

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following technical report was prepared for the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) by Versar, Inc. (Versar), under Agreement Number 1539 (Task 4) as part of DelDOT's U.S. Route 301 project. Investigations involved Phase II archaeological evaluations of three sites: 7NC-F-122, Sandy Branch Prehistoric site; 7NC-F-124, Shell Button Historic/Prehistoric site; and 7NC-F-126, Bunker Hill Road Historic/Prehistoric site. These sites were first identified and recorded by Hunter Research (Hunter) during an initial Phase IA (Burrow et al. 2009) and Phase IB (Liebeknecht and Burrow 2010) survey of the area also completed as part of DelDOT's U.S. Route 301 project. The Phase II investigations detailed in this technical report were undertaken to enable DelDOT to determine whether these archaeological sites are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). In addition to the Phase II evaluations, a limited amount of supplemental Phase I survey was conducted to cover area adjacent to site 7NC-F-126 that was not surveyed as part of Hunter's Phase IB due to a shift in engineering plans.

All work was performed in accordance with the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Guidelines set forth in 36CFR800 for the Protection of Historical and Cultural Properties, the Delaware State Management Plans for Prehistoric and Historical Archaeological Resources (Custer and DeSantis 1986; De Cunzo and Catts 1990), and the Guidelines for Architectural and Archaeological Surveys in Delaware developed by the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office (DE SHPO) (1993).

7NC-F-122. A total of 27 1x1 meter (m) test units were excavated on grid within the approximately 1.5 acre (0.6 hectare) Locus A of site 7NC-F-122. A total of 119 artifacts were recovered as a result of Phase II excavations; 116 prehistoric, and 3 historic. All artifacts were recovered from the plowzone. Three small triangular jasper points recovered from the site suggest a Woodland II Period use range for the site (Custer 1984, Custer and DeSantis 1986, Custer 1989). Soils on site consistently included an active plowzone overlying sterile subsoil. In some areas, a compacted historical plowzone stratum was clearly visible underlying the active plowzone. No subsurface features were located as a result of Phase II excavations.

As such, site 7NC-F-122 is recommended not eligible for inclusion in the NRHP under criterion (d). The low density scatter has no subsurface integrity and is not likely to yield information important to this time period in Delaware prehistory, nor is it significant under any other criteria of eligibility. No further work is recommended.

7NC-F-124. A total of 35 1x1 m test units were excavated on grid within the approximately 2.4 acre (1.0 hectare) core of site 7NC-F-124, northeast of the sewer line. A total of 120 artifacts were recovered as a result of Phase II excavations; 112 historic, and 8 prehistoric. Due to the light distribution of all artifact types, no field sampling or discard was undertaken. All artifacts were recovered from the plowzone. Two gastropod shell wasters from button manufacture were found in one unit (N1040 E481), and four

additional samples were collected from two surface locations. Soils on site consistently included an active plowzone overlying sterile subsoil. No subsurface features were located as a result of Phase II excavations. As a result, artifacts associated with the shell button manufacturing industry found in number during Phase IB from surface collection are interpreted as having been dumped in the present location possibly as a result of widespread earth moving activities associated with recent development of the area or as a gravel substitute for probable use of the site as a construction staging area.

As such, site 7NC-F-124 is recommended not eligible for inclusion in the NRHP under criterion (d). Excavations revealed that the artifact scatter has no contextual integrity and is not likely to yield information important to this time period and industry in Delaware history, nor is it significant under any other criteria of eligibility. No further work is recommended.

7NC-F-126. A total of 28 shovel tests were excavated as part of investigations at 7NC-F-126. Shovel testing was completed to address a shift in the limits of construction (LOC) from an earlier version of the project engineering plans. Thirty-five artifacts were recovered as a result of these efforts: one prehistoric quartz flake and 34 historic artifacts (including eight pieces of coal/cinder that were counted, weighed, and discarded). As a result of shovel testing, it is recommended that the site limits of 7NC-F-126 be expanded to include the current LOC.

In total, 2.3 acres (0.9 hectares) were investigated using a combination of ground penetrating radar and magnetometer geophysical survey techniques. Thirty-three subsurface anomalies were identified as having the potential to be cultural. Test unit placement was based on geophysical results in combination with Phase I surface collection. Forty-three 1x1 m (or area-equivalent) test units were excavated within the approximately 2.3 acre (0.9 hectare) core of site 7NC-F-126, north of Bunker Hill Road. A total of 3,012 artifacts were recovered as a result: 3,002 historic and 10 prehistoric. Over half of the historical material comprised coal and coal cinders; a total of 1,788 coal pieces/cinders were weighed and sampled in the field. The remaining 1,224 artifacts were retained as a collection. All artifacts were recovered from the plowzone. Soils on site consistently included an active plowzone overlying sterile subsoil. No subsurface features were located as a result of Phase II excavations.

As such, site 7NC-F-126 is recommended not eligible for inclusion in the NRHP under criteria (a)-(d). Excavations revealed that the artifact scatter has no subsurface integrity and is not likely to yield information important to the early historic time period in Delaware history, nor is it significant under any other criteria of eligibility. No further work is recommended.