



# ARCHAEOLOGY

## Archaeological Preservation and Certificate to Dig Application

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*Tocobaga; picture from the Weeden Island Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center*

## ARCHAEOLOGY

*Archaeology* is the scientific study of material remains of past human life and activities. *Archaeological sites* are places where people left some sign of their presence. This typically means that *artifacts*, things people made or modified, are present. However, sites can also include changes in the land—a ditch, a levee, a mound. Sites usually contain materials in addition to artifacts, like plant and animal remains, soil, and charcoal.

Together, these form an *archaeological deposit*. When people stay in one place for a long time, deposits accumulate, one on top of the other, over decades or centuries. Because people and environments change over time, deposits differ from each other. Moreover, any single deposit may contain evidence of many different activities. Archaeological sites and the artifacts associated with them are messengers from our past. Without archaeological research and excavation, these unique pieces of our history would be lost.

Archaeological sites are surprisingly common on the landscape and come in all sizes and a variety of types. Archaeological sites in Florida range from large, prominent prehistoric mounds, historic forts and plantations, to smaller sites, such as a historic dump or small scatters of artifacts that represent temporary

encampments of Native American people. Regardless of size or complexity, all archaeological sites have the potential to tell us something about people and environments of the past. More than 27,000 different archaeological sites of all periods are already known in Florida, and many new sites are recorded in the Florida Master Site File each year. Some archaeological sites are completely buried and remain unknown until accidentally uncovered by digging, or until they are found during an archaeological survey.

Clues to past events and previous ways of life remain in backyards, pastures, forests, hammocks, and streambeds all across the Florida landscape. Pre-European archaeological sites (before A.D. 1500) offer clues to Native American hunting and cooking methods, social organization and family life, artistic and religious expression, and past environments. Archaeological evidence of later cultures, more like our own, also exists. Early European exploration and settlement, and Florida's territorial and statehood growth, left their unique signatures on and under the ground, creating a Florida landscape that is a mosaic of different natural and historical events.

Excerpt from *Best Management Practices: An Owners Guide to Protecting Archaeological Sites*. Bureau of Archaeological Resources, Division of Historic Resources, Florida Department of State. Tallahassee, Florida. 2005.

## **MANASOTA, WEEDEN ISLAND, and SAFETY HARBOR CULTURES and the TOCOBAGA**

Tampa Bay and St. Petersburg are rich with Native American history. Three cultures were known to have inhabited the area, starting with the Manasota culture as early as 500 B.C. and extending to approximately 900. From 300 to 700, the Manasota culture began incorporating ceremonial burial practices from the Florida panhandle and came to be referred to as the Weeden Island-related late Manasota culture. The Weeden Island culture was eventually replaced by the Safety Harbor culture.

Subtle distinctions between archaeological cultures are defined by time and learned through the study of ceramics, which fall into two categories, sometimes called sacred and secular. Sacred ceramics are found primarily in mounds, while secular ceramics are found primarily in middens and house sites.

“Mounds” are a deliberately constructed, elevated earthwork intended for a range of uses. Native Americans built a variety of mounds intended for a range of potential uses. While “burial mounds” were commonly used across many cultures, “platform mounds” were also used to support temples, the houses of chiefs, council houses, and other important structures. Locally, the term “temple mound” is based on a description by members of the Hernando de Soto expedition of a temple on a mound in a Safety Harbor village. An example of a platform mound, archaeologists now believe that the temples were likely charnel houses, where bodies were prepared and stored for later burial.

“Middens” are smaller mounds of domestic waste that sometimes consist of mollusk shells and other artifacts associated with past human occupation. Middens are a useful resource for archaeologists to study the diet and habits of past societies and even discern seasonal and climatic information. Locally, the most common type of midden is a shell midden, consisting mainly of oyster and clam shells. These shell middens are usually located where earlier societies processed

aquatic resources directly after harvest and may be associated with use by the entire village or individual households.

