

Chapter 6

EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

The evaluations of significance for Archaeological Sites 7S-C-100 and 7S-C-102, identified in the Phase I and Phase II surveys, have been carried out broadly following the methodology outlined in the National Park Service's *Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Archeological Properties* (Little *et al.* 2000). These guidelines provide a specific framework for developing evaluations, but are not commonly used in CRM surveys (SRI Foundation and ICF International 2007). There is a continuing debate about both the underlying philosophy of archaeological site significance evaluation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and about the methods that should be used to establish it (e.g., Altschul 2005; Little 2005; SRI Foundation & ICF International 2007). In Delaware the state's well developed Historic Preservation Plan structure (Custer 1986; Ames *et al.* 1989; De Cunzo and Catts 1990) is an important tool in conducting evaluations.

A. PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

1. Archaeological Site 7S-C-100

While a limited number of prehistoric artifacts were found scattered throughout the plowzone across site 7S-C-100, one area within the larger historical archaeological site produced a notable concentration of Native American cultural materials along with evidence of intact prehistoric stratigraphy. This area, roughly 200 feet in diameter, was identified approximately 600 feet east of SR 30/Cedar Creek Road and extended northward from the alignment of the proposed new connector road (Figure 6.1). Surface collection operations within this area found two pro-

jectile points, while three excavation units produced moderate quantities of Native artifacts (including ceramics), some of which were recovered from the B horizon and from a prehistoric pit.

The prehistoric pit in Excavation Unit 57 was a shallow feature filled with layered loamy sand [Contexts 3 and 4] (Figure 5.2; Plate 5.3). This feature yielded a quartz/grit-tempered pottery sherd, a piece of wood charcoal, a chert flake and four pieces of sandstone. A broadspear fashioned from grey argillite was recorded from the ground surface within the 200-foot-diameter area during the Phase II surface collection.

Broadspears are generally held to date to the second millennium B.C. and to be special purpose tools, perhaps with non-functional associations. This is emphasized in the local context by the frequent use for these points of non-local argillite, which Custer has suggested was probably brought into the region from the middle Delaware Valley in the form of primary bifaces (Custer 1983: 109). The recovery of this item here may point to connections with the Barker's Landing Complex in nearby Kent County. The quartz-tempered ceramics are too fragmentary for close identification, but are most probably of Wolfe Neck affinity and somewhat later in date than the broadspear (Custer 1983: Table 9)

In summary, a small area of intact prehistoric stratigraphy can be defined within site 7S-C-100 and appears to reflect limited occupation dating from the Woodland I period. Although the data is limited, it is felt that there is potential for some additional significant information from this site, chiefly because of the presence diagnostic artifacts in association with features in the B horizon. These circumstances are suf-

ficiently rare in this type of setting within Delaware to indicate that this cluster of material is eligible for the National Register under Criterion D.

2. Archaeological Site 7S-C-102

The thin expression of Native American occupation identified in the Phase I and II archaeological surveys and designated as site 7S-C-102 covers an area no more than 400 feet in diameter. Three separate surface collection operations (one in each of the Phase I surveys and a third during the Phase II survey) produced a total of 25 prehistoric artifacts that were found widely scattered across the site. These items comprised: a black chert side-notched projectile point of Brewerton type; a small fragment of net-roughened Mockley-type pottery; a jasper biface; a quartz biface; an argillite cobble tool (a chopper); five jasper flakes, three quartz flakes, two chert flakes and two quartzite flakes; and eight fragments of thermally altered rock. Phase I shovel testing found no additional artifacts, while a series of five excavation units dug as part of the Phase II survey recovered only six additional artifacts (a chert flake; a jasper flake; a quartz pebble; two fragments of thermally altered quartzite; and a fragment of quartzite), all found within the plow-zone. No evidence for intact prehistoric stratigraphy or features was noted and the artifact yield indicates a low level of Native American occupation, probably datable to the Woodland I period, now much dispersed by agricultural activity. This site retains little archaeological integrity, has minimal potential for yielding significant new information about Native American lifeways and does not meet the criteria for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. It contrasts with the cluster within 7S-C-100 in the absence of subsurface features and lower artifact density. Occupation at 7S-C-102 may be somewhat later than that in 7S-C-100.

B. HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

1. Archaeological Site 7S-C-100

As is commonly the case with rural properties of the early colonial period, it has proved difficult to establish the identity of the individuals responsible for creating the archaeological signatures on 7S-C-100 (see above, Chapter 4). The first locally situated owner was Alexander Draper in 1731, but it is clear that people had been living on the property for at least a generation before that time. Draper's acquisition may roughly have coincided with the formalization of the line of what is now Cedar Creek Road/SR 30, which was in existence by 1734. Draper's ownership did not last long and in the remainder of the 18th century the property changed hands several times.

Figure 6.1 summarizes the main site elements as they have been defined in this Phase II study. The data is interpreted as showing two house sites, the one closer to SR 30/Cedar Creek Road possibly succeeding the one to the east sometime in the second quarter of the 18th century. In between the two house sites is a less well-defined but still definite mid-18th-century locus that may be an outbuilding or more likely a quarter for servants or possibly slaves. These low density domestic material scatters have also been found on the U.S. Route 301 alignment (e.g. Reedy Island Cart Road Site 4, 7NC-F-153), where it proved equally difficult to locate structural features within the domestic artifact distribution areas.

Multiple postholes and other cut features, particularly at the early/mid-18th-century locus near the road probably denote outbuildings and fences of a farmstead complex. Some of the artifact patterning probably also reflects midden deposits and refuse disposal practices. The brick clamp is undated at this point, and its relationship to the other loci is unclear. Overall, the data from the Phase II studies indicates

that there is certainly good potential for laying bare the layout of a farmstead nucleus in the locus by SR30/Cedar Creek Road, and clear evidence that the complete plan of the late 17th/early 18th-century cellar is recoverable to the east.

One the basis of the Phase II work, the boundary of Site 7S-C-100 has been defined as shown on Figure 6.1. This boundary is drawn with regard both to modern landscape detail and the archaeological data. The western boundary is defined by SR 30/Cedar Creek Road. It is highly likely that a site of similar date lies on the other side of the road and may be related, but this is not factored into the boundary of 7S-C-100. The northern boundary is drawn along the southern side of the originally proposed ramp alignment, since this encompasses the limits of the artifact distributions associated with the site. The eastern boundary is drawn on the same principle. The southeast corner extends into the woods in order to fully encompass the area of the brick clamp. The absence of artifacts from the area to the west permits the exclusion of a triangular area of cultivated field from the site, but the boundary is then run south to intersect with the property line of the modern house that lies south of the site and then returns west to SR 30/Cedar Creek Road south of the early/mid-18th-century house site

Historic Context

The archaeological data from the site points to a rural and agricultural setting for the site, with occupation falling chiefly between the last quarter of the 17th and the last quarter of the 18th century. The brick clamp feature is undated at this point, but probably dates to before *circa* 1875 at the latest. Within the framework of the Delaware State Historic Preservation Plan (Table 6.1) the site therefore relates primarily to the following contexts and themes:

1630-1730±: Exploration and Frontier Settlement.

1730-1770±: Intensified and Durable Occupation.

The site can be expected to be relevant to all four of the research domains (Domestic Economy, Manufacturing and Trade, Landscape, and Social Group Identity, Behavior and Interaction) identified in the Delaware Historical Archaeological Resources Management Plan (de Cunzo and Catts 1990:16-22).

