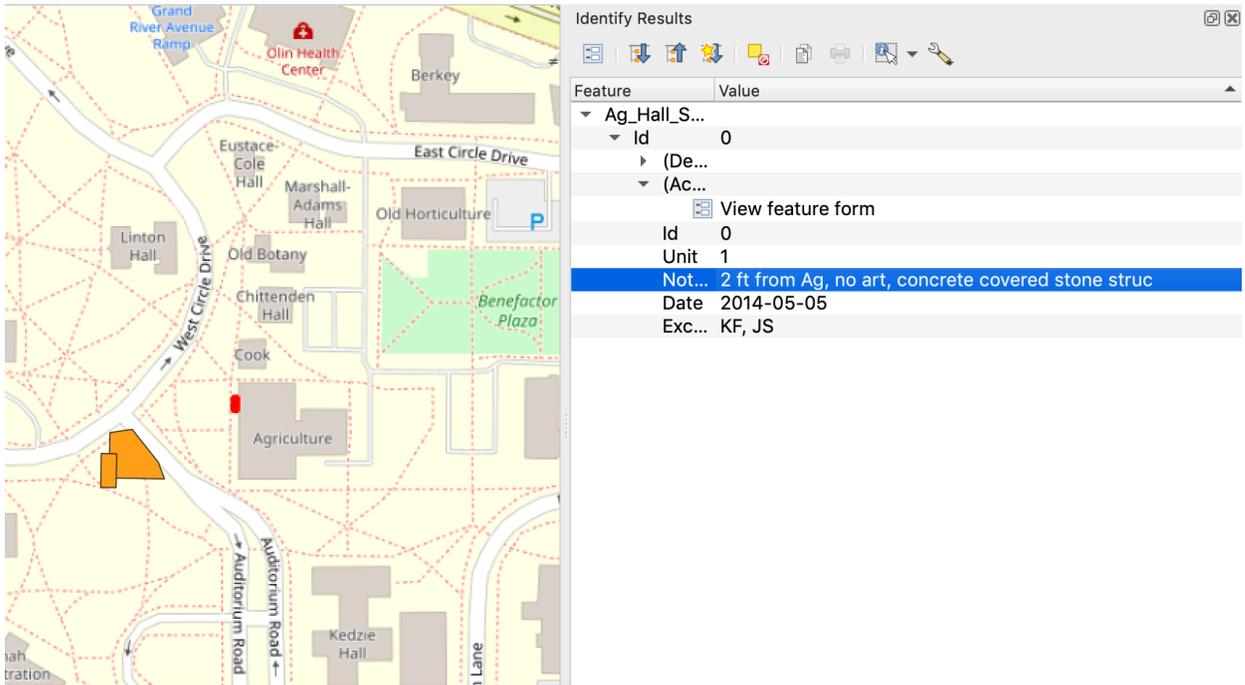


Figure 2: GIS map showing Ag Hall Foundation site (red highlight) and Ag Hall South/Vet Lab site. Also included is a description of the feature from monitoring, which states that the foundation wall was found 2 feet from the extant building, the hole contained no artifacts, and it describes the foundation wall as a “concrete covered stone [structure]”.

