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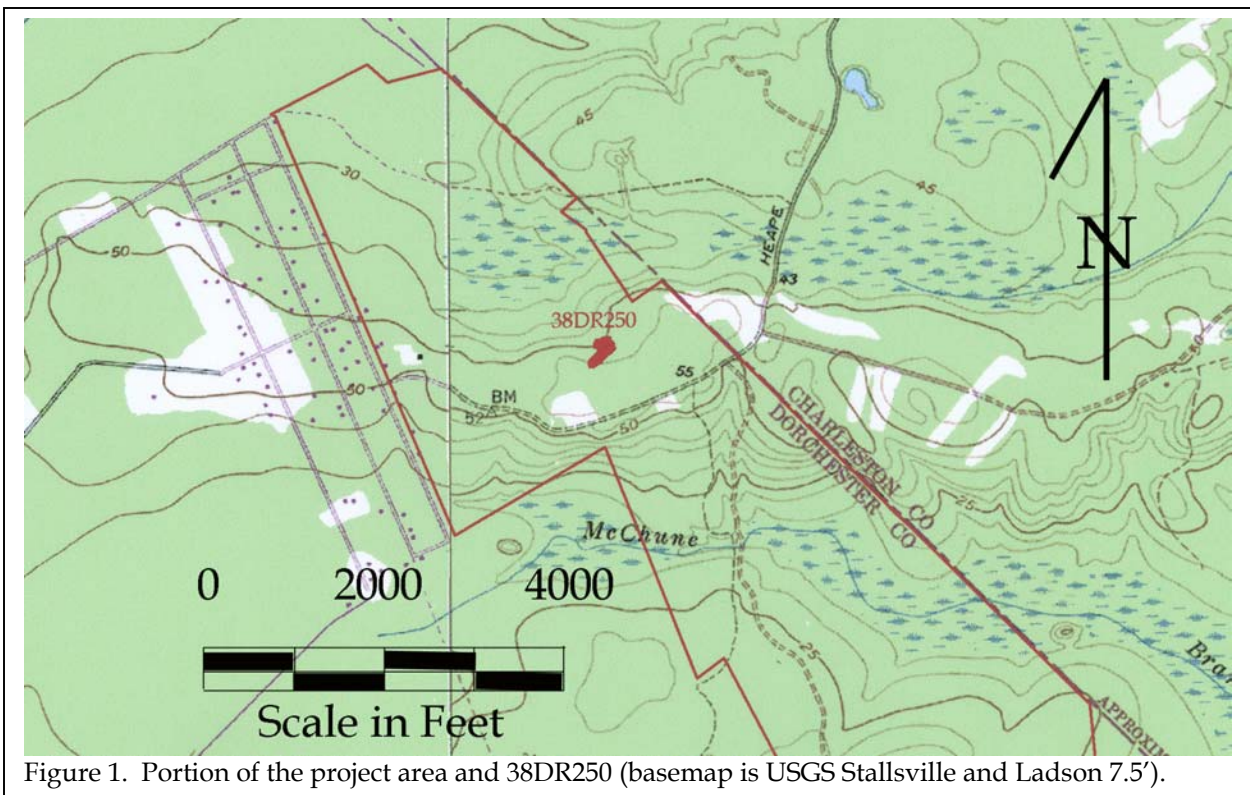
May 25, 2006

### NATIONAL REGISTER POTENTIAL OF 38DR250

#### Introduction

From November 14 to December 1, 2005, an intensive archaeological survey of the Heape Tract, located in Dorchester County (see Trinkley and Southerland 2006), was performed for Centex Homes. During the survey of the 587 acre tract (Figure 1), a probable slave settlement (38DR250) was identified and recommended potentially eligible for the National Register for its ability to address significant research questions.

