

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY AND ASSESSMENT OF URBAN
ASSOCIATES PROJECT, FINLEY FOREST, ORANGE AND DURHAM
COUNTIES, NORTH CAROLINA

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Management Summary

An archaeological survey and assessment was conducted on a 38.2-acre tract comprising the site of a proposed apartment-condominium development in Orange and Durham counties, North Carolina. No clearinghouse number was available. A combined pedestrian survey and shovel-testing method was used. The shovel tests were placed at systematic 100-foot or 200-foot intervals, or at locations judged to have cultural potential by the surveyors. All of the study tract consists of previously cultivated land. Plowing and erosional disturbance is greater in the northern two-thirds of the property. Only slight cultural remains (three flakes in two tests) were found, and the area was deemed to have low potential for buried or intact cultural deposits or features. No further archaeological study or mitigation is recommended.

Introduction

On July 13, 1983, Roy S. Dickens, Jr. and H. Trawick Ward of the Research Laboratories of Anthropology, University of North Carolina conducted an archaeological survey and assessment of a 38.2-acre tract comprising Urban Associates' Finley Forest development project in Orange and Durham counties, North Carolina. This survey and assessment was undertaken for Hakan/Corley and Associates, Incorporated under a directive from the Veterans Administration as part of the process of obtaining VA approval for the project.

Project Location and Description

The project tract is located approximately 800 feet south of Highway 54 and 2 1/2 miles eastsoutheast of Chapel Hill (Figure 1). Approximately 500 feet of the east side of the property borders Barbee Chapel Road. The tract is roughly rectangular in shape, with its long axis oriented north-south. The Orange-Durham County line intersects the the west portion of the property from northeast to southwest. Adjoining property on the north and northeast sides (except for that bordering Barbee Chapel Road) is in private ownership; adjoining property on the west, south, and southwest sides is owned by the University of North Carolina.

Most of the survey tract is covered by vegetation representing some stage of reforestation of old agricultural

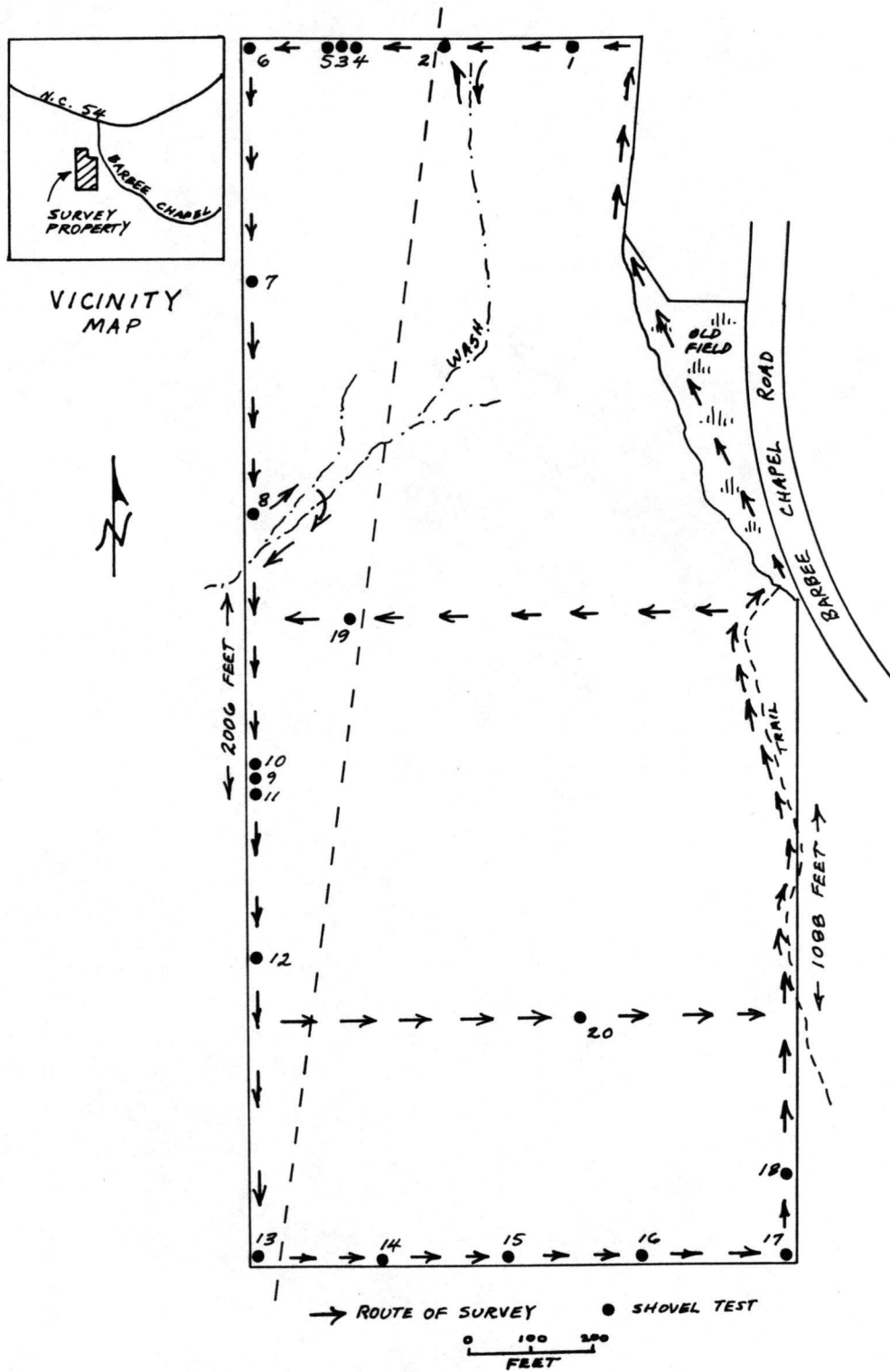


Fig. 1. Map of Project Tract, Showing Routes of Pedestrian Survey and Locations of Shovel Tests.

