APPENDIX VII

PUBLIC INFORMATION HANDOUT

1981 - 1983

STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
P. O. BOX 778
DOVER, DELAWARE 19901

W. M. HAWTHORN FARMSTEAD AND PREHISTORIC OCCUPATION SITE

A historic and prehistoric cultural resource mitigation program is being conducted by the Delaware Department of Transportation, Division of Highways, and the Federal Highway Administration in conjunction with University of Delaware, Department of Anthropology archeologists at the W. M. Hawthorn Farmstead and Prehistoric Site. The mitigation is necessitated by the widening of New Churchman's Road which is intended to provide a safer, wider facility to accommodate the increased development and anticipated traffic volumes and patterns resulting from the upgrading of Routes 4 and 7.

The site is located in a region of very early settlement in northern Delaware. Archival research suggests that it may be situated on a tract of land originally patented in 1672. The site is located about 1½ miles north of the village of Christiana, a 17th century town which was an important portage point to the Chesapeake Bay into the 19th century. Two 18th century towns are also located near the site: Ogletown about two miles west, and Stanton about 2½ miles northeast.

The W. M. Hawthorn Farmstead is an early-19th century farmstead which contains a late 18th century occupation. Centered around a now-demolished, early-19th century residence the site includes: a brick-lined drain between the house rubble and New Churchmans Road; a 20'x40' above-ground cement barn or stable foundation 150' south/southeast of the house rubble; a brick-lined subsurface feature (probably a cistern) 250' south of the house rubble; a subsurface stone foundation and nearby mortar capped feature located northwest of the house rubble; and a deteriorating stone springhouse located 250' northeast of the house rubble and across New Churchmans Road.

The photograph, taken of the farmstead circa 1960 while the house and barn/stable were still standing, indicates that the house was of a vernacular architectural style common to the Mid-Atlantic region throughout the 19th century. It appears to be two rooms deep, two rooms wide with a central hallway between them, and two stories high with a low pitched roof, wide front porch, internal gable-end chimneys, and a raised basement. Except for the overgrowth and demolition and deterioration of above ground structures the site probably looks much the same as it did during its active periods of occupation.

The significance of the Hawthorn Farmstead lies in the fact that no similar farmsteads in the region have been excavated and reported on for comparative purposes related to artifact patterning or distribution. Because archival investigations of the site have provided limited information in studying the farmstead, archeological investigations must be relied upon. Survey results have located one area of late-18th/early-19th century artifact concentration at the site distinct from the late-19th and 20th century artifacts recovered elsewhere at the site, possibly indicating two changing activity areas through time. The site has been shown to be archeologically undisturbed (except by the construction of New Churchmans Road which disturbed only the area under and immediately adjacent to the road) and contains a full complement of recoverable data on its entire period(s) of occupation. Specifically, because of the separate, undisturbed areas of cultural materials dating to differing periods of occupation, the site retains information concerning the variation in spacial utilization of a farmstead around the residence structure from the late-18th century through the mid-20th century. Hence this site provides the research opportunity to gain a better understanding of the changing lifeways of the Delaware farmer as well as a comparative base for future excavations at other similar sites.

Sub-surface testing also uncovered a layer of buried soil that contained prehistoric artifacts. Excavations revealed the presence of four buried living floors and a storage/refuse feature within the older buried soils. Diagnostic artifacts included stemmed projectile points dating to the Late Archaic (3000 BC) and Early Woodland (AD 1000) Periods. Analysis of the soils at the site shows that they are approximately 3000 - 5000 years old and that they are an in situ deposit buried by later episodes of slope wash from the knoll where the house was located. Therefore, the cultural remains in this area are in place and represent patterned deposits that can be correlated with patterned prehistoric behavior.

The prehistoric components of the Hawthorn Site are significant in that they are likely to yield significant data on regional prehistoric adaptations. During this time period nearby locations are utilized as large semi-sedentary base camps (e.g., the Clyde Farm and Delaware Park sites). The relatively small size of the Hawthorn components indicates a small community; however the presence of a storage refuse pit indicates some degree of settlement stability. Thus, the Hawthorn Site prehistoric components represent a class of site not yet studied in detail in the northern New Castle County, Delaware. Additionally, the site will provide significant comparative data to study the variable processes of growth in residential stability and social complexity in the High Coastal Plain zone.

If you request any further information or particulars concerning this cultural resource project, please contact the site supervisor, David Bachman or Kevin Cunningham, DelDOT Archeologist at 736-3243.