

2.0 METHODS

2.1 Background Research

Prior to the initiation of the geomorphological and archaeological fieldwork, background research was conducted. Background research for the project included the examination of the Delaware archaeological site files, the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) files, the historic resources inventory files, reports documenting previously conducted cultural resource studies, relevant state-wide historic contexts, and historic as-built roadway plans housed at the SHPO and DeIDOT offices. In addition, information about the history of the project APE was provided during informal interviews with local informants. In addition, McCormick, Taylor and Associates, Inc. (MTA) and DeIDOT personnel provided information regarding previously completed historic structures research in the S.R. 26 Improvements project APE.

2.2 Fieldwork

The S.R. 26 Improvements project Phase I fieldwork was conducted in two stages. The first stage was a geomorphological reconnaissance of the project APE in order to assess the nature of the landforms and soils within it, and to determine if appropriate areas existed for the implementation of Phase I archaeological survey procedures. Geomorphological investigations included the examination of the soils/sediments contained in the project APE, *via* expedient hand excavated auger borings, in order to determine the presence or absence of *in situ* soils, slope, microrelief, the depth of potential cultural deposits, and any areas of modern disturbances which would preclude the preservation of buried archaeological resources. Areas with less than 15 percent slope, no obvious disturbances (e.g., cut and fill or grading operations, below ground utility installation), relatively intact, well-drained soil horizons, and those adjacent to existing cemeteries were chosen as appropriate locations for Phase I archaeological fieldwork. The results of the geomorphological investigations and recommendations for Phase I survey were presented in a report previously submitted by Skelly and Loy, Inc. to DeIDOT and the Delaware SHPO (Gundy and Sams 2003).

Phase I archaeological field procedures consisted of a visual examination of the entire project APE, followed by subsurface testing of 22 of the 24 test areas delineated during the geomorphological reconnaissance. During the survey, it became apparent that due to on-going

development in the project APE, two of the original test areas were no longer testable, leaving 22 to be tested. All of the test areas, with the exception of Test Areas 7, 10, and 21, were surveyed *via* pedestrian reconnaissance in concert with hand excavated shovel test pits (STPs). STPs were spaced at 15.0 m (49.2 ft) intervals along transects within each test area. Radial (retest) STPs were emplaced at 5.0 m (16.4 ft) intervals around culturally positive STPs. All of the STPs were excavated by arbitrary 10.0 cm (3.9 in) levels within natural strata to a minimum depth of 10.0 cm (3.9 in) into the culturally sterile subsoil. All of the sediments recovered from each STP were screened through 0.64 cm (0.25 in) mesh hardware cloth. Information regarding the soil texture and color, depth of any cultural materials recovered, and any soil disturbance was recorded on Skelly and Loy's standard excavation forms.

Three test areas, Test Areas 7, 10, and 21, are portions of the proposed roadway improvements project that are adjacent to existing historic cemeteries. These three test areas were specially surveyed to make sure that no unmarked graves will be disturbed by the proposed roadway construction. Although there are several remote sensing methods for identifying possible grave locations, the delineation method with the highest clarity is the removal of the topsoil in order to see any stain/discolorations in the subsoil that might indicate a grave shaft. This is the method that was chosen to survey Test Areas 7, 10, and 21. By limiting soil removal to just the topsoil, no coffin, coffin hardware, or human remains were disturbed during the delineation. Once the topsoil was removed, the exposed subsoil was manually cleaned (shovel shaved) in order to identify any soil anomalies. Test Area 7 is adjacent to the Messick Cemetery. Due to the constricted size of the test area, the topsoil was removed by hand shoveling. The stripping removed the topsoil in order to expose the topsoil/subsoil interface where the stains of unmarked graves would be identifiable, if present. Test Area 10 is adjacent to the St. Georges Cemetery. Due to the presence of buried utilities, hand excavation of the topsoil was accomplished in Test Area 10, as well. Test Area 21 is adjacent to the Mariners Bethel Cemetery. Due to the size of the test area, it was surveyed using mechanical stripping of the topsoil.

Daily field notes and STP excavation information were kept by the field directors. Field data were recorded on standardized field forms and were supplemented with notes made on the project maps, as warranted. The fieldwork was documented *via* 35 mm and some digital photography.

2.3 Laboratory

Recovered artifacts were transported to Skelly and Loy's laboratory in Monroeville, Pennsylvania, where they were processed. Once in the laboratory, all recovered artifacts were recorded, washed/dry brushed, sorted by class, labeled, and re-bagged. Each recovered artifact was individually examined and described. Artifacts were first divided into major categories according to material type, and then further subdivided into more specific functional or typological categories within each type. Artifacts were prepared for curation at the Delaware State Museum according to their guidelines (Delaware SHPO 1993). Provenience information and an artifact catalog are included as Appendix B. The Phase I survey of the S.R. 26 Improvements project APE yielded only eight historic period artifacts.

2.4 Curation

All project materials related to the S.R. 26 Improvements project Phase I archaeological survey are temporarily stored at Skelly and Loy's Monroeville facility. Permanent curation of the project materials will be with Delaware State Museums.