

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

A. PROJECT BACKGROUND

This report is an Evaluation of Significance study of archaeological resources associated with the Reedy Island Cart Road Site 4 [7NC-F-153], first identified in Phase I studies of this portion (Section 1) of the U.S. Route 301 alignment, and of an adjacent portion of contiguous survey area A&HC 5 along the southern boundary of the 7NC-F-153 site area (Figures 1.1 and 1.2) (Archaeological and Historical Consultants, Inc. 2009, 2010; Hunter Research, Inc. 2010; 2011a). This Phase II Evaluation of Significance was the subject of a detailed management summary report in November 2011 (Hunter Research, Inc. 2011b). The current report is an expansion of that document, presenting the Evaluation of Significance in more detail, and including a developed depositional model for predicting the physical survival of features relating to 17th- and 18th-century cart roads in the U.S. Route 301 project area (Appendix E), which forms the theoretical basis for the Alternative Mitigation study presented in the separate report that follows this one.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) will construct a new alignment for U.S. Route 301 in southern New Castle County, Delaware, from just south of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal as far as the Maryland state line southwest of Middletown (Figure 1.1). In November 2007 a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was signed by the Federal Highway Administration, the Delaware State Historic Preservation Officer (DESHPO), the Maryland State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Delaware Department of Transportation. This MOA, prepared pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended) and to 36 CFR

800, sets out the procedures to be followed for historic properties (Federal Highway Administration 2008, Attachment D). This study is one of a now-extensive series of reports prepared for DelDOT on the cultural resources and historic properties of the highway corridor.

For archaeological resources, the MOA stipulations include the following:

1. Phase I identification surveys and, if necessary, Phase II National Register eligibility evaluation surveys, within the APE.
2. Submittal of reports by DelDOT to the Maryland and Delaware State Historic Preservation Officers.
3. Procedures for making National Register eligibility determinations.
4. Treatment of adversely affected eligible archaeological resources, including documentation through research-oriented programs of archaeological data recovery. Such programs will include a public participation plan.
5. Procedures for the treatment of human remains.
6. Curation of artifacts with the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs.
7. Procedures for addressing changes to the U.S. Route 301 project design.
8. Procedures for addressing late or unanticipated discoveries in accordance with 36 CFR 800.13.



Figure 1.1. General Location of the U.S. 301 Selected Alternative Project Corridor. The area covered by this report is indicated. Source: Federal Highway Administration and Delaware Department of Transportation 2007:Figure I-2.

