

12.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 Summary

Phase III archaeological data recovery investigations were conducted by Skelly and Loy, Inc. for the DeIDOT at NRHP-eligible archaeological site 7NC-B-54 (Ronald McDonald House) as part of the Blue Ball Area Transportation Improvements project located in Brandywine Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware. The data recovery investigations were designed and executed in a manner conducive to identifying, recording, and recovering significant information about the pre-contact period use of the NRHP-eligible archaeological site, and to assure compliance with all appropriate federal and state cultural resources legislation.

Archaeological Site 7NC-B-54 (Ronald McDonald House) was first discovered during the Phase I archaeological survey of the AstraZenca Property, and was comprised of 15 lithic artifacts. The site was recommended as potentially eligible for listing in the NRHP, and the DESHPO concurred with that recommendation. Phase II investigations were conducted in 2001, and 175 lithic artifacts, including seven projectile points indicative of the Woodland I period, were recovered. Geomorphological investigations indicated that the site had never been plowed.

Following the Phase II testing investigations, the site eligibility recommendation was changed to not eligible; however, DESHPO and DeIDOT disagreed with the changed recommendation and suggested a reassessment of the archaeological site. Upon reassessment of the site, it was deemed eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion D for its potential to provide information on non-base camp archaeological sites located in the Piedmont and associated with the Woodland I period. Since Site 7NC-B-54 (Ronald McDonald House) was considered eligible for listing in the NRHP, and it was not feasible to avoid the site through redesign of the Blue Ball Area Transportation Improvements project, a plan to mitigate the future loss of the site was developed. The mitigation plan involved a Phase III archaeological data recovery designed to isolate, investigate, and interpret discreet activity areas within the site that would lead to explanations of behavior at this site. Based on the characterization of the archaeological site as a historically unplowed (or infrequently plowed), low density lithic scatter most intensively utilized during the Woodland I period, the research design emphasized methods which would elucidate information about non-base camp intra-site structure and intra-site variability in visit functions, individual behavior, and Piedmont settlement patterning.

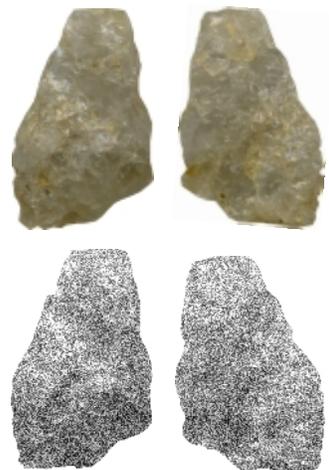
The goal of the excavations was to isolate and fully capture at least three activity areas (artifact clusters) in order to evaluate the functional differences of each visit. To this end, 94 1.0 x 1.0 m (3.3 x 3.3 ft) test units were excavated in contiguous blocks during the Phase III data recovery fieldwork. A total of four artifact clusters/activity areas (Cluster 1, Cluster 4, Cluster 5, and Cluster 6) were defined and fully excavated during the fieldwork. A total of 1,310 lithic artifacts was recovered from the site, with 1,178 of these comprising the four identified artifact clusters/activity areas. The artifacts recovered from the non-cluster activity areas were analyzed, but are not included in the detailed descriptions in this report; tools are shown in Plates 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, and 31. All artifacts recovered during the Phase III data recovery were processed and analyzed according to industry standards and the terms of the research design. Additional studies (e.g., blood residue, trapping, and blood study syntheses, etc.) were completed as approved by DelDOT. The project materials will be permanently curated with Delaware State Museums.

The Phase III data recovery at Site 7NC-B-54 (Ronald McDonald House) resulted in the identification and characterization of four examples of short-term, ephemeral pre-contact period activities, as represented in the archaeological record by artifact clusters. All four of the artifact clusters were comprised solely of lithic artifacts. Based on the spatial distributions and morphological characteristics of the recovered lithic artifacts, the pre-contact period behaviors that once took place at these locations could be “fleshed out.” The most obvious common behavioral element demonstrated during the four site visits includes knapping of lithic raw materials for tool manufacture and/or tool maintenance. The Cluster 1 and Cluster 4 knappers that visited Site 7NC-B-54 (Ronald McDonald House) were interested in both manufacturing new stone tools, as well as maintaining sharp edges on previously made stone tools, and used locally available raw materials. However, the Cluster 4 knappers relied almost exclusively on quartz as their lithic raw material of choice during their site visit, while the Cluster 1 knappers worked with a variety of lithic raw material types during their visit. There is no evidence that the people who stopped at the Cluster 5 and Cluster 6 locations chose these locations to maintain or sharpen their stone tools. Instead, the Cluster 5 knappers were manufacturing new stone tools to replace worn ones and the Cluster 6 knappers were reducing large pieces of lithic raw material into smaller, more easily transported pieces or forms for use in tool manufacture at a later time and different location.

