



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18BC45

Site Name: Oliver Johnson Square

Prehistoric

Other name(s) Block 1146

Historic

Unknown

Brief Description:

early 19th-late 20th century two block area of brick rowhouse & commercial structure sites

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 14

SCS soil & sediment code JpB

Latitude 39.3110

Longitude -76.6115

Physiographic province Eastern Piedmont

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation 40 m

Site slope 6-10%

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 Mile

- | 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 150 m

Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

Paleoindian site

Woodland site

Archaic site

MD Adena

Early archaic

Early woodland

Middle archaic

Mid. woodland

Late archaic

Late woodland

Unknown prehistoric context

Contact period site ca. 1820 - 1860 Y

ca. 1630 - 1675 ca. 1860 - 1900 Y

ca. 1675 - 1720 ca. 1900 - 1930 Y

ca. 1720 - 1780 Post 1930 Y

ca. 1780 - 1820 Y

Unknown historic context

Unknown context

Ethnic Associations (historic only)

Native American Asian American

African American Unknown Y

Anglo-American Other

Hispanic

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? Urban

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

rowhouses, commercial buildings

Interpretive Sampling Data:

Prehistoric context samples

Soil samples taken

Flotation samples taken

Other samples taken

Historic context samples

Soil samples taken N

Flotation samples taken N

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"/>	Levana	<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		Staffordshire		Stoneware	
Astbury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jackfield	1	Tin Glazed	<input type="checkbox"/>	English Brown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Borderware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mn Mottled	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whiteware	35	Eng Dry-bodied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buckley	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Devon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Porcelain	1	Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creamware	19	Pearlware	82			Rhenish	<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)	153	Activity item(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass (all)	4	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural	2	Faunal material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Furniture	<input type="checkbox"/>	Misc. kitchen	2
Arms	<input type="checkbox"/>	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clothing	2	Misc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal items	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Historic Features

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

Description:

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Unknown

External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at Maryland Historical Society

Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

Oliver Johnson Square (18BC45) is the location of a complex of early 19th - late 20th century brick rowhouses and commercial structures in downtown Baltimore, Maryland. It is situated on the slope and top of a knoll that is part of a ridge complex leading down to the flats surrounding the Baltimore Inner Harbor. The site extends across City Block 1146, which is bounded by Oliver Street, Harford Avenue, Preston Street, and Aisquith Street. The landscape surrounding the site is heavily developed and the soils are intensely modified from their native state. Soils mapped for the area are classified as "Urban Land" meaning that 80% of the surface is covered either by buildings or by impervious surfaces such as asphalt or concrete.

City Block 1146 has been occupied since the late 18th century. Located on one of the hills lying north of the part of Baltimore that was originally known as "Old Town" or "Jonas Town", considerable development can be seen in the area by 1801. A map of the area from 1801 indicates a number of structures along Harford Avenue (then Harford Road). Although none of the structures which would appear to have stood on the block is identified, several of the buildings east of Harford Road are indicated as residences of the Chalmers and one is noted as the house of a family called Piper. Two elongated buildings are also shown on this map. From their general shape, it would seem likely that these structures were rope walks (a long covered walk where ropes are twisted). Two small buildings indicated west of Harford Road across from the Piper House would have been within Block 1146. It seems likely that they were residences or small workshops related to farming or rope manufacturing.

The block remained outside the major area of development during the first decade of the 19th century. Most maps from the era either fail to incorporate this block or show it as undeveloped. A plat from 1823 indicates that some small development had occurred since the turn of the century. The plat indicates that the gridiron plan of streets had been laid out over the area. That these streets were not physical realities (but merely lines on a map) can be inferred by the placement of structures blocking and overlapping most of the streets shown connected with Harford Avenue.

The 1823 plat shows seven small structures in the area of Block 1146. These structures cluster into two groups. One group appears as a series of independent houses built in the area just south of Hoffman Street. The other structures, which appear to all lie in one lot, are just south of Oliver Street. All the buildings lie along the western edge of Harford Avenue. The area behind these buildings is indicated as being vacant. East of Harford Avenue, several ropewalks are indicated. The surrounding area is nearly totally undeveloped.

