

BACKGROUND

Project Compliance

Terrestrial archaeological investigations were conducted by MAAR Associates, Inc. (MAI) over a two-week period in November of 1998 within a narrow ROW located along the waterfront of the Christina River, running west from Market Street to the former bed of Shipley Run, at the Delaware Transit Corporation property in the city of Wilmington, Delaware (**Figure I-1**). In a separate operation, submerged archaeological resources off-shore were investigated through remote sensing conducted by Dolan Research, Inc. (**Appendix A**). Operations are planned to construct the Christina Riverfront Walkway project at this location, to extend westward from Market Street. Package A of the planned construction will require minor slope grading, the excavation of storm drain basins, and the introduction of fill for the placement of the actual walkway. Package B will consist of the laying of the walkway, including block and, in areas, a boardwalk. The project will also require the burying of utility lines. These processes may impact intact cultural resources within the ROW.

Since the construction of the Christina Riverfront Walkway will be done with Federal funding, and requires a U.S. Corps of Engineers permit, the project is subject to Section 106 regulations and falls under the jurisdiction of the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Office. Accordingly, a decision was made to require the employment of Cultural Resources Management consultants to determine if intact archaeological resources occur within the impact area. Previous archaeological investigations by various organizations have led the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs to conclude that, within the general area, intact cultural resources could be anticipated. Evidence indicates that the waterfront had witnessed early residential, commercial and continuing industrial development dating from the eighteenth century through the mid-twentieth century.

An Area of Potential Effect (APE) has not yet been determined for this project, which is usually required as part of the Section 106 process. Nevertheless, for purposes of analysis, three properties near the water's edge are clearly within the projected APE for the project. It is assumed that an APE determination will be undertaken in the future. Since formal National Register evaluation and APE determinations have not yet been completed, the discussions on standing structure impact below should be considered preliminary.

Background research was conducted by Dr. Lauren C. Archibald, Architectural Historian. The terrestrial field work was undertaken by MAAR Associates, Inc. (MAI) of Newark, Delaware, under the overall direction of Ronald A. Thomas, SOPA, with assistance in the field from the firm of A.D. Marble & Company. Submerged cultural

resources were investigated by Lee J. Cox of Dolan Research, Inc. Field supervision was provided by Martin B. Reinbold and David L. Weinberg, both of A. D. Marble & Company. They were assisted by MAI Field Technicians Judith M. Rosentel, Amy Jessup, Mark Jessup, Will Forbes, John Hoffman, Daniel Holding and Matt Croson. Report editing and graphic illustration were undertaken by Jessica L. Billy and Christopher B. Thomas of MAI, respectively. Gwen Davis of the Historic Preservation Office acted as liaison for the project, with contributions from Daniel R. Griffith, State Historic Preservation Officer; Alice Guerrant, Historic Archaeologist; and Debbie Martin, Cultural Resources Planner for the City of Wilmington.

Background Research Approach

Two objectives are proposed for the historical background study in conjunction with the archaeological investigations at the Christina Riverfront Walkway, namely:

- to review the historic contexts and management plans pertinent to a study of the project area; and
- provide documentary evidence for the kinds of historical development that might be encountered during construction within the study area.

A number of primary sources were reviewed to structure the historic research. These include Wilmington: A Plan for the City's Historic Archaeological Resources (Guerrant 1983); the Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan (Ames, Callahan, Herman, and Siders 1989); the Management Plan for Delaware's Historical Archaeological Resources (De Cunzo and Catts 1990); the Wilmington Archaeological Resources Management Plan: Block-By-Block Archaeological Analysis of the Waterfront Management Unit (Bromberg 1988); and The Wilmington Waterfront Analysis Area Intensive Level Architectural Survey (Dixon 1992).

The Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan (**Ames, Herman, and Siders 1987:84-89**) defined five geographic zones as an appropriate geographical framework for the investigation of the state's historic resources. The Management Plan for Delaware's Historical Archaeological Resources (**De Cunzo and Catts 1990:119-120**) considered only the first four geographic zones and dropped the fifth zone (Urban) because Wilmington had developed its own management plan for historic preservation (**Goodwin 1986**). Since the Christina Riverfront Walkway project area lies wholly within the City of Wilmington urban zone, the Goodwin document was used as the primary organization source for this study.

