

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Dale Site (7-NC-134) was once the home of the African-American family of Samuel Dale. The site is just north of Middletown, Delaware, near the intersection known as Armstrong Corners (Figures 1-3). Until recently this was farm country, nearly flat, the broad fields interrupted by occasional wood lots. By the time archaeologists found the Dale Site, the buildings had long been demolished. The only sign that this had once been a farm was a scatter of artifacts on the surface of a plowed field. The site was directly in the path of new U.S. Route 301, a major highway project of the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT), which has been designated a “mega-project” by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). DelDOT sponsored archaeological investigations to learn what was left at the site before the new highway was constructed.

The site was discovered in 2010 by Hunter Research, Inc. (Liebknecht and Burrow 2010). Phase II testing of the site was carried out by The Louis Berger Group, Inc. (Louis Berger), in 2011, to determine if the site was eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). A large amount of archaeological and historical research had already been conducted for this project by several consultants and more was ongoing as this report was being written. Louis Berger pursued this study as part of this overall research program, making use of work already done and contributing to future studies.

Louis Berger’s Phase II investigations were managed by Charles LeeDecker, and the principal investigator was John Bedell. Jason Shellenhamer was the field supervisor and carried out historical research. The field crew consisted of Weston Bacon-Schulte, Jerusha McLeod, Mary Patton, Lex Vancko, Emily Walter, and John Wilkinson. Fieldwork was carried out between August 22 and October 5, 2011.

### B. PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS

#### 1. *The U.S. Route 301 Program*

Early archaeological studies for the U.S. Route 301 project began in the 1980s with a reconnaissance and predictive model (Kellogg 1992). Planning and pre-construction activities for the project apparently remained dormant for more than 20 years but were re-initiated with an updated predictive model (Baublitz et al. 2006). Concurrently with the re-initiation of the project, protocols for Section 106 compliance were negotiated and formalized in a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) among the FHWA, the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office (DESHPO), DelDOT, and the Maryland State Historic Preservation Office. Executed in November 2007, the MoA contains stipulations for the identification, evaluation, and treatment of archaeological resources, along with specific guidance for the protocols that would follow the unexpected discovery of human remains and for curation of archaeological collections and associated records.

