



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18PR416

Site Name: Pheasant's Thicket

Prehistoric

Other name(s) MIHP # PG:85A-22

Historic

Unknown

Brief Description: Late 18th-Late 19th century farmstead

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 11

SCS soil & sediment code

Latitude 38.6798

Longitude -76.8837

Physiographic province Western Shore Coastal

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation 61 m

Site slope 0

Ethnobotany profile available

Maritime site

Site setting

-Site Setting restricted

-Lat/Long accurate to within 1 sq. mile, user may need to make slight adjustments in mapping to account for sites near state/county lines or streams

Topography

- Floodplain
- Hilltop/bluff
- Interior flat
- Upland flat
- Ridgetop
- Terrace
- Low terrace
- High terrace
- Rockshelter/cave
- Hillslope
- Unknown
- Other

Ownership

- Private
- Federal
- State of MD
- Regional/county/city
- Unknown

Nearest Surface Water

Name (if any) Tributary of Timothy Bran

- | Saltwater | | Freshwater | |
|--|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Ocean <input type="checkbox"/> | Estuary/tidal river <input type="checkbox"/> | Stream/river <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Swamp <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tidewater/marsh <input type="checkbox"/> | Lake or pond <input type="checkbox"/> | Spring <input type="checkbox"/> | |

Minimum distance to water is 60 m

Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

- Paleoindian site
- Archaic site
- Early archaic
- Middle archaic
- Late archaic
- Woodland site
- MD Adena
- Early woodland
- Mid. woodland
- Late woodland
- Unknown prehistoric context

- Contact period site
- ca. 1820 - 1860 Y
- ca. 1630 - 1675
- ca. 1675 - 1720
- ca. 1720 - 1780
- ca. 1780 - 1820 Y
- Unknown historic context
- Unknown context
- ca. 1860 - 1900 Y
- ca. 1900 - 1930 Y
- Post 1930 Y

Ethnic Associations (historic only)

- Native American
- African American
- Anglo-American Y
- Hispanic
- Asian American
- Unknown
- Other

Y=Confirmed, P=Possible

Site Function Contextual Data:

- ### Prehistoric
- Multi-component
 - Village
 - Hamlet
 - Base camp
 - Rockshelter/cave
 - Earthen mound
 - Cairn
 - Burial area
 - Misc. ceremonial
 - Rock art
 - Shell midden
 - STU/lithic scatter
 - Quarry/extraction
 - Fish weir
 - Production area
 - Unknown
 - Other context

- ### Historic
- Urban/Rural? Rural
 - Domestic
 - Homestead
 - Farmstead
 - Mansion
 - Plantation
 - Row/townhome
 - Cellar
 - Privy
 - Industrial
 - Mining-related
 - Quarry-related
 - Mill
 - Black/metalsmith
 - Furnace/forge
 - Other
 - Transportation
 - Canal-related
 - Road/railroad
 - Wharf/landing
 - Maritime-related
 - Bridge
 - Ford
 - Educational
 - Commercial
 - Trading post
 - Store
 - Tavern/inn
 - Military
 - Battlefield
 - Fortification
 - Encampment
 - Townsite
 - Religious
 - Church/mtg house
 - Ch support bldg
 - Burial area
 - Cemetery
 - Sepulchre
 - Isolated burial
 - Bldg or foundation
 - Possible Structure
 - Post-in-ground
 - Frame-built
 - Masonry
 - Other structure
 - Slave related
 - Non-domestic agri
 - Recreational
 - Midden/dump
 - Artifact scatter
 - Spring or well
 - Unknown
 - Other context

Interpretive Sampling Data:

Prehistoric context samples Soil samples taken

Flotation samples taken Other samples taken

Historic context samples Soil samples taken N

Flotation samples taken N Other samples taken



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Diagnostic Artifact Data:

