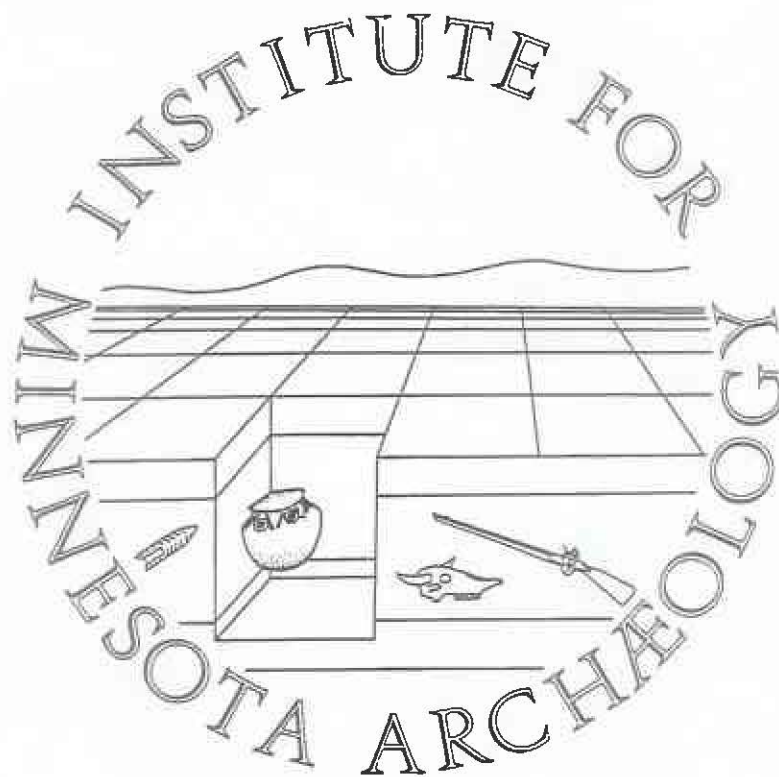


**PHASE I ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT THE GILLMORE  
HOTEL, CITY OF DEADWOOD, SOUTH DAKOTA**

by  
Craig M. Johnson  
Staff Archaeologist

Institute for Minnesota Archaeology  
3300 University Ave SE Suite 202  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55414



**INSTITUTE FOR MINNESOTA ARCHAEOLOGY  
REPORTS OF INVESTIGATIONS NUMBER 182**

FEBRUARY 28, 1992

**THIS PROJECT WAS CONDUCTED FOR RPI SERVICES INC.**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Institute for Minnesota Archaeology (IMA) conducted Phase I excavations on the *Gillmore Hotel* property in the City of Deadwood, South Dakota for RPI Services Inc. The project consists of a grassed area on the west side of the hotel scheduled for a freestanding addition to the structure. The area will be excavated for footings. Two shovel tests and one excavation unit were excavated in the area to determine if there are any intact subsurface deposits which are of historical importance. A thin scatter of cut bone, glass, nails, ceramics and other items dating to the 20th century were recovered from the excavations. No features such as a privy or kitchen midden deposits were located which would be of historical significance. No further archaeological work is recommended for the area.

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## INTRODUCTION

RPI Services Inc. of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota contracted with the Institute for Minnesota Archaeology (IMA) to conduct phase I archaeological excavations on the Gillmore Hotel property located within the City of Deadwood, South Dakota. Excavations were conducted prior to the construction of a freestanding addition to the hotel to be built on the west side of the hotel. The hotel, which was constructed in 1892 with an addition in 1896, will be renovated and converted into apartments.

The fieldwork was conducted on 2/26/92 - 2/27/92 by Craig M. Johnson, IMA Staff Archaeologist.

## FIELD METHODS AND RESULTS

The project area is located on the west side of the Gillmore Hotel in a grassy area east of a work shed (Appendix A, Figure 1). Several days prior to the excavations, an area about 8 feet by 8 feet was heated to remove the frost in the ground. Except for one shovel test, this area was the focus of the excavations. Soil matrix from all excavations was passed through 1/4 inch hardware cloth. Excavations began with shovel test 1 to determine the nature of the subsoil deposits prior to larger excavations. All shovel tests are square units 30 centimeters on a side.

Shovel test 1 (ST 1), excavated to a depth of 36 centimeters, revealed a dark brown silty loam (10YR 3/3) down to 13 centimeters below the surface, a dark brown silty loam mixed with slate or shale from 13 to 24 centimeters, and a dark yellowish-brown hard compact silty loam (10YR 4/4) to the bottom of the unit. All cultural material recovered from this test is within the upper two depositional units. It consists of three machine cut nails, five wire nails, two pieces of clear container glass, one piece of window glass, two pieces of mammal bone (probably cow), and one small round flat metal container, possibly a pill box. All items are typically found in 20th century contexts.

