

UNCOVERING ONTARIO'S HISTORY SINCE 1972

July 24, 2015 Archaeological Research Associates Ltd. Buildings, Commercial
Archaeology, Conservation, Curation, Education, Explore Posts ARAHeritage, Canada, Commercial
archaeology, CRM, Ontario, outreach

Archaeological Research Associates Ltd. (ARA) is Ontario's oldest archaeological and heritage consulting firm, uncovering Ontario's history since 1972.

Over the past 43 years, ARA has completed hundreds of contracts for clients in the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors across Ontario. With strong ties to Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU) in Waterloo, Ontario, ARA has consistently been staffed with the best and brightest archaeologists and heritage specialists in Ontario.



At ARA, we approach the landscape in a holistic way, offering services in both Archaeology and Heritage. We have a strong commitment and Education and Outreach, sharing our knowledge with the public and engaging them in learning about their local and greater community.

ARCHAEOLOGY

ARA's Archaeology Department is responsible for conducting all 4 Stages of archaeological assessments as regulated by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS).

Stage 1 investigations consist of an archival search of any known historical, environmental and archaeological data for the study area. The information obtained in this search may be used to determine the archaeological potential of the study area. Sources in Stage 1 investigations may include, but are not limited to, historical maps and archives, oral histories, geophysical mapping, and Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport site records.



During Stage 2 assessments, field crews are dispatched to the study area to examine it directly for the presence of archaeological and heritage resources. Visual inspection or subsurface-testing techniques are employed depending on field conditions. Significant archaeological finds are noted on large-scale field maps, and diagnostic artifacts (i.e. buttons, coins, pottery, bone, stone tools) are retained for analysis. At this point, MTCS guidelines are employed to determine whether or not a site requires further investigation.

In this photo our Field Technicians are completing a Test Pit survey to identify any new archaeological resources in the study area. This particular survey required some creative transportation in the middle of the assessment!



We always gain permission to enter the property where we are working, here Field Director Sarah has made a new friend in this pygmy goat while checking in with some property owners before beginning their assessment.



After Stage 2, our crews may continue to excavate an archaeological site at the Stage 3 level. A Stage 3 assessment is conducted if a potentially culturally-significant deposit is encountered during Stage 2 investigation. The site is subject to a controlled surface pickup (CSP) in which all artifacts visible on the surface are individually plotted using a Global Positioning System (GPS) device. All of our surface artifacts here are marked by red and white straws.



In Stage 3, a series of 1×1 m test excavation units are placed in a grid formation, and the resulting artifacts and soil features are used to determine age, cultural affiliation, density, and extent. A determination is made, in consultation with the MTCS, regarding the need for further investigation in the form of full (Stage 4) excavation.





Being responsible archaeologists means back-filling all of the units that we excavate... but sometimes the soil just doesn't want to fit back in the same space! Here we see crew member Owen doing his best high-jumps to pack the soil back in!

In the below photo we are excavating a Euro-Canadian site at the Stage 4 level. In this final phase of the process, a site which is endangered and cannot be preserved is subjected to excavation. Stage 4 excavations are carried out according to MTCS guidelines and industry-accepted standards and practices. At ARA, we endeavour to collect research-grade data. Our collections are effectively curated and are made available to qualified scholars and researchers.





*Field work can be dirty but we do have fun!
We rock the most enviable styles... #fashion*



*And sometimes you just want to rule from a throne of dirt!
Did we mention our Game of Thrones obsession might
have run a little wild? #MustLoveDirt*

Unlike archaeology in the movies, the work is seldom glamorous. Archaeological work is physically demanding. Working out-of-doors means exposure to the elements and biting insects; frequently in isolated and sometimes challenging conditions.



#NotTodayTicks

At the same time the archaeologist occasionally has an opportunity unavailable to others – to be the first to discover and retrieve artifacts last used by people that came before us hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years. It is through these artifacts and other evidence preserved in the record of the past, that their experiences come to life once again.



