

ABSTRACT

This Historic Context and Reconnaissance Survey Report presents the results of an initial cultural resource planning study conducted in preparation for proposed corridor improvements to U.S. 301 in Pencader and St. Georges Hundreds, New Castle County, Delaware (Figure 1). The purposes of the proposed improvements are to enhance safety, reduce traffic congestion, and improve traffic flow. A number of alternatives are being explored to meet these needs. This report was prepared in conjunction with Rummel, Klepper, and Kahl (RK&K) for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) to assist in the identification of historic properties within the Area of Potential Effect (APE). Generally, the limits of the APE extend from the Maryland state line, north along U.S. 301, to just south of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal (C&D Canal). North of Middletown, the APE extends west and runs along Choptank Road and extends east to SR 1 (Figure 2). The APE will continue to be refined based on the ongoing development of the proposed undertaking.

To prepare this report, previous work relevant to the historical development of the APE was examined and photocopied, including the Cultural Resource Survey (CRS) forms on file at the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office (DE SHPO). A reconnaissance survey of the APE was then conducted to field verify previously documented and/or evaluated resources, identify new resources, and observe resource types. Through the synthesis of the previous studies and the results of the reconnaissance survey, the historical development of the APE was established and relevant property types and registration requirements were developed.

Background research included an examination of previous cultural resource surveys and studies within the APE as well as primary and secondary resources available in local repositories, including the DE SHPO, the DelDOT archives, the Delaware Public Archives, and the University of Delaware. Many previous studies with relevance to the APE were identified (see discussion in Section 5.0 and Bibliography). Twenty-two (22) resources in the APE have been listed in the National Register, and 12 of these were listed as a result of the multiple property nomination form, *Rebuilding St. Georges Hundred, New Castle County, 1850-1880* (Herman et al. 1985) (Figure 3; Table 1). Seven resources have been determined eligible, and eleven resources have been determined not eligible. The number of previously documented resources that have not yet been evaluated for National Register eligibility totals 99 (Table 2). Following background research, the CRS forms collected in the APE were entered into a Geographical Information Systems (GIS) database provided by DelDOT. Historic mapping layers were added to GIS to assist in the identification of dates of construction. The limits of cultural resource surveys in the APE will be mapped and presented in future reports.

In an effort to gain further understanding of the type of resources in the APE, a reconnaissance survey was conducted (Section 6.0). The historic resource survey documented all above-ground features present in the APE by 1962. Using the 1962 aerials mapping and previous documentation, the survey identified the sites of former historic buildings. A total of 81 newly identified resources (not previously documented) are located in the APE (Table 2). Thus, a total of 180 previously unevaluated resources are located in the APE (Table 2). The field survey also revealed that the integrity of six of the previously listed and/or eligible resources has been compromised since the initial period of listing (Table 1). Additionally, the National Register

boundaries of many of the resources were not concisely presented in written and descriptive illustrations in the original National Register nominations (Figure 3). Cases of unclear National Register eligibility and boundaries will be addressed as part of future work efforts in coordination with DelDOT and DE SHPO staff. A summary of the property types and registration requirements identified for the project is provided in Section 6.0, Results of Reconnaissance Survey.

Historic contexts were developed to assist in the identification and evaluation of identified historic resources as they relate to the major historical themes within the APE. The historic themes expand upon the context previously prepared for this project (Siders et al. 1993) and are based on themes outlined in the *Delaware Historic Preservation Plan* (Ames et al. 1989). Historic themes include Agriculture, Residential Architecture, Community Development, Commercial Development, Industry, Transportation, and African-American History and Culture. Information contained in previous reports/contexts was used as a foundation on which to build a more complete historic context of the APE.

The Historic Context (Section 7.0) provides information on the historical development of these themes in the APE. Section 8.0 provides guidance for the National Register evaluation of properties in the APE and is organized by theme. This portion of the report includes descriptions of the identified property types and discusses the frequency of the occurrence of the property type and/or specific examples identified during the reconnaissance survey. Section 8.0 also provides a discussion of the National Register Criteria and Aspects of Integrity required for eligibility.

Section 9.0 outlines recommendations for future work. Following approval of this report by the DE SHPO, CRS-1 and -9 forms will be completed. CRS-10 or update forms will also be provided to the SHPO for previously identified resources located in the APE. The GIS database prepared for this project will be forwarded to DelDOT for delivery to the DE SHPO at a future date.