

Section 8: Recommendations

Archaeological excavations at the Dunham House that were undertaken in 2002 by Monmouth University and in 2019 by the Archaeological Society of New Jersey were completed as research studies to aid in the historical and archaeological interpretation of the Dunham House, one of the oldest surviving homes in Middlesex County. The Trinity Episcopal Church of Woodbridge generously offered access to its property. While the Monmouth University study was completed as a volunteer research study as part of a graduate student's thesis project, the 2019 study was made possible through funding provided by the Middlesex County Chosen Freeholders and the Middlesex County Office of Arts and History. The latter study was also conducted as a public archaeological dig to highlight Middlesex County's rich cultural heritage and to shed light on one of its oldest surviving homes.

The studies revealed the presence of notably dense, thick and partially intact archaeological deposits. Many of the deposits date from the early 18th through the mid-19th century and several contexts can be linked to the Samuel Barron family occupation from ca. 1752-1801. Many other contexts contain temporally mixed deposits dating from the early 18th century to the late 19th century. Several structural features were identified, including the remains of a large oval or teardrop-shaped, 19th-century driveway west of the house (Features 3 and 4), the stone foundation remains of an outbuilding northwest of the patterned brick home that appears to have been removed by the late 18th century or possibly later (Feature 6), and the remains of a former, rear addition that was removed by 1871 (Feature 5). The rear addition may have served as a service wing.

Dendrochronological analysis of tree rings from samples taken in first floor joists and attic joists in the patterned brick section of the home indicate that the first floor was constructed in the Spring of 1709, which coincides with Benjamin and Mary Dunham's ownership of the property, following their father, Jonathan Dunham, Sr.'s death. The analysis also indicates that the house was extensively remodeled in 1871.

Areas of high archaeological sensitivity exist in the west side yard and rear north yard. Care should be taken during future landscape modifications in this area, and it is recommended that such modifications be preceded by an archaeological study, if possible. No archaeological investigations have yet taken place in the east and south yard areas, though these areas also have great potential to contain intact archaeological deposits and cultural features. Ground penetrating radar conducted in the south yard area identified two square anomalies that may represent former structures. Further, a late 19th-century map depicts a structure approximating the same size as the Dunham House to have been formerly situated at the location of the current circular driveway south of the home. It is recommended that proposed ground disturbances in these areas be preceded by an archaeological study, if possible.