

## *5.0 Eligibility Recommendations*

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## 5.0 ELIGIBILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluations of significance for 7K-F-148B, 7K-F-180, 7K-F-187, 7K-F-194, and 7K-F-195 were conducted according to the National Park Service's (NPS's) *Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Archaeological Properties* (Little et al. 2000). Also employed when appropriate were the *Management Plan for Delaware's Prehistoric Archaeological Resources* (Custer 1986) and the *Management Plan for Delaware's Historical Archaeological Resources* (De Cunzo and Catts 1990).

Archaeological sites may be eligible for NR listing under any of the four criteria that apply to historical sites:

1. If the site is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
2. If the site is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
3. If the site embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
4. If the site yields or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criterion D is most often applied to archaeological sites. In order to identify if a site is NR eligible, it is necessary to identify the type of site and its time period. Assessing the integrity of a site is critical because usually only sites with intact structural or landscape features or sites that are depositionally and chronologically intact can provide important information about the past. Only then can the potential of the information contained in a site be considered in light of archaeologically based research questions, such as those outlined in existing statewide cultural resource management plans (Custer 1986; De Cunzo and Catts 1990; see also Catts and De Cunzo 1999; De Cunzo 2004; De Cunzo and Garcia 1992; Lees and Noble 1990; McManamon 1990; Wilson 1990).

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## 5.1 7K-F-148B

7K-F-148B is located in an agricultural field and contains evidence for precontact-era occupation. Bare Island, Rossville, and generalized stemmed projectile point forms date the occupation to the Late Archaic and Woodland I periods. The site also contains evidence for historic-era occupation. Diagnostic ceramic sherds date the span of the historic component to the late eighteenth to early twentieth century. There is no documentary evidence for historic settlement at this location. No historic-era features were encountered at the site. It is hypothesized that the historic artifacts originated from the practice of field manuring and represent historic field scatter.

The site conforms to the limits of 7K-F-148 as mapped by Diane Gelburd, who designated this section of the site as 7K-F-148B. The field crew identified one possible precontact-era feature that contained numerous (N=133) debitage. The feature may represent a pit that Native American groups used to discard lithic debris. All (N=355) but one historic artifact recovered during the Phase II work were recovered from the A-horizon/plowzone. Precontact artifacts (N=146) were recovered primarily from the A-horizon/plowzone and E-horizon that was encountered sporadically across the site.

Although a few high density zones of historic and precontact artifacts are present at the site, the kinds of artifacts are nonetheless distributed evenly across the site. Prior to intensive plowing, the site may have contained an informative record of Native American settlement in a rarely identified intact ecological setting. Indeed, the setting is considered unique because it represents a rare wooded wetland that one might imagine contained and attracted sought-after plant and animal resources. The site is located near bay-basin features that would have also presumably attracted precontact-era inhabitants. However, it appears that the archaeological deposits have become so disturbed that any inferences based on the evidence would be anemic and largely untenable. Decades, if not centuries, of plowing have likely compromised the temporal and stratigraphic characters of the deposits. Thus, depositional integrity of the deposits is weak at best.

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The importance of the site is limited by the lack of meaningful information about its occupants and its low integrity. The lack of historical data means that the site cannot be eligible under Criteria A and B. No structures and the paucity of features at the site indicate that the site is not eligible under Criterion C. The site lacks chronological and depositional integrity and therefore does not meet the requirement of eligibility under Criterion D. Therefore, the site is not NR eligible and no additional investigations are warranted.

## **5.2 7K-F-180 (Thomas James Site)**

7K-F-180 (Thomas James Site) is located in an agricultural field and on the edge of Clapham Road. It represents the remains of a tenant farmstead established by nineteenth-century peach orchard farmer Thomas James and dates to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Investigations identified an artifact-rich core of the site where TU excavations sought buried features associated with the farmstead. However, there is no apparent distributional patterning among the types of artifacts in the assemblage, and no activity areas were determined to be present. A number of historic features were identified at the site, one of which was a large but narrow (3.5 m by 7 m), shallow (30 to 35 cm deep) depression that contained a temporally mixed artifact assemblage. No foundation was found abutting the edges of the feature, and therefore it seems unlikely to have represented a cellar.

A.D. Marble & Company geo-referenced the 1937 aerial photograph showing the farmstead onto the test locations map and found that the depression was located between the house and the field to the north that abutted the farmstead. Unfortunately, the poor image resolution at the scale required to show the spatial relationship between the depression and complex made it impossible to include it as a figure in this report. Two postholes were identified near the edge of the depression, and A.D. Marble & Company suggests that the depression may represent an animal pen and that the postholes may represent posts for a fence that surrounded the pen. Investigators also discovered a dense glass concentration in context with other nineteenth- and twentieth-century domestic household and architectural artifacts. No pit feature was found in association with the glass cluster, which has been interpreted as the remains of a bottle dump. Plowing probably slowly incorporated the dump into the plowzone. The farmstead was razed in the

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1960s, likely mechanically, as is evident in the disturbed site deposits examined during the investigations.

Little is known about the tenants of the site, and no remains of the structures that stood on the site were identified. Therefore, the site does not meet Criteria A through C. The site does not meet Criterion D because it fails to provide meaningful information as it lacks temporal and depositional integrity. 7K-F-180 (Thomas James Site) is not considered to be an NR-eligible resource, and no additional investigations are warranted at the site.

