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George Washington Memorial Parkway
McLean, Virginia



Cultural Landscape Report
Arlington House

June 2025

Prepared by the Urban Heritage Project
Weitzman School of Design, University of Pennsylvania

Acknowledgments

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Cover Photo: View of Arlington House and the South Flower Garden. Photo by the Urban Heritage Project, 2023.

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Cultural Landscape Report
Arlington House

George Washington Memorial Parkway
Arlington, Virginia



Part 1 Analysis

Historical context | Historical Summary, by Character Area | Analysis of Shifting Values | recommended updates

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Introduction

The purpose of this modified Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) for Arlington House is to help the National Park Service (NPS) develop an informed and consistent approach to managing change of the cultural landscape located in Arlington, Virginia.

This guide builds on previous documentation efforts and offers holistic, coordinated management strategies. The project began with a kickoff and planning meeting in December 2022, and the final report was presented in June 2025.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORTS

National Park Service CLRs are the primary tool to inform long-term management decisions regarding cultural landscapes. The CLR documents the history and existing conditions of a cultural landscape, evaluates its significance according to National Register of Historic Places (National Register; NRHP) program standards, and provides design and management recommendations for the property. The CLR is part of the park's planning process and is a fundamental tool for integrating information and determining relationships between the cultural landscape and other resource types, and site objectives.

The CLR goal is to preserve, restore, or rehabilitate the historic character of the developed area, while providing for opportunities to enhance facilities maintenance, resource management, and interpretive opportunities within the historic district. The CLR is the primary planning document for the treatment of the cultural landscape and provides site managers with a comprehensive understanding of the physical evolution of the cultural landscape, its current condition, and guidance for the future landscape management.

The CLR scope includes identifying cultural landscape significance and current condition, and developing treatment strategies to preserve, restore, and rehabilitate resources within the cultural landscape.

This CLR for Arlington House adheres to the stated purpose for CLRs, but adopts a modified scope of research and analysis.

Section Cover: Rear work yard at the Arlington House cultural landscape, 2023. Urban Heritage Project.

METHODOLOGY

Research

Using primary and secondary sources, the team conducted research to understand the physical history of Arlington House. Key repositories and archives included: GWMP archives; Arlington House archives; related photograph collections; and research conducted by members of the Family Circle.

Based on the research, the team prepared a historical context summary for the evolution of the historic site, as well as character area histories for distinct sections of the study area. These historical summaries do not represent a full physical history of the site that would be typical of a traditional CLR; for example, the pre-contact history of the landscape was outside the scope of this project.

Analysis of Existing Documentation

For decades, Arlington House has been the subject of extensive documentation, including previous Cultural Landscape Inventories, Cultural Landscape Reports, Historic Structure Reports, Historic American Buildings Surveys, and more. For this modified CLR, the project team reviewed these reports and developed recommendations for revisions to the areas/periods of significance, boundaries, and feature inventories of these baseline documents.

Fieldwork and Data Collection

The team conducted fieldwork and site visits during the project. Fieldwork to document existing conditions and geolocate extant features took place in June through August of 2023. During this time, researchers collected and recorded GIS data using Eos Arrow equipment. The team identified, photographed, and recorded characteristic landscape features within the project area boundaries.

In February 2024, the project team made an additional site visit with the project's consulting forest ecologist to document the conditions in Arlington Woods.

Mapping

Maps for this CLR were produced following NPS National Capital Regional Office's (NCRO) GIS standards. The team collected data in the field, including small-scale features, circulation features, structures, and vegetation. This data was then edited in ArcPro.

Stakeholder Engagement

In order to gain first-hand perspective on the use, perceptions, strengths, and weaknesses of Arlington House, the project team interviewed several stakeholders, including current and former park staff, Arlington National

Cemetery staff, and others. Virtual interviews were conducted in December of 2023 and January of 2024. These interviews informed our treatment recommendations.

Treatment Workshop

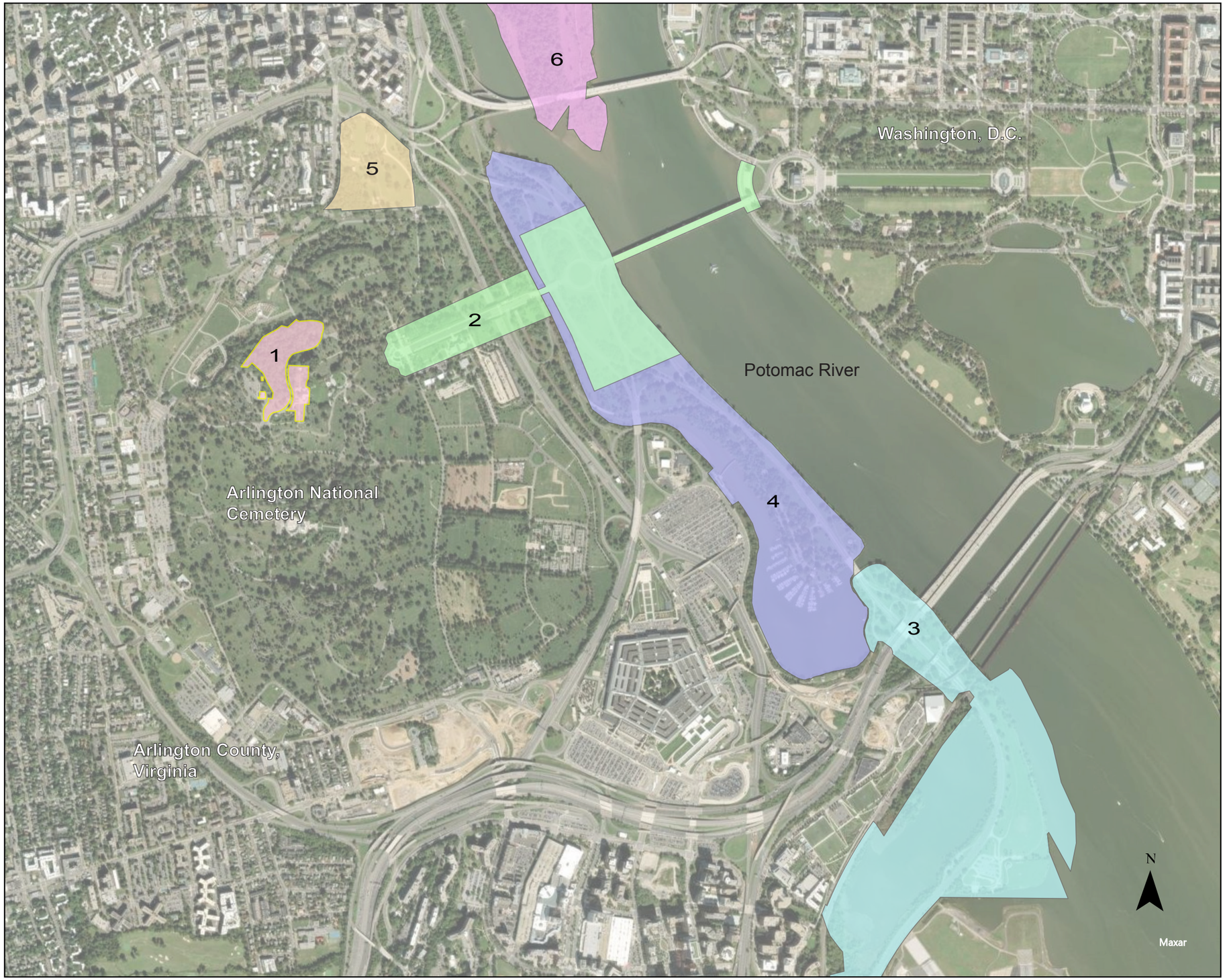
Our team consulted with National Park Service staff throughout the project, including members of the National Capital Regional Office and the George Washington Memorial Parkway administration. Most intensively, our team convened a virtual treatment workshop on May 6, 2024, to present our findings-to-date and our preliminary treatment priorities.

TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the feedback received at the treatment workshop, and all other phases of work, the team prepared treatment recommendations for the historic site. The draft recommendations were reviewed by members of the Family Circle and staff from the National Capital Regional Office and the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

FAMILY CIRCLE

This project was informed at all stages by the work of the Family Circle. The project team reviewed the Family Circle's existing research, as well as the group's preliminary proposals related to stumbling blocks for Arlington House. Urban Heritage Project staff members were invited to attend virtual Family Circle meetings in February and April 2025, and we shared our draft report with them in April 2025. Seven members of the Family Circle reviewed the report and provided in-depth comments (refer to the acknowledgements for their names). The report was revised based on their input.



Cultural Landscape Report

Arlington House
George Washington Memorial Pkwy
Arlington, VA

Location Map and Surrounding Cultural Landscapes

Urban Heritage Project | PennPraxis
Department of Historic Preservation
Weitzman School of Design
www.cultural-landscapes.org

In cooperation with:
National Capital Region, National Park Service

Sources
1. Ortho Imagery, 2024
2. Original data: GWMP CR GIS, NPS

Drawn By
Meg Frisbie, ArcGIS Pro 3.2.2, 2024

Legend
- 1. Arlington House
- 2. Memorial Avenue Corridor
- 3. George Washington Memorial Parkway
- 4. Lady Bird Johnson Park
- 5. Arlington Ridge Park
- 6. Theodore Roosevelt Island

Notes
1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N

0 0.1 0.2 0.4 0.6
Miles

Drawing 1

Drawing 1. Location map.



Historical Context

Historical Context

EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF ARLINGTON HOUSE (1608-1802)*

In 1778, John Parke Custis, son of Martha Dandridge Washington and stepson of George Washington, purchased 1,100 acres on the Potomac River from the heirs of Robert Alexander. Custis intended to develop the large tract of land as his family seat.

his land would eventually encompass the study area and surroundings, including Arlington National Cemetery, Joint Base Myer-Henderson-Hall and part of the site of the Pentagon. Custis, along with his wife Eleanor and four children (Martha, Elizabeth, Eleanor "Nelly", and George Washington Parke) moved into Alexander's former home on the flats of the Potomac River and named the plantation "Abingdon." Abingdon plantation later burned in 1930.[1]

CUSTIS ERA AND CUSTIS/LEE ERA (1802-1861)

Following the death of Martha Dandridge Washington in 1802, George Washington Parke (GWP) Custis, at age 21, moved into an existing four-room house on the flats of the Potomac.[2] GWP Custis's inheritances from John Custis (his father), Martha Custis Washington (his grandmother), and George Washington (his step-grandfather) included over 16,000 acres of land (both at Abingdon plantation and elsewhere) and approximately 200 enslaved laborers. With this inheritance, Custis was among the largest enslavers in the United States, in terms of the number of humans he subjected to chattel slavery.

In the summer of 1802, Custis brought 57 enslaved laborers to the 1,100 acres of land on which the Arlington House plantation was established. The next year, the laborers cleared much of the plantation's forest, which at the time was dominated by hardwoods such as oak, hickory, and chestnut trees. They left intact a forested

* Early development of the landscape prior to the construction of Arlington House plantation is outside the scope of this project. For additional information, see: Jennifer Hanna, *Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial: Cultural Landscape Report, History (Volume I)* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Cultural Landscape Program, 2001) and Saylor Moss, *Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial Cultural Landscape Inventory* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Cultural Landscape Program, 2009).

Section Cover: Sketch of the rear work yard at Arlington House, 1854. (Source: Arlington House archives)

area (now known as Arlington Woods, which is the 12 acre remaining remnant of the original forest west of Sherman Drive) to the west of the future plantation house, which largely consisted of native oaks. Those woods were flush with game and birds, and enslaved laborers were permitted to hunt and trap them.[3] After felling trees elsewhere on the site (and using the lumber to build their homes on the plantation), enslaved laborers burned the tree stumps and cleared the land. Over the following years, the enslaved workers improved the pre-existing tenant farm and established a large market garden on the plantation grounds.

Enslaved laborers played essential roles in building, maintaining, and operating the plantations that Custis inherited, including Arlington House. The heads of household (male or female) for at least four enslaved families—the Parks, the Syphaxes, the Grays, the Norrises, and the Branhams—lived at both Mount Vernon and the Arlington House plantation.[4]

The enslaved at the Arlington House plantation descended from the enslaved men, women, and children of Custis's relative, Major John Custis IV (1678-1749). At this time, the Virginia Slave Codes of 1705 were codified, which were a series of laws enacted by the Colony of Virginia's House of Burgesses that regulated and restricted the rights of Africans and of Americans of African Descent.[5]

The alluvial plain along the Potomac River, on the eastern edge of the property, offered approximately 50 acres of fertile ground for not only the market garden, but also crop fields of wheat and corn, pastures, and a fishery. The fields were

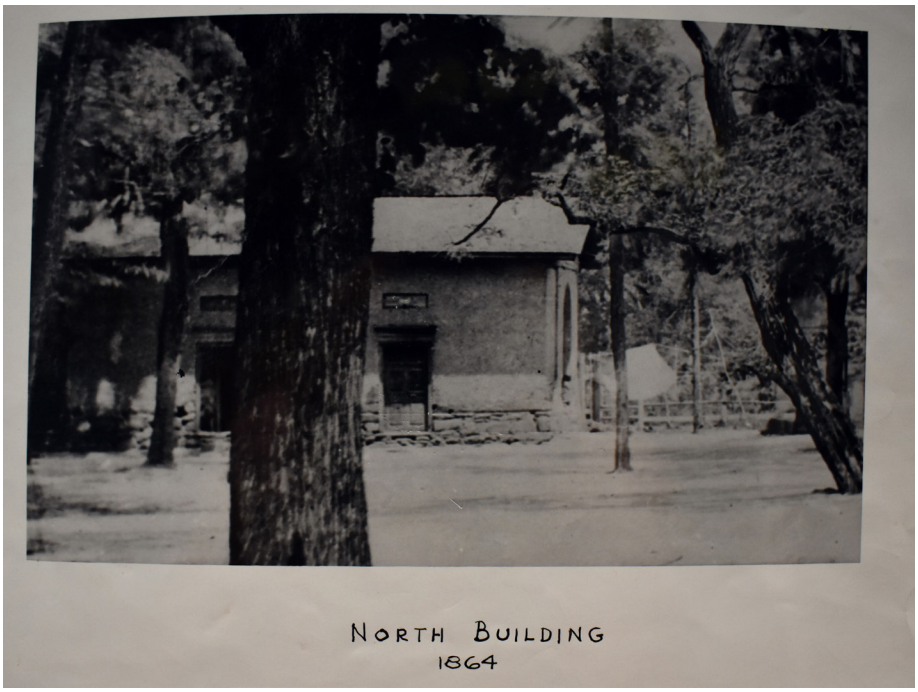


Figure 1. North enslaved quarters, 1864 (Source: Arlington House Archives).

located within the eastern and southern sections of the historic boundaries of the plantation on terraces of gently sloping land. The crops and the produce from the market garden fed all of the individuals (free and enslaved) living on the plantation; the surplus was sold in nearby urban centers.[6] As the plantation grew, new buildings and structures were added, including a wheelwright shop, blacksmith shop, saddlery, poultry yard, carriage shop, granary, large feeding barn, and pump house.[7] Animals were housed in and near these buildings.

Custis employed architect George Hadfield to design a new house to be the Custis family seat, sited on a rise above the Potomac River and surrounded by a working landscape. Enslaved laborers graded the landscape to construct the house and created flat terraces to the north and south of the house. Enslaved laborers harvested the rich clay deposits along the Potomac River as part of the labor-intensive process of brick-making that included molding, drying, burning, and transporting of the bricks. Beginning in 1803, enslaved laborers dug the foundation and constructed the two-story stuccoed brick home, starting with the northern wing of the house.[8] The plantation home would be the first temple-form residence built in the United States and was originally called Mount Washington, but would become known as Arlington House.[9] Beginning in 1803, enslaved laborers constructed the home, beginning with the northern wing of the house.[10]

At this time, enslaved individuals lived in log cabins in three locations around the plantation: south of Arlington House; in the lower fields near the Potomac River; and near the wooded ravine behind Arlington House.[11] Additionally, in the early



Figure 2. South enslaved quarters, c. 1900 (Source: Arlington House Archives).

1800s, laborers constructed two brick and stucco quarters for enslaved families behind the main house, in alignment with the wings of the house (see Figure 1 and Figure 2).[12] This proximity to the plantation house, as well as the presence of the overseer's house and barn within the cluster of cabins in the lower fields, established a high degree of surveillance of the plantation's laborers.

By 1818, the Custis plantation house was complete, and enslaved laborers planted deciduous and evergreen trees on the slopes below the home (see Figure 3 and Figure 4).[13] Also in the early 1800s, a stable for horses and carriages was built west of Arlington House, across the wooded ravine.

In the ensuing years, a kitchen garden was established on the north side of the house, surrounded by a post and rail fence and bordered by hedges on the south side. Large trees screened the garden from northwest winds, and two large barberry bushes were located on either side of the entrance. A central path through the roughly rectangular garden was lined by fruit trees. For more information on the evolution of this north kitchen garden, refer to the Historical Summary, by Character Area, "North Kitchen Garden, Custis Era, 1810-40s" beginning on page 86.

South of the house, a flower garden was surrounded by a white picket fence on its north, south, and east sides; a carriage drive ran along the picket fence on the garden's south and east sides. Within the garden, a walkway was arranged on axis with the kitchen garden; the path was likely composed of gravel and measured approximately six feet wide. A hexagonal wooden arbor with wooden benches was located at the center of the garden; yellow flowering jasmine and red and pink honeysuckle vines grew on the outside of the arbor. For more information on the evolution of the south flower garden, refer to the Historical Summary, by Character Area, "South Flower Garden, Custis Era, 1804-1861" beginning on page 65.

Compared with other, larger plantations, Arlington House was considered more of a showplace and family seat than an income-producing working landscape, but enslaved laborers were nevertheless essential to the maintenance of the property. Enslaved men and women cleared the land, cultivated fields, built infrastructure including roads and buildings, operated a fishery, raised animals, and served the Custis family.

Mount Vernon's research historian emerita, Mary V. Thompson, writes that, "Martha Washington's grandson, George Washington Parke Custis, was commonly believed to have fathered several children with his slaves, who were

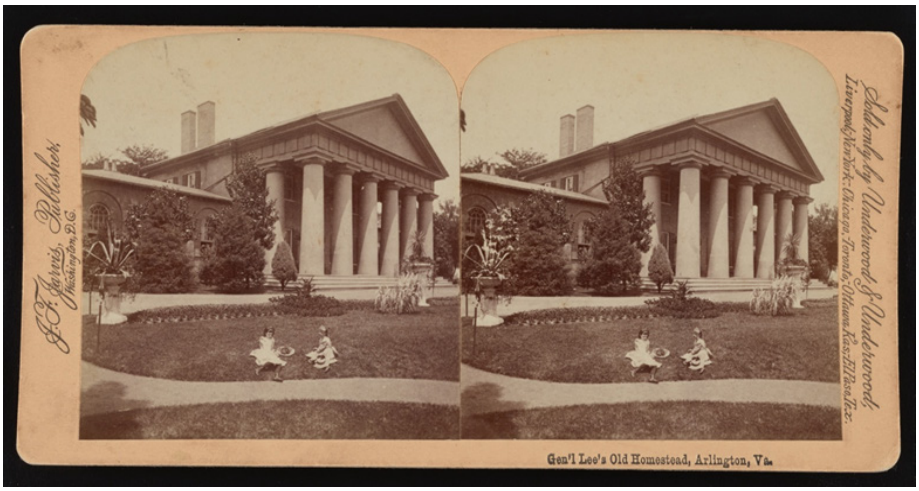
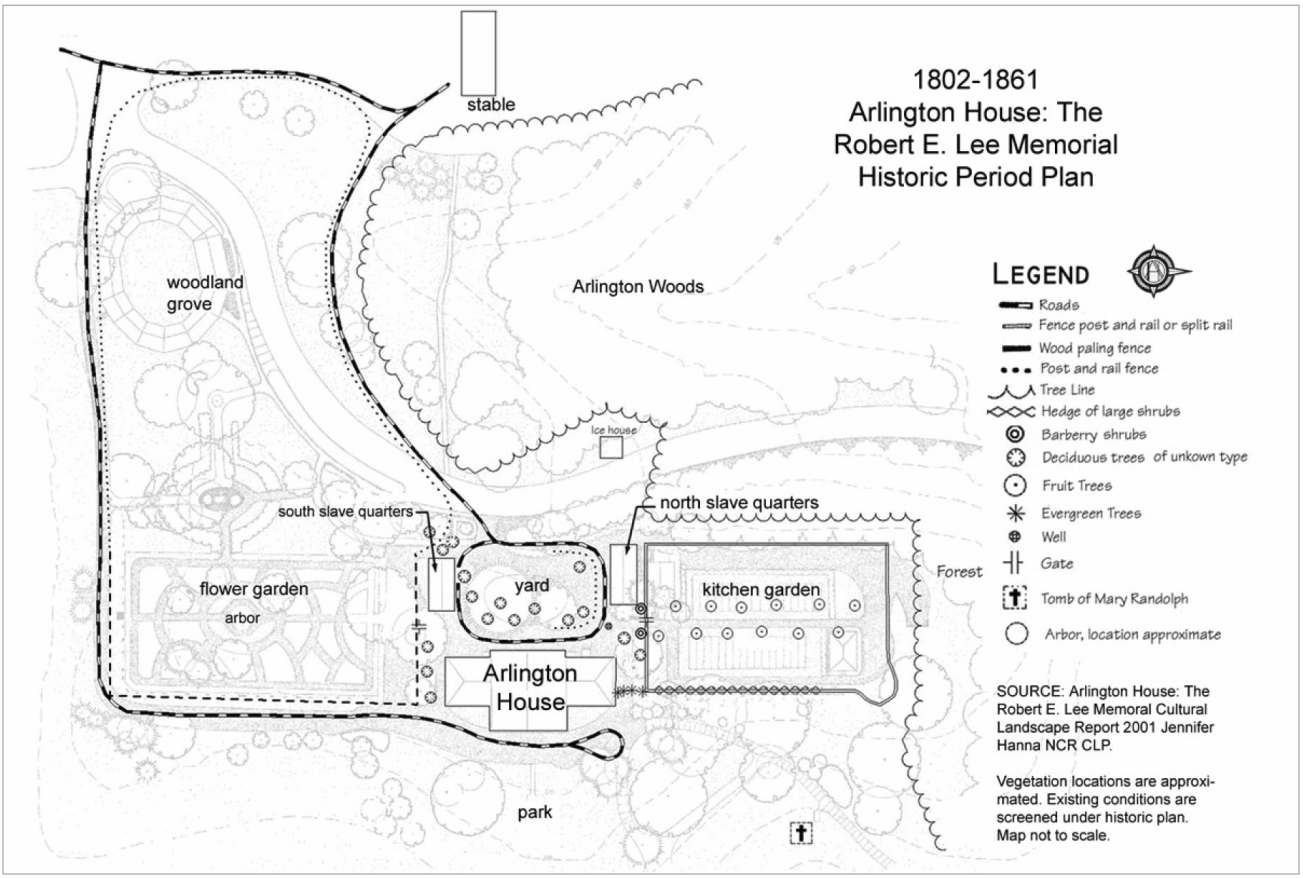


Figure 3. General Lee's Old Homestead, Arlington, VA," c. 1890s-early 1900s (Source: Library of Congress, Control number: 2018653402).

often freed or otherwise cared for by Custis."[14] Custis chose to emancipate some of his enslaved children (but not all).

For example, Maria Carter Custis (later, Syphax) was born into chattel slavery in 1803, as a daughter who resulted from Custis's rape of the enslaved Arianna (Airy) Carter. She grew up at Arlington House as the enslaved maid to her half-sister, Mary Anne Custis, who was five years younger than Maria. On August 6, 1825, Custis trafficked his daughter Maria to Edward H. Stabler, a Quaker apothecary

Figure 4. Arlington House and surrounds from 1802-1861 (Source: Hanna 2001, 69).



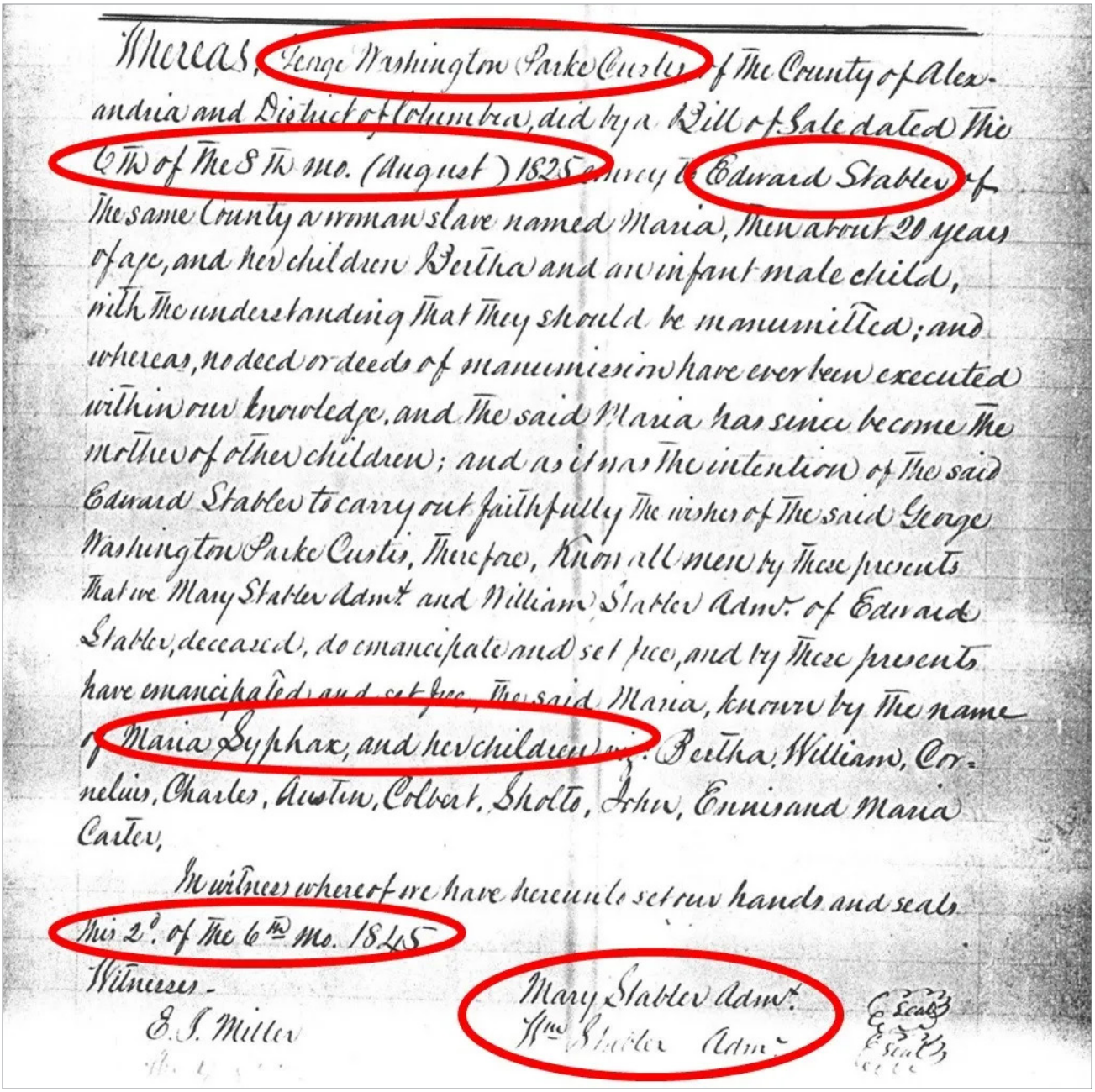
in Alexandria; Stabler manumitted her almost immediately (see Figure 5). The sale may have been an attempt to emancipate Maria Carter Custis Syphax by circumventing an 1806 Virginia law known as "An Act to amend the several laws concerning slaves," which prohibited the importation of enslaved people into the state and required that any freed persons had to leave the state within twelve months of manumission. Historians generally believe that Maria Carter Custis Syphax's sale to Stabler would transition her and her children to freedom without directly violating the 1806 law.

Maria Carter Custis Syphax was the only person enslaved by the Custis family to later own property within the Arlington House plantation lands. After being trafficked to Edward Stabler and receiving her freedom, she received a 17-acre plot of land set aside by Custis for her family in the southwest portion of the Arlington plantation. This tract is referred to as "Syphax Corner" by descendant family members, and is located near what is today the southwestern boundary of Arlington National Cemetery (see Figure 6 and Figure 7).

Following the death of GWP Custis on October 10, 1857, his daughter Mary Custis Lee inherited Arlington House and the 1,100 acre Custis-Lee plantation and 196 enslaved men and women. An 1858 inventory of enslaved individuals at Arlington House listed members of the Bingham, Norris, Gray, Check, Burke, Parks, Taylor, Lancaster, Meredith, Richardson, Branham, Syphax, Clark, Dotson, and Derricks families.

Mary Custis Lee was married by this point to Robert E. Lee, who served as the executor of Custis's will and sought to manage the plantation after Custis's death.[15] Custis's will stipulated that the enslaved people be freed within five years of his death, after the payment of legacies and debts. The legacies amounted to $10,000 to each of four granddaughters.[16] However, when those five years had elapsed, Lee refused to emancipate them and instead forced the enslaved population to continue to work. In 1858 and again in 1862, Lee petitioned state courts to extend his right to enslave the workers, arguing that it would not be possible to pay off the debt in the five years stipulated by the will.[17] In both cases, the state refused his petition, reiterating that Lee was obligated to adhere to the instructions in Custis's will and emancipate all of the plantation's enslaved people.[18]

During this period, many enslaved people sought and claimed freedom, while many others were trafficked or "rented," all of which led to the decline of the enslaved population of Arlington House. Lee often chose to rent out male enslaved laborers to other plantations, splintering family units for profit.[19]



Whereas, George Washington Parke Custis of the County of Alexandria and District of Columbia, did by a Bill of Sale dated the 6th of the 8th mo. (August) 1825 convey to Edward Stabler of the same County a woman slave named Maria, then about 20 years of age, and her children Bertha and an infant male child, with the understanding that they should be manumitted; and whereas, no deed or deeds of manumission have ever been executed within our knowledge, and the said Maria has since become the mother of other children; and as it was the intention of the said Edward Stabler to carry out faithfully the wishes of the said George Washington Parke Custis, Therefore, Know all men by these presents that we Mary Stabler Admx and William Stabler Admr. of Edward Stabler, deceased, do emancipate and set free, and by these presents have emancipated and set free, the said Maria, known by the name of Maria Syphax, and her children viz: Bertha, William, Cornelius, Charles, Austin, Colbert, Sholto, John, Ennis and Maria Carter,

In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands and seals this 2d. of the 6th Mo. 1845

Witnesses -
E. J. Miller

Mary Stabler Admx.
Wm Stabler Admr.

