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Significant cultural material found on Laurier YMCA project site in Brantford during archaeological assessment

BRANTFORD – During construction monitoring commissioned by Wilfrid Laurier University and the YMCA of Hamilton/ Burlington/ Brantford, archaeologists have discovered a previously unknown archaeological site. The archaeological assessment is part of the site preparation for the Laurier YMCA facility, to be located between Colborne and Water Streets in downtown Brantford.

Despite extensive construction on the property that took place in the 19th century, at least three areas of the archaeological site appear to be intact. The cultural material discovered includes chert flakes consistent with the production of tools, and pottery fragments, which appear to be 1000 to 1500 years old.

Upon discovery, Laurier and the YMCA notified Aboriginal communities that have expressed an interest in archaeological assessments in the area, and invited them to participate in the process. A thorough archaeological investigation of the site is now being undertaken in partnership with the Haudenosaunee Development Institute, the Six Nations Elected Council and the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. This process will include further archaeological investigation through additional excavation, and planning for the appropriate stewardship of the cultural material discovered.

"These are important discoveries," said Brian Rosborough, senior executive officer of Laurier's Brantford campus. "Ensuring that the archaeological site is managed properly and that we are undertaking appropriate community engagement and stewardship activities is a priority for Laurier and the YMCA."

Further archaeological assessment, and planning for the preservation of material, is expected to take two to three months. During this time, other site preparation and construction activity at this location will be limited to protect the site, which is consistent with the guidelines governing archaeological assessment in Ontario.

"The archaeological process is an important step in developing a facility that will enhance the health and wellness of our communities and we're pleased this process creates an opportunity to contribute to the understanding of the historical richness that characterizes this region," said Bryan Webber, vice-president, financial development for the YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford.

The award-winning project, which has garnered substantial financial support from all orders of government and the community, is expected to take approximately two years to construct and is scheduled to open in 2017.

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