

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Under Task 1 of Parent Agreement 1534, Dovetail conducted a Phase I archaeological survey, Phase II archaeological testing, and an architectural analysis of the Burnham House site, New Castle County, Delaware for the Route 301 project. Archival research, including a review of relevant historical documents (e.g., period maps, property and tax records, census data, genealogical information, etc.), was conducted in support of the archaeological investigations. The purpose of this effort was to examine the site's various components in a larger socio-historical context to facilitate a more cohesive interpretation and evaluation.

Archival research showed an extensive history of the larger property dating back to an original grant in 1734 (Baublitz et al. 2006), yet the specific Burnham House site does not appear in the archival record until 1868 (Pomeroy and Beers 1868). The results of the archaeological and architectural investigations conducted at the Burnham House corroborate this site history, suggesting house construction and site occupation dating to the late 1860s.

The architectural analysis concluded that the late-1860s Burnham House was a two-story, five-bay vernacular Gothic Revival I-house with an L-shaped plan. The foundation was formed of uncoursed stone rubble fastened with unlimed mud mortar, and the timber frame was clad in weatherboard. The side-gable roof and the central cross-gable on the primary elevation were clad in ungalvanized standing-seam metal. Photographs and aerial imagery indicate that the structure burned in the 1990s.

The Phase I archaeological examination included systematic surface collection followed by judgmental shovel testing at locations where clusters of artifacts were found and areas where notable artifacts were recovered. This work confirmed that the site boundaries of the Burnham House site are confined to the Phase II testing area and do not extend to the north and south. Some artifact clusters identified during Phase I testing were determined to be field scatters and not directly associated with the domestic occupation of the Burnham House site. As such, it is recommended that these artifacts not receive site or CRS numbers.

Phase II testing within the Burnham House site (7NC-F-157) included the excavation of both close-interval shovel tests and test units. Close-interval testing along with a surface inspection of the site area revealed the remains of nine structures in addition to the Burnham House. This shovel testing also indicated that the majority of artifacts were architectural remains and clustered around these identified structures. Phase II shovel testing also indicated an abundance of bottle and vessel glass, which are commonplace on late-nineteenth and twentieth century-era sites. Also quite evident from close-interval testing was the extensive historic and modern dumping, as well as ground disturbance from heavy machinery. Numerous push and debris piles were noted across the site, indicating that the area had been cleaned/scraped in the recent past. Phase II test units mimicked the results of the close-interval shovel testing in that artifact assemblages were

quite similar and evidence of subsurface disturbance was noted across the site. Test unit excavation at the Burnham House and the various outbuildings confirmed mid-nineteenth century building techniques and subsequent renovation in the early-twentieth century.

The archival research combined with the results of the archaeological testing and architectural evaluation of the site indicates the Burnham House was constructed in the late 1860s. Additionally, analysis showed at least two of the outbuildings (Structures 2 and 9) were likely contemporaneous with the main house. The main house shows evidence of major renovation, which likely took place in the early part of the twentieth century. At the same time, the property underwent updating, involving the construction of multiple poured concrete foundation outbuildings. Structure 6 is evidence of these continued renovations. Exhibiting construction styles and materials indicative of eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth-century construction techniques, Structure 6 highlights continued occupation at the site.

Based on the extensive archival, archaeological, and architectural research conducted as part of this project it is recommended that the Burnham House (7NC-F-157) is Not Eligible for listing on the NRHP under Criteria A, B, C or D. Given the extensive horizontal and vertical disturbance at the site, due to heavy machinery, the site does not maintain subsurface integrity. Additionally, there are numerous better-preserved examples of the properties characteristic of the Period of Rebuilding in St. Georges Hundred (1850–1880). As such, Dovetail recommends no further field investigations at the site.