Indications that the visitors to the site were also performing tasks not directly associated with knapping are present at the Cluster 1 and Cluster 6 locations. The presence of specialized tools and tools demonstrating utilization and/or breakage associated with utilization indicates



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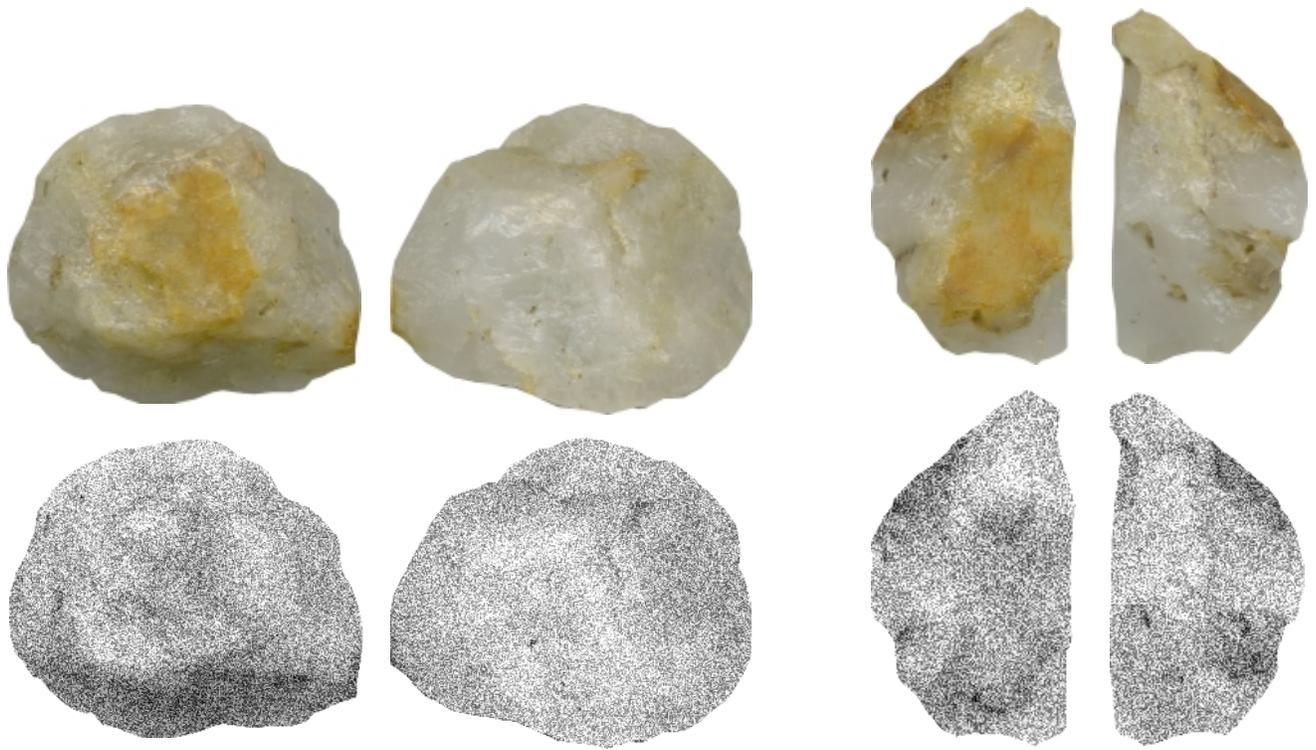
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Plate 25. Site 7NC-B-54 (Ronald McDonald House) Non-Cluster Projectile Points.



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Plate 26. Site 7NC-B-54 (Ronald McDonald House) Non-Cluster Projectile Points.