Historic research of the tract identified an 1853 plat of an adjacent property, but which showed



the McKewn Settlement to be located on the current project area. Trinkley and Southerland (2006:18-20) summarize the conveyance of the property; however, the earliest mention of the settlement is provided by H.A.M. Smith who suggests that the property was part of Charles Barker's Spring Grove. Smith also notes that "the site of the old settlement on the McKewn part which was probably that of Charles Barker has been so destroyed that nothing can be gathered as to its character" (Smith 1988:300). In fact, the current survey did identify the McKewn Settlement (38DR252), however, no mention of any slave or overseer structures was found during the brief history of the tract. While deeds are vague and plats are rare, Smith (1988) would place portions of the property in the hands of Archibald McKewn by 1797.

Original shovel testing at 38DR250, which was performed at 50-foot intervals, produced artifacts that had a mean ceramic date (MCD) of 1773, although the artifact quantity was sparse. Nevertheless, the

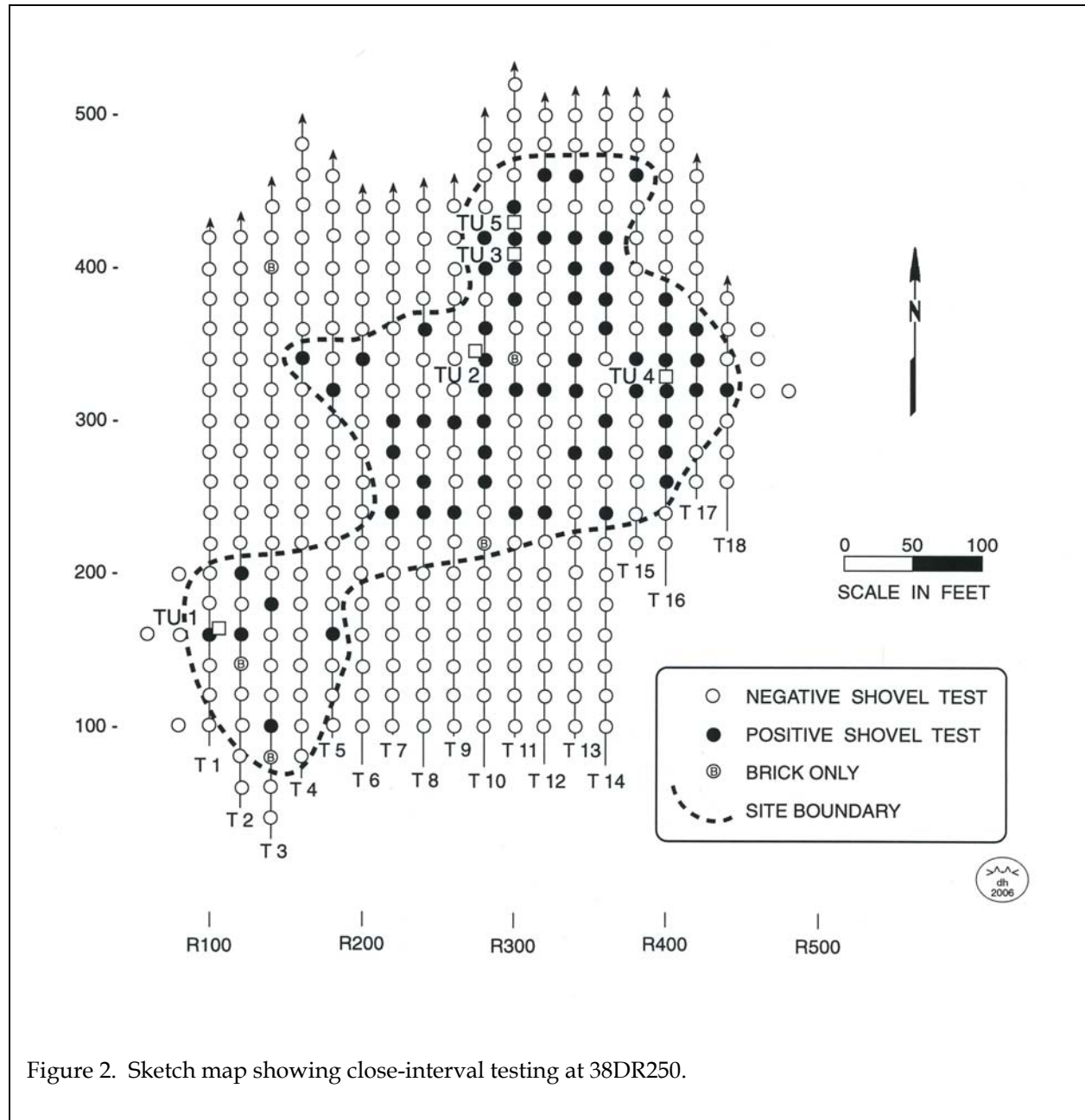


Figure 2. Sketch map showing close-interval testing at 38DR250.



State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) agreed that the site was potentially eligible for the National Register and additional testing was needed (letter from Valerie Marcil dated February 23, 2006). Additional testing was performed at 20-foot intervals from May 10-12, 2006 to better define the boundaries of the site. In addition, five 1.5-foot units were excavated to better determine the possibility of finding features (such as post holes or wall trenches).

## **Results**

A total of 330 shovel tests were excavated at 20-foot intervals (Figure 2), which provided a site boundary of 340 feet east-west by 360 feet north-south, although the shape of the site runs approximately northeast-southwest. From these tests (64 or 19% of which were positive with an additional five tests containing only brick), a total of 221 artifacts were recovered, which provided a more accurate date for the site. The new MCD is 1758.7, almost 15 years earlier than previously thought. As previously mentioned, since deeds and plats were hard to identify, it is unknown whether 38DR250 was part of the plantation owned by Archibald McKewn, or an earlier owner. Additional research would be needed to identify the earlier ownership.

