

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND SUMMARY

This report documents a cultural resource survey undertaken in connection with improvements planned to the intersections of Forrest Avenue/Halltown Road (Delaware Route 8) with Hartly Road (Delaware Route 44) and Pearson's Corner Road in Kent County, Delaware (Figures 1.1 and 1.2). Notice to proceed for the project was issued on June 19th 2008, and background research began immediately. Field inspections were undertaken on July 8th and 9th 2008. Completion of the reporting was delayed by the need to gain access to one of the structures. The draft report was submitted on December 17th 2008. Records from this survey are currently held in secure storage at Hunter research, Inc, 120 West State Street, Trenton NJ 08608, and will be transferred to a final repository when such is specified by the client.

Three improvement scenarios are currently under consideration (Figures 1.3 through 1.5). These range in scope from the simplest, which consists of relatively minor roadway improvements involving the addition of turning lanes at the two intersections, to the most complex, which involves the construction of turning lanes, the realignment of the southernmost segment of Hartly Road along a new corridor and the construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Halltown Road and Hartly Road.

The Delaware Department of Transportation anticipates the use of federal transportation funds by the Federal Highway Administration in connection with these activities and thus they would be considered undertakings subject to compliance under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and review

by the Delaware Historic Preservation Office. This project therefore reflects due diligence in advance of the initiation of formal Section 106 consultation.

Initial scoping activities undertaken by Delaware Department of Transportation staff identified 16 historic architectural properties that may be of greater than 50 years in age within the project's historic architectural Area of Potential Effects (APE) (Figure 1.6). A number of these have already been documented by Delaware Historic Preservation Office Survey Forms.

The purposes of this study were to verify that each of these 16 architectural properties were in fact constructed prior to 1961, the survey's established cut-off date; to evaluate the eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places for all pre-1961 properties, both individually and as part of a potential historic district; and completion of Delaware Cultural Resource Survey forms for each property regardless of age. A Phase IA archaeological study of the project corridor has also been completed (see Chapter 4).

The Area of Potential Effects presented on Figure 1.6 encompasses the lots on which the 16 architectural properties are located, with additional areas of potential archaeological effects on the western side of Pearsons Corner to address possible impacts from the proposed realignment of Hartly Road under Options 2 and 3.

Prior to undertaking field evaluations, background research was conducted. This included an examination of the files of the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office, a search of construction and as-built plans of the Delaware State Highway Department, review of historic maps, primary research in tax, deed, court