HERITAGE

In addition to looking at cultural heritage resources below the ground in the archaeology department, ARA's Heritage Department also looks at built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes. Our job is to help piece together the history of individual properties and landscapes.

Most of our jobs start in the field doing site visits (rain, shine, sleet or snow!). We get to get up close and personal with lots of different types of buildings and structures. We document their layout, location and condition through floor plans, photographs and even measured drawings.



These investigations can take you to some very interesting places, like this former military tower!

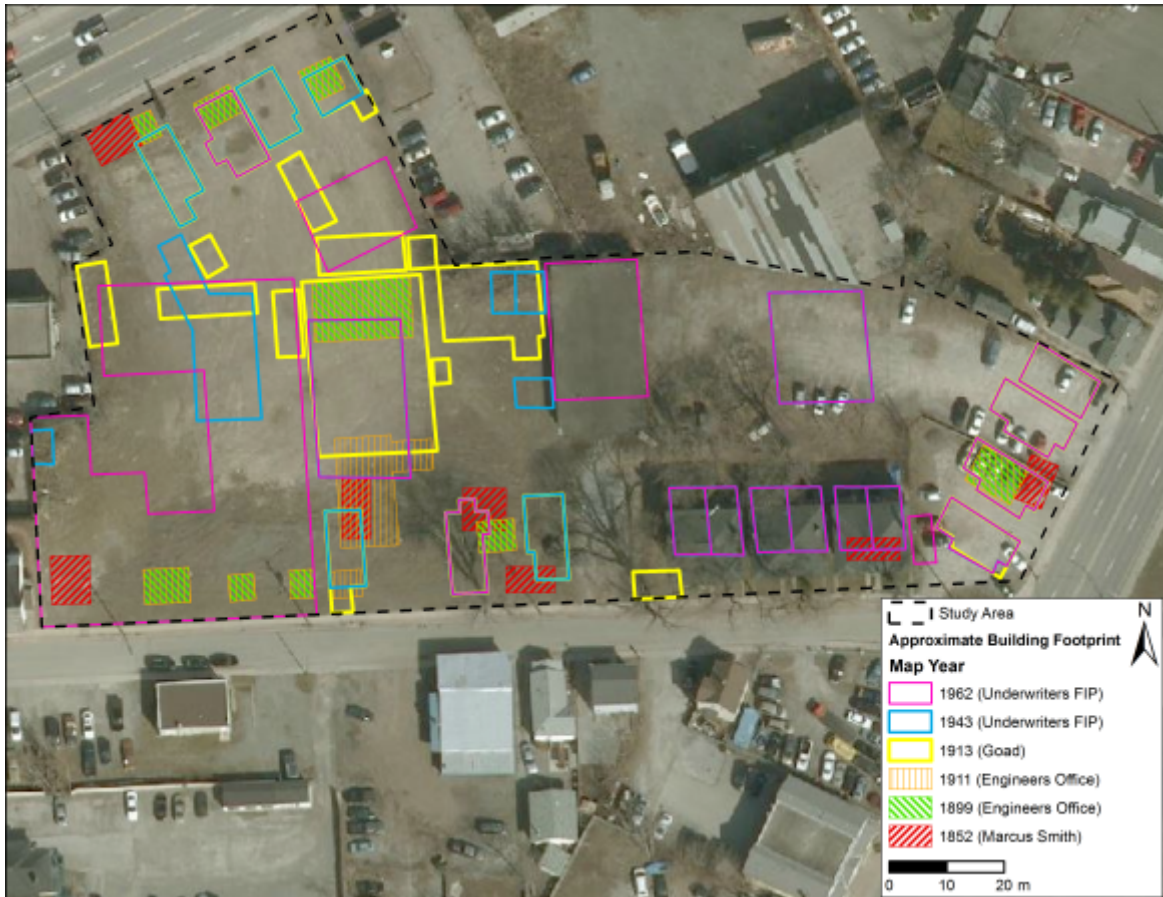


Here we are taking a close look at some wood flooring to determine if it is original to the structure



We're testing the pH level of a gravestone to assist with a condition assessment.