A plan of the City of Baltimore from 1841 continues to show the area as substantially undeveloped. However, maps created in 1851 and 1852 do suggest that significant development occurred in the intervening years. Although the three ropewalks indicated in 1823 appear to still be extant east of Harford Avenue, three areas of development are indicated east of Harford between John (present day Preston) and Oliver Streets. Facing on Harford, a series of rowhomes is indicated running south from the corner of Oliver Street to a point halfway between Oliver and Hoffman Streets. At the corner of Hoffman and Harford (still only a "paper" intersection at this stage) a large structure is indicated, probably representative of a stable or other commercial establishment. Further south, midway between Hoffman and John Street, another large, probably commercial structure is indicated.

West of Harford similar development is evident. Running south from Oliver Street a series of rowhouses is depicted parallel to the development on the east side of Harford. At the end of this row, the large structure shown on the 1823 map is depicted as still standing. Three additional structures, set back from Harford Avenue, are indicated on the same lot. A structure is also indicated in the middle of Hoffman Street. This building is the first of 6 free-standing structures which face Harford running in a line to the south. A large building is depicted at the corner of John Street and Harford Avenue, occupying almost the entire area between Harford and Aisquith. The area behind (to the west) of these structures is still indicated to be vacant.

Several plats were made of the block during the 1860s as part of a scheme to open Hoffman and Aisquith Streets. Two property owners, an Ann Butler and a Christian Keener, owned brick houses on the block which were demolished during the construction of Hoffman Street. Outbuildings related to several homes on Harford Avenue were also demolished during the opening of John (now Preston) and Aisquith Streets. One structure is identified on the plats as to its function: a public school. Examination of the city directories for 1860 reveals that a bricklayer, a painter, a soap and candle manufacturer, a tailor, and a tin/iron worker were situated on the block. Some of the destroyed outbuildings could have been their workshops.

Sache's Bird's Eye View of this area in 1869 shows the area. The majority of the structures front on Harford Avenue and are 2 ½ storeys high and three bays wide, but several more substantial structures are also shown. In general, the surrounding area is relatively undeveloped, with the area along Harford Road being an exception. The ropewalks, a public school and several churches are clearly present.

Two plats from the early 1870s, indicate that development along Aisquith was getting underway. By 1877, both Aisquith and Harford were fairly thoroughly developed. However, large vacant areas can be noted not only between and behind the developments on each road, and also in some areas fronting on the roads. The development of the surrounding area can be seen to have concentrated south of the site and to the east of Harford Avenue. Several churches, a convent, a grammar & primary school and a hospital are indicated in this area. West and north of the site, development is either non-existent or light, with the majority of development focusing at the northeast corner of Greenmount Cemetery fronting along point lane. A railroad tunnel, which lies beneath Hoffman Street, is indicated for the first time.

A decade later in 1887, considerably more development is indicated on maps, but the surrounding area is still considerably open. On Block 1146 structures can be seen fronting on Harford, Aisquith, Hoffman, and Preston. Oliver Street had not been opened by this period. Little had changed along Harford Avenue until its intersection with Hoffman Street. Several buildings and a wagon works are indicated at this intersection. A lumber yard with office and warehouse or stable are shown just to the north. In this same section, along Hoffman and north along Aisquith, structural development is nearly continuous. The function of these structures is not indicated. About halfway between Oliver and Hoffman Streets a large stable or warehouse is shown. The upper third of the block facing on Aisquith Street is shown as vacant. South of Hoffman Street along Harford Avenue, development is continuous with the streetscape being broken only in the north half of the block between Preston and Hoffman by several structures which have been set back and by J. Preston's Coal Yard. On Aisquith Street, structural development is not as intense. Nearly half of the 17 lots contain stables or are vacant. A series of rowhouses are shown at the intersection with Hoffman. In both the southern and the northern sections of the block, interior areas remain relatively vacant. The surrounding area is little different from a decade earlier. The most important change appears to be expansion of St. Joseph's Hospital grounds and the construction of new rowhouses in the area where Henderson's ropewalk stood in 1876.



