

Monitoring Report Festival Park Development, Phase I Forks National Historic Site

Paul Downie, June 25, 1999

Archaeologically significant material was not encountered during the monitoring of Festival Park Development, Phase I operations on the Forks National Historic Site property. The development being monitored was the excavation for a pathway which curves across the north portion of the park from the west property line north of the main entrance, to the exit at the extreme northeast corner of the park. Associated with the pathway excavation were seven auger holes drilled at 20 meter intervals on the river side of the pathway for the installation of the light bases. The auger holes were the main concern due to their depth. The pathway was also monitored to confirm that our expectation regarding the depth of the Railroad Period fill was correct and that any resources that did appear would not go unrecorded. Site excavations and monitoring occurred on June 17, 18 and 22. No material was collected and no deposits predating the Railway Period fill were identified. It appears that the excavation did not penetrate below the Railroad Period fill layer that is present across the site.

A preliminary reconnaissance of the area to be affected by the development, including photography, was conducted prior to excavation. Photographs were also taken of the excavation in process showing the equipment used and depths of excavation. A plan update of the excavation showing the changes to the route of the pathway was provided by Steve Miville. The light bases were indicated to be placed at 20 meters intervals and represent fairly accurately the locations of the excavations. More accurate locations can be had from any subsequent "as-built" drawing that may be made. No further mapping in the field was necessary. Provenience recording followed standard Parks Canada methods, and notes were taken throughout the monitoring process.

The excavation for the pathway began June 17. This portion of the development was not considered to be a major concern. Previous excavations have shown that fill associated with the Railroad Period of occupation generally extends well below the depth of the excavation for the pathway and therefore was thought unlikely to affect any cultural resources. This proved to be the case along the route of the pathway as well. On June 17, backhoe excavation of the pathway from the road on the west side of the property to a point about halfway through the beam was monitored. Photographs of the excavation were taken and it was confirmed that excavation was not penetrating below the fill layer. The pathway excavation was completed on June 18 with the exception of small portions where the new path crosses or meets existing pathways. A gravel sub-base was laid as soon as excavation was completed. Again it was confirmed that excavation had not penetrated below the fill layer.

The two western-most holes for the light bases were also excavated on June 18 with a Bobcat-mounted auger and an 18-inch bit. The holes were drilled to a depth of approximately 2.5 meters. Monitoring the excavation of these two holes required observing the soil as it was excavated while still on the bit and raking through the back dirt after its removal. This method of excavation results in mixing between the upper and lower levels but no material of archaeological significance was observed. The material removed (loose gravel and sand containing modern debris, and at the deepest level, mottled clays with the continued presence of modern debris) suggests that excavation did not penetrate below the fill layer. The remaining five auger holes were drilled on Tuesday, June 22 using a truck-mounted auger with an 18-inch bit. The holes were drilled to a depth of approximately 2.5 meters and similar observations and conclusions were made. A concrete block was struck almost immediately at grade level while drilling the sixth hole east of the west property line. This required that the excavation be moved approximately 1 meter east of its intended location. Photographs of the operation were taken.

Artifacts and samples were not collected so no artifact processing, analysis or storage is required. Provenience data, photographic records, and notes do require processing, and a base map of the site needs to be updated to reflect the results of these excavations.