

Uptown Oakland Archaeological Pre-Testing

Summary Report as of March 10, 2006

Developer: Uptown Housing Partners, LP

Consultant: Archeo-tec, Inc.

February 16, 2006 (Parcel 2)

We made a find of potential significance on Parcel II this morning. The find in question is the subterranean portion of a circular, brick-lined water tank, or well. The structure, which is probably a remnant of the Delger estate, appears on the 1889, 1902 and 1912 Sanborn maps and is associated with the greenhouses and aviaries that once existed within this portion of the Uptown-Oakland project site. The feature -- which we have designated as Feature 12 -- was found by construction personnel while they were removing a large concrete footing that once supported the now demolished parking garage. As soon as our on-site monitor conducted a preliminary inspection of the feature (which occurred as soon as the footing has been removed), additional Archeo-tec personnel went out to the site to document the remains of the water tank. We took photographs and measurements and did everything possible to document the remains.

February 21, 2006 (Parcel 1)

We finished the first day of archaeological testing in the previously unexamined areas of Parcel I at the Uptown-Oakland site. We did not encounter any significant cultural findings today, but we are still early in the process.

February 22, 2006 (Parcel 1)

Today we continued our testing within the previously uninvestigated portions of Parcel I. We found one small 19th century trash deposit and investigated this feature with care. However, it appears that this small, ephemeral trash deposit (which contained no Chinese cultural specimens) is neither horizontally or vertically extensive nor historically significant.

February 23, 2006 (Parcel 1)

Today we spent another day continuing to perform archaeological testing procedures in the previously uninvestigated portions of Parcel I. No significant findings were made today.

February 24, 2006 (Parcel 1)

Today was our fourth day of pre-construction testing within the previously un-investigated portions of Parcel I. We found a brick wall associated with one of the structures shown on one of the Sanborn maps and two small later 19th/early 20th century trash deposits. We investigated these features with care. However, it appears that the two small trash deposits are neither horizontally or vertically extensive nor historically significant.

March 2, 2006 (Parcel 1)

We were able to accomplish quite a bit with respect to our investigation of Parcel I today. Thankfully the weather proved quite cooperative. This morning we encountered the remnants of a structure that was associated with a small assemblage of historic period artifacts. Among these specimens was a single shard of celadon ware. This discovery led us to posit that we had identified a disturbed remnant of the 19th century Chinese community that is believed to have existed in this area during the second half of the 19th century. We proceeded to evaluate this feature by hand-excavation. We are not finished with our evaluation yet, but with any luck we will be completely done with Parcel I tomorrow. At this moment, it does not appear that the recently discovered structural remnant in Parcel I is associated with the Chinese community. Among other things, we are finding that the structural remnants are associated with wire nails. As wire nails did not come into common usage until around 1890, it would appear that this structure post-dates the Chinese settlement by at least 15 years. In addition, the structural remnants are highly disturbed; among other things, a large sewer pipe transects the architectural remains. Further, there are relatively few artifacts associated with the feature, and only one specimen is of Chinese origin.

March 3, 2006 (Parcel 1)

We just completed our test evaluation of Feature 16, the structural remnant situated within Parcel I that, as I noted yesterday, was associated with a single celadon ceramic shard. Feature 16 consists of a portion of a burned redwood structure that has been substantially disturbed by 20th century development and topographic modification. Relatively few artifacts of any kind (and even fewer temporally and/or functionally diagnostic specimens) were found associated with Feature 16. We did note, however, that the structural remnants are associated with round-head wire nails, a finding that suggests a date that can be no earlier than the early 1890s, the time when round-head wire nails became commonplace throughout the western United States. Given this observation, it would appear that the burned redwood structure was erected and occupied at least 15-20 years after the abandonment of the Chinese settlement that is believed to have existed within Parcel I. In brief, I think we have encountered the remains of a turn-of-the-century building and not remnants of the earlier Chinese settlement. In addition, Feature 16 cannot be associated with any specific person or event, is highly disturbed, appears to lack contextual integrity, and is not particularly informative. Therefore, Feature 16 cannot, in my judgment, be deemed historically significant pursuant to the various criteria and standards set forth by CEQA.

