

## PREFACE

New Castle County faces increasing challenges in dealing with early twentieth-century properties, particularly subdivisions, both because previous survey efforts have largely by-passed twentieth-century buildings and because no clear guidelines exist to inform future survey activities. The earliest subdivisions are threatened by modification and buildings within them are at risk from deterioration and demolition as they age and by renovations that compromise architectural integrity.

This historic context has been prepared in response to requests from several quarters. The New Castle County Department of Planning had sought guidance in evaluating the extent to which historically significant properties related to suburbanization were distributed in the vicinity of Wilmington. In addition, the State Historic Preservation Office and the Grant Selection Committee of the State Review Board for Historic Preservation responded to this request by making the development of an historic context on suburbanization a high priority for funding under the Historic Preservation Fund subgrant program for FY 1991. It was their intention that the context would provide a guide for future survey and treatment activities. Their support fulfills a priority established in the *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan* (Delaware Plan).

In FY 1991, the Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering received a matching funds grant from the Historic Preservation Fund to develop a historic context examining the process of suburbanization in the vicinity of Wilmington, Delaware, primarily in the early twentieth century. The project was conducted for the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office, Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, and the grant was administered by the National Parks Service, Department of the Interior. The historic context was developed in accordance with the planning process described in the Delaware Plan and its companion volume, the *Historic Context Master Reference and Summary*, as well as the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation. All activities relating to the development of this context have been carried out in consultation with the staff of the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office, Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs.

An advisory committee established to assist in the preparation of the historic context consisted of Valerie Cesna (preservation planner, New Castle County), Eldon Homsey (Wilmington architect), Carol E. Hoffecker (professor, Department of History, University of Delaware), April Veness (assistant professor, Department of Geography, University of Delaware), and Steve Del Sordo (state historian) and Alice Guerrant (state archaeologist), both from the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office. The committee met three times between 1 January and 31 March 1992 and provided guidance in regard to several aspects of the project. In terms of editorial considerations, they made suggestions on the graphics used to present data on suburban development, on clarifying the distinctions among terms used in the context (suburb versus subdivision versus development), and on where emphasis could be added beneficially to

existing text. In addition, they identified by their questions areas of confusion, such as the exclusion of certain types of developments, and the need for clear labels for the associative property types.