Table 1 shows the artifacts found during the original survey, current testing at 20-foot intervals, and the five 1.5-foot units, which were excavated after shovel testing in the areas of interest (high density of artifacts, high density of brick, or unusually deep profiles). As shown in the table, 5% of the total artifact assemblage consist of prehistoric artifacts that do not provide enough information to be considered an eligible component of this site. Soil profiles are similar to the somewhat excessively drained Blanton soils, which generally have an A horizon of light brownish gray (10YR6/2) fine sand to a depth of 0.2 foot over a brown (10YR5/3) fine sand to 0.7 foot in depth (Eppinette 1990). The subsoil is a very pale brown (10YR7/3) fine sand. However, almost every shovel test produced a slightly different profile. The sketch map of the five 1.5-foot test units show some of the variants of the soil (Figure 3).

Specifically, Test Unit 1 had a surface layer of very dark gray (7.5YR3/1) sand to 0.3 foot in depth over a brown (10YR4/3) sand to 0.6 foot in depth. The next layer was a grayish brown (10YR5/2) sand to 1.0 foot. The subsoil was a pale brown (10YR6/3) sand. The artifacts were found in the upper 0.6 foot of soil and no features were noted in the profile.

Test Unit 2 had an A horizon of gray (5YR5/1) sand to 0.4 foot in depth over a brown (10YR4/3) sand, which occurred to a depth of 0.8 foot. The brown changed slightly to a 10YR5/3, which occurred to a depth of 1.3 feet. The subsoil was a pale brown (10YR6/3) sand with no features noted in the profile. Artifacts were found to 1.3 feet, although density appeared to decline with depth.

Unit 3 had a surface layer of dark gray (7.5YR4/1) sand to 0.3 foot over a brown (7.5YR4/2) to 0.8 foot. By 1.1 feet, the soil turned to a brown (7.5YR5/2) sand. The subsoil was a light brown (7.5YR6/3) sand with no features noted. Artifacts were found in the upper 0.8 foot of soil.