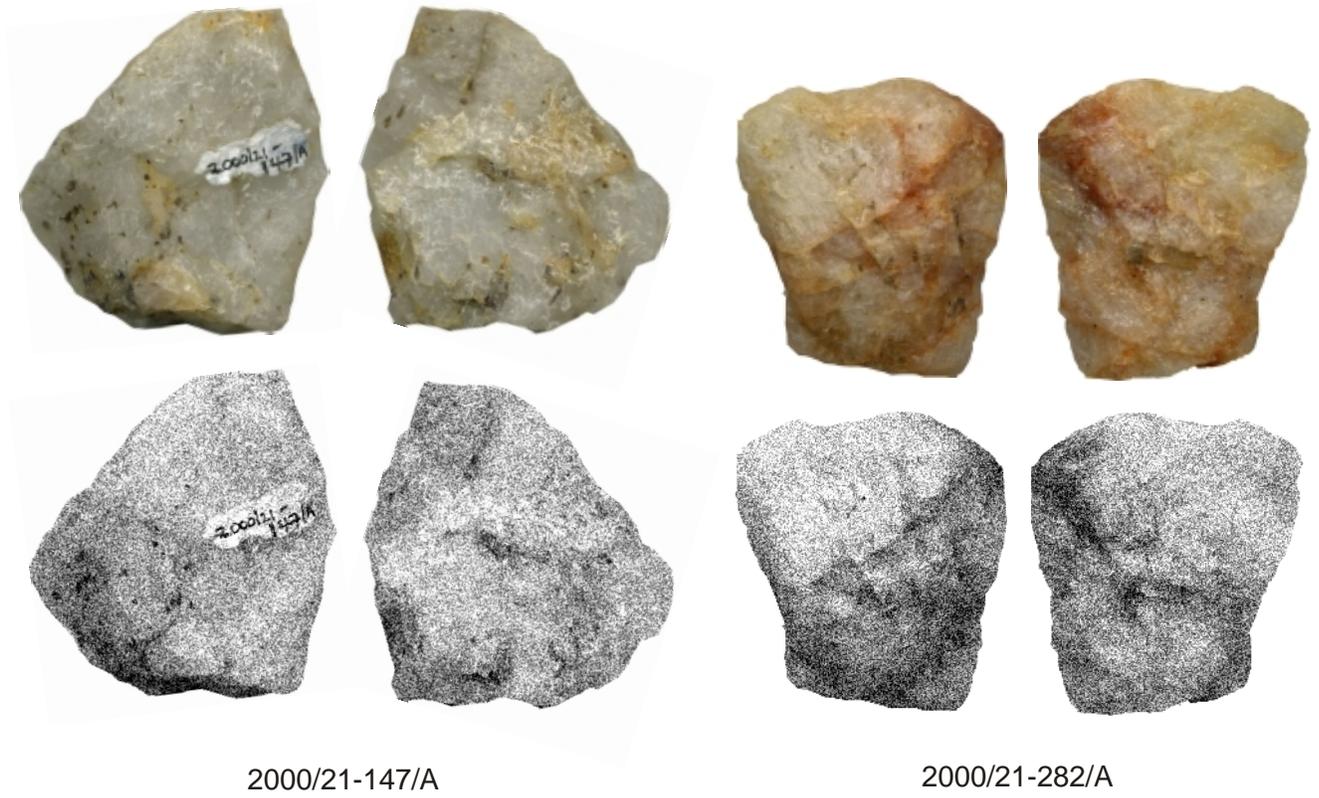


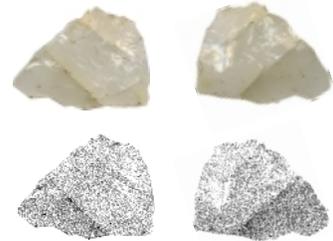
Plate 27. Site 7NC-B-54 (Ronald McDonald House) Non-Cluster Stage 3 Bifaces.



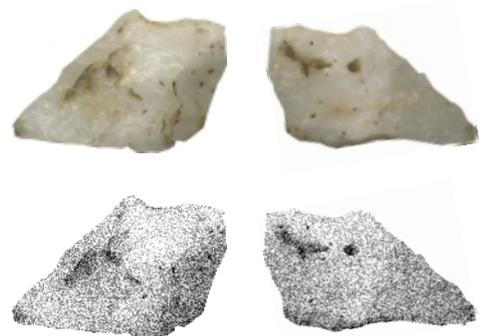
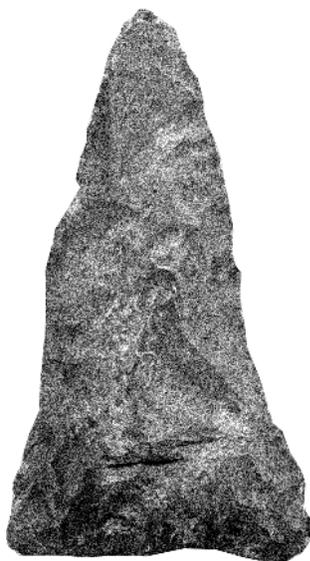
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Plate 28. Site 7NC-B-54 (Ronald McDonald House) Non-Cluster Stage 4 Biface.



