

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The architectural survey of U.S. Route 13 between Loockerman Street and Townsend Boulevard identified nine individual resources 50 years of age or older within the project APE. None of these resources had been previously listed or determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. All of the resources represented part of the mid- to late twentieth-century development of the U.S. Route 13/113 corridor in Dover. This corridor is part of the historic Dupont Highway, which was the first highway constructed in the state and extended from Wilmington to the Maryland border in southern Delaware. The road began as a private venture of T. Coleman du Pont in 1911, but the project eventually came under control of the State Highway Department and was completed in 1923. Like other future highways, the road was planned to bypass what then included the City of Dover and extended through a rural area east of the city. The project area remained rural in character throughout the 1920s and 1930s. However, the construction of a major regional thoroughfare outside of the city provided the opportunity for the development of a second business district readily accessible to highway travelers. Soon, gas and service stations, motels, restaurants, and other service-related industries started to spring up along the Dupont Highway. Today, the highway corridor through Dover is heavily commercialized, with no remnants of its agricultural past remaining.

The U.S. Route 13 corridor within the APE does not constitute a linear district which would meet National Register criteria. The corridor has been repeatedly redeveloped within the past 50 years, and the portion of the highway within the APE features Red Lobster, Olive Garden, and Friendly's restaurants, two modern hotel complexes, and other modern buildings that house local businesses. None of these structures meet the 50-year age criterion, nor would they qualify under Criteria Consideration G, which governs resources under 50 years of age. Owing to the modern commercial character of U.S. Route 13 through Dover, the highway does not appear to constitute a district eligible for listing in the National Register.

None of the nine individual resources documented within the APE appear to meet criteria for individual listing in the National Register. The nine resources include three minimal traditional dwellings and one minimal traditional professional building constructed during the 1940s or early 1950s, all of which are undistinctive examples of common suburban development with no other significant historical associations. Three mid-twentieth-century commercial buildings were also documented during this study. Two of these were service stations, both of which represent undistinctive examples of common roadside commercial architecture from the mid-twentieth century and would not meet National Register criteria. The third commercial building, the Edgehill Shopping Center, is a common example of strip-mall construction which has experienced significant loss of integrity resulting from the application of modern materials. Latex/Playtex Park, the lone industrial resource identified within the APE, was also determined to possess insufficient integrity because of the construction of modern building units which have concealed three of four sides of the original plant and the reconfiguration of the building's main entrance. Finally, although part of a significant historic highway, the portion of the Dupont Highway within the APE does not possess sufficient integrity to be eligible for listing in the National Register. The highway was originally designed as a dualized road, but since 1968 the portion within the APE has been significantly widened to accommodate increased traffic. The highway through Dover has been extensively redesigned and today consists of six lanes with additional turning lanes at all intersections. These lane additions, along with the replacement within the project area of part of the grassy median with concrete islands, have resulted in a loss of the resource's design integrity. Furthermore, the modern twentieth-century commercial development surrounding the highway has diminished the road's integrity of setting and association.

The research and field survey program undertaken for this study has been sufficient to accomplish the stated objective of identifying historic properties within the APE of proposed improvements to U.S. Route 13.