I

INTRODUCTION

A. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Cultural Resource Group of Louis Berger & Associates, Inc. (LBA), has completed an archaeological excavation of a small family cemetery at Site 7S-F-68, located along U.S. Route 113 near Redden in Sussex County, Delaware (Plate 2; Figure 1). The Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) sponsored this program prior to the dualization of U.S. Route 113 between Georgetown and Milford. This study has been carried out in accordance with the instructions and intents of Section 101(b)(4) of the National Environmental Policy Act; Section 1(3) and 2(b) of Executive Order 11593; Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act; 36 CFR 771, as amended; the guidelines developed by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation published November 26, 1980; and the amended Procedures for the Protection of Historic and Cultural Properties as set forth in 36 CFR 800. As a recipient of funding from the Federal Highway Administration, DelDOT undertook this investigation to comply with federal cultural resource management policies that require consideration of the effects of construction on significant historic or prehistoric resources.

Site 7S-F-68 was initially identified in 1988 during an archaeological survey along the Route 113 right-of-way (LeeDecker et al. 1989), and a site evaluation program was completed in 1991 (LBA 1991a; LeeDecker et al. 1992). As a result of the site testing program, Site 7S-F-68 was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, based on its capacity to contain significant information pertaining to the prehistory of Delaware.

During March and April 1992, Phase III archaeological excavations focused on recovery of information pertaining to prehistoric chronology, subsistence, settlement patterns, intrasite patterning, technology, and environmental adaptation (LBA 1991b). During the Phase III excavations, five historic human burials were identified. The human burials were associated with an unmarked family cemetery that was used during the late eighteenth century. Upon exposure of human remains, a report was filed with the Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (BAHP), and the human remains were left in place. Because the cemetery area was located within the DelDOT right-of-way in an area scheduled for new roadway construction, DelDOT proceeded in accordance with the requirements of Delaware's Unmarked Human Remains Act (Chapter 54, Title 57 of the Delaware Code).

In November 1992, DelDOT authorized LBA to begin excavation of the historic burials. After excavation of the five known burials, the topsoil and pavement were stripped from adjacent areas to identify any additional interments. Four additional burials were identified, and these features were excavated immediately after exposure. A DelDOT maintenance crew backfilled the site in late December of 1992, immediately after removal of all nine human burials. This report presents the results of the excavation of the historic cemetery at Site 7S-F-68. DelDOT has authorized preparation of a separate report dealing with the prehistoric archaeological investigations at the site.

In addition to archaeological excavation of the burials, DelDOT sponsored a program of skeletal analysis, which was carried out in the Physical Anthropology Laboratory at the University of Delaware. Analysis of the skeletal material focused on determination of age, sex, and ethnicity as well as health status and activity patterns, as permitted by the condition of the material. One of the principal objectives of the skeletal analysis was to provide information that might be used to establish the identity of the deceased individuals.

