

2.0 PROJECT SETTING

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The Clarence Street Extension APE is situated inside the Mid-Drainage Zone of the Lower Coastal Plain Physiographic Province. This area is underlain by the Pleistocene sands and gravels of the Columbia formation. These deposits have been extensively reworked, resulting in a relatively flat and featureless landscape (U.S. Geological Survey [USGS] 1931). Topographic elevation in the APE ranges from approximately 25 feet to 35 feet above sea level. Tar Ditch traverses the APE in a northwest-to-southeast orientation. The section of Tar Ditch that runs through the APE is the only aboveground portion of Tar Ditch in the City of Dover. Historic mapping suggests that Tar Ditch was straightened in the late nineteenth century.

The broader region is drained by a series of small creeks, including Puncheon Run and Isaac Branch. Both of these streams are tributaries to the St. Jones River, a tidal drainage that flows east into the Delaware Bay. Isaac Branch provided water power for several early mill seats in the vicinity of the APE. Hambrook-Urban Land (HkB) and Urban Land (Up) soils constitute the soils in the APE (<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov.htm>, accessed September 17, 2010; Figure 3). Hambrook sandy loam soils are located in the western half of the APE; they are productive agricultural soils. The Hambrook soils in APE are no longer pristine and have been severely disturbed because excavations during this investigation show that the Urban Land soils characterizing the eastern half of the APE extend into the central portion of the APE, which is currently delineated (albeit incorrectly) as Hambrook sandy loam. Historic mapping illustrates that the APE and vicinity served a combination of residential and industrial use throughout much of the nineteenth century and all of the twentieth century.

No known archaeological sites are located in the APE. Areas within the APE that have the greatest likelihood to contain precontact sites are those that have level, well-drained soils and lie near water sources, such as the area surrounding Tar Ditch. Pre-European Contact sites were believed to have the highest likelihood of being situated near Tar Ditch, which was hypothesized at the outset of the investigation as the area within the APE that might have experienced the least amount of ground disturbance over the use-life of the APE. Areas within the APE that have the

greatest likelihood to contain historic archaeological sites are those that lie near standing historic structures, or areas near where such structures once stood.