

RESEARCH DESIGN

OBJECTIVE

To determine if the areas of potential effect of the road improvements projects for S. State Street (U.S. Route 113A) from Webbs Lane to State Route 10 and North Street from West Street to Mifflin Road contain architectural resources listed in or previously determined eligible for the National Register or meeting National Register criteria.

METHODS

Background research was conducted at the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office and the Hall of Records, Kent County Tax Assessor and Recorder of Deeds Offices, and Dover Public Library, all located in Dover. Census material was found at the National Archives and historical maps at the Library of Congress, both located in Washington, D.C. Particular attention was paid to determining if any of the extant buildings within the North Street project area were associated with the African-American settlement of Dover during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, an important historical settlement and demographic development that occurred in the Dover area during this period. Historical investigations also sought to determine whether any of the existing structures located on the north side of North Street were in any way associated with Eden Hill, a National Register property on the south side of North Street.

An on-site survey of architectural resources over 50 years of age within the project areas identified eighteen resources. During the field study, information was collected concerning the type, style, and condition of each resource. The age of each building surveyed was initially classified by visual assessment or owner information. Information as to the date of construction was later obtained from the tax assessor's office as supporting evidence. All relevant survey forms were completed for the eighteen resources, and are included in Appendix A. Black and white 35-millimeter photographs were taken of each resource.

EXPECTED RESULTS

Based upon available cultural resource information, it was expected that about 20 architectural resources would require investigation for the S. State Street project area. The property types expected within the project area would typically be associated with small farmsteads and the early suburbanized residential development within this vicinity. Because of the recent trend toward the conversion of farmland into housing subdivisions in this area of East Dover Hundred, it was expected that modern housing developments would have encroached upon earlier agrarian and domestic landscapes.

The North Street project area is known to contain one resource already listed in the National Register of Historic Places, Eden Hill, which was constructed in 1749 by the Ridgelys, a prominent local family. In addition, based upon known historical settlement patterns for Dover, the area on the north side of North Street was considered at least potentially part of the African-American settlement of the city during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was expected that five to 10 resources 50 years or older in this area would require documentation and evaluation and would constitute residences formerly occupied by African-American households.

In order to be considered eligible for listing in the National Register, resources 50 years or older identified within the project area must retain integrity of location, setting, design, material, and workmanship, and

possess architectural distinction and/or important historical associations. Properties significant under the agriculture and settlement patterns and demographic changes themes through Criterion A or B require documented association with an event or trend that was important in the history of the area or county, or with a person or persons who made significant contributions to the history of the area or county. Significance of properties under the architectural theme for both project areas would likely derive from Criterion C. Significance under Criterion C would depend on the ability of the resource to clearly convey a specific use, function, and/or type or style of construction.