

**2008 FIELD SEASON AT PHILLIP'S GARDEN,
PORT AU CHOIX NATIONAL HISTORIC
SITE**

**M.A.P. Renouf
Memorial University**

Introduction

In 2005 and 2006 the Port au Choix Archaeology Project re-excavated Houses 17 and 18, two dwellings originally investigated by Elmer Harp of Dartmouth College (Harp 1976). These re-excavations have led to important new information about the large size and substantial construction of at least some Phillip's Garden dwellings (Cogswell 2006, Renouf 2006, Renouf in press). In addition, investigation of palynological and artefactual data has shown that sealskin working was an important activity at the site and at nearby Bass Pond (Bell et al. 2005, Renouf and Bell 2008, Knapp 2008). Investigations at House 17 included a small area outside the house where we found an extensive area of anomalous mottled soil and other features

which we interpreted as evidence of outdoor activities (Renouf 2007).

In the context of these results, the objective of the 2008 field season was to excavate a large area outside House 17 (Fig. 1). Specifically we were interested in identifying where the preliminary stages of sealskin processing might have taken place, assuming that at least the initial stages of this activity occurred outdoors. In addition to recording features and artefacts we did preliminary soil sampling for multi-chemical analysis. We are interested in determining if there are any areas outside House 17 where the soil has an anomalously high marine signature. This was the first of a planned two seasons of excavation to expose and connect the outdoor area between Houses 17 and 18.

Results

We excavated 34 m², first removing a significant midden deposit. We excavated part of this deposit in 2007 where it is dated at 1450±40 BP (Beta 238478). A large amount of faunal material and numer-

Figure 1: Excavation areas centred on House 18, one half of House 17, and the area between them (outlined in blue). We excavated 34 m² of this 50 m² area. The irregular shapes within the three excavation areas are features of various kinds, not described here (Renouf)

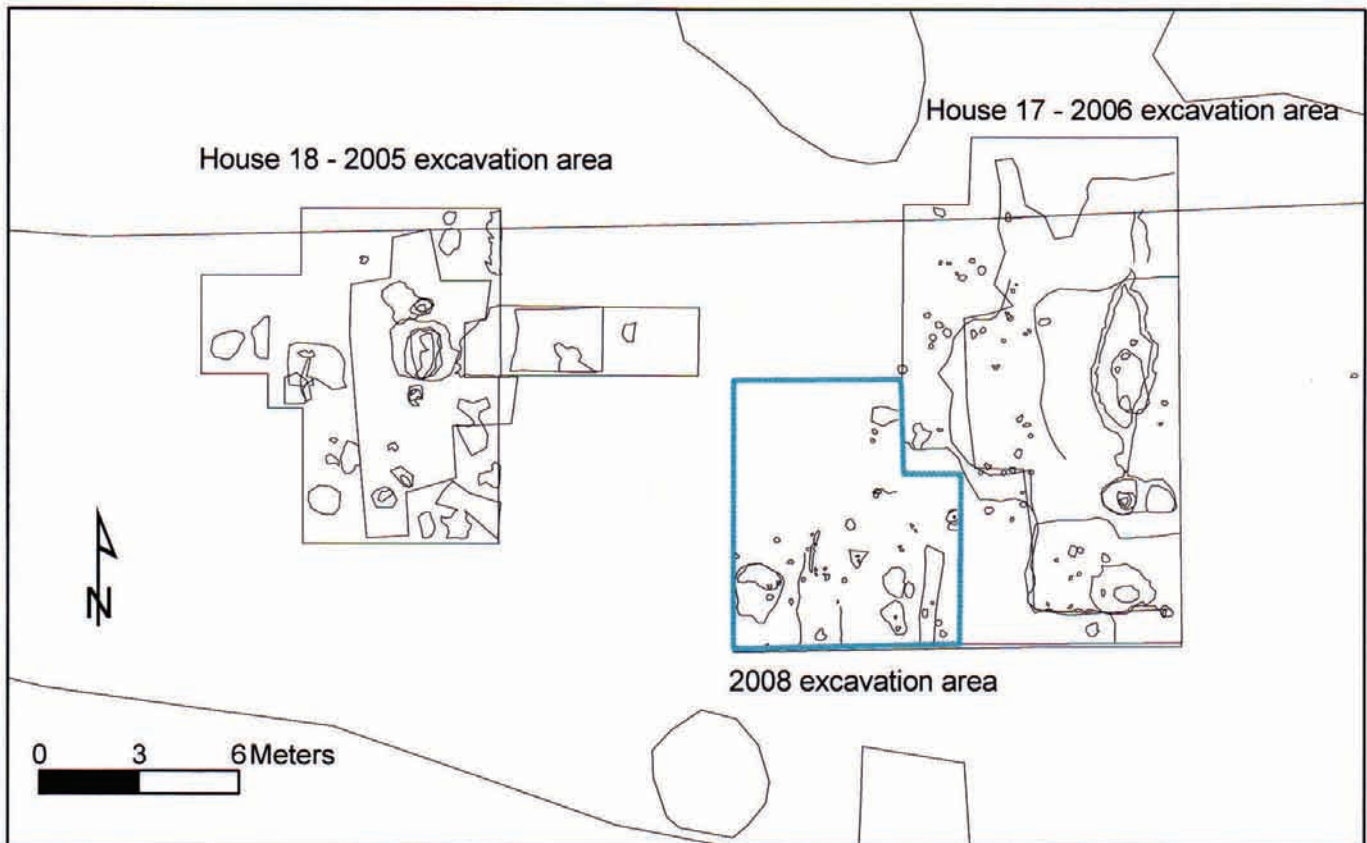




Figure 2: A complete soapstone bowl found in the midden (Renouf)



Figure 3: A series of medium-sized, paired post-holes with possible shape of a structure outlined in red string. Insert shows close-up of one pair of post-holes (Renouf)

ous artefacts were found (Fig. 2).

Beneath the midden there was evidence of cultural activities outside House 17: (1) continuation of the mottled soil mentioned above which has been dated to 1610 ± 40 (Beta 238478) which we hypothesize is sand impregnated with organic material, perhaps seal fat, (2) an outdoor axial feature dated to 1750 ± 40 (Beta 238477), (3) a number of pits and (4) sets of large, medium and small post-holes which we believe outline at least four small structures (Fig. 3). While we have not yet identified the nature of the structures, some might be racks and others might be storage areas.

Soil samples were taken every 50 cm and a subset has been sent off for analysis (Fig. 4)

Conclusions

The results of the 2008 field season indicate that there are a number of outdoor structures associated with at least one large dwelling at Phillip's Garden, House 17. This suggests that there may be similar activity areas outside other Phillip's Garden dwellings. With these preliminary results we continue to fill in the cultural details of this intensively occupied site.

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Figure 4: Don Butler processing soil samples (Renouf)

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