III. SYNOPSIS OF PHASE I AND PHASE II TESTING

Archaeological resources at Locust Grove were initially identified during LBA's Phase I survey of the proposed SR 1 corridor, between Scott Run and Pine Tree Corners (Bedell et al. 1997). Since the presence of a nineteenth-century house on the Locust Grove lot was obvious, Phase I testing of the house was directed toward locating intact yard deposits and features. Twenty-eight shovel test pits were excavated around the house at 10-meter intervals (Figure 3). When artifacts were encountered, the interval was reduced to 5 meters. Twenty-one additional shovel test pits were placed in the yards surrounding the house, for a total of 49.

Phase I shovel testing identified an intact midden deposit, containing shell, bones, and large pieces of redware, near the southwestern corner of the house. Two features were also located during testing. Feature 1, a brick walkway, was encountered in a shovel test excavated southwest of the house (Plate 4). It was determined by probing that this walkway connected the front door of the house with the driveway to the east. Feature 2 was a deposit of rubble and sand, up to 50 centimeters deep, located by Shovel Test Pit 8 in the front yard. It was thought that this might represent the foundation ruins of an earlier house on the site.

PLATE 4: Feature 1 (Brick Walkway)

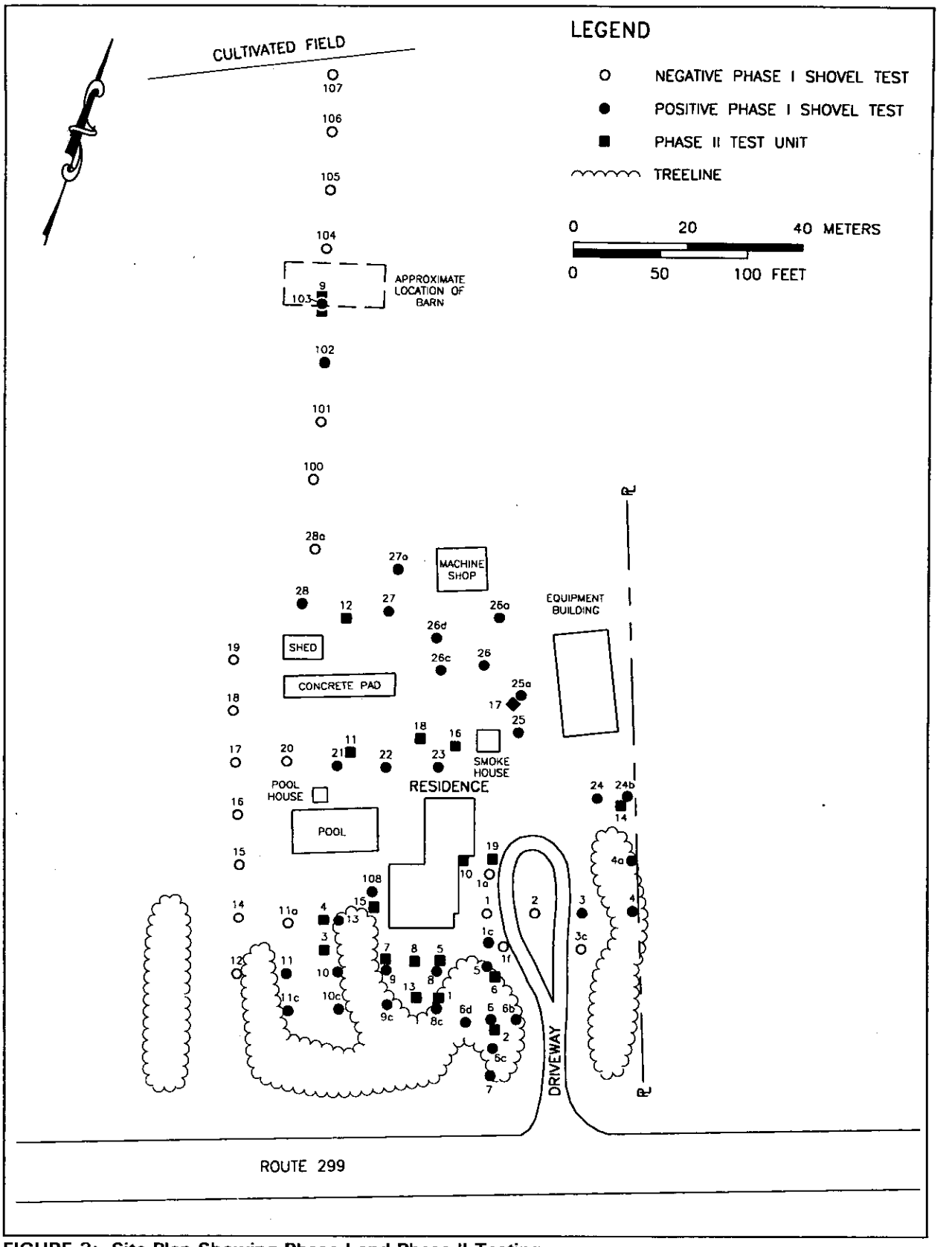
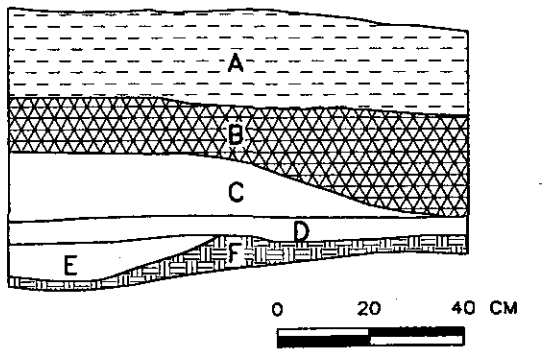


