



Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18PR96

Site Name: George Washington Inn

Prehistoric

Other name(s): Indian Queen Tavern

Historic

Brief Description:

Late 18th-Early 19th century tavern, 19th century residence/cabinetmaker/funeral home; Archaic & Late Woodland

Unknown

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Latitude: 38.9359 Longitude: -76.9511
Elevation: 2 m Site slope: 0-2%

Maryland Archeological Research Unit No. 11

SCS soil & sediment code: UrzA,CnD,ZN

Physiographic province: Western Shore Coastal

Terrestrial site Underwater site

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

Ownership

Private
Federal
State of MD
Regional/county/city
Unknown

Nearest Surface Water

Name (if any): Anacostia River
Saltwater Freshwater
Ocean Stream/river
Estuary/tidal river Swamp
Tidewater/marsh Lake or pond
Spring
Minimum distance to water is 244 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
ca. 1630 - 1675 ca. 1860 - 1900
ca. 1675 - 1720 ca. 1900 - 1930
ca. 1720 - 1780 Post 1930
ca. 1780 - 1820
Unknown historic context
Unknown context

Ethnic Associations (historic only)

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

Y=Confirmed, P=Possible

Site Function Contextual Data:

Prehistoric
Multi-component Misc. ceremonial
Village Rock art
Hamlet Shell midden
Base camp STU/lithic scatter
Rockshelter/cave Quarry/extraction
Earthen mound Fish weir
Cairn Production area
Burial 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
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 tavern
Post-in-ground
Frame-built
Masonry
Other structure
Slave related
Non-domestic agri
Recreational
Midden/dump
Artifact scatter
Spring or well
Unknown
Other context

Interpretive Sampling Data:

Prehistoric context samples
Soil samples taken N
Flotation samples taken Y
Other samples taken Faunal, Tobacco, Protein, Pollen

Historic context samples
Soil samples taken N
Flotation samples taken Y
Other samples taken Faunal, Tobacco, Protein, Pollen



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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 Mtn	<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"/>	3	
				Potomac Cr	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Historic Sherd Types

Earthenware		Ironstone	30	Staffordshire	23	Stoneware	
Astbury	19	Jackfield	29	Tin Glazed	310	English Brown	24
Borderware	2	Mn Mottled	10	Whiteware	1719	Eng Dry-bodie	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buckley	58	North Devon	27	Porcelain	246	Nottingham	16
Creamware	1247	Pearlware	1430			Rhenish	25
						Wt Salt-glazed	375

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Other Artifact & Feature Types:

Prehistoric Artifacts		Other fired clay	
Flaked stone	45	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ground stone	1	Modified faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stone bowls	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unmod faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire-cracked rock	1	Oyster shell	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other lithics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics (all)	5	Uncommon Obj.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rimsherds	1	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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	European flint	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rhyolite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Basalt	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartzite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Argilite	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Sandstone	<input type="checkbox"/>

Dated features present at site

Numerous features containing diagnostic historic artifacts

Historic Artifacts		Tobacco related	
Pottery (all)	6900	Activity item(s)	250
Glass (all)	6220	Human remain(s)	463
Architectural	10507	Faunal material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Furniture	52	Misc. kitchen	6614
Arms	5	Floral material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Clothing	72	Misc.	2452
Personal items	81	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Historic Features

Const feature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Privy/outhouse	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depression/mound	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Foundation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Well/cistern	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cellar hole/cellar	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trash pit/dump	<input type="checkbox"/>	Railroad bed	<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 checked="" 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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External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at MAC

Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

The Indian Queen Tavern (also known as the Indian Maid Tavern or George Washington House/Inn) is a standing historic commercial/domestic structure in Bladensburg, Prince George's County. While the building was, apparently, operated as a prominent inn and tavern during the latter half of the 19th century and into the early 20th century, the historical "Indian Queen Tavern", was likely a frame structure in the vicinity of the site, which was part of the same commercial complex as the standing masonry structure (MIHP# PG:69-2). The archeological deposits associated with the structure have been assigned archeological site number 18PR96. The site is situated a short distance from the Anacostia River along Baltimore Avenue (Alt. US 1) in Bladensburg, MD.

