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Chicora Foundation, Inc.

Memo

To: Dr. David Morgan, NPS
From: Michael Trinkley
CC: Charlie Jackson, NPS
Date: August 25, 2012
Re: Excavations at Allenbrook, 9FU286

In fulfillment of our contract with NPS and our ARPA Permit for that work, I am submitting this brief overview of the work. Our full report will follow, but this document may be of use in immediate decision making needs.

The investigations were conducted by Dr. Michael Trinkley, RPA (who was on-site during the entire project), Ms. Debi Hacker, and Mr. Dennis Forest beginning Monday, August 20 through Thursday, August 23. A total of 66 person hours were spent in the field, with an additional 8 person hours spent out of the field conducting research.

In compliance with the ARPA permit, one 2x2 m test unit was excavated along the S (front) elevation of the Allenbrook House. It was located .5m west of the structure's SE corner. Thus, the structure's SE corner served as horizontal control for the excavation. Vertical control was maintained by the original ground surface, which was documented in reference to a mortar joint. This allowed vertical control to be maintained without damage to the structure that would have been created by chiseling in a control point. All elevations are therefore bs (below surface).

Excavation levels were a combination of arbitrary levels and natural soil levels (often called zones). This was achieved by, in so far as possible, using natural soil levels, but where these exceeded approximately 10cm, breaking them into levels. In several cases the levels were significantly less than 10cm. The goal of this was to prevent intermixing of artifacts that may relate to different cultural events.

Excavation was by hand. Screening was through 1/4" (0.635cm) with all material collected except for brick or mortar rubble (of which there was very little). Where present, this material was collected, weighed, and discarded in the field.

Field records collected include 4 pg of Daily Reports with 1 pg of sketch mapping; 1 pg of Photo Record for digital photographs complying with the National Register Photography Policy (http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/guidance/Photo_Policy_final.pdf); 3 pg of Level Form including plans and profiles; and 2 pg of Feature Data. These documents and archival copies will be submitted for permanent curation.

Excavations found about 0.07m of a reddish brown (5YR 4/3) loam at the surface, designated Level 1. Approximately 60% of this was screened. All materials recovered were modern, primarily related to recent renovations of the structure, such as dry wall screws, aluminum screen parts, etc.

Underlying this modern humic layer was a very compact mottled red (2.5YR 4/4) clay and saprolite rock that was designated Level 2 and extended from 0.07 to 0.17m. This zone represented fill and no artifacts were identified.

Level 3 was slightly deeper, extending from 0.17 to 0.35m and consisted of identical compact mottled red (2.5YR 4/4) clay and saprolite rock that graded into a red clay (2.5YR 4/6) and saprolite rock. This fill was also sterile.

Level 4 extended from 0.35 to 0.48m and consisted of red clay (2.5YR 4/6) and saprolite rock.

Level 5 extended from 0.48 to 0.53m and consisted of red clay (2.5YR4/6), but lacked the saprolite rock found in the upper levels. In addition, this level produced a small quantity of artifacts that appear, at this time, consistent with those found in association with original site humus (discussed below). There was no clear evidence of mixing with underlying cultural levels. One possible explanation is that this level came from elsewhere in the Allenbrook yard, perhaps from the rear which was at one time terraced.

Level 6 represents the original site humus, consisting of a reddish brown (2.5YR 5/3) sandy loam. Artifacts were plentiful including nails, window glass, and pearlware and whiteware ceramics. Of special interest were a relatively large number of buttons recovered. This level extended from 0.53 to 0.58m.

