

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Two historic architectural resources located within the area of potential effect (APE), a brick culvert and bridge, were inventoried as part of the cultural resources study. Proposed construction plans indicate that both may be impacted by planned improvements to State Route 9. URS recommends that the brick culvert does not warrant further consideration for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, as it does not appear to be significant in design, construction, or historical associations. Although not initially evaluated for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places per the original Scope of Services, Bridge 447A was recommended as potentially significant for its utilitarian modern design. In addition, if the bridge was federally funded, it may also be significant for reflecting the government's efforts to stimulate Delaware's economy and provide work for the unemployed during the Great Depression. The construction of the bridge in such a remote locality also demonstrates the pervasiveness of the automobile in Delaware by the 1930s. Since Bridge 447A may be significant for its association with New Deal-era construction, its relationship with the growing dependence on the automobile in Delaware's agricultural areas, and its design, further evaluation was recommended to determine its eligibility or non-eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

At the request of DeIDOT, URS conducted an assessment of the bridge's eligibility following the completion of the Phase I cultural resources investigation. Bridge 447A was not among the structures identified in the statewide bridge survey completed by P.A.C. Spero & Company in 1991, or in the revised edition completed by Lichtenstein Consulting Engineers, Inc. in 2000. These surveys encompassed over 680 bridges built before 1957 (as listed in Delaware's bridge management database), but overlooked Bridge 447A.

In reviewing the bridges inventoried and evaluated in the two surveys, it becomes apparent that only a small percentage of Delaware's bridges were determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. According to the 1991 survey, to be considered eligible for the National Register bridges must be "excellent examples of their type" (P.A.C. Spero 1991:6). While Bridge 447A is intact and is representative of its type and period, it does not present an exceptional example of a reinforced concrete slab bridge.

Other bridges of this type, similar in their size and dates of construction, have been listed or were determined eligible for listing as representative or exceptional examples of reinforced concrete slab bridges. In New Castle County, these include Bridge NC-476 (N-12657), built in 1933, Bridge NC-630 (N-13595), constructed in 1953, and Bridge NC-504 (N-12646), built in 1939. There are several other reinforced concrete slab bridges similar to Bridge 447A that have been listed or determined eligible throughout the state of Delaware. In fact, the form and construction of Bridge 447A was of a type "immediately adopted" as the standard for bridge design in Delaware from the 1920s through the 1950s (Lichtenstein 2000:153). This type of span was especially practical for crossing small streams, as in the case of Bridge 447A, which spans a seasonal creek.

The original bridge survey also required bridges to be "in excellent condition with all decorative features intact" in order to be considered eligible for National Register listing (P.A.C. Spero

1991:6). Bridge 447A, as noted in a March 27, 2001 NBI Inspection, is in fair condition. The inspection lists advanced deterioration of the southwest corner at the waterline, delaminating concrete, spalling and exposed rebar on the east balustrade, and active corrosion of the exposed metal.

Bridge 447A presents a common bridge type—a reinforced concrete slab—that was widely used throughout Delaware in the second quarter of the twentieth century. Bridge 447A is not distinguished in its decorative details, its design, or material use. Other contemporary reinforced concrete bridges of similar size and decorative detail have already been selected as representative of this type. No association between this bridge and the Federal Works Program could be established. No significant architect or engineer was associated with its design.

As no significant association with historical, cultural, engineering or design developments could be established, Bridge 447A is not recommended as eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A, B, or C.

The Phase I archaeological survey performed as part of this study did not encounter any archaeological sites. A sparse scatter of material was recovered in several areas adjacent to the intersections of State Route 9, Paddock Road, Thoroughfare Neck Road, and an area adjacent to the north bound lane of State Route 9 on property owned by the Vietnam Veterans Motorcycle Club of Delaware. Due to the fragmentary nature of the recovered artifacts, their recovery from a disturbed context (resulting from construction, landscaping, and agricultural activities), and the absence of a clear association with historic use of the property, the assemblage does not have the potential to provide important data on historic occupation beyond what has already been collected during the present investigation. Given these findings, the archaeological APE does not contain resources that have the potential to provide significant information in history, and therefore is not eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion D. No further archaeological work is recommended within the project area.

While no archaeological sites were located within the APE, the investigation did document three gravestones and two possible grave shafts that are part of a cemetery apparently associated with an African-American church. The church, located on the adjacent parcel just north of the cemetery, is present on both the 1868 Beers and 1893 Baist maps. Based on construction drawings for the proposed improvements to State Route 9, it does not appear that construction activities will impact the cemetery. The drawings indicate that roadway widening will occur on the far side of the highway approximately 15 meters from the cemetery. However, since the cemetery is a culturally sensitive site located adjacent to the project area, URS strongly recommends that the following constraints be implemented in order to prevent any inadvertent impacts to the cemetery during construction activities. First, cemetery boundaries should be clearly delineated on all construction documents as a sensitive area. Second, all equipment, vehicles, and construction materials should be restricted to the present limits of the proposed construction zone. At no time should any equipment, vehicles (commercial or private), or construction materials be permitted to operate, drive, park, or be stored within the boundaries of the cemetery. Finally, due to the cemetery's proximity to the construction zone, orange construction fencing and/or flagging tape and appropriate signage should be erected along its perimeter.