The Indian Queen Tavern is a fairly simple but impressive structure in contrast to its surroundings (largely modern and industrial/commercial in nature). The brick building stands 2 ½ stories high, with basic mid and late 18th century characteristics. Facing east, the principal façade is 5 bays wide, of common-bond brick, with wide centrally located doors at both first and second floor levels. Most openings have flat jack arches, and the first floor door is headed by an unusual serpentine-shaped arch of molded stretcher brick. The gable end walls are constructed of Flemish bond (of original construction). On the south gable end, the door and window have segmental relieving arches. On the north end, a segmental arch indicates a former doorway. First floor windows are 6/9 sash while second floor windows are 6/6. A reconstructed two story galleried porch covers the front (east) façade of the building.

On the front slope of the roof are three 6/6 sash gable-roofed dormer windows. At each gable end is a single exterior chimney with irregular weatherings (those sloping towards the rear are longer than those sloping towards the front). Toward the east side of both chimney bases is a single flat-arched door. The one on the south end appears to be an alteration of a previous window. Adjacent to the east side of the south chimney is the small segmental-arched window of header brick and two small attic windows within the gable. Aside from the bricked-in door at the north end the only other opening is a single small window at attic level. Much of the rear wall of the house is hidden by a later, two-story frame addition. However, two irregularly positioned windows remain exposed toward the south end at the second floor level. On the rear roof slope are two gable-roofed dormers, each positioned towards the ends of the house. The eave cornices are boxed and have molded trim, and appear to be of a later (19th century) date. The tavern was built on dressed stone foundation walls that rise about two feet above the ground line.

The Indian Queen Tavern gained its reputation as the "George Washington House" through an assumption that "George Washington slept here". Research in primary sources has shown that the extant structure was actually never a tavern during Washington's lifetime, although it is possible that he stayed in the frame Indian Queen Tavern formerly located next to the extant brick structure. The brick tavern began to be known as the "George Washington House" before 1878 when it was being used as a hotel. The building is historically significant for a variety of reasons. It has been closely associated with a number of important personages and events and it has served the community of Bladensburg for more than 200 years in a multitude of ways. The structure stands today as the last surviving remnant of a social and commercial complex established by Jacob Wirt in Bladensburg during the early 1760s. This complex included a store (represented by a portion of the existing building), a billiard hall, a tavern, a counting house, a blacksmith shop, and a number of supporting buildings. Between 1774 and 1783, the complex was rented and run by Peter Carnes, who was responsible for the first authenticated balloon ascents, either manned or unmanned, in the United States. The building is notable for its more than 200 years of service to the Town of Bladensburg as a store from c. 1763 until 1809 or later, as a private home from 1832 to 1854, again as a store from 1854 until 1857, as a tavern, hotel, and store from 1857 to 1858 (and possibly until the mid 1860s), and as a tavern and hotel from 1871 until the 20th century. It is little wonder then that the structure has become a local landmark with a rich and distinctive history of its own composed of both historical facts and homespun legend. It currently serves as the headquarters of the Anacostia Watershed Society.

Despite its "landmark" status, by the late 20th Century the Indian Queen Tavern had fallen into significant disrepair. Much of the structure was boarded up, windows were broken, it had peeling paint, decomposing woodwork, and a leaking roof. In 1972, the Prince George's Chapter of the Jaycees purchased the building and began undertaking efforts to restore it. It was around this time that an archeological fieldschool was conducted at the site by Montgomery College, with support from the Maryland Geological Survey. Presumably, the Montgomery College fieldschool was undertaken at this time because of the planned improvements by the Jaycees to turn the building into a Museum of Prince George's County History.

Unfortunately, no finished report was ever generated from this work, so details are sketchy at best. However, there is a collection of notes on the 1972 excavations in the MHT library which provides some basic information. Five test trenches of varying size were excavated adjacent to the tavern structure and in the surrounding "yard" areas.

