

AMENDMENT TO

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
Lease Construction - MAL92600
U.S. Probation & Corps of Engineers Building
201 St. Michael Street, Mobile, Alabama

WHEREAS, the General Services Administration (GSA), the Alabama State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (Council) entered into a Memorandum of Agreement, which was ratified June 23, 1993, for the lease construction of the U.S. Probation and Corps of Engineers Building to be located at 201 St. Michael Street, Mobile, Alabama; and

WHEREAS, the site has been disturbed by looting activities on or about the last weekend in June 1993; and

WHEREAS, the data recovery plan entitled "St. Michael Street Site Data Recovery Plan, June 9, 1993" and included as Attachment A to the Agreement can no longer be carried out; and

NOW, THEREFORE, GSA, the Alabama SHPO and the Council agree that the Agreement shall be amended in the following manner:

Stipulation III shall be amended to read, "GSA shall ensure that the data recovery plan entitled "Damage Report and Data Recovery Assessment/Amendment, St. Michael Street Archeological Site, Mobile, Alabama" dated July 14, 1993 (i.e. Attachment "A/2") is implemented prior to construction of the Probation Building."

Execution of this Memorandum of Agreement and implementation of its terms evidence that GSA has afforded the Council an opportunity to comment on the undertaking and its effects on historic properties, and that GSA has taken into account the effects of the undertaking on historic properties.

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

By: Robert D. Bush Date: 8/16/93

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

By: Paul L. Allison Date: 7/29/93
Mr. Paul L. Allison, Acting Regional Administrator

ALABAMA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

By: Lawrence Oaks Date: 7/29/93
Mr. F. Lawrence Oaks, State Historic Preservation Officer

INTRODUCTION

This report presents an assessment of damage to the St. Michael Street archeological site made following a site visit by project Principal Investigator J.W. Joseph on July 1, 1993, and presents recommendations for the amendment of the data recovery plan for this site which address the resources lost to site vandalism.

DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

Reports that the St. Michael Street archeological site had been vandalized were received by the General Services Administration and relayed to New South Associates on the morning of June 28, 1993. Upon this notice, Mr. Joseph contacted the security firm which had been hired to provide 24 hour security at the site, Supreme Security, to discuss this report. Captain Williams of Supreme Security verified that the site had been damaged by bottle hunters. Captain Williams further indicated that he had withdrawn 24 hour security from the site, without notifying New South Associates of this change, because of cash flow problems and because of his perception that there was nothing on the site worth guarding. Captain Williams accepted responsibility for the site damage. Mr. Joseph notified Captain Williams to maintain 24 hour coverage of the site until further notified. On June 30th Mr. Joseph informed Captain Williams that Supreme Security was being replaced by Mobile Protective as of 5 pm that day. Mobile Protective has been assigned 24 hour coverage of the site until further notice.

Mr. Joseph arrived on the site at 9 AM on the morning of July 1st, and was met by an agent of Mobile Protective. The owner of Mobile Protective, Mr. Dorsey, subsequently came out to the site to meet with Mr. Joseph, and the nature of the security effort, to protect the archeological resources present on the site from further damage, was explained. Mr. Joseph then reviewed the damage the site had received. This damage was extensive and directed toward Blocks 1, 2, and 5, those blocks which were also the targets of the data recovery excavations proposed for the site.

Block 1 had received the greatest damage. Virtually all of the major features in this block had been vandalized to some extent, and probing had also exposed and dug up features extending into the profile walls. The excavations made by the bottle hunters were extensive, and mixed the fill deposits of various features as soil removed from these excavations was strewn across the block surface. The bottle hunting activities appear to have focused on the results of probing, and hence locations yielding positive probe "hits" were subjected to shovel excavation in search of intact bottles. As might be expected, nearly all of the major trash features which were to be the focus of the data recovery studies in this block contained artifact concentrations which were recognized by probing, and hence these features have been heavily disturbed. Of the features originally

feature was not damaged suggests it may have been sterile, since probing appears to have located all other artifact bearing features.

