

RECOMMENDATION

National Register eligibility

No sites listed on the National Register, or previously determined to be eligible for the National Register, lie within the proposed right-of-way. As an historic district, the Fork Branch community has lost many of its above-ground features.

The larger study area outside the right-of-way deserves consideration as a possible multiple resource listing in the Register. Since the significant features are outside the impact area of the present project, a determination of eligibility is inappropriate to the present report.

The destroyed structures of the community, including the school and possibly as many as a half-dozen houses, represents an undisturbed archaeological resource.

The existing hamlet, between the cemetery and the railroad, probably did not begin to develop until Angelica Hansor bought it in the middle of the nineteenth century. We have no record to confirm the absence or presence of tofts there before that time. Remains from two periods may therefore lie on different sites.

On the Dover Products tract was the Nehemiah Handsor, Jr., homesite, occupied by his heirs until the time of the Civil War. Industrial development here may have obliterated any evidence of farmstead features.

A small Archaic-period procurement site (7K-C-113) possessed good integrity until it was excavated, but has little significance.

In summary, the community has historical and archaeological significance but its physical integrity has been compromised. Significant remains exist, and probably are eligible for inclusion in the National Register, but they lie outside the present proposed alignment (Figure 14).

Specific determination of effect

If a cul-de-sac is built at the grade crossing, it could have an impact on remains of the Fork Branch community and the duPont station site. The old roadway in the bank of the swamp at the north end of the Austin Smith field will certainly be destroyed by the proposed alignment; it was mapped as part of the present project. The site of "Hugh's old cabin" is outside the present proposed right-of-way, but could be impacted by a slight shift to the westward.

Recommendations for future research

Further research into the Fork Branch community would be a fertile field for archaeologists and other social scientists, but not in connection with the present construction project as now proposed.

Any deviation from the proposed right-of-way, however, could involve historic resources, particularly the sites of Hugh's old cabin and possibly other buildings occupied during the period when the community was undergoing significant social change. Any realignment of the proposed construction should therefore be reviewed archaeologically.

Archaeological monitoring during site clearance would be prudent, since buried features might be encountered.

We suggest that future studies of similar sites should include flora studies and soil type analysis. These two avenues of approach at this site seemed to hold particular promise that was unrealized because of inadequate comparative material.