The purpose of Test Trench 1 was to try and date the construction of the house and to determine whether it was constructed as one unit or as several units. It was located on the northern side of the house to the west of the exterior chimney, and adjacent to both. The trench measured 1.98 m X 1.524 m (6 ½ ft X 5 ft) and was excavated to a depth of 1.02 m (3.35 ft) below datum. Excavation revealed that the builder's trench most likely had been dug up and destroyed during the installation of water pipes and the construction of a later addition off the back of the structure. A concrete coating (from the addition foundation) was noted on the upper levels of the original structure's foundation. With the installation of the pipes, the natural stratigraphy and artifacts were severely disturbed.

Further evidence of this disturbance was the fact that artifacts in all levels were of wide date ranges, with the possible exception of the corner of the chimney and the house, and under the chimney where it is possible that the builder's trench was not disturbed by the laying of the pipe. The foundation extended to 3 different depth levels, suggesting that the house was probably built in several stages. The stratigraphy under the chimney suggests that the builder's trench had not been disturbed here and in this area, pieces of gray salt-glazed stoneware with an incised cobalt-blue decoration were found. The researchers suggested that this pottery may have come from a factory in Kehoughton, Virginia which operated from 1608 to 1770. Other artifacts encountered in Trench 1 include dry cell battery remains, a large metal hinge, nails, pieces of modern water pipe, numerous pieces of brick, a large quantity of shells, salt-glazed stoneware, 20th century ceramic sherds, other ceramic sherds, an animal tooth, a .38 caliber bullet casing, metal fragments, mixed glass fragments (including an old bottle lip), and pieces of charcoal.

The purpose of Test Trench 2 was to see if a fireplace foundation west of the original structure and within the later frame addition has any connection with the main foundation and whether or not it was built at the same time as the main house. The trench was located adjacent to the southeast half of the fireplace foundation and had a length of 1.83 m (6 ft) running north to south by 53.3 cm (1.75 ft) running east to west. It was excavated to a depth of roughly 1.524 m (5 ft) below datum.



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Unknown

Artifacts from Trench 2, under the fireplace foundation are mixed late 18th century to early 19th century, suggesting that the fireplace was not built before the late 18th century. The fireplace may have been built as late as the mid 19th century, but not at the same time as the main portion of the house. Large numbers of shell and bone in the 4th level of the unit compared to other levels and other excavation units may indicate the proximity of this area to a kitchen. In general, artifacts appeared mixed above level four, but were less disturbed below. Artifacts encountered in Test Trench 2 include a marble, a metal tomahawk/hatchet, pieces of brick, numerous nails, early Canton ware, Delftware, Cauliflower ware, Whieldonware, creamware, yellowware, redware, gray and blue stoneware, other ceramics, oyster shells, animal bones, several pipe stem and bowl fragments, broken glass, numerous metal fragments, and lumps of coal.

Test Trench 3 was excavated to find an undisturbed portion of the builder's trench in an effort to date the construction of the house, and to determine the depth of the foundation wall. It was located inside the house addition on the west side of the old house (the original structure), under the rear door. The trench was roughly the same size as Trench 2. No builder's trench was found and the bottom of the foundation was located at a depth of about 85 cm (2.8 ft). Evidence of disturbance was encountered and artifacts recovered were inconclusive as to the date of the house. Artifacts encountered include 3 clay marbles, nails, pottery sherds, several pieces of bottle glass (some thick), animal bones and shell, a lot of metal fragments, and mixed glass.

Test Trenches 4 and 5 were dug to determine the existence of any outbuildings and to establish the natural stratigraphy of the area. Trench 4 was roughly 3.66 m (12 ft) by 53.3 cm (1.75 ft) in size. In the process of digging Trench 4, a section of brick walkway was exposed at roughly 49 cm below datum. Test Trench 5 was then opened up approximately 3.05 m (10 ft) southeast of Trench 4 in a line running parallel to the direction of the exposed walkway in Trench 4. The walkway was exposed again in Trench 5. The walkway measured 84 cm (2.75 ft) wide. Test Trench 5 also exposed the corner of an outbuilding foundation and some rubble. Artifacts in the units were of a wide variety (largely undescribed) dating from the late 17th to early 20th centuries and were largely mixed.

