



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18BA555

Site Name: Belltown Lowe Lots

Prehistoric

Other name(s) Area D; MIHP structures BA-670, 671, & 689

Historic

Unknown

Brief Description:

Late 19th through 20th century rural residences and store

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 14

SCS soil & sediment code GcB2;GnB

Latitude 39.4233 Longitude -76.8084

Physiographic province Eastern Piedmont

Terrestrial site Underwater site

Elevation m Site slope 3-8%

Ethnobotany profile available Maritime site

Site setting

-Site Setting restricted

-Lat/Long accurate to within 1 sq. mile, user may need to make slight adjustments in mapping to account for sites near state/county lines or streams

Topography

- Floodplain
- Hilltop/bluff
- Interior flat
- Upland flat
- Ridgetop
- Terrace
- Low terrace
- High terrace
- Rockshelter/cave
- Hillslope
- Unknown
- Other

Ownership

- Private
- Federal
- State of MD
- Regional/county/city
- Unknown

Nearest Surface Water

Name (if any) Unnamed tributary of Red

- | Saltwater | | Freshwater | |
|--|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Ocean <input type="checkbox"/> | Estuary/tidal river <input type="checkbox"/> | Stream/river <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Swamp <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tidewater/marsh <input type="checkbox"/> | Lake or pond <input type="checkbox"/> | Spring <input type="checkbox"/> | |

Minimum distance to water is 550 m

Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

- Paleoindian site
- Archaic site
- Early archaic
- Middle archaic
- Late archaic
- Woodland site
- MD Adena
- Early woodland
- Mid. woodland
- Late woodland
- Unknown prehistoric context

- Contact period site
- ca. 1820 - 1860
- ca. 1860 - 1900
- ca. 1900 - 1930
- Post 1930
- ca. 1630 - 1675
- ca. 1675 - 1720
- ca. 1720 - 1780
- ca. 1780 - 1820
- Unknown historic context
- Unknown context

Ethnic Associations (historic only)

- Native American
- African American
- Anglo-American
- Hispanic
- Asian American
- Unknown
- Other

Y=Confirmed, P=Possible

Site Function Contextual Data:

Prehistoric

- Multi-component
- Village
- Hamlet
- Base camp
- Rockshelter/cave
- Earthen mound
- Cairn
- Burial area
- Misc. ceremonial
- Rock art
- Shell midden
- STU/lithic scatter
- Quarry/extraction
- Fish weir
- Production area
- Unknown
- Other context

Historic

Urban/Rural? Rural

Domestic

- Homestead
- Farmstead
- Mansion
- Plantation
- Row/townhome
- Cellar
- Privy

Industrial

- Mining-related
- Quarry-related
- Mill
- Black/metalsmith
- Furnace/forge
- Other

Furnace/forge

Other

Transportation

- Canal-related
- Road/railroad
- Wharf/landing
- Maritime-related
- Bridge
- Ford

Educational

Commercial

- Trading post
- Store
- Tavern/inn

Military

Battlefield

Fortification

Encampment

Townsite

Religious

- Church/mtg house
- Ch support bldg

Burial area

Cemetery

Sepulchre

Isolated burial

Bldg or foundation

Possible Structure

Post-in-ground

Frame-built

Masonry

Other structure

Slave related

Non-domestic agri

Recreational

Midden/dump

Artifact scatter

Spring or well

Unknown

Other context

commercial/store

Interpretive Sampling Data:

Prehistoric context samples

Soil samples taken

Flotation samples taken

Other samples taken

Historic context samples

Soil samples taken

Flotation samples taken

Other samples taken



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Diagnostic Artifact Data:

Projectile Point Types		Koens-Crispin	
Clovis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Perkiomen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hardaway-Dalton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Susquehana	<input type="checkbox"/>
Palmer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vernon	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kirk (notch)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Piscataway	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kirk (stem)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Calvert	<input type="checkbox"/>
Le Croy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Selby Bay	<input type="checkbox"/>
Morrow Mntn	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jacks Rf (notch)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guilford	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jacks Rf (pent)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brewerton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Madison/Potomac	<input type="checkbox"/>
Otter Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Levanna	<input type="checkbox"/>

Prehistoric Sherd Types

Marcey Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Popes Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shepard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keyser	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dames Qtr	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coulbourn	<input type="checkbox"/>	Townsend	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yeocomico	<input type="checkbox"/>
Selden Island	<input type="checkbox"/>	Watson	<input type="checkbox"/>	Minguannan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Monongahela	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accokeek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mockley	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sullivan Cove	<input type="checkbox"/>	Susquehannock	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wolfe Neck	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clemson Island	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shenks Ferry	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Vinette	<input type="checkbox"/>	Page	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moyaone	<input type="checkbox"/>		
				Potomac Crk	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Historic Sherd Types

