5.0 Interpretations and Recommendations

5.0 INTERPRETATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A Phase IB Archaeological Survey was conducted for eight separate parcels of land within the proposed APE for the SR 141 Centre Road Corridor project. While the overall project area consists of a heavily developed suburban setting, the archaeological survey uncovered a mix of disturbed soils associated with utility construction and recent building demolition along SR 141, relatively intact upland settings overlooking Little Mill Creek, and open sections of ground along Faulkland Road that were once part of an agricultural setting that has now been relegated to industrial- and state-owned facilities. These different parcels yielded archaeological evidence of Native American presence in the project APE, as well as eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century occupation.

Cultural materials recovered in the project APE provide evidence of the prehistoric and historic occupation in the project area. A 76.2-meter by 30.5-meter concentration of lithic debitage recovered from the A-horizon in an upland setting in Parcel 4 is interpreted to reflect Native American stone tool production or maintenance activities in the project area. A few additional isolated pieces of debitage were found in fill horizons in test pit excavations in Parcels 1, 3, and 6 as well. Given that the debitage concentration in Parcel 4 was recovered from an intact A-horizon on an upland setting overlooking Little Mill Creek, this particular resource may support subsurface cultural features associated with the maintenance activities, in addition to the potential to provide more detailed information concerning lithic resource selection, duration of site use, and any discrete activity areas within the larger concentration. Given the rate of residential and commercial development in the Little Mill Creek drainage, and the minimal number of prehistoric sites recorded within the drainage, this lithic concentration is potentially eligible for National Register-inclusion listing under Criterion D.

Cultural debris associated with the historic occupation in the project area was found throughout the APE. In general, the artifact collection reflects an early-nineteenth- to early-twentieth-century temporal association, although a few late-eighteenth-century ceramic sherds were found in Parcel 7. Similarly, the glass assemblage illustrates mid- to late-nineteenth- through twentieth-century bottle and vessel glass. These temporal and functional associations are not unexpected,

as the residents in the rural agricultural nineteenth-century community would maintain utilitarian crockery, decorated wares, glassware, jars, and other items as part of a household inventory. Twentieth-century development of SR 141 introduced building materials and other modern refuse into the artifact collection, illustrating the transition from a rural agricultural setting to a suburban community housing the labor force for industries in Wilmington and the surrounding area. Unfortunately, much of the historic artifact collection was recovered with modern refuse in fill deposits, and retains no potential to identify the source or the age of the original context of the deposits.

No further archaeological investigations are recommended in Parcels 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8. The archaeological survey in these parcels identified prehistoric, historic, and modern materials in the plowzone and fill deposits, but no significant artifact concentrations or subsurface features were identified. Historic maps of the project area indicate that these sections of the APE were likely plowed fields or wooded ground in the nineteenth century, and were not developed until the early to mid-twentieth century.

It is recommended that a Phase II archaeological investigation be conducted for the prehistoric artifact concentration delineated in Parcel 4. Based on the information collected in the Phase IB survey, this 76.2-meter by 30.5-meter lithic concentration may contain subsurface features associated with stone tool production and maintenance activities on the property. In addition, the concentration has the potential to provide new information regarding lithic procurement patterns, tool processing techniques, and settlement patterns within the Little Mill Creek drainage.