Given the degree of damage which the site has incurred, it is recommended that the project seek to replace the features lost with comparable features. This would appear to be best accomplished by exposing additional occupation surface in the central city block area. Block 1 had encountered a high number of nineteenth-century features because it was located in the central portion of the city block, and thus exposed rear yard areas where nineteenth-century features were concentrated. There is room to the east of Block 1 for the location of another large block, and it is recommended that a 10 meter block be opened in this area. The size of this block is comparable to that of Block 1, and hence a new block should expose a comparable number of features. It should be recognized that there is no absolute assurance that the feature density and preservation in the proposed new block location will be the same as that of Block 1. If necessary, further area could also be opened to the north, south, and west of Block 1 which might expose additional features. Basically, these new areas need to identify comparable features which could be excavated in replacement to those originally identified. It is doubtful that this further excavation will expose exactly the same number and types of features originally identified and proposed for excavation in Blocks 1 and 5. The focus of data recovery excavations in these areas should remain the same, that is, targeting nineteenth-century features, with large trash features (especially privies) receiving the highest priority. It is recommended that the same hourly allocation be devoted to feature excavation in this new area as originally proposed, that is, a total of 37.5 persondays. The rates of excavation should also be comparable to those rates given in the Management Summary/Data Recovery Plan, so that the total number of features to be excavated will depend on the actual number of large and small features selected for excavation, at a rate of five persondays for large (privy, etc.) features and one personday for small (pit, etc.) features.

This new area to be exposed will be excavated and recorded following the procedures used during the initial field phase. A trackhoe will be used to remove the overburden down to the occupation surface of the block. Once this surface is exposed, it will be shovel shaved. All features within the block will be recorded on a block plan and will be numbered, beginning with the last feature number recorded during the survey and assessment phase. The location of the new block or expanded block area will be shown on the site plan. The time required to excavate, clean, and record these new features will not be taken from the feature excavation time and hence will not infringe on the data recovery plan.

Once the features in this new block have been recorded, a telephone or in-field conference will be held between GSA, the Alabama State Historic Preservation Office, and New South Associates. The purpose of this meeting will be to present New South Associates' recommendations for which features in the new block require excavation. It should be noted that approval of these recommendations, or negotiation, will be required immediately. We envision proceeding with data recovery excavations in Block 2 while the stripping and

Figure 1
Damage to Block 1

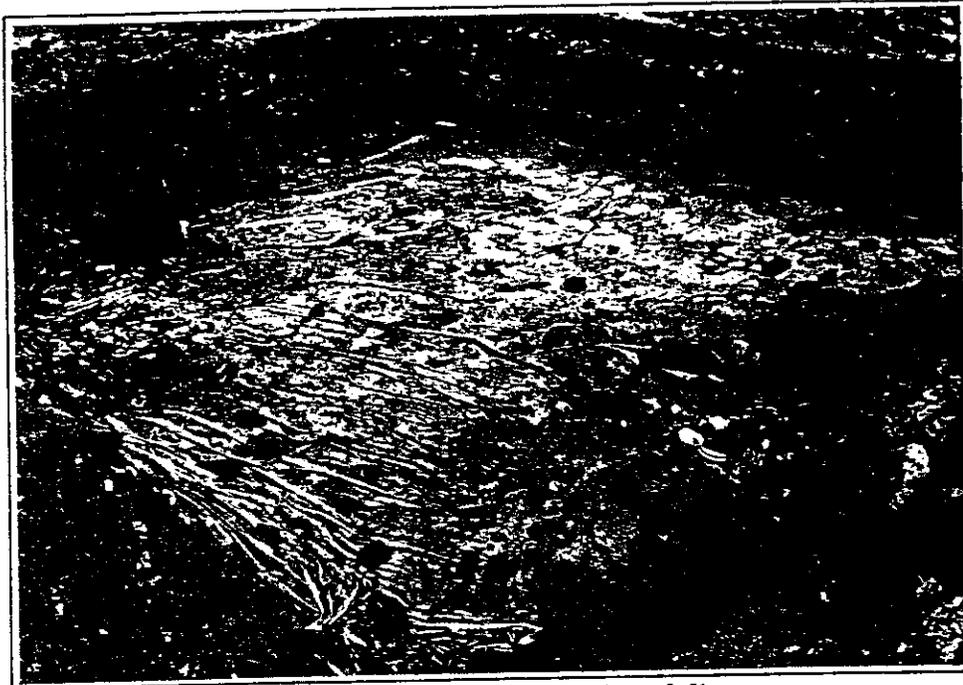


Block 1, view to the northeast showing extent of vandalism.



Block 1, view to the northwest showing extent of vandalism.

Figure 3
Damage to Block 2



Block 2, view to the northeast showing extent of vandalism.



Block 2, view to the northwest showing vandalism in this block. Focused primarily on the profile walls.