Test Unit 4 (Figure 4) had a surface layer of black (7.5YR2.5/1) sand to 0.4 foot over a dark brown (7.5YR3/2) sand to 0.8 foot. A thin yellowish brown (10YR5/4) layer was observed to 1.0 foot and the base of excavations showed a possible feature. As shown in Figure 3, the base had three distinct areas including a dark grayish brown (10YR4/2) sand, brown (10YR4/3) sand and a mottled brownish yellow (10YR6/6) and yellowish brown (10YR5/4) sand. Artifacts, however, appeared to stop at 0.8 foot in depth.

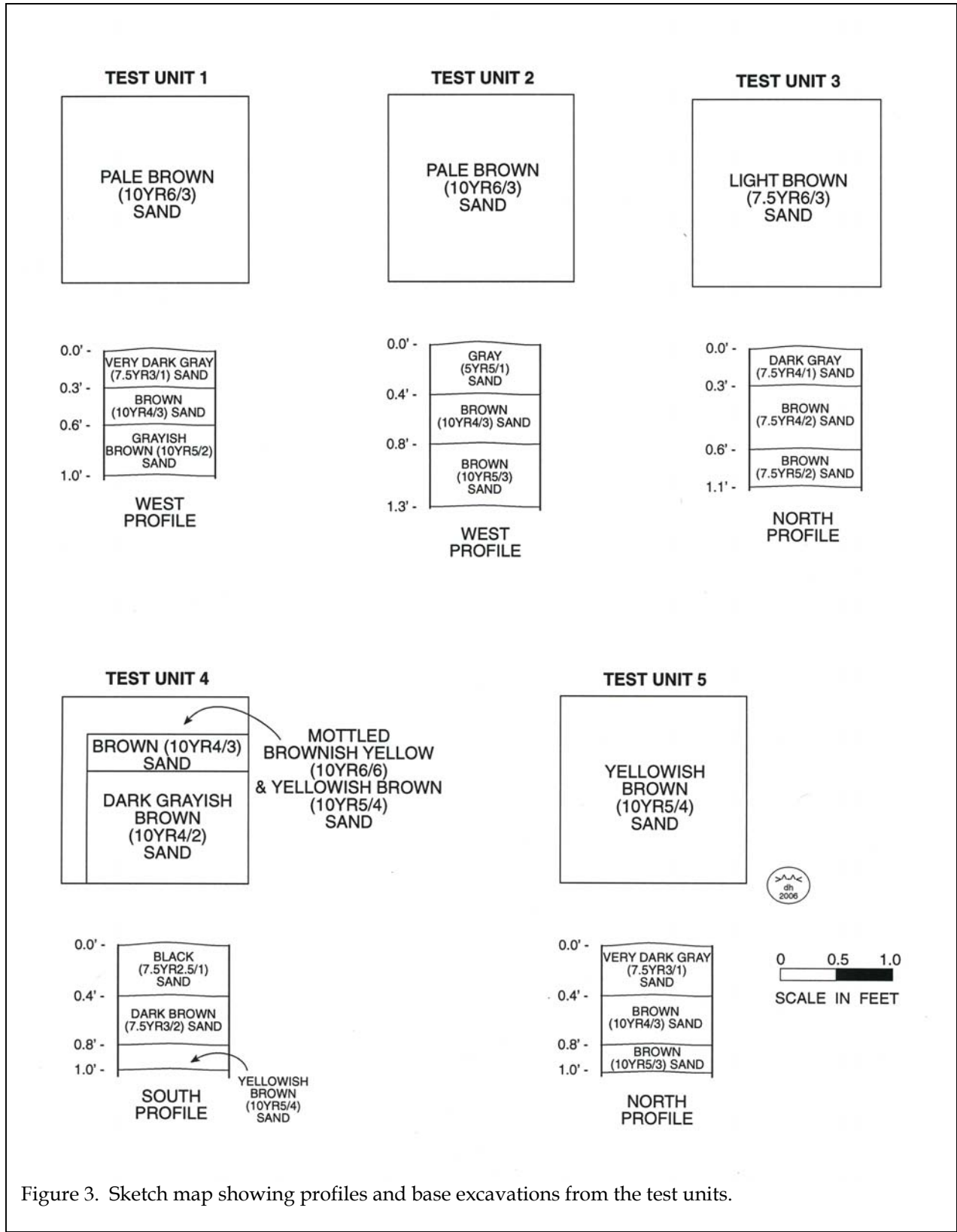


Figure 3. Sketch map showing profiles and base excavations from the test units.