Projectile Point Types		Koens-Crispin	
Clovis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Perkiomen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hardaway-Dalton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Susquehana	<input type="checkbox"/>
Palmer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vernon	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kirk (notch)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Piscataway	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kirk (stem)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Calvert	<input type="checkbox"/>
Le Croy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Selby Bay	<input type="checkbox"/>
Morrow Mntn	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jacks Rf (notch)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guilford	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jacks Rf (pent)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brewerton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Madison/Potomac	<input type="checkbox"/>
Otter Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Levanna	<input type="checkbox"/>

Prehistoric Sherd Types

Marcey Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Popes Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shepard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keyser	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dames Qtr	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coulbourn	<input type="checkbox"/>	Townsend	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yeocomico	<input type="checkbox"/>
Selden Island	<input type="checkbox"/>	Watson	<input type="checkbox"/>	Minguannan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Monongahela	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accokeek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mockley	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sullivan Cove	<input type="checkbox"/>	Susquehannock	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wolfe Neck	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clemson Island	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shenks Ferry	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Vinette	<input type="checkbox"/>	Page	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moyaone	<input type="checkbox"/>		
				Potomac Crk	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Historic Sherd Types

Earthenware		Ironstone	535	Staffordshire	1	Stoneware	
Astbury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jackfield	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tin Glazed	2	English Brown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Borderware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mn Mottled	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whiteware	230	Eng Dry-bodied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buckley	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Devon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Porcelain	68	Nottingham	1
Creamware	1	Pearlware	4			Rhenish	<input type="checkbox"/>
						Wt Salt-glazed	<input type="checkbox"/>

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Other Artifact & Feature Types:

Prehistoric Artifacts		Other fired clay	
Flaked stone	3	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ground stone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Modified faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stone bowls	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unmod faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire-cracked rock	<input type="checkbox"/>	Oyster shell	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other lithics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Uncommon Obj.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rimsherds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Prehistoric Features

Mound(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Storage/trash pit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Midden	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shell midden	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ossuary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Postholes/molds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
House pattern(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Palisade(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Hearth(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Lithic reduc area	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Lithic Material

Fer quartzite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sil sandstone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jasper	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chalcedony	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chert	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rhyolite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Argilite	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartz	<input type="checkbox"/>	Steatite	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartzite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sandstone	<input type="checkbox"/>
		European flint	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Basalt	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Dated features present at site

20th century artifact sheet midden, 20th century builder's trench, and small 19th century trash pit

Historic Artifacts		Tobacco related	
Pottery (all)	943	Activity item(s)	81
Glass (all)	2099	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural	975	Faunal material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Furniture	<input type="checkbox"/>	Misc. kitchen	22
Arms	47	Floral material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Clothing	7	Misc.	210
Personal items	6	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Historic Features

Const feature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Privy/outhouse	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depression/mound	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foundation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Well/cistern	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cellar hole/cellar	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trash pit/dump	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Railroad bed	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Hearth/chimney	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sheet midden	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Earthworks	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Postholes/molds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Planting feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mill raceway	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Paling ditch/fence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Road/walkway	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Wheel pit	<input type="checkbox"/>		

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Radiocarbon Data:

Sample 1: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 2: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 3: +/- years BP Reliability

Sample 4: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 5: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 6: +/- years BP Reliability

Sample 7: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 8: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 9: +/- years BP Reliability

Additional radiocarbon results available



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Brief Description: Late 18th-Late 19th century farmstead

Unknown

External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at MAC

Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

Pheasant's Thicket (18PR416) is the archeological remains of a Late 18th-Late 19th century plantation and farmstead in southern Prince George's County north of Waldorf, Maryland. The site is situated east and adjacent to an unnamed tributary of Timothy Branch which flows south toward Mattawoman Creek. The ruinous dwelling house of the Pheasant's Thicket plantation/farmstead is located at the top of a small terrace in the east-central portion of the site. The floral setting of the property generally consists of forested reclaimed pastures and farmland dominated by thickets, brambles, and ivy. Red Cedar, Virginia Pine, Black Locust, and Big Tooth Aspen are the dominant species of trees within site 18PR416. The forest is mature with trees in excess of 30 years old. Soils at the site are Beltsville silt loams and Grosstown gravelly silt loams.