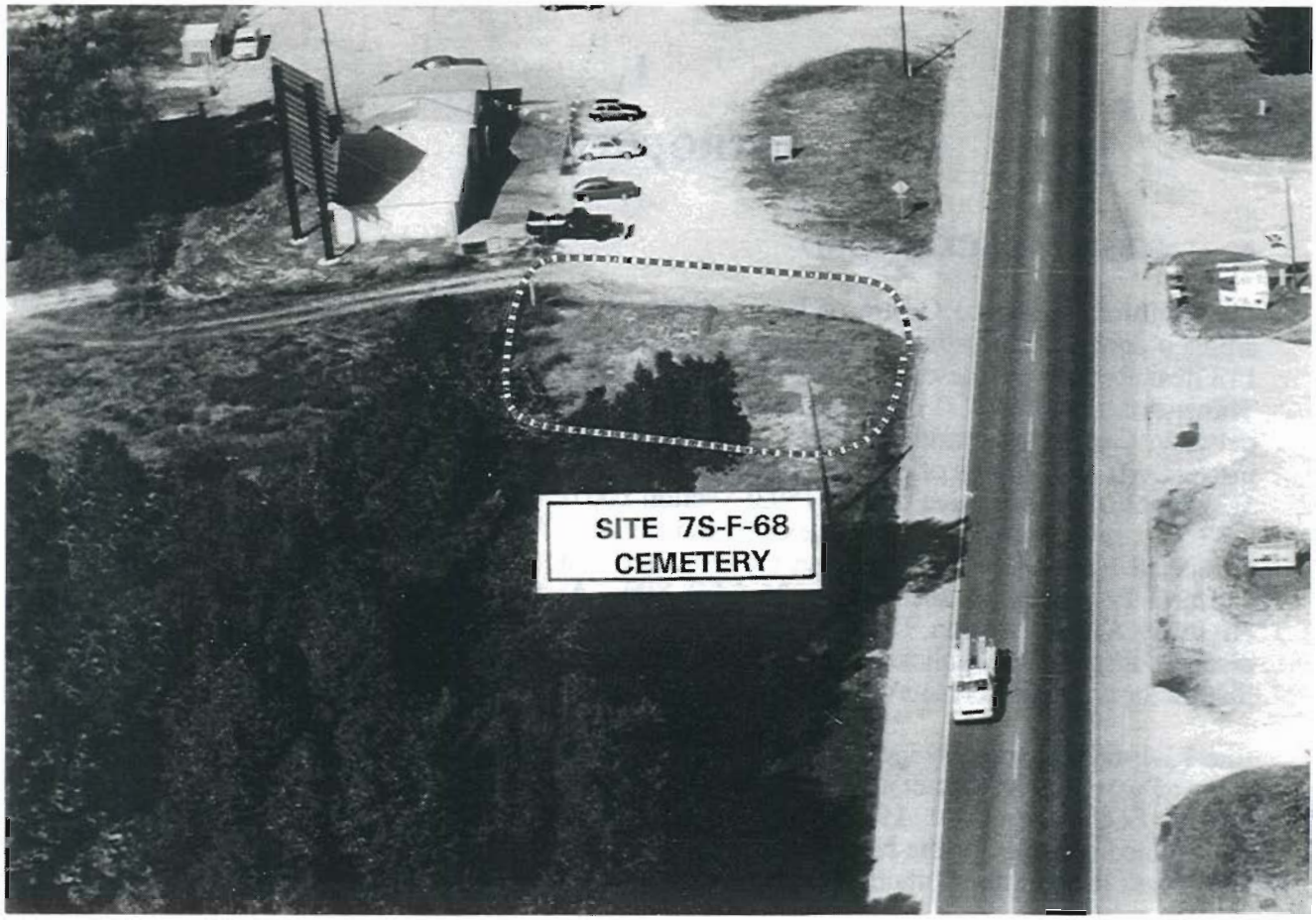

PLATE 2: Aerial View of Site, Facing North

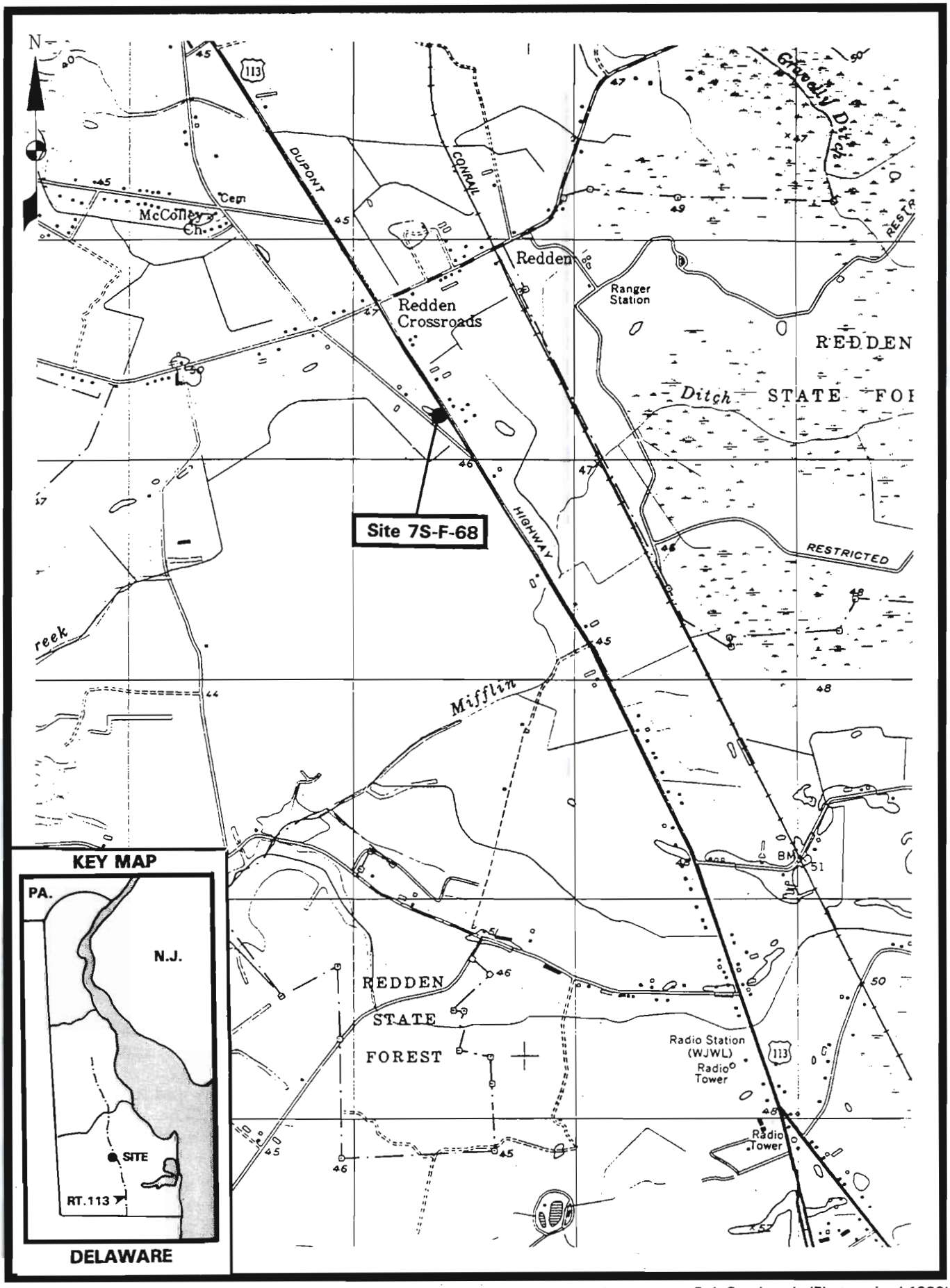

FIGURE 1: Site Location

Source: 1954 USGS 7.4-Minute Georgetown, Del. Quadrangle (Photorevised 1983)

Historical research was also carried out in an attempt to identify the individuals who were buried at the site. This involved research of the property's complete chain of title and occupancy, using state and county archives. During fieldwork, handouts were distributed at the site, and information about the project appeared in local newspapers. As a result, local residents provided genealogical information concerning families which had occupied the site during the mid-nineteenth century. However, LBA's historical research and analysis of the material culture associated with the burials indicates that the cemetery was used during the late eighteenth century. After completion of the historical research, excavation, and analysis, the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office (DESHPO) began efforts to locate individuals whose ancestors were interred at the site, in accordance with Delaware's Unmarked Human Remains Act. As a result, two individuals whose ancestors were associated with the property during the period of the cemetery's use contacted the DESHPO and provided genealogical information regarding their families. In accordance with the Delaware Unmarked Human Remains Act, DelDOT will make arrangements with the DESHPO and the family descendants for appropriate reburial of the human skeletal material.

The remainder of this report is organized into seven chapters. Chapter II outlines the overall project research design, with a discussion of relevant state planning documents for management of archaeological resources and a summary of the research methods. Chapter III describes the site's historical context, with specific reference to the historical development of Sussex County, and provides a summary of the property's ownership and occupation since the colonial period. Chapter IV presents an archaeological description of the cemetery, including a discussion of the field methods and results. Chapter V provides a description of the material culture associated with the burials. Chapter VI describes the results of the analysis of the skeletal material, which was completed at the University of Delaware Physical Anthropology Laboratory (Rosenberg 1994). The concluding chapter presents a general discussion of the excavated cemetery in its historical context, focusing on colonial burial customs and attitudes toward death and the afterlife.