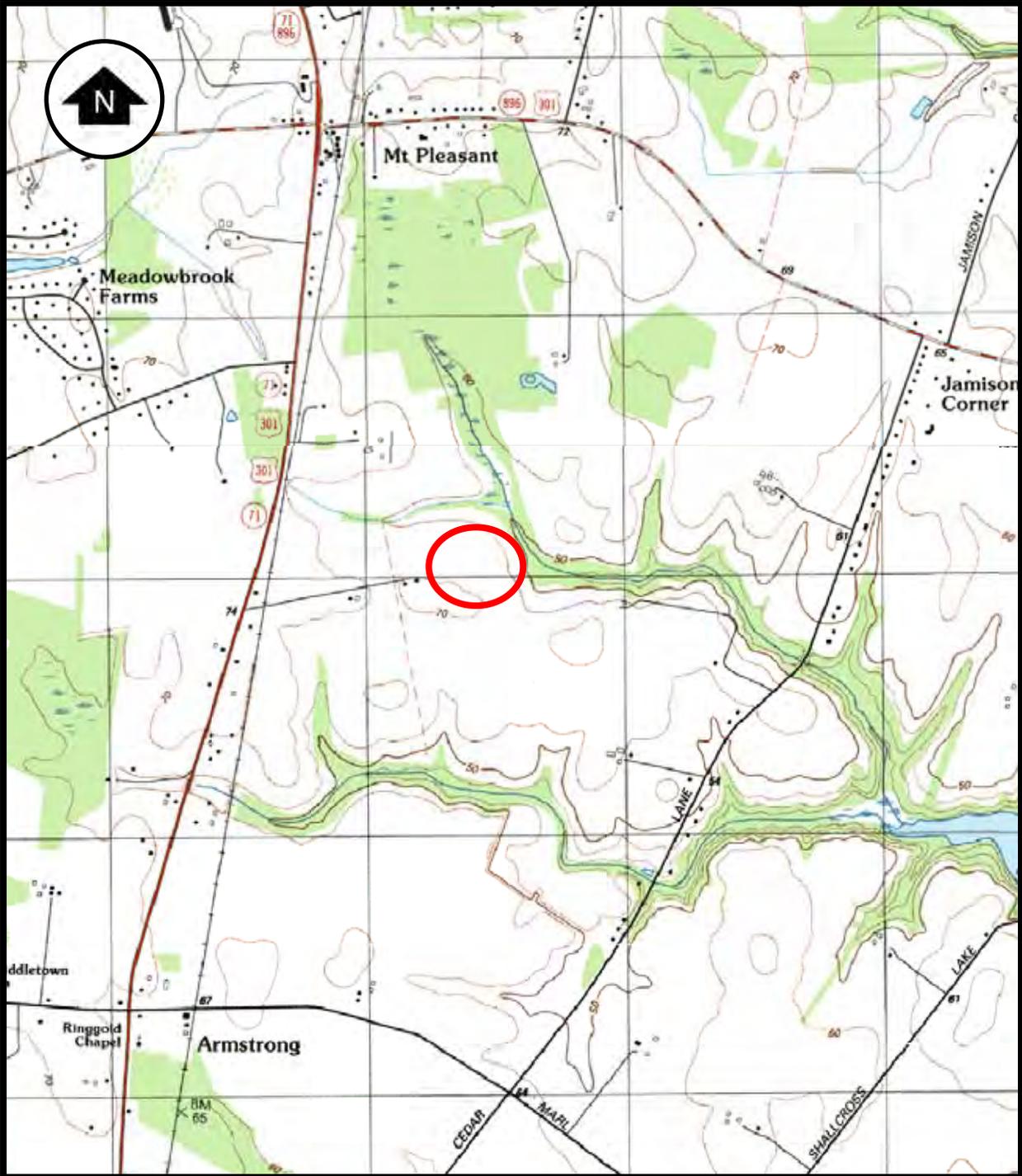


Figure 1.2. Detailed Location of the Phase II Investigations of the Reedy Island Cart Road Site 4 (7NC-F-153, N14533), and a portion of adjacent Survey Area AHC 5. Source: USGS Middletown, Delaware Quadrangle, 1953, photorevised 1986.

The data and research for the Phase I work was presented in:

Archaeological and Historical Consultants, Inc.

2009 Phase IA Archaeological Survey and Testing Strategy, US Route 301 Project Development Purple Section 1, St. Georges Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware. Prepared for Delaware Department of Transportation, Dover, Delaware.

2010 Management Summary, Phase IB Archaeological Survey, Purple Section 1, U.S. 310 Project Development, New Castle County, Delaware.

Hunter Research, Inc.

2010 Delaware State Historic Preservation Office Cultural Resource Survey (CRS) Forms:Reedy Island Cart Road 4 (7NC-F-153, N14533).

2011 Delaware Department of Transportation, U.S. Route 301, Section 1 New Areas (and Section 2, Area 17), St. Georges Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware: Phase IB Archaeological Cultural Resource Survey.

B. PHASE I RESEARCH

Historical research had traced the ownership of the property back to 1780 (Archaeological and Historical Consultants, Inc. 2009). The area was examined through a surface collection, and through 39 shovel tests and four excavation units (Hunter Research, Inc. 2011a:3-38 through 3-51). Prehistoric materials from the area dated from the Late Paleo-Indian/Early Archaic periods through the Woodland II period and suggest repeated short-term hunting camps over a long period of time. Four clusters (loci) of historic artifacts dating from the late 17th through late 18th

century were identified, and it was suggested that there may have been a sequential occupation of this piece of land, which lies along the north side of the Reedy Island Cart Road.

The current study investigates the southern pair of loci, identified as 2 and 4. The Phase I artifact assemblage suggested an occupation beginning *circa* 1690, or possibly earlier, and extending to *circa* 1790. Architectural artifacts from the site and data from Excavation Unit 1 demonstrate that an identified structure in the northeast part of the area (beyond the current impact and study area) had a brick foundation for a wood-framed superstructure. The building had a cellar extending four feet below the surface, and measuring approximately 16 feet by 20 feet (Hunter Research, Inc. 2011a: 3-39 through 3-53).

Also included in the current investigations was A&HC Area 5, comprising a segment of the main alignment immediately south of the proposed Borrow Area in which Loci 1 through 4 of site 7NC-F-153 lie.

C. PHASE II RESEARCH

It was apparent from the Phase I studies that Loci 1 and 3 of 7NC-F-153 possessed a high degree of integrity, and there was a consensus between the Delaware Historic Preservation Office and DelDOT that they were to be treated as eligible for the National Register. The design of the proposed borrow area was modified to exclude the northern part of 7NC-F-153 containing these loci, which will be permanently preserved *in situ*.

The eligibility status of the much lower density Loci 2 and 4 was less clear, and it was felt that a Phase II study of these was required. Additionally, it was appreciated that the southern property boundary of the

site, which is traversed by the U.S. Route 301 alignment, was on the predicted alignment of one of the cart roads (see below, Chapter 2).

The chief objectives of the Phase II investigations were:

1. to define the horizontal and vertical limits of the archaeological resources,
2. to establish the integrity of these resources.
3. to develop preliminary interpretations of the data and function of the sites within the established Delaware historic contexts framework (the Domestic Economy and Landscape domains were considered likely to provide the thematic framework for evaluation), and
4. to undertake supplementary historical research to contribute to the framing of contextual statements and evaluation considerations. Specifically, the nature of the activity areas represented by the artifact concentrations in Loci 2 and 4 was to be characterized, and geophysical survey and follow-up investigations were to be undertaken on the predicted alignment of the Reedy Island Cart Road.