FIGURE 3: Site Plan Showing Phase I and Phase II Testing

Phase II testing of the Locust Grove Site entailed the excavation of 18 1x1-meter test units, one 1x2-meter test unit, and eight additional shovel test pits (see Figure 3). The shovel test pits were excavated in a line running north from the site at 10-meter intervals to search for barns or other outbuildings in the field behind the house. Shovel Test Pit 103, 90 meters (300 feet) north of the house, encountered a fill deposit, and Test Unit 9 was placed in this area. The test unit was widened to 1x2 meters to expose a stone foundation wall. North of the wall was a deep deposit of building debris (the upper portion of which was designated Feature 3), including roofing metal, burned boards, building stone, and wire nails. This deposit, which was interpreted as the remains of an early twentieth-century barn that had been pushed into its interior, was capped by a deposit of clay fill mixed with debris that appeared to indicate the barn had been destroyed by bulldozing. The area outside the foundation, as shown in both the test unit and the shovel test pits, was also disturbed. The soil was mixed fill, probably because it had been repeatedly churned up during use of the area as a truck parking lot. Although barn remains are clearly present, they are disturbed, and no intact ground surface was located in the surrounding area.



LEGEND

A BROWN (10YR 4/3) SILTY LOAM; LANDSCAPING FILL

B YELLOWISH BROWN (10YR 5/6) SILTY CLAYEY LOAM MIXED WITH BROWN (10YR 4/3) SILTY LOAM; POSSIBLE CELLAR FILL

C YELLOWISH BROWN (10YR 5/6) WITH SMALL LENSES OF VERY DARK GRAY (10YR 3/1) SAND; POSSIBLE CELLAR FILL

D VERY DARK BROWN (10YR 3/2) SILTY CLAYEY LOAM WITH YELLOWISH BROWN (10YR 5/6) SAND AND VERY DARK GRAY (10YR 3/1) SAND; YARD DEPOSIT

E DARK GRAYISH BROWN (10YR 4/3) LOAM; FEATURE 2

FIGURE 4: Test Unit 5, East Wall Profile

The remainder of the test units were deployed closer to the house. Test Units 1 through 8, 13, and 15 were excavated in the front yard (see Figure 3). Test Unit 4 exposed more of the intact domestic midden deposit southwest of the house that had been originally encountered in Phase I Shovel Test Pit 13. This midden, buried under 20 centimeters of soil, included quantities of bone, oyster shell, ceramics (largely redware and whiteware), and container glass. The solarized, or amethyst, variety of the latter provided a Terminus Post Quem (TPQ) of 1880 for the deposit. Test Unit 5, south of the house, relocated a deposit of rubble and sand that had been encountered originally in Phase I Shovel Test Pit 8 and had been interpreted as a possible foundation (Figure 4; Plate 5). Phase II testing showed that the deposit was not a foundation, but was related to some building/demolition project, possibly associated with the construction of the new front section of the house in the 1870s. Sealed beneath this deposit was another midden containing household refuse, as well as a small trash pit. Intact deposits containing quantities of domestic material were thus demonstrated to be present in the front yard in at least two places. One of these deposits appeared to date to the mid-1800s, the other to the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