Excavation unit 1 (XU1) was placed 30 centimeters to the west of shovel test 1 (Appendix A, Figure 1). This unit measures 1 x 1 meter and was excavated to a depth of between 35 and 40 centimeters below the ground surface. The ground surface slopes gently from west to east in the area of the test. A 40 x 40 centimeter "window" was excavated into the northeast corner of the unit down to 60 centimeters below the surface to determine the nature of the deep soil strata. The soil from this extension of XU 1 was not screened. Excavations in XU 1 revealed essentially the same soil horizons present in ST 1 (Appendix A, Figure 2). A dark brown silty loam (10YR 3/3) varied from 15 to 20 centimeters below the surface. Most of the cultural material recovered from XU 1 was within this horizon. A dark brown silty loam (10YR 3/3) mixed with pieces of coal and shale/slate occurs below the upper soil horizon. This unit ranges in thickness between 8 and 10 centimeters. A few historic artifacts were recovered from this horizon. Below this is a dark yellowish-brown silty loam (10YR 4/4) down to 40 centimeters below the surface. No cultural materials were recovered from this horizon. The next soil horizon consist of a hard, compact yellowish-brown silt (10YR 5/4) from 40 to 50 centimeters below the surface. The basal horizon consists of a very hard, compact yellowish-red silty loam (5YR 4/6) to depth of more than 60 centimeters below the surface. The depositional history of the sediments in this unit indicates that the lower two compact horizons are probably natural strata, with the upper three being the result of land leveling and filling the area before or after construction activities. No features such as a privy or midden from kitchen refuse was noted during the excavation of this unit.

The following cultural materials were recovered from XU 1. The upper horizon contained twenty-two pieces of bone, most from the upper eight centimeters of deposit. The remaining material was found throughout the upper horizon. Most of the identifiable bone is from cow; a few pieces may be from pig and bird such as chicken. Of the nails recovered, two are square machine cut and 33 are wire nails. Two screws and one staple were also found. The remaining metal items include a dinner knife, bail, two ornamental items, one clip and two unidentified items. The glass items from the upper level include five yellow container fragments, two white canning jar lid pieces, five clear pressed glass fragments, 39 clear glass pieces from containers, three fragments



of thin window glass and 27 pieces of thick window glass. Ceramics recovered include two pieces of porcelain and two pieces of whiteware, one of which has a floral transfer print. Other items recovered include two glass beads, one ceramic marble, four glass buttons, two shell buttons, one metal fuse housing and one 1942 S Jefferson nickle. Three wire nails and two metal tubes were recovered from the second depositional level in XU1. Given the low density of cultural materials recovered from this excavation unit and the relatively long time the area has been occupied, the scatter of debris is indicative of a series of isolated, unstructured behaviors rather than any patterned activities occurring over a longer period of time.

Shovel test 2 was excavated four meters southwest of XU 1 to determine if the soil strata and cultural deposits differed from those found in shovel test 1 and excavation unit 1. Although the ground was partially frozen, a slow and tedious excavation revealed an upper horizon of dark brown silty loam (10YR 3/3) 13 centimeters thick over a layer of slate/shale and soil which is 11 centimeters thick. The basal unit, which extends down at least to 30 centimeters where the shovel test terminated, is the yellowish-red hard, compact silty loam (10YR 4/6) located at a greater depth in XU 1. Only one artifact, a large flat washer, was recovered from the upper horizon of this shovel test.

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Phase I archaeological excavations at the Gillmore Hotel in Deadwood, South Dakota for RPI Services Inc. found a relatively light scatter of 20th century debris consisting of nails, cut bone, glass, ceramics and other items in two shovel tests and one excavation unit. This material is interpreted to be the product of isolated, unpatterned activities associated with the occupation of the hotel. No features such as a privy or a concentration of midden debris which would be of historical importance were found in the excavations. We recommend that no additional archaeological work be scheduled for the area.