The Safety Harbor culture was an archaeological culture practiced by Native Americans living on the central Gulf coast of the Florida peninsula, from approximately 900 until after 1700s A.D. The Safety Harbor people were organized into chiefdoms and lived primarily in villages along the shoreline of Tampa Bay and the adjacent Gulf of Mexico coast. The primary chiefdom associated with St. Petersburg is the "Tocobaga," a name that first appeared in Spanish documents in the mid-1560's and is often used to refer to all of the indigenous peoples of the Tampa Bay area during the first Spanish colonial period (approximately 1513-1763).

The most impressive archaeological site in Pinellas County includes a 20-foot high temple mound, one smaller burial mound, and two shell middens, located in Philippe Park in Safety Harbor. The remnants are from a major Tocobaga village dating from 900 to 1500 A.D.

In St. Petersburg, an important facility for the study of our county's archaeological history is the Weedon Island Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center. At the information center, visitors will learn about the history of the island and view artifacts from the Weeden Island people who inhabited the site from 1,000 to 1,800 years ago. The most recent addition to the center is a 40-foot dugout canoe that was discovered in the Weedon Island Preserve in 2011; the dugout canoe is believed to be an estimated 1,100 years old.

#### **Weedon or Weeden?**

Weedon Island is a well-known archaeological site listed on the National Register from which a vibrant Pre-Columbian Gulf Coast culture existed. After excavating in 1923, Dr. J. Walter Fewkes and Matthew W. Sterling of the Smithsonian Institute reported three or four distinct series of mounds. The largest, about 400 feet in diameter and about 27 feet high, was a burial mound. The Fewkes and Sterling excavations established the name for the Weeden Island period cultures and led to the description of an archaeological culture and ceramic series in the central Gulf Coast area.

The name of the island is derived from the property owner in 1928, Tampa doctor and amateur archaeologist, Leslie Washington Weedon, spelled with the letter "o". However, when the Fewkes and Sterling recorded their 1923 findings with the Smithsonian Institute, the name of the archaeological site was entered as Weeden, misspelled with the letter "e". Their original misspelling of "Weeden" to describe the culture persists to this day, while the more accurate spelling of "Weedon" is used to describe the nature preserve and park.

St. Petersburg also includes several mounds and middens indicating earlier villages by the Tocobaga. One mound dating to approximately 1,000 A.D. can be found near the intersection of Park Street and Elbow Lane North. This location is also considered to be the 1528 landing site of Spanish explorer Panfilo de Narvaez. A portion of the site is located in the Jungle Prada De Narvaez Park, and the remaining balance of the site is in private ownership as the Sacred Land Preserve. The site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Just north of the Jungle Prada De Narvaez Park is Abercrombie Park, location of the (now destroyed) Bayshore Homes Temple Mound. This location was the subject of a major archaeological study in 2008. Further, the City of St. Petersburg recently expanded Abercrombie Park and is installing an interpretative outdoor experience to learn more about the archaeological significance of the site.

Maximo Park is located in south St. Petersburg. Dating to 800 A.D., this archaeological site consists of several large shell middens that run 1,200 feet along the shoreline of Boca Ciega Bay.

Finally, Pinellas Point is another location of archaeological significance in the city. The Pinellas Point Temple Mound, generally located near the intersection of Mound Place South and Bethel Way South, includes interpretive signs and the opportunity to walk upon the mound. Local tradition holds that the mound at Pinellas Point was the site where Princess Hirrihigua saved the life of Spanish sailor Juan Ortiz. Some scholars believe the incident was the actual inspiration for the later story of Pocahontas and Captain John Smith. Several shell middens in the area also contain clues to the history of the neighborhood area.

As was the case in much of Florida, a vast majority of the Tampa Bay area's temple mounds, burial mounds, and middens were destroyed as the local population grew rapidly in the early to mid-20th century. Developers sought to level land near the water and road construction crews found that bulldozed shell mounds made for excellent road fill.