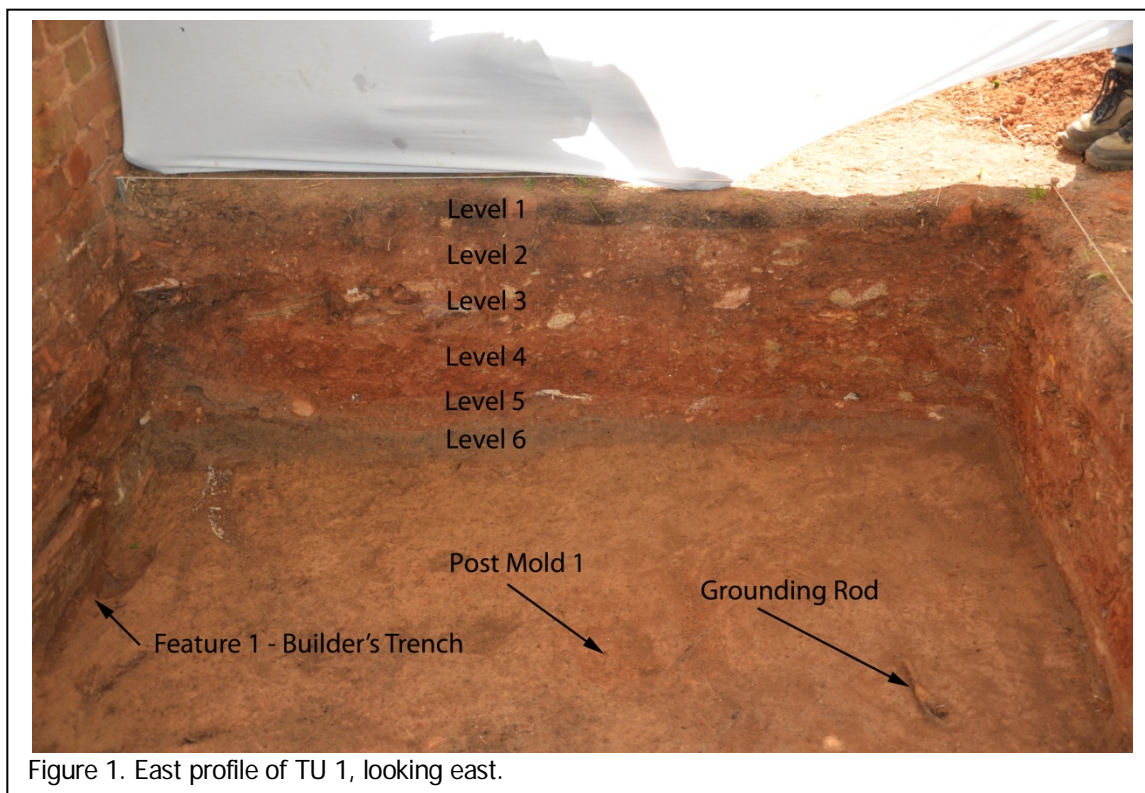


Figure 1. East profile of TU 1, looking east.

The excavations identified one square post mold at the base of Level. Upon excavation it was found to be shallow (5cm) and to measure about 4 by 5cm. It was likely associated with scantling erected to lay the brick structure. Also identified was a relatively narrow builder's trench parallel to the stone wall.

This trench did not extend to the base of the wall, suggesting that the wall was constructed primarily from the interior basement. This feature measured about 0.2 to 0.3m in width and was a maximum of 0.27m in depth. Artifacts, including window glass and ceramics were recovered.

No evidence of porch piers was identified and the old humus thinned away from the house. This suggests that piers were set shallowly and were completely removed by the infill of the yard. We did, however, identify very good indirect evidence of the porch.

The unit was fortuitously placed to expose an iron grounding rod that still contained about 0.2m of attached copper grounding wire. We believe this was likely associated with lightening protection originally installed on the house. The location of the grounding rod, about 1.7m south of the structure wall and 1.4m west of the structure corner, likely identifies the SE corner of the original porch. This grounding rod is in almost perfect alignment with the porch ghosting on the south wall. This would make the porch about 1.6m in width (about 5 feet). Given the disturbance to the yard, this is likely the best evidence that will be identified of the original porch.

At the conclusion of the hand excavations, a mini-excavator with a grading bar welded to the teeth was used to open a trench beginning at the SE corner of the hand excavation southward for 4.5m. This trench was 1.2 meters in width, tapering to 0.6m at its southern end. The trench was opened to expose Level 6, which was found intact throughout the trench, although it became shallower the further we progressed from the house.