In addition to the above, the Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan (**Ames, Herman, and Siders 1987**) defined five temporal study units as a chronological framework for the investigation of the state's historic resources. These

temporal study units were adopted unaltered in the Management Plan for Delaware's Historical Archaeological Resources (**De Cunzo and Catts 1990:119**) and have been utilized as a basis for the historical background and site documentation:

- Exploration and Frontier Settlement (1630-1730)
- Intensified and Durable Occupation (1730-1770)
- Early Industrialization (1770-1830)
- Industrialization and Early Urbanization (1830-1880)
- Urbanization and Suburbanization (1880-1940)

Finally, the Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan (**Ames, Herman, and Siders 1987**) designated 22 thematic units defining various cultural behaviors which might be effectively addressed through the investigation of the state's archaeological resources. These thematic units were subsequently reorganized into the Management Plan for Delaware's Historical Archaeological Resources (**De Cunzo and Catts 1990:120-121**), four research domains within which the various thematic units are interpreted:

- Domestic Economy
- Manufacturing and Trade
- Landscape
- Social Group Identity, Behavior, and Interaction

The principal archival repositories available for consultation include the Historical Society of Delaware in Wilmington, Delaware; various New Castle County offices in Wilmington, Delaware; the Hall of Records in Dover, Delaware; Morris Library of the University of Delaware in Newark, Delaware; and the Library at Hagley Museum in Wilmington, Delaware. Materials from the in-house library at MAI in Newark, Delaware were also consulted. Among the principal record groups utilized in the preparation of this report were management plans and reports of previous archaeological investigations in the general study area.

Historical Contexts and Site History

Exploration and Frontier Settlement (1630-1730)

Between the initial settlement of Delaware by the Swedes in 1638 and the end of the period of initial settlement in 1730, New Castle County was under the control of three different colonial jurisdictions: Swedish (1638-1654), Dutch (1654-1664), and English (1664 to the American Revolution). Each of these colonial experiences left their particular mark on historic settlement patterns in northern Delaware.

In 1638, a company of Swedish settlers arrived on the lower Delaware River and established a small, fortified settlement called Fort Christina in the marshes on the

north side of the Christina River near the present site of Wilmington. Within a decade, Swedish settlements extended along both sides of the Delaware River between Wilmington and Philadelphia. Despite its geographic extent, the Swedish community remained small, with an estimated population of no more than 250-300 people (**Printz 1647; Delaware County 1980**). The Swedes lived either in small, fortified settlements like that which developed around Fort Christina or on widely scattered, independent farmsteads located in the marshes along the Delaware River and the lower reaches of the larger rivers and creeks which emptied into it. The Delaware River and its tributaries provided the major means of transportation and communication between these isolated settlement sites. The Swedish colony was commercial, concerned primarily with profit-making ventures such as the cultivation of tobacco and trade with the Indians for pelts and hides.

In 1682, the "Lower Counties" were conveyed to William Penn and annexed to Pennsylvania. In 1704, Delaware became a separate colony with the establishment of its own Assembly but retained close ties with Pennsylvania until the American Revolution. Under English rule, both the Dutch and the Swedes were permitted to maintain their own languages and customs. However, the English initiated many changes in colonial administration, which resulted in the imposition of new settlement patterns. First, the English established a court system accessible to all inhabitants of the region with sessions meeting at Upland (Chester) in Pennsylvania and at New Castle in Delaware. The establishment of courts at these locations served as stimuli to the development of these settlements into regional market towns. During the 1680s, many Quaker settlers took up land in the upland regions of northern Delaware. Between 1704 and 1730, Philadelphia replaced both New Castle and Chester as the principal commercial center on the lower Delaware River, although both communities continued to serve as regional market centers. Agriculture remained the principal economic activity of rural areas. Upland areas were generally cultivated, while the marshes were either used as pasture for cattle or mown for salt hay.