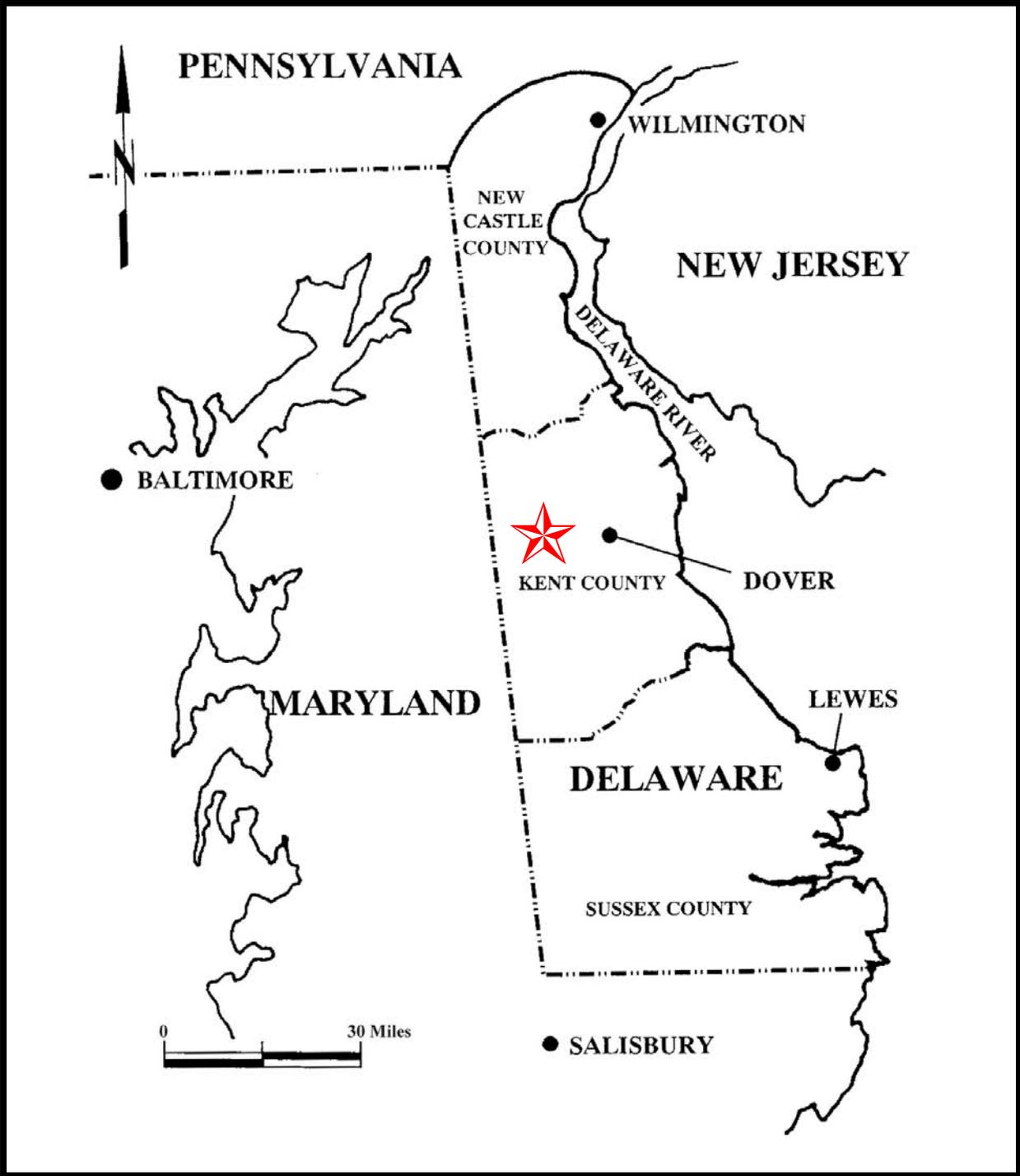


Figure 1.1. General Location of Project Area (starred).

and census records at the Delaware Public Archives, review of materials held by the Delaware Historical Society, and research using standard secondary sources on the history of the project area. The results are presented in Chapter 3. In the case of five properties to be evaluated, this research showed them to have been built since 1961.

Background research was followed by a field examination of each property, during which building exteriors were recorded photographically and through the use of written notes. Additionally, during the field phase the entire project area was evaluated in terms of “a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction,” i.e., a potential historic district. This included an assessment of integrity of streetscapes and landscapes and the presence of structures built after the period of significance of any such district.

Information gathered during research and fieldwork was then used to assess each property against the National Register *Criteria* (see below) and was used to complete Delaware Cultural Resource Survey Forms. These forms have been finalized by the Delaware Department of Transportation and are not included with this report.

The expected outcome of the survey was a evaluation of the National Register significance of the individual architectural properties and the potential historic district within a historic context framework, and an archaeological sensitivity assessment, primarily directed towards the areas of direct impact from the proposed alternatives.

In summary, a total of 15 properties were surveyed (the house and carriage house/barn at 5770 Forrest Avenue having been combined onto one property for the purposes of the study). Six structures are more than 50 years old, and four building of unknown date appear to have been moved to their present posi-

tions after 1961. No new resources were identified and none of the individual structures meet National Register integrity or significance standards. There is not considered to be a case for identification of a historic district. The total area surveyed was approximately 32 acres (12.95 hectares)

Criteria of Evaluation

The information generated by these investigations was considered in terms of the criteria of evaluation, the guidelines established for making determinations concerning National Register eligibility as outlined by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Register Program in 36 CFR 60.4:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and:

- A. that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. that have yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Properties which qualify for the National Register must have significance in one or more "Areas of Significance" that are listed in *National Register Bulletin 16A*.