No features were identified in this trench and no evidence of the porch was encountered. The yard, however, appears to remain level. There is no indication of a gradual decline to the existing road, suggesting that the house yard was always elevated above the roadway.

No additional trenches were opened since we saw no reason to cause additional damage to the yard, the existing vegetation, or the existing brick walkways. The first 1m of the Level 6 old humus in the trench was excavated in order to expand the existing collection that could be firmly associated with the structure.

At the conclusion of the work the trench was backfilled. The 2x2m excavation had clear plastic laid down to mark its base and walls, and was also backfilled. The ground was contoured to approximate what was found originally.

About 0.3 cubic foot of artifacts were collected and will be cleaned and prepared for curation.

Conclusions and Recommendation

Our study reveals that the original humus associated with the Allenbrook House was about 0.56m (1.8 feet) below the current threshold. This might translate into three steps with 6" risers – which is exactly what is shown in the Bell painting of Allenbrook.

Although no piers for the original porch survive, we did locate a grounding rod that would limit the porch to about 1.6m (about 5 feet). We know of no source with which to compare this measurement.

We understand from the 2004 *Allenbrook Historic Structure Report* that the entire north wall and substantial portions of the east and west walls have been extensively modified with the placement of Portland cement footers and wall reconstruction. There is no information provided to indicate whether this work was preceded by archaeological investigations. The work, however, would have destroyed evidence of the builder's trench and associated archaeological deposits around much of the building – increasing the value of the deposits associated with the south wall.

This investigation reveals that much of Level 5 and all of Level 6 contain valuable cultural materials that can be used to interpret the Allenbrook structure. It is our professional opinion that these archaeological deposits should be preserved in place. If that is not feasible, we recommend additional archaeological investigations.



Figure 2. Troweling Level 6 after excavation of features.



Figure 3. Debi Hacker speaking to NPS Interpreter Marjorie Thomas about the excavations.