Intensified and Durable Occupation (1730-1770)

In the 1730s, the town of Wilmington (Wilmington) was laid out on high ground overlooking the Christina River near its confluence with the Delaware River. Wilmington grew rapidly as a market town, specializing in provisioning ships and the shipment of agricultural products to the West Indies. As the commercial cultivation of grain became a major part of the region's agricultural production, milling became an important part of the local economy. By the end of the colonial period, mills were situated on virtually every stream in northern Delaware which was capable of generating a sufficient head of water to support a merchant mill. The lower reaches of the Brandywine River became a bustling merchant milling center where locally-manufactured products could be directly shipped to market.

Early Industrialization (1770-1830) and Industrialization and Urbanization (1830-1880)

The Christina River waterfront became heavily developed during the latter part of the eighteenth century, primarily to handle the shipping for the Brandywine millers (**Bromberg 1988:12**). Weslager (**1944:58**) describes the Christina as containing many long wharves, hindering navigation along the river to the point where, in 1772, a local law had to be passed to specify wharf dimensions. Bromberg (**1988:13**) suggests that slips began to replace the earlier wooden piers by 1800 and that by the middle of the century, the original shoreline had been obscured and replaced by artificial bulkheads and slips. She indicates that the north bank of the Christina River can be expected to contain considerable historic overburden containing evidence of this development.

The major development in this area during the nineteenth century was the construction of the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad along the north side of the Christina River. The railroad, which was completed in 1837, ran at grade through this area, bisecting a number of properties which formerly extended from the river to the upland roadways. Together with the riverfront, the railroad spurred industrial and commercial development of this part of the Wilmington scene.

Urbanization and Suburbanization (1880-1940)

During the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the area along the north side of the Christina River in Wilmington was an area of mixed land use including transportation, commercial, industrial and residential. As late as 1930, industrial sites, housing tracts, and commercial establishments lay in close proximity to each other in most of the city. The northern portion of the block crossed by the Christina Riverfront Walkway, adjacent to and with direct access to a railroad, as is noted below, had been used for many purposes, including industrial sites, during most of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. During the late nineteenth century, the building of ships and railroad cars became Wilmington's most important industry. The population of Wilmington grew many-fold during this period, increasing from around 8,000 in 1840 to 110,000 by the turn of the century (**Hoffecker 1974**).

Study Area Archaeological Potential

Previous archaeological management plans indicated a low probability for the archaeological integrity of prehistoric and/or early historic resources for the area between Market Street and Shipley Run (**Guerrant 1983: Figure 27**), due, primarily, to continued industrial development within that area. However, it does appear that the archaeological potential of the project area may be high for in-ground remains associated with cultural resources dating to the last half of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries.

In general, the potential for early historic period resources and prehistoric archaeological resources is expected to be somewhat lower, for reasons noted above. Prehistoric settlements, especially in the later periods, tended to be situated along major waterways, with high potential locations at intersections with smaller tributaries. Earlier historic period resources, or those dating to before A.D. 1850, might be located in the project area, owing primarily to two factors: 1) the fact that the area extending from Market to West Streets is situated close to the early historic core area of the City of Wilmington first developed by the Swedes and the Dutch; and 2) the fact that the Christina River served as the main artery for transportation and communication, particularly during the seventeenth century and throughout much of the eighteenth century as well.

The potential for the existence of intact prehistoric sites, although difficult to assess due to the substantial changes which have affected the waterfront portions of the city, is thought to be moderate, since the aboriginal inhabitants of the region not only would have used the river for transportation purposes, but certainly were aware that the river itself, along with its fringing wetlands, would have constituted a rich environmental zone from which they could have drawn their sustenance. The area adjoining the intersection of the Christina River and Shipley Run would have been especially likely to have been utilized by Woodland peoples.

For the prehistoric period, the site types likely to be, or have been, represented in the project area include both base camps and procurement camps. This is true for all of the periods comprising the prehistoric continuum from the Paleo-Indian period, ca. 10,000 BC, on up through the end of the Woodland II period, ca. A.D. 1600. This same potential also exists for Contact period settlements.