Two specifically agricultural contexts have been developed for Delaware: “*Neither and Desert Nor a Paradise: Historic Context for the Archaeology of Agriculture and Rural Life, Sussex County, Delaware, 1770-1940*” (De Cunzo and Garcia 1993) and *Agricultural Tenancy in Central Delaware 1770-1900±* (Siders et al. 1991). These two documents however apply only peripherally to the period of significance of 7S-C-100. A context developed for the Department of Transportation: *The Archaeology of Farms and Rural Dwelling Sites in New Castle and Kent Counties, Delaware, 1730-1770 and 1770-1830* (Bedell 1999) covers a portion of the earlier time periods. Although 7S-C-100 is in Sussex County it lies close to the Kent County boundary and falls within the Upper Peninsula Geographic Zone in which the majority of the sites discussed in Bedell (1999) lie. The Bedell study includes a useful compilation of sites investigated up to 1999 that can be drawn upon for comparison and synthesis. No further detailed studies of 18th-century farmsteads have been undertaken in the period since this document was produced.

Property Types

Bedell (1999) identifies four agricultural property types for the 1730-1770 agricultural context, and it is reasonable to anticipate these also in the 1630-1730 period.

Table 6.1. Archaeological Site 7S-C-100: Historic Context Framework.

HISTORIC THEMES	CHRONOLOGICAL PERIODS AND THEMES	
	1630-1730 ± EXPLORATION AND FRONTIER SETTLEMENT	1730-1770± INTENSIFIED AND DURABLE OCCUPATION
ECONOMIC TRENDS		
AGRICULTURE	X	X
FORESTRY		
TRAPPING/HUNTING		
MINING/QUARRYING		
FISHING/OYSTERING		
MANUFACTURING		
RETAIL/WHOLESALING		
FINANCE		
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES		
TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION	X	X
CULTURAL TRENDS		
SETTLEMENT PATTERNS AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE	X	X
ARCHITECTURE, ENGINEERING AND DECORATIVE ARTS	X	
GOVERNMENT		
RELIGION		
EDUCATION		
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS		
OCCUPATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS		
MAJOR FAMILIES, INDIVIDUALS & EVENTS		

Source: Ames et al 1989: Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan Figure 1

A *Farm* is “a dwelling house and the outbuildings necessary for the operation of a substantial agricultural enterprise”.

A *Rural Dwelling* is “distinguished from the farm by the lack of outbuildings, making it unsuitable to serve as the center of a major agricultural operation”.

A *Slave Quarter* is a “dwelling area maintained by a slave owner for his or her slaves”.

Workshops are “Sites associated with other nonagricultural economic activities... found in rural areas, sometimes as parts of farms and sometimes as stand-alone entities”. Bedell cites as examples smithies and weaving/dyeing sheds.

The archaeological evidence strongly points to the presence of a farm at the western side of the site near SR 30 in the early to mid-18th century. The late 17th-/early 18th-century cellar hole to the east might be classified as a rural dwelling on the basis of the current evidence, but the quality of the artifacts and the construction of this building suggest strongly that it is the primary structure of a farmstead. An isolated rural dwelling also seems very unlikely at this early stage of settlement. The somewhat diffuse 18th-century artifact scatter between these two loci cannot be characterized at this point. Similar scatters have been found recently at 18th-century sites on the U.S. 301 project. One interpretation is that these are cabins for dependents, slaves or indentured servants, but this is only a hypothesis at this point.

Criteria of Evaluation

The site is not considered to be eligible under either criterion A or B, since historical research does not indicate association with notable historical figures or with significant events.

Consideration was given to eligibility under Criterion C (for properties showing “the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction”). Guidance in Little *et al.* 2000 indicates that Criterion C may be applicable to archaeological properties where they show a “pattern of features common to a particular class of resources”, or where relatively intact architectural remains have been buried through either cultural or natural processes. As with Criteria A and B “heavy emphasis [is placed] on a property looking like it did during its period of significance”. It may prove that this site shows a “pattern of features common to a particular class of resources” if it is fully exposed archaeologically. This may be particularly the case with the late 17th-/early 18th-century cellar, which may retain specific constructional features expressing the cultural affinities of the builders or occupants, but at this phase of investigation this cannot be demonstrated.

The site is however considered to be eligible under Criterion D because of its demonstrated capacity to yield important information in history. The National Register Guidelines identify two characteristics necessary for a property to meet Criterion D:

Data Sets. This refers to the demonstrated presence of artifacts and features in physical relationships that will permit analysis pertinent to relevant research questions. Despite the post-occupation cultivation of the site, the description in Chapter 5 above demonstrates the presence of multiple informative archaeological data sets here.