Research at local archives is like a treasure hunt. One newspaper clipping may make the whole history of a building fall into place. We find all kinds of interesting articles, from an ad in a 1820s newspaper for a circus held behind a subject building advertising “*Grand Entrée by six horses which will go through many pleasing maneuvers*” or a fur company catalogue showing stylish men and women. By reading through a record of land transactions we can determine who owned the land and how long they lived there. By examining historic photos or maps we can see the progression of a building over time.



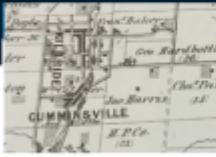
Our work helps to tell the stories of the buildings that were witness to incredible moments in history, ordinary lives lived, and the growth of our cities and towns. We dig deep to describe the people who once lived, worked and played in these buildings, and their importance to the community both past and present.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

ARA is also very involved in numerous Outreach and Education initiatives. Our Heritage Department recently worked with the City of Burlington and Heritage Burlington to draft stories for 30 themes and 30 properties in the City for their new website (www.heritageburlington.ca). The research for this involved detailed investigations of many interesting local legends. This website's goal is to engage the community in learning about their history, and sharing their own stories.

Discover our
Stories

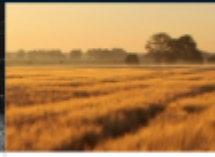
Share your
Story



Communities



Transportation



Agriculture & Industry



Natural Heritage



Culture

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In honour of Aboriginal Month (June) in Canada, our Heritage Cartographer worked on a joint project with the Kitchener Public Library to produce the “*Local Aboriginal History and Culture Bike Tour*”. The Library made this guide available online and in it’s main branch, and held guided tours through out the month.

A Joint Project by

ARCHAEOLOGY | HERITAGE | OUTREACH | EDUCATION

Local Aboriginal History and Culture Bike Tour

This route is: 34 kms
Walking: 3 hours
Biking: 1 hour

Cultural Centres
Historic Places
Terminology

11. **Aboriginal Student Centre, Wilfrid Laurier University** (117 Silver St., Waterloo, Ontario, N2L 2Y1)

12. **Aboriginal Education Centre, University of Waterloo** (St. Paul's United College at the University of Waterloo, Waterloo, ON, N)

13. **Aboriginal Services, Conestoga College** (Waterloo, ON, N2G 2W9) (200 Elm St., Waterloo, Ontario, N2L 1G4)

14. **University and college Aboriginal centres provide students with culturally appropriate academic, social, and personal support. These resources include academic tutoring, life skills support, resource libraries and access to technology. They also have different cultural and social activities. Please visit each centre for more information. Sources are as follows:**

15. **UOIT** (University of Ontario Institute of Technology) (2000 Simcoe St., Oshawa, Ontario, L1H 8K4)

16. **UWaterloo** (University of Waterloo) (200 University Ave., Waterloo, Ontario, N2L 1G1)

17. **UWindsor** (University of Windsor) (401 University Ave., Windsor, Ontario, N9A 6K1)

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To view and print the brochure:

http://www.kpl.org/_docs/gsr/AboriginalHistory/TourMap.pdf

We also speak and lecture at various venues. From opening the Mississauga's of the New Credit First Nation Annual Gathering, to jetting off to Alberta to talk about social media, we are always excited to talk about our passions!



Our Heritage Manager talking about “Heritage is #trending” at the Municipal Heritage Forum in Alberta, Canada.

Speaking of social media, for more behind-the-scenes photos, interesting cultural heritage news, and all things ARA please check out our Facebook Page ([ArchaeologicalResearchAssociates](#)); Twitter profiles [@ArchResearch](#) and [@ARAHeritage](#) and to further fuel your Pinterest obsession you can find us at www.pinterest.com/araarchaeology and www.pinterest.com/araheritage.



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