The site was first identified in 1991 during the course of a Phase I survey. The Phase I work was carried out prior to the proposed construction of the 277 acre Brandywine Village development. An Army Corps of Engineers wetlands permit was required in order for the development to proceed and, thus, compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and portions of the Annotated Code of Maryland came into consideration. In consultation with MHT and Prince George's County planning authorities a Phase I work plan was approved and undertaken.

Subsurface testing was conducted in portions of the property that had moderate to high potential for containing prehistoric and historic cultural materials. The Pheasant's Thicket site was considered to have high potential because of the presence of a dwelling house, barn, two sheds, and a possible well/privy, all in a ruinous state of condition. The structures appeared to date from the early 19th century or possibly the late 18th century. The main dwelling structure (PG:85A-22) had been inventoried by MHT as early as 1974 (already in ruinous condition) and had been surveyed and described. The one-and-one-half storey, gable-roofed main building had a four-room plan. Two exterior free-standing brick chimneys rose from the west gable end. Other diagnostic features included beaded second-floor joists, plastered walls, and pegged mortise and tenon rafters indicating an earlier timeframe for construction of the original portion of the building.

Phase I subsurface testing at 18PR416 was conducted within a 50 m radius around the house site. Forty-four shovel test pits (STPs) were excavated at 20 m intervals along four primary transects spaced 20 m apart and two supplementary transects placed 10 m from the original transects (which had produced pre-modern materials). Shovel tests measured 30 cm in diameter and were excavated 10 cm into sterile soil. Soils were removed by natural strata and were sifted through hardware mesh. A reconnaissance level pedestrian survey covered an additional 100 m around the testing area.

The Phase I artifact assemblage consisted of 35 historic artifacts, including 2 activity items, 4 architectural objects, 26 kitchen-related artifacts, and 3 miscellaneous objects. The activity items were a glass candlestick and a clay pigeon. The architectural artifacts were all pieces of sewerage/drain pipe. The kitchen-related assemblage included 8 ceramic sherds (2 tin-enameled, 2 domestic gray stoneware, 3 whiteware, and 1 Nottigham-like stoneware), 17 glass fragments (a glass lid liner, 9 pieces of bottle glass, a blown-in-mold bottle, 6 machine-made bottle), and a piece of butchered bone. Finally, the miscellaneous objects were unidentified metal items. Based on these findings, Phase II testing of the site was recommended.

Phase II work was not conducted until the spring of 2006. Originally part of the 1990s era proposed development named "Brandywine Village", the parcel containing 18PR416 had recently been purchased as part of a newer development plan. The new proposed development included 97,597 square feet of a 115,947 square foot shopping center. The Phase II work was requested by the Prince George's County Planning Board, as required by recently enacted legislation to protect significant historic sites, eligible for listing on the NRHP. Phase II work included both background archival work and field excavation.

Archival research reveals that Pheasant's Thicket is situated on a portion of a late 17th century land patent located in the Brandywine District of Prince George's County. A 100 acre tract called "Chance" was patented by a Peter Burgess in 1688. In the years that followed, the land containing the study area was primarily used for agricultural purposes. In the late 18th century, the Robinson family purchased "Chance" as well as portions of several other parcels which sat adjacent. The Robinson family was the first family to build a residence on the property. In 1791, Benjamin Robinson patented a small 4 acre parcel and called it "Sandy Bottom". Sandy Bottom was located south and adjacent to "Chance" and was incorporated into the 169 acre Robinson that would eventually come to be known as "Pheasant's Thicket".

Following Benjamin Robinson's death in 1819, the estate was divided between his two sons, Alexander and William. The last will and testament of Benjamin Robinson mentioned that the sons would also inherit a number of slaves from their father's estate. In 1833, Alexander and William sold their interest in Pheasant's Thicket to Zadock Robinson. It is likely Zadock was a son and nephew of the two brothers. Zadock Robinson lived in a house on the property (the dwelling house ruin) with his wife and son, William, until the early 1860s, where they operated a tobacco farm. The structure is also located on an 1861 Atlas of Maryland. Census records and newspaper advertisements from the period also indicate that Zadock Robinson owned a number of slaves which he used to operate the farm. According to the 1840 census records, Zadock Robinson owned 12 slaves (4 male and 8 female). Over the next 20 years he purchased more slaves. By 1860 he owned 26 slaves, mostly women, and had constructed four dwelling houses for the slaves on his property. Zadock Robinson lived at Pheasant's Thicket until his death in 1864.

