

4. FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

THE AUTHOR VISITED THE PROJECT AREA during the first week of February 1993. Each project locus was identified and then investigated, following the format established by the Berger survey group.

Prehistoric site probability has been calculated and mapped by the University of Delaware Center for Archaeological Research. These maps were consulted and incorporated into the survey (Figures 1 and 2). Regardless of a site's predicted probability for containing sites, it was given at least a walkover survey.

The current study followed the Berger group's practice of identifying test locations in terms of stations along the right-of-way. Wherever possible, surface reconnaissance was employed, usually in the form of a walkover of a plowed field. Topsoil storage areas are typically a half acre or an acre, but walkovers were not confined to this size.

In four instances, there was no soil visibility. These were places where the topsoil storage will be placed on a grassed lawn that had been a cultivated field.

The most likely prehistoric property type here is the small procurement site, which is not considered to be significant if it has ever been cultivated. Therefore, it is necessary only to determine that cultivation has taken place, in order to determine that no significant procurement site is present.

Historic sites, or the very unlikely large prehistoric base camps, can be detected in very limited topsoil testing, since they contain a large number of artifacts.

Since all the proposed topsoil storage areas have been cultivated from time to time, the plowzone can be interpreted as having poor integrity. In the state's hierarchy, plowed surface sites have a low level of potential significance unless they are also very early. Therefore no subsurface tests were undertaken below plowsoil.

SURVEY AREA: STATION 105, WSEA

This half-acre site on the west side of the road was classified as possessing a moderate probability of containing a prehistoric site. It is currently the lawn of the radio station. Soil is Pocomoke sandy loam. One shovel test pit was sunk west of the right-of-way. The black sandy topsoil was 15 inches deep, over grey subsoil. No artifacts were found. The soil appears to have been cultivated at some time in the past.

Berger's four tests, at station 108, were situated near the north end of this same storage area. They found no site, even though their test was in the area of highest relative site probability, near a stream.

Proposed impact on this location would be limited to deposit and removal of topsoil reserves. Our tests confirmed the previous investigators' conclusion that this project area contains no resources that would be eligible for inclusion in the National Register.

SURVEY AREA: STATION 105, EAST SIDE

A similar situation existed on the east side of the road, next to an automobile repair shop. The proposed one-acre storage site is well-kept lawn next to a drainage ditch

This site was classified as possessing a moderate probability of containing a prehistoric site. Soil is Pocomoke sandy loam, which does not have a high incidence of sites. One shovel test pit was sunk east of the right-of-way. The site had apparently been plowed previously. The black sandy topsoil was 15" deep, over grey subsoil. No artifacts were found in the shovel test pit.

Proposed impact on this location will be limited to deposit and removal of topsoil removed from the right-of-way. Our test concluded that this project area contains no resources eligible for inclusion in the National Register that would be impacted by the proposed storage activity.

Because the two loci at station 105 are situated on the old state road that preceded Route 113, one cannot dismiss the possibility that early roadside development occurred here.

SURVEY AREA: STATION 135

This half-acre site was classified as possessing a moderate probability of containing a prehistoric site. The proposed storage area has been used for storage of pine logs, indicated by a deposit of bark on the surface of the ground. Soil is mapped as Fallsington sandy loam, which is slightly more hospitable to site locations than Pocomoke.

Because this locus is situated on the old state road that preceded Route 113, one cannot dismiss the possibility that early roadside development occurred here.

It appears from the topography that several feet of earth has been removed from the proposed storage area.

The Berger group sank four tests a short distance to the north, at station 136, and recovered one square cut nail.

In view of the negative results from the Berger survey and the apparent removal of surface deposits, we concluded that no cultural resources, eligible for the National Register, exist at the site.

SURVEY AREA: JACOB SHARP HOUSE

The one-acre yard of the Jacob Sharp House, state site archaeological number 7S F 72 and CRS number S-8449, was extensively examined during the Berger survey (LeeDecker et als. 1992:109). Cultural Heritage Research Services, Inc., also noted the house (Tabachnick and Keller 1992: 40) in connection with an east-west corridor study. Because of the house, the site has a high probability of containing remains that relate to domestic archæology.

Because this locus is situated on the old state road that preceded Route 113, one cannot dismiss the possibility that early roadside development occurred here.

The soil is mapped as Pocomoke sandy loam, which is drained by the adjacent Mifflin Ditch system. We sank two shovel

test pits in the back garden, where the storage activity will take place. Our test confirmed the previous two investigators' evaluation that the site contains nothing eligible for the National Register. The proposed storage area was recently a garden, and probably was cropland before the house was built, over a century ago.

SURVEY AREA: STATION 187

This is the mowed lawn of an establishment called Uncle Dan's, a flea market. The half-acre site was evaluated as having a low potential for containing prehistoric sites. The soil type is Pocomoke sandy loam.