fields. The northern two-thirds of the property is covered by a mixed stand of pines and small hardwoods. These trees range in age from about 15 to 40 years. Relict plow furrows are visible in some of the more recently cultivated portions, and a 3-foot-deep drainage ditch and a series of 6-foot-deep erosional gullies run from northeast to southwest across the northern and central portions of the tract. The southern one-third of the property has stands of moderately old hardwoods, especially in the southwest portion. There is also less evidence of intensive plowing and erosion in the southern portion. The tract has only slight variations in relief, with the lowest terrain being near the center, and the highest to the south.

A phased program of development is intended for this tract (Richard Gurlitz, Hankan/Corley and Associates, personal communication). Quadplex condominiums, which will resemble large individually-spaced residences, will be constructed in the northern, central, and southwestern 31 acres, whereas more dense apartments are planned for 7 acres in the southeast portion. The former will require less grading and clearing than the latter.

Archaeological Information for the General Area

Nine archaeological sites have been recorded within a one-mile radius of the project tract. The nearest of these

sites, 31Dh3, is located 0.4 mile northeast of the tract. This site contains bifacial tools and tool fragments ("projectile points" and "blades") and probably represents the remains of a small Archaic-period camp. 31Dh14 and 31Dh15, located 0.7 and one mile southeast of the tract, are similar in size and cultural affiliation to 31Dh3. A cluster of sites, recorded as 31Or4, 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, and 4e, are located from 0.5 to 0.7 mile southwest of the project tract, in the area of Finley Golf Course. Artifacts from these latter sites consist of ceramic vessel sherds, soapstone vessel sherds, bifacial tools and tool fragments, and a hammerstone. Cultural affiliations of these sites appear to be Archaic and Early-Middle Woodland. They have light to moderate surface artifact distributions. The densest concentration seems to have been at the Manson Farm site (31Or4e), where 28 "projectile points", 13 "preforms", 168 ceramic sherds, and one soapstone sherd were found.

Survey Methods

The two surveyors walked the entire property boundary, made short excursions into the tract along paths and engineering survey cuts, and walked two complete east-west transects across the less-disturbed central and southern portions of the property (Figure 1). All areas of exposed surface -- erosional gullies and washes, cleared areas (Figure 2), footpaths, and roadbeds -- were carefully

examined for evidence of past human activity. The sides of erosional features were flat-shoveled in several places to obtain subsurface profiles.

Shovel tests were dug along the property boundary at approximately 100-foot and 200-foot intervals, and in areas where topographic characteristics suggested that the locations would have been amenable to human occupation, and/or where surface conditions indicated that there had been less erosion or plow disturbance (Figure 3). In short, the testing program was partly systematic and partly judgemental. Each shovel test measured approximately one-foot square and was excavated well into sterile subsoil. In the northern portions of the tract (Tests 1-7), the tests revealed a shallow to non-existent humus, which was underlain by bright orange, compact clay subsoil. In the western and southern portions, where there was older vegetation and less plow disturbance and erosion, the tests revealed a shallow to medium humus overlying a tan sandy clay that graded to orange clay subsoil. Only two tests were dug in the interior of the tract, as no major differences in topography or other surface conditions were noted between this area and areas along the boundary. Again, as with the boundary areas, any exposed surfaces (e.g., paths, ditches, and gullies) were examined.

Findings

Only two of the shovel tests produced possible cultural



Fig. 2. View of Northeast Boundary of Project Tract, at Barbee Chapel Road.



Fig. 3. View Looking East along Southern Boundary of Project Tract. Excavation of Shovel Test 14 is in Progress.

remains. Test 3, on the northern boundary of the tract (Figure 1), produced two stone flakes -- one of Rhyolite that has possible cultural origins, and one of Carolina Slate that has probable cultural origins. The former, if cultural, represents a medium-sized ($5/8 \times 1 \frac{1}{4}$ -inch) thinning flake, and the latter is a small ($3/8 \times 3/8$ -inch) thinning or retouching flake. Because of this discovery in Test 3, two other tests (Tests 4 and 5) were dug at intervals of ten feet on either side of the first. Neither of these tests yielded any cultural remains. Test 9, on the southern part of the west boundary, produced one stone flake of probable cultural origins. This was a medium-sized ($1 \frac{1}{4} \times 1 \frac{1}{2}$ -inch) thinning flake of Rhyolite. Because of this discovery, two additional tests were dug on either side of the first. Neither of these tests produced cultural remains.

Summary and Recommendations

The Finley Forest tract is composed of 38.2 acres of old agricultural land. Evidence of past plowing and sheet erosion are extensive over the tract. Areas in the southern one-third of the tract are covered in relatively old hardwoods and evidence less plow disturbance and erosion. A pedestrian surface inspection and a combined systematic-judgemental shovel testing program revealed only slight evidence of aboriginal use of the tract.

The slight evidence of cultural activity revealed in the shovel tests, together with observations of surface and sub-surface conditions over the tract, strongly suggest that the area has low probability for buried or intact cultural features or deposits. On the basis of these findings, we conclude that no further archaeological investigation or mitigation is warranted for this property.