

ABSTRACT

Phase I archaeological survey and Phase II testing were completed for the Route 40 Improvements project located in Pencader and New Castle hundreds, New Castle County, Delaware for the State of Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT). 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 approximately 8.1 km (5.0 mi). The Area of Potential Effects (APE) was defined as the extent of proposed cut and fill operations for a total of 104.85 ha (259.08 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 20 test areas, totaling 11.48 ha (28.36 ac) in area. The remainder of the APE was disturbed (84.43 ha [208.62 ac]), wet (0.65 ha [1.60 ac]), previously cleared (6.88 ha [17.0 ac]), or access denied (1.43 ha [3.53 ac]). The 20 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. Three historic period sites and an Isolated Find were discovered during the Phase I survey. The C.M. Whitaker House site (7NC-D-255), 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.

The Pyle Tenant House site (7NC-D-256) is located 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 the site is found to lack the attributes necessary to yield important information. The Pyle Tenant House site (7NC-D-256) is recommended as not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Prior to Delaware State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurrence on this recommendation, the entire site was subjected to deep soil removal as part of non-DelDOT commercial development. The site no longer exists.

The Corrie House/Cumberland Farm site (7ND-D-242) is located partially within the APE. This ca. 1830-1940 tenant house site included only artifacts. The site was examined through the excavation of 11 STPs and five 1.0 x 1.0 m (3.3 x 3.3 ft) test units. All portions of the site located within the APE exhibit mixed/disturbed contexts; therefore, it was impossible to identify the occupants of the tenant farm during the nineteenth century. The Corrie House/Cumberland Farm site (7ND-D-242) is recommended as not eligible for listing in the 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 as not eligible for listing in the NRHP. Subsequent to the Phase I survey, the topsoil was graded away from the location of Isolated Find 1 as part of a non-DelDOT park development project.

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