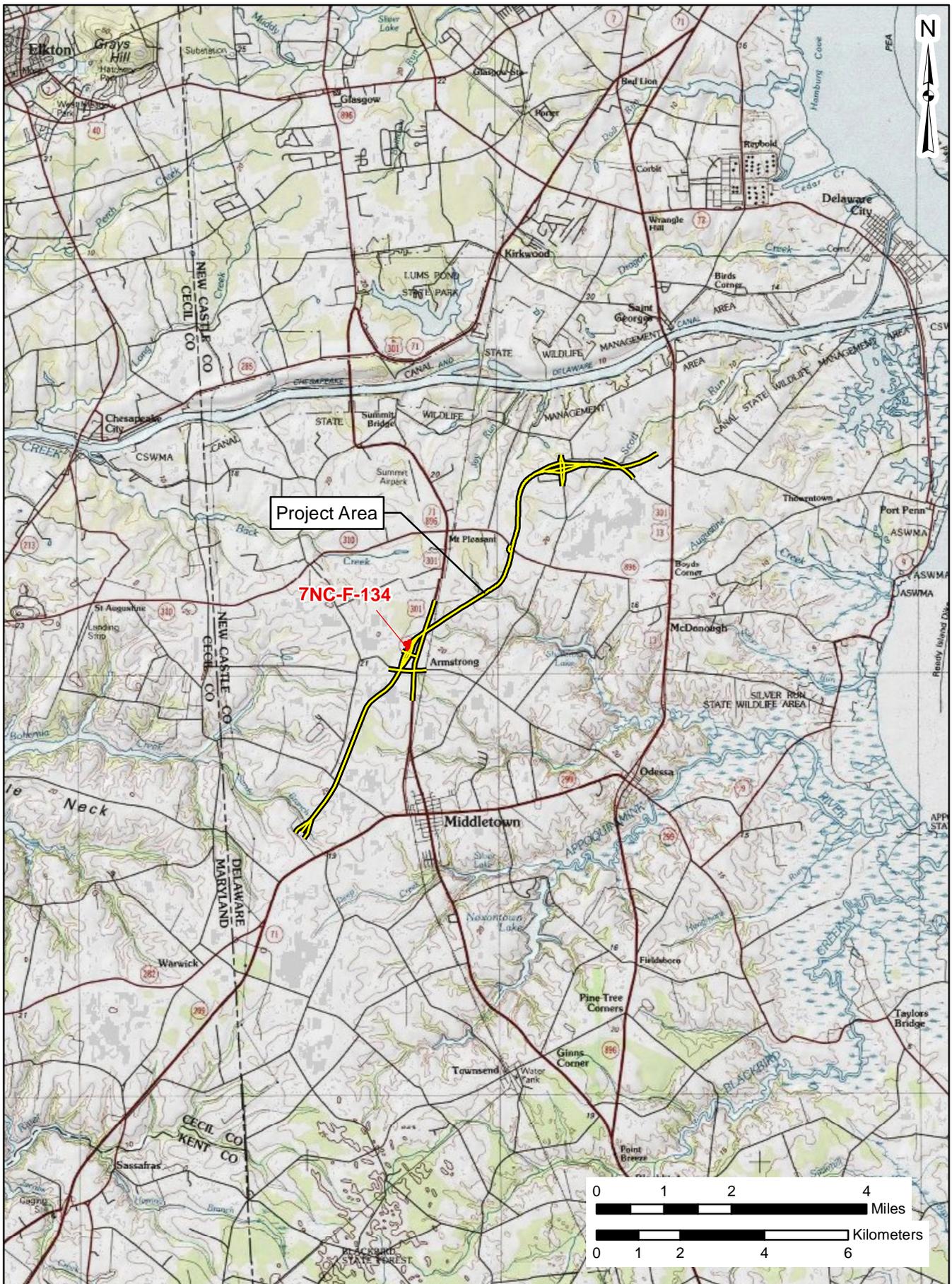


FIGURE 1: Location of the Project Area

SOURCE: ESRI USA Topo Maps 2012

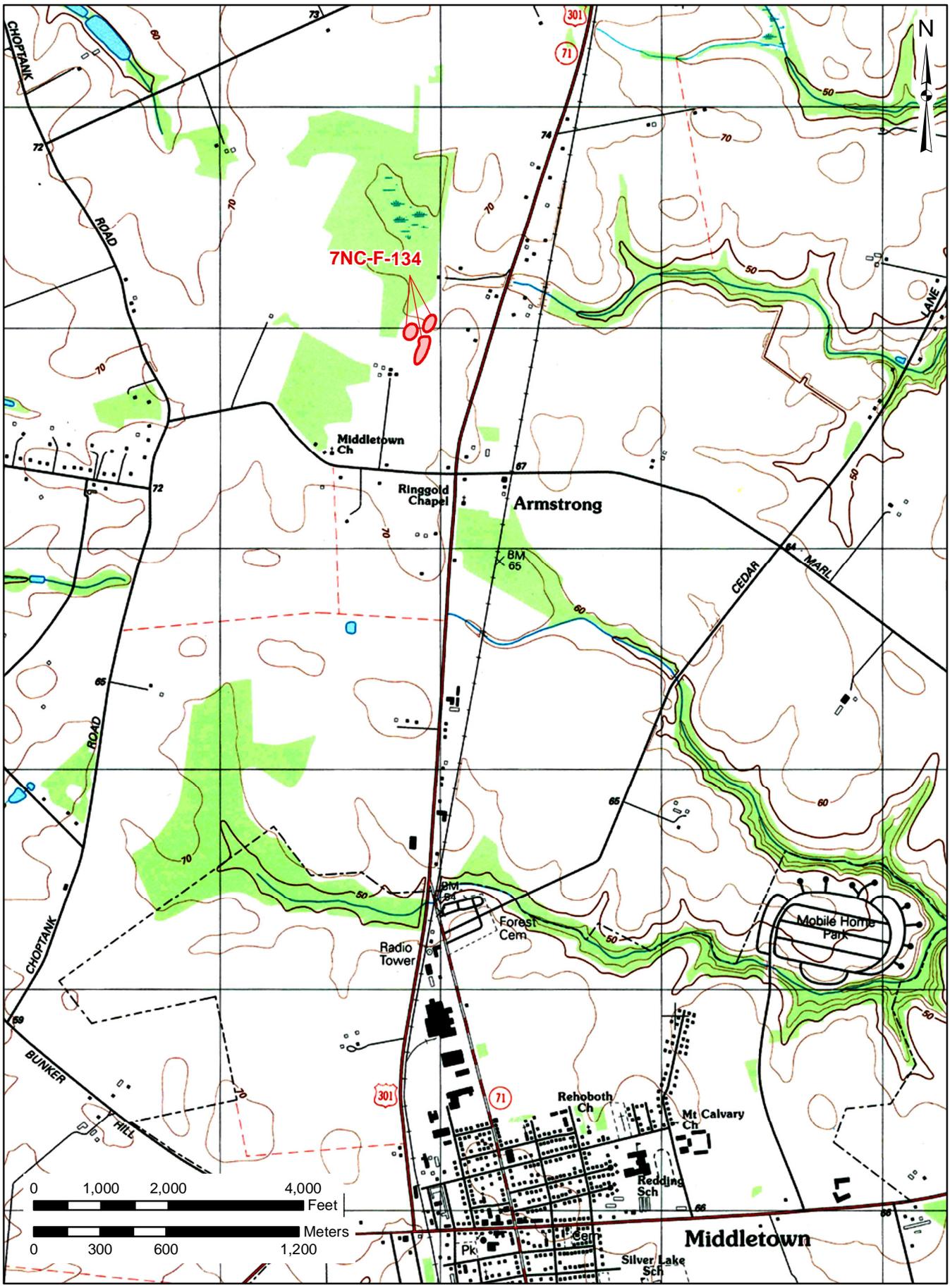


FIGURE 2: Location of the Tested Sites

BASE MAP: USGS 1993

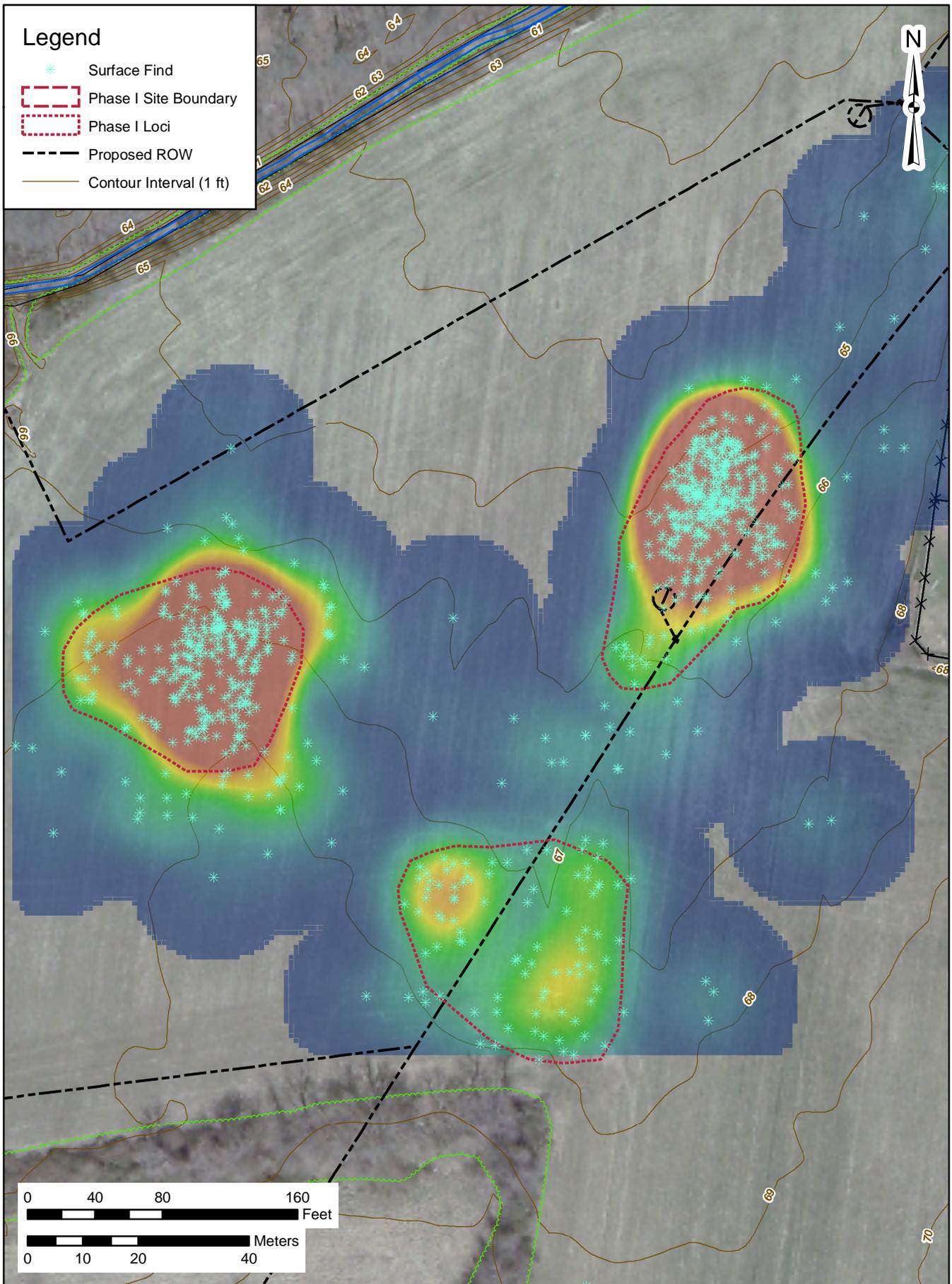


FIGURE 3: Plan of Phase I Surface Collection at the Dale Site

BASE MAP: Liebknecht and Burrow 2010

The new right-of-way (ROW) for the U.S. Route 301 runs from the Maryland-Delaware line southwest of Middletown to join SR 1 south of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal. It runs roughly southwest to northeast across a region that had been little explored by archaeologists. Once the plan was in place, DelDOT initiated a series of Phase IA and Phase IB archaeological studies, designed to sketch out the region's history and identify archaeological sites. During the Phase IA studies a great deal of historical background material