I. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of Phase III data recovery excavations conducted by Rutgers University Center for Public Archaeology, Department of Anthropology (Rutgers) at the Gabor Prehistoric Site (7NC-D-131B) in New Castle County, Delaware (Figure 1.1). The Gabor Site was formerly located (prior to construction) in the State Route 4, Ogletown Interchange, New Castle County, Delaware. URS prepared this report for the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) based on the artifacts and associated excavation records from the Phase III investigation conducted by Rutgers University's Center for Public Archaeology, Department of Anthropology (Rutgers). Phase III data recovery excavations were conducted under the direction of John Cavallo for DelDOT in September through December 1994. This site had been identified during Phase I investigations conducted in 1986 by the University of Delaware Center for Archaeological Research (UDCAR) (Coleman, Hoseth, and Custer 1987). Phase II investigations were conducted in 1992 and 1993 (Hoseth and Seidel 1994). In the course of this previous work, three features (Features 3, 5, and 6) were identified as potential semi-subterranean pithouses, considered as the remains of "enclosed residential structures" (Hoseth, and Seidel 1994: 45). On the basis of these three features, as well as the general density of artifacts, the site was recommended as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Since avoidance of the site was not a feasible alternative, data recovery excavations were recommended and subsequently carried out.

RUTGERS' PHASE III INVESTIGATIONS

Since the three above-noted features were the basis of the site's potential National Register eligibility, Rutgers' Phase III data recovery excavations focused on the attempt to identify the three features as pithouses and assess their supposed cultural status. These features are of interest, since archaeological work in Delaware since the late 1970s has uncovered a number of shallow depressions identified either as 1) semi-subterranean pithouses (or domestic structures with shallow pit features in their interiors) or 2) natural tree falls that incorporated cultural materials into the depressions caused by uprooted, tilting root balls. As a feature category, these shallow depressions are unique to Delaware, not having been described or documented elsewhere in the Middle Atlantic region. Rutgers analyses of the three features at the Gabor Site are presented in Appendix B.

Rutgers' Phase III data recovery investigations failed to confirm these three features as cultural in origin. All three of the features were identified as natural tree falls and not semi-subterranean pithouses or features associated with a domestic structure. In fact, a major section of the Rutgers' fragmentary text consists of an extended discussion of the potentially natural origin of these features in Delaware (as noted above, this text—extracted from Dr. Raymond Muller's chemical analysis of soils and discussion of potential pithouses—is presented in Appendix B).

Rutgers' excavations did convey a basic picture of site structure apart from issues dealing with the nature of pit features. Their excavations showed that most of the site was composed of a

Figure 1.1 Portion of Newark East Quadrangle, Showing Location of the Gabor Site (7NC-D-131B) (Source: Maptech 1997).

series of small Archaic components, likely specialized exploitative or hunting stations, and a "macro-band base camp" related to the Slaughter Creek Complex of the Woodland stage. The horizontal distribution of debitage and other lithic materials from the plowzone horizon—presented as a series of *Surfer* maps in Chapter IV—clearly shows several discrete chipping loci arranged by raw material category. Artifacts recovered from the Phase III investigations numbered 10,033 specimens. Most of this sample is composed of debitage (n=4,839), while other artifacts included ceramics (n=117), bifaces (n=44), projectile points and other hafted bifacial tools (n=46), cores (n=63), cobble tools (n=12), flake tools (n=38) and fire-cracked rock (FCR). As noted, most of these materials likely relate to several small, Archaic stage occupations, perhaps short-term camps.

Identifiable projectile points include Savannah River and Bare Island cognates, as well as Poplar Island, Perkiomen, and Susquehanna types. Specimens classed as Orient Fishtail types, straddling the Late Archaic (or Transitional) to Early Woodland period boundary, are also included in the Phase III assemblage. Although Orient types were present, no Early Woodland period ceramics were found during Phase III excavations, nor were any recovered during the earlier Phase I and II investigations. The ceramics recovered from the site, all clustering in the western edge of the site area, belong to the Late Woodland Riggins ware group, and are interpreted as marking the locale of a small, hamlet-type occupation. Indeed, most of the sherds appear to belong to a small range of vessels, perhaps associated with a single-family domestic unit. Riggins Ware has been placed within the Slaughter Creek complex as recognized in Delaware. Triangular Levanna points recovered during Phase III investigations may be associated with this Late Woodland period component. No additional evidence was found during Phase III for a Middle Archaic occupation suggested by a LeCroy bifurcate specimen recovered during Phase I and II investigations and prominently illustrated on the cover of the report detailing the work (Coleman, Hoseth, and Seidel 1994: cover and page 37, Figure 27*e*). The latter point, found in many surface collections from a variety of topographic settings, is best interpreted as a stray point find.

URS REPORT PRODUCTION

As noted above, this report was produced based on the artifacts and associated documents obtained from Rutgers. Rutgers labeled and washed all artifacts in preparation for analysis and report production. In addition, a complete inventory of the materials was recovered and supplied in digital format to URS. Rutgers completed portions of a report, though neither detailed analyses of artifacts nor their distribution across the site are offered within these materials. The variable parts of the Rutgers text used here are noted when appropriate. In many ways, the current report was a difficult one to prepare. The provided materials exhibited numerous discrepancies between feature logs and unit notes; in some cases, maps and associated field notes for significant features were missing altogether. These discrepancies are noted in Chapter IV when appropriate. Although numerous flotation samples had been taken, none were present with the materials retrieved from Rutgers, and no data indicating the processing of such material was evident. Blood residue samples were taken (from projectile points and associated soil samples);

however, URS decided not to sample these items, given concerns of the technique's usefulness and the long-term storage of the samples.

The current report follows a standard format. Following this introduction, Chapter II details the local site environment, while Chapter III presents an overview of the prehistoric cultural background. This presentation diverges from the standard framework long used in Delaware and established by Custer. Terms such as Woodland I and Woodland II and not used herein. Categorization originally established by Griffin (1967) is used instead to convey the long trajectory of Eastern United States prehistory, which includes the Delmarva Peninsula. Chapter IV presents the results of analysis. The first section outlines the site's context and features present, while a second section summarizes the various categories of material culture recovered during Phase III investigations. Chapter V discusses the several discrete, Late Archaic occupations and the Late Woodland hamlet within the context of an ethnographically derived settlement model of these societies. Appendices include a complete artifact inventory and resumes of key personnel.

Many people helped with the production of this report. Daniel Eichinger and William P. Barse authored various sections of this document. Dr. Barse edited the entire report and is responsible for its archaeological content. Mr. Paul Elwork edited the report for style and consistency, while Lynda Bass and Scott Hood prepared report graphics. Drew Oberholtzer prepared photographs of the artifacts (digital and otherwise). Their efforts in this report are appreciated.