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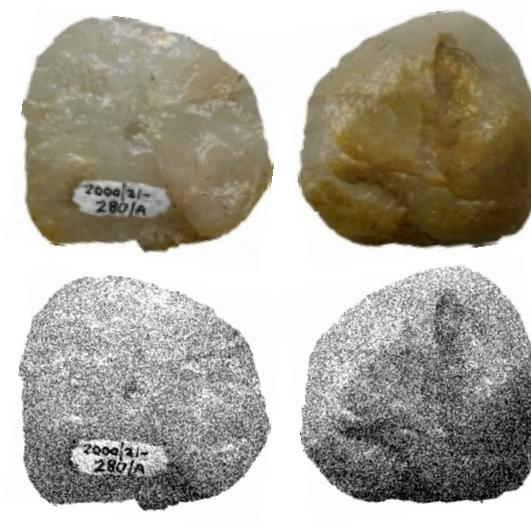


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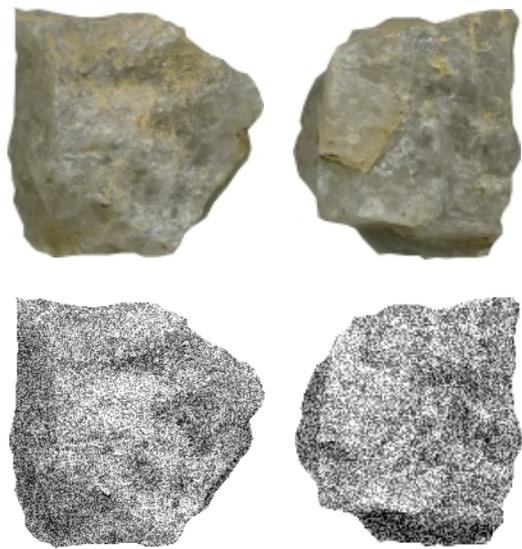
Plate 29. Site 7NC-B-54 (Ronald McDonald House) Non-Cluster Indeterminate Bifaces.



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Plate 30. Site 7NC-B-54 (Ronald McDonald House) Non-Cluster Uniface Endscraper.



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Plate 31. Site 7NC-B-54 (Ronald McDonald House) Non-Cluster Multi-Directional Core.

that domestic activities, such as chopping, scraping, or cutting, were occurring during the site visits. Based on the absence of blood residue on the artifacts, the indication is that these activities did not involve butchering or other tasks which would expose the lithic remains to blood. Instead, it is more likely that the cutting, scraping, and/or chopping were being done during the collection and processing of vegetal resources.

With the exception of the Cluster 6 site visit, which cannot be dated, the others are attributed to different portions of the Woodland I period, based on the relative, typological dating of recovered projectile points. Despite the description of Woodland I behaviors as reflecting “relatively sedentary lifestyles, less portable storage technologies and non-transportable facilities, larger population aggregates, stratified societies, elaborate exchange systems, and complex burial patterns” (Custer 1986:84), the evidence from Site 7NC-B-54 (Ronald McDonald House), indicates that none of these were happening at the site location. Instead, it represents the antithesis, a non-permanent location at which unrelated, limited and short-term activities utilizing locally available resources took place at various intervals over time. Based on the characterization of the cluster locations, Site 7NC-B-54 (Ronald McDonald House) is a type of site that has not previously been recognized as important to the explanation of Woodland I period life in the Piedmont of Delaware. Sites like 7NC-B-54 (Ronald McDonald House) may represent the appearance of foraging and collecting adaptations in areas less productive than estuarine and riverine settings, may represent transient exploitation of a wide variety of resources at a wide variety of locations, or may represent continuations of earlier collecting/foraging strategies.

Although lithic artifacts are present at each activity area, and traditionally this site would have been lumped into a “lithic scatter” site type category, in-depth investigations have allowed us to elucidate the significant differences in the nature of the four activity areas. This, in turn, allows us to say that there was no pattern of repeated site use for one specific function, and that the site has provided an unusual glimpse into individual behaviors during the Woodland I period at a non-base camp site located in the Piedmont of Delaware.

12.2 Recommendations

The Phase III archaeological data recovery investigations at Site 7NC-B-54 (Ronald McDonald House) detailed in this document were completed as part of the DeIDOT-sponsored Blue Ball Area Transportation Improvements project. The fieldwork and subsequent analyses were conducted in compliance with a DeIDOT- and DESHPO-approved work plan. Throughout

the duration of the project, DeIDOT and DESHPO professionals provided valuable advice on excavation and analysis strategies. Since Site 7NC-B-54 (Ronald McDonald House) was deemed eligible for listing in the NRHP, and avoidance of the site was not feasible, the Phase III archaeological investigations have served to mitigate the transportation project's adverse effects to the site. The goals of the Phase III work plan, although modified during the course of the project, have been achieved, and the study of Site 7NC-B-54 (Ronald McDonald House) has made a valuable contribution to Delaware archaeology. No further archaeological investigations are warranted.