Test Unit 5 had an A horizon of very dark gray (7.5YR3/1) sand to 0.4 foot over a brown (10YR4/3) sand to 0.8 foot. Artifacts stopped at this horizon, however, the brown (10YR5/3) sand extended to 1.0 foot in depth. The base of excavations was a yellowish brown (10YR5/4) sand.



Figure 4. View of the base of excavations in Test Unit 4.

With the prehistoric artifacts removed from the context, the site still produced artifacts from six data sets (Kitchen, Architecture, Arms, Tobacco, Personal, and Activities groups). The percentage of artifacts appear to follow a mixture of Garrow's (1982) Carolina Slave Artifact Pattern and a possible eighteenth century overseer from 38BK1900 or 38CH1278 (Table 2). For example, the Kitchen and Activities Groups appear to be closer to the eighteenth century overseer, whereas the Tobacco Group seems to be more similar to the Carolina Slave. The Furniture, Arms, and Clothing Groups could represent either an overseer or slave and the unusually high percentage of the Personal Group does not appear to represent either group.

Ceramics make up the bulk of the Kitchen Group (78%), however Colono ware, a slave made pottery commonly found at eighteenth century sites, was found more often (45%)

Table 2.  
Previously Published Artifact Patterns Compared to 38DR250 (numbers in percents)

	38DR250	Revised Carolina Artifact Pattern <sup>1</sup>	38BK1900 Area B 18th Cen. Overseer <sup>2</sup>	38CH1278 18th Cen. Overseer <sup>3</sup>	Carolina Slave Artifact Pattern <sup>1</sup>	Georgia Slave Artifact Pattern <sup>4</sup>
Kitchen	67	51.8-65.0	65.2	78.1	70.9-84.2	20.0-25.8
Architecture	26	25.2-31.4	21.2	8.9	11.8-24.8	67.9-73.2
Furniture	0	0.2-0.6	0	0.1	0.1	0.0-0.1
Arms	0.5	0.1-0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1-0.3	0.0-0.2
Tobacco	4	1.9-13.9	10.2	11.4	2.4-5.4	0.3-9.7
Clothing	0	0.6-5.4	0.1	0.2	0.3-0.8	0.3-1.7
Personal	1	0.2-0.5	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1-0.2
Activities	1.9	0.9-1.7	2.9	1.1	0.2-0.9	0.2-0.4

<sup>1</sup>Garrow 1982

<sup>2</sup>Trinkley et al. 2003

<sup>3</sup>Trinkley et al. 2005

<sup>4</sup>Singlton 1980

than European ceramics (33%). Of the European ceramics, delft and undecorated creamware was the most common. In general, brick was not found in any large quantity or size. Unidentifiable nails make up the bulk of the

Architecture Group with 78% of the total, however both hand wrought and cut nails were identified. Hand wrought nails were most common in the eighteenth century, however cut nails were introduced in 1789 (Howard 1989:54). Only 7% of the Architecture Group was window glass, likely representing structures without windows.

As previously mentioned, only one Arms Group item, a honey-colored gun flint, was recovered. The lack of arms items is not uncommon at a slave settlement, however, there tend to be a higher quantity of flints, which could be used as strike-a-lights.

Two items, representing 1% of the total artifact assemblage, were found in the Personal Group – one key and one coin. The coin, while badly eroded, is copper and has the image of a seated Liberty figure. These coins, if an American mint, were produced from 1785 to 1789 (Newman 1976:105), however if the coin is a British Halfpenny, it could date as early as 1749.

