



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Independence National
Historical Park

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Geotechnical Work to Begin on President's House Site

Philadelphia, PA – Geotechnical work on the President's House site at 6th and Market Streets in Independence National Historical Park will begin on Friday, November 21, 2008. Six targeted digs will go approximately 25 feet down into fill dirt that was used to cover and protect the archeological resources during August 2007. This investigative work will not uncover any new resources. The sites are carefully situated to avoid any contact with the archeological features that were discovered during the 2007 archeological dig. The work will consist of preliminary data-gathering including collection of soil samples. This information will be used to design the foundation of the new commemoration.

Geotechnical activity will run from November 21 until December 5, depending on weather. The site will be fenced off during this time and the viewing platform that has remained on the site since the archeological dig last summer will be temporarily closed to the public. Visitors will be able to view the site from 6th Street or Independence Mall, and information about the site (including information about the archeological dig and the history of the house) will be available at the Independence Visitor Center and online at www.nps.gov/inde.

The untold stories of the nine enslaved Africans owned by George Washington and the house that was home to the nation's first two presidents have been a missing part of the fabric of American history, especially historic Philadelphia. Many participants in the project have been moved by the thorny juxtaposition of 18th century political stances, considering it tragic that while the nation's founding fathers declared "all men are created equal," Washington himself owned slaves and signed the infamous Fugitive Slave Act of 1793, mandating the return of escaped enslaved Africans to their owners.

Mayor Michael A. Nutter has actively supported this project, discussing ideas extensively with the National Park Service officials and spearheading the effort to raise the additional funds required to complete the project as a result of the unexpected archeological funds. Funds for an educational endowment are also part of the \$3.4 million campaign.

The project, a design-build project awarded to Kelly/Maiello Architects & Planners, is slated for completion by the fall of 2010. Upon its completion, the President's House project, a joint initiative of the City of Philadelphia and Independence National Historical Park – will result in a new permanent outdoor installation on the doorstep of the Liberty Bell Center at 6th & Market Streets.

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