March 6, 2006 (Parcel 1)

We managed to conduct fieldwork for half a day today at Uptown today. We completed some last minute details pertaining to Parcel I, caught up with some lagging paperwork and mapped out the specific areas that we will need to test within Parcel II. Then the rain started and we could do no more in the field.

March 7, 2006 (Parcel 1)

We managed to work in the field today although conditions at the project site are far from optimal. On account of the soggy condition of the ground due to the recent rains, work within Parcel II was not feasible. However, we were able to work within Parcel I. In the morning, we placed a mechanical test unit beneath the old AC Building and encountered a small concentration of trash -- both upon and directly beneath the contemporary ground surface -- that included roughly one dozen shards of Chinese ceramic wares. Upon the discovery of these materials we switched our testing methodology from mechanical exploration to hand-excavation in an effort to carefully delineate the aerial extent, characteristics and associations of this concentration of cultural specimens. By the end of the day we had determined that the Asian artifacts were thoroughly mixed with a far greater number of more recent cultural specimens, including several clear-glass, screw-top bottles, plastic bags and at least two modern aluminum soft-drink cans. In my view, this observation provides evidence of substantial 20th century disturbance within this portion of the project site. In my judgment, after examining the evidence we recovered today, the concentration of trash beneath the old AC Building appears to lack sufficient context, association and integrity to be deemed significant in accordance with the criteria of CEQA. Nevertheless, given the concerns within the community for what may lie buried within Parcel I, my associates and I will treat this part of Parcel I with extreme caution and, before making a final determination, will open up an aerial exposure to determine the horizontal and vertical extent, context, provenience and significance of that portion of Parcel I beneath the old AC Building.

March 9, 2006 (Parcel 2)

Today Parcel II had dried sufficiently --if by no means completely -- for us to start our pre-construction archaeological testing work there. In an effort to help keep construction on schedule, we focused our efforts on the portion of Parcel II that has been selected as an area where soil will be borrowed to make a ramp. Around lunchtime, we found a brick foundation that, according to the Sanborn maps, was once associated with a stable on the Delger Estate. We exposed this structural remnant by a combination of mechanical and manual means. So far, no artifacts of any sort were found in association with the brick structural remnants. Weather permitting, we will continue exposing this feature tomorrow and by the end of the day we should be able to arrive at a definitive determination of significance.

March 10, 2006 (Parcel 2)

This is my daily Uptown Update for Friday, March 10, 2006. Today we braved both hail and cold to complete another day of work in the field. We essentially completed our work within that portion of Parcel II where the ramp is scheduled to be built. We finished our exposure and documentation of the brick structural remnants that I discussed yesterday (i.e., the Delger stable). We found only a few fragmentary, generally non-diagnostic, artifacts in the vicinity of, and possibly associated with, the structural remains and, in my judgment, the brick feature cannot be deemed "significant" in accordance with any of the criteria of evaluation established by CEQA. We also completed our final test efforts within Parcel I this afternoon. All told, while we recovered perhaps two dozen scattered, fragmentary Chinese ceramic shards here and there within Parcel I, we unearthed no evidence whatever of an intact, or otherwise significant archaeological deposit associated with the Chinese settlement that is believed to have existed in

this location during the second half of the 19th century. It is very possible that the remnants of such a settlement once existed in this location and were subsequently destroyed by 20th century development and topographic modification. It is also possible that the Chinese settlement in question was so transitory and ephemeral that few, if any, archaeological remains were ever deposited beneath the surface of the ground. It is also possible that the Chinese settlement in question existed nearby, but not within the borders of Parcel I; this hypothesis would provide an explanation for the lack of cultural deposition associated with a 19th century Asian community within Parcel I. In any event, our archaeological testing procedures failed to identify any trace of such a deposit anywhere within Parcel I, or Parcels II and III, for that matter. Nonetheless, we will continue to monitor construction excavation and foundation work within all three parcels in case our testing efforts missed pockets of significant archaeological deposition, Chinese or otherwise.