Figure 5. Emancipation deed for Maria Carter Custis Syphax. (The body text of the deed notes the date of 1825, but for unknown reasons, it was not signed until 1845.) (Source: Emancipation of Maria Syphax and Children, Records of the Alexandria Circuit Court, Reel 65, Deed Book E-3:425, Office of the Court Clerk, 510 King Street, Alexandria, VA, reproduced and annotated in The Syphax Family, George Washington's Mount Vernon website, with annotation and overlay added by Stephen E. Hammond, https://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/slavery/a-community-divided/syphax-family/family-history).

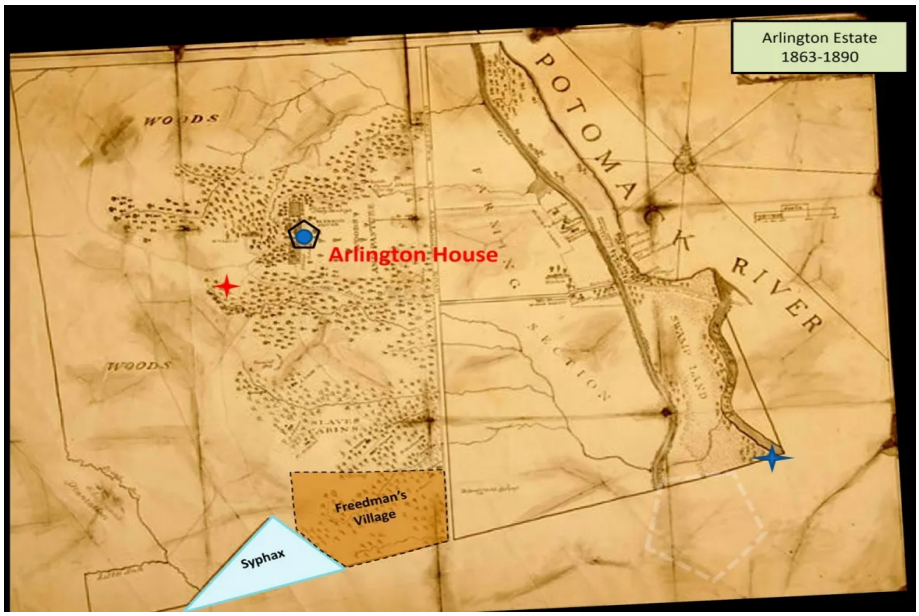


Figure 6. A map of Arlington Estate on the Potomack River, c. 1929, with overlay of Syphax Property and Freedman's Village (Source: National Park Service, Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial, ARHO 283; reproduced in The Syphax Family, George Washington's Mount Vernon website, with annotation and overlay added by Stephen E. Hammond, https://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/slavery/a-community-divided/syphax-family/family-history).

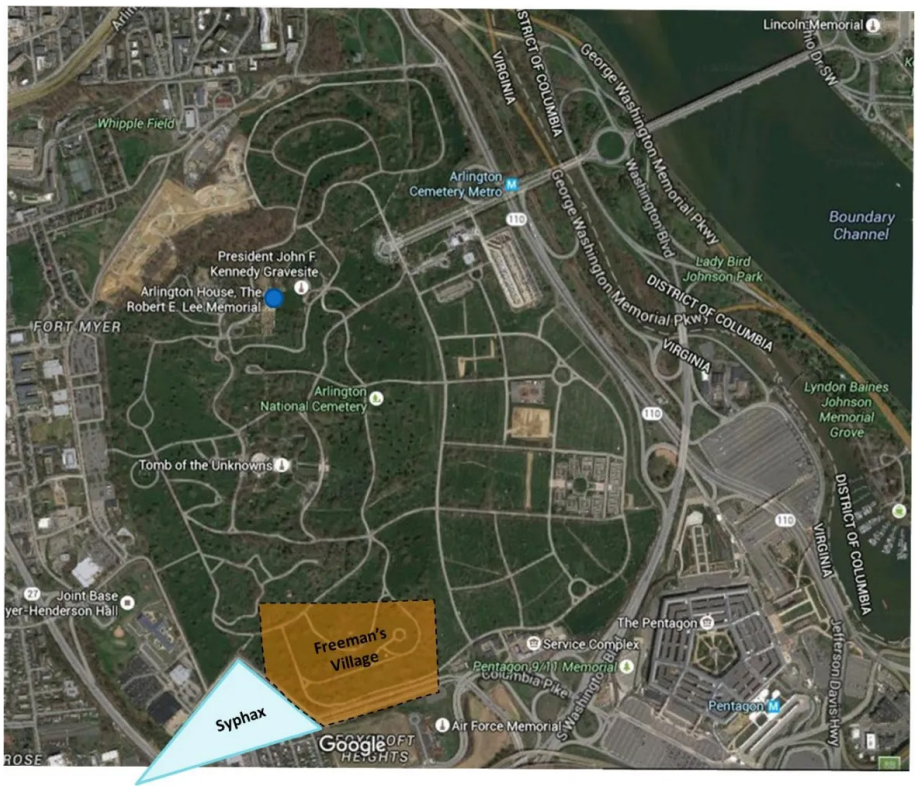


Figure 7. Google Map aerial image of Arlington House and surroundingss with overlay of the Syphax Property and Freedman's Village (Source: The Syphax Family, George Washington's Mount Vernon website, with annotation and overlay added by Stephen E. Hammond, https://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/slavery/a-community-divided/syphax-family/family-history).

Finally, in December of 1862, Lee executed a deed of manumission for all 194 enslaved people across Custis's estates, including Arlington House; the deed took effect on January 1, 1863. This action took place by court order one day after the Emancipation Proclamation took effect, and nearly three months after the last legal date of their enslavement according to the stipulations of Custis's will. The manumission document identified seven families—the Binghams, Norrises, Grays, Checks, Burkes, Parkses, and Taylor-Richardsons—and many other individuals. Several of these families went on to establish free Black communities in Arlington.[20] An excerpt of the 1862 manumission document is included as an appendix to this CLR.

CIVIL WAR / HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC (1861-1865)

At the onset of the American Civil War in April 1861, Virginia seceded from the United States. Lee, who had been promoted to colonel of the 1st Cavalry on March 16, 1861, declined the offered to command the United States Army, and instead traveled to Richmond to take command of Virginia's military forces, which he named the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia. Lee left the Arlington House plantation on April 22, and Mary Custis Lee left Arlington House the following month on May 15. She left Selina Gray, her enslaved housekeeper, in charge of the house, expecting the enslaved workers to continue in forced labor even after their enslavers left.

Later that month, the US Army seized the Arlington House plantation and used the plantation house as the headquarters for the Army of the Potomac; the military would eventually convert the plantation grounds into a military cemetery (see Figure 8, Figure 9, and Figure 10). In addition to the symbolic value of seizing the plantation of the leading secessionist, Arlington House also offered strategic value for the United States, as the location high atop a hill overlooking the Potomac River provided the army with tactical defense advantages. In the ensuing months, the army constructed a system of roads throughout the former plantation as forts were established around its borders.[21]

On July 17, 1862, as public concern grew for the proper burial of US Army soldiers, Congress granted authority to the President to purchase land "whenever in his opinion it shall be expedient, to purchase cemetery grounds and cause them to be securely enclosed, to be used as a national cemetery for the soldiers who shall die in the service of the country."[22] Ultimately, the War Department chose Arlington House plantation for use as a military cemetery (see below for further discussion of Arlington National Cemetery's early development).



Figure 8. View of Arlington House with US Army soldiers in front, 1864 (Source: Library of Congress, Control number: 2004680140).

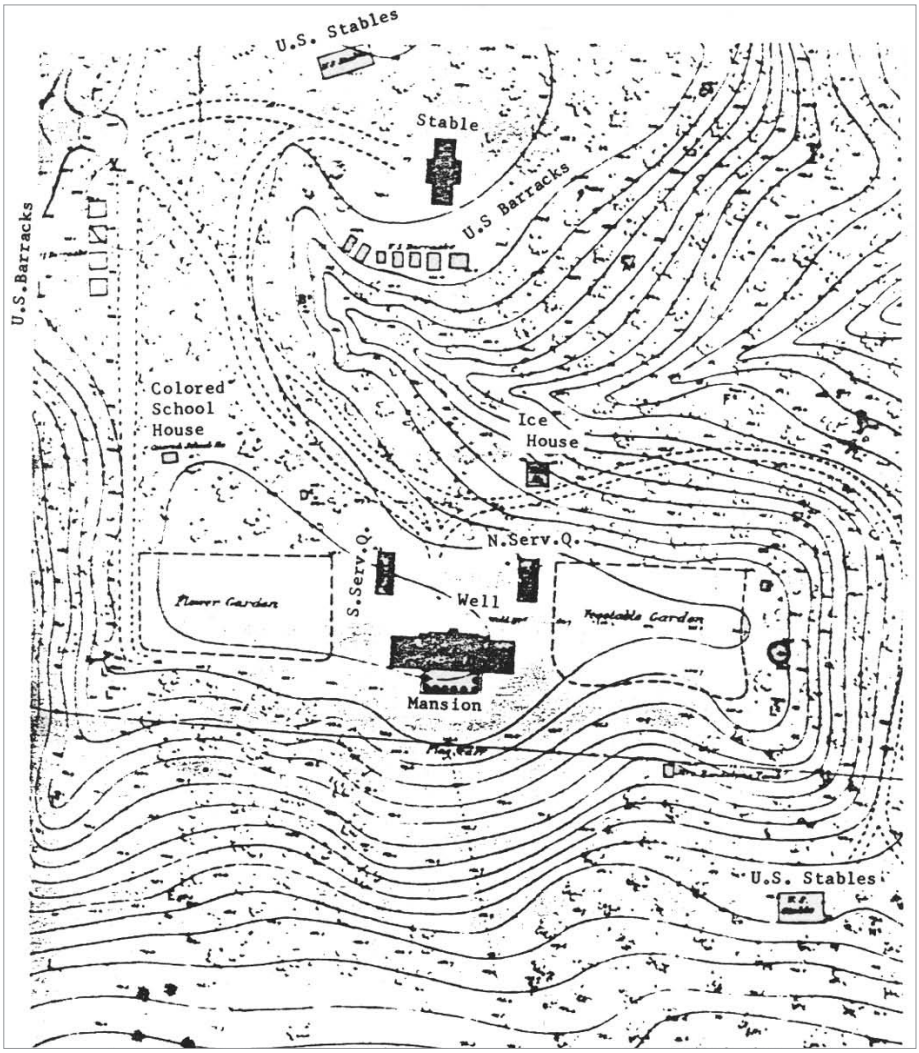


Figure 9. Detail of a topographic map produced by the U.S. Coast Survey commissioned by General Montgomery C. Meigs at the creation of the National Cemetery at Arlington in late spring 1864 (Source: Hanna 2001, 85).

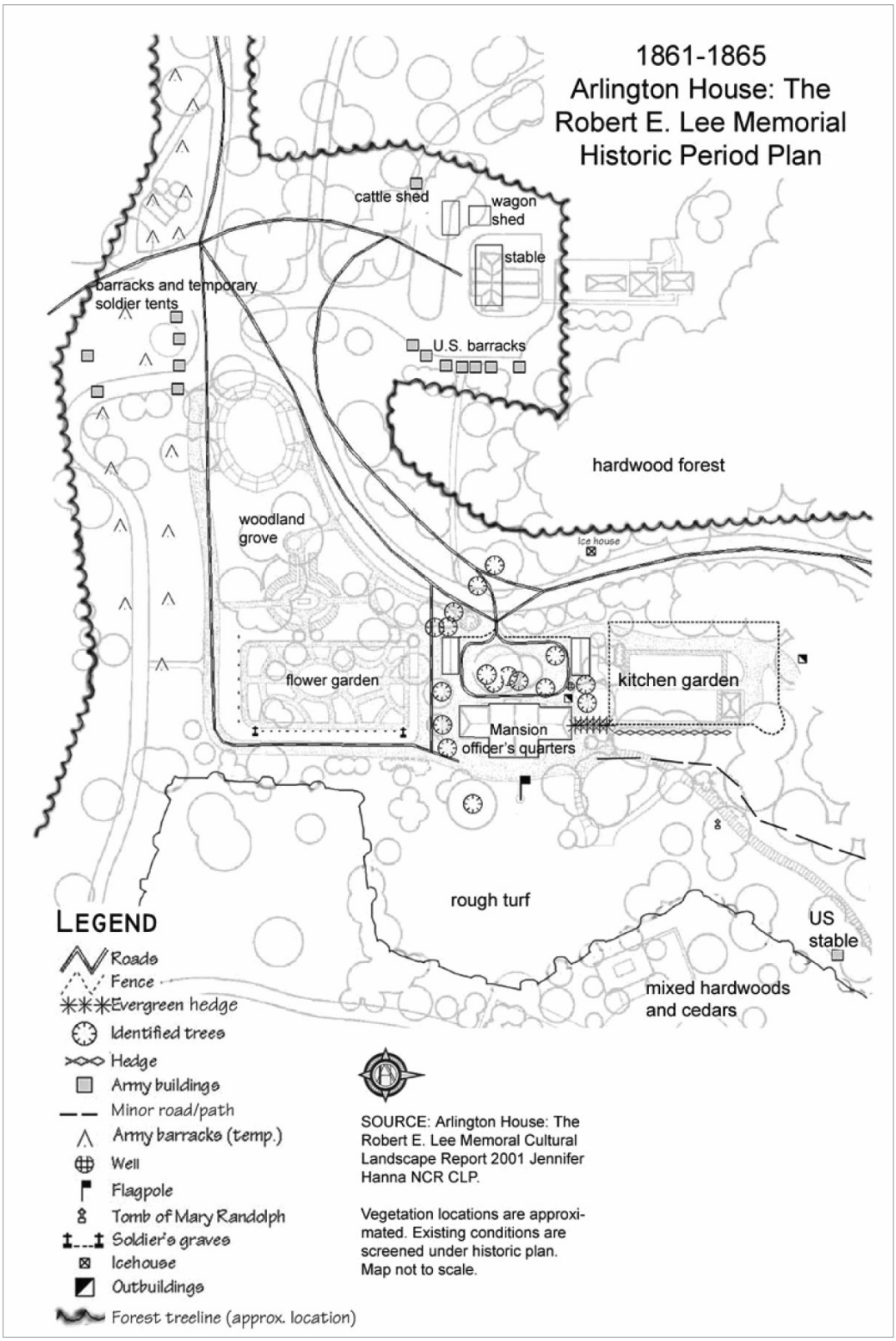


Figure 10. Diagram of Arlington House and surrounds during the Civil War, 1861-1865 (Source: Hanna 2001, 91).

FREEDMAN'S VILLAGE

On April 16, 1862, Congressional legislation freed all enslaved people in Washington, D.C. Seeking such liberation, many Black people outside of D.C. escaped enslavement by migrating to the capital city from surrounding states; arriving as refugees, they were often housed in freedmen's camps established by the government. The population of the camps continued to grow, particularly following the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. Between 1860 and 1863, the Black population of D.C. increased from 19 percent of the District's population, to more than 30 percent.[23] The rapid influx resulted in overcrowding of the camps, with impacts to public health that prompted the decision to create new camps outside of the city proper.

Under the authority of the Department of the Army, the Freedman's Village was established in June 1863 on the west side of the Potomac River. It was located on the southeastern portion of Arlington House plantation, west of the Alexandria-Georgetown Turnpike (outside of the study area boundaries). Intended as a model community for freedpersons, the plantation was thus converted into a village for freedmen and freedwomen. As noted by the National Park Service, "For many abolitionists and some in the Government, Robert E. Lee, as the leading Confederate General, came to personify slavery and unrealized freedom for millions of African Americans in America. The use of his home as a camp for freedpersons was, thus, thought to be very appealing and appropriate by many in the north."[24] Indeed, village occupants included people who had been enslaved by GWP Custis before being manumitted by Robert E. Lee in the weeks leading up to the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Wood-frame buildings initially housed 100 people, including fugitives and formerly enslaved individuals. Built by the War Department, the planned community was intended to be a temporary settlement where residents could learn vocations before seeking employment and moving on to other, more permanent stations. While no remnants of Freedman's Village survive today, the center of the village is believed to have been located south/southwest of the study area boundaries and approximately one-half mile to the south of Arlington House, in the southern portion of Arlington National Cemetery in Sections 8, 47, and 25 (see Figure 11).[25] Other sources note the main street of the village traveled through what are now Sections 3, 4, 8, and 18, around present-day Jessup, Clayton, and Grant Drives in Arlington National Cemetery.[26]

The village was a physical manifestation of the War Department's goals of moral uplift for freedpersons.[27] An 1865 central village plan depicts over 50 residences, a hospital, a kitchen/mess hall, a school, an "old people's home," and a laundry,

among other institutions and structures, all of which were tidily arranged around a central pond (see Figure 12). The village's whitewashed, one-and-a-half story clapboard duplexes evoked the early Classical Revival style, "symbolically connecting America to the ancient democracy [the Roman Empire] and its ideals through architectural style."[28]

Although the village's organizing principles envisioned a future beyond agricultural labor for Black Americans, the greater village area was divided into roughly 50 farms, approximately 10 acres each, and farmed by freedpersons. Residents cleared the land and grew crops, establishing their emancipated lives and livelihoods within the village. While a corral and other structures from the plantation were removed in 1864, usable structures from the Arlington House



Figure 11. Sketch of the Freedman's Village by artist Alfred R. Waud, April 1864 (Source: Library of Congress, Control number: 2004660337).

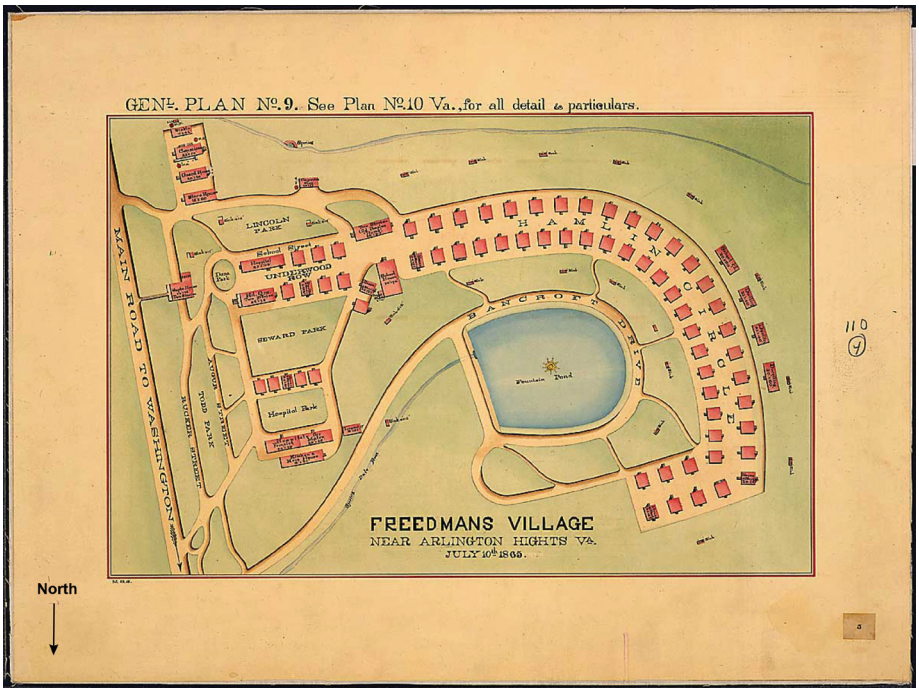


Figure 12. "Map of Freedmans Village, near Arlington Heights, VA, July 10th, 1865. Genl [ground] Plan No. 9," from the Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General (Source: National Archives, NARA Identifier: 305826; north arrow is approximate annotation by CLR authors).

plantation were incorporated into the village. Over the next two decades, villagers built new homes, made improvements to existing structures, and constructed a brick church.

The population of the village fluctuated over the years, peaking at over 1,000 individuals. As of July 1867, there were 837 inhabitants living at Freedman's Village, including 619 people in residences; 83 people in the home for the indigent; 35 people in the hospital; and 100 people in the vicinity of the village.[29] In 1888, the village population was 763, composed of 170 families. By this time, the village included 124 dwellings, three shops, two churches, and one school. Historian Lindsey Bestebreurtje writes that, "Though residents benefited from the overall central planning of the Village's buildings, layout, and services undertaken by the War Department, it was the freedmen themselves who spearheaded the development of a truly robust community in Freedman's Village."[30]

The institutions serving the village, including fraternal and mutual aid organizations, provided residents with opportunities to engage in social and political activities as the village became "the first great cultural and political meeting ground" produced by and for Black Americans.[31] The War Department, in tandem with northern religious and aid organizations, also established institutions to provide residents with domestic housekeeping skills and vocational training.[32] By this time, most adult males—including freedmen—voted and paid taxes. By the late 1880s, over half of the families who lived at the village had resided there for at least 15 years.

Given the proximity to the military posts on the former plantation, some village residents earned wages as paid workers within the military posts. The Syphax family property was west of the village, also near the military complexes, and the family was granted passes to sell goods to United States Colored Troop soldiers. Over the decades, residents also worked on government farms surrounding Freedman's Village. Village workers earned 10 dollars per month, although they were obligated to contribute half of their earnings to the general fund to maintain the village.[33]

In 1865, the Freedmen's Bureau took over the management of the village from the Department of War. The Freedmen's Bureau was thus responsible for collecting rent payments from village residents. In 1865, the Freedmen's Bureau took over the management of the village from the Department of War. The Freedmen's Bureau was this responsible for collecting rent payments from village residents.[34]

As the former Arlington House plantation land became increasingly desirable for development in the decades after the war, threats mounted to close Freedman's Village and evict the residents. Faced with the closing of the village, residents bought their homes from the government, established a rent-to-own system for the land, and continued to expand their own community institutions. In spite of consistent threats, residents successfully organized and remained in the village until the end of the 19th Century.[35]

The Freedman's Village existed for 40 years, a much longer time frame than many other refugee villages (or "contraband camps") established during and after the Civil War. While village residents were successful in establishing community institutions and accessing education and employment opportunities, the community was not immune to the patterns of displacement and control in the broader context of an emerging Jim Crow society. Forces within the white community, including government agencies, land developers, and those seeking to limit Black political power, sought to gain control of the land by closing Freedman's Village.

In 1872, the Freedmen's Bureau was abolished. In the 1880s, support for Reconstruction-era programs declined, and villagers had fewer advocates within the government. The War Department increased its efforts to close the village, and Congress declared it unlawful for individuals to reside on a military installation. Thus, the village was disbanded and its residents were officially evicted.[36] In 1888, residents petitioned the government for the right to remain in the village. John Syphax wrote a letter to the government, requesting a sum of $350 for each village homeowner as compensation for their property, improvements, and relocation expenses. The government ultimately compensated most village residents, but the payments were considerably less than market value.[37]

One source notes that on December 7, 1887, residents were given 90 days to leave the Freedman's Village.[38] Other sources indicate that the village did not close until circa 1900.[39] While the precise date of closure is unclear, some of the residents remained in Arlington County and established the existing neighborhoods of Arlington View (formerly called Johnson's Hill), High View Park (formerly called Hall's Hill), and Green Valley (formerly called Nauck).[40]

SYPHAX PROPERTY

When the United States had confiscated the Arlington plantation from Mary Custis Lee in 1863, based on her failure to pay taxes, it had also seized Maria Carter Custis Syphax's property due to lack of ownership documentation. In June of 1866, Syphax's eldest son William successfully petitioned the government

for the return of the family's land. The "Bill for Relief of Maria Syphax" was introduced in Congress, voted on, passed, and signed by President Andrew Johnson. The property was thereafter returned to Maria Carter Custis Syphax, and Congress reconfirmed her ownership in 1884.

In his petition, William Syphax stated that he was presenting the bill on behalf of "his mother by the late George Washington Parke Custis." Thus, Custis's paternity of Maria Carter Custis Syphax was entered in the *Congressional Globe*.

At the time of Maria Carter Custis Syphax's death in 1886, her 17 acres of land were divided among her children. However, the federal government continued to condemn additional land within the Syphax property in order to expand the Fort Myer military installation, once again expelling the remaining Syphax family members.[41] As late as the mid-1940s, descendants of Mary Carter Custis Syphax continued to be displaced from their land by the federal government.[42]

As the family was displaced, the remains of Charles Syphax, his wife Maria Carter Custic Syphax, and other family members were exhumed from a family cemetery plot (located within the present-day boundaries of Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall on Southgate Road) and reinterred at Lincoln Memorial Cemetery in Suitland, Maryland. In 1959, an additional 21 Syphax family members were reinterred at Harmony 10 Cemetery in Landover, Maryland. The original locations of some of these graves are not fully documented.[43]

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY'S EARLY DEVELOPMENT (1864 – 1920)

In January of 1864, the federal government purchased the Arlington House plantation at auction (after Mary Lee failed to pay taxes on the property in person).[44] As the Civil War progressed, cemeteries in Washington, D.C., and surroundings reached capacity and beginning in May of 1864, the Army used available land along the northern border of the Arlington House plantation to bury soldiers. Concurrently, Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs sought a location for an official cemetery.

On June 15, 1864, Meigs recommended to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton that the Arlington House plantation be officially adapted for use as a cemetery. Meigs believed Lee had dishonored the property by resigning from the US Army and leading the Confederate forces. He thus sought to restore honor to the property through the development of the cemetery to bury the war's dead. To deter the possibility of the Lees returning to the property after the war, Meigs

suggested digging graves in close proximity to the Arlington House residence. Stanton approved the choice the same day, stipulating that no more than 200 acres of Arlington House and its grounds were to be used as a military cemetery; the cemetery was not to interfere with the existing Freedman's Village.[45]

Upon approval, Quartermaster Meigs ordered a survey of the 200-acre cemetery site, directing that proper fences be installed along its boundaries. The resulting survey inventoried army barracks and tents located southwest of the plantation house. Photographs and written records from this same year indicate the presence of whitewashed wooden picket fences around the burial areas, in addition to picket fences along the boundary of the Alexandria-Georgetown Turnpike.[46]

While most burials were initially placed at a distance from the plantation house, in August of 1864, 26 bodies were buried along the perimeter of Arlington House's south flower garden, within a few yards of the plantation house.[47] For more on the evolution of this south flower garden, refer to the character area history beginning on page 65.

Over the next several years, the federal government developed Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) into a burial ground, a significant change from the working plantation landscape of the Custis and Lee years.[48] In April of 1866, Meigs ordered the construction of a tomb for unidentified Civil War dead in the flower garden; it eventually included the remains of 2,111 unknown soldiers.[49]

In the 1864 Annual Report of the Quartermaster, Meigs described the general condition of ANC and a typical burial within the cemetery:

> The grounds have been carefully surveyed and suitably laid out and enclosed. Already nearly 3,000 interments have taken place in this national cemetery. The graves are carefully sodded, and at the head of each is planted a neat head board, painted white, on which are inscribed, in black letters...the name of the soldier, his company and regiment, and the date of his death.[50]

By 1865, the Arlington Stables were established to accommodate army horses and mules, incorporating structures from the former plantation farm. Nearly all of the forests surrounding the cemetery were gone by this time. Within Arlington Woods, additional trees were cut down to make room for large corrals and stables. [51]

After the Civil War, the Arlington plantation was used simultaneously as a cemetery, a military post, and the Freedman's Village. Between 1864 and 1870, the Custis- and Lee-era carriage drives winding around the grounds were reestablished and regraded and by 1867, according to a report on the conditions



Figure 13. View of Arlington House, 1868 (Source: Arlington House Archives).



Figure 14. Sketch of Arlington House, 1868 (Source: Gedney, J. F., Engraver, and Publisher W.H. & O.H. Morrison. Arlington House. Arlington Virginia, 1868).



Figure 15. Road to Arlington House along front of flower garden, c. 1860-1870 (Source: Library of Congress).

of Arlington National Cemetery, the lawns, gardens, and slopes had been rehabilitated from wartime damage (see Figure 13, Figure 14, and Figure 15).[52]

Meanwhile, the picturesque cemetery took shape with the planting of trees, shrubs, and grass. Fences were reconstructed around the flower garden, and the terraces and slopes were improved. Congress allocated funds to repaint and stucco the plantation house, where the superintendent of ANC resided by this time. On May 30, 1868, the Grand Army of the Republic, a powerful association of US Army veterans, organized the first widely observed Memorial Day services on the portico of Arlington House, to commemorate Civil War soldiers.[53]

Landscape gardener David H. Rhodes, hired by the Quartermaster General's office, arrived at the army installation in 1873, and also made Arlington House his home. Rhodes, who served as the cemetery landscape gardener until approximately 1930, added benches and urns around the house, in addition to planting beds and foundation plantings. In 1874, Rhodes added two deodar cedars (*Cedrus deodara*) in a circular planting bed to the work yard behind the plantation house. Four years later, Rhodes added boxwood (*Buxus* sp.), yew (*Taxus* sp.), and arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*) along the foundation of the plantation house. Rhodes also added magnolia (*Magnolia* sp.) trees in front of each wing of the house. The following season, he and his laborers added clusters of Elephant's ear (*Caladium esculentum*) and canna in beds on the east side of the plantation house at the base of the flagpole. A brick water tower was constructed west of the plantation house in 1880 in the deodar cedar planting bed.