Earthenware		Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staffordshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stoneware	
Astbury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jackfield	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tin Glazed	<input type="checkbox"/>	English Brown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Borderware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mn Mottled	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whiteware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eng Dry-bodied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buckley	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Devon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Porcelain	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creamware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pearlware	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Rhenish	<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>	Wt Salt-glazed	<input type="checkbox"/>

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Other Artifact & Feature Types:

Prehistoric Artifacts		Other fired clay	
Flaked stone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ground stone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Modified faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stone bowls	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unmod faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire-cracked rock	<input type="checkbox"/>	Oyster shell	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other lithics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Uncommon Obj.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rimsherds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Prehistoric Features

Mound(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Storage/trash pit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Midden	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shell midden	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ossuary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Postholes/molds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
House pattern(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Palisade(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Hearth(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Lithic reduc area	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Lithic Material

Fer quartzite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sil sandstone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jasper	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chalcedony	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chert	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rhyolite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Argilite	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartz	<input type="checkbox"/>	Steatite	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartzite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sandstone	<input type="checkbox"/>
		European flint	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Basalt	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Dated features present at site

Historic Artifacts		Tobacco related	
Pottery (all)	69	Activity item(s)	9
Glass (all)	283	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural	1251	Faunal material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Furniture	15	Misc. kitchen	17
Arms	1	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clothing	4	Misc.	280
Personal items	7	Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Historic Features

Privy/outhouse	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depression/mound	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Const feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foundation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Railroad bed	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Cellar hole/cellar	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sheet midden	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Earthworks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hearth/chimney	<input type="checkbox"/>	Planting feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mill raceway	<input type="checkbox"/>
Postholes/molds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Road/walkway	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wheel pit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paling ditch/fence	<input type="checkbox"/>				

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Radiocarbon Data:

Sample 1: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 2: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 3: +/- years BP Reliability

Sample 4: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 5: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 6: +/- years BP Reliability

Sample 7: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 8: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 9: +/- years BP Reliability

Additional radiocarbon results available



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Description:

Late 19th through 20th century rural residences and store

Unknown

External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at

Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

The Belltown Lowe Lots (18BA555) is the archeological remains of a late 19th through 20th century rural residence and country store between the Reisterstown and Owings Mills areas of Baltimore County. The site is on a gentle southwest-facing slope amidst a modern landscape of single family houses, grass lawns and hedges. It encompasses nearly 2.18 acres. Some wooded areas are present along the edges of the various house lots. Soils at the site are Glenville silt loams.

In the 18th century Site 18BA555 was part of the huge landholdings of Thomas Harrison, specifically part of a tract called "Soldiers Delight." The Lowe family purchased parts of Soldiers Delight from Harrison and, after Harrison's death, from his estate. The Lowe family held title to most of this large farm well into the 20th century. However, between 1876 and 1880 the Lowe family sold 99-year leases for four small lots along the eastern edge of their farm. Each of these four lots was two acres or less, with road frontage. From south to north, these parcels are listed in tax records as Parcels 166, 165, 162, and 161. All four parcels front Pleasant Hill Road. By the early 20th century these leaseholds had all been transformed into fee simple properties. The southernmost of these four late-19th century lots was approximately 1000 feet south of the other lots (listed in the MIHP as BA-672 or the Ziegler House). Site 18BA555 encompasses the northern three of the Lowe family lots.

These lots formed part of the rural late 19th century locality called "Belltown". The geographical extent of Belltown is vague: USGS maps from 1906 to 1974 label the intersection of Pleasant Hill, Church, and Tollgate Roads as "Belltown," while a 1915 Atlas of Baltimore County places "Belltown" by the Mt. Pleasant A.M.E. church further to the east. The history of Belltown is also not well documented. It is not clear if the locality was named for a white family named Bell who ran a store at the intersection of Pleasant Hill and Tollgate Roads in the 1890s or for a Black man named Bell who was minister at the Mt. Pleasant A.M.E. Church during the late-19th and into the 20th centuries.

