

Three Ships Discovered at Robinson Landing

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City of Alexandria, Virginia*

The City of Alexandria has announced that archaeologists under contract with developer EYA LLC and working under a City-approved Resource Management Plan have found the remains of a third historic ship at the Robinson Landing construction site in Old Town. All three ships are believed to have been built in the mid-to-late 1700s, and buried before 1798. A similar ship was discovered nearby at the Hotel Indigo site in late 2015.

“The combination of Revolutionary War-era ships, early building foundations, and thousands of other artifacts makes Robinson Landing one of the most archaeologically significant sites in Virginia,” said Eleanor Breen, acting City Archaeologist. “The discoveries at this site have gained international attention, and the City is working with EYA to identify and preserve these important pieces of Alexandria’s history.”



The City and EYA LLC arranged for public viewing of the site on Saturday, April 14, 2018 from the unit block of Wolfe Street. Archaeologists were on hand to provide information and answer questions. The active construction site was not open to the public during the viewing, but many notable elements of the site were visible, including the most recent -- and largest -- ship discovery. The ships was covered before and after the viewing, in order to protect the wood from exposure.

“Working in Alexandria for more than 20 years, we recognize and respect the rich history of the city and the importance of preserving discoveries of this kind,” said Evan Goldman, EYA LLC Vice President of Acquisition and Development. “We’re committed to this unprecedented effort to protect the archaeological history of Old Town. The results have gone well beyond what we expected, and we are thrilled by the significance of the findings and their unique ability to preserve the legacy of the city for years to come.”

The Alexandria Archaeological Protection Code requires developers to have archaeologists on site to monitor all phases of ground disturbance. This ensures that any historic features encountered during demolition and construction are dealt with properly so that Alexandria’s history is enriched through archaeological study. As development of the Alexandria waterfront continues, excavations have the potential to continue to unearth additional evidence of early wharves and piers, maritime vessels, early industries, and commercial and domestic activities.