

INTRODUCTION

The following report presents the results of a final data recovery program undertaken at the Robert Ferguson Homestead (N-3902), 636 East Chestnut Hill Road, New Castle County, Delaware (Map 1, Plate 1). The archival research, archaeological fieldwork, and report preparation were accomplished by archaeologists from the Delaware Department of Transportation, Division of Highways, Location and Environmental Studies Office.

The Robert Ferguson House, until 1980 a privately owned residence, is located approximately one-half mile southwest of Ogletown and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The house is situated 15 ft. north of the existing right-of-way on a 3.45 acre parcel (Plate 2 and 3). An earthen berm defines the northern limit of the yard behind the house. The property configuration is a rectangular lot with approximately 245 ft. of road frontage. The depth of the property from the highway right-of-way is approximately 610 ft. The majority of the site is a fallow field; the dwelling-related buildings and the lawn occupy only the first 60 ft. from the road (Map 2). One small outbuilding, a chicken house circa 1950, stands approximately 200 ft. from the road near the northwest property line.

Although the Ferguson House property and parcels on the west and east retain much of their rural characteristics, the surrounding area is heavily developed with numerous residential subdivisions along Route 4. In the immediate vicinity of the property, suburban developments are situated north and west. A 215 unit subdivision development (Todd Estates) occupies land across Route 4 and a subdivision access road exists directly across from the house. The Ferguson House is situated only 15 ft. from the edge of the Delaware Route 4 roadway.



PLATE 2

HOUSE AND GARAGE

PLATE 3
REARVIEW OF HOUSE



The proposed highway project will reconstruct and relocate Delaware Route 4 as a four-lane facility from Delaware Route 7 near Stanton to Delaware Route 896. A typical cross section will consist of a 40 ft. median, four 12 ft. travel lanes, two 10 ft. shoulders, and a 21 ft. bikeway/shoulder system. With the addition of a 10 ft. utility impact zone, a 140 ft. wide right-of-way will be required. For the Route 4 expansion, proposed build alternatives will directly impact a 0.36 acre portion of the Ferguson House property, including the land on which the structure stands.

The Robert Ferguson House was first surveyed on May 18, 1977 by the Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (Appendix 1). Subsequently, a Determination of Eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places was submitted by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). On February 10, 1978, the Keeper of the National Register determined that the Ferguson House and the surrounding 3.45 acre property were eligible for inclusion to the National Register (Appendix 2). The FHWA, in consultation with the Delaware State Historic Preservation Officer (DeSHPO), concluded that a 0.36 acre property take, including the ground on which the house stands, would adversely effect the National Register property. Through consultation with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), it was concluded that an adverse effect could not be avoided and that mitigation of the adverse effect was in order. As a result of these actions, the Executive Director of the ACHP prepared a Memorandum of Agreement. In order to comply with the Memorandum, DelDOT developed a scope of work for the Route 4 study area.

Mid-Atlantic Archaeological Research, Inc. (MAAR) was contracted by DelDOT to perform archaeological and architectural research required by the Memorandum of Agreement. The methods and results of their archaeological

excavations and architectural survey are presented below in "Background Research". Their recommendation called for an extensive mitigation (total excavation) of the Robert Ferguson site.

The data recovery excavation was conducted by DelDOT archeologists from June 25 to August 7, 1981. Artifact processing, further archival research, and report writing and processing were accomplished during parts of 1982 and 1983.

Appreciation is extended to the following involved individuals for their support, administration, research and services.

FORMER OWNERS AND/OR RESIDENTS OF THE FERGUSON HOUSE

Alice Weber
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