Parcels 161 and 162 comprise the northernmost, and chronologically first (1876), of the four lots the Lowe family subdivided as 99-year leaseholds in the late-19th. The first owner, David Slade, is shown in this approximate location on an 1877 map of Baltimore County, suggesting a ca. 1876-1877 building there. The residential structure within Parcel 162 (1 Church Road) is listed in the MIHP as structure BA-670. The structure is described on MHT architectural survey forms as an older one-storey log structure hidden within a modern-looking clapboard facade. More recent examinations of this structure, however, have called this interpretation into question. Deeds from 1876 to 1948 included both modern Parcel 162 and the modern parcel to the north (Parcel 161) and the metes-and-bounds descriptions are identical in all of these deeds. It is apparent that Parcels 161 and 162 were divided from one another in 1952, as deeds from 1952 to 1984 all include only modern Parcel 162 and the metes-and-bounds descriptions are identical in all of these deeds. Aerial photographs from 1938, 1943, and 1952 all show a structure at the northeast corner of Parcel 161. The fact that Parcels 161 and 162 were combined as one larger lot up to 1952 suggests that the structure on the aerials is most probably the log house reported to have been there. The current structure on Parcel 161, however, is set-back further from Church Road than the structure in these aerials. So, it appears that the log house remembered locally when the MIHP forms were filled out (in the 1970s) was on modern Parcel 161 and was razed in 1952 or later, while the current structures on Parcels 161 and 162 are both post-1952.

The title chain for Parcel 162 indicates six owners for the larger (1876-1952) lot. It appears likely that the first three owners were not resident on this lot and probably rented the property to others. In contrast, oral historical sources state that the fourth owners (Henry and Rachel Clark) did live on this property. According to these sources, the Clarks were African-Americans and active members of the Mt. Pleasant A.M.E church community who raised a large family at this home. It is likely that the Clarks lived here before 1911, renting from previous owners. In 1935 the elderly Clarks sold the Parcel 161/162 lot to a local developer, Goucher Tase, and moved to another location.

MIHP structure BA-671 is within Parcel 165. The metes-and-bounds description for Parcel 165 in the first deed (written in 1879) is repeated exactly in each succeeding deed, up to 2004. The residential structure within Parcel 165 (204 Pleasant Hill Road) is also described as an older log structure hidden within a modern-looking clapboard facade, in this case a two-storey dwelling. A similar description of the house is also found in a 1973 interview with local informants, in which they noted that the structure was "once inhabited by a colored family named Madden, but it may have been actually owned by Elias Norris, also colored." It appears likely that most, if not all, of the early owners were not resident on this lot and probably rented the property to others.

MIHP structure BA-689 (the Bell House and Store) stood on Parcel 166 until 1984, when it was razed during the construction of I-795. The structure was a 2 ½ storey Victorian style house with a gable roof, brown wood shingle exterior, and a stone foundation. Records of the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) provide a map of the property, revealing a one-storey wing on the south end of the building that is believed to have been what served as the former store. Deed research suggests that the structure was built at some time between 1880 and 1887 by Charles and Fannie Bell. Many historic accounts attribute the community name "Belltown" to Charles, Fannie, and their store, though (as noted above) this is still in question.

Phase I research conducted in late 2007 led to the identification of archeological site 18BA555. The work was conducted as part of the (then) proposed Dolfield Boulevard extension between Reisterstown Road and Tollgate Road. The project was conducted in compliance with state and federal regulations regarding consideration for historic resources when using public funds.

Subsurface testing in 2007 entailed the excavation of 9 shovel test pits (STPs) excavated at 15.24 m (50 ft) intervals along the roadside edges of the site. Each STP was 35-40 cm in diameter and was excavated at least 10 cm into sterile subsoil. All soil was screened through hardware mesh. Although no notable artifact concentrations or cultural features were encountered, these STPs did yield a small assemblage of architectural, domestic, and personal artifacts. Most of the artifacts were recovered from the A horizon, disturbed fill horizons, or the truncated remains of a former plowzone horizon that was found intermittently along the test transect. A total of 41 artifacts were recovered during the 2001 Phase I project including a porcelain toy doll, a wire nail, and 2 cut nails, along with miscellaneous objects.

Surface inspections at that time also identified the exposed remains of a seemingly intact, brick-lined feature in Parcel 166, approximately 15 meters off of the Pleasant Hill Road edge of pavement. The feature was tentatively suggested to be the remains of a well or cistern. Based on these findings, additional work was recommended if the road reconstruction could not be altered to avoid the site. Minor changes were subsequently made to road improvements which would avoid impacting the site.

In 2009, a combined Phase I/II project was carried out at 18BA555 and in the surrounding area. The work was carried out as part of planned improvements to the Interstate 795 interchange with Dolfield Boulevard/Pleasant Hill Road. The (then) proposed construction entailed the relocations of Tollgate Road, widening of existing roadways, intersection improvements, construction of several stormwater management structures, and the addition of sidewalks and



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Unknown

Description:

bicycle lanes. The Phase I/II project was conducted in compliance with state and federal regulations regarding consideration for historic resources when using public funds.

The 2009 testing at the site entailed a combination of STPs, and formal test units. Thirty-seven STPs, three 91 X 91 cm (3 X 3 ft) test units and one 1.524 X 1.524 m (5 X 5 ft) test unit were excavated at 18BA555.

