

THE ROLE OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Historic places are an important part of the fabric and local character of our towns and cities. Whether they are existing buildings or locations of important structures or events, many historic sites are also important archaeological sites with parts of their stories buried in the ground beneath them. Archaeological investigation at these sites can help towns and historical agencies identify what below-ground resources are preserved, document changing landscapes, and interpret daily life and local history. Knowledge of a property's past—using historical research, remote sensing (mapping buried features without digging), and archaeological excavation—can assist the development of management plans, add to the determination of a site's significance on local, state, or national levels, and promote local historical tourism.

The Fiske Center works with numerous local governments, town historical commissions, and preservation organizations to locate, assess, and understand the archaeological remains on their properties. Archaeology makes vital contributions to preservation projects on historic sites and landscapes.

UMass Boston archaeology students drawing a profile to record the soil layers at the Hassanamesitt Woods Site in Grafton. This partnership project won a preservation award from the Massachusetts Historical Commission.



At Gore Place, archaeological survey and excavations located several buried structures around the house. Here a graduate student takes notes about a dry well discovered on the grounds.

RECENT PRESERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

Gore Place, Waltham, Massachusetts

At Gore Place, the early 19th-century estate of Massachusetts Governor and U.S. Senator Christopher Gore and his wife Rebecca, archaeological excavations, remote sensing, and documentary research have been carried out in tandem as part of the landscape restoration and management plan. Fiske Center archaeologists have been working with the Gore Place Society to discover the remains of outbuildings such as the 1793 carriage house, the greenhouse, and the grapery in order to restore the grounds to their Gore-period appearance. Archaeological and architectural investigations in the mansion cellar have identified the changing use of household spaces and found remains of the former house.

Hassanamesitt Woods, Grafton, Massachusetts

The archaeological investigation of Hassanamesitt Woods is a collaborative project involving the Town of Grafton, the Fiske Center, and the Nipmuc Tribal Nation. The Town of Grafton purchased the 200-acre parcel for conservation, in part because initial archaeological survey showed it was once part of the 17th-century Native community of Hassanamesitt. Additional archaeological excavations uncovered the historic farmstead of Sarah Boston, an important Nipmuc resident of Grafton. The Town and the Nipmuc Tribal Nation are using results of these investigations to develop interpretive displays and signage for the public.



To learn more about the Fiske Center visit www.fiskecenter.umb.edu

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A lock (left), fragments of Chinese porcelain (center), and a few of the buttons (right) excavated from Sarah Boston's farmstead in Grafton. Artifacts like these provide clues to the appearance of the farmstead and the routines of daily life in the past.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON

With a growing reputation for innovative research addressing complex urban issues, the University of Massachusetts Boston, metropolitan Boston's only public university, offers its diverse student population both an intimate learning environment and the rich experience of a great American city. UMass Boston's seven colleges and graduate schools serve more than 14,000 students while engaging local, national, and international constituents through academic programs, research centers, and public service activities.

UMass Boston has a special commitment to engage with and serve its community. The University actively supports partnerships that bring the expertise of University faculty and staff to bear on the needs of local towns and cities.

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Bringing the results of archaeological research to the public is a key goal of many of the Fiske Center's projects. Here, an archaeologist discusses the finds from the excavation with a school group visiting the site.



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Historic Preservation Partnerships



The Fiske Center for Archaeological Research