In 1877, George Washington Custis Lee (the oldest son of Robert E. Lee and Mary Anna Custis Lee) sought to regain ownership of the Arlington property; his dispute ultimately went to the US Supreme Court in 1882, argued as the case of *United States v. Lee* (106 U.S. 196). The Supreme Court decided in favor of



Figure 16. Photograph looking toward Arlington House including greenhouse, which was removed in 1880, part of gravel walk, and picket fence, c.1870-1888 (Source: New York Public Library Digital Collections, Image ID: G92F073_058F).

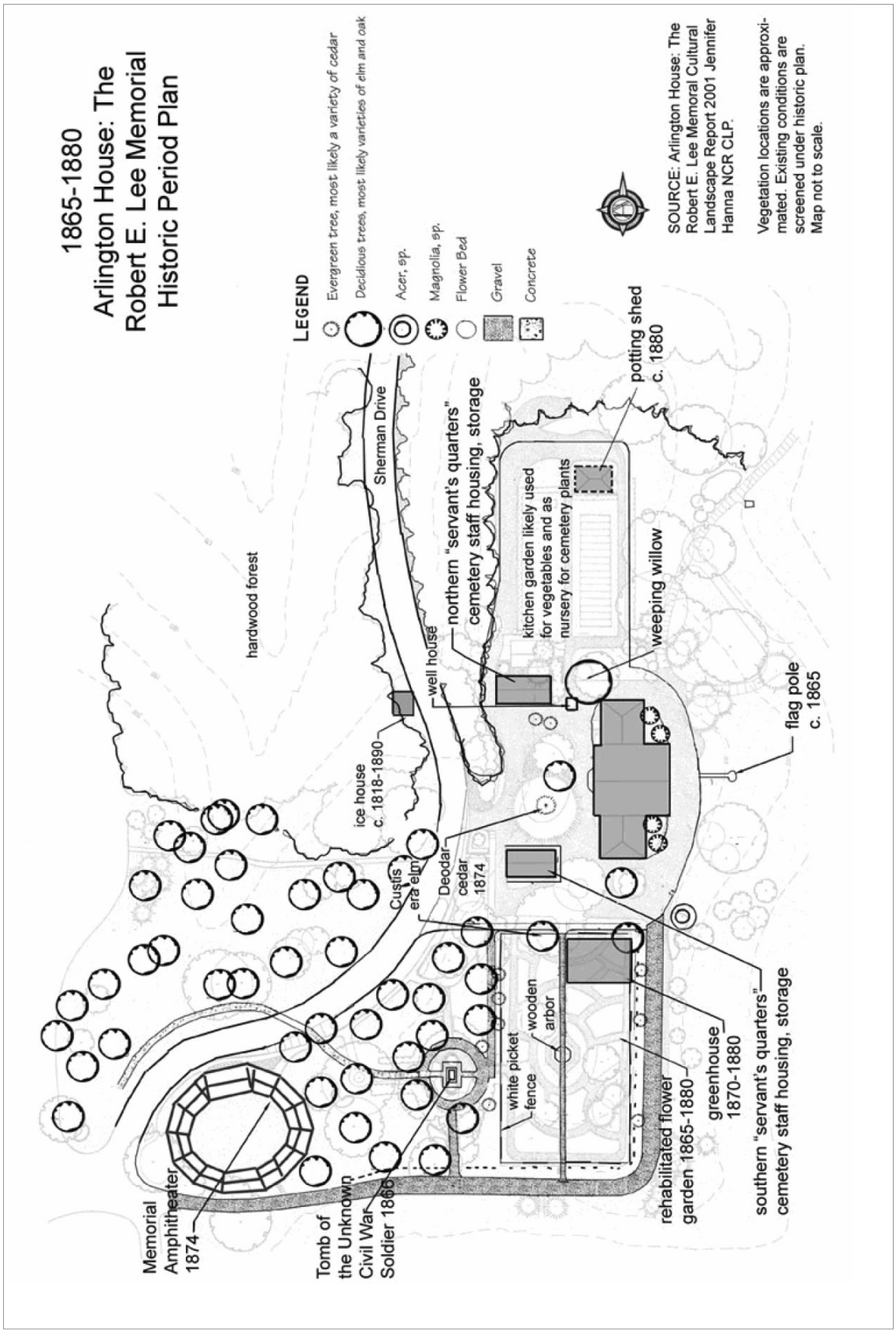


Figure 17. Arlington House and surrounds following the Civil War, 1865-1880 (Source: Hanna 2001, 115).

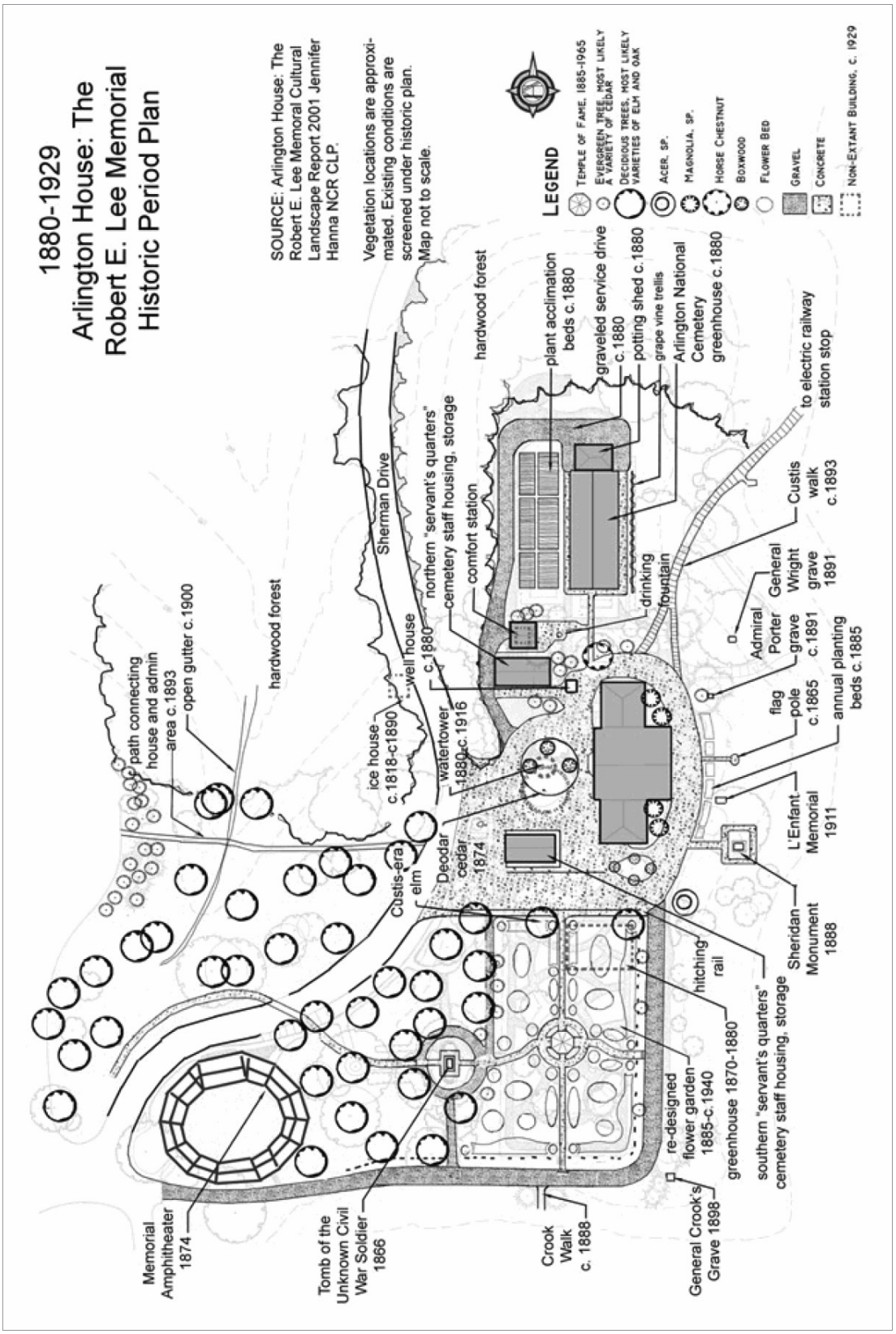


Figure 18. **Arlington House and surrounds after 1880, with many changes, including monuments, memorials, and graves in proximity to the plantation house (Source: Hannah 2001, 137).**

Custis Lee, who did not move back to the property, but rather sold the family home and surrounding 1,100-acre plantation back to the federal government for $150,000.[54] A second Supreme Court decision the following year granted clear title of ownership of the ANC property to the federal government.[55]

The cemetery grew in 1889, as Congress transferred 142 additional acres to Arlington National Cemetery from surrounding federal lands; another 56 acres were added to the cemetery in 1897.[56]

The Arlington House landscape continued to see changes in the late 19th century, as the landscape around it transformed into the cemetery. In the south flower garden, a greenhouse stood in the northeast corner from approximately 1870 to 1880 (see Figure 16, Figure 17, and Figure 18). When the greenhouse was removed in 1880, the flower garden underwent a thorough redesign led by Rhodes. The Custis-Lee arbor and various fences were removed, and the land was regraded and plowed; a new concrete path was added through the garden (see Figure 19 for arbor). A large domed "Temple of Fame" structure was added at the center of the garden, where it stood for 70 years; it comprised stone columns, entablature, and a frieze salvaged from the US Patent Office after a fire (see Figure 20 and Figure 21).[57] For more on the evolution of this south flower garden, refer to the character area history beginning on page 65.

In the north kitchen garden, a new greenhouse was constructed around 1880 on the eastern side of the garden. The structure measured 100' long and 30' wide, and featured a brick foundation, glass windows, and an iron frame. A two-story



Figure 19. The flower garden with central arbor, and Arlington House plantation house visible in the background, c. 1870 (Source: Virginia Museum of History and Culture, Item number: 1999.160.347).



Figure 20. Temple of Fame, c. 1880-1930 (Source: NYPL Digital Collections, Image ID: G92F073_102F).



Figure 21. Temple of Fame, c. 1910-1950 (Source: Arlington House Archives).

potting shed was attached to the north side of the greenhouse.[58] For more on the evolution of this north kitchen garden, refer to the character area history beginning on page 86.

By 1894, another garden was located in the northern part of the lower terrace cemetery, to serve the nearby army post at Fort Myer.

In 1900, ANC set aside a one-acre section (Section 16) of the cemetery for Confederate soldiers, in a gesture towards reconciliation. A total of 136 Confederate graves were relocated from elsewhere in the cemetery to this designated section, along with 128 Confederate burials relocated to Section 16 of ANC from the Soldiers' Home in Washington. (An additional 241 Confederate burials were located in ANC until the 1870s, when they were disinterred and moved to Southern cemeteries.) In 1906, Congress approved the construction of a Confederate Memorial in Section 16, southwest of Arlington House (see Figure 22 for the cemetery and Figure 23 for a view of Arlington House and grounds at this time). The Confederate Memorial was designed and executed by Confederate veteran Moses Ezekiel and completed in 1914.

In 1907, what is now referred to as the "Old Administration Building" was constructed on the site of the 19th century stables, which had burned down in 1904. This building was constructed approximately 400 feet west of the plantation house, on the west side of Sherman Avenue, and rehabilitated and expanded in the early 1930s to serve as the administrative building for the cemetery. Elements of the building resemble the architectural style of Arlington House. This building served as the primary contact station for ANC visitors until the 1960s.[59]

EARLY RESTORATION EFFORTS (1920-1932)

During the Jim Crow era, between the end of Reconstruction and the modern Civil Rights Movement, many Black Americans faced discrimination and terrorism around the country. Against this backdrop of racial terrorism, in the early 1920s, Frances Parkinson Keyes (wife of US Senator Henry W. Keyes of New Hampshire) called for the dedication of Arlington House as a memorial to Robert E. Lee. The US Army initially pushed back against the request, out of concern that the plantation house would become a shrine to Lee and the Lost Cause. Ultimately, a compromise was reached, and in 1925, the 68th Congress passed a bill to restore Arlington House "as nearly as practicable to the condition in which it existed immediately prior to the Civil War."[60]

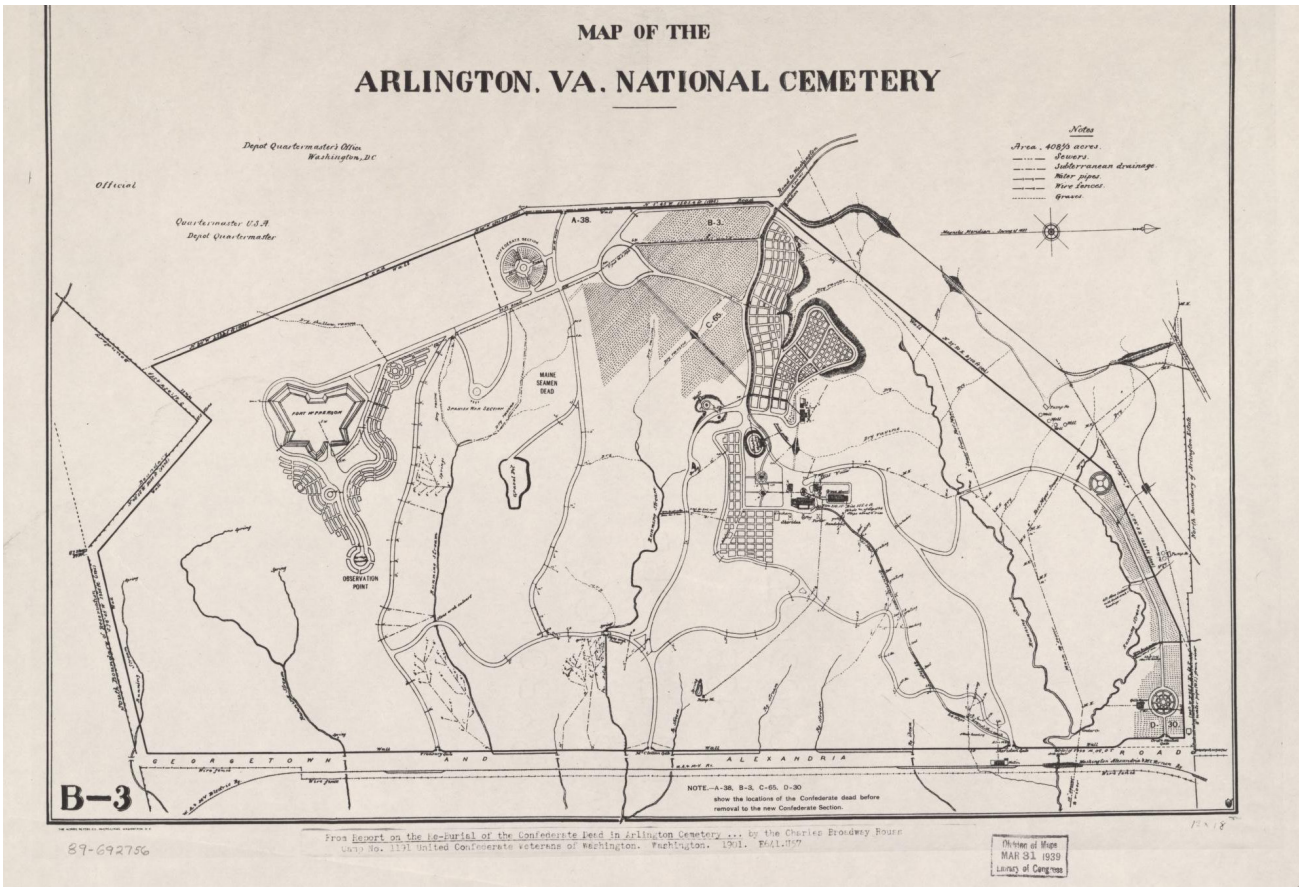


Figure 22. Map of Arlington National Cemetery, 1901 (Source: Library of Congress, Control number: 8962756).

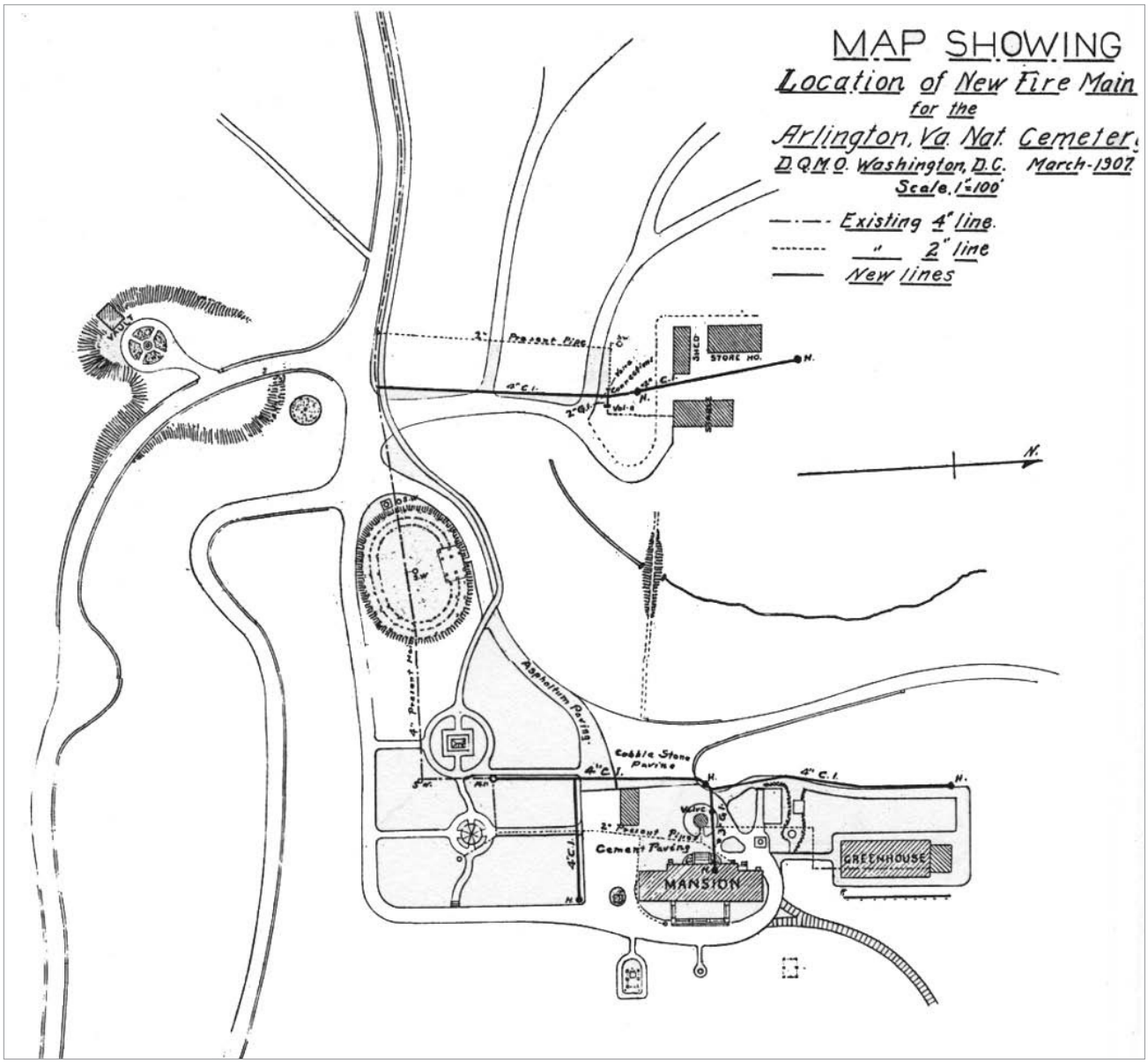


Figure 23. Map depicting Arlington House grounds, 1907 (Source: National Park Service, Historic Structures Report, 1985).



Figure 24. Aerial view of Arlington House and landscape, c. 1920 (Source: Arlington House Archives).

The legislation affirmed that the US government would retain control of the plantation house and grounds, focusing on Lee's efforts to promote peace and reconciliation after the Civil War. The bill passed unanimously and was signed into law by President Calvin Coolidge. For more on these evolving values and interpretations associated with the landscape, see the Summary of Shifting Values below.

Although the legislation specified a Lee-era and postbellum interpretation of the site, under the influence of Charles Moore, Chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA), the plantation house was actually restored to the period of George Washington Parke Custis (see Figure 24). All elements of the rehabilitation project went through the CFA for approval. Following a meeting between Moore and President Coolidge, a *New York Times* article reported that, "creating a shrine to the memory of Robert E. Lee in the restoration of the Lee Mansion in Arlington National Cemetery probably will be dropped."[61]

Moore asserted that the objective of the restoration was that "the entire work in Arlington is based on the restoration of the plantation house and grounds as an estate representative of the manners, customs, and taste of the first half century of the republic."[62] Under the direction of Moore,the design decisions reflected the popularity of the Colonial Revival movement of the 1920s. Throughout the 1930s, the Quartermaster's Office continued to approve landscape treatments influenced by the Colonial Revival style, and no furniture manufactured after 1830

was included in the restoration efforts, thus negating the Lee family's influence on the house.

In 1929, Congress appropriated $90,000 for the restoration of the plantation house. The CFA approved a Colonial Revival-style landscape treatment plan created by the Quartermaster's Office. The rehabilitation campaign was completed in 1935, and included extensive alterations to the landscape (see Figure 25, Figure 26, Figure 27, and Figure 28), including:

- replacement of concrete paving around the plantation house and outbuildings with gravel;
- paving of the drive on the east side of the house with brick;
- addition of cedars on the east side of the house, as well other vegetation screening additions;
- removal of vehicular traffic from the west side of the house, redirecting the traffic to a screened parking area near Memorial Amphitheater;
- addition of a field stone well head over the well in the work yard;
- rehabilitation of the south flower garden, including straight paths that were lined with tightly trimmed boxwood hedges in the "Colonial garden" style;
- the annual flower beds planted in the 1880s were removed;
- alterations to the kitchen garden included the addition of a brick perimeter walk and a central north-south brick walk;
- removal of the 1880 greenhouse from the kitchen garden;
- addition of brick walks connecting the kitchen garden with the plantation house, enslaved quarters and comfort station[63]; and
- paving of the walkway between the plantation house and current administrative area where the stables were located.

Building 314 was originally constructed in 1931 as the potting shed and greenhouse to replace the functions of the previous greenhouse (demolished by the NPS). The potting shed and greenhouse were constructed immediately south of today's curatorial facility, which was originally a segregated comfort station for Arlington National Cemetery built in 1941, located within today's administrative area. For more on the evolution of each of these areas, refer to the character area histories.

NPS MANAGEMENT (1933 – 2000)

During the Great Depression in the early 1930s, many of the War Department's historic sites were transferred to the Department of the Interior's Office of National Parks, Buildings, and Reservations (later, the National Park Service/ NPS). Thus, on June 10, 1933, Executive Order 6166 transferred the plantation

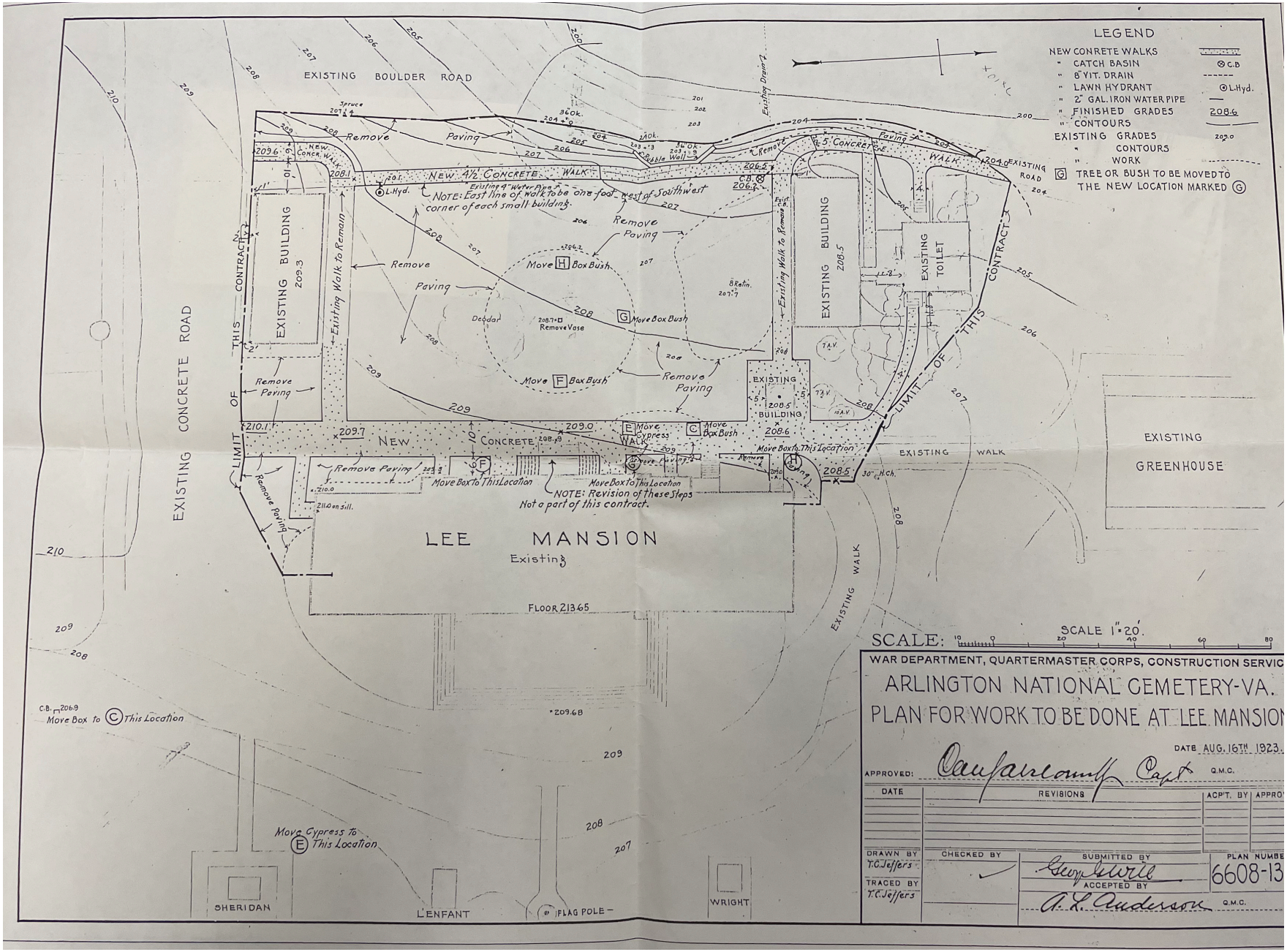


Figure 25. View of the north kitchen garden and its potting shed after the greenhouse was removed, 1938 (Source: Arlington House Archives).



Figure 26. "Plan for Remodeling the Ground about Lee Mansion," 1921. These plans were never fully implemented (Source: Arlington House Archives).

Figure 27. (opposite) "Plan for work to be completed at Lee Mansion," 1923. These plans were never fully implemented (Source: Arlington House Archives).


LEGEND
NEW CONCRETE WALKS
" CATCH BASIN C.B.
" 8" VIT. DRAIN
" LAWN HYDRANT L.Hyd.
" 2" GAL. IRON WATER PIPE
" FINISHED GRADES 208.6
" CONTOURS
EXISTING GRADES 208.0
" CONTOURS
" WORK
G TREE OR BUSH TO BE MOVED TO THE NEW LOCATION MARKED G
EXISTING BOULDER ROAD
EXISTING CONCRETE ROAD
NEW 4½ CONCRETE WALK
NOTE: East line of walk to be one foot west of Southwest corner of each small building.
Existing 4" Water Pipe
EXISTING BUILDING 209.3
EXISTING BUILDING 208.5
EXISTING TOILET
EXISTING BUILDING 208.6
EXISTING WALK
EXISTING GREENHOUSE
EXISTING ROAD
Existing Walk to Remain
Existing Walk to Remain
Existing Drain
THIS CONTRACT LIMIT OF
THIS CONTRACT LIMIT OF
Remove Paving
Move H Box Bush
Move F Box Bush
Move G Box Bush
Move E Cypress
Move C Box Bush
Move Box to This Location
NOTE: Revision of these Steps Not a part of this contract.
LEE MANSION
Existing
FLOOR 213.65
NEW CONCRETE WALK
Move Cypress to E This Location
C.B. 206.9 Move Box to C This Location
SHERIDAN
LENFANT
FLAG POLE
WRIGHT
SCALE: SCALE 1" = 20'
WAR DEPARTMENT, QUARTERMASTER CORPS, CONSTRUCTION SERVIC
ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY-VA.
PLAN FOR WORK TO BE DONE AT LEE MANSION
DATE AUG. 16TH 1923.
APPROVED: Dan Farnsworth Capt Q.M.C.
DATE
REVISIONS
ACP'T. BY
APPRO'
DRAWN BY T.C. Jeffers
TRACED BY T.C. Jeffers
CHECKED BY
SUBMITTED BY
ACCEPTED BY A. L. Anderson Q.M.C.
PLAN NUMBE
6608-13

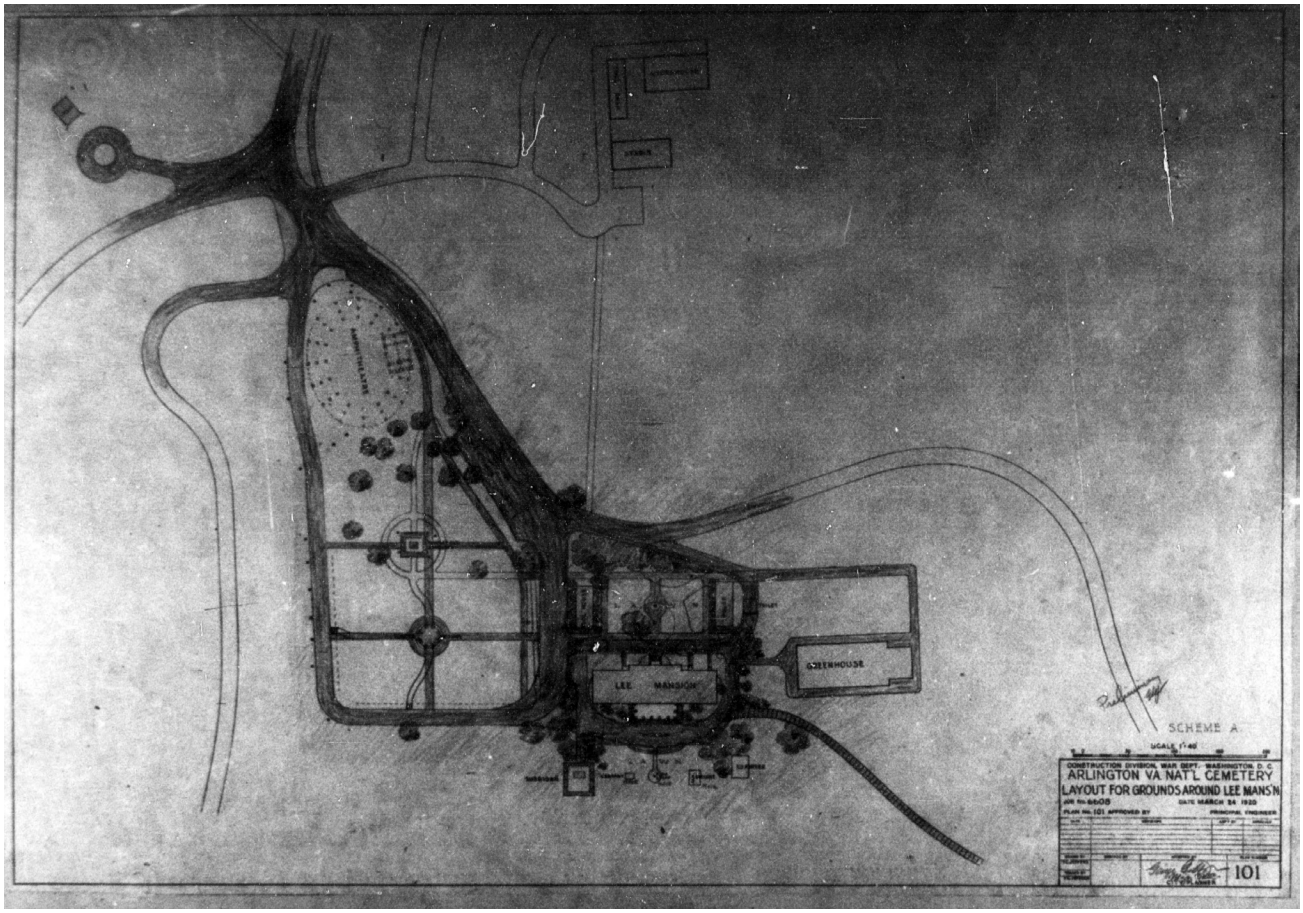


Figure 28. One of several 1920s plans for development (Source: Arlington House Archives).

house and the two enslaved quarters from the War Department to the Department of the Interior.[64] While no associated land was transferred at this time, the NPS began administering the house and immediate grounds as a park site in 1933. The remainder of Arlington House estate—including the land beneath the plantation house and enslaved quarters—remained under the jurisdiction of the War Department as Arlington National Cemetery, until 1947 when the house and enslaved quarters, in addition to the kitchen garden, potting shed, and work yard were transferred in fee simple, with the flower garden later transferred in 1959.

