

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY AND ASSESSMENT OF TWO  
MICROWAVE TOWER LOCATIONS IN WAKE AND CHATHAM  
COUNTIES, NORTH CAROLINA

by

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#### MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

An archaeological survey and assessment were conducted at two microwave tower sites in Wake and Chatham counties, North Carolina (No Clearinghouse numbers were available). The Cary Repeater site is less than 0.2 acres in extent and is located at the junction of N.C. 54 and I-40 between Cary and Raleigh in Wake County. The Pittsboro Microwave Tower site, including a proposed access road, covers approximately 0.7 acres and is located about 2.5 miles south of Pittsboro in Chatham County. Both sites were assessed by pedestrian survey. Shovel testing was also conducted at the Pittsboro site due to low surface visibility. No prehistoric or historic cultural remains were identified at the Cary Repeater site; in fact, the entire site was heavily disturbed with no potential for intact cultural resources. Archaeological evidence at the Pittsboro Microwave Tower site consisted of a single, small stone flake and does not meet minimum standards to be considered significant by National Register criteria. Consequently, no further archaeological assessment is recommended.

## INTRODUCTION

On July 30, 1985, archaeological surveys were conducted at the Cary Repeater and Pittsboro Microwave Tower sites by R. P. Stephen Davis, Jr. and Gary L. Petherick. The project was initiated at the request of the Eastern Regional Office of MCI Telecommunications Corporation, Douglasville, Georgia.

The proposed Cary Repeater site (Figure 1) is located adjacent to Aeroglide Corporation at the intersection of N.C. 54 and I-40 between Cary and Raleigh (UTM: 17/703470/3962990; Elev: 484 ft). The project includes a 70 x 80 ft tower site and an approximately 50 x 50 ft graveled parking area. Constructed facilities will include a repeater tower, generator, 1000 gal LPG tank, and an 11 x 18 ft shelter, all of which will be enclosed by a chain-link fence.

The proposed Pittsboro Microwave Tower site (Figure 2) is situated on a low knoll in a pasture, about 2.5 miles south of Pittsboro and 0.3 miles west of NCSR 2219 (UTM: 17/663900/3949530; Elev: 534 ft). This project includes a 75 x 75 ft tower site, a 25 x 75 ft graveled parking area, and an 1100 ft x 12 ft wide access road. Constructed facilities will include a microwave tower, enclosed by a chain-link fence.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Over 800 archaeological sites have been recorded in Wake and Chatham counties. The overwhelming majority of these were identified during surveys of bottomlands inundated by Jordan Lake on Haw River and Falls Lake on Neuse River (see Claggett and Cable 1982; McCormick 1970; Smith 1965; Wilson 1976). These investigations documented the presence of Indian peoples in the region over the last 9000 years. Beyond the

