

1. INTRODUCTION

This report documents the results and conclusions of a Phase II Archaeological Evaluations of site 7-NC-A-84, an historical property located in the town of Hockessin, New Castle County, Delaware, near the intersection of S.R 41 and Valley Road (Figure 1). Sub-surface testing focused on the remains of a house that occupied this location between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and that had once served as both an early store and Post Office for the community. Though owned by a succession of families and never officially named, this parcel has been christened the Jackson-Griffith House Site for the purposes of the present investigation, in honor of the individuals that occupied the property during its earliest and most historically significant period of use.

This investigation follows an earlier Phase I Cultural Resources Survey of the proposed S.R. 41/Hockessin Intersection Improvements Project Area (KSK 2001) and was performed by the Cultural Resource Group of Kise Straw & Kolodner (KSK) for the engineering firm of Whitman, Requardt and Associates, LLP (WRA) and the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT). The purpose of the present study was to evaluate the potential archaeological significance of this historic house site and property and to make recommendations regarding its eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historical Places.

This investigation was conducted in accordance with, and pursuant to all applicable federal laws and regulations. Federal law, specifically Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended), requires that federal agencies take into account how their undertakings may affect cultural resources. Additional federal statutes and directives include Section 101 (b)(4) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1966, as amended; 36 CFR Parts 60 and 63, "National Register of Historic Places;" and 36 CFR Part 800, "Procedures for the Protection of Historic Properties."

The objectives of the Phase II Archaeological Investigations are as follows:

- 1) Evaluate the vertical and horizontal integrity of the identified artifacts deposits;
- 2) Identify any evidence of potentially meaningful intra-site artifact patterning;
- 3) Recover a sufficient sample of artifacts to examine possible site function and dating; and
- 4) Evaluate the site's potential eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

KSK conducted this investigation between June 10 and 24, 2002. All findings and analyses are documented and assembled in this report according to requirements contained in *The Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan*. This draft report is being submitted for review to WRA, DelDOT, and the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office (DE SHPO) with the understanding that upon the receipt of comments, the KSK will prepare the final report.

Project Location and Description

The Project Area is located within the northern portion of the town of Hockessin, New Castle, Delaware, approximately 6.0 miles (9.7 kilometers) northwest of the city of Wilmington. Situated within the eastern portion of the present Elsie Walker Rest Area and park, and occupying an area of approximately 0.5 acres (0.2 hectares), the site is bounded to the north by DE State Route 41 (Lancaster Pike), to the east by Valley Road, to the south by Old Lancaster Pike, and to the west by the limits of the earlier historical

property (Figure 2).

The undertaking that initiated this and the previous Phase I Cultural Resources investigations involves the planned construction of a series of safety improvements to S.R. 41 in the vicinity of the town of Hockessin. Specific modifications to be made in conjunction with these improvements include the widening of the current roadbed to accommodate left turn lanes as well as the creation of additional storm water management areas. According to project plans the impact area for this project will vary in width between approximately 50-90 feet (15 and 27 meters) from extant curb lines.

Summary of Phase I Findings

As mentioned above, site 7-NC-A-84 was initially identified during KSK's earlier Phase I archaeological survey of the entire proposed S.R. 41/Hockessin Roadways Improvement project area (KSK 2001). That investigation was completed in the spring of 2001 and encompassed lands on either side of S.R. 41 both east and west of the Valley Road intersection, and included areas that had been previously assessed low through high archaeological site potentials. Testing involved the excavation of 135 shovel tests and three larger, 3-foot by 3-foot square test units and resulted in the recovery of a total of 676 artifacts, including 629 pieces of historic refuse and 47 potential prehistoric items. The overwhelming majority of this material was recovered from fill deposits within the western half of the Elsie Walker Rest Area and, to a lesser extent, in areas across Valley Road near the active channel of Mill Creek. The remaining sections of the project area showed evidence of extensive disturbance associated with the construction of S.R. 41 in the mid-1950s and contained no associated artifact deposits.

Historic artifacts from the rest area during the Phase I study consisted primarily of unidentified, non-diagnostic architectural/construction-related debris, along with lesser amounts of vessel glass and late eighteenth through twentieth century ceramic sherds. Prehistoric deposits derived from both historic fills and the underlying Ap and B-horizon soils, and were represented by somewhat questionable quartz shatter (97.87%) and at least one unifacially retouched flake. Subsequent excavation of two test units in the vicinity of these finds revealed intact sections of stone foundation walls for the former Jackson-Griffith house (ca. 1865-1953).

Based on these findings KSK recommended that additional, Phase II investigations be performed within the Rest Area portion of the project area, in order to more fully document the nature and extent of identified archaeological deposits and to evaluate the site's potential eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.