

Introduction

This report documents the results of archaeological investigations conducted at Site 7NC-E-152, a multicomponent prehistoric site located near the community of Duross Heights, New Castle County, Delaware (Figure 1.1). These investigations were prompted by the Delaware Department of Transportation's (DelDOT) proposed roadway improvement project, encompassing the intersection of Airport and Churchman's Roads, and were conducted for Whitman, Requardt and Associates (WRA) on behalf of DelDOT and the Federal Highway Administration. The archaeological investigations were conducted in accordance with, and pursuant to, the requirements of applicable federal and state regulations, including sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended; the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); the Department of Transportation Act, as amended; the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA); and the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office's (DE SHPO's) *Guidelines for Architectural and Archaeological Surveys in Delaware* (1993).

The Phase I survey for the Airport and Churchman's Road Intersection Improvement Project area, conducted by Kise Straw & Kolodner, Inc. (KSK), initially identified Site 7NC-E-152 along the west side of Airport Road, a short distance north of the intersection with Churchman's Road (KSK 2001). The site is situated atop a low wooded bench or terrace overlooking a series of first-order tributary streams and expansive wetlands associated with the nearby Christina River. Terrain sloped gently downward to the west (Figures 1.2 and 1.3). Sixteen positive shovel test pits (STPs) produced 64 prehistoric artifacts, including a triangular projectile point (Figure 1.4). The work resulted in a recommendation for more intensive Phase II level investigations.

KSK undertook Phase II fieldwork in April and May of 2002 within an area of potential effects (APE) extending 90 meters along Churchman's Road and ranging from 10–20 meters in width (see Figure 1.4). Fieldwork involved the excavation of 25 1-x-1-meter excavation units (EUs), along with a series of 27 close-interval STPs. Completion of these excavations resulted in the recovery of 814 prehistoric and 126 historic artifacts. Native American cultural materials are represented in pieces of lithic manufacturing debitage, a number of both formalized and expedient tool forms, and quantities of fire-cracked rock (FCR). One silver artifact of European manufacture was identified. Initially thought to be a shoe buckle, it was later identified as a Contact-period brooch. Historic materials include a variety of domestic and architectural objects potentially dating to the late eighteenth through twentieth centuries. The latter objects could not be spatially associated with a past historic residence and were not interpreted as comprising a significant cultural component within the larger site.

The Phase II evaluations revealed that Native American materials were distributed throughout the study area in the form of an expansive, generally light scatter of debitage. Within this larger scatter were identified at least four spatially distinct and non-overlapping areas of more concentrated artifact deposits. Based on these data, Site 7NC-E-152 was interpreted as likely representing a series of distinct, short-term Native American occupations associated with past exploitation of locally available resources associated with nearby Churchman's Marsh. Given

Figure 1.1 General vicinity of Site 7NC-E-152 (Source: *Wilmington South and Newark East NJ Quadrangles*, 7.5 Minute Series, USGS 1993).



Figure 1.2 Project area showing Cluster 3 excavation block, facing south.



Figure 1.3 Northern end of project area, facing north.