**APPENDIX A**

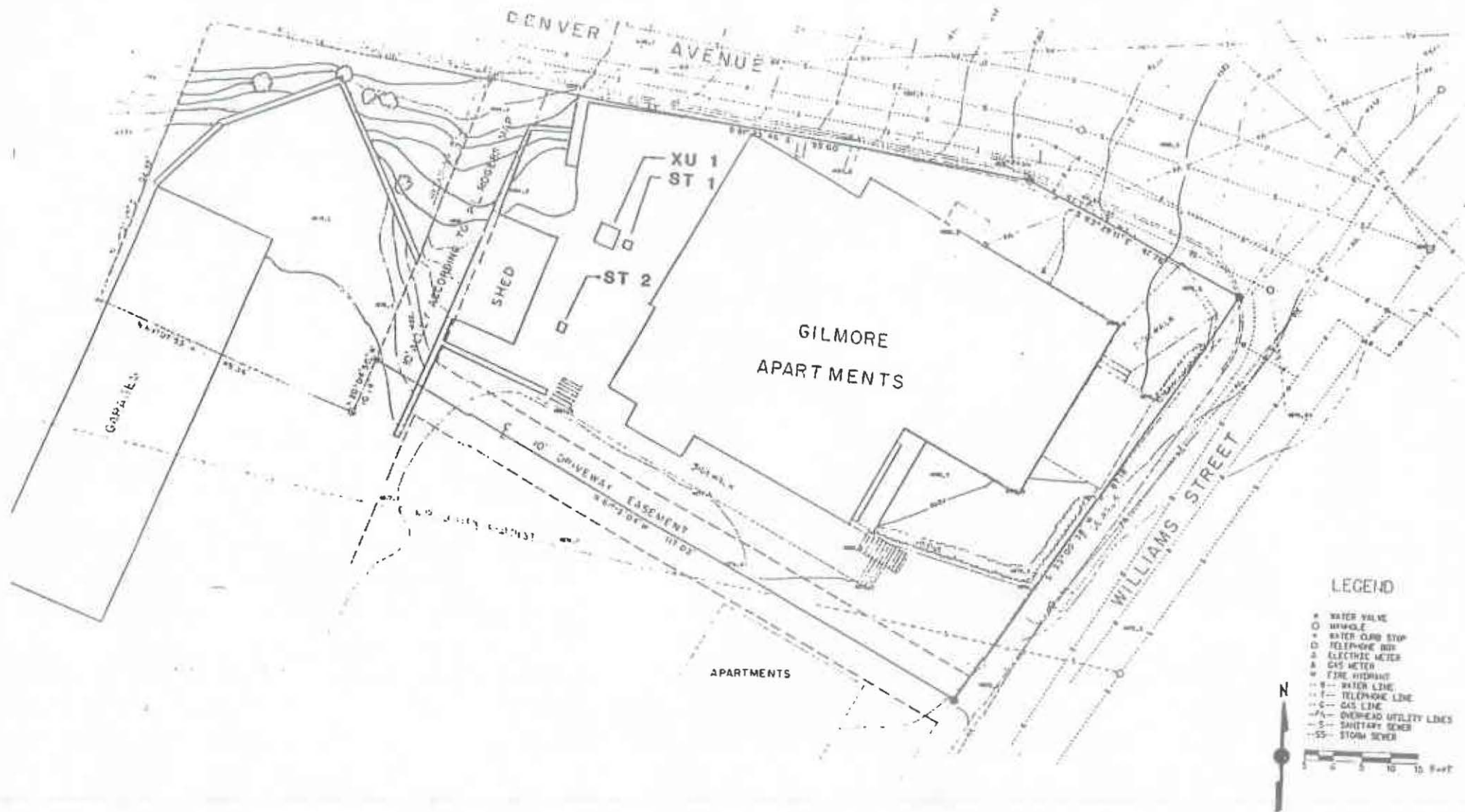


Figure 1. Location of shovel tests (ST) and excavation units (XU) in the project area.

XU 1 NORTH WALL PROFILE

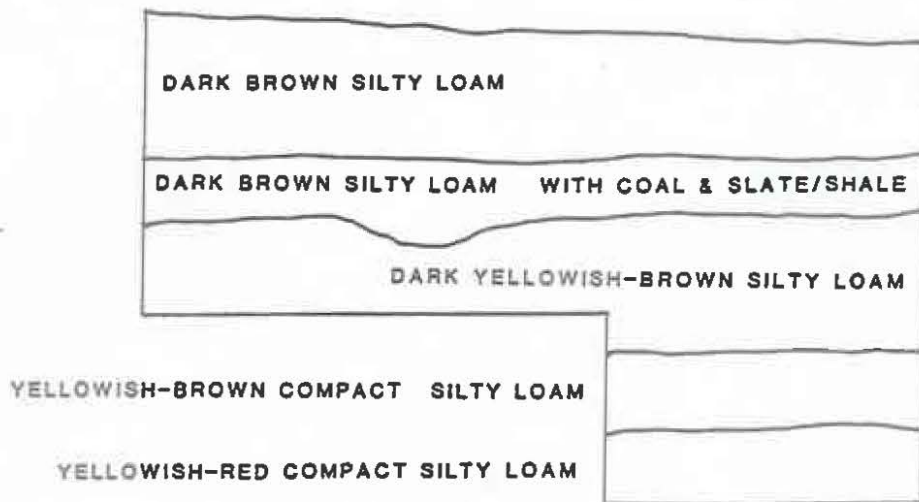


Figure 2. Profile of the north wall of excavation unit 1.



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THE INSTITUTE FOR MINNESOTA ARCHAEOLOGY

3300 UNIVERSITY AVE. S.E., SUITE 202  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55414  
612/623-0299 FAX 612/623-0177

February 28, 1992

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Mr. Dana Vaillancourt  
Historic Archeologist  
Deadwood Economic Development Corporation  
P.O. Box 506  
Deadwood, SD 57732

Dear Mr. Vaillancourt:

Enclosed please find a copy of our archaeological investigations at the Gillmore Hotel. The artifacts from these excavations will be sent to you under a separate cover.

Thank you for your assistance with this project.

Sincerely,

  
Craig Johnson  
Staff Archaeologist

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