Includes excerpts from Wikipedia, <https://www.wikipedia.org>, and a news article written by Marcia Biggs titled "Discovering the Indian Mounds of Tampa Bay" and published in Bay Soundings: Tampa Bay's Environmental News, 2012.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES PRESERVATION

The City of St. Petersburg first acted to manage its archaeological resources in 1978 when it conducted an archaeological survey within three (3) designated areas of the city. This effort was later expanded in 1987 when a citywide archaeological survey was performed using literature review, informant interviews, predictive modelling, and field testing. The results included creation of a site inventory and location map, assignment of levels of archaeological sensitivity for the various sites, and recommendations for managing the identified archaeological resources. These determinations were subsequently reinforced within the 1991 publication titled *City of St. Petersburg, Florida, Archaeological Resources Management Plan* ("Management Plan").

Pursuant to the Historic and Archaeological Preservation Overlay, City Code Section 16.30.070.3.1, any site plan or building permit, which shall include ground disturbing activity in a Sensitivity Zone 1, is required to obtain a Certificate to Dig. Sensitivity zones are identified on the Archaeological Sensitivity Zones Map:

"Ground disturbing activity means any excavation, filling, digging, removal of vegetation and/or trees, or any other activity that may alter or reveal an archaeological site and may include, but is not limited to, excavating soil for the placement or removal of pilings, posts, footers, power poles, fence posts, large trees or plants, septic tanks, in ground water features, ponds, swimming pools,

hot tubs, water and sewer lines, drainage ditches, and the extensive grading of virgin soil.”  
16.90.020.3

Subject to City Code and the Management Plan, the City may require bounding, assessment, protection, mitigation, and curation, as typical conditions of approval for issuance of a Certificate to Dig.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATIONS

Archaeologically sensitive lands are classified into one of five categories:

- Local (Archaeological) Landmark
- Sensitivity Level 1: Landmark Eligible Sites
- Sensitivity Level 1: Potentially Landmark Eligible
- Sensitivity Level 2
- Sensitivity Level 3

### Local (Archaeological) Landmark:

Archaeological sites that have been designated a local landmark by formal approval of the St. Petersburg City Council.

### Sensitivity Level 1:

Archaeological sites that have been evaluated and are *landmark eligible* or *potentially landmark eligible*.

*Landmark eligible sites:* These sites are considered to be of such obvious importance that no further assessment is necessary. These sites should be preserved, if possible.

*Potentially landmark eligible:* These sites appear to contain information that may be important to regional and local prehistory; however, further archaeological work is necessary to confirm this. These sites should be preserved, if possible, since it is likely that important information is contained within them.

### Sensitivity Level 2:

Archaeological sites that are areas of high potential based on predictive modelling, but have not been evaluated.

*Eligibility not determined:* These sites do not include enough information to make an informed assessment of landmark status.

### Sensitivity Level 3:

Archaeological sites that have been evaluated and are *not landmark eligible*.

*Not eligible for landmark status:* These sites have been evaluated but are not considered to be regionally or locally significant resources. The amount of archaeological data at these sites is so little and ephemeral that they cannot make a significant contribution to local prehistory, or they

have been destroyed or redeposited by recent development. No further archaeological work is necessary at these sites.

Due to State law, the City of St. Petersburg is prohibited from making the Archaeological Sensitivity Zones Map publicly available online. However, upon request, city staff can show you the map in the office, provide you information about the status for a piece of property by telephone or email, and assist you with specific archaeological questions.

## EVALUATION PROCESS

**Local (Archaeological) Landmark:** Owner is required to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness.

**Sensitivity Level 1, Landmark Eligible Site:** A Certificate to Dig is *required*.

The following procedures will be considered and may be required as part of any Certificate to Dig that impacts a Sensitivity Level 1, Landmark Eligible Site:

- *Bounding* – The bounding of an archaeological site is accomplished in the field by a combination of above ground observation and subsurface testing performed by an archaeologist and is followed by a perimeter line establishment performed by a land surveyor, if needed. The bounding of an archaeological site shall be delineated on the proposed site plan, so that the proposed development may be designed to avoid potential archaeological impacts. In some cases, an archaeological site may have been previously bounded.
- *Assessment* – Following the bounding of an archaeological site, the archaeologist shall prepare a report of their archaeological findings, including assessment of the site as landmark eligible or not eligible. The findings may also suggest mitigation techniques for accommodating the proposed development while minimizing any potential impact to the archaeological resources.
- *Protection* – Measures taken to protect an archaeological site may be temporary or permanent. When a site is to be protected, it is to be shielded from deterioration, damage and artifact collection. Site protection is designed to sustain the existing form and integrity of the site. Protection methods are expected to be recommended by the archaeologist performing the assessment. These may include:
  - Designing a site plan to avoid potential archaeological impacts. The design action may include the establishment of a protective covenant or preservation easement between the property owner, the city, or any other authorized entity.
  - Under certain circumstances, protection may be achieved by means of fencing, on-site public notices, covering with fill or paving over buried archaeological resources, stabilization, or a combination of the two.

- Care shall also be given to avoiding indirect impacts as a result of development site preparation and construction activities. Examples include disturbance by the moving of heavy equipment, delivery of construction materials, and digging of utility line trenches. Therefore temporary buffers, fencing, or other means of site protection may be required during site preparation and construction.
- *Mitigation* – Excavation of these archaeological sites should be avoided where possible and occur only as an option of last resort if development impacts are unavoidable. If it is infeasible to preserve the site, in whole or in part, then the owner or applicant shall hire an archaeologist to perform a more complete excavation of the impacted portion of the bounded archaeological site. The purpose is to recover and interpret the information which the site contains before it is permanently damaged or lost.
- *Curation* – Artifacts (objects made or used by humans) recovered during the ground disturbing activities shall be properly curated. If artifacts are recovered, they shall remain in the care of the professional archaeologist for the duration of the appropriate analysis. Once analysis has been completed and a report submitted to the Division of Urban Planning and Historic Preservation, the artifacts shall be returned to the property owner:
  - a. The property owner may choose to keep the artifacts. The property owner is *encouraged* to maintain a record of the individual objects and any associated materials and to protect the materials by storing them in an environment that protects against deterioration.
  - b. The property owner may also choose to sell, loan, or donate the artifacts to a museum, educational institution with suitable curatorial facilities, or similar. City staff may assist in identifying appropriate institutions and contacts, if requested.
  - c. Any person who removes or attempts to remove artifacts, except in the course of activities allowed under this Certificate to Dig, is subject to a \$500.00 per day fine for each violation, and shall forfeit to the City all archaeological resources collected.
  - d. If human skeletal remains are found, the property owner, person in possession, or applicant for this Certificate to Dig shall notify City staff and comply with all relevant state laws (currently F.S. §872.05).

**Sensitivity Level 1, Potentially Landmark Eligible Site:** A Certificate to Dig is *required*.

Review procedures and requirements identified as Sensitivity Level 1, Potentially Landmark Eligible Site shall be the same as properties identified Sensitivity Level 1, Landmark Eligible. See above for more information.

**Sensitivity Level 2:** A Certificate to Dig is *not required*.

Property owners are encouraged to learn more about the history of their property. Although not required, it is *recommended* that a professional archaeologist be hired to monitor any ground disturbing activities. The professional archaeologist will provide helpful information to avoid indirect



impacts to any archaeological resources as a direct result of development site preparation and construction activities.

**Sensitivity Level 3:** A Certificate to Dig is *not required*.

## REFERENCES

For specific information related to a Certificate to Dig, please contact the City of St. Petersburg's Urban Planning and Historic Preservation Division. For general information relating to the study of archaeology and preservation of archaeological sites, please contact:

Jeffrey T. Moates, M.A., RPA, Director  
West Central & Central Regional Centers  
Florida Public Archaeology Network  
University of South Florida, Department of Anthropology  
Office: (813) 396-2327  
Email: [jmoates@usf.edu](mailto:jmoates@usf.edu)  
Website: <http://www.flpublicarchaeology.org>

Mary Glowacki, Ph.D.  
Bureau Chief, and State Archaeologist  
Florida Division of Historic Resources  
Office: (850) 245.6444  
Email: [mary.glowacki@dos.myflorida.com](mailto:mary.glowacki@dos.myflorida.com)  
Website: <http://dos.myflorida.com/historical/archaeology>

