

Conclusions

V. CONCLUSIONS

KSK reviewed the nominations for the Wilmington and Western Railroad and the Public School No. 29, and evaluated the current condition of both resources. Both retain their significant characteristics and are therefore still eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. KSK also concurs with the eligibility determination for Jackson's Store and Post Office made by the New Castle County Planning Department. KSK determined 1410 Old Lancaster Pike to be ineligible due to a loss of integrity. KSK determined the properties along Old Lancaster Pike lack historic character and cohesiveness due to widespread exterior renovations and the recent infill of large modern buildings. KSK, therefore, has found the area not eligible as a National Register Historic District.

KSK then evaluated the nature of the undertaking and its potential effects on above-ground resources. Because SR 41 is a modern highway, and the proposed improvement is compatible with the existing road, KSK has determined that the undertaking will not significantly alter the visual character of the area. Moreover, the current project plans do not physically intrude upon the National Register-eligible properties. Regarding the Wilmington and Western Railroad crossing, it dates from the construction of the SR 41 (1952). While the proposed safety improvements may alter the crossing, they would not alter the historic fabric. KSK has therefore determined that the undertaking will not adversely effect historic architectural resources. KSK, however, does recommend safety elements such as crossing signals should take into consideration and be sympathetic with the historic nature of the rail line.

In terms of archaeological resources, results of field testing have largely borne out the predictions of the sensitivity model and have demonstrated that large tracts of the S.R. 41/Hockessin project area have been extensively disturbed by both the construction of the modern highway and recent industrial/commercial development. Subsurface testing in the eastern portion of the APE failed to identify any potentially significant cultural resource deposits, and as such will not require further archaeological investigation. Although not heavily disturbed, storm water management areas south of S.R. 41 also produced no evidence of intact archaeological materials and can be cleared for construction.

In contrast to the rest of the project area, sections of S.R. 41 west of the Valley Road intersection were found to contain two loci of archaeological deposits; however, only one of these is considered by KSK to represent a potentially significant resource. The scatter of lithic materials identified northwest of the Valley Road intersection consisted entirely of blocky quartz shatter of uncertain origin. Although this setting is consistent with the location of other known sites in the vicinity the small quantity of lithics recovered, combined with doubts regarding the association of these materials with prehistoric Native American tool-making activities leads KSK to conclude that this loci does not represent a significant archaeological resource, and to recommend that no further (i.e., Phase II) investigations be required in this area.

Phase II evaluations are recommended, however, for the concentration of prehistoric and historical artifacts and foundations identified within Area D (site 7-NC-A-84). While many of the recovered items derived from fill horizons a substantial amount were found within buried A and B-horizon soils, and as such represent potentially intact, or at least only partially impacted resources. Further archaeological investigations within this area are needed to more clearly discern the precise nature of these materials and to gather information regarding the possible cultural affiliation of any potential intact deposits. For the historical component, recovered materials represent examples of domestic refuse, directly associated with structural remains, and hold the potential for providing valuable insights regarding the former occupants of the property and the historic development of the surrounding vicinity.

Based on available historic maps of the project area it appears that the structure identified southwest of the Valley Road intersection was constructed sometime before 1868, and that it functioned not only as a domestic residence but also for some period of time as a store and Post Office. Given these associations more extensive excavations are likely to produce quantities of data relating not only to the property's use as a nineteenth century private residence but also regarding its commercial and community infrastructure functions.

At this time it is uncertain exactly how extensive construction related impacts to this portion of the APE are expected to be, or whether or not acceptable avoidance measures can be instituted that can insure the continued preservation of this resource. It is further KSK's recommendation that WRA consider adopting any measures that can minimize potential impacts to this site. KSK would be pleased to offer any suggestions to WRA that might be of assistance in this matter or, if necessary, to prepare a proposal outlining the scope of work and research goals for possible Phase II excavations.