

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODS

### Background Research

Background research was conducted in order to provide a context for archaeological data that might be recovered during fieldwork. Research into the prehistory and history of the region involved an examination of a variety of sources, including regional archaeological publications, local site reports, and the Delaware Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (BAHP) site files housed in Dover.

These data were utilized to develop tentative locational predictions as to prehistoric and historic sites, and to develop expectations regarding relatively high and low probability areas. Several areas of previously documented Historic Period settlement were noted, including the Belltown area, the Dorothy Dodd property, previously recorded Site 7-S-G-67, and others (see below). Based on this information, such loci were deemed high probability for the presence of historic deposits, and field efforts were directed accordingly.

No previously recorded prehistoric sites were located within the project area. However, certain areas along the Route 1 right-of-way could be considered relatively high probability for the presence of sites, based on a knowledge of prehistoric site locations elsewhere in the vicinity, and on local environmental characteristics. The linear project area does not traverse a wide variety of micro-environments; however, the Route 1 corridor generally follows a series of slight swells or hills, that divide the Atlantic Shore drainages from the Delaware Bay drainages. The project area crosses three watercourses and lies very near two others. All of these watercourses are small, and the Beaverdam Branch and Murphy Branch are the largest. Prehistoric sites in the vicinity are known to be located in direct association with such watercourses (e.g. Griffith 1980; Griffith and Artusy 1977), and thus those portions of the project area lying near these watercourses were considered to be of high prehistoric potential. Based on environmental characteristics or data from other sites, no other areas could be considered inordinately high probability, except that site probability might be expected to converge with distance to water.

### Field Methods

The Phase I archaeological survey discussed herein was conducted in two stages: surface reconnaissance and subsurface testing. Each is described as follows.

### Surface Reconnaissance

Surface reconnaissance included an examination of all exposed ground surfaces within the project area. Very little of the proposed project area offered surface visibility that was conducive to surface collection. The purpose of this task was twofold. The first was to locate and identify areas of archaeological potential, and the second was to identify and document previous disturbance to the landscape. Disturbed areas were described and plotted onto a base map. In some areas, surface reconnaissance was conducted outside of the proposed alignment in order to provide greater surface area visibility as well as to locate previously recorded archaeological sites. It should also be noted that in one area, although surface visibility was 100 percent, subsurface testing was nonetheless conducted due to the narrow width of the exposed area.

### Subsurface Testing

Shovel test units were excavated in order to determine the presence or absence of buried archaeological deposits in areas of poor surface visibility. A total of 283 shovel test units was ultimately excavated. This figure is somewhat less than that originally anticipated, and reflects the presence of considerable previous disturbance in the project area, the extent of which could not be absolutely predicted at the outset.

Shovel test units were placed in the field using easily identifiable landmarks, and unit locations were plotted onto a base map. All shovel tests measured 40 centimeters in diameter, and were excavated in 10 centimeter levels into culturally sterile subsoil. Soil strata were differentiated primarily on the basis of a Munsell Color Chart, and differences in soil texture and composition were also noted on testing logs. All excavated soils were passed through one-quarter inch hardware cloth, and all recovered artifacts were bagged according to provenience. Soil profiles for each shovel test unit were recorded, and a detailed photographic record of the project was maintained, including both black and white prints and color slides.