The STP excavations consisted of controlled-interval testing across Parcel 166 and the rear yard areas of Parcels 165, Parcel 162, and Parcel 161. Selective STPs were also excavated in the front and side yards of Parcel 161. No subsurface testing was conducted in the front yard of Parcel 162 due to extant landscaping and extant paved surfaces. Testing within the active septic/drainage fields in the rears of some of the parcels (identified based on informant interviews) was not conducted. STPs were approximately 40 cm in diameter and were spaced at 15.24 m (50 ft) intervals. When artifact finds were made, radial STPs were excavated at 7.62 m (25 ft) intervals around the positive find. STPs were generally excavated at least 9 cm into sterile subsoil and soils were screened through hardware cloth.

The placement of the test units across the site was contingent upon the STP results, however, the general excavation strategy was designed to target portions of the site that exhibited either high artifact concentrations and/or site areas that seemed most apt to contain archeological materials with good subsurface integrity. Test unit excavations were conducted by natural and/or arbitrary levels depending on the situation. The humus, plow disturbed horizons, and any discernible unstratified historic fill deposits were excavated and screened individually as single levels in their entirety within each unit. All sub-plowzone horizons were excavated in arbitrary 9 cm levels or by natural levels, whichever was thinner. Representative closing profiles of each test unit were plotted and photographed at the completion of the unit. All soils were screened through hardware cloth.

Detailed stratigraphic and plan view mapping were recorded on standardized STP/test unit data forms. Baseline maps of the site were generated and regularly updated throughout the duration of the field investigations. Field notes detailing the progress of field investigations, findings, and initial impressions were maintained by research archeologists and field technicians. Excavations were documented on digital media. All test pits were backfilled and surface areas were restored.

Test excavations in 2009 produced an assemblage of 1,931 historic artifacts. The collection included 8 activity items, 1,248 architectural artifacts, 4 clothing items, 15 furniture objects, 369 kitchen-related artifacts (69 ceramic sherds, 283 bottle/table glass fragments, and 17 faunal remains), 7 personal items, 1 arms object, and 243 miscellaneous objects. A tally of diagnostics is not available in the body of the full Phase I/II report.

Although test excavations at 18BA555 in 2009 did yield 1,931 artifacts, the results of the field investigations revealed that, as a whole, the site retains little subsurface physical integrity. The majority of the recovered artifacts were collected from subsurface stratigraphic contexts that contain artifacts that span the mid 19th through early 20th century. Nearly all of the artifacts that could be attributed to the 19th century were recovered in association with distinctly modern cultural material. Most of these artifacts also have projected date ranges that span broad periods of time, and as such, are not particularly diagnostic. This is especially true for the ceramic assemblage which is composed primarily of undecorated whiteware forms. While the rise of its use and popularity are contemporaneous with the formation of the Belltown Lowe Lots lease properties, the site, as represented by the recovered assemblage, does not appear to possess the quantities or diversity of vessel forms or decorative types that would allow for any meaningful analysis. In this respect, the other ceramic ware types are also lacking, if not absent completely, and thus provide little additional data that can be used for comparative analysis.

The other non-architectural artifact classes, namely metal and personal artifact assemblages, are either too few in number, or contain relatively equal mixes of artifacts from different time periods. The limitations of the glass assemblage, which is composed primarily of machine-manufactured container glass, are similar to those of the architectural assemblage. Most of the glass artifacts are commonplace forms or non-descript fragments.

The artifacts recovered from the site were also collected from either severely mixed contexts or from low-density scatters. In both cases, differentiation of specific occupations within these assemblages (notwithstanding pre-1900 occupations) can only be speculated. At Parcel 166, the artifact-bearing soil deposits have been mixed and re-deposited across the parcel to a point where discrete temporal contexts or activity areas are no longer discernible.

Site 18BA555 does contain one area with some potential for intact archeological deposits. This area was located just outside the I-795 interchange project's limit of disturbance (LOD) area, in the front yard of Parcel 161. During the excavations, a feature that extends over 1.22 m (4 ft) in depth was encountered. The feature may represent the remains of an in-filled cellar hole, or possibly an underground storage tank buried before the construction of the current residence. Interviews with the owners of Parcels 161 and 162 did not recall any former above ground or below ground structures at this location. While the tested portion of the feature fill contains a mix of 19th through late 20th century artifacts throughout its stratigraphic profile, it is possible that other portions of the feature may be better preserved. The feature was not examined further as part of the 2009 project, as it would not be impacted by the I-795 project. Additional work was recommended if this portion of the site should be come threatened in the future. Thus, Site 18BA555 should be considered a largely disturbed archeological site, but one with pockets of intact remains that may be significant to Maryland and Baltimore County history.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

Site Files, 95001590