The Old Administration Building was remodeled from 1931-1934 to resemble Custis' original 19th century building. In 1941, Arlington National Cemetery constructed a segregated comfort station approximately 150 feet north of the "Old Administration Building." The building today functions as the curatorial facility for the NPS.

In 1945, Irving Payne, Chief Landscape Architect for the Buildings and Grounds Division of National Capital Parks within the National Park Service, created a plan to redesign the north kitchen garden to its 19th-century appearance.[65] Two years

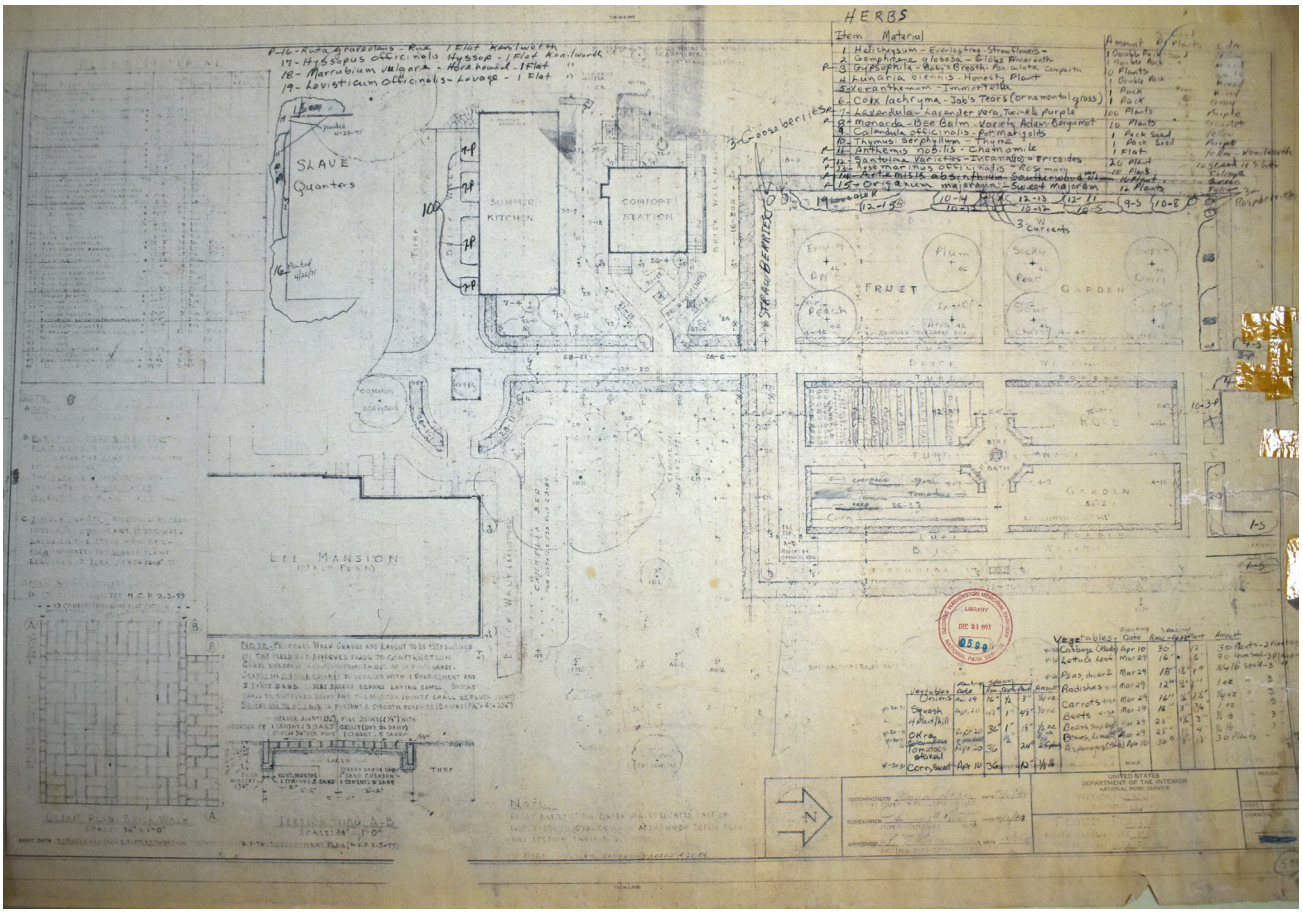


Figure 29. Revised planting plan for Arlington House, 1948 (Source: Arlington House Archives).

later, in 1947, the War Department transferred 2.374 acres in fee simple to the NPS, including the rear work yard, and the north kitchen garden and its potting shed. This transfer allowed Payne's large-scale rehabilitation and redesign of the historic site to move forward (see Figure 29).

The project began in 1948 and was complete by 1954. The redesign included the planting of over 40 kinds of shrubs, foundation plantings along the east side of the plantation house, roses in the northeast corner of the kitchen garden, and an American holly hedge surrounding the kitchen garden. A fruit garden was installed in the western half of the kitchen garden. Boxwoods were planted as a screen on the north and east ends of the kitchen garden to provide a transition between the woods and the turf area near the potting shed.[66]

In 1955, a joint resolution of the 84th Congress enacted Public Law 84–107, designating Arlington House as the "Custis-Lee Mansion," a permanent memorial to Robert E. Lee. Rep. Joel Broyhill—a Republican from Virginia, and a staunch segregationist who opposed the integration of public spaces—introduced the legislation to the House of Representatives. The bill recognized Lee as he "attained world renown as a military genius, and after Appomattox fervently



Figure 30. Looking north across the lawn after the flower garden was removed in to the early 1930s, image taken between the 1930s and 1960s, prior to the 1960s rehabilitation (Source: Arlington House Archives).

devoted himself to peace, to the reuniting of the Nation, and to the advancement of youth education and the welfare and progress of mankind."[67] Around this time, the National Park Service converted the potting shed in the north kitchen garden to use as a museum, with artifacts on display from the Custis and Lee families.

In 1956, the Arlington House property received a federal reservation number (Res. No. 697). In 1959, NPS assumed control of the former flower garden located on the south side of the plantation house.[68] In 1964, the NPS National Capital Office of Design and Construction created a plan to restore the flower garden; that restoration was executed between 1964 and 1967[69] (see Figure 30 and Figure 31 for the garden prior to the rehabilitation; Figure 32 for the rehabilitation plan; and Figure 33 for documentation of the plantings following the rehabilitation).

In 1964, the Secretary of the Army ordered that Arlington Woods be preserved in perpetuity as parkland, in order to enhance the beauty of the cemetery and protect the setting of Arlington House.

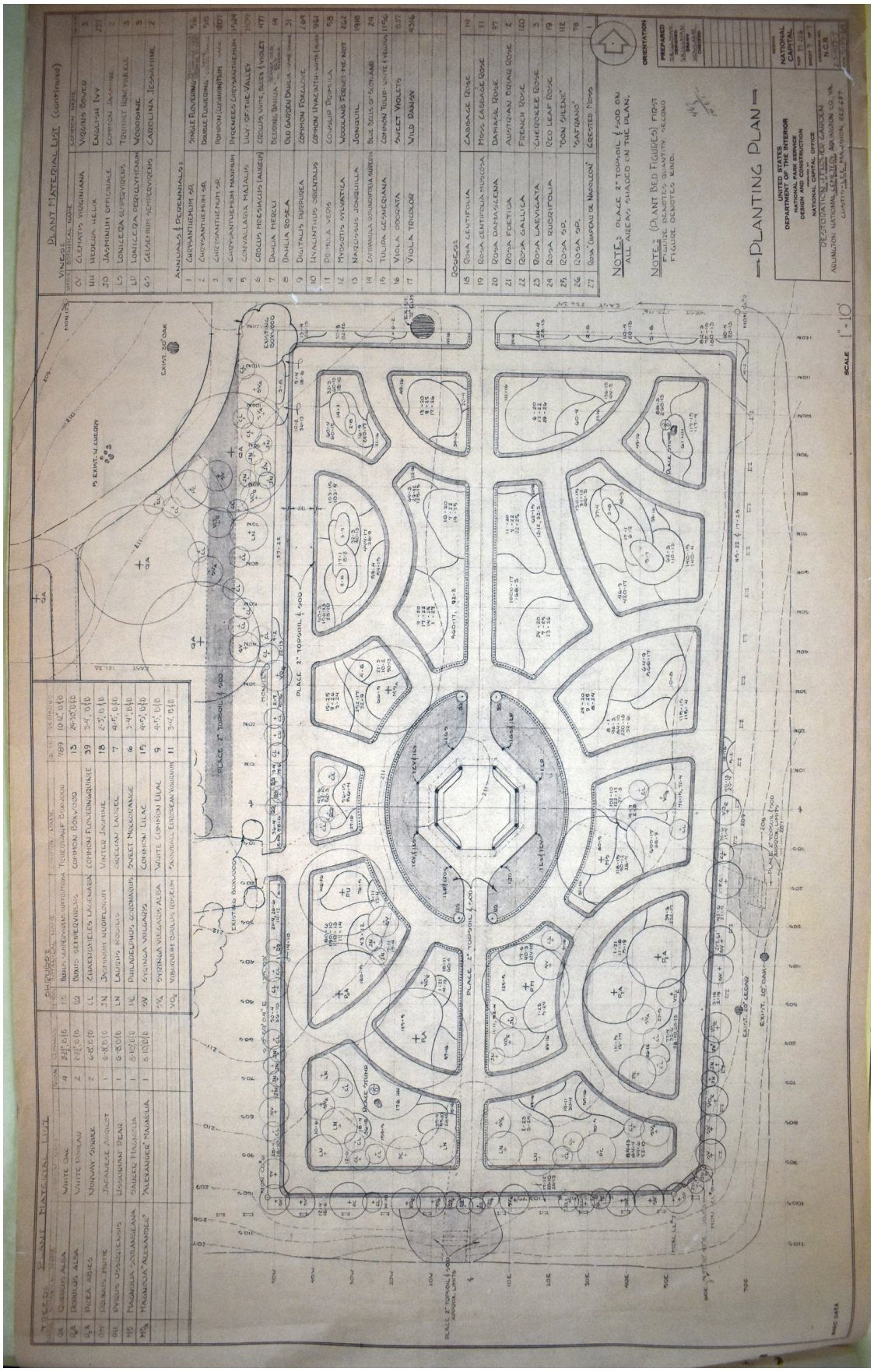


Figure 31. View towards the Arlington House residence and south enslaved quarters, c. 1930. The photograph demonstrates the landscape conditions prior to the 1960s rehabilitation (Source: Arlington House Archives).

In the years that followed, the NPS developed its first master plan for Arlington House and the surrounding grounds, completed in 1966 (see Figure 34). Partially encouraged by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the agency conducted extensive research to inform a large-scale restoration that would return the house and grounds to their conditions as of April 1861.[70] The master plan had four specific objectives:

- to increase understanding and regulation of historic resources, in the wake of the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act;
- to upgrade park facilities and improve resource management as part of the Mission 66 campaign**;

** Although visitation steadily increased at national parks after World War II, most NPS landscapes had not seen steady investment in their infrastructure since the 1930s, and needed repair and/or were inadequate to accommodate the increasing number of visitors. In an effort to address the backlog of deferred maintenance and to modernize these facilities, Congress approved funding in 1956 for the NPS Mission 66 program. This 10-year building and design campaign sought to expand visitor services and recreational opportunities in time for the 50th anniversary of the NPS in 1966.


PLANTING PLAN
SCALE 1" = 10'
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
NATIONAL CAPITAL OFFICE
NOTE: PLACE 2" TOPSOIL & SOD ON ALL AREAS SHADED ON THE PLAN.
NOTE: (PLANT BED FIGURES) FIRST FIGURE DENOTES QUANTITY. SECOND FIGURE DENOTES KIND.
ORIENTATION
PREPARED
DESIGNATION OF PLANTS IN ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY, ARLINGTON CO., VA.
CONTRACT NO. NCR-RM-RM-RM

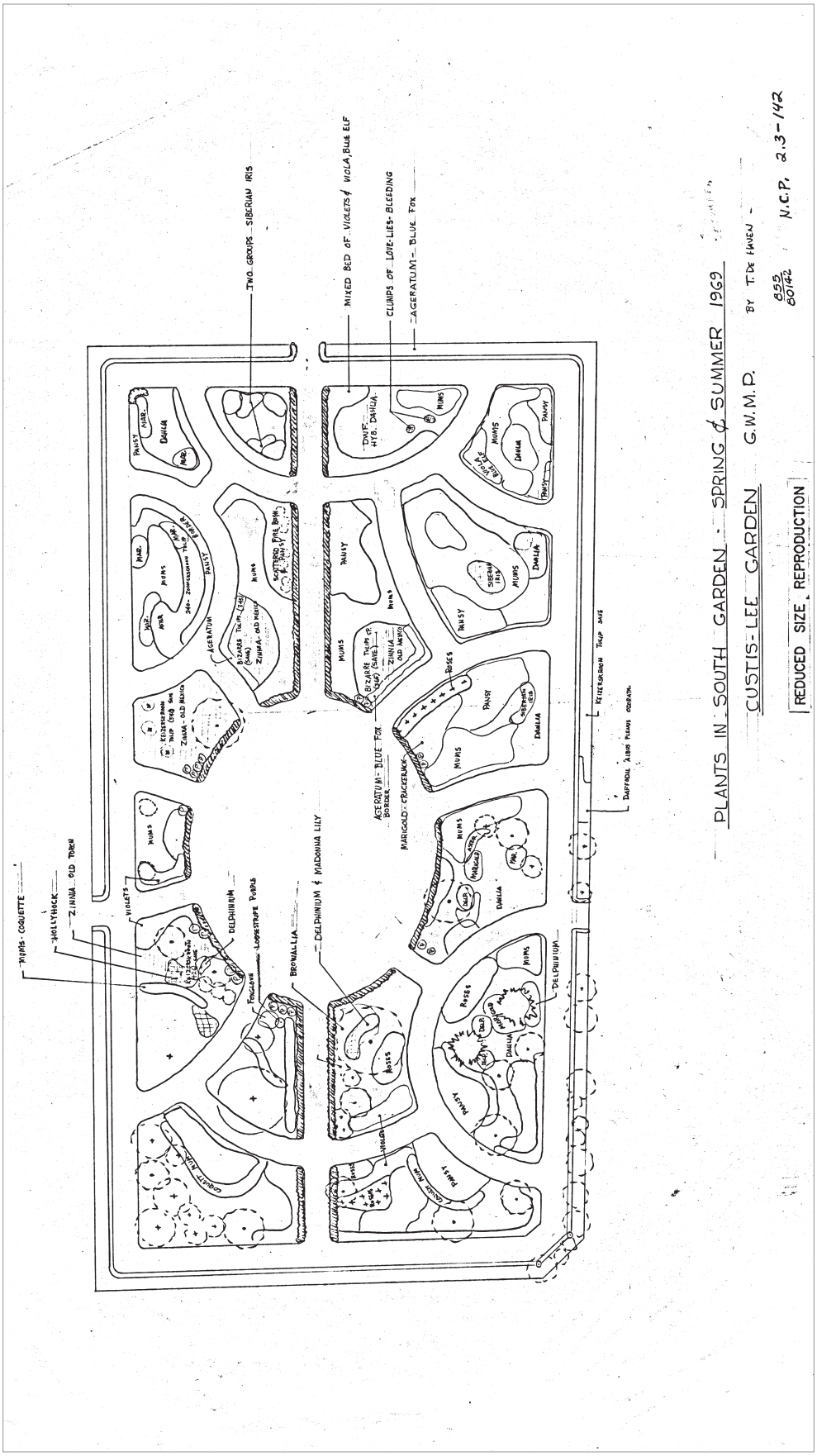


Figure 32. (opposite) **Planting plan for the restoration of the flower garden, 1964 (Source: Arlington House Archives).**

Figure 33. (this page) **Plants in the Flower Garden, 1969 (Source: Arlington House Archives).**


ORIENTATION
PREPARED
G W M P
271
Archives
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NCR
TOPOGRAPHIC BASE MAP
PART OF THE MASTER PLAN
CUSTIS-LEE MANSION
KENNEDY GRAVESITE
APPROXIMATE BOUNDARY OF LAND SET ASIDE BY
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE — APRIL 17, 1964

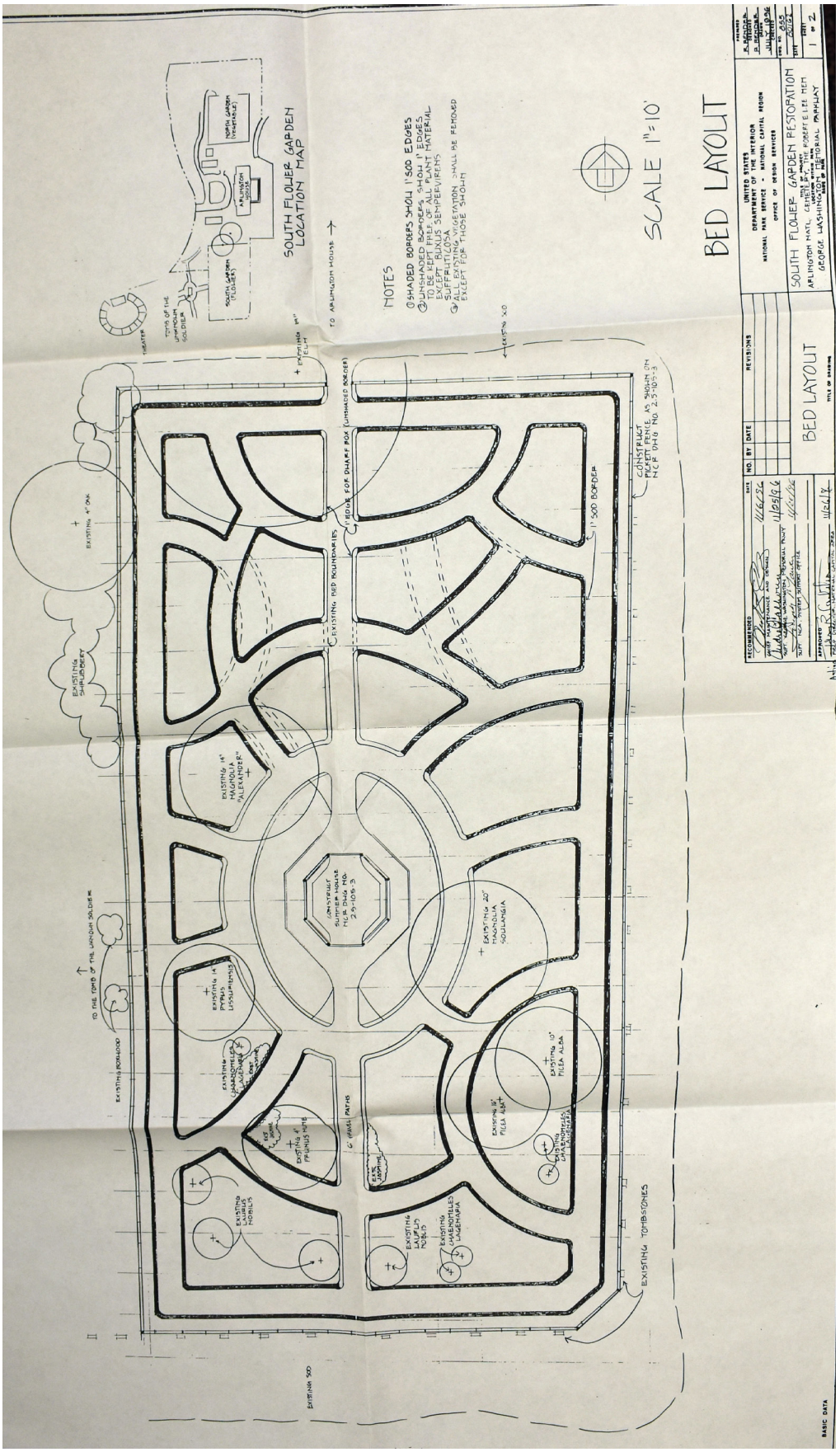


Figure 34. (opposite) Topographic base map for the 1966 master plan (Source: Arlington House Archives).

Figure 35. (this page) Layout of garden beds in the south flower garden, 1996 (Source: Arlington House Archives).

- to boost interpretation of living history by recreating settings and tell a story of US history; and
- to create a permanent memorial to Robert E. Lee.

In 1972, Congress authorized the renaming of the Custis-Lee Mansion to "Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial." As in the 1950s, Joel Broyhill of Virginia introduced the legislation, citing the need to differentiate Arlington House from the Lee residence at Stratford Hall in Virginia. The action to rename the site passed unanimously in the Democrat-controlled 92nd Congress and was signed into law by Republican President Richard Nixon.

In 1975, Congress voted to restore Robert E. Lee's citizenship. (He had been stripped of it when the Confederate Army surrendered at the end of the Civil War.) Sen. Harry F. Byrd of Virginia introduced the bill in the Democrat-controlled Senate, where it passed unanimously; the bill passed the House of Representatives with a 407-10 vote. On August 5, 1975, Republican President Gerald R. Ford signed the bill into law (Public Law 95-67) at a ceremony on the portico at Arlington House, officially posthumously restoring Robert E. Lee's citizenship.

In the same year that Lee's citizenship was reinstated, the US Army deemed Arlington House and surrounds to be excess property and transferred 24.44 acres to the National Park Service, namely incorporating land within Arlington Woods. That same year, the kitchen garden was planted with vegetables, fruit trees, and shrubs.

In the 1990s, the flower garden underwent a rehabilitation, and the brick walkways around the plantation house and the enslaved quarters were replaced with gravel (see Figure 35). In 1998 a land transfer occurred between the US Army and the NPS. At this time, ANC acquired land from the NPS along Memorial Avenue near the cemetery entrance, and NPS acquired 0.17 acres of land from ANC upon which the Old Administration Building and Curatorial Facility sit. The Army retained jurisdiction over the adjacent parking lot and nearby structures.

MILLENNIUM PROJECT

With the exception of the rehabilitation of the south flower garden rehabilitation in the 1990s, there were no major changes within the landscape during the last decades of the 20th century.

In 1998, Garrow and Associates conducted a cultural investigation of Arlington Woods, identifying many of the oldest trees within the forested area. The report indicated that the oldest trees in the surrounding area were located in the mixed

hardwood forest in the ravine between the house and administration building. They found one fallen hickory tree that dated to approximately 1775. Some of the other trees identified in their inventory, considered "witness trees," still stand today.

By the beginning of the 21st century, Arlington National Cemetery needed additional land for burials. In 2002, the NPS transferred 12 acres of Arlington Woods back to ANC, with an additional 12 acres transferred in 2008 for this purpose. The cemetery embarked on a 27-acre expansion project, known as the Millenium Project, which was ultimately completed in 2018. The Millennium Project included the construction of casket burial sections, in-ground sites for ashes, and both columbarium niche courts and a niche wall.

RECENT REHABILITATION

Restoration work on Arlington House and grounds took place between 2009 and 2011. At this time, extensive work occurred on portions of the plantation house's interiors and the north enslaved quarters. Additionally, the rehabilitation of mechanical, electrical, and fire protection systems, and the replacement of site utilities took place at this time. A new comfort station was constructed at the north end of the landscape and a mechanical bunker to house building systems was added.

In 2012, the 1920s War Department comfort station was demolished, extensive archeology was completed around the north enslaved quarters, and a new comfort station was constructed at the north end of the cultural landscape for visitors.

In 2018, the National Park Service launched a three-year, large-scale rehabilitation of the plantation house and landscape. The rehabilitation included alterations and improvements to the grounds, visitor circulation and access, paving materials, plantings, signage, and waysides.

During the rehabilitation, the north and south enslaved quarters were converted to interpretive spaces to improve how the narrative of the enslaved community is presented. A concession stand in the north enslaved quarters was removed.***

For the plantation house itself, the project stabilized the foundation; restored exterior finishes and hardware; recoated decorative masonry faux-marble finishes; repainted the interior; repaired plaster; rehabilitated windows and doors; and reset the brick portico floor. A ramp was added within the conservatory space

*** The faux exterior has been deteriorated in places, and moisture in interior walls continues to be a problem.

at the southwest corner of the plantation house for accessibility. The work also included new or improved electrical, lighting, security, climate management and fire suppression systems. The rehabilitation also entailed the conservation of restoration of more than 1,000 historic objects in the museum collections, and the acquisition of 1,300 antiques or reproductions, including several artifacts associated with the history of Black Americans.

Additionally, as part of the rehabilitation efforts, a Landscape Plan was created in 2020, outlining:

> the goals and priorities of site maintenance along with long term care and future projects. The Plan's goal is to maintain a high standard of horticultural care and management that provides optimal growing conditions for the site's plant material, enhances the ecological health of the site's environment, and presents a landscape of high quality for visitors.[71]

The Landscape Management Plan divides the cultural landscape into four sections: Zone 1 – General Site Maintenance; Zone 2 – South Flower Garden; Zone 3 – Kitchen Garden Vegetable Beds; and Zone 4 – Arlington Woods.

In the rear work yard, the rehabilitation campaign included investigation and improvements in the 18' x 16' west room of the south enslaved quarters. Workers completing a floor leveling task within the modern fill dug too deep, reaching historic period soils. While shovel-skimming, four north-facing glass bottles within a subfloor storage pit were uncovered adjacent to and northeast of the fireplace hearth. The discovery was reported to the archeological monitor on site. Subsequent archeological investigations concluded that the subfloor storage pit and four bottle were likely associated with Selina and Thornton Gray and their family, who occupied the west room in the mid-19th century.[72]

Elsewhere during the rehabilitation campaign, the historic grounds and kitchen gardens were realigned to improve accessibility. In the area north of the kitchen garden, a bookstore was added on to the comfort station complex.

Following the rehabilitation work, Arlington House reopened to visitors in June 2021. In the previous year, as part of the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, additional land was transferred to ARHO, including Building 314 and surrounding land within the ARHO administrative area.



Historical Summary, by Character Area



Cultural Landscape Report

Arlington House
George Washington Memorial Pkwy
Arlington, VA

Key Features

Urban Heritage Project | PennPraxis
Department of Historic Preservation
Weitzman School of Design
www.cultural-landscapes.org

In cooperation with:
National Capital Region, National Park Service

Sources
1. Ortho Imagery, 2024
2. Original data: GWMP CR GIS, NPS
3. Data field-checked and collected in June, July, August 2023

Drawn By
Meg Frisbie, ArcGIS Pro 3.2.2, 2024

Legend
- Arlington House CLR Boundary
- 1. Front Plaza
- 2. Arlington House
- 3. Rear Work Yard
- 4. North Enslaved Quarters
- 5. South Enslaved Quarters
- 6. Flower Garden
- 7. Kitchen Garden
- 8. Museum
- 9. Bookstore/Comfort Station
- 10. Arlington Woods
- 11. Old Administration Building
- 12. Building 314
- 13. Curatorial Facility
- 14. Deodar cedar

Notes
1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N

0 0.01 0.03 0.06 Miles

Drawing 2

Historical Summary, by Character Area

This section summarizes the physical changes of the Arlington House site according to the character areas that define the cultural landscape: the plantation house and approach; the rear work yard and enslaved quarters; the south flower garden; the north kitchen garden; Arlington Woods; and the administrative area.