Since these last two units were excavated as salvage and exploratory units, no information was recorded in the notes concerning the spatial or temporal significance of the artifacts within natural or arbitrary stratigraphic levels. Likewise, nothing was reported with any degree of assurance concerning the date of construction of the outbuilding foundation and associated sidewalk. The form of the construction of the foundation suggests late 19th century to early 20th century. The sidewalk appears to rest on the base of the same stratigraphic level from which late 18th century artifacts were derived in excavation Trenches 2 and 3. Therefore it may be supposed that further excavation would show this construction to be of an earlier date.

Additional data recovery excavations at 18PR96 were conducted during the summer of 2010. The Maryland State Highways Administration (SHA) and students from the University of Maryland, College Park, conducted excavations at the site of the Indian Queen Tavern in May and June of that year. This work was part of a larger project undertaken as part of the upcoming preparations for the War of 1812 bicentennial.

The town of Bladensburg, and the main house at 18PR96 which was standing by that time, were witness to one of the most important events of the War of 1812; the Battle of Bladensburg. The town of Bladensburg had been established in 1742 by a group of prominent colonial citizens as an important tobacco port for the growers of the "eastern Potomac" or the Anacostia. The port's location, depth of berth, and sheltered location insured rapid growth for the small community. On August 20, 1814, an expeditionary force of some 4,500 British soldiers landed at Benedict, Maryland and began their overland trek towards the capital of the, then still new, American republic. Their goal was to reach and destroy the US Capitol and as many other federal buildings as they could before maneuvering toward Baltimore. Washington was surprisingly poorly defended, but major bridges over the Anacostia River had been destroyed in an attempt to protect the capital. The only remaining bridge was the one situated at Bladensburg.

The British were met on the 24th of August at Bladensburg by Commodore Joshua Barney and 500 Marines who had been defending the Chesapeake. Commodore Barney's flotilla had been fighting small British naval squadrons since June of that year, delaying the full British invasion. On August 21st, when it became clear that the invasion was on, Commodore Barney landed his soldiers at Pig Point, near Upper Marlboro and gave orders to scuttle the ships in the Patuxent (see synopsis report for 18PR226). He then marched his marines to the defense of Washington, meeting the British at Bladensburg. Though the Americans fought the British off for 4 hours, the outnumbered forces were eventually routed and began a retreat to Montgomery County. Commodore Barney was wounded during the battle and taken prisoner. The US Capitol and the White House were burned before a massive storm forced the British to pull back.

A remote sensing (ground penetrating radar) survey of the Anacostia Watershed Society's parking lot (see above) was carried out in advance of the 2010 excavations. During that survey, five anomalies were detected beneath the ground surface, two of which were felt to have archeological interest.

Following the GPR survey, SHA used a Grad-All to excavate three trenches within the paved parking lot on the north side of the structure. Two of the trenches were opened parallel to each other, separated by a 61-91 cm (2-3 ft) wide balk. These trenches were oriented east-west at an azimuth of 98 degrees. The trenches were 1.52 m (5 ft) wide and about 11.3 m (37 ft) long. The third trench was placed 3.4 m (11 ft) west of the other two, towards the back of the lot. It was oriented north-south and was 1.52 m (5 ft) wide and approximately 5.2 m (17 ft) long. This third trench was opened on the initial day of excavation, but was closed due to the presence of a shallow water table and what appeared to be disturbed soils.

The two east-west oriented trenches were stepped in depth, with the east ends of the trenches stopping on the most recent deposit, the middle on an earlier deposit, and the western ends on an even earlier deposit. Eleven 1.52 X 1.52 m (5 X 5 ft) test units and two 76.2 X 152 cm (2.5 X 5 ft) unit extensions were hand excavated within these trenches. Five test units were placed in the southern-most trench and six test units and the two extension were placed in the northern-most trench.