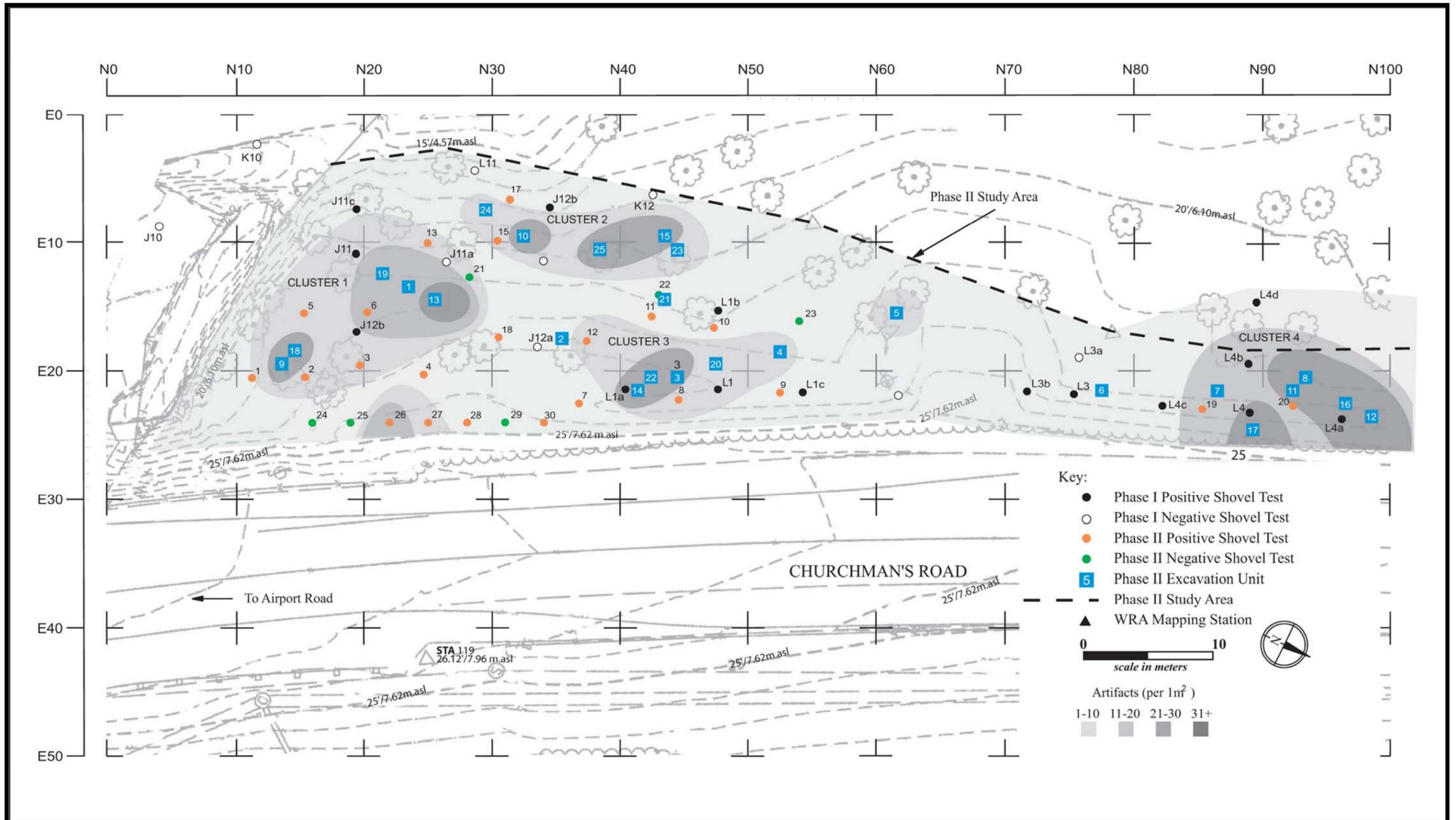


Figure 1.4 Phase I and II test locations and horizontal distribution of artifacts.

the apparent preservation of intrasite horizontal artifact patterning and the recovery of diagnostic artifacts, the site was considered to exhibit a high degree of research potential related to Delaware's prehistory and was recommended for Phase III data-recovery investigations. In 2003, DelDOT and DE SHPO concurred that the site was eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The APE for Phase III investigations was limited to the boundaries of the project's final preferred alternative roadway improvement design, encompassing an area of 550 square meters. The data-recovery fieldwork was completed in two stages, together consisting of 18.4% of the APE. Fieldwork for Stage 1 was conducted by KSK during the spring of 2004 and involved the excavation of 22 1-x-1-meter EUs. Completion of this stage resulted in the recovery of 1,628 total artifacts and the identification of one possible subsurface feature. Consultation with representatives of DelDOT and DE SHPO resulted in the determination that further work was warranted.

Phase III Stage 2 was completed between November 2004 and January 2005, and involved the excavation of an additional 79 units. The additional units were used to recover a more robust sample of associated cultural deposits from each cluster, to help refine site chronology, and to more thoroughly delineate preserved intrasite artifact patterning. The conclusion of this stage of investigation resulted in the recovery of 6,057 artifacts, distributed across a wide variety of artifact classes, including prehistoric ceramics. No features were identified in this stage of fieldwork.

This report details the results of the Phase III archaeological investigations. Following introductory sections that summarize the environmental and cultural contexts associated with the site location (Chapter 2), results of Phase I and II investigations are presented in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 presents the research design, including research questions for Phase III investigations, as well as field, laboratory, and analytical methodologies. Chapter 5 details the analysis and results, inclusive of all phases of investigation, and Chapter 6 presents the summary and conclusions. A series of appendices contain a variety of information related to the project, the qualifications of project personnel, relevant documentation supporting the prehistoric analyses, the Phase II report of geomorphological investigations, and a combined artifact inventory for the site.

Douglas B. Mooney served as Principal Investigator for the project. Richard J. Lewis and Kimberly A. Morrell directed the field investigations. The crew for the three phases of fieldwork included Thaddeus Davis, Mickey Crouse, Andrea Crouse, Michael Conroy, Andrew Stanzaski, Dawn Lewis, Joelle Browning, Dawn Chesheak, Philip Glaubman, Sara Rakus, James Lint, Jason Lewis, and Jason Kershner. Rebecca White supervised the laboratory analysis. Laboratory technicians included Alex Agran, Lisa Geiger, Eileen Kao, Thomas Kutys, Tara Schwartz, and Andrew Stanzaski. Brian Seidel performed the blood-residue analysis. Jennifer Rankin conducted the microwear analysis and related photography. James Lint, Dawn A. Turner, and Scott Hood prepared the graphics. James Burton photographed the artifacts. Paul Elwork formatted the report and edited the text for style and consistency.