

Newly discovered cannons to be put on display

Following the discovery of 21 cannonballs and nine cannons at the site for the construction of Digicel's headquarters in downtown Kingston, the Jamaica National Heritage Trust (JNHT) intends to put the artefacts on display at the telecommunication company's new location once construction is complete.

"What we've found will enhance what Digicel is doing there and an exhibition will be there on-site," said Dorrick Gray, acting executive director and technical director of archaeology at the JNHT.

"That location used to be the ordnance yard for the British military. They stored military equipment there."

The discovery was made last Friday by construction workers. JNHT archaeologists were subsequently brought in.

The construction site is of great historical relevance to Jamaica.

Active ordnance yard

One of Jamaica's national heroes, George William Gordon, boarded the HMS Wolverine there and was taken to St Thomas where he met his fate and was hanged for his revolutionary role in the Morant Bay Rebellion in the late 1800s.

According to Gray, the ordnance yard was active in the 1700s and 1800s.

"Research has shown us what the ordnance yard looked like," Gray said.

He also pointed out that in 1943, the ordnance yard was closed and the set-up was relocated to Up Park Camp.

Other artefacts have been discovered in the past, hinting at the communal setting that used to be there.

"Bits and pieces such as plates and jugs have been discovered. We've even come across a Taino ceramic shard," Gray said.

The Taino people are the earliest recorded inhabitants of the Caribbean.

Gray noted there was no reason to make the location a heritage site.

"Development is taking place and we are there to guide them, on a certain level. This find isn't significant and we have to balance development and heritage," he said.

"We could make all of Jamaica a heritage site, but we can't preserve everything, otherwise there will be nowhere to live and work." - jamaicagleaner