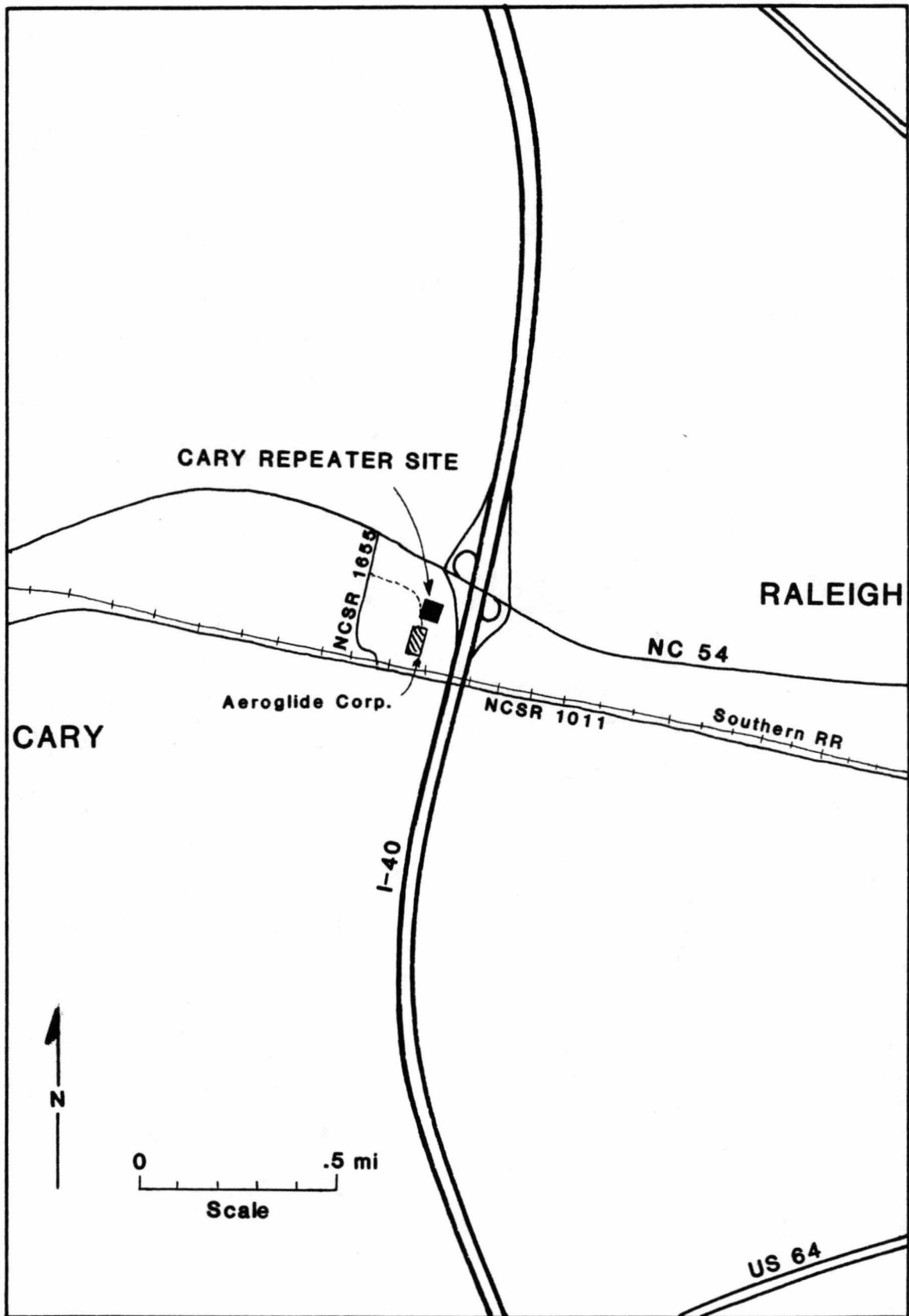


Figure 1. Map locating the Cary Repeater project site.

