

**Report on  
Site Examination Testing  
at 11 North Street  
Plymouth, MA**

Prepared for  
The Plymouth  
Antiquarian Society  
and The Plymouth Guild, Inc.

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## ABSTRACT

Site Examination testing was conducted at 11 North Street in Plymouth prior to the commencement of restoration of the small structure that is located behind the Plymouth Guild's headquarters. The building, which measures 8 x 12 feet, is believed to be related to the estate of Colonel George Watson, once the eighteenth century owner of a significant portion of the land between North and Middle streets. Watson was a slave owner and the structure is on file with the Massachusetts Historical Commission as being possibly related to the slaves owned by him. Goals of the site examination were to 1) determine if the building has been moved or exists in situ; 2) examine the architecture of the structure and to determine the possible original use for it; 3) examine the possible African origins of the architectural style and possible African/ African-American material culture that may be present under and around it; 4) examine the yard around the structure to search for traces of the property's use during the prehistoric and historic periods; 5) make preliminary recommendations for future preservation and research. Testing focused on the area beneath the structure and across the entire yard where the structure is located. A total of 32 50-cm-square test pits adjacent to and around the extant 8 x 12' structure. Two sites, one prehistoric- **the PAG Site**, and one historic- **the Watson/ Jackson Site**, were identified. The PAG site was found to consist of a scatter of Late Archaic and Late Woodland artifacts and one possible cache pit. The Watson/ Jackson site consisted of significant deposits of household and architectural materials and features dating from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries.

As a result of Site Examination testing, the Watson/ Jackson site was found to have definite boundaries, site integrity, and high research potential due to presence of intact occupation deposits. Intact deposits were identified beneath the extant outbuilding, associated with demolition and filling activities in the early nineteenth century and yard scatter. Intact deposits were identified which could be definitively be linked to the period of the occupation of the site by Colonel George Watson (1745-1800) and Abraham Jackson (ca. 1818-1830) as well as successive owners of the property. The structure identified as a possible slave house has been reinterpreted as a probable 18<sup>th</sup> century privy associated with the Watson house. Background research found that the property was originally part of the 1623 land appropriations made by Plymouth Colony. The site appears to have been first occupied in the 1630s. A small percentage of 17<sup>th</sup> century artifacts relating to this occupation were recovered including a silver doublet button bearing a Tudor Rose, Midlands Purple, Sgraffito, Borderware, and North Devon gravel free pottery, and tobacco pipe fragments. One piece of possible Colonoware was also found. the majority of the artifact assemblage is believed to have been deposited when the ownership of the house was transferred from the Watsons to the Jacksons. Artifacts include many high status items such as porcelain and wine bottle seals as well as a wide variety of ceramic tableware forms. One stone foundation possibly relating to an 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century outbuilding were also found.

The PAG Site was found to have definite boundaries, site integrity, and a high research potential due to presence of at least one intact occupation deposit (Feature 7) a possible Late Woodland cache pit and potentially intact deposits of reduction debris. Artifacts recovered indicate that the site was first occupied in the Late Archaic Period (Small Stemmed and Wayland Notched points) but that the most intense occupation occurred in the Late Woodland Period (Levanna points and pottery) when the site is interpreted as having served as a base camp. Occupation was probably also related to the Native community of Pawtuxet located in the general area of downtown Plymouth.

The property maintains a high research value as one of the only intact locations in the heavily developed downtown Plymouth area. It contains intact evidence of all periods of occupation on Plymouth from the prehistoric to Plantation to later historic periods.