## SOURCES

1. Austin, Robert J. *An Archaeological Survey of the City of St. Petersburg, Florida*. Planning Department of City of St. Petersburg, Florida and Piper Archaeological Research, Inc. St. Petersburg, Florida. 1987.
2. Piper, Harry M., Jacqueline G. Piper and Joan Deming. *Archaeological Survey of the Urban Redevelopment Program Areas of the City of St. Petersburg, Florida*. Planning Department of City of St. Petersburg, Florida and Piper Archaeological Research, Inc. St. Petersburg, Florida. 1978.
3. *Best Management Practices: An Owners Guide to Protecting Archaeological Sites*. Bureau of Archaeological Resources, Division of Historic Resources, Florida Department of State. Tallahassee, Florida. 2005.
4. Official Website: <http://dos.myflorida.com/historical/archaeology>. Bureau of Archaeological Resources, Division of Historic Resources, Florida Department of State. Tallahassee, Florida.



5. Official Website, Trail of Florida's Indian Heritage: <https://www.trailoffloridasindianheritage.org>.  
Bureau of Archaeological Resources, Division of Historic Resources, Florida Department of State.  
Tallahassee, Florida.



# CERTIFICATE TO DIG

Application No. \_\_\_\_\_

## List of Required Submittals

### Included in this packet:

- General Information
- Application
- Narrative

### Only complete applications will be scheduled for processing:

- Completed Certificate to Dig application form**
- Application fee (\$50.00)**
- One- and Two-Unit Residential Property**
  - Cover letter, *including* site address, parcel identification number, property owner, agent
  - Boundaries of site
  - Aerial Photo
  - Site Plan, *including* location on the site of all proposed ground disturbing activity
- Commercial or Three or More Unit Residential Property**
  - Cover letter, *including* site address, parcel identification number, property owner, agent
  - Report from professional archaeologist
    - Boundaries of site
    - Aerial photo
    - Site Plan, *including* location on the site of all proposed ground disturbing activity
    - Significance of the site
    - Analysis of the impact of the proposed activity on the archaeological resources
    - Recommendations concerning avoidance of adverse impacts or mitigation
- Other relevant information, photographs, and illustrations.**

Planning and Economic  
Development Department

Urban Planning and  
Historic Preservation  
Division

[http://www.stpete.org/  
history](http://www.stpete.org/history)

Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 2842  
St. Petersburg, FL 33713

Physical Address:  
One Fourth Street North  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

ESTABLISHED 08-11-2017

Completeness review by city staff: \_\_\_\_\_



# CERTIFICATE TO DIG

Application No. \_\_\_\_\_

All applications are to be filled out completely and correctly. The application shall be submitted to the City of St. Petersburg's Planning and Economic Development Department, located on the 8th floor of the Municipal Services Building, One Fourth Street North, St. Petersburg, Florida.

GENERAL INFORMATION	
<b>NAME of APPLICANT (Property Owner):</b>	
Street Address:	
City, State, Zip:	
Telephone No:	
Email Address:	
<b>NAME of AGENT:</b>	
Street Address:	
City, State, Zip:	
Telephone No:	
Email Address:	
<b>PROPERTY INFORMATION:</b>	
Street Address:	
Parcel ID or Tract Number:	
General Location:	

## AUTHORIZATION

By signing this application, the applicant affirms that all information contained within this application packet has been read and that the information on this application represents an accurate description of the proposed work. The applicant certifies that the project described in this application, as detailed by the plans and specifications enclosed, will be constructed in exact accordance with aforesaid plans and specifications. Further, the applicant agrees to conform to all conditions of approval. It is understood that approval of this application by the Commission in no way constitutes approval of a building permit or other required City permit approvals. Filing an application does not guarantee approval.

- NOTES:**
- 1) It is incumbent upon the applicant to submit correct information. Any misleading, deceptive, incomplete or incorrect information may invalidate your approval.
  - 2) To accept an agent's signature, a notarized letter of authorization from the property owner must accompany the application.

Signature of Owner / Agent: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_