This report also includes a summary catalog listing of the historic artifacts associated with the cemetery, which is included as Appendix A. The artifacts recovered from the site are currently in storage at LBA's archaeology laboratory in East Orange, New Jersey. The artifact collections and associated field records have been prepared for permanent storage at the Delaware State Museum. Other appendices include a copy of the Delaware Human Remains Act, a glossary of technical terms employed in the skeletal analysis, and a copy of the public information handout that was distributed during fieldwork.

B. PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

Located in the central area of Sussex County, Delaware, within a region of low-lying, nearly level topography, Site 7S-F-68 occupies a slightly elevated knoll or ridge with a maximum elevation of approximately 50 feet above mean sea level (amsl). Surface elevations in the surrounding area lie at approximately 45 to 47 feet amsl. The Atlantic Coastal Plain physiographic province, which encompasses the site area and the surrounding Delmarva Peninsula, was formed by the deposition of material transported from beyond the Fall Line, and it is characterized by masses of unconsolidated sediments comprised of sands, gravels, and clays of marine or fluvial origin.

Delaware can be divided into physiographic zones of similar geography and topography that are useful for discussion of prehistoric cultural manifestations (Custer 1986). Site 7S-F-68 falls within the Mid-Peninsular Drainage Divide physiographic zone, which has been described as the "backbone" of the Delmarva Peninsula (Thomas 1966:3 in Custer 1986). This zone is defined by the Atlantic-Chesapeake watershed line that separates the headwaters of streams that flow toward the east and empty into the Delaware Bay and those that flow to the west through Maryland and empty into the Chesapeake Bay (Ireland and Matthews 1974). In addition to flat topography and slow-moving headwaters of the streams that empty into the Delaware and Chesapeake bays, the

Mid-Peninsular Drainage Divide zone is also characterized by swamps surrounded by sand ridges and by bay/basin features (Custer 1986). The site area is drained by headwaters and high-order tributaries of the Nanticoke River, which empties into the Chesapeake Bay. There is no visible stream channel within the wetland area immediately south of the site.

The surficial deposits in the site area have been identified as the Columbia Formation, a Pleistocene deposit that consists mostly of coarse-textured sediments and ranges in thickness from less than one foot to several feet. Landscapes associated with the Columbia Formation typically exhibit evidence of extensive reworking during the Holocene. The rise occupied by the site is most suggestive of a dune, a landscape form which is fairly common throughout southern Delaware. Often located at the margins of large swamp areas, these dunes exhibit varying sizes and complex curving forms (Wagner 1992).

The inland areas of Sussex County have retained a predominantly rural character, although the immediate site area exhibits a mixture of farms, rural residences, and commercial roadside establishments. Residential and commercial roadside development associated with the community of Redden extends from Redden Crossroads to the intersection of U.S. Route 113 and County Road 213, forming a 2,000-foot corridor that straddles the site area (see Figure 1). The Site 7S-F-68 cemetery occupies a triangular parcel formed by the juncture of the old Milford to Georgetown Road (formerly known as the State Road, now known as County Road 213), and U.S. Route 113 (formerly known as the Coleman du Pont Road). Both of these highways link Georgetown and Milford, but U.S. Route 113 follows a more direct alignment than its predecessor. Construction of the initial roadway linking Georgetown and Milford was authorized by the General Assembly in 1796, and the initial alignment was located to the west of the cemetery site. In 1911, the parcel containing the cemetery was included in the right-of-way acquired for the du Pont Road, and the roadway was subsequently built a few feet to the east of the cemetery (Figure 2). Although twentieth-century roadside development has been concentrated along the newer road alignment, the cemetery's inclusion within the state-owned right-of-way may have prevented its total destruction by encroaching development (Plate 3). An architectural survey of the Route 113 corridor indicated that a number of nineteenth-century structures have been preserved along the old Georgetown to Milford corridor, predating construction of the newer roadway alignment (LeeDecker et al. 1992). A case in point is provided by an extant nineteenth-century farmhouse located along County Road 213, approximately 150 feet from the cemetery (see Figure 2). This house occupies the same property that contained the Site 7S-F-68 cemetery, but the house is believed to have been built in the late nineteenth century while the cemetery (LeeDecker et al. 1992) is believed to have been used in the late eighteenth century.