Because this locus is situated on the old state road that preceded Route 113, one cannot dismiss the possibility that early roadside development occurred here.

The Berger group sank four shovel test pits in a higher-probability area a short distance south, at stations 181 and 183, near the bank of a stream. Their nine tests uncovered nothing.

The black topsoil in our only shovel test was a foot deep over grey sand. No artifacts were present in the test, which appeared to be previously-plowed soil.

Proposed impact on this location will be limited to deposit and removal of topsoil removed from the right-of-way. Our test concluded that this project area contains no resources eligible for inclusion in the National Register that would be impacted by the proposed storage activity.

SURVEY AREA: PLANT SITE, STATION 217

The proposed batch plant site, east of the highway and behind a utility building factory, is entirely filled ground. Of the four acres of cleared ground, about two acres will be used for the plant. Louis Thibeau told us that he has owned the property for ten years. Before he bought the place, the proposed batch site had been used as a junk-disposal area. It was kept wet by the spoil piles thrown up from the adjacent tax ditch.

The property possesses a very low likelihood of containing historic habitation sites. It could have been used as a dump.

A few years ago, Thibeau cleared the site, dug a deep pond, and deposited eighteen inches or more of fill over the site. This fill, derived from the pond, is the present ground surface.

Site 7S F 68, which contained historic and prehistoric remains, lay across the road from this location. There is no reason to conclude that this poorly-drained plant site has ever been part of the well-drained archaeological site.

In view of the site's original wet condition, and the clearance activities undertaken by the owner, we conclude that the plant site is not likely to contain any cultural resources eligible for the National Register.

SURVEY AREA: REDDEN DISPOSAL AREA

Northeast of the Redden crossroads is an area, also owned by Mr. Thibeau, that has been identified for disposal of earth judged unsuitable for use as fill in the project. The tract lies east of a ditch and north of Road 565. It is about 600 by 700 feet.

Most of the soil is low-lying Fallsington, but the northeast corner is a hill mapped as Klej. "Hill" in local parlance means that the high part of the field is nine feet higher than the low side. This relative elevation can be important when one is identifying places for archaeological site probability. The probability map shows the entire disposal area as low, but the elevation possesses a higher probability of its own.

Outside the hill, the boggy property has a very low probability of containing a site from the historic period.

The USGS Georgetown quadrangle indicates that a house was standing here fairly recently. No toft appears here on the Beers map of 1868 (Figure 3). At that time, the property was part of the James Redden estate, which owned a house on the present Route 213 at McColley's Church.

The site has recently been logged, and stumps have been pulled from the ground but not removed. In the thrown-up earth on the stumps it was possible to examine a fair amount of soil. As predicted, the Fallsington soil did not reveal any site evidence except

pearl button blanks, which were commonly used as road metalling in this area.

On the hill, however, hand-made bricks and unfired brick clay were found in the upthrust tree roots. The bricks possessed the characteristic unevenness of clamp firing and the struck-off appearance of hand-moulded bricks (Heite 1968, 1973).

Further probing indicated the existence of a cellar hole and an intact foundation, about 50 by 35 feet, built of handmade bricks. The ground post to a lightning rod system marked the northeast corner of the ruin. This appears to be the foundation of the house shown on the USGS map.

While handmade bricks of this type, made on site, normally are not found after the middle of the nineteenth century, at least one house in the area was built of such bricks during living memory. An acquaintance of the author has recounted that the bricks for his house in Georgetown were made just before World War II by a relative who fired clamps in the forest.

Since brick clay was found on the site, there is a possibility that the bricks were made in a clamp on this site, after 1868. If this is the case, it is a very late example of the brickmaker's craft.

At the request of the contractor, the author flagged the site, which will be mapped and fenced to protect it against damage during spoil deposit activities.

Further investigation might show that the house site is eligible for the National Register, especially if a very late example of a clamp should be found in association with the house site. However, since the project will have no impact on the resource, no further investigation will be warranted at this time.

SURVEY AREA: STATION 229-230

Site 7S F 67 was identified by the Berger survey as lying almost entirely within the right-of-way adjacent to this proposed two-acre topsoil storage area. The soils are Klej and Fallsington. Historic artifacts were found in a Phase II survey by the Berger group, who also conducted deed research. A transient prehistoric occupation was detected (LeeDecker et al 1992:199).

Like the disposal area, this site was part of the James Redden farm at the time of the Beers *Atlas* map.

In connection with this survey, the author conducted a walkover survey outside the right-of-way, but adjacent to the identified limits of 7S F 67. No artifacts were found, even though the field had fair surface visibility. We concur in the Berger group's evaluation that the site is not eligible for the Register.

