

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

A. UNDERSTANDING OF PROJECT

The Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) is planning improvements to the intersection of State Route 1, Cedar Neck Road and State Route 30 (SR 30) Southeast of Milford, Sussex County, Delaware (Figure 1.1). The proposed improvements (at September 2009) comprise the realignment of Cedar Neck Road east of SR 1, a “jug handle” ramp system connecting SR 1 northbound with Cedar Neck Road/Wilkins Road, and a connector road (Ramps A and B) running east from SR 30, about 1300 feet south of Wilkins Road, joining SR 1 about 1,800 feet south of Cedar Neck Road (Figure 1.2). The new road alignments traverse agricultural, or formerly agricultural, fields in an upland setting near the headwaters of Beaverdam Brook, and tributaries of Cedar Creek and the Mispillion River. The land slopes down to the northwest immediately north of the project area. To the south of Ramps A and B land slopes down to the south towards an unnamed branch of Cedar Creek.

The purpose of this study is to provide baseline presence/absence information on archaeological cultural resources within the defined Area of Potential Effects (APE) as the first step in the Section 106 process, and also to identify any archaeological properties that have already been placed on or determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. It may be possible to provide preliminary evaluations of significance of newly identified resources at this level of effort.

B. WORK PLAN

The accepted proposal narrative comprised the following:

1. Background Research

A secondary and selective primary source-level historic research program was to be undertaken with the objective of summarizing pre-existing research on the history of the area, with particular emphasis on ownership and development through time, as well as to obtain an overview of prehistoric data and predictive models for the area and of similar landforms (e.g. Eveleigh, Custer and Klemas 1983).

Research was to take place primarily in Dover at the State Archives and the Historic Preservation Office. Extensive use was also to be made of the DelDOT online resources for cultural resource reports and other studies.

Contextual material was to be reviewed, especially De Cunzo and Garcia 1993, Kellogg and Custer 1994.

2. Conference Call with DelDOT and SHPO

On completion of the research a conference call was to be held to address any implications from the research for the fieldwork. Two approaches to archaeological field survey were proposed: plowing and surface collection of the most recently cultivated portion of the APE, and standard shovel testing in the remaining areas. The total area to be investigated was about 18 acres.

3. Fieldwork Preparation

Access arrangements: Ownership and occupancy information and letters of introduction were to be obtained from DelDOT prior to going in the field if necessary. Any personal encounters will be used to learn more about the properties and any site locations. Arrangements were to be made for plowing the identified portion of the APE.

4. Field Survey

Only areas directly impacted by construction within the APE were to be selected for archaeological intervention.

Two approaches to archaeological field survey were proposed. In the most recently cultivated portion of the APE, south of Wilkins Road and west of S.R. 1, plowing of the proposed ramp alignment, amounting to about two acres, was proposed. This was to be followed by surface collection during which any artifacts will be flagged and recorded, collected and mapped. This approach was adopted here partly because the remaining areas do not appear susceptible to plowing because of the anticipated dense root mat in these long-fallow locations, and partly to provide a methodological check on the shovel testing for the other areas.

The remaining areas of direct impact were to be subjected to standard shovel testing, aiming for an overall coverage of about 17 tests per acre. The testable area amounts to some 18 acres, and a total of 300 shovel tests was budgeted to allow for closer interval testing where artifact concentrations are found and to allow for some untestable locations.

5. Analysis

Artifacts were to be processed either in Odessa or in Trenton. Final cataloging and documentation will be undertaken in Trenton.

6. Completion of Report

The report was to be a fully supported technical document meeting DelDOT and DelSHPO requirements and guidelines. Two copies of the draft, and four copies of the final, report and a .PDF version were to be prepared.

C. PREVIOUS WORK AND PRINCIPAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

No specific archaeological cultural resource survey documents relating to this section of SR 1 have been identified, although it does fall within the Milford Study Area of the Route 113 investigations (see below). An undated letter report by Parsons Engineering Science (O'Neill, n.d.) does, however, document investigations for a stormwater management pond at the Bethuel Watson estate site, adjoining the east side of SR 1 at the north end of the APE. In addition to locating historic materials (mostly brick) relating to the late 18th- and 19th-century farm property, two Woodland I jasper bifaces were recovered. Some archival resources were also identified that also cover the present project area, particularly an orphan court map of 1827 and a sale map of 1851.

The general history of the area is presented in standard references (Scharf 1888, Conrad 1908 and Hitchens 1976).

State of Delaware cultural resource survey forms were completed for a number of architectural properties in the project vicinity in 1983. None are located

within the project limits. One standing property, CRS S10315, lies just north of Area 2 (see below, chapter 3). This property was assessed as being of early 20th century date in the 2005 John Milner survey, but the Historic Preservation Office requested that the possibility be considered that this is at least in part the Shockley house shown on the map (Figure 4.3). Even allowing for the imprecision of maps of that era, the present-day structure clearly lies too far to the north to be at the same location as the one shown in 1868. There remains the possibility that the structure was moved. Further investigation may be warranted but was outside the current work scope.

Two important cultural resource studies have been reported from the project vicinity. The Cedar Creek Prehistoric Site [7S-C-71], located about 2 miles southeast of the project area, yielded 48 features and a wide range of lithics and ceramics (Thomas et al. 1973). Cabbage Mill [7-C-61] lies at the SR 30 crossing of Cedar Creek about 1.5 miles south-southeast of the project area. The detailed study of the mill site here also includes historical research and a contextual overview of the area (Resnick and Frye 2005).

U.S. Route 113 (Dupont Highway), which lies about 2.75 miles west of the project area, has been the subject of cultural resource studies for the Delaware Department of Transportation (Louis Berger & Associates, Inc. 1992 [Milford to Georgetown segment], John Milner Associates, Inc. 2004 [Milford study area, including the current project area]; John Milner Associates, Inc. 2005 [historic context for the highway]).

Within the Milford study area, encompassing approximately 41.94 square miles, 1,296 "Cultural Resource Property Points" were plotted within a GIS layer. Of these recorded properties, 32 had archaeological components, of which 18 were prehistoric or had pre-

historic components. None of these resources were in the current project area. The study characterized the area as follows:

...the large majority of currently recorded cultural resources are domestic properties for which dates can be assigned are associated with the period from circa 1880-1940. A significant number of properties date to the period 1830-1880, while smaller numbers of currently recorded properties date to the post-World War II period. A considerable number of the total within the study area have not been assigned time periods.

Historic archeological sites within the study area, while smaller in number, mirror this trend. For Native American sites the number of currently recorded sites is remarkably low. The most prevalent Native American sites have no known time period of occupation assigned. A smaller number date from the Woodland I period, with even less dating to the Archaic and Woodland II periods (John Milner Associates, Inc. 2004: 27).