It is important to note that these summaries do not include any disinterments of the Syphax family descendants that occurred within the study area boundaries. Such changes would have altered the landscape in significant ways, but the original locations of the graves have not been fully documented to date and therefore could not be conclusively addressed in these summaries. Further research is needed to study those impacts on the character of the cultural landscape.

PLANTATION HOUSE AND APPROACH

CUSTIS-LEE ERA

1810s

The carriage drive is built from the Alexandria-Georgetown Turnpike at the southern end of the estate to the front of the house. The drive splits in two directions at the top of the hill:

> In one direction it [takes] a 180-degree turn to the east where it [passes] along the edge of the grove and flower garden. There, it [takes] a 90-degree turn towards the north, [passing] in front of the portico and [terminating] at a rotary in front of the north wing of the house. This [is] the route of the Custis and Lee families and their guests. The second split at the top of the hill [leads] to the stable across the ravine directly to the west of the house; from there it [turns] 180 degrees and [continues] in a loop around the yard on the east side of the house. This part of the drive [is] used to gain access to the slave quarters, storage and domestic work areas.[73]

1830

The house's Doric front pillars are scored to resemble marble.[74]

1853

Harper's New Monthly Magazine describes the "park" in front of Arlington House: "sloping toward the Potomac is a fine Park of 200 acres, dotted with groves of oak and chestnut and clumps of evergreens and behind it the dark forest."[75]

1860s

The "Park" landscape in front of the house is described in contemporary publications as a highly cultivated meadow.[76]

There are "Few plantings and "much grass."[77]

CIVIL WAR PERIOD

1861-1864

As the US Army occupies the former plantation site, roads are cut and trees felled through the woods in order to allow troop passage and communication.[78]

1861

The American flag flies from the pediment of Arlington House.[79]

1864

The carriage drive in front of the house loses its borders and erodes.[80]

POST-CIVIL WAR

1867

The slopes east and south of the house are regraded; weeds grow, and other landscape conditions worsen.[81]

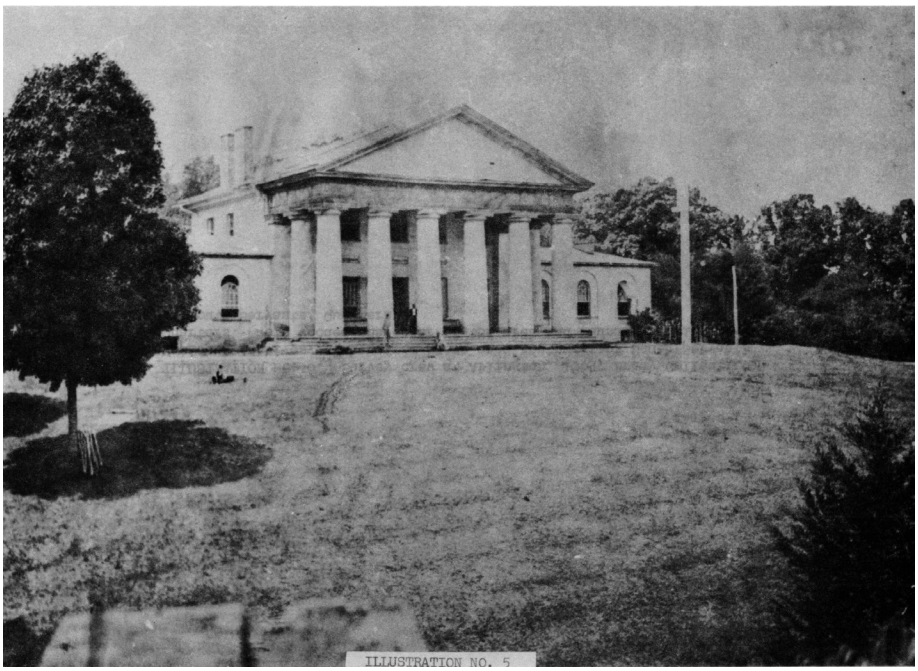


Figure 36. Arlington House plantation home, 1864 (Source: McCormick 1968, Illustration No. 5).

1869

The American flag is moved to a pole directly in front of the portico stairs. One hundred cedar trees are planted "around the officer's graves and the main drives."[82]

1878

David H. Rhodes plants magnolia trees in front of each wing of the main house and evergreens like boxwoods, yews, and arbor vitae along the foundation. Annuals are planted in the beds next to the flagpole along the east front drive.[83]

1890s

US Army Generals Sheridan, Dixon Porter, and Horatio Wright are buried on the eastern slope in front of Arlington House.[84]

1893

Land around the plantation house is paved. White iron urns are set into planting beds. Iron urns are set along the front drive east of the house and planted with annuals, ornamentals, and grasses. The American flag in front of the house is on a small berm with a planting bed of evergreen shrubs at the base of the pole.[85]

1911

Pierre Charles L'Enfant is reinterred in front of Arlington House.[86]



Figure 37. Arlington House, 1954 (Source: Hanna 2001, 161).

1916

Magnolia trees in front of the house begin to conceal the east façade and sun out the shrubs below. On the crest of the front slope (at the edge of the berm), 5 circular beds of ornamental grasses and a row of annuals are planted. There are evergreens around the flags, and a new path to Sheridan's grave is established in front of the house.[87]

1967

The grounds east of the study area are regraded for John F. Kennedy's grave.[88]

REAR WORK YARD AND ENSLAVED QUARTERS

CUSTIS-LEE ERA

1803-1818

Enslaved laborers construct the enslaved quarters around the plantation house.[89]

1820s-1860

"During the first half of the nineteenth century, the ground to the north and east of the northern slave quarters most likely sloped down from the main house towards the kitchen, allowing for ground-level access from the northern side to the ground-level, banked summer kitchen."[90]

The rear work yard is the center of labor for Arlington House during the antebellum period, as enslaved laborers live and work in the open area behind the plantation house. "It [is] the area through which people [move] between the gardens and the house, kitchen, storeroom, well, privy, stable, ice house and other outbuildings. It [is] the front yard for the servants living in the quarters along its sides…In summary, the courtyard [is] essentially an outdoor domestic living area rather than a formal, decorative, or stately mansion lawn."[91]

1850s

The well in the rear work yard is recorded for the first time in a sketch. According to the drawing the well appears to have a simple wood post with a weighted lever.[92]

Figure 38. An 1854 sketch of the rear work yard (Source: McCormick 1968, Illustration No. 11).



Based on contemporary sketches, the yard is thought to be open with high-limbed trees (e.g. locusts), with rougher grasses allowed to grow in the center of the open space. It is not intended to be seen or used by houseguests; rather, it is a service space for the plantation house, as enslaved laborers conduct domestic chores around the house.[93]

CIVIL WAR PERIOD

1861

Mary Lee lists the enslaved laborers forced to work in the rear yard as of 1861: Selina Gray, George Clarke, Eleanor Harris, Perry Parks, Daniel [no surname listed], and Ephriam [no surname listed]. Although the Lees fled the plantation when war broke out, these enslaved laborers remained on site in Arlington House.[94]

1864

After four years of war and occupation by the US Army, the rear work yard area is cleared of most shrubs and undergrowth. The ground had become so trampled that little vegetation grew. Most of the trees remain, however.[95]

By this time, the area west of the house included a driveway (approximately 10' wide) that looped around the rear yard, passing close to the front elevations of

Figure 39. Military tents at Arlington House and surroundings, 1861 (Source: Hanna 2001, 72).



both enslaved quarters. The road may have featured gravel at some point earlier in the war, but there was none by 1864. A post-and-single-rail fence was in place in the rear yard; a portion of the fence was gone by 1864.[96]

A visitor to the grounds described the plantings in this driveway of sorts: there was a lawn with two or three trees, one of which may have been a Pope's Willow. The Pope's Willow was a favorite of George Washington Parke Custis.[97]

POST-CIVIL WAR

1873

A "neat house" is established over the well to keep debris out. Pumps replace the bucket.[98]

1874

Two deodar cedars are planted in circular beds in the center of the rear yard. One of the trees died within a few years of planting.[99]

1880

By 1880, a force pump with wooden encasement is installed at the well to provide drinking water. A more ornate "neat house" is installed.[100]

Figure 40. Photo of the rear work yard and driveway, 1864 (Source: McCormick 1968, Illustration No. 9)



1881

The War Department constructs a brick water tower in the work yard to provide water throughout the cemetery, distributed through buried water lines using steam power.[101]

Public lavatories are constructed directly north of the north enslaved quarters.[102]

1896

The deodar cedar is damaged by a hurricane (the top of the tree splits off), but tree is preserved. Three hundred additional trees toppled on the Arlington grounds during the hurricane.[103]

1916

The War Department removes the water tower.[104]

Figure 41. Work yard with north enslaved quarters and well visible, 1904 (Source: Hanna 2001, 119).



EARLY RESTORATION

1921

The granolithic pavement between the plantation house and the enslaved quarters is used for parking.[105]

1929

The concrete around the site is scored to resemble granite pavers. The rear work yard features the largest opening in the paving, as the enormous deodar cedar remains in place. A cast-iron vase is in place next to the cedar (where the 1881 brick water tower had stood), and four large boxwoods are planted at equal intervals around the circular island bed.[106]

1930

The old drinking fountain is removed from the well, and a new field stone well head is built over the well. Brick walks are inserted at this time to connect the kitchen garden to the main house, enslaved quarters, and comfort station. This was in line with the Colonial Revival style that was popular in this period.[107]

[1930 – 1991]

No information found during the research for this report; further research is needed.



Figure 42. View of the new stone well head, 1933 (Source: Hanna 2001, 151).

NPS MANAGEMENT

1991

Archeological investigations reveal that the original yard between the two enslaved quarters existed 2 feet lower during the historic period than its current grade as of the 1990s. An underground fuel tank near the north enslaved quarters is removed. In a resultant monitoring project, NPS archeologist Matt Virta determines that there is no evidence of an outside entrance to what is known as the "coachman's room," a space on the lower level of the north enslaved quarters. In addition, a dry-laid brick pavement—found approximately 3' below grade—suggests that considerable grade change has occurred in this location.[108]

SOUTH FLOWER GARDEN

CUSTIS-LEE ERA

1804-1861

"The flower garden to the south of the house is bounded on its southern and western borders by the carriage drive. A white picket fence with wide palings [runs] along the south, north and east sides. The west side, known as "The Grove," [is] more naturalistic than the rest of the garden and [is] without a fence so it [will] appear to blend into the surroundings. The principal walk [is] probably composed of gravel and [is] approximately 6 feet wide. At the center of the garden, the path [narrows] to about 4 feet and [passes] through a hexagonal-shaped wooden arbor. Inside the arbor [are] wooden benches that [curve] along the arbor's sides. Yellow flowering jasmine and red and pink honeysuckle vines [grow] up the lattice that [extends] from the roof to the ground on all sides of the arbor."[109]

"The garden [consists] of two distinct spaces: a formal landscaped area of approximately one acre and a larger, wilder section known as the grove. The entire area [is] enclosed by a white picket fence, with a single gate located at the north end."[110]

1800-1810

Mrs. Custis' favorite flowers are heartsease [*sic*] and lilies of the valley, planted in borders of the flower beds.[111]

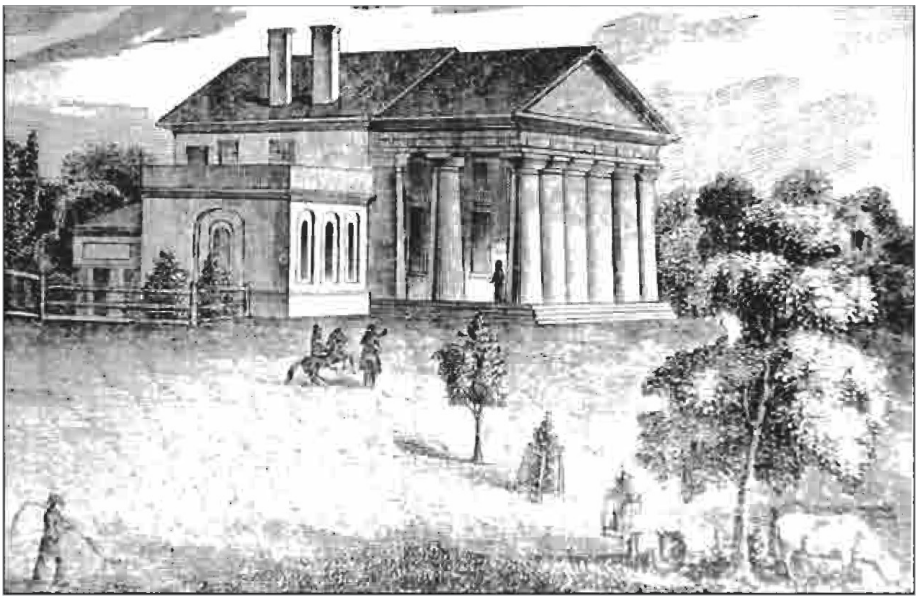


Figure 43. Sketch of Arlington House depicting enslaved laborers in foreground, and enslaver as depicted by a man, woman, and child in the mid-ground, c. 1853 (Source: National Park Service, Historic Grounds Report, 1964, 53).

1830s

The Custis and Lee women and the people they enslave gather flowers such as roses (*Rosa* sp.), lily-of-the-valley (*Convallaria majalis*), jasmine (*Jasminum officinale*), and chrysanthemums (*Chrysanthemum* sp.) from the flower garden in the summers. The Custises and Lees sell the flowers in Washington, DC to raise money for the American Colonization Society, an organization that sough to cover the costs of sending enslaved African Americans to colonize Liberia.[112]

Monographs refer to the roses and dahlias (*Dahlia* sp.) at Arlington House.[113]

1836

A publication mentions "oval, circular, and square shapes of flower beds and winding gravel walks of the formal flower garden at Arlington." The same publication makes mention of an elegant mixed perennial border.[114]

1840s

The general arrangement of the landscape is in place.[115]

1850s

Robert E. Lee writes of honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*) and yellow jasmine growing in the flower garden in May.[116]

According to *Growing up in the 1850s: The Journal of Agnes Lee*, the flower garden was originally designed by GWP Custis. It is maintained by the enslaved laborers and the women of the Custis and Lee families. Each woman and girl has her "space" in the flower garden or grove to grow her own plants.[117]

Documentary descriptions of the arbor indicate that the original paths were made of gravel.[118]

1853

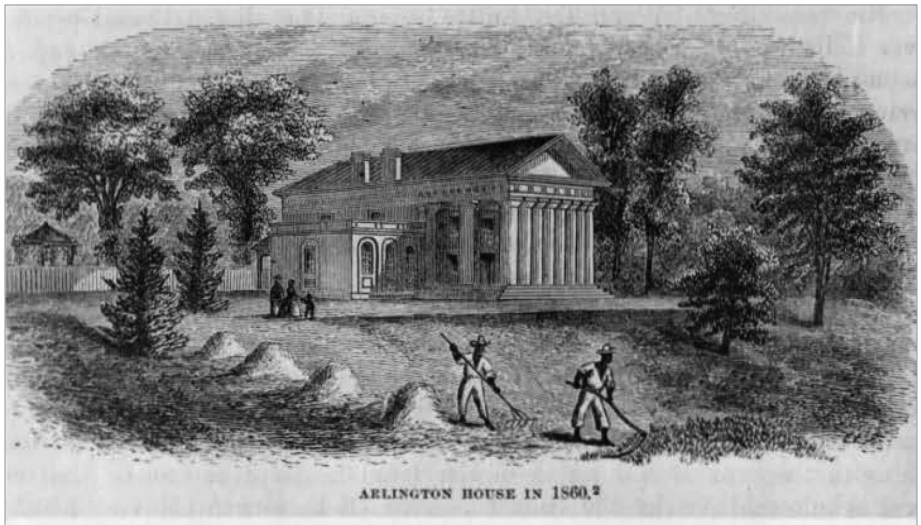
These 1853 sketches represent the earliest known documentation of the arbor.[119]

1858

A letter about the garden refers to geraniums, parmese violets, heliotropes, and callas.[120]

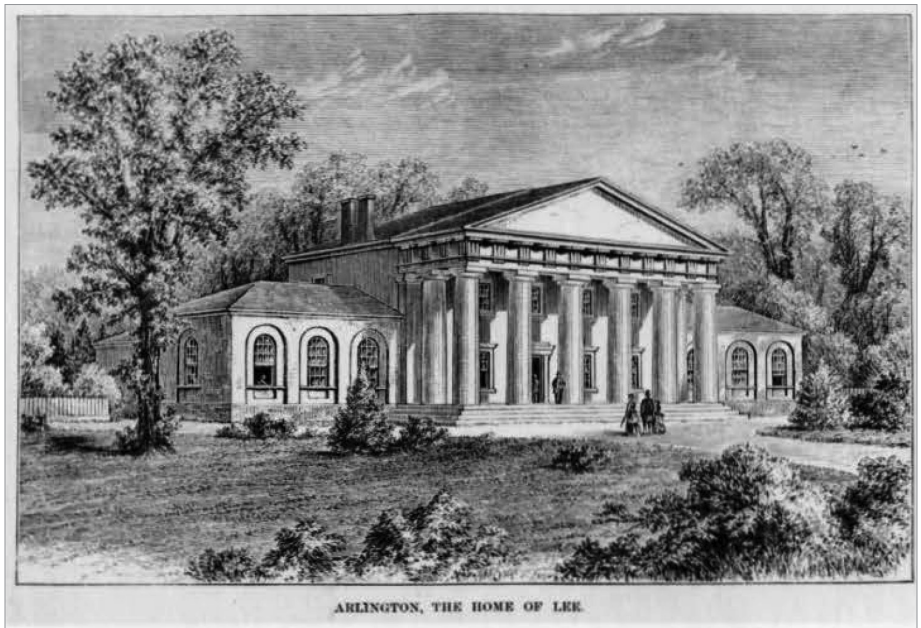


Figure 44. Sketch of Arlington House including a depiction of enslaved labor and possible characterization of GWP Custis with top hat and cane, c. 1853 (Source: National Park Service, Historic Grounds Report, 1964, 52).



Sketch of "Arlington House" c. 1853 published in Civil War in America by Benson J. Lossing. Arlington House had the parapits on the wings removed between 1857 and 1859. Mr. Lossing visited Arlington in 1853 and most of his sketches show the house as he remembered it from that visit.

Figure 45. Sketch of Arlington House depicting enslaved laborers in foreground, and enslaver as depicted by a man, woman, and child in the mid-ground, c. 1853 (Source: National Park Service, Historic Grounds Report, 1964, 53).



Sketch of "Arlington House" c. 1860, published in Reminiscences of R. E. Lee by J. William Jones.

Figure 46. Sketch of Arlington House, c. 1860 (Source: National Park Service, Historic Grounds Report, 1964, 54).

1850-61

The garden is planted according to what was contemporarily known as a general or mingled flower garden (that is, a mix of flowers with or without flowering shrubs). The goal is to mix colors and varieties of flowers so that the whole garden remains bright and full of color from February through October.[121]

1861

The garden contains flowers, shrubs, and trees; no two beds are identical.[122]

The grove also exists at this point and has an arbor, a moss-covered rock, grapevines, and alleys of trees carpeted with ferns and wild flowers. The grove and the flower garden are fenced together, with the only entrance to both at the gate east of the historic elm tree. The distinction between the grove and the garden is noted on two topographical surveys from 1861 and 1864, which demarcate the southern section.[123]

[No Known Date]

Two women formerly enslaved at the Arlington House plantation spoke of "two large magnolia trees, white and pink, were growing near to the center and a good deal of box and shrubbery was located at the back of the garden as well."[124]



Figure 47. Sketch of Arlington House depicting enslaved laborers in the foreground managing the landscape on the slope in front of the plantation house, c. 1860 (Source: National Park Service, Historic Grounds Report, 1964, 55).

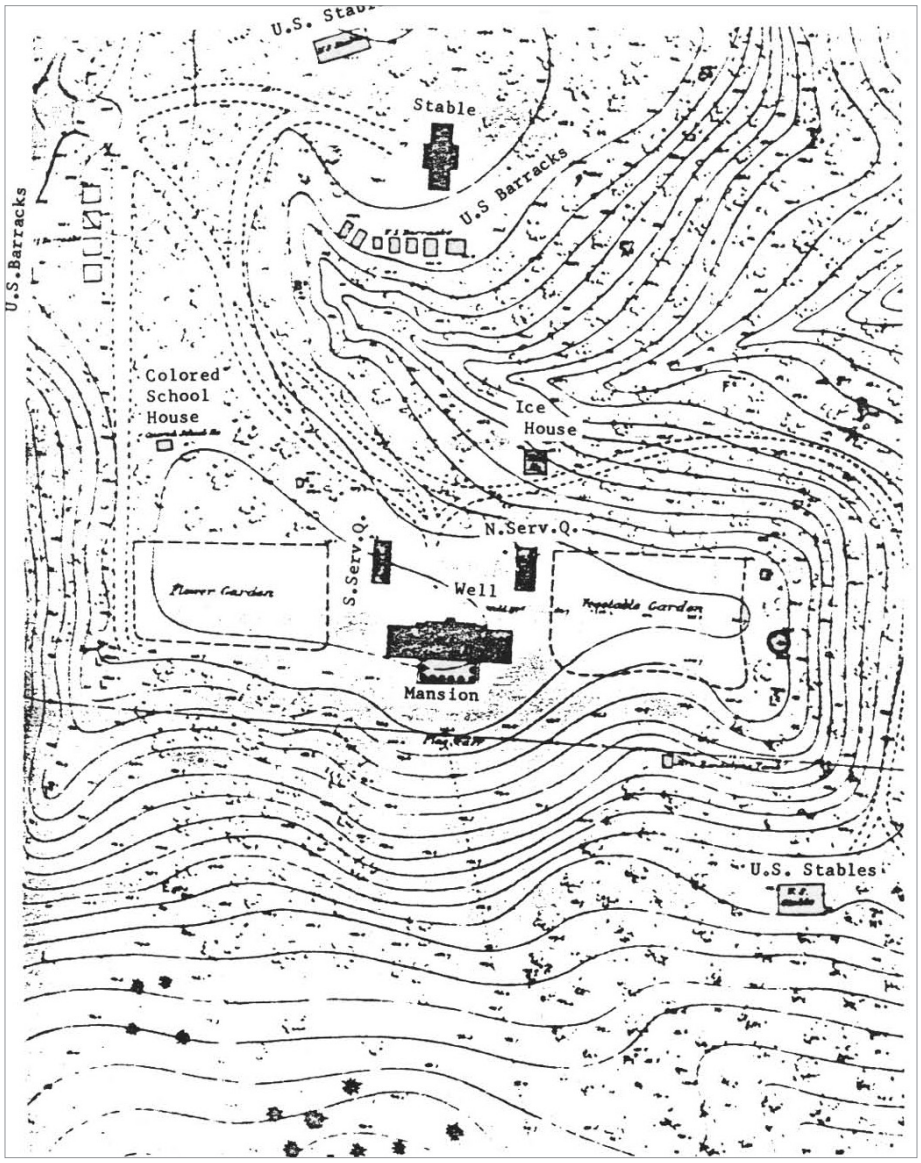


Figure 48. Topographical Survey Environs of Washington, 1864 (Source: Sheet No. 5, Record Group 77, Office of Chief Engineers, Cartographic Section, National Archives, 1864.)

CIVIL WAR PERIOD

1861-1865

The flower garden and large trees near the plantation house survive the occupancy of the US Army. Three tents are erected between the flower garden and the house.[125]

1862

Martha "Markie" Custis Williams, a cousin of Mary Custis Lee, who lived at Arlington House throughout the 1850s, describes the flower garden in a letter to Mrs. Lee: "The garden is enclosed by a white washed fence and the roses white jasmine were blooming as… used to do in the happy days gone bye.... I walked in & with tearful eyes, gathered a bouquet. All the small flowers in the garden are of course overgrown with weeds, but the larger ones look pretty much the same & considering the immense number of troops that have been here and that it is still a military Depot, The preservation is wonderful."[126]

1864

The Army erects a fence around the flower garden to preserve it. It stations camps and tents in the adjacent grove.[127]

Figure 49. Arlington House and surroundings, 1861 (Source: Hanna 2001, 72).





View of the Civil War Tomb of the Unknown Dead showing a portion of the roof of the Arlington garden arbor, United States Army photograph (1867-1883).

Figure 50. View of the Civil War Tomb of the Unknown Dead, c. 1867-1883 (Source: National Park Service, Historic Grounds Report, 1964, 60).

A short east-west road is constructed during the Civil War era between the flower garden and the work yard, connecting the Custis/Lee-era carriage road (now Custis Walk) and the road leading to the work yard (now Sheridan Drive).[128]

1865

The white paling fence around the flower garden and the other post-and-rail board fences are removed for lumber.[129]

US Army officers are buried in a row along the eastern edge of the flower garden.[130] A total of 45 officers are interred in this area south of the plantation house; Quartermaster Meigs likely determined the location.[131]

The carriage drive, which by this time wrapped around the southern edge of the flower garden and passes in front of the plantation house to a turnaround northeast of the house, continues to erode; it has lost its strict borders.[132]

POST-CIVIL WAR

1866

The Tomb of the Unknown Civil War Soldier is placed in what had been known as the grove, about 45' west of the flower garden. The eastern fence of the garden remains intact.[133]

1867

"Weeds [overrun] the perennials and roses in the flower garden. Yet the wooden arbor [remains] in its center. The broken wooden lattice walls and roof [are] still draped with red and pink honeysuckle. White-painted headboards, dwarfed by towering weeds, [run] parallel to the outside of the newly erected, white-washed, paling fence on the eastern and southern sides of the garden. The kitchen garden, which [is] located to the north of the mansion and [remains] enclosed by a wooden fence, may [fare] better than the flower garden."[134]

1870s

"The design style of the cemetery landscape near Arlington House [reflects] the design begun in the 1870s. Ornate iron urns sometimes [fill] with flowers and grasses, cast iron benches, thick foundation plantings, and the ever increasing use of annuals in the flower garden all [reflect] the aesthetic movements occurring elsewhere around the country in the latter half of the nineteenth century."[135]

Figure 51. Arbor within the flower garden, c. 1870 (Source: Virginia Museum of History and Culture, Item number: 1999.160.347).





Figure 52. Photographs of the flower garden. Image on the left form c. 1870-1888 and image on the right from c. 1862-1888 (Source: National Park Service, Historic Grounds Report, 1964, 62-63).

1870

The Army constructs a greenhouse on brick foundations in the northeast corner of the flower garden, along the north fence line. The greenhouse is used to grow flowers for use in the cemetery.[136]

1870-1871

"A paling fence [is] rebuilt around the flower garden and newly whitewashed, and the flower garden is repaired. Gravel walks in the garden are repaired and beds are prepared for planting of annuals."[137]

1872

"Roses are added and an arborvitae hedge is planted in the open border between the garden beds and fence to act as a screen."[138]

1873

According to accounts from landscape gardener D.H. Rhodes, the path around the edge of the garden is located 4' from the picket fence. A central walkway passes through the arbor, and curved oblong walkways encircle the garden and overlap the central north-south axis. The entire garden is composed of flower beds and walkways; no two planting beds are identical in shape or size. This

design represents a significant shift from the flower garden during the Custis-Lee era.[139]

1880

The greenhouse in the northeast corner of the flower garden is removed.[140]

1884-1886

"In the mid-1880s, numerous flower beds are cut out of turf in the garden. During the warm months, showy annuals and exotic foliage [are] planted. During some years, plants [are] arranged to form words and numbers. A border of hardy roses is planted on the east and south sides of the garden in the mid-1880s. In the mid-1880s, new gravel walks are built that cross the garden from east to west and connect to existing walks around the Tomb of the Unknown Civil War Soldier."[141]

1884

A new Temple of Fame replaces the Custis-era arbor (considered "rotted and disreputable-looking" by this point) at the intersection of the paths in the center of the flower garden. According to landscape gardener Rhodes, the new structure was originally intended to serve solely as an arbor. However, officers of the Quartermaster's Corps decided to "convert it to a memorial or Temple of Fame by having the names of distinguished men inscribed thereon." All but one of the "distinguished men" were the leading Union generals of the Civil War."[142]

The temple is created out of salvaged stone columns, entablature, and frieze discarded after a fire destroyed parts of the US Patent Office.[143]

1885

The flower garden is plowed, regraded, and redesigned under a plan designed by Rhodes. The white picket fence surrounding the garden is removed. Boxwood hedges are also removed, along with several trees, including the magnolia and northern pine. New path connections are added to connect the garden area with the Tomb of the Unknown Civil War Soldier to the west. New entrances on the east, south, and west sides are built, with short staircases taking the place of the original entry on the north side. Small fluted iron urns are placed on pedestals at the beginning of each stair flight. Iron benches with backs and arms shaped like gnarled twigs are placed under the temple. Cemetery staff plant rosebushes on the east and south sides of the garden, as backdrops for the officers' headstones in those locations.[144]



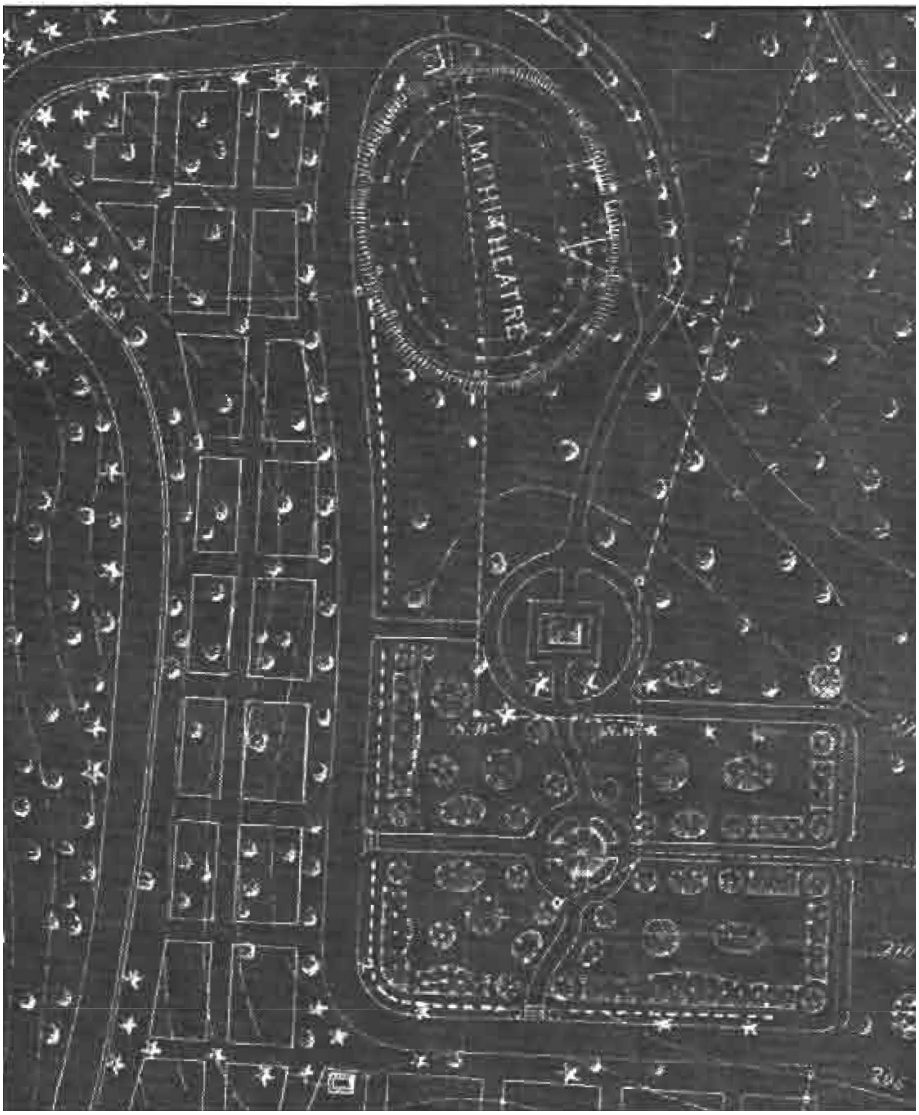


Figure 53. Image and plan of the flower garden from the early 1900s (Source: Hanna 2001, 121).