### **5.3 7K-F-187 (J. Grier Site)**

7K-F-187 (J. Grier Site) is a farmstead established by J. Grier and dates to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although one can trace the evolution of household occupations at the site, the site incontrovertibly lacks archaeological integrity (temporal and stratigraphic) and precludes one from associating any deposits with any specific household or time frame of site occupation. Features that include a stone and brick foundation of the Grier house, as well as a number of postholes, confirm the presence of the J. Grier house and fences inside and on the edges of the complex. However, the remainder of the complex is not located inside the APE. The farm complex was razed between 1968 and 1992 and was likely razed mechanically, which is seems to be confirmed via the comprehensive disturbance of the deposits at the site.

Although the site is clearly associated with nineteenth century “cultures of agriculture” (De Cunzo 2004), which is a concept that directly pertains to the evolution of agricultural economy in Delaware, the site is not associated with any specific events that made significant contributions to this broad pattern; therefore, the site is not NR eligible under Criterion A. The J. Grier family was composed of relatively wealthy, well-known agricultural producers who may have been locally important in nineteenth-century Kent County, but they were not significant persons in the greater American-wide past; therefore, the site is not NR eligible under Criterion B. No standing structure or intact structural remains that might be considered historically distinctive of the work of a master were identified at the site, so the site is not eligible under Criterion C. The lack of archaeological integrity of the site precludes the site from being considered eligible under Criterion D. In sum, the site is not NR eligible, and no further investigations are warranted.

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#### **5.4 7K-F-194**

7K-F-194 is an early-nineteenth-century tenant farmstead site that was located on land owned by Sarah George and occupied by William Smithers. The site contains an artifact assemblage dating to the eighteenth through twentieth centuries. The Phase II evaluation focused on the eighteenth-century artifacts, which turn out to have been associated with the Smithers occupation in the first third of the nineteenth century. The site is primarily a plowzone site, although the field team did identify two possible structural postholes and a modern mechanically excavated pit during the evaluation fieldwork. The team also identified seven fence post postholes in the stripped area. The postholes were truncated, presumably from many years of plowing. Artifact and feature patterning revealed no internal structure to the site, and no activity areas were deduced from the data. The archaeological signature of 7K-F-194 is arguably the result of the overlapping of two historic activities: the early-nineteenth-century William Smithers homestead occupation and the late-nineteenth- through early-twentieth-century field scatter that is probably associated with the nearby 7K-F-187 (J. Grier Site) located adjacent to the south. Any material patterning that might be attributed to either activity has been blurred by many years of agricultural plowing; therefore, the site evinces no temporal and very little stratigraphic integrity, save for the few postholes encountered during the evaluation fieldwork.

Except for the fact that William Smithers was a tenant of Sarah George that lived at the site in the early nineteenth century, little is known about him. Even less is known about any remains of the structure in which he resided. Together, the lack of information rules out eligibility under Criteria A, B, and C. 7K-F-194 clearly lacks the integrity and information potential to be NR eligible under Criterion D. In sum, the site is not NR eligible and deserves no further investigation.

#### **5.5 7K-F-195 (Skeeter Neck Road Site)**

7K-F-195 contains an assemblage of eighteenth- through twentieth-century artifacts evenly distributed in kind and number across the cultivated field. The evaluation fieldwork sought to identify subsurface evidence of eighteenth-century occupation. The team identified three small postholes that were likely associated with fence posts. The site contains no internal site structure, and depositional and temporal integrity are lacking. The site is likely a field scatter associated

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with 7K-F-187 (J. Grier Site) located across the street to the north. The site clearly fails to meet NR eligibility under Criteria A through C, as there are no data about site occupants or structures that stood at the site. The lack of archaeological integrity of the site demonstrated that the site is not NR eligible under Criterion D. In sum, the site is not NR eligible and warrants no further investigation.

## **5.6 Summary and Conclusions**

None of the five sites evaluated herein is considered NR eligible. Archaeological sites are perhaps most often evaluated for their potential to yield information important to history or prehistory. No meaningful or significant artifact or feature patterning was inferred from any of the five sites. This is because the lack of archaeological integrity of each site prohibits each from being eligible under Criterion D. The discovery of either no structural remains or no intact structural remains at any site demonstrates that none of the sites is eligible under Criterion C.

Although 7K-F-180 (Thomas James Site), a tenant farmstead; and 7K-F-187 (J. Grier Site), the farmstead of J. Grier, were associated with individuals who were wealthy, locally important agricultural-productive property owners who helped drive the evolution of the agricultural economy in the Little Heaven region in the nineteenth century, they are not considered significant persons in the collective American past. Therefore, the Thomas James and J. Grier sites fail to meet NR eligibility under Criterion B. 7K-F-194 was associated only with William Smithers, a tenant farmer whose household lived at the site from ca. 1800 to 1830, but background research shows that he was a citizen of no great renown. The remaining two sites could not be associated with any specific individuals. These latter three sites are clearly not NR eligible under Criterion B.

The final criterion for which a property may be considered NR eligible is Criterion A. Eligible properties under Criterion A would be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of American history. As alluded to above, all of the sites are associated with central Delaware nineteenth-century agricultural economy (De Cunzo's "cultures of agriculture" [2004]), which may be arguably considered part of the broader pattern of change through time in the American agricultural economy. However, the lack of data denies A.D.

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Marble & Company from demonstrating how each site might be associated with any specific events that contributed to that broader pattern. Thus, none of the sites evaluated herein is considered NR eligible, and in sum, additional excavations at any of these sites would be unlikely to produce any more information about these sites and their occupants.