

ABSTRACT

A Phase I archaeological survey was completed for the Route 40 Improvements project in New Castle and Pencader hundreds, New Castle County, Delaware. The proposed improvements include the construction of an additional travel lane in each direction along U.S. Route 40 between State Route (S.R.) 896 and S.R. 1, and the improvement of intersections at S.R. 896 and S.R. 72. The project length is 8.1 km (5.0 mi). The Area of Potential Effect (APE) was defined as the extent of proposed cut and fill operations for a total of 103.56 ac (255.91 ac). The APE contains a mixture of intensive commercial and residential development, as well as agricultural fields.

The results of archival research and a geomorphological reconnaissance defined 21 test areas, totaling 5.33 ha (2.16 ac) in area. The remainder of the APE was disturbed (88.75 ha [219.29 ac]) or wet (0.65 ha [1.60 ac]). The 21 test areas were examined through a combination of surface survey and shovel test pit (STP) excavation.

No previously recorded sites were present in the APE; several previously recorded sites had been present but were destroyed by road or commercial construction. Two sites and an Isolated Find were discovered. Site 1, a nineteenth century home site with a cellar depression and well, was discovered outside the APE and does not extend into the APE. It was not evaluated as part of the present project.

Site 2, the Pyle Tenant site, is partially within the APE. This *ca.* 1917-1958 tenant house site included a poured concrete foundation, a well, a privy remnant, and much post-abandonment refuse. A draft context for evaluating twentieth century farm sites is presented, and Site 2 is found to lack the attributes necessary to yield important information. Site 2 is recommended not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Isolated Find 1 is a portion of a non-diagnostic quartz biface. It was found during surface survey, and no additional artifacts were discovered in its vicinity. The biface fragment cannot contribute significant information to our understanding of New Castle County prehistory, and Isolated Find 1 is recommended not eligible for listing in the NRHP.

The proposed Route 40 Improvements project will not affect any archaeological site eligible for or listed in the NRHP. No further archaeological work is recommended.