Ordinarily, cemeteries, birthplaces or graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, properties primarily commemorative in nature, and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years shall not be considered eligible for the National Register. However, such properties will qualify if they are integral parts of districts that do meet the criteria or if they fall within the following categories:

- A. a religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or
- B. a building or structure removed from its original location but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event; or
- C. a birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no other appropriate site or building directly associated with his productive life; or
- D. a cemetery which derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events; or
- E. a reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived; or

F. a property primarily commemorative in intent of design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own historic significance; or

G. a property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are from the Department of the Interior, National Register of Historic Places 36 CFR 60.3 (Federal Register, Vol. 42, No. 183, Wed. Sept. 21, 1977, pp. 47666-67):

1. A "district" is a geographically definable area, urban or rural, possessing a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united by past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development. A district may also comprise individual elements separated geographically but linked by association or history.
2. A "site" is the location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure, whether standing, ruined, or vanished, where the location itself maintains historical or archeological value regardless of the value of any existing structure.
3. A "building" is a structure created to shelter any form of human activity, such as a house, barn, church, hotel, or similar structure. Building may refer to a historically related complex such as a courthouse and jail or a house and barn.
4. A "structure" is a work made up of interdependent and interrelated parts in a definite pattern of organization. Constructed by man, it is often an engineering project large in scale.

5. An “object” is a material thing of functional, aesthetic, cultural, historical or scientific value that may be, by nature or design, movable yet related to a specific setting or environment.

B. PEARSON’S CORNER: A SUMMARY

Pearson’s Corner, or Pearson’s Crossroads as it was sometimes known, is a rural crossroads community that coalesced during the mid-19th century. The little hamlet was strongly associated with the Pearson and Rash families but the early homesteads of both these families appear to have not been located in the immediate vicinity of the crossroads. Both were farming families although the Pearsons also operated a steam-powered sawmill nearby during the third quarter of the 19th century. The Beers Atlas of the State of Delaware of 1868 shows that at that date there were buildings on the northeast, southeast and northwest corners of the intersection. The northwest corner of the intersection was occupied by the residence of Joseph H. Thomas who served as the town’s postmaster and operated a wheelwright shop at this location. The southeast corner was occupied by an “M. Rice.” The southeastern corner was occupied by the house of “J. Pearson.” This was John H. Pearson, a farmer who may have also permitted the operation of a store at this location. A store was definitely operated at this location by William Cooper and Edith Killen Hurd from the 1920s to the 1950s. By the 1920s, a house and barn had been constructed on the southwest corner of the intersection as well. The biggest physical change to the community occurred in the early 1920s, when Halltown Road was constructed between Pearson’s Corner and Marydel, Maryland. As part of this construction effort, the radius of a sharp turn on Hartley Road was reduced to improve the intersection with the newly created Delaware Route 8. The history of Pearson’s Corner is addressed in more detail in Chapter 3.

C. STATE HISTORIC CONTEXTS AND SUMMARY OF PROPERTY TYPES

The chronological periods embraced by Pearson’s Corner are: 1770-1830 +/- Early Industrialization; 1830-1880 +/- Industrialization and Early Urbanization; and 1880-1940 +/- Urbanization and Early Suburbanization.

The relevant historic themes are agriculture, retailing and wholesaling, transportation and communication, manufacturing, and architecture, engineering and decorative arts. Historic resources that could be reasonably anticipated within each are as follows:

Agriculture: Expected resources include fragments of farms that had been settled in the early 19th century or later, then subdivided with the passing of later generations. These would typically be expected to include a historic house but only limited outbuildings. Some outbuildings would likely be replaced with modern replacements performing slightly different functions (i.e., garages replacing wagon sheds).

Retailing and Wholesaling: As a crossroads community that reached its zenith around the middle of the 19th century, one or more corner stores would be expected to dominate the study area. In this region and era, such buildings typically would be frame, nearly always two or two and a half stories tall, often with windows larger than those found in houses.

Transportation and Communication: The presence of roads connecting Pearson’s Corner to other settled places of more or less importance would suggest the presence of one or more blacksmith shops and/or wheelwright shops dating from the 19th century, and service stations and diners dating from the automobile age. The first two of these would also relate to the theme of Manufacturing.

The theme of Architecture could well be represented in a long-lived community such as Pearson's Corner by houses ranging in date from the late 18th to the early 20th centuries. Given its rural and somewhat isolated locations, examples would tend to be more vernacular than high style, and to have been altered and enlarged with the passage of time. Specifically, modern materials such as siding, windows and doors often mask or replace original detailing, such that the massing (or a portion thereof) is often the chief indicator of a building's age.