Test units were excavated in 9.14 cm (0.3 ft) levels within natural strata. In general, testing extended to the depth of sterile subsoil or rock. Any identified features were mapped and photographed, and small features were bisected or (as needed) excavated in their entirety. Large soil features were sampled based on the portion of the feature that fell within test unit boundaries. Masonry features were mapped, photographed, and generally left in place. Soils recovered from STPs, test units, and features were screened through hardware cloth for uniform recovery of artifacts. Soil samples were collected for flotation from contexts that had a potential to yield information about historic foodways. Additional soil samples were collected for palynology analysis.

The investigation resulted in recovery of 52 prehistoric artifacts, 23,572 historic and modern artifacts, 6,429 faunal remains, and 2,432 floral remains. Forty historic cultural features were identified. Features included 20 post holes and/or molds, three pits, six artifact or charcoal concentrations, three builder's trenches, three foundation walls, two brick footers, soil stains on the interior of a foundation, a brick pavement, and a well. Artifacts and features were located less than a foot beneath the modern surface and span the historic period of occupation from the mid-18th to the 20th century.



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The 2010 excavations revealed that four modern strata are present. An asphalt driveway, present in the north portion of the excavation area, is the first stratum (Stratum I). A pea gravel parking lot (Stratum II) runs under the pavement. This pea gravel was placed on top of a coarser gravel and concrete mixture (Stratum III), which serves as the base for both the unpaved and paved sections of the parking lot. Stratum IV was a dark clay fill containing a temporally mixed assemblage with later artifacts dating to the mid-20th century. This stratum is a very dark grayish brown clay loam, which may have served to level the area.

Four historic strata are present below the fill. In addition, several lens deposits were noted. Stratum V is present across the entire site; it is a thick, very dark grayish brown sandy loam with gravel inclusions. While equivalent in color, Stratum V differs from Stratum IV above in both texture (sandy loam versus clay loam) and artifact dates. Most of the artifacts from Stratum V date to the 19th century, but some early 20th century artifacts were also found. Stratum VI is a thin stratum that is not consistent across the site. This strong brown to dark yellowish brown sandy loam may represent the remnant of an alluvial event that capped a second, older A Horizon (Stratum VII). While some soil may have been deposited through flooding, it is likely that artifacts accumulated through use of the property (i.e., artifacts were not brought in through flooding). Artifacts date primarily to the mid-19th century, however, the deposit includes some artifacts from the late 19th century. Stratum VII is present across the site and slopes down to the west. Stratum VII varies from very dark gray to very dark grayish brown sandy loam. During excavation, Stratum VII was difficult to distinguish from Stratum V where Stratum VI was absent as both colors and textures of Strata V and VII were similar. The presence of several features at the top of Stratum VII helped distinguish it from soils above. Artifacts primarily date to the 18th to early 19th century; however the stratum includes artifacts from the mid-19th century. Stratum VIII is a B Horizon consisting of yellowish brown sandy loam. The sediment struck down to the west and was below the water table in the western end of the trenches. Diagnostic artifacts date to the 18th century.

The prehistoric components date to the Archaic and Late Woodland Periods and indicate long-term use of the landscape by prehistoric populations. The full prehistoric assemblage consisted of 2 projectile point/knives, 1 early stage biface, 1 core, 35 flakes, 6 pieces of shatter, 1 piece of fire-cracked rock, 1 groundstone pestle, and 5 ceramic sherds. Diagnostic artifacts include a Halifax-like point and 3 Moyaone sherds (1 rim). No intact prehistoric occupations were identified at the Indian Queen Tavern. All of the prehistoric artifacts were actually recovered from historic contexts. No features associated with the prehistoric component were identified. The prehistoric components likely indicate seasonal or short-term occupations focused on the procurement of resources.