Following Zadock's death, his only son, William, inherited the family estate. Land Records are unclear as to how long William T. Robinson owned the family estate. An 1878 Atlas of Prince George's County indicated that William resided in a house located approximately 1/2 mile north of his father's old residence. This same map also indicates that by 1878, William's son Aquilla, was living in Zadock's old house. By the end of the 19th century, Aquilla T. Robinson was the sole owner of Pheasant's Thicket. Like his grandfather, Aquilla operated Pheasant's Thicket as a tobacco farm. In the inventory of his estate, the appraised items included 1.25 tons of fertilizer, one tobacco planter, two cows, one oxen, and 8 horses. The inventory also indicates that Aquilla owned a store of tobacco valued at \$660 in 1924. During Aquilla's occupation of the property, the farm was divided into four lots (the land containing the dwelling designated "Lot 3").

All records indicate that Aquilla lived in his grandfather's home until he died in 1924. A year later, the estate was divided among his surviving children. On August 17, 1925, Sallie P. Robinson inherited Lot 3, but continued to live in her home in Washington DC with her husband. Eleven years later she and her husband sold the property to Philip D. Robinson. Philip and his wife, Maude, owned the property until 1958. In that time, they converted the tobacco fields into pasture land. Philip and Maude became the first to sell the property to a non-family member in over 150 years. For 3 years, Walter and Barbara Ludke owned the property before selling it in 1961 to Frank S. Pellegrini. In 1972, Pellegrini sold the property to the first of what would be a series of development companies. In 1978, Town Center Limited Partnership sold the property to Mattawoman Associates, who in turn, sold the estate to Brandywine Investment



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Prehistoric

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Historic

Brief

Description: Late 18th-Late 19th century farmstead

Unknown

Description:

Associates Limited Partnership in 1985. And in 2005 it was sold to the development firm responsible for the Phase II study.

The archeological fieldwork was composed of shovel testing followed by test unit excavation. A grid system of shovel test locations was superimposed over the estimated site area using a compass and tape. The grid was composed of transect lines of shovel tests spaced at 15.24 m (50 ft) intervals. Once boundaries had been better established, the STP interval was reduced to a 7.71 meter (25 ft) and in areas of dense artifact concentration 3.81 m (12.5 ft) interval. The shovel tests were excavated stratigraphically in order to maintain vertical control over the artifacts recovered and all soils were screened through hardware mesh. A total of 312 shovel tests were excavated within the site area. Of that total, 172 produced positive artifact recoveries. The resulting site dimension was estimated to be 152 meters north-south by 137 meters east-west. Based on the density of the artifacts recovered within the site area, eight 91 cm X 91 cm (3 X 3 ft) test units and a ninth half-size test unit (45.72 cm X 91 cm) were excavated. Four test units were located in the center of the site around the Aquilla Robinson house. The half-sized test unit was opened up alongside one of these in order to explore a possible feature further. An isolated test unit was excavated in the south-central portion of the site, where a concentration of domestic and architectural material was recovered in a grove south and adjacent to the house ruin. Another unit was placed in the northeast portion of the site, adjacent to the western foundation of the barn ruin. A test unit was located in the western portion of Site 18PR416, where a large concentration of domestic artifacts was recovered adjacent to the unnamed tributary of Timothy Branch. The final unit was excavated in the southern portion of the site, where a large concentration of domestic material was recovered during shovel testing. In addition to the test unit excavation, some additional close-interval shovel testing was employed to facilitate the delineation of subsurface features identified during the test unit excavation.

A total of 4,312 artifacts were recovered from Site 18PR416 including 3 prehistoric, 4,028 historic, and 281 modern items. Three cultural features were discovered during the excavation process. The features included a 20th century artifact sheet midden, a 20th century builder's trench, and a small 19th century trash pit. Unfortunately, there was a lack of soils with good stratigraphic integrity throughout.