Because this locus is not situated on the old state road that preceded Route 113, there is a low possibility that early roadside development occurred here.

SURVEY AREA: STATION 269

A half-acre topsoil storage area at station 269 is on the west side of the right-of-way in a cultivated field on the Wilson farm. Visibility was good but no artifacts were identified during a walkover survey. The soil is mapped as Woodstown, the same type identified in the Berger group's test at station 262.

As the location is not close to a natural watercourse, and is not particularly elevated, it is unlikely to contain a prehistoric site. A low to moderate probability is indicated on the UDCAR map. The Berger tests had been closer to the watercourse and therefore in a higher probability area.

Proposed impact on this location will be limited to deposit and removal of topsoil removed from the right-of-way. Our test concluded that this project area contains no resources eligible for inclusion in the National Register that would be impacted by the proposed storage activity.

SURVEY AREA: STATION 278

This proposed topsoil storage area lies east of the highway, near Gravelly Branch. The Berger group tested a tract directly across the road that had been known to yield prehistoric artifacts (also station 278). Their tests, however, did not yield conclusive evidence of prehistoric occupation.

The Berger test was in the area of highest probability in the immediate vicinity, a well-drained ridge on the south bank of

Gravelly Branch. The owner, Mr. Wilson, reported having found artifacts in that survey area, but only a single jasper flake was recovered.

Our test area was an open field adjacent to the east edge of the right-of-way, where the owner reports no artifacts have been found. The ridge, of Matawan loamy sand, extends into the field, but most of the field is mapped as Woodstown.

Surface visibility in the plowed field was good, and the walkover was extended beyond the immediate area of the topsoil storage. Three artifacts were found: a milky quartz chunk, a white-clay pipe stem fragment, and a sherd of historic-period red earthenware with mottled brown glaze.

After the pipe stem was found in the storage area, the search was extended halfway across the field. No concentration was found that could have been the source of the potsherd or the pipe. The quartz chunk was found in this extended search, beyond the storage area.

The property owner pointed out a house site on the east end of the same field, not far from the railroad that was still standing when the USGS map (Figure 2) was published. This house site was examined but not field collected. It appears to be a late nineteenth century house site, unlikely to have produced the pipe stem fragment.

Lacking a site focus, the finds must be identified as chance scatterings from an unidentified source. For purposes of the present project, no site exists in the area of impact. Lacking integrity, the locus cannot be defined as eligible for the National Register.

Proposed impact on this location will be limited to deposit and removal of topsoil removed from the right-of-way. Our test concluded that this project area contains no resources eligible for inclusion in the National Register that would be impacted by the proposed storage activity.

SURVEY AREA: STATION 293

The last storage site investigated is west of the highway and north of Gravelly Branch. Surface visibility was excellent. Because this locus is not situated on the old state road that preceded Route 113, it

possesses a low possibility that early roadside development occurred here.

The soil of this plowed field is mapped as Woodstown, and is assigned a moderate to high prehistoric sensitivity because of the nearness of a major ditch, part of the Gravelly Branch system.

ARTIFACTS FROM STATION 293	
Utilitarian cream-colored stoneware, brown glazed inside	3 sherds
European porcelain tableware	2 sherds
White porcelain plumbing fixture	1 sherd
White glass Mason jar lid liners	3 sherds
Aqua glass jar fragment	1 sherd
Undecorated white refined earthenware	4 sherds
Blue transfer printed white refined earthenware	1 sherd
Raised pattern white earthenware with blue color in the glaze	1 sherd
Undecorated white ironstone	2 sherds
Clear vessel glass, apparently contemporary	2 sherds
Pearl button blank	1 piece
Clam shell	1 piece

The Berger group had surveyed the ditch bank area, near station 287. They found no artifacts in four tests on a slight ridge mapped as Elkton soil. Because it lies much closer to a watercourse, the Berger test locus

is much more likely to contain cultural remains.

The field method was walkover survey, facilitated by good surface visibility. A few artifacts were found within 100 feet of the right-of-way edge, in the area to be impacted by topsoil storage, but the site proper is well way from the proposed storage area.

The survey was extended westward into the field, and artifact density increased, until a site centered around 250 feet from the right-of-way could be identified.

The artifacts did not include concentration of such structural materials as nails and bricks that would have betrayed a house site, but instead appeared to be late-nineteenth-century or early-twentieth-century domestic trash.

The artifact concentration does not exhibit any readily identifiable boundaries that would indicate that it has integrity. Instead, the concentration is spread over a wide area without a focus.

Proposed impact on this location will be limited to deposit and removal of topsoil removed from the right-of-way. Our test concluded that this project area contains no resources eligible for inclusion in the National Register that would be impacted by the proposed storage activity.