Relevant Research Themes, and the Ability of the Data Sets to Address Them. The existing state contexts and research trends, site-specific background research,

and the analysis of the archaeological data from the site suggests the following as research themes that are in accord with the overall state plan objectives:

18th-Century Farm Tenancy in Sussex County. Traditions in architecture, farmstead layout and landscape can be studied at this site. Importantly, the apparently sequential development of the site over more than 100 years provides the opportunity to identify and explain change.

The Initiation Date of Anglo-American settlement in Mid-Drainage and Mid-Peninsula Divide Settings in Sussex County. The presence of several types of temporally diagnostic artifacts in stratified contexts means that it may be possible to establish the initiation of occupation at this site to within a decade or two. It already appears likely that this early site may call into question some of the assumptions about settlement development in the 1630-1730 period.

The “Lower Delaware Valley Culture”. The heterogeneous and syncretic nature of colonial culture in the Delaware Valley has long been noted (Fisher 1989, Glassie 1968, Bedell 1999:89-92). The three Lower Counties that became Delaware fully partook of this because of the Swedish/Finnish and Dutch components to the ethnic mix, and the close counties’ proximity the somewhat different, and heavily English, tobacco/slave society of the Chesapeake. The acquisition of data on the layout of individual buildings and of the farmstead as a whole, and the identification of foodways (potentially through faunal and other organic material analysis but more likely through the identification of specific artifact types such as distinctively Dutch ceramic vessels) can be framed to address this broad issue.

Assessment of Significance

Because of its demonstrated ability and potential to address important research questions, Site 7S-C-100 is considered to be significant at the regional level.

Integrity Assessment under Criterion D:

National Register guidance identifies seven aspects or qualities of integrity. These are briefly discussed below.

Location: The site meets National Register Integrity for location, since it lies at its original location, the general character of which remains comprehensible.

Design: Under Criterion D, the Design component of integrity refers to the preservation of intra-site patterning within the archaeological record, expressed as “the preservation of distributional information in the plowzone, and the presence of subplowzone features” (Bedell 1999). Archaeological Site 7S-C-100 clearly possesses this quality.

Setting: The setting of the site does not contribute to its significance, although its still-agricultural quality may convey some sense of the landscape during the period of significance.

Materials: “Under Criterion D, integrity of material is usually described in terms of the presence of intrusive artifacts/features, the completeness of the artifact/feature assemblage, or the quality of artifact or feature preservation”(Little *et al.* 2000). Archaeological Site 7S-C-100 has demonstrated good quality preservation of artifacts and features and an evidently intact late 17th-century house cellar or basement.

Workmanship: This quality is not considered relevant to this site.

Feeling and Association: The site does not possess either of these qualities.

2. Archaeological Site 7S-C-102

No significant historical archaeological resources were located within this site and there is no basis to consider it for National Register Eligibility discussion.

Eligibility

Since Archaeological Site 7S-C-100 has significance under Criterion D and has demonstrated integrity of Location, Design and Materials, it is considered to be Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and is therefore subject to the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historical Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended).

Summary Statement of Significance

Archaeological Site 7S-C-100 is eligible for the National Register under Criterion D as an example of a well-preserved farmstead site with at least two foci, occupied from the last quarter of the 17th through the last quarter of the 18th century on present evidence. The site shows considerable integrity and has the potential to provide information on research topics identified in State of Delaware Historic Context documents and more widely in regional historic, archaeological, and ethnographic literature. A substantial body of data from at least a dozen other 18th-century farmstead sites in the State provides an important basis for comparison and analysis. The site shows evidence for changes in layout through time and, based on current research, is predicted to contain a wide range of information on 18th-century farm buildings and farmstead layout. Artifact assemblages are expected to throw light on aspects of foodways and economic status and networks. The presence of late 17th-century artifacts on the site identifies this as one of a small number of pre-1700 sites so far identified in Delaware.