Also interesting to note is the possibility of two loci within the site. The sketch map of the site (Figure 2) shows a small scatter of positive shovel tests in the southwest, separated by the larger northeast section by about 100 feet of negative shovel tests. While the only difference in artifacts was the recovery of a key at the southwest section, it is possible that the two loci may be separate structures of the slave settlement, possibly even an overseer's house. However, artifacts were sparse and the analysis of features may be the only way to distinguish the two loci. Work has been performed at an eighteenth century overseer site in Charleston County (Trinkley et al. 2005) and it was found that the early overseers tended to have just as little as slaves, however as was mentioned, with the sparse artifacts it is too early to make these assumptions.

In general, eighteenth century slave settlements are not well studied and most of the studies are from Berkeley County. This provides an opportunity to expand research into a new geographic area to determine if there are recognizable differences that may relate to either the location, the crops, or the economy of the area. Given the wide range of archaeological data sets, including a generally low status artifact assemblage, we believe that 38DR250 is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places for its information potential.

Given the rarity of these sites – coupled with the very limited historical data that our research reveals will be present for the eighteenth century occupants – site 38DR250 poses a number of significant research questions that incorporate both African American lifeways and, in particular, attempting to determine why the artifact pattern from this site is distinct from other slave settlements. Of considerable interest is the possibility of an overseer in near proximity to the slaves. We must also consider the possibility that the pattern is reflective of a slave driver, rather than white overseer. It is possible that analysis of either artifacts or possibly faunal remains may help resolve this issue.

In spite of their simplicity, these questions are worthy of research since the period of occupation represents the very early settlement of South Carolina. This was a time when the English, many from the previously slave-holding West Indies colonies, were beginning to establish slavery as a common practice in Carolina. Short of very generalized economic and social histories, there is little archaeological research for this time period.

Moreover, while such site types were presumably common, many have been culturally “swamped” by late eighteenth and early nineteenth century settlements. The development of the

plantations, taking place on top of the very early, and very ephemeral, earlier settlements has made them impossible to study with any precision. In this case, we have not determined where later settlements were moved, however, with the recovery of only two pieces of pearlware (the latest ceramic found at the site), we have been ensured that the site has been “frozen” in time. It is also possible that sites of this size are often overlooked in archaeological projects or are “written off” because of their low artifact density. Consequently, 38DR250 assumes an even greater importance as a representative site type for which there are very few examples.

If green spacing is not an option, data recovery should be implemented to accurately address research questions for the site. Research in this area should focus on the recovery of a larger and more representative artifact collection as well as the identification of structural remains. The surest way to accomplish this is to place 10-foot units at the areas of highest density identified from testing of the site. While most of the shovel tests contained only one or two artifacts (n=49), 13 tests contained 3-4 artifacts, and two shovel tests contained 5 or more artifacts. No distinct cluster of artifacts was identified, possibly the result of logging that has damaged the site, however it is possible that features will still be identified in the areas with higher density of artifacts. Structural remains are admittedly more difficult to discover and correctly interpret in sandy, cultivated soils. Nevertheless, we have found that structures tend to be associated with concentrations of artifacts (see Trinkley et al. 2003).

### **Conclusions**

Should data recovery of 38DR250 be necessary, the field work would require two to three weeks of time. Once the field work is completed, a management summary could be produced within two weeks of the project’s completion.

While green spacing is an option, it would require that the property be managed for the long-term preservation of the archaeological site and no development or construction activities may take place on the site. However, looting is a concern for the property since two other eligible sites (38DR249 and 38DR252) have been damaged by looters. Until data recovery has been performed or the site has otherwise been secured from looting, only two copies of this letter will be produced – one to the client and one to the SHPO. Hopefully this will help ensure that the site will be accurately studied and information can be distributed to anyone interested in learning more about South Carolina history.

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