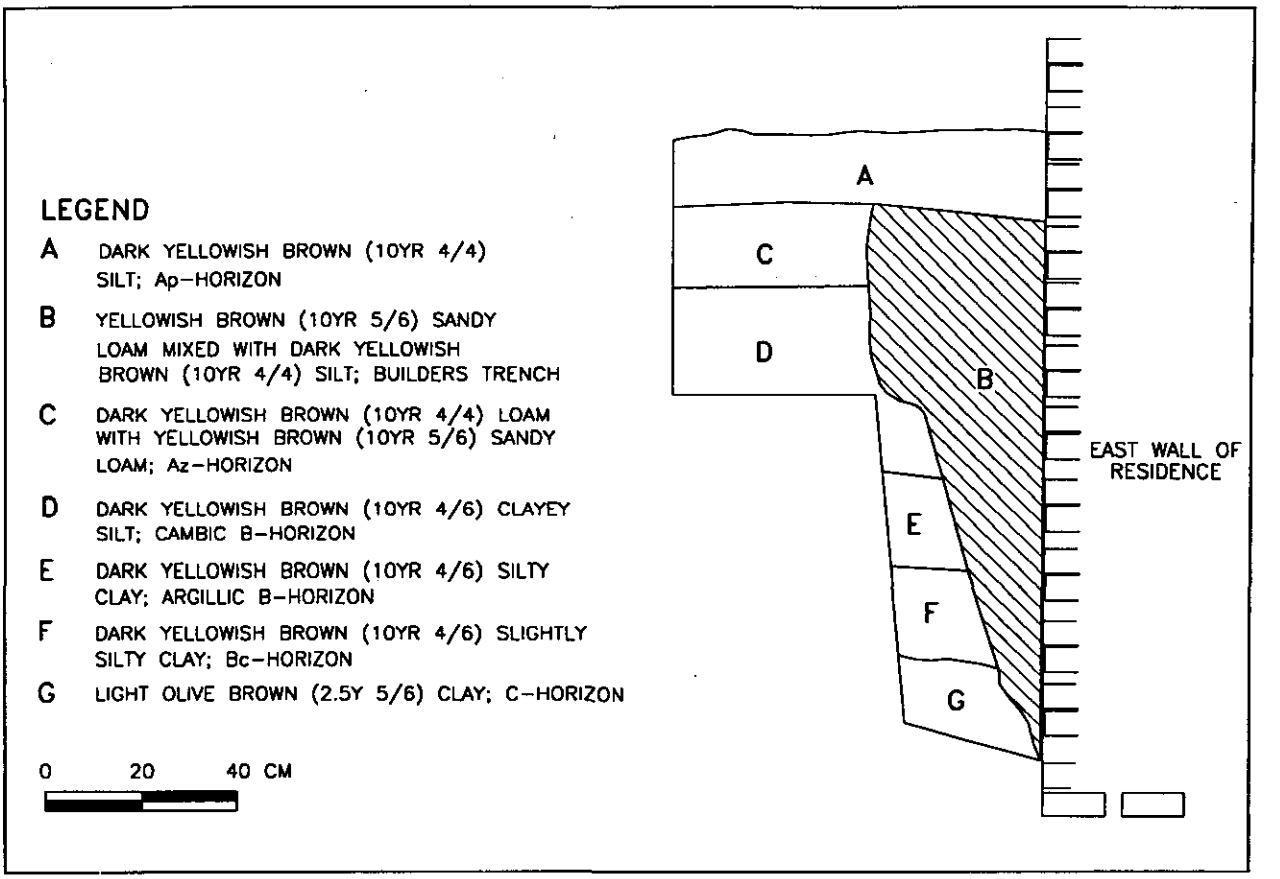


FIGURE 5: Test Unit 10, South Wall Profile

Test Unit 10 was placed against the eastern brick foundation wall of the older, rear section of the house to investigate the backfilled exterior portion of its cellar hole (i.e., the filled gap between the foundation and the side of the cellar excavation) and any adjacent deposits (see Figure 3; Figure 5). No domestic deposits were encountered in this area, and the exterior, filled, portion of the cellar excavation was completely sterile. The absence of artifacts in the fill adjacent to the early nineteenth-century house foundation, coupled with the lack of artifacts from the yards dating to earlier periods, strongly suggested that this was the first house on the site. Test Unit 19 was excavated 4 meters east of Test Unit 10 and encountered a layer of redeposited subsoil, possibly from the cellar excavation of the early section of the house; this deposit was nearly sterile, however, and was not capped with domestic deposits.

The test units in the rear of the house were less interesting than those in the front yard. Test Unit 11, northwest of the house, encountered a brick walkway, probably of recent date. Test Units 16, 17 and 18, excavated near the nineteenth-century smokehouse, recovered large quantities of artifacts, but this material all appeared to date from the twentieth century. Test Unit 12, located 30 meters (98 feet) north of the house, was nearly sterile, while Test Unit 14, 30 meters (98 feet) east of the dwelling, in front of the equipment shed, encountered part of an asphalt driveway and yielded predominantly twentieth-century material.

PLATE 5: Feature 2 (Refuse Deposit)

In summary, Phase II testing at Locust Grove located intact, artifact-bearing deposits at three places in the yards surrounding the house. The deposits to the rear of the dwelling, centered on the nineteenth-century smokehouse, were dated to the twentieth century by finds of plastic and other recent material. The deposits in the front yard were sealed by a layer of debris that might be associated with the construction of the major addition to the house in the 1870s. These deposits, which included large ceramic sherds, mammal bone, and oyster shell, were considered to date to the period from 1830 to 1870. West of the house, a second domestic deposit was located that appears to date to the late nineteenth century. Testing of the backfilled exterior portion of the early nineteenth-century cellar hole showed that it was sterile, strongly suggesting that the Greek Revival portion of the house was the first dwelling on the site.