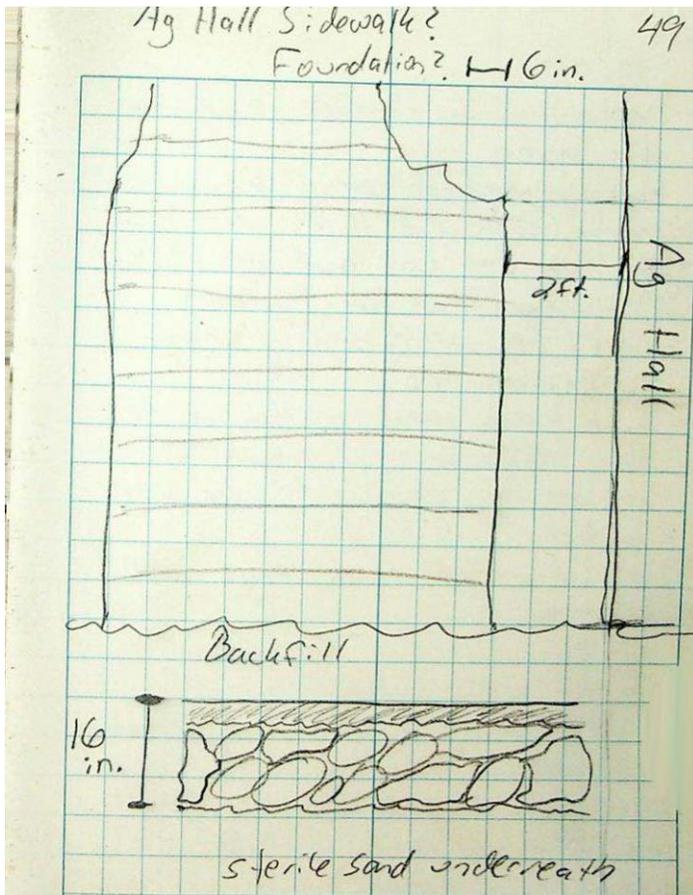


Figure 3: Sketch map showing location and profile view of the foundation feature

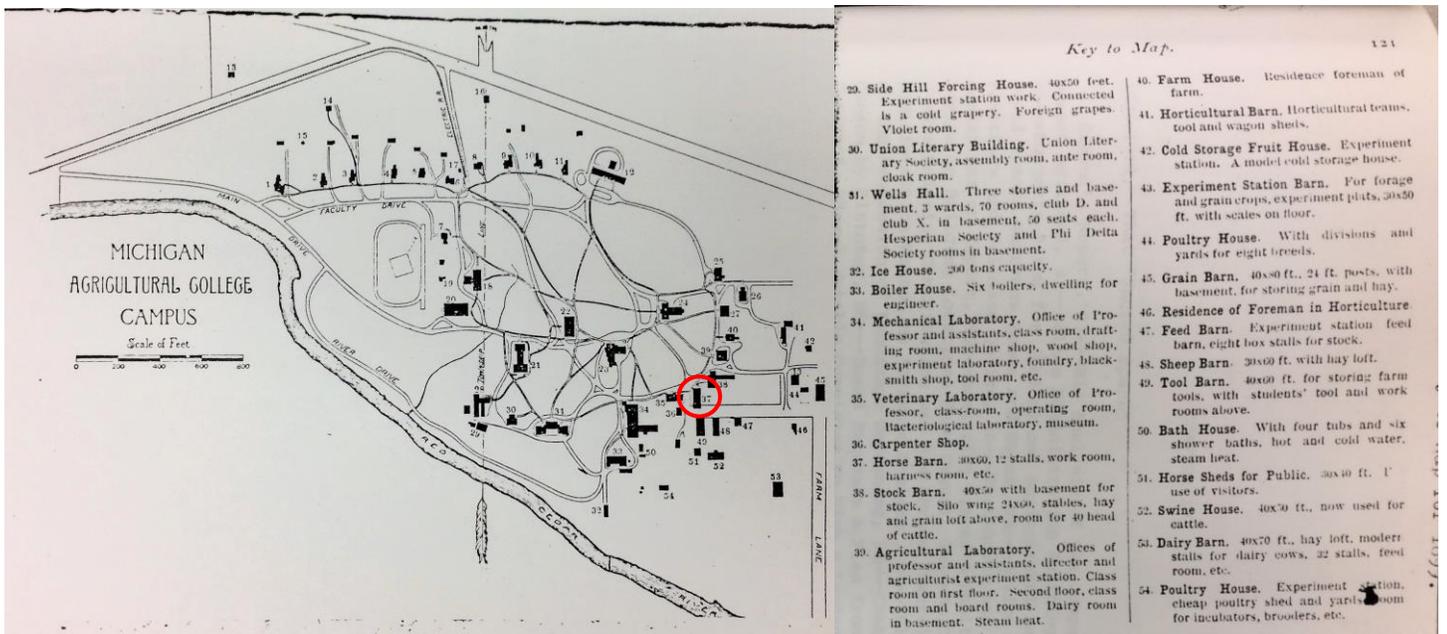


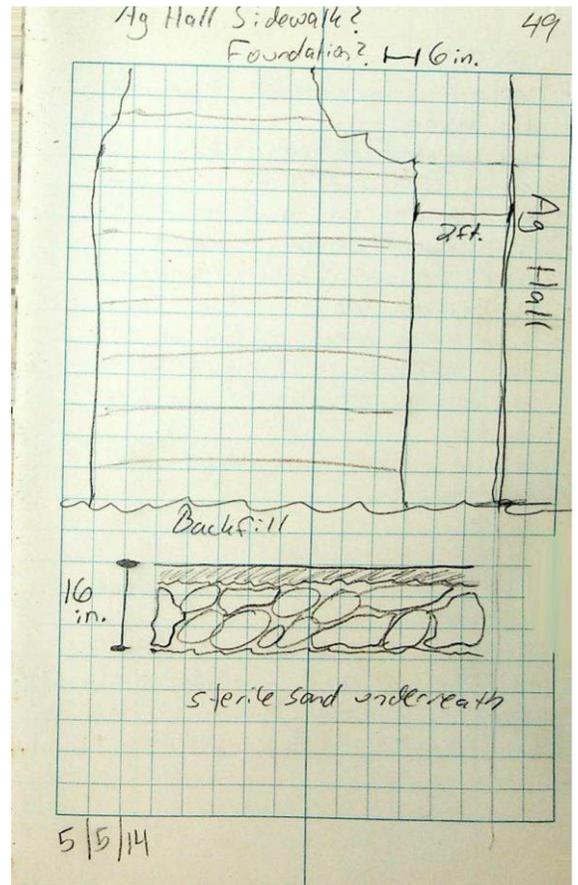
Figure 4: Map of M.A.C from 1899 showing a horse barn (37) in the future location of Agricultural Hall

5/5/14: Crew: Kate Fredrick, JS

- Weather:
- Called to Ag Hall by Granger this morning
 - o Found a two-course stair structure w/ a layer of concrete [covering?] it.
 - o It is about 6x8 ft – 2-ft away from front of Ag hall
 - o **No artifacts found**
 - o Mapped, measured, and took pictures
- Bags
 - o All artifacts were collected in bags: Bag #s K44 – K54

5/7/14 (these notes cover monitoring of Ag Hall foundation site, but as little was found there, they mostly refer to “Ag Hall South/Vet Lab” site)

- Crew: Kate Fredrick,
- Weather:
- Continuing to monitor by Ag Hall this morning
 - o we believe building remnants we sound on Monday (south of Ag Hall) were from the old Vet Lab, built in 1885
 - o Excavations revealed more bricks on west end of huge construction hole
 - o Huge buried areas on top of the stone foundation – jumbled bricks on top – no structure to the bricks
 - o Tons of artifacts – old keys, also a doorknob
- Clearing west rubble
 - o In afternoon we found another section of the wall to the NW of the rubble. It is under the protection fence for the tree on the NW corner of the road
 - o Mapped it and photo'd but it will not be destroyed further by construction
 - o 67 cm depth from ground to top of wall
 - o 122 cm depth to ___ (rubble?)
 - o Discovered west wall of Vet Lab at end of the day



Photos:



Figure 6: Photograph of feature showing courses and concrete layer



Figure 7: Photograph of feature showing surrounding rock rubble

¹ A course is a layer of the same unit running horizontally in a wall. It can also be defined as a continuous row of any masonry unit such as bricks, concrete masonry units (CMU), stone, shingles, tiles, etc.
([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Course_\(architecture\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Course_(architecture)))

² Madison Kuhn, *Michigan State: The First Hundred Years*. The Michigan State University Press, East Lansing, Michigan. (1955):223

³ Kuhn, *Michigan State: The First Hundred Years*, 123