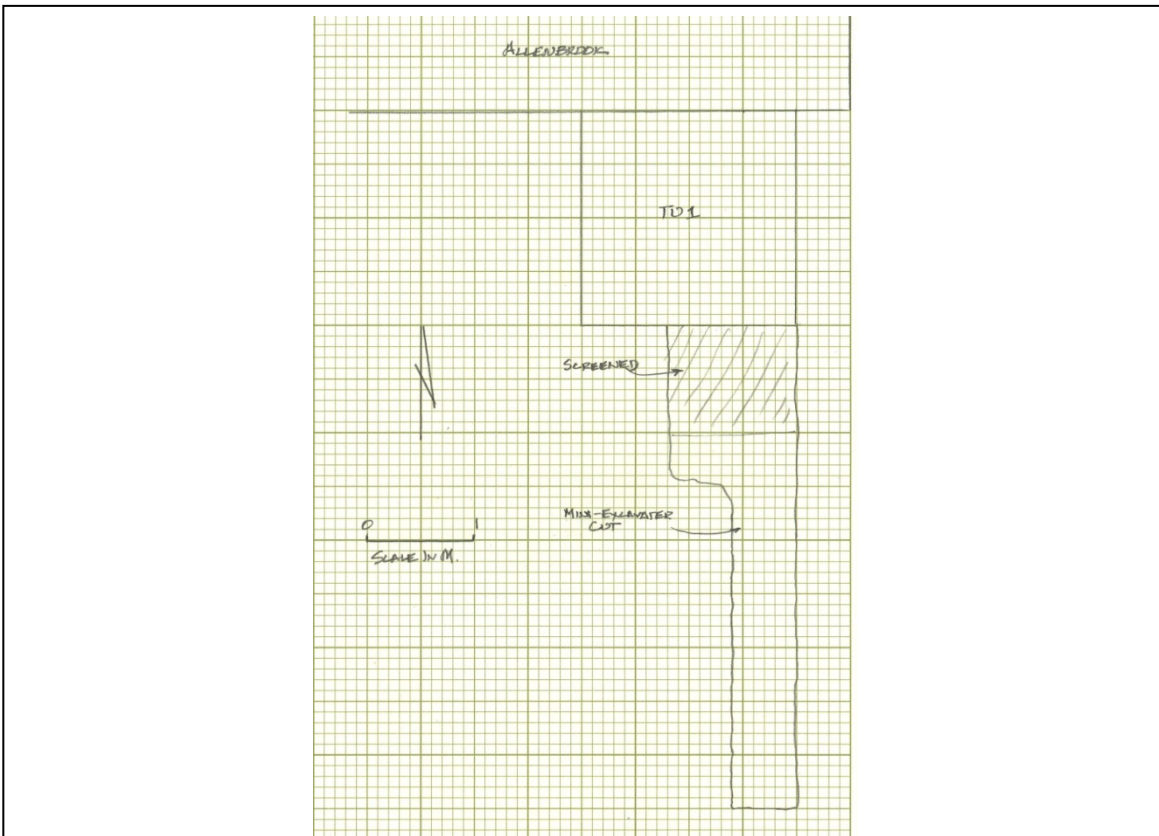


Figure 4. Sketch plan of excavations at Allenbrook.

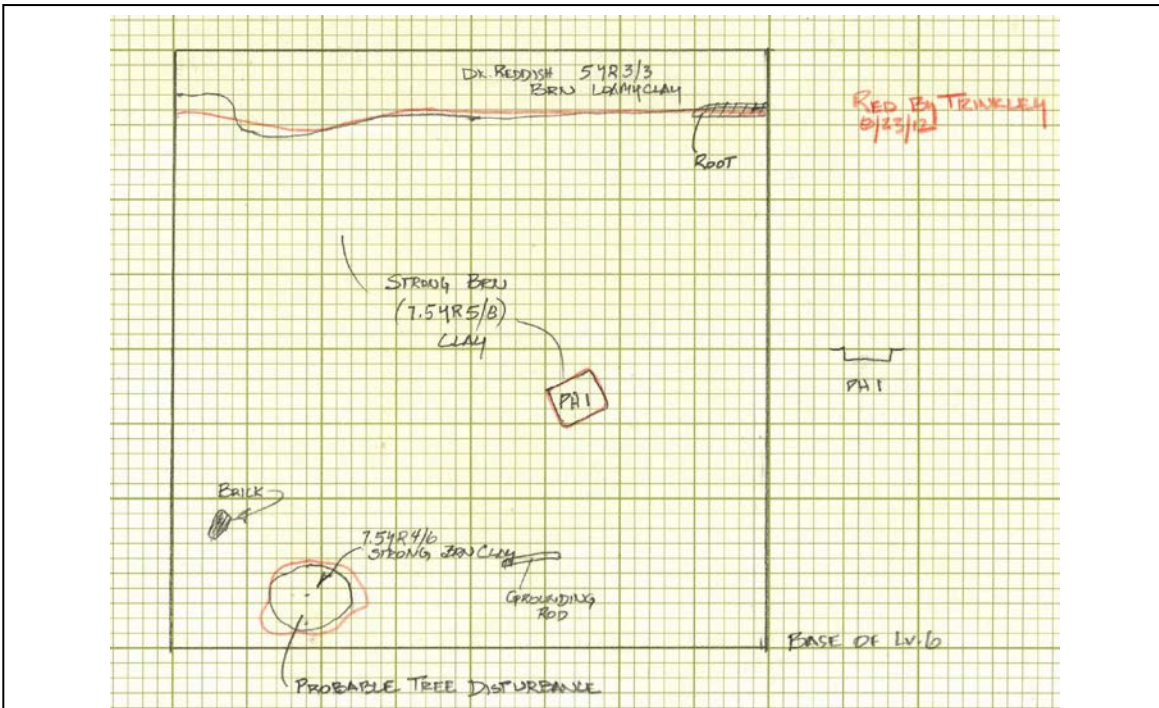


Figure 5. Plan of Test Unit at the base of Level 6 (north at top, each square = 5cm; red is post-excavation).