

VIII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Site 7K-C-394

Site 7K-C-394 is a farm complex occupied from approximately 1850 to recent times. The excavation area included the location of a house shown on maps and photographs of the site made between 1906 and 1981. Approximately 6,000 artifacts were recovered from the excavations on the site, most of them architectural fragments and nineteenth- or twentieth-century domestic items. The site has been plowed since the abandonment of the farm, and most (93%) of the artifacts were recovered from the plowzone. No foundations or other structural remains were discovered during the excavations. A number of postholes were uncovered and excavated, probably all from fences. A few eighteenth-century artifacts were recovered, but not enough to indicate occupation of the site in the pre-1850 period.

Site 7K-C-394 is not considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Although the site once belonged to the important Ridgely family, they never occupied it, and the connection is too tangential to support consideration of National Register eligibility under Criterion B. The site is not eligible under Criterion D because it lacks sufficient integrity to convey important information about the past. The site has been plowed, and the structures were demolished using heavy equipment in a way that further rearranged the archaeological remains. The main deposits of architectural material are not in the locations of the known buildings, suggesting that they were moved by heavy equipment. The thick rubble deposits along the tree line, identified in Test Units 24 and 25, are further evidence of bulldozing. Because the artifacts have been disturbed by plowing and demolition, the spatial patterning of the finds has no cultural meaning. No privies, trash pits, or other artifact-rich features that might have provided analytical units were discovered.

Since the artifacts from the site cannot be associated with any particular occupation period, household, or activity area of the farm, they provide very little information for answering the kinds of research questions proposed in state management plans (De Cunzo and Catts 1990; De Cunzo and Garcia 1992:267-297). Many of the questions proposed in the management documents, and of much interest to historical archaeologists, pertain to individual households, and the dispersed artifacts from the Laws Farm are useless in these contexts (LeeDecker and Friedlander 1985; LeeDecker et al. 1987). Furthermore, since some of the different households that occupied the farm were tenants and some were owners, and since the value of the farm fluctuated over time, making some of the families richer and some of them poorer, the artifacts cannot provide information on the lifeways of any particular social group (Spencer-Wood 1987).

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material from the buried A-horizon in Locus 2 can provide information on food-gathering activities in this environment. The lithic artifacts from Locus 2 represent a good record of an industry based on producing small scrapers and flake tools from local cobbles. The ceramics from Locus 1 can provide information on the ceramic vessels used in a particular context, a procurement station, and thus on the functions of the vessels. Because Site 7K-C-396 is not threatened by the proposed wetland replacement, the site should be preserved in place for future archaeological research.