

ABSTRACT

This report details the findings of an archaeological and historic architectural survey conducted by URS Corporation (URS) for the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT). Work was initiated in response to proposed improvements for a section of State Route 9 from the Kent County line to N453. A walkover survey and subsurface testing were conducted within the project's area of potential effect (APE). Although there are several documented sites presently on file at the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office (DE SHPO) in the general vicinity of the project area, there are none within or adjacent to the immediate APE. Testing did not locate any new archaeological sites. Therefore, no additional archaeological investigations are recommended within the project area.

While no archaeological sites were located within the APE, the investigation did document three gravestones and two possible grave shafts that are part of a cemetery apparently associated with an African-American church. The church, located on the adjacent parcel just north of the cemetery, is present on both the 1868 Beers and 1893 Baist maps, but is not extant today. Based on construction drawings for the proposed improvements to State Route 9, it does not appear that construction activities will impact the cemetery. The drawings indicate that roadway widening will occur on the far side of the highway approximately 15 meters from the cemetery. However, since the cemetery is a culturally sensitive site located adjacent the project area, URS strongly recommends that the cemetery be fenced off and clearly marked in order to prevent any inadvertent impacts during construction activities.

Two historic architectural resources located within the APE—a brick culvert and bridge—were inventoried as part of the cultural resources study. Proposed construction plans indicate that both may be impacted by planned improvements to State Route 9. It was recommended that the brick culvert did not warrant further consideration for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, as it did not appear to be significant in design, construction, or historical associations. Although not initially evaluated for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places per the Scope of Services, Bridge 447A was recommended as potentially significant for its utilitarian modern design, its association with New Deal-era construction, and its relationship with the growing dependence on the automobile in Delaware's agricultural areas. URS recommended further evaluation to determine the eligibility or non-eligibility of Bridge 447A for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. DelDOT then requested an assessment of eligibility on the bridge; this assessment revealed that no significant association with historical, cultural, engineering, or design developments could be established, and Bridge 447A was not recommended as eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A, B, or C.