Historic development of the project area can be documented to some extent through an examination of historic maps. The cartographic data is ambiguous, particularly for the earlier periods including the late seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries, because these early maps lack detail and usually do not depict individual structures. The presence of structures or any other kinds of facilities located along the waterfront can only be inferred or extrapolated from investigations conducted in the waterfront portions of other cities such as Philadelphia or Baltimore.

The data could also be obtained, possibly, from deeds or other types of primary documents which sometimes contain references to specific structures located on land parcels. It is not until the middle of the nineteenth century that the cartographic data becomes detailed, specific and relatively accurate. The early maps are useful in one particular respect, particularly as they relate to the original course of the Christina River. Although one for one correlation is not possible, owing to the absence of identifiable landmarks and also due to the inherent inaccuracy of many of the early

maps, it is still possible to get an "impressionistic" picture of how much modification of the original shoreline has occurred along some segments of the river.

The specific types of historic period resources likely to be located in the project area relate to the maritime activities one would expect to take place in a waterfront setting. It is known that the project area as a whole was never used for "residential" purposes, but rather that it was set aside for the types of commercial and industrial development typically associated with port facilities. The specific types of resources known to have been located in the project area include a carriage factory, planing mills and lumber yards, saw mills, ship yards, machine shops, railroad depots, boiler shops, a rope works, warehouses, piers, docks, wharves, and boat slips. There were a variety of support structures relating to the maintenance and servicing of watercraft, as well as of the adjacent railroad lines which were used to move goods inland from the port facilities. Other types of resources not documented in the project area, but which may be encountered, include facilities relating to shipbuilding such as chandleries and other commercial establishments servicing the needs of boats and their crews. On the waterfront at Justison Street was the vast Harlan & Hollingsworth iron ship and car works, with numerous structures and railroad spurs throughout their property.

The specific archaeological potential of each block in the project area is discussed in a later section and is based on what could be ascertained from the cartographic data. The sources found to be useful include:

- Willingtown, now Wilmington, as it was laid out in the year 1736 (**Figure I-2**)
Rea and Price Map of 1847 (**Figure I-3**);
- Sidney Clark Map of 1850
- Bird's Eye Views of the City of Wilmington, Delaware, drawn circa 1865, E. Sachse & Co, Baltimore and 1874 (**Figure I-4**)
Beer's 1868 Atlas, Wilmington Sheet (**Figure I-5**)
- Wilmington City Atlas, 1876 from Hopkin's Map of Wilmington (**Figure I-6**)
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of 1884 (**Figure I-7**)
- Baist's Property 1901 Atlas of the City of Wilmington
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of 1927 (**Figure I-8**)

Early eighteenth century maps of the present-day Market to Justison Streets area indicate that the modern-day shoreline is relatively close to the eighteenth century shoreline. An "Historical Map of Wilmington" dated to A.D. 1736 shows two separate property owners for the area, with one structure on Water Street and another to the west of Tatnall Street situated approximately one-half block from the waterfront (**Figure I-2**). Nothing is shown directly along the waterfront at this early date, although it can be expected that Water Street development would have included facilities focusing on the Christina River. In 1842, the area between Tatnall Street to Justison Streets is shown as marshland (Fairlamb map, 1842); since that time that land has been filled. The Rea and Price map of 1847 (**Figure I-3**) is the earliest that shows detail along the waterfront

and it is obvious that by this time considerable ground modification had already taken place in the form of slips and boat docking facilities along the shoreline. The circa 1874 "Bird's Eye View" (**Figure I-4**) shows considerable development along all of the blocks of the Christina River waterfront, with several large structures lining the river's edge between Market and Tatnall Streets; from Tatnall to Justison Streets there are large buildings along Water Street but not directly at river's edge. Beginning at present-day Tatnall Street and moving west to Justison Street and beyond, large expanses of land along the waterfront (the marshy area) remained open, until developed as industrial sites in the late nineteenth century.