was assembled, including some chains of title for important properties. During the Phase IB studies many archaeological sites were identified, including the Dale Site. These studies showed that the area was well settled by the early 1700s and remained so down to modern times. Farms of all sizes dotted the landscape throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

## 2. *Discovering the Dale Site*

The Dale Site is a nineteenth-century domestic site located in an active agricultural field (see Figure 3). The total area of the site, as defined after the Phase IB survey, was approximately 4 acres (Liebknecht and Burrow 2010). The Phase IB survey found artifacts in three separate concentrations within the site, one yielding many more artifacts than the other two. Only half of the site was actually plowed and disked as planned, and the other half of the survey was conducted under conditions of poor visibility. Even so, the artifact scatter found in the poor-visibility section produced the most material, so this appeared to represent the main house. The three concentrations each had an area of about 30,000 square feet, or 0.75 acre. The artifacts include whiteware (plain, sponged, blue shell-edged, and annular), ironstone, redware, gray salt-glazed stoneware, buff-bodied stoneware with Bristol slip, yellowware, white clay tobacco pipe fragments, amethyst-tinted bottle glass (1880 to 1915), aqua bottle glass, cut nails, a slate pencil, and an iron hoe blade (Table 1). One especially interesting artifact was the hand from a porcelain doll. This object was very heavily worn, as if it had been carried around a great deal or even used as a charm (Figure 4). Documentary research showed that the site was part of a 20-acre property purchased in 1854 by Samuel Dale, an African-American farmer and minister.