1890s

Annual beds in the flower garden are filled with cannas, ornamental grasses, and annuals.[145]

1896

A hurricane strikes Arlington House, toppling over 300 trees on the grounds.[146]

1898

The crook walk is dedicated; the path connects the south entrance of the flower garden with the rest of the cemetery on the lower slopes.[147]

1910

Charles Moore, secretary of the Commission of Fine Arts, did not approve of the new urns around Arlington House and the annual flowerbeds. He put plans in motion to remove the flower garden.

EARLY RESTORATION

1928

The chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts describes the restoration of Arlington House as a reflection of the first half-century of the Republic. He sees the restoration as an effort to restore the site to its Colonial state, as it was during the Custis family's tenure.[148]

1929

A plan seeks to restore Arlington House to its Colonial period: "It will stand as a fitting memorial to two of America's most distinguished families, as well as to the memory of the South's great military leader." The redesign of the landscape is a balancing act between the preservation of the cemetery and the grounds at Arlington House.[149]

1930-1933

The paths are redesigned to be straight and linear. They are lined with boxwood hedges in the "Colonial-garden" style, and the slope on the west side of the plantation house is reduced. Annual beds from the 1880s are removed.[150]

1931

The annual flower beds are removed from the flower garden; the Temple of Fame remains in place. The chairman of the CFA advises against any new structural additions to the flower garden that would block the view of the city from the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the Civil War.[151]

Figure 54. Image of the flower garden, c. 1920 (Source: Hanna 2001, 122).



NPS MANAGEMENT

1933

The plantation house and enslaved quarters are transferred to the NPS; the grounds east and west of the house remain under ANC control. This prompts a huge public outcry over the split maintenance of the site.[152]

When the NPS assumes ownership of the property, "plans for the development of this area to look as it had when Robert E. Lee last saw it were in [the] active files at the time of transfer to the Department of Interior in 1933-34."[153]

1945

The National Park Service creates a plan to redesign the grounds east and west of the plantation house, even though the agency does not have control over those grounds yet.[154]

1947

NPS implements the new planting plan for the areas around the house.[155]

1955

The Custis-Lee Mansion becomes a permanent memorial to Robert E. Lee, based on a Congressional order.[156]

1959

The flower garden is transferred from the War Department to the NPS.[157]



Figure 55. Looking north towards Arlington House across the flower garden area after the planting beds were removed, c. 1957-1959 (Source: Moss 2009, 56).

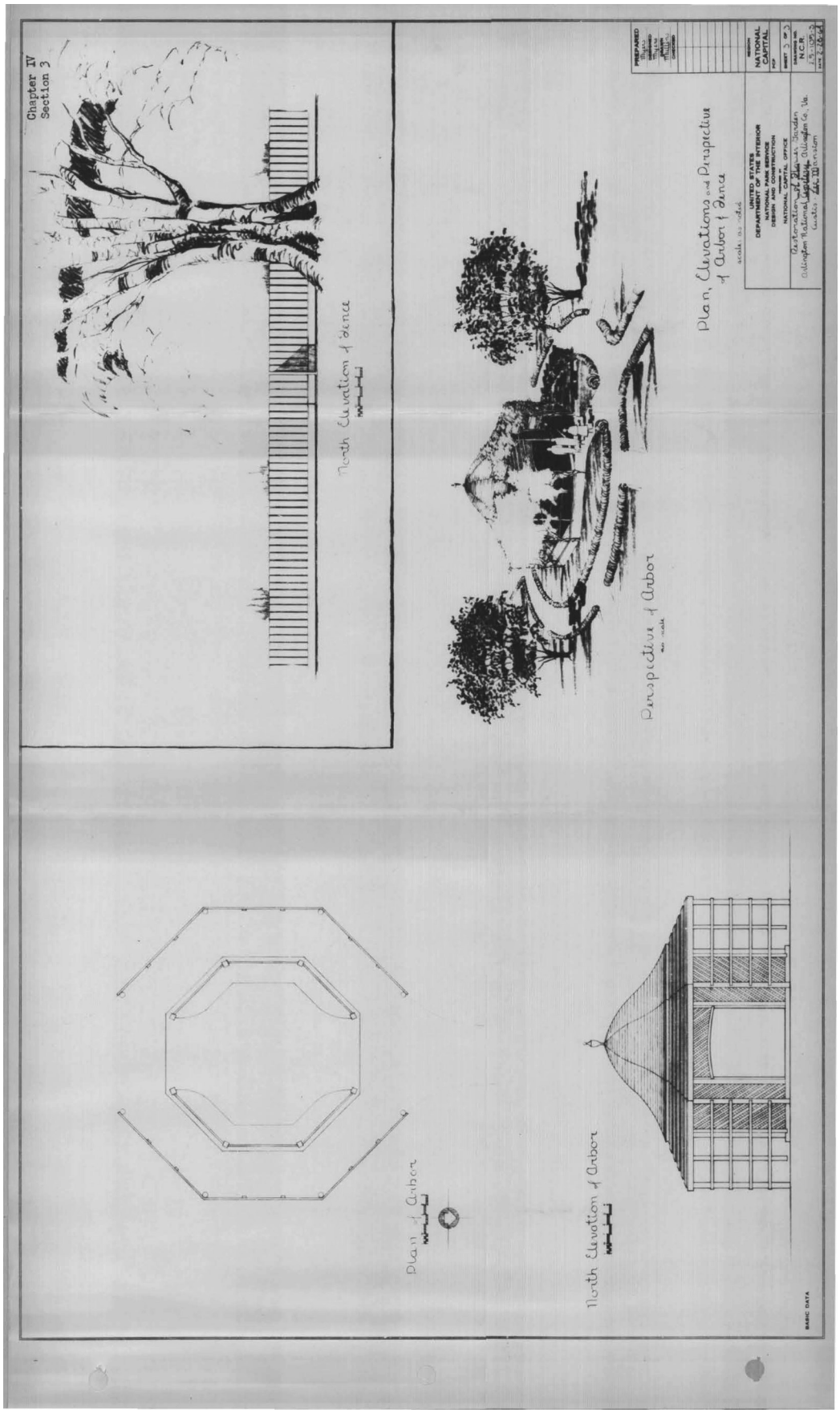


Figure 56. Plans and sketches of the flower garden (Source: National Park Service, Historic Grounds Report, 1964, Chapter IV, Section 1, Section 2, and Section 3).

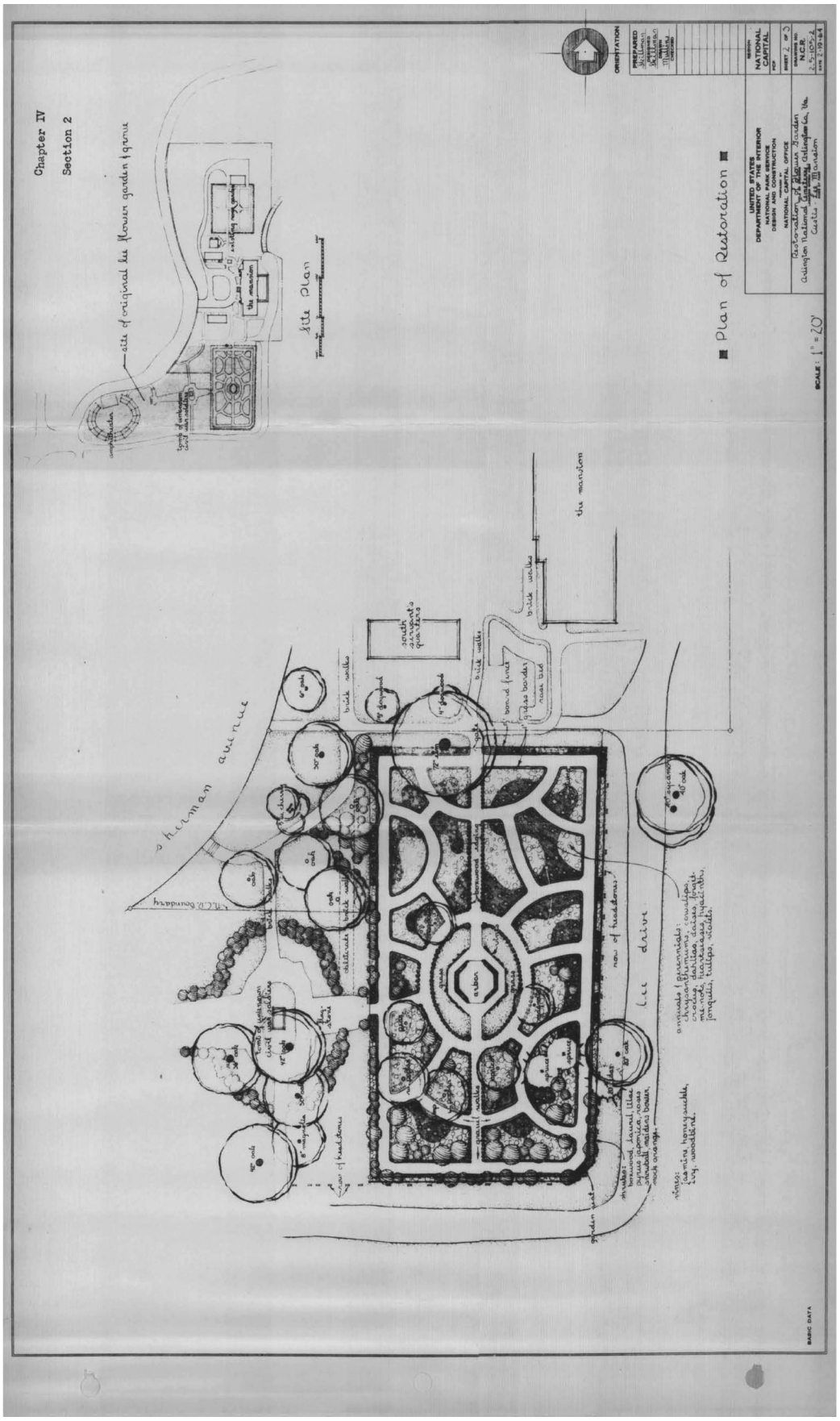


Figure 57. Plans and sketches of the flower garden (Source: National Park Service, Historic Grounds Report, 1964, Chapter IV, Section 1, Section 2, and Section 3).

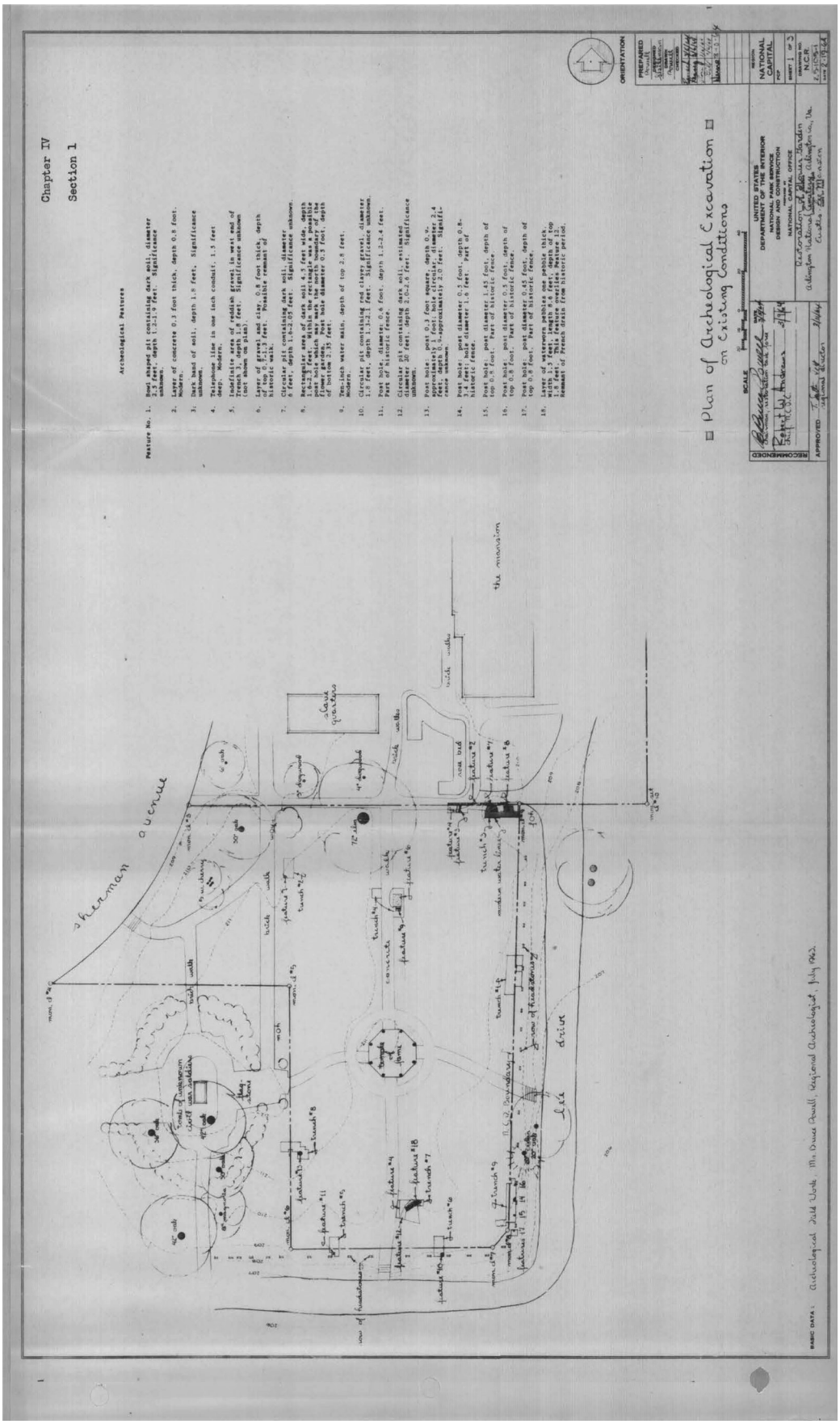


Figure 58. Plans and sketches of the flower garden (Source: National Park Service, Historic Grounds Report, 1964, Chapter IV, Section 1, Section 2, and Section 3).

1960s

The NPS proposes the reconstruction of gravel paths in the flower garden, but the Commission of Fine Arts refuses.[158]

1964

Trees are planted on the southern end of garden, including Norway spruce, magnolia, apricot, and white poplar.[159]

The 1964 Historic Grounds Report describes the condition of the flower garden as follows:

> The area which was once the flower garden now consists of large lawn squares around the "Temple of Fame." The "Temple" itself stands on the spot where the old arbor was located. . . .The old elm tree that stood near the garden gate survives. The walks that Mr. Rhodes laid out have been surfaced with concrete. Today, signs of the layout of the Rhodes flower beds are not discernable. The tomb stones placed one foot from the garden fence in 1864 remain around the east and south sides. There is no evidence of drastic changes in the grove area since the old amphitheater was placed there in 1873 and Mr. Rhodes planted the wisteria that now provides its reason for existence.[160]

The NPS' National Capital Office of Design and Construction develops a master plan to restore the flower garden. A fence is installed around garden, but CFA quickly orders its removal. The large elm tree at the northern entrance of garden dies and is removed.[161]



Figure 59. Planting beds southwest of Arlington House, 1967 (Source: Hanna 2001, 159).

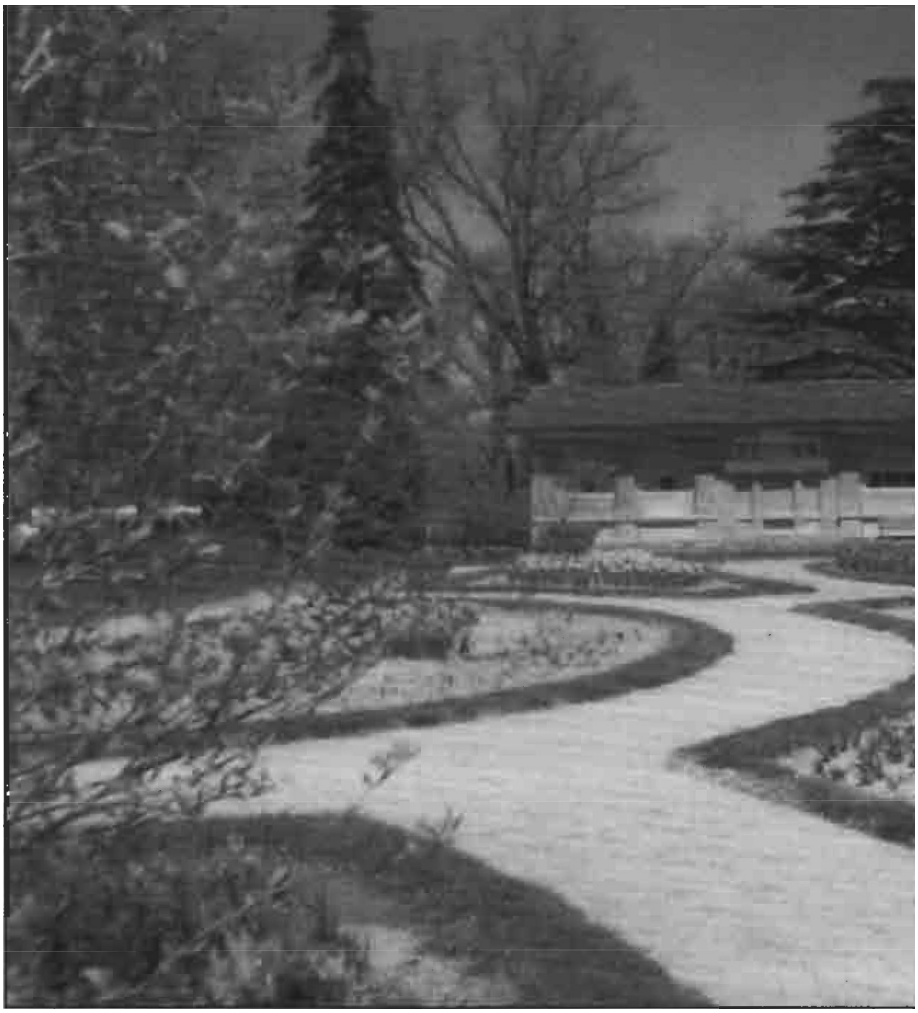


Figure 60. Flower garden after restoration, c. 1971 (Source: Hanna 2001, 166).

1966

The 1966 master plan calls for the restoration of the landscape to 1861, when Robert E. Lee was still associated with the plantation. The 1966 plan's mission statement reads: "The interpretation and restoration programs at Custis-Lee National Memorial will provide the visitor with a moving personal experience leading to a clear understanding of R. E. Lee and his place in American history."[162]

1967

NPS removes the Temple of Fame, in preparation for the restoration of the garden. Peace roses are planted in Flower Garden.[163]

1970

New plantings of flower garden are established.[164]

1980s

A Kentucky Coffee Tree is planted south of the southern wing of the plantation house.[165]



Figure 61. **The south façade of Arlington House and east side of the flower garden, 2001 (Source: Hanna 2001, 167).**

1981

The historic elm tree on the north end of the flower garden is replaced by a Chinese elm tree.[166]

1990s

The flower garden is rehabilitated again. The NPS develops and implements a plan based on research into the conditions of the flower garden during the Custis and Lee eras, as well as flower gardens of the early 19th century. The resulting design uses existing trees and some existing shrubs and perennials, and adds new plant material.[167]

For more recent alterations please see the section titled "Summary of Landscape Alterations since 2009," beginning on page 135.

NORTH KITCHEN GARDEN

CUSTIS-LEE ERA

1810-40s

The kitchen garden is established out of necessity to grow vegetable and fruits for consumption by all in residence on the plantation; it is not intended for public eyes. As the productive garden, the kitchen garden is sited northwest of the plantation house, away from the approach road. (In contrast, the ornamental south garden is visible as visitors approached the house from the southeast.) The kitchen garden is further screened by foliage, the north enslaved quarters, and the north wing of the house.[168]

The initial footprint of the garden is rectangular. The east side of garden slopes downward, following the topography of the site. The elevation drops off 5' on the east, west, and south edges; this grading is important, ensuring that the beds have multiple routes of drainage.[169]

No fence is visible in photographs of the 1860s on the south side of the garden, just thick and tall hedges that act like a screen between the house and the kitchen garden. The hedges at that location could also have been used to prevent access through the north side of the house. "There is no direct evidence, but it seems reasonable to assume that the method of enclosure including the gate on the south side of the garden was duplicated at the north end, and the fence-hedging

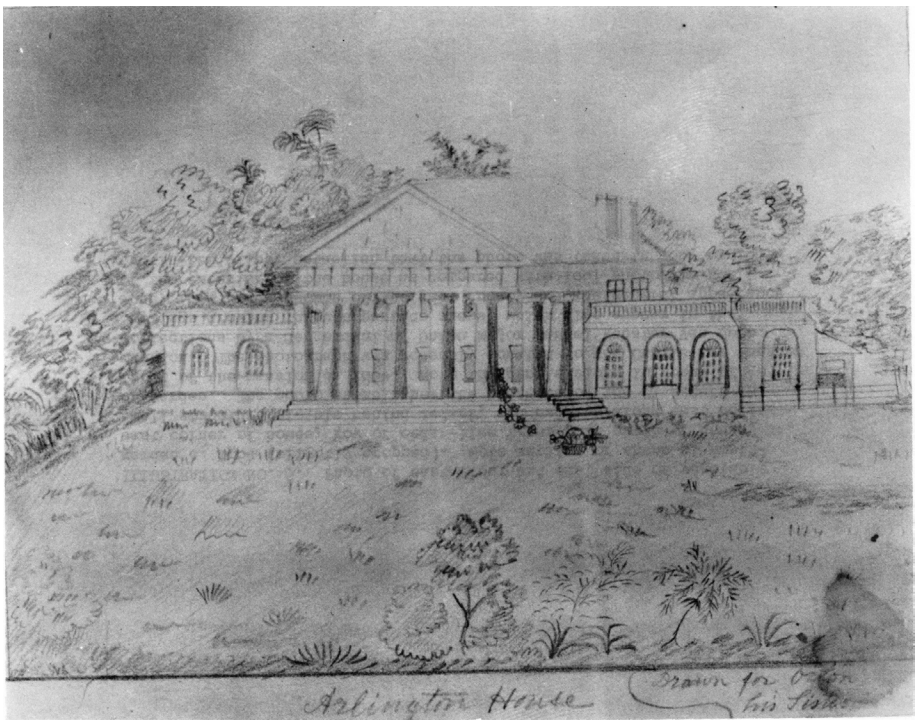


Figure 62. Sketch of Arlington House, 1843 (Source: McCormick 1968, Illustration No. 4).

combination on the east side was duplicated on the west. Fences were probably painted a light color or whitewashed."[170]

The garden is cleared of any taller canopy, although "tall trees and hedging" are planted in the northwest corner of the garden to protect from storms and winds. Southeastern corner, right off the edge of the north wing (there is no path on the north side of the house at this point), is enclosed by a variety of hedges and plantings, including evenly placed cedars.[171]

The principal access route through the garden is along a central north-south path, which is wide enough to fit a manure cart. Two large barberry bushes flank the entrance gate on the south side, and fruit trees are planted along the central path.[172]

There is no evidence of an arbor or fountain in the center of the garden; this confirms that (in contrast with the flower garden) the kitchen garden is for productive—not ornamental—use. The garden borders are planted with seedlings and delicate plants like herbs and strawberries. These border beds (3-12") are likely bordered internally by gravel paths (3-6' wide).[173]

There is no information on the shapes of the beds or their extent or their border paths. "The size of beds or patches for the various vegetables [depend] on the ground space required to meet the requirements of anticipated consumption and

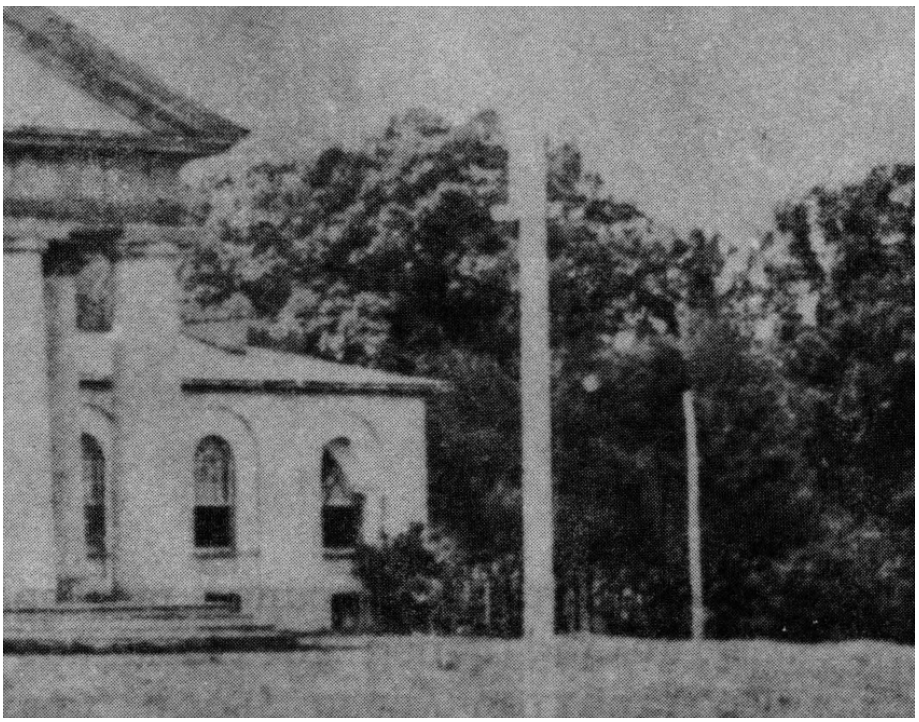


Figure 63. Detail of north wing of Arlington House, c. 1864 (Source: McCormick 1968, Illustration No. 5)

the exigencies of cultivation. Most garden books of the period [assume] that the hoe rather than the plow [will] be the principal implement. Thus, the width of the beds, particularly of close cultivated crops, [should] be sufficiently narrow to permit easy access with hand implements from the sides."[174]

Enslaved laborers cultivate a variety of vegetables in the kitchen garden, including early and late maturing varieties and successive crops of the same variety—all selected to ensure that fresh vegetables are available from early spring through late fall.[175]

The following structures are located in or near the garden:

Southeast corner: a low-slung, 3'x5'x3' sloping structure. This is likely a woodshed or toolshed. It is visible in the photograph below, glimpsed through vegetation.[176]

Northwest corner: a small square building, located just outside the hedge border of the kitchen garden and marked with "p" on maps. This structure could be gardening shed, poultry house, pet house, or other.[177]

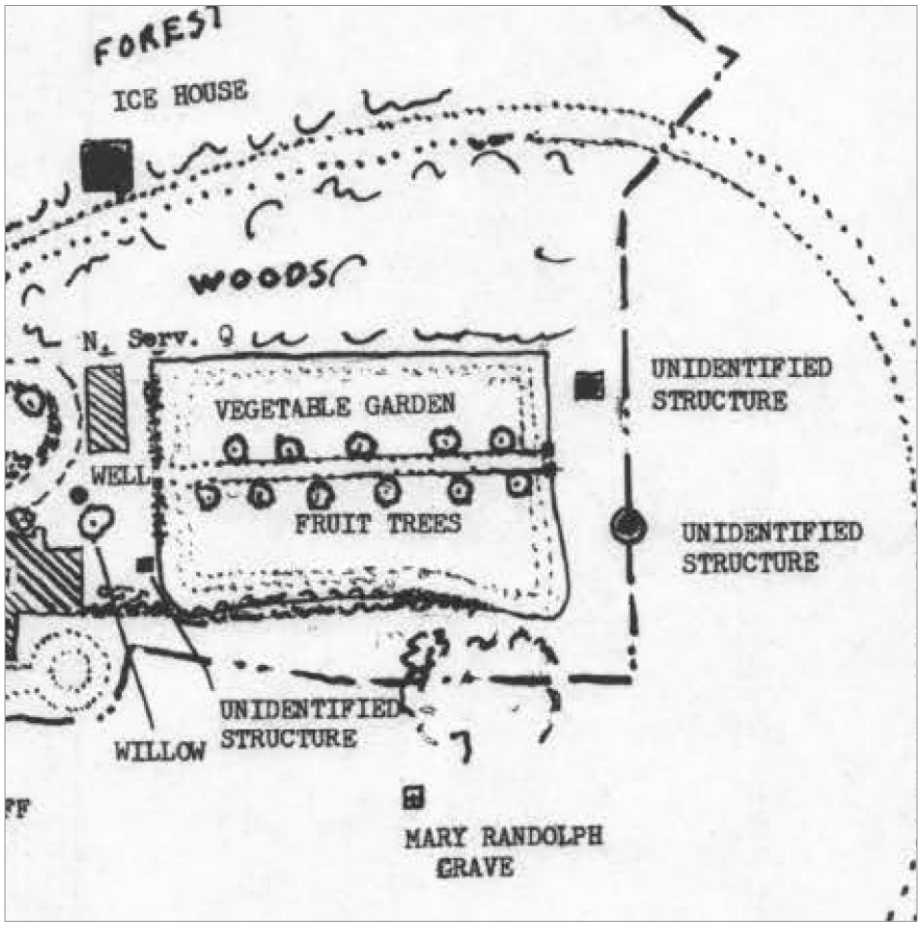


Figure 64. A circular pit, 25' in diameter and located 25' from the north side of garden. This may be an ash pit or trash pit (Source: McCormick 1968, 46).