The historic artifact assemblage consisted of 79 activity items, 971 architectural remains, 7 clothing items, 2,645 kitchen-related artifacts, 6 personal items, 1 tobacco-related artifact, 47 arms-related artifacts and 207 miscellaneous objects. The activity items were 20 pieces of lamp glass, 43 unidentified hardware items, and 16 flowerpot fragments. The architectural assemblage included 373 window glass fragments, 405 nails (80 cut, 151 wire, 6 handwrought, 168 unidentified), and 193 miscellaneous architectural artifacts (brick, mortar, plaster, and slate). The 7 clothing items were a brass button, an oyster shell button, and 5 pieces of shoe leather. Kitchen-related artifacts were 935 ceramic sherds (1 creamware, 4 pearlware, 68 porcelain, 535 ironstone, 227 whiteware, 1 yellowware, 5 redware, 9 miscellaneous earthenware, 56 brown-bodied stoneware, 12 gray-bodied stoneware, 9 American blue/gray stoneware, 4 Albany slip stoneware, 1 Staffordshire stoneware, and 3 miscellaneous stoneware), 1,689 glass fragments (734 bottle glass and 955 other container glass), 19 faunal remains (14 bone and 5 oyster shell) and 2 floral objects. The 6 personal items were glass beads and the tobacco-related artifact was a Kaolin pipe stem. The arms-related artifacts were two 12 gauge shotgun shells, 1 unidentified shotgun shell, forty-two .22 caliber cartridges, and two .38 caliber cartridges. The miscellaneous objects were 43 pieces of unidentifiable glass, 20 pieces of coal, 1 piece of charcoal, and 143 other objects (corroded metal and melted glass). In addition to these historic artifacts 281 modern artifacts and 3 prehistoric remains (2 quartz flakes and quartz shatter) were recovered.

In summary, the historic artifact recovery at Site 18PR416 was thought to reflect a mid 19th through early 20th century occupation period. The mid-19th century was attributed to the site given the recovery of transfer-printed whiteware and ironstone, hand-painted whiteware and ironstone, machine-cut nails, and the oyster shell and brass buttons (dated from 1837 to 1965). The early 20th century temporal assessment was given due to the presence of decal-decorated earthenwares and manganese-tinted and amber depression glass. The material recovery from Site 18PR416 likely represents an occupation period beginning around 1840 and extending until 1930. This date range matches the long occupation history of the property. Zadock Robinson inherited Pheasant's Thicket in the 1830s. The last family member to occupy the property for an extended period of time was Aquilla Robinson, who lived at Pheasant's Thicket from 1878 until his death in 1924. Several isolated pieces of earlier artifact types (i.e. creamware, pearlware, and Staffordshire) were recovered from portions of the site area. While the small sample may indicate materials associated with an early 18th century occupation, the paucity of those materials recovered suggests the earlier component was likely erased during the Zadock and Aquilla Robinson occupation of Site 18PR416. According to the nature of the ceramic artifact recovery, the occupants of Site 18PR416 were likely middle income planters.

Site 18PR416 was thought to have potential research value because of its 19th century temporal affiliation and association with long-term occupants of moderate economic means. The research potential of this site, however, was dramatically reduced by a lack of soils with good stratigraphic integrity. Apparently, the continuous occupation of the site sufficiently impacted the yards where undisturbed pre-1880 artifact deposits may have once existed. In addition, where 19th century materials existed, they were found in mixed context, in some cases with 20th century artifacts. One portion of the site, located southwest of the house ruin, was thought to contain good stratigraphic integrity. This is the portion of the site that contained a small intact trash pit dating to the late 19th century. The trash pit was fully excavated during the Phase II process. No other intact 19th century subsurface features were identified during the subsurface investigation. Because of the questionable stratigraphic integrity and lack of intact unexcavated cultural features, Site 18PR416 is not thought to contain research value beyond that already obtained through the Phase II evaluation process. The site should not be considered a significant archeological resource.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

00006777, 97003158