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Unknown

The Sanborn Map of 1911 is the next map to indicate any major changes in the area of the site. In the northern section of the block along Harford Avenue, the lumberyard property and the vacant land to the north have been developed into rowhouses. A bakery and a store are noted among the dwellings near Oliver Street, and a series of stores near Hoffman. The building at the corner of Harford and Hoffman has retained its function from the earlier period, but is now indicated as a blacksmith and carriage shop, rather than a wagon works. The most significant change in this section along Aisquith Street is the construction of the Snellenberg Company's Factory for the manufacture of artificial flowers and feathers in the upper third of the block, and the identification of the stable/warehousing structure on the street as part of an ice cream factory. Except for one store front at the intersection of Hoffman and Aisquith and a storage facility near the ice cream factory, the remaining structures on Aisquith as well as those facing Oliver, are dwellings.

The southern section (between Hoffman and Preston streets) of the block along Harford is shown as continuously developed with the street façade being broken only by three setbacks. Dwellings and storefronts are indicated intermixed throughout. A carpenter shop, an ambulance, Sale Stables, and a bakery are noted. A saloon is also shown at the corner of Harford and Preston. Five of the 17 lots on Aisquith Street are still shown as containing stables or being vacant, although one stable has been converted into a paint shop. In large measure, the interior of the block is still open, although much more in the northern section than in the southern section of the block. In the northern section of the block this open area appears to be serviced by means of a wide alley opening onto Oliver Street.

Very little changed on the block or surrounding areas until 1931. The Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for that year indicates that several new stores had opened along Harford near Oliver and a filling station and automobile repair structure had been built near the middle of the block. The area behind these structures, along a wide alley had been dotted with small garages. The wagon shop still remains at the corner of Harford and Hoffman. Along Aisquith Street, the ice cream factory has been replaced by the Maryland State Dairymen's Association Creamery and Snellenberg Company's artificial flower and feather factory is now vacant. On the southern section of the study area, below Hoffman, drastic changes have occurred. The entire northern half of the block has been replaced with a multicar garage, and the southern half now contains a filling station. The bakery on Harford Avenue appears to have remained, but the paint shop at the rear of the property had been converted to a garage, as had the stable /shed indicated along Aisquith in 1911. Only four exclusively domestic structures remained facing along Harford Avenue. The remaining structures are indicated as stores, one with paints and oil.

The changes in the surrounding area were of a similar nature. In the adjoining blocks to the east, a similar replacement of dwellings and stores by multicar garages and filling stations is indicated in the Sanborn Map of 1931. The development stage remained about the same until the 1970s. In the 1960s, this block was seriously damaged by urban riots. Many buildings were eventually torn down in the following decade and the surface somewhat leveled.

The only known archeological work to take place at 18BC45 occurred in 1983 when the Baltimore Center for Urban Archaeology (BCUA) investigated the research potential of the site. The work was carried out due to plans for a new housing development on the block. Under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act, the National Environmental Preservation Act and the Archaeological Preservation Act, actions which are funded, approved or licensed by Federal or State agencies must take measures to identify and protect significant cultural resources.

No archeological report for the work is available at MHT, however, the collections, notes, and extant reports of the now defunct BCUA were given to the Maryland Historical Society and a final report may be available there.

According to an updated site form provided to MHT by BCUA, the site was investigated with 6 backhoe trenches and stripping of debris from a 5.18 X 16.8 m (17 X 55 ft) area with a bulldozer. This debris was the result of the riots of the 1960s and subsequent demolition of structures in the 1970s. Any discovered structures were cleaned by hand and documented. Artifacts were then collected from features and exposed surfaces.

Testing revealed little or no depth (30.5 cm maximum) to the site. A well and some foundations were identified, but little else. The site was found to be too highly disturbed to warrant further investigation.

Artifacts reported from the excavations include 1 Jackfield sherd, 19 creamware sherds, 82 pearlware sherds, a porcelain bottle stopper, 35 whiteware sherds, 7 ironstone sherds, 2 yellowware sherds, 1 Bristol stoneware sherd, 5 other stoneware sherds, brass buttons, window and bottle glass (mostly 20th century in age), and bone food remains. No other data is presently available on the site.

Based on the extremely disturbed nature of Site 18BC45, it cannot be considered a significant archeological resource.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

00005561, Site Files