Although there is no documentation of other structures in this area at this time, several types of features were common in similar landscapes of this period: devices protecting or forcing plants; a glass case; a sunk pit; a sash light; and/or common hotbed frame.[178]

A *hand glass* is portable and used for growing seeds, separable glass top and wood frame bottom. A *glass case* is a stackable version of hand glass.

A *sunk pit* is used to preserve vegetables such as endive, celery, lettuce, cauliflower, and broccoli. The sides of the structure are typically brick or stone, and they feature glass frames/shutters on the sides.

A *walled pit* is a sunk structure with stone or brick walls. Typically 6-7' wide, it can be used successively from the early spring through summer to grow cauliflower, cucumbers, radishes, and fine varieties of grapes.

A *sash light and hot bed frame* is "a bottomless and topless wooden box, subdivided at the top by rafters. It [is] portable and on top of it [is] placed one or more sash lights."[179]

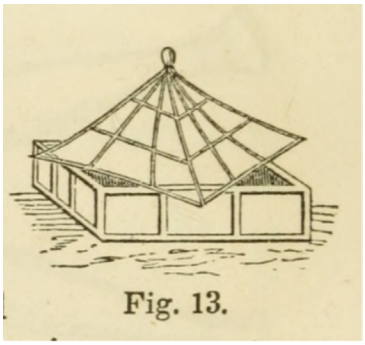


Figure 65. A hand glass (Source: Buist 1847; McCormick 1968, 47).

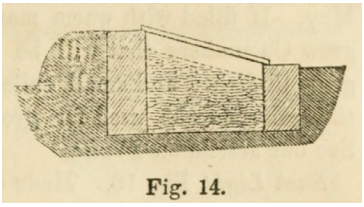


Figure 66. A sunk pit (Source: Buist 1847; McCormick 1968, 47).

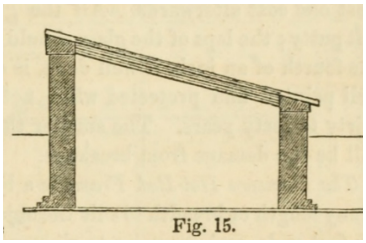


Figure 67. A walled pit (Source: Buist 1847; McCormick 1968, 47).

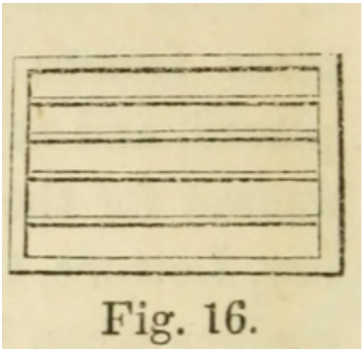


Figure 68. A sash light (Source: Buist 1847; McCormick 1968, 47).

CIVIL WAR PERIOD

1864

The kitchen garden includes two rows of trees along the central path.[180]

POST-CIVIL WAR

1867 (as of)

The kitchen garden likely survives the Civil War in better condition than the ornamental flower garden. It remains enclosed by a wooden fence. The shrubs on the west side of the garden are overgrown, but remain in place. At least some of the fruit trees along the central path remain in place.[181]

1869

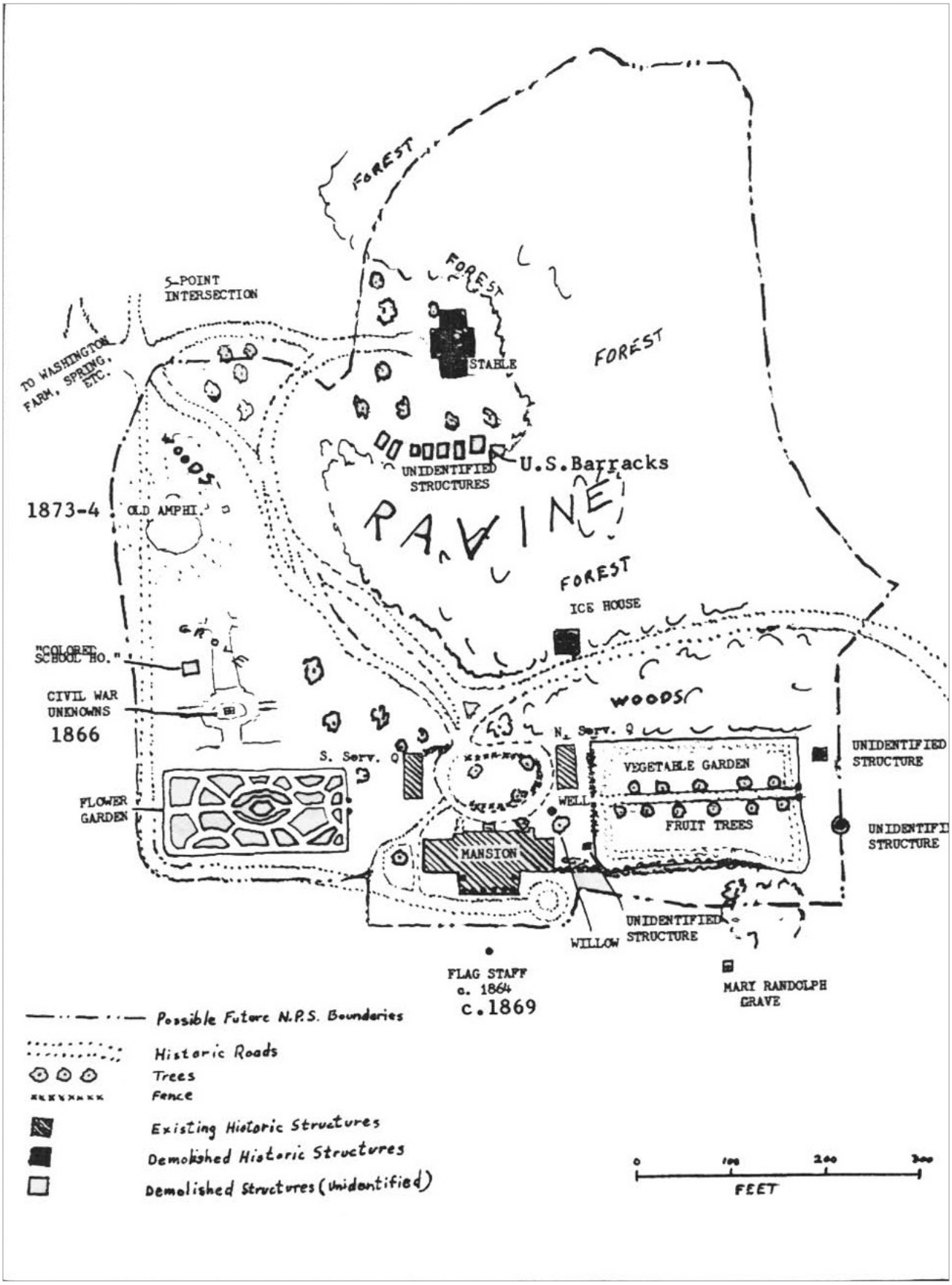
The paling fence around the kitchen garden is rebuilt.[182]

1888

A new greenhouse and potting building are constructed in the kitchen garden. (The greenhouse apparently replaces the c. 1870 greenhouse in the flower garden, which is removed around this time.) The kitchen garden greenhouse is 100'x30', with a brick foundation, iron frame, and glass walls. A new access road is established in 1888 or 1889 between the rear work yard and the potting house, along the western edge of the kitchen garden area.[183]

1915

"A grape arbor is located on the eastern edge of kitchen garden terrace to screen the greenhouse from the Custis walk. The western half of the kitchen garden is lined with rows of seedlings that are being acclimated to the outdoors from the


FOREST
FOREST
FOREST
FOREST
5-POINT INTERSECTION
TO WASHINGTON FARM, SPRING, ETC.
STABLE
U.S. Barracks
UNIDENTIFIED STRUCTURES
RAVINE
WOODS
1873-4
OLD AMPHI.
FOREST
ICE HOUSE
"COLORED SCHOOL HO."
CIVIL WAR UNKNOWNS
1866
WOODS
N. Serv.
S. Serv.
VEGETABLE GARDEN
UNIDENTIFIED STRUCTURE
FLOWER GARDEN
WELL
FRUIT TREES
UNIDENTIFI STRUCTURE
MANSION
UNIDENTIFIED STRUCTURE
WILLOW
FLAG STAFF c. 1864
c. 1869
MARY RANDOLPH GRAVE
Possible Future N.P.S. Boundaries
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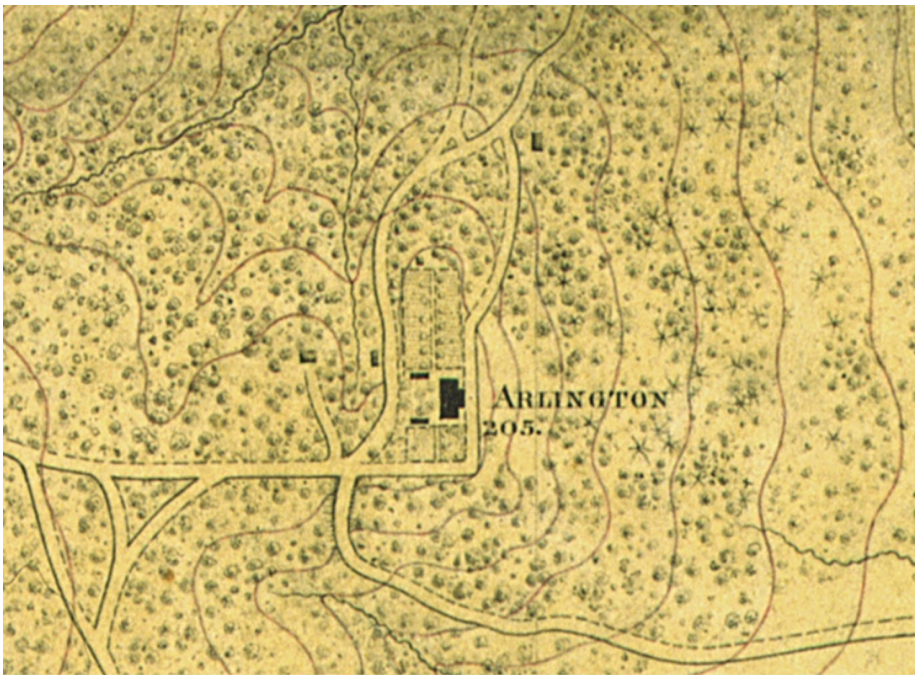


Figure 69. (opposite) Base map for the 1968 Historical Data for Grounds study, depicting the c. 1861 conditions (Source: McCormick 1968, 82).



Figure 70. Detail of: Environs of Washington, Prepared from Original Survey of the Engineer Department, 1864-1866 (Source: National Archives, Sheet 5 and 8, RG 77, F99).

Figure 71. Detail of 1864 photograph of the rear work yard, with the kitchen garden visible in the background (Source: McCormick 1968, Illustration No. 10).

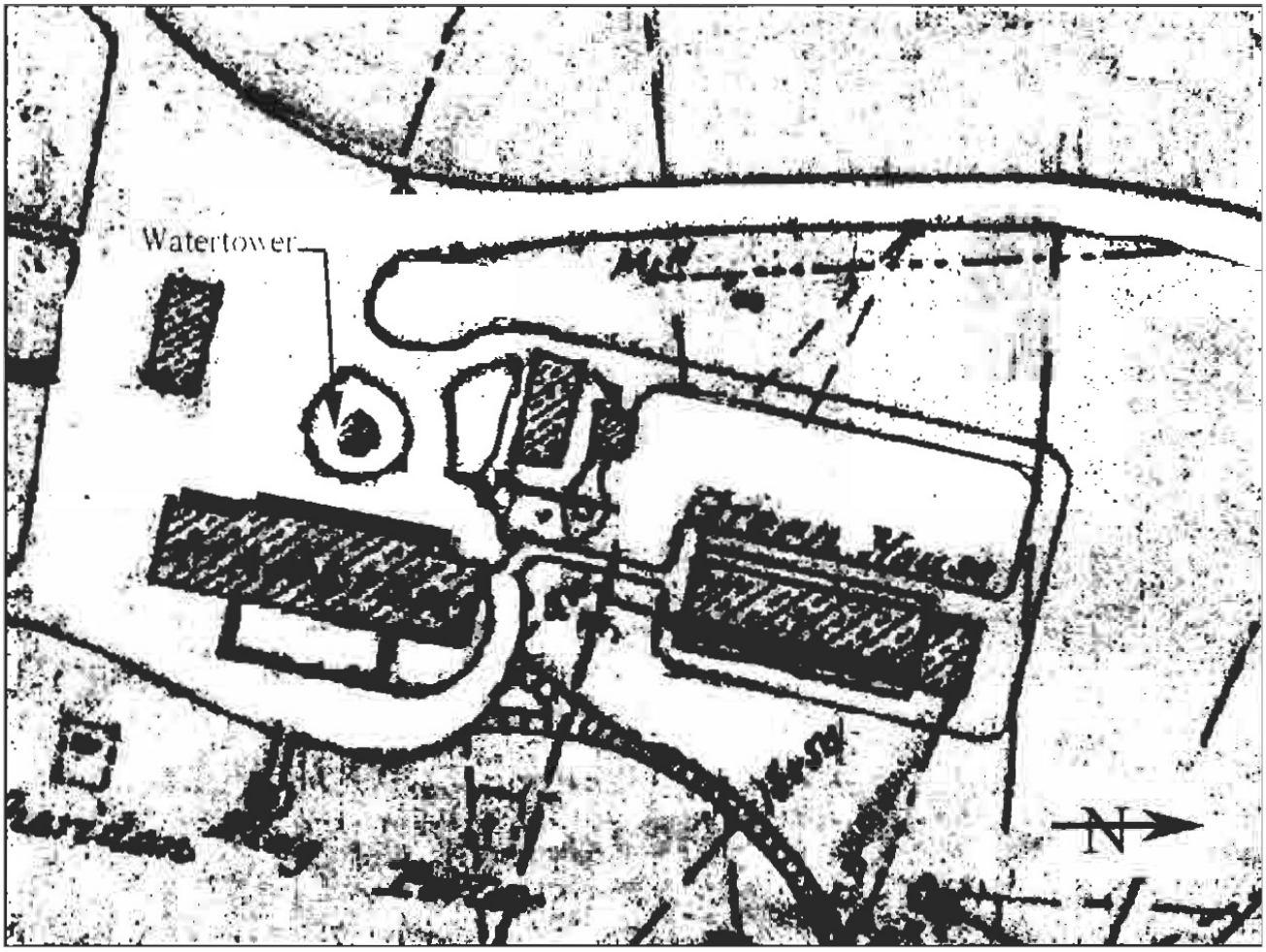


Figure 72. Map including the location of the greenhouse and comfort station location near the north enslaved quarters, 1894 (Source: Hanna 2001, 119).

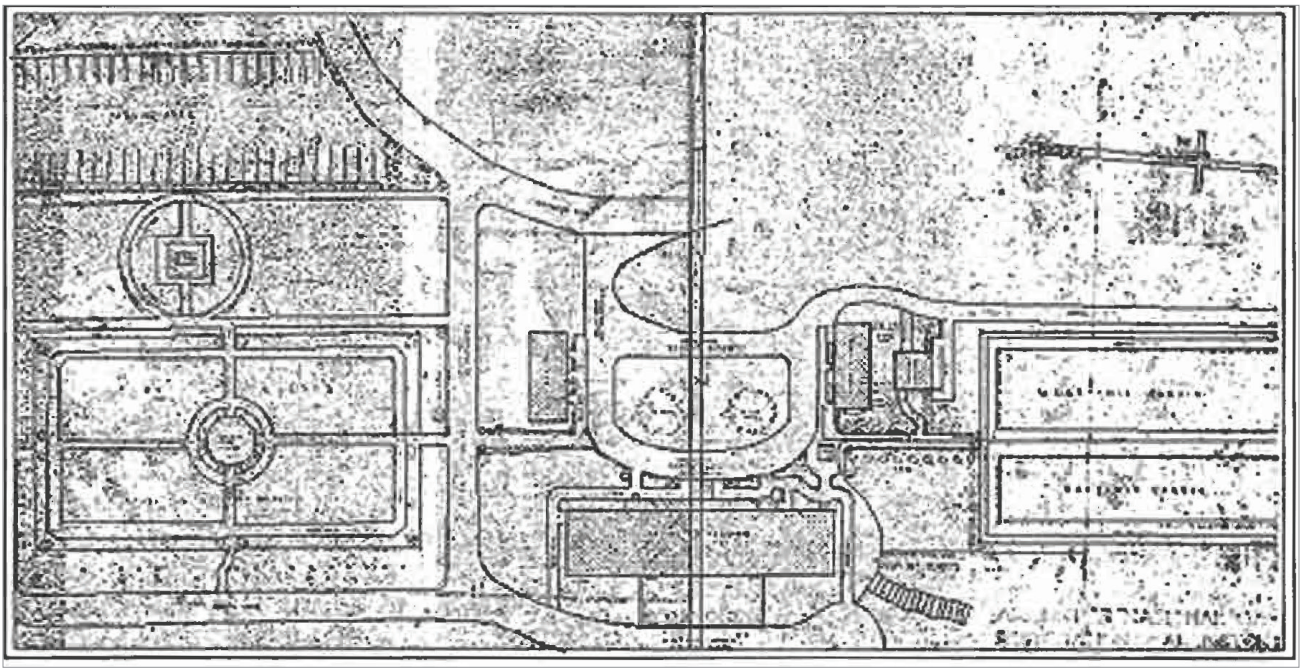


Figure 73. Map created by the Department of the Army, c. 1930 (Source: Hanna 2001, 147).

greenhouse. A boxwood-lined path leads from the yard west of house, past the comfort station and on to the seedling rows."[184]

EARLY RESTORATION

1929

"As part of an official cemetery plant nursery, the western half of the former nineteenth-century kitchen garden [is] lined with neat rows of seedlings acclimating to the natural elements before being planted out in the cemetery. The concrete path that led from the yard area west of the house past the comfort station to this utilitarian area [is] lined with a low hedge of boxwood."[185]

The Commission of Fine Arts prioritizes the restoration of the kitchen garden area instead of the greenhouse.[186]

1930

The Office of the Quartermaster General submits a plan for the restoration and treatment of the grounds for the CFA to review.[187]

NPS MANAGEMENT

1930s

Bricks are introduced as pathway materials between the kitchen garden, the enslaved quarters, and the house.[188]

Lilacs, yews, and boxwoods line the walk to the greenhouse, screening the comfort station.[189]

1930-1950s

Because the flower garden consists mostly of turf by this time, flowers are primarily grown in the kitchen garden.[190]

1932

Boxwood hedges are planted to protect the western bed of the kitchen garden. Shrubs are also planted to screen the comfort station.[191]

1934

The 1880 greenhouse is demolished, but the brick potting house is retained. A hundred cubic yards of topsoil are brought in and resodded over the whole footprint of the kitchen garden. New boxwood hedge is planted on the east side of the garden to match the west side. The brick perimeter walk and the north-south walk are rebuilt. A turf walk is established at the north-south midpoint in the west and east beds. The gravel driveway to the 1880s greenhouse/potting shed remains on the western edge of garden, even after the greenhouse is removed. A new fence is constructed around the brick walk.[192]

1947

The NPS assumes control of the kitchen garden and flower garden. (The agency already manages the plantation house and enslaved quarters by this point.)[193]



Figure 74. The potting shed on the north side of the kitchen garden, 1938 (Source: Hanna 2001, 156).

1948

Irving Payne (Chief Landscape Architect for the Buildings and Grounds Division of National Capital Parks within NPS) redesigns the rear work yard and the kitchen garden. His design includes the installation of American holly hedge on the edges of the garden and fruit for the western bed. He removes boxwoods to screen the Tomb to Unknown Civil War Soldiers and to the area northeast of the Potting House.[194]

1950s

Payne's planting plant is carried out. The potting shed is repurposed as a museum to interpret Robert E. Lee and his family.[195]

1954

A large bed of camellias is planted near the northern wing of the house, based on Mary Lee's oral history that revealed that she liked camellias.[196]

1940-60

Post-and-chain fencing is erected along the sides of every brick walk (with the exception of the flower garden).[197]



Figure 75. Aerial view of Arlington House and surroundings, 1950 (Source: National Park Service, Historic Grounds Report, 1964, 17).

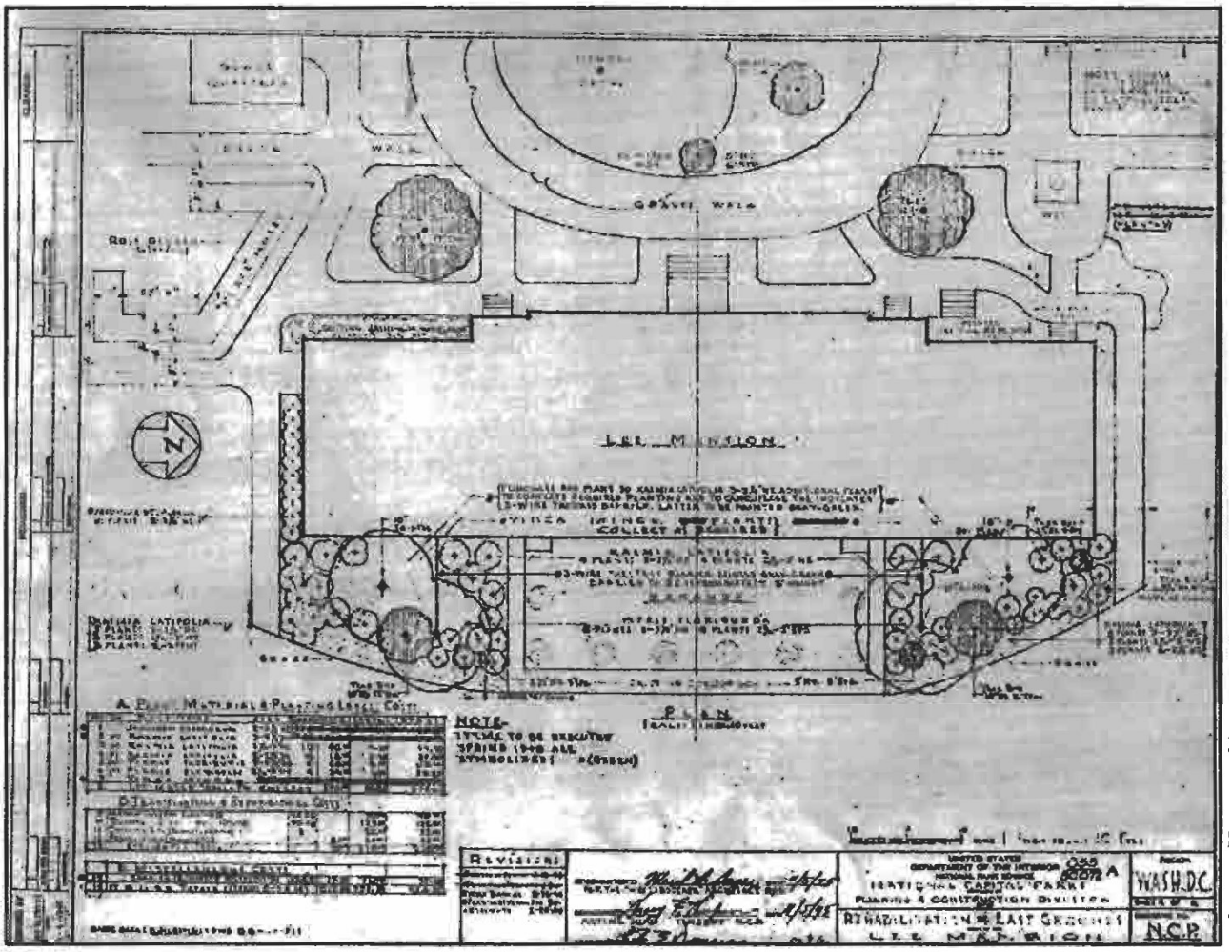


Figure 76. Layout and development plan of the kitchen garden, 1948 (Source: Hanna 2001, 160).



Figure 77. Image of the kitchen garden, c. 1953 (Source: Hanna 2001, 157).

1970s

Since the flower garden had been restored by this time, fruits and vegetables are planted in the kitchen garden (in lieu of flowers). They include fruit trees, shrubs, raspberries, gooseberries, currants, pears, cherries, and plums.[198]

1990s

The brick walkways are removed because of safety concerns.[199]

2009

The kitchen garden is restored to 1861 appearance.[200]

2012

A new HVAC system is installed for the house, resulting in a mechanical bunker to the west of the kitchen garden and a tunnel underneath the kitchen garden. Also at this time, an access road and holly hedge on the west side was removed and the rail fence was installed to the full extent of the kitchen garden.[201]

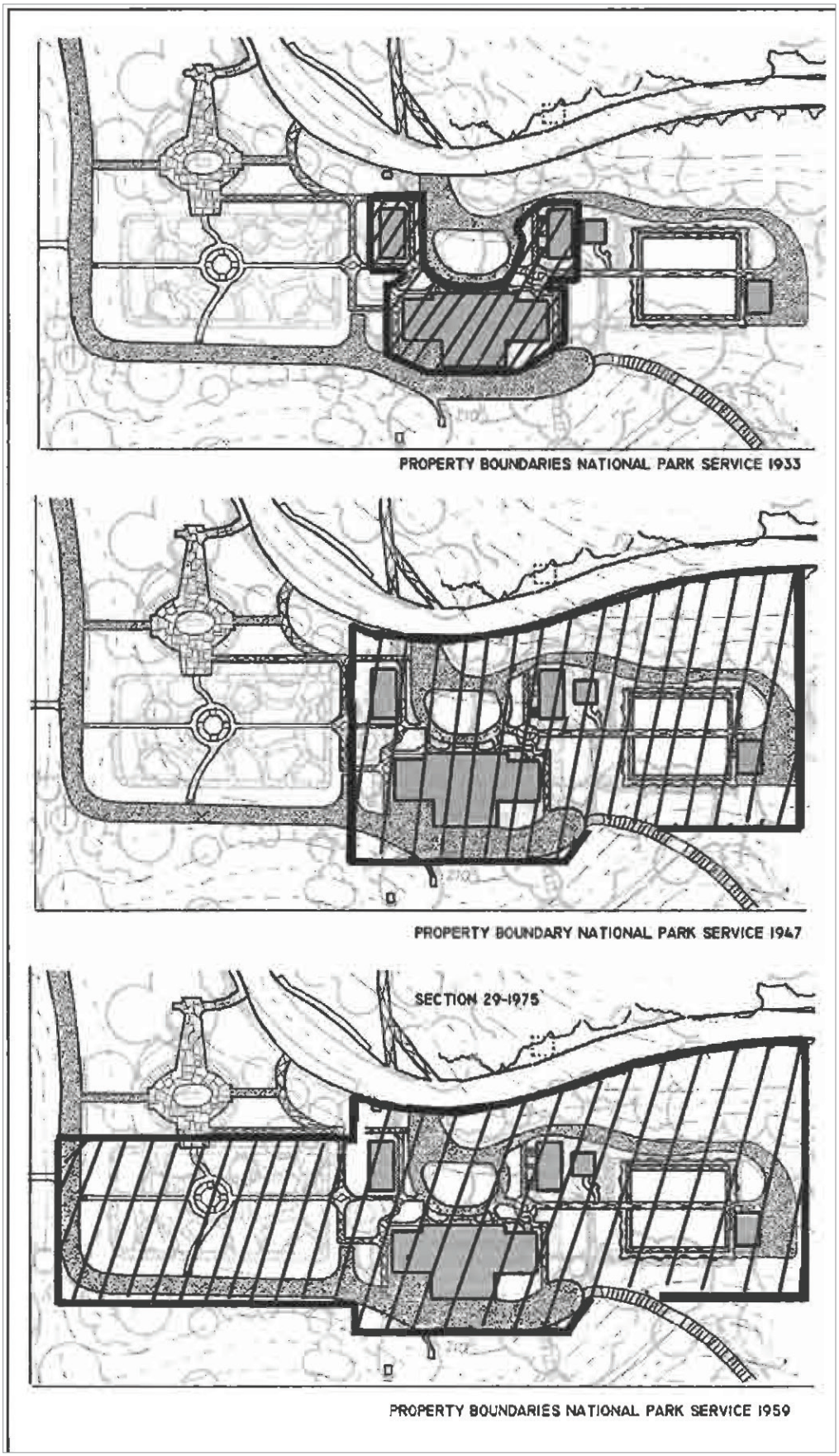


Figure 78. Total acreage of Arlington House managed by the NPS from 1933 through 1959 (Source: Hanna 2001, XXI).