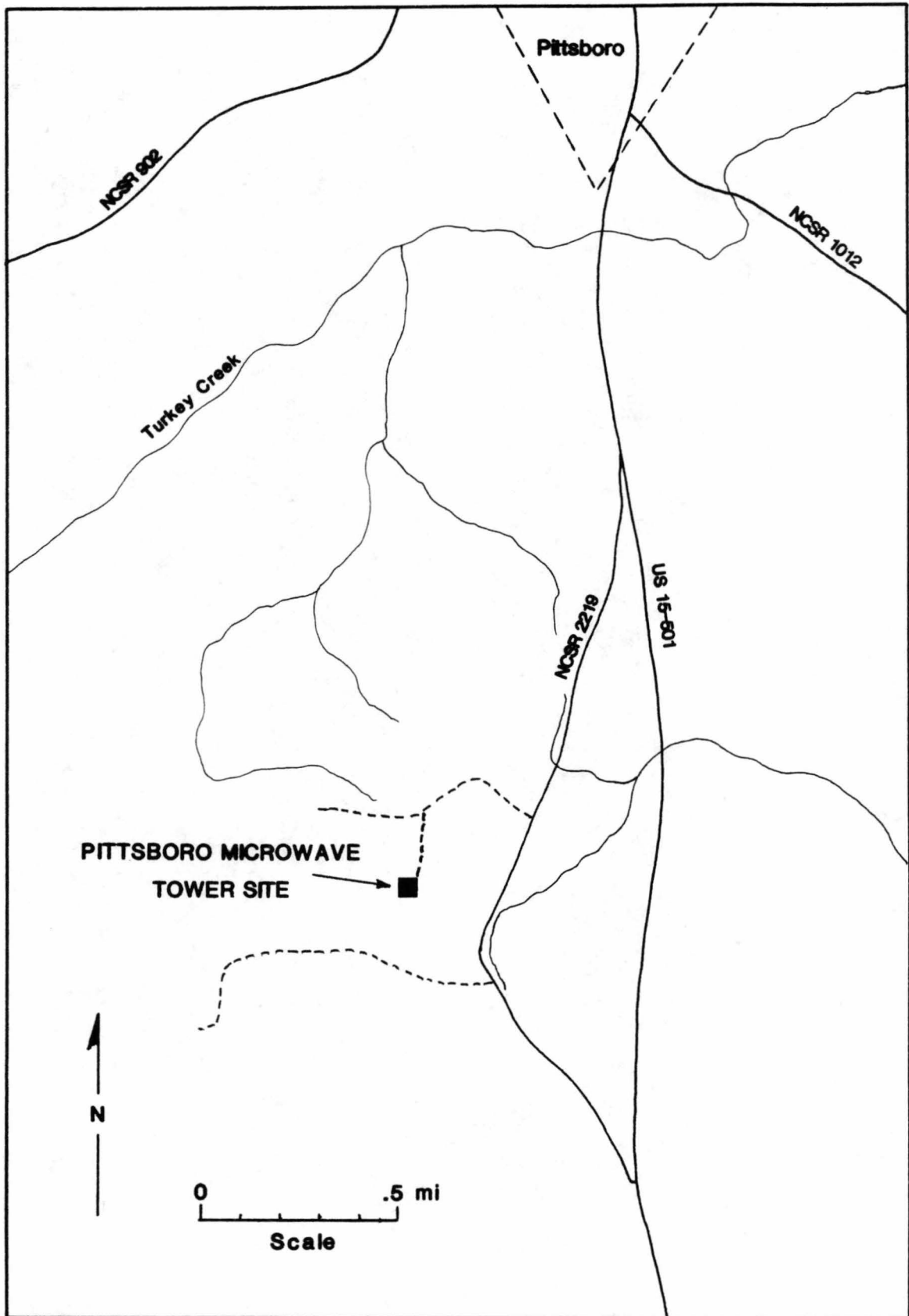


Figure 2. Map locating the Pittsboro Microwave Tower project site.

alluvial valleys of these rivers and their major tributaries, most archaeological sites represent small, disturbed camp sites and produce varying amounts of mostly nondiagnostic lithic debris (Davis and Ward 1983; Ward and Davis 1984). When temporally diagnostic specimens are found, they usually date to the Middle Archaic (4000-2000 B.C.) or Late Archaic (2000-1000 B.C.) periods with Morrow Mountain, Guilford, and Savannah River lithic assemblages predominating. Camp sites of these periods are particularly common on knolls and hilltops throughout the uplands in this region.

#### SURVEY METHODS AND RESULTS

The Cary Repeater site was found to be located in an extensively disturbed area with exposed clayey fill and sparse vegetation. Both cutting and filling had taken place at the site (probably when the nearby Aeroglide plant was constructed), with as much as 20 ft of fill covering most of the site. Given these conditions and the lack of any undisturbed ground surface within the project vicinity, no further assessment was deemed necessary.

The Pittsboro Microwave Tower site is situated on a low grassy knoll with poor surface visibility, over 1000 ft away from the nearest stream. Humic topsoil is relatively thin (0.3-0.4 ft thick) and underlain by a gravelly tan clay loam. Several erosional patches along the proposed access road were examined for cultural remains; none were found. Evaluation of the tower location consisted of inspecting spoil piles from two coring holes and digging 10 shovel tests (1 x 1 ft by 0.5 ft deep) at roughly 20 ft intervals. Examination of fill from the first shovel test identified a small stone flake representing waste from aboriginal stone tool manufacture. The following nine tests, however,

failed to produce any additional artifacts. Given these results and the lack of potential for buried cultural deposits, no further archaeological assessment is recommended for this project site.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological survey and assessment at the Cary Repeater and Pittsboro Microwave Tower sites failed to identify any significant prehistoric or historic archaeological remains. It is concluded that these projects will have no effect upon significant cultural resources. Archaeological clearance without further assessment is recommended for both projects.

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