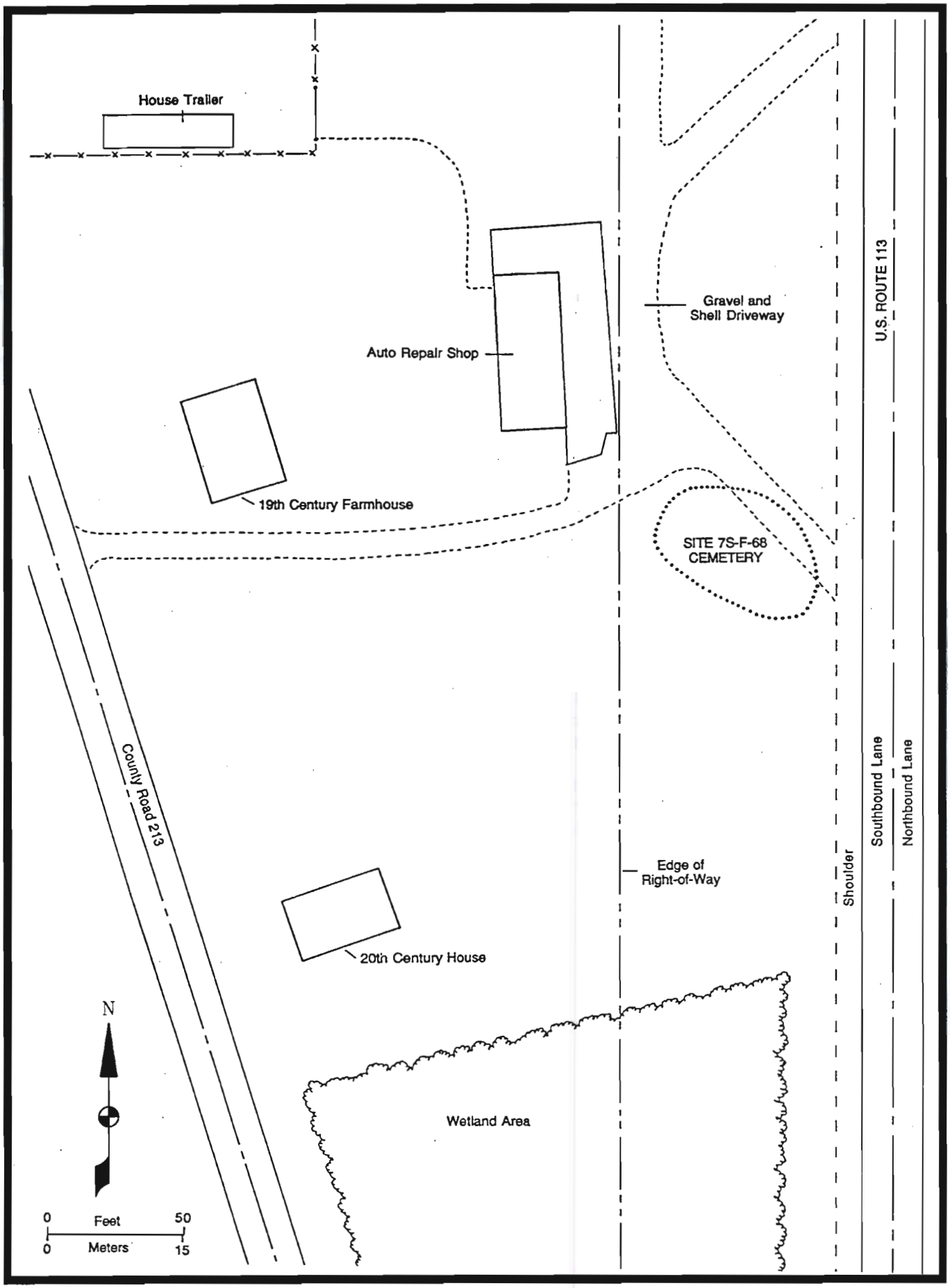

FIGURE 2: General Site Plan

PLATE 3: Site Location Along U.S. Route 113, Southeast View