ARLINGTON WOODS

PRE-COLONIAL ERA

3000-1200 BCE

Archeological investigations have found lithic tools and debris from this period in Arlington Woods.

CUSTIS-LEE ERA

1800-1860s

"The forest, composed primarily of oak, chestnut and elm trees, [is] a dominant part of the landscape. In fact, the forested sections of the property [compose] over half of the entire estate. No evidence has been found to suggest that Custis or Lee harvested many of the trees." Five forest types comprise the woods during the historic period: mixed hardwood forest, red oak forest, chestnut oak forest, white oak forest, and disturbed hardwood forest. The forest is preserved throughout the Custis-Lee era, partly for economic reasons, as the land within the forest is unsuitable for agriculture.[202]

The woods also provide an intentional backdrop to the house designed by George Hadfield: "Early on in the history of the estate, the forests [are] considered integral to the success of the home's design. The dark trees [provide] a beautiful, imposing backdrop to the pale-colored classical architecture of Arlington House—a characteristic of the estate commented on throughout its history." This setting is based on the picturesque ideal popularized by Andrew Jackson Downing, Humphrey Repton, and other landscape designers who were influential during this time period. The woods also offer a setting for hunting, pleasure walks, and family burials.[203]

CIVIL WAR PERIOD

1864

A new road to approach the house is constructed through the woods. The road begins at the turnpike at the northeastern corner of the former plantation and proceeds west up the slope, descending into the ravine and out again before reaching the rear work yard on the west side of the house.[204]

POST-CIVIL WAR

1870

A contemporary diary describes plant species found in the woods, including anemone, dog-toothed violet, lady's slipper, fringed polygala, and hepatica.[205]

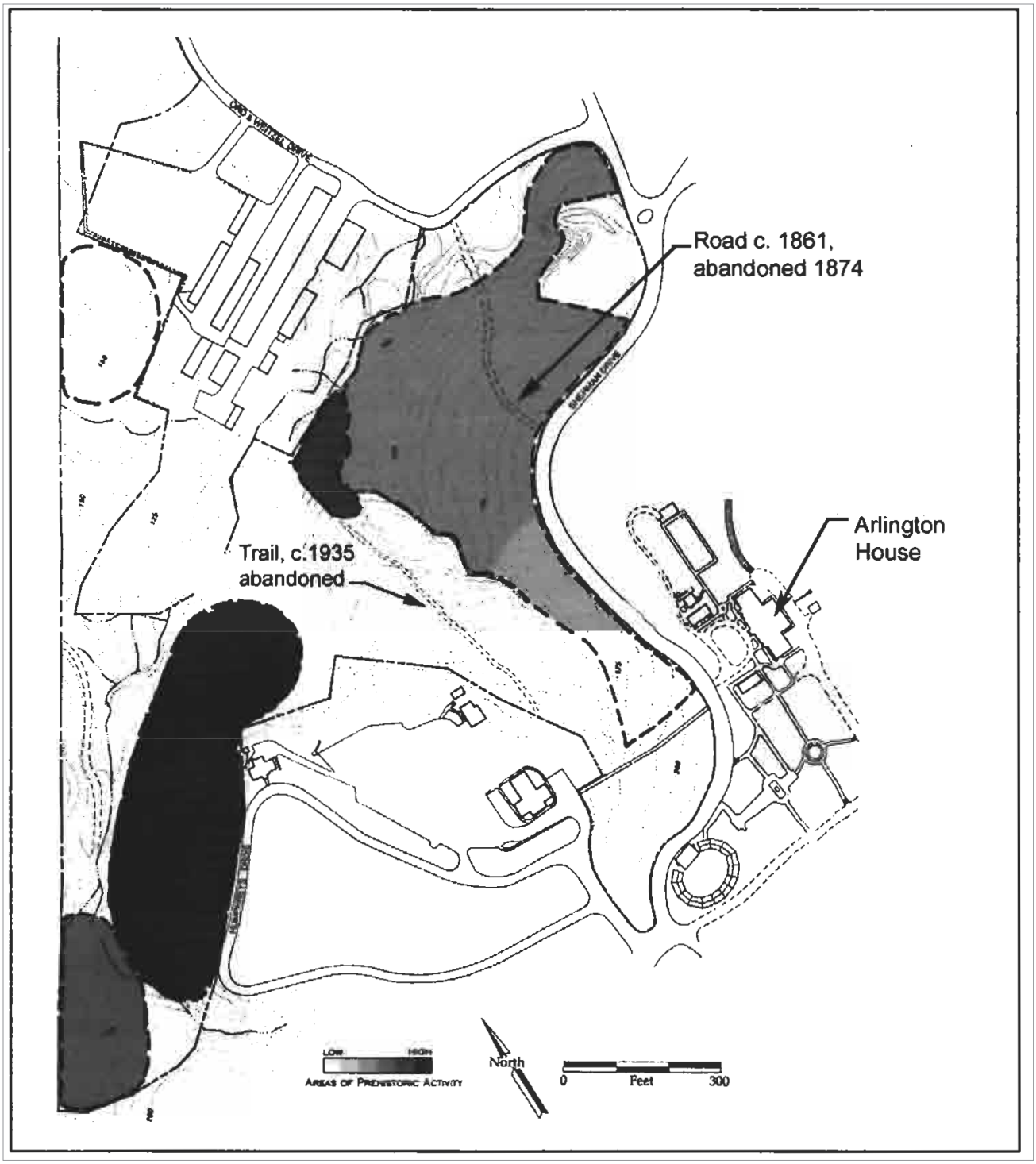


Figure 79. Map depicting intensity of activity prior to European contact (Source: Hanna 2001, 2).

1876

Landscape designer D.H. Rhodes comments on the state of Arlington Woods after the Civil War, remarking that they were largely intact: "The majority of the forest trees in this area [are] red, white and chestnut oaks, interspersed with various types of elms." He preserves a few American beech trees north of the kitchen garden as he believes they deserve special preservation.[206]

The carriage road on the west side of Arlington House (which later becomes Sherman Drive) is regraded due to its steepness, in preparation for the Decoration Day celebration of the wisteria on the newly built amphitheater.[207]

[1876 – 1995]

No information found during the research for this report; further research is needed.

NPS MANAGEMENT

1995

The Department of the Interior and the Department of Defense sign an interagency agreement to transfer 12 acres of Arlington Woods to the Department of the Army for cemetery use.[208]

1997

The Arlington Ravine Site is uncovered; it is a multi-component Indigenous and European American site that has remains of a 19th-century ice house and trash middens from the Custis estate. The prehistoric remains represent a rare large-scale quarry site in Arlington County.[209]

1998

A Cultural Resources Investigation determines that the mixed hardwood forest of the ravine between the house and administration building features the oldest trees in the surrounding area, including a fallen hickory tree that dates to circa 1775. Some of the oldest specimens are considered "witness trees." The report determines that the forest retains high integrity with respect to the Custis-Lee era, with five extant forest types: mixed hardwood forest, northern red oak forest, chestnut oak forest, white oak forest, and disturbed hardwood forest.[210]

The Cultural Resources Investigation report also determines that Arlington Woods includes an archeological site of high integrity, with significant prehistoric and historic deposits. The study advises that "only limited portions of the study area can be utilized for interments without adversely affecting cultural resources,"

and recommends that the entire preservation zone be preserved intact. The mixed hardwood forest is the primary type in the preservation zone.[211]

"*Lonicera sempervirens* (a native honeysuckle vine) and *Prunus virginiana* (a native shrub cherry), found in Arlington Woods, are not found anywhere else within the GWMP. In fact, *Prunus virginiana* is not known to grow anywhere else on the Virginia Coastal Plain."[212]

2002

Despite opposition from the NPS, members of Congress, Arlington County, the NAACP, and the Sierra Club, 12 acres of the 24-acre Section 29 plot is transferred to ANC.[213]

2013

The Army Corps of Engineers conducts an Environmental Assessment Report to study the impact of the Section 29 addition and planned maintenance, and identifies the relative age of different areas of the woods.[214]

2014

Simmons produces another report about the natural resources within Arlington Woods, testing three different areas of forest types:

> (1) Central Appalachian / Inner Piedmont Low-Elevation Chestnut Oak Forest (old and large chestnut oaks, colonies of Mountain Laurel). Found on steep, gravelly, north-facing slope behind the plantation house and above the ravine. (2) Piedmont Acidic Oak-Hickory Forest ("White Oak (*Quercus alba*), Northern Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*), Pignut Hickory (*Carya glabra*), Mockernut Hickory (*Carya alba*), and Sweet Pignut (*Carya ovalis*) are the dominant canopy and subcanopy species here, with White Oak and hickories reaching great size and age. The understory and shrub layers are diverse, with Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*), Fringe Tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*), and Pinxterbloom Azalea (*Rhododendron periclymenoides*) prominent. Found on southwest-facing upper slopes of the ravine and occupying colluvial slope benches of weathered Potomac Clay.
>
> (3) Northern Coastal Plain/ Piedmont Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest (Dominant species include tulip tree, American Beech, White oak, Northern Red Oak, Chestnut Oak, Maple-leaf viburnum and mayapple). Found on the lower slopes, colluvial fans and streambanks throughout the ravine.[215]

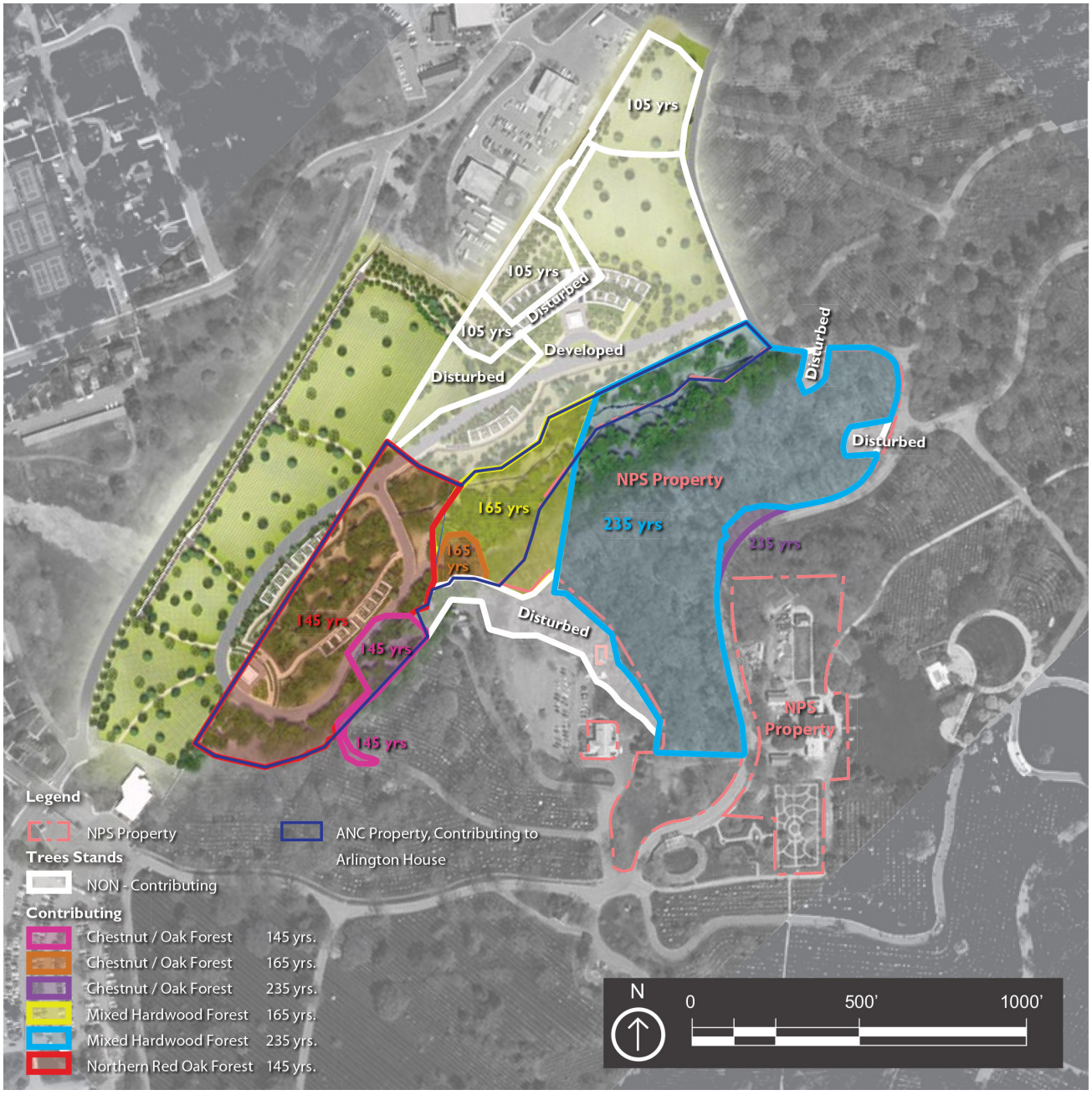


Figure 80. Map of Arlington Woods depicting ages of trees from the 2013 Millennium Project Environmental Assessment, Appendix B (Source: Department of the Army 2013, 6)

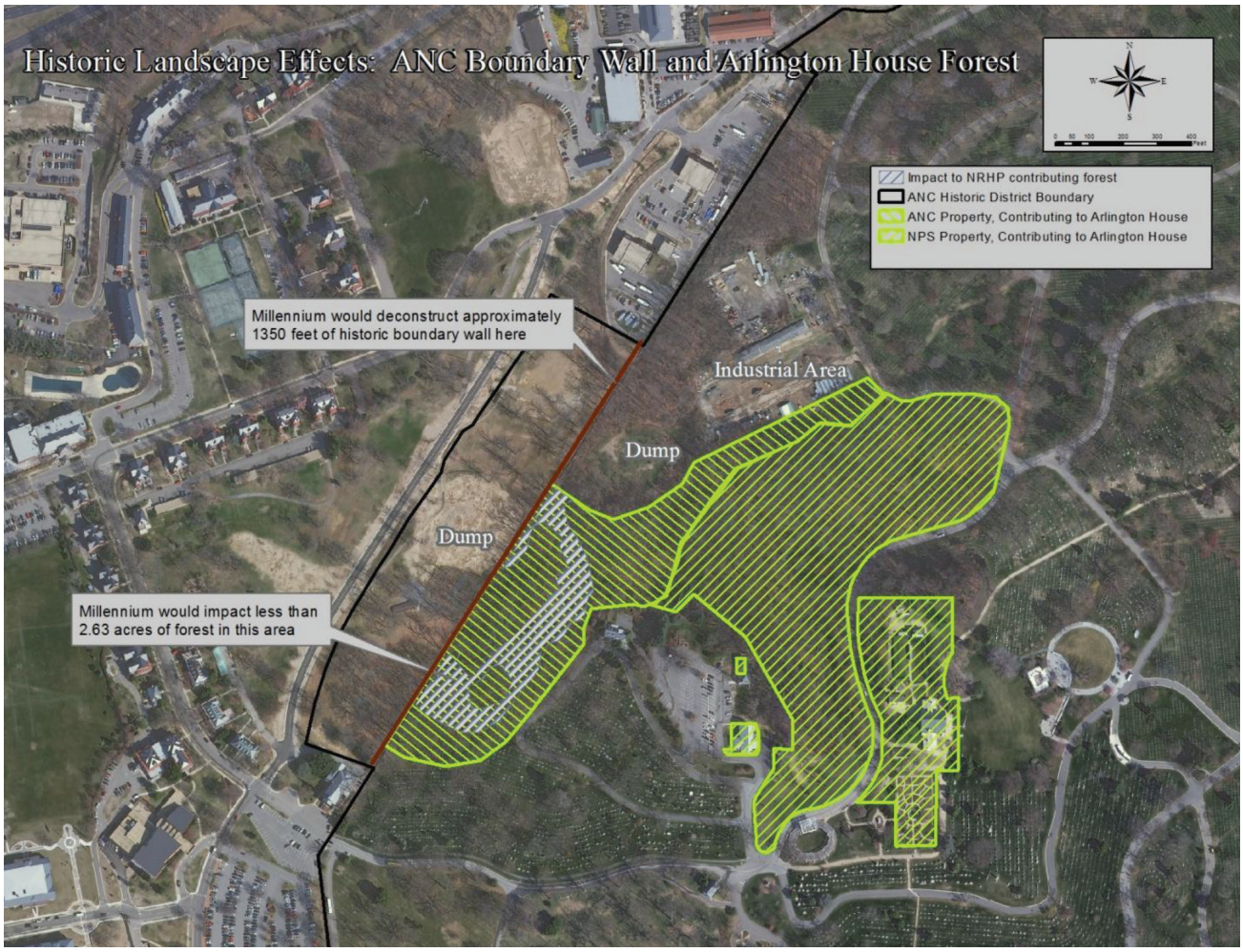


Figure 81. Map depicting existing conditions, impacts, and contributing areas of Arlington House from the 2013 Millennium Project Environmental Assessment (Source: Department of the Army 2013, 133).

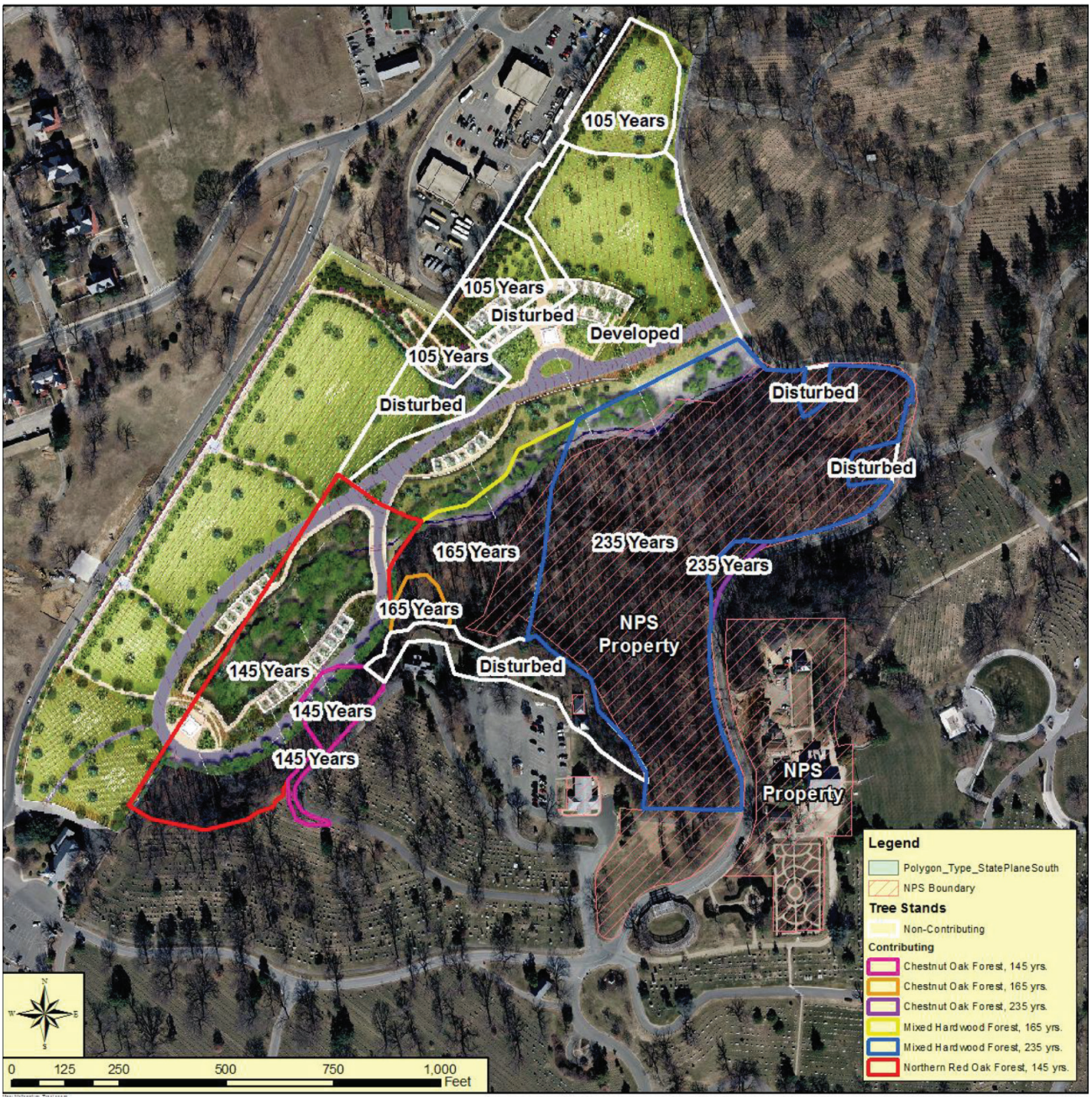


Figure 82. Map depicting tree impact analysis from the 2013 Millennium Project Environmental Assessment (Source: Department of the Army 2013, 120)

ADMINISTRATIVE AREA

CUSTIS-LEE ERA

Early 1800s

In the early 1800s, c. 1818, an architecturally elaborate stable for horses and carriages was constructed west of Arlington House, across the wooded ravine. The stable was accessed by a carriage road spur.[216]

CIVIL WAR PERIOD

1861-1865

The US Army took over the stable and associated support structures to accommodate army horses and mules.[217] Surrounding trees were cut down to make room for large corrals and stables. By 1865, the approach drive to the stable

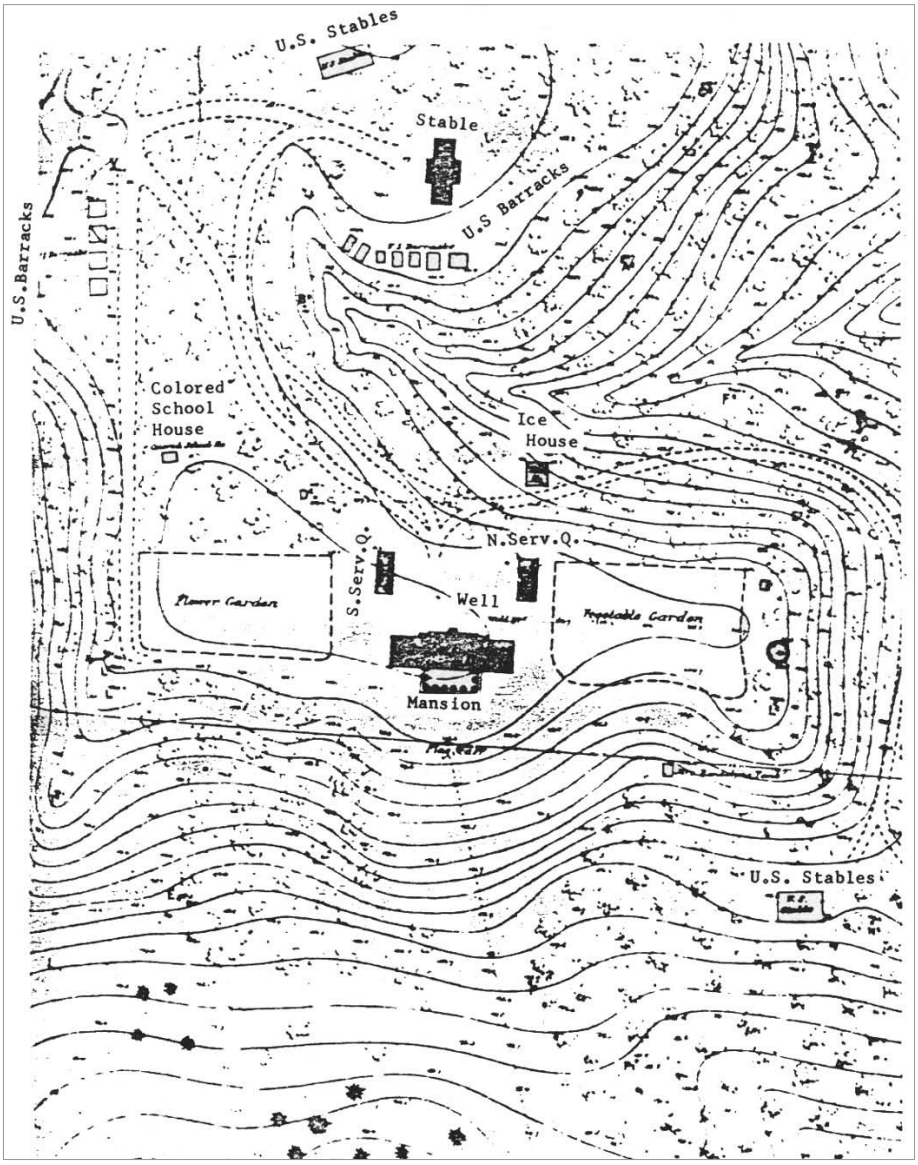


Figure 83. Topography of Arlington House Grounds with stables visible across the ravine from the plantation house, 1864 (Source: National Park Service Historic Structures Report 1985).

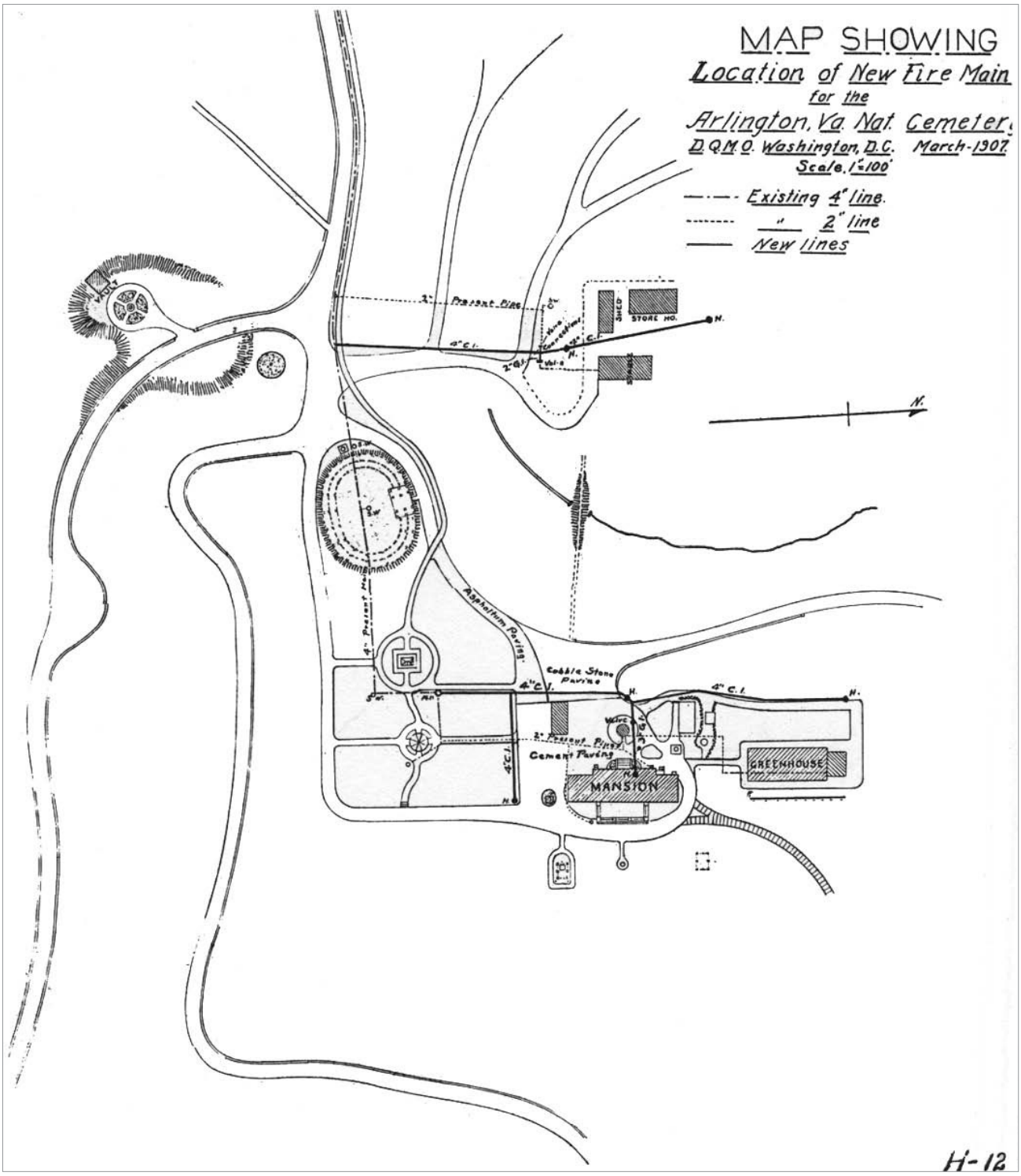


Figure 84. Map depicting Arlington House grounds in 1907, with building cluster visible west of the plantation house including the stable, shed, and a building labeled Store (Source: National Park Service, Historic Structures Report, 1985).

was less distinct having been divided into many additional routes created by soldiers walking through the area.[218]

POST-CIVIL WAR

1904

The stable building built under Custis is destroyed by a fire in July 1904.[219]

1907

In 1907, the stable that burned in 1904 is reconstructed of brick.[220] A second building is constructed that same year approximately 150 feet north of the stable replacement. This second building, which today functions as the NPS curatorial facility, was constructed on the footprint of a stable building.[221]

1931

Building 314 is constructed on the south side of the Curatorial Facility. It served as a potting shed with an attached greenhouse until it was converted into a security office for ANC.

1934

After Congress directed that the plantation house be restored, the War Department developed plans to develop other portions of the site. At this time, architects for the War Department designed the new Administration Building to replicate Custis' 19th century porticoed stable. It is believed that the designers retained the 1907 building in their restoration with additional sections added.[222] New awnings were added over the window and a parking lot was also constructed. The building was used as administrative office for the cemetery and was the primary contact station for ANC visitors until the 1960s.[223] By 1935, the walkway between the plantation house and current administrative area—where the stables were previously located—is paved.

1941

ANC completed construction on a segregated comfort station (Building 313/the present-day curatorial facility).

