

SCOPE OF WORK

SOUTH WILMINGTON BOULEVARD

Introduction

The City of Wilmington developed after 1731, when Thomas Willing laid out lots in the area between Market and French Streets as the village of Willingtown. Major expansion during the eighteenth century took place to the west and north of this center. Front Street, because of its location along the Christina River, was an area of important commercial development, as well as the location of the homes of many prominent citizens. During the nineteenth century, the expansion of the city continued to move west along Front Street, occasionally engulfing an eighteenth-century farm house. Many earlier structures at the center of the town were replaced or altered to suit the prevailing fashion. Further alteration of both eighteenth- and nineteenth-century structures has taken place in the twentieth century, in many cases destroying the architectural integrity of the structures. In most cases, however, significant archaeological data remains.

Archaeological deposits in urban sites occur in two basic contexts-- (1) surface deposits (midden) and shallow trashpits, and (2) trash deposits in deep features such as wells, cisterns, and privys. The shallow deposits are particularly important in studying eighteenth-century occupations because refuse was commonly disposed of outside the main entrances to the house or in trash pits along the side and rear property lines, as well as in deep features which were no longer being used. In the nineteenth century, trash disposal patterns changed, and trash was less likely to be de-

posited on the ground. Instead, it was carted away, or, as in the eighteenth century, used to fill abandoned deep features. It is, therefore, of particular importance to identify the location of eighteenth-century occupation sites in which there has been little or no ground disturbance, either at the entrances to the eighteenth-century structure or along the property lines. Undisturbed topsoil is less important in studying nineteenth-century sites, where associated refuse is likely to be found in deep features under 6 to 8 feet of culturally sterile fill or demolition debris.

South Wilmington Boulevard, which will bring traffic into center city from I-95 along what is now Front Street, will cut a transect through the city along a major route of urban expansion. Archaeological materials in this right-of-way should produce important social and economic data reflecting the pattern of urban development in Wilmington. This scope-of-work is designed to ensure that a representative sample of this significant data will be recovered.

Phase I--Document Search

The first phase of the project involves the accumulation of documentary information regarding the occupation and development of the project area. Significant phases of development along Front Street should be identified. The location of eighteenth-century occupation sites should also be identified, even if later structures have replaced earlier ones. Special function sites should also be located. Finally, a determination should be made as to the potential for archaeological materials under the

existing street, whether as filled public wells or as shallower deposits. A report should be prepared detailing the results of this research, and maps produced showing the development of the area. A developmental model which can be used in a sampling strategy should be devised.

Phase II--Preliminary Evaluation

The second phase of the project involves determining the nature of the archaeological remains in the project area. It should be understood that every property occupied in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, prior to the installation of public sewer and water facilities, can be expected to have some kind of deep feature. The degree and nature of disturbance on each eighteenth-century occupation site must be determined, however, in order to identify sites for which surface excavation would be appropriate. Undisturbed nineteenth-century sites can probably be determined from visual reconnaissance. A map delineating sampling strata based on developmental phase (as derived from Phase I research), function of site, and type of archaeological remains should be produced, as well as a report outlining the procedures and outcome of Phase II.

Phase III--Test Excavation

In Phase III, a random sample of the properties in each sampling stratum should be excavated, using an excavation strategy appropriate to the nature of the archaeological remains. Sites on which surface deposits can be expected should be excavated by standard grid methods, while sites on which no undisturbed surface deposits may be expected may be stripped

and only exposed features excavated. A report should be prepared detailing the results of these excavations, analyzing the data categories which can be expected on sites of similar period and with similar archaeological remains, and relating this data to the pattern of urban development in Wilmington. From this analysis, recommendations regarding National Register eligibility can be prepared, as well as recommendations for mitigation procedures, if required.