



STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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GOVERNOR

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT LOCUST GROVE

The Delaware Department of Transportation, in conjunction with the Cultural Resource Group of Louis Berger & Associates, Inc., is conducting archaeological excavations at the Locust Grove Archaeological Site, near Odessa in New Castle County. The site is in the proposed path of the planned State Route 1. State Route 1 is being constructed to relieve congestion on U.S. 13 and provide a safer, faster route from Wilmington to southern Delmarva and the Ocean beaches.

The Locust Grove Archaeological Site consists of archaeological deposits associated with Locust Grove, a standing nineteenth-century house located on Middletown Road (SR 299) approximately one mile west of Odessa. The Locust Grove house has been determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The house was built in two sections. The earlier portion, a simple, two story frame structure, facing east, dates to the 1830s. What is now the front section of the house, facing Middletown Road, is a two-and-one-half story second empire gothic house with a slate mansard roof and a full length porch, much larger and more impressive than the original structure.

Previous investigation at the site identified intact archaeological deposits and features in the yard areas surrounding the house. A midden deposit containing shell, bones, and large pieces of redware were located off the southwest corner of the house. Two features were also located during testing: a brick walkway and a deposit of rubble in the front yard, which might represent the foundation ruins of an earlier house on the site. Intact midden deposits and trash pits were also identified in the yard areas, some dating to the mid-1800s and others to the last quarter of the 19th century.

The present program of excavations has been designed to recover a sample of the midden deposits associated with the house. This data provides excellent data for the study of the inhabitant's material lives. Because the occupants of the house are well documented, this material can be analyzed with regard to their class, ethnicity, and household structure.

At the conclusion of the survey, a report will be prepared for DelDOT and the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office, which interested persons can obtain from DelDOT. Any artifacts found within the state right-of-way will be turned over to the Delaware State Museum. If you would like additional information concerning the project, please contact Kevin Cunningham, DelDOT archaeologist, at 739-4642, or Charles Lee Decker of Louis Berger & Associates at 202-331-7775.