The historic component at the Indian Queen Tavern was characterized by numerous archeological features representing outbuildings and fences located in the work yard behind the tavern. It does not appear that the 18th century frame tavern/dwelling itself was located within the tested parking lot area. The Indian Queen Tavern and the George Washington House were built on Lot 6 of Bladensburg in the mid- to late 18th century. At times the lot and buildings were split between owners and at other times they were owned by the same people. Because of the long period of occupation and presence of mixed contexts attributing portions of the assemblage to specific owners or inhabitants is difficult.

The construction date of the Indian Queen Tavern is not known from archival records. It may have been built by 1752, when the Bladensburg Town Commission ceased repossessing the property for non-improvement. It may have been standing by 1763 when Israel Folsom sold the property to Jacob Wirt. The deed noted that "all the houses and other improvements" were included. By 1791, James Johnson and Catherine Wirt became owners of the portion of Lot 6 containing the tavern. The property passed to their daughter Elizabeth Johnson, who owned the property until sometime before 1832. From 1832 to 1856 the property passed between several owners, some of whom resided on the property and some of whom had tenants on the property. The records suggest that the tavern building was still standing during this period but serving solely as a residence.

In 1856 Erntz Franz Gasch purchased the property and opened a cabinet shop, eventually providing undertaking services as well. Gasch constructed a cabinet shop set back from the road, and by 1878, Gasch had added a dwelling abutting the road. It is not known if the Indian Queen Tavern and its outbuildings were still standing in 1856, but it is possible that they were removed to make way for the new buildings. The results of the archeological investigation seem to support demolition and replacement of the earlier buildings in the mid-19th century.

In general, the 18th to mid-19th-century artifact assemblage from the Indian Queen Tavern site suggests general domestic use of the property. The tavern served as a residence throughout its period of use, and it is not possible to determine which artifacts may be associated with the commercial use and which are strictly domestic. In addition, the excavation appears to have taken place behind the tavern where food was prepared and stored rather than within the tavern footprint, where public activities would have taken place.

The mid to late 19th-century assemblage from the Indian Queen Tavern site does not reflect the cabinet making or undertaking activities that took place on site. The assemblage is primarily domestic. It is possible that the Gasch's lived above the cabinet shop, or that the area of excavation represents a yard deposit between the shop and residence.

The 2010 historic assemblage consisted of 455 activity items, 10,490 architectural artifacts (including 3,319 pieces of window glass), 72 clothing and sewing items, 52 furniture items (flower pots and lighting glass are counted in the activity assemblage), 6,872 ceramic sherds, 2,889 kitchen glass fragments, 6,590 faunal remains (including 1,522 pieces of shell, 607 fish bones, and 4,461 animal bones), 5 other kitchen-related artifacts, 81 personal objects, 240 tobacco-related artifacts, 4 arms items, and 2,433 miscellaneous objects (including 3 rodent bones and 126 unidentifiable pieces of glass). The ceramic sherd assemblage included 2 borderware, 308 tin-glazed earthenware, 29 Jackfield, 27 North Devon gravel-tempered, 10 manganese-mottled sherds, 23 Staffordshire slipware sherds, 19 Astbury, 58 Buckley, 16 coarse earthenware, 245 refined earthenware, 16 Whieldonware, 1,225 creamware, 1,430 pearlware, 1,719 whiteware, 2 Agateware, 20 bone china, 259 white granite, 3 Chinese export porcelain, 241 porcelain, 30 ironstone, 426 redware, 82 yellowware, 16 Nottingham, 24 English Brown stoneware, 25 Rhenish gray stoneware, 375 white salt-glazed stoneware, 235 miscellaneous stoneware, and 7 unidentifiable sherds. In addition, 2,432 floral remains were recovered from test units and soil/flotation sampling. For more information on the archeobotanical assemblage from the site, see the linked ethnobotany profile for the site.

No formal determination has been made as to the NRHP eligibility of Site 18PR96. In general, however, it can be said that archeological work to date, has encountered intact historic strata, and revealed the presence of intact historic features. The site should be assumed to be a significant archeological resource until a formal determination can be made.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

00006718, 95001878, Site Files