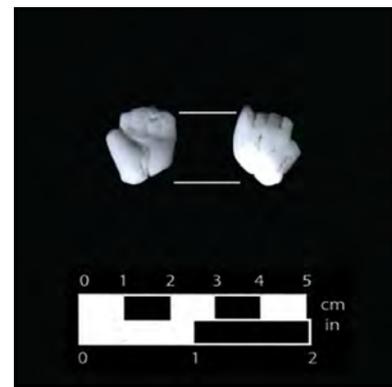


FIGURE 4: Porcelain Doll Hand from the Phase I Survey of the Dale Site.

Source: Liebknecht and Burrow 2010

The Dale Site as originally defined ran up against a hedgerow that marked a property boundary. That other property could not be surveyed when the site was discovered, so the archaeologists had to return to this area several months later to finish. The other property was not a plowed field, so it had to be surveyed by shovel testing. Shovel testing at 60- and 30-foot intervals showed that the artifact scatter continued inside the hedgerow, complicating the question of where the Dale Site ended. Shovel tests within the hedgerow produced as many as 15 artifacts, as many as in the main Dale house site. In fact the Dale Site seemed to continue right up to another, older site to the south, the Noxon Tenancy. Sorting out this boundary became one of the tasks of the Phase II testing.

The Dale Site was considered potentially significant as the physical expression of the African-American community at Armstrong Corners, representing an opportunity to learn more about the residents and their lives. Phase II testing was therefore recommended.

TABLE 1

HISTORIC ARTIFACTS FROM THE PHASE I SURVEY AT THE DALE SITE

ARTIFACT TYPE/SUBTYPE	COUNT	ARTIFACT TYPE/SUBTYPE	COUNT
<i>Ceramics</i>		<i>Glass</i>	
Creamware, plain (1762-1820)	1	Wine bottle, olive	4
Pearlware (1775-1840)	1	Bottle, light aqua	66
Whiteware		Bottle, clear	13
Plain (1820-present)	48	Bottle, amber	4
Shell-edge blue (1850-1895)	2	Bottle, amethyst tint (1880-1915)	10
Annular (1820-present)	1	Bottle, green	5
Annular (20 <sup>th</sup> century)	1	Bottle, cobalt blue	1
Transfer-print, red (1825-present)	1	Jar, light aqua	1
Cut sponge (1840-1900)	1	Milk glass lid liner (1867-present)	6
Ironstone (1840-present)	25	Lamp chimney	3
Ironstone mixing bowl (20 <sup>th</sup> century)	1	Tumbler, decorated (1880-1915)	1
Yellowware spittoon (1870-1890)	1	<i>Architectural</i>	
Yellowware (1827-1940)	1	Nail, cut (1790-present)	11
Red-bodied slipware (1740-1850)	2	Spike, cut (1830-present)	6
Coarse red earthenware	57	Spike, wrought	1
Stoneware		Window glass	38
Gray-bodied	5	Terra cotta tile fragments	3
Gray with Albany slip (1800-1940)	2	<i>Other</i>	
Porcelain, undated	3	Iron hardware	4
Porcelain (1920-1950)	2	Unidentified Iron	9
<i>Personal</i>			
Graphite pencil (1875-1950)	1		
Doll part (hand), porcelain	1		
White clay tobacco pipe stem	1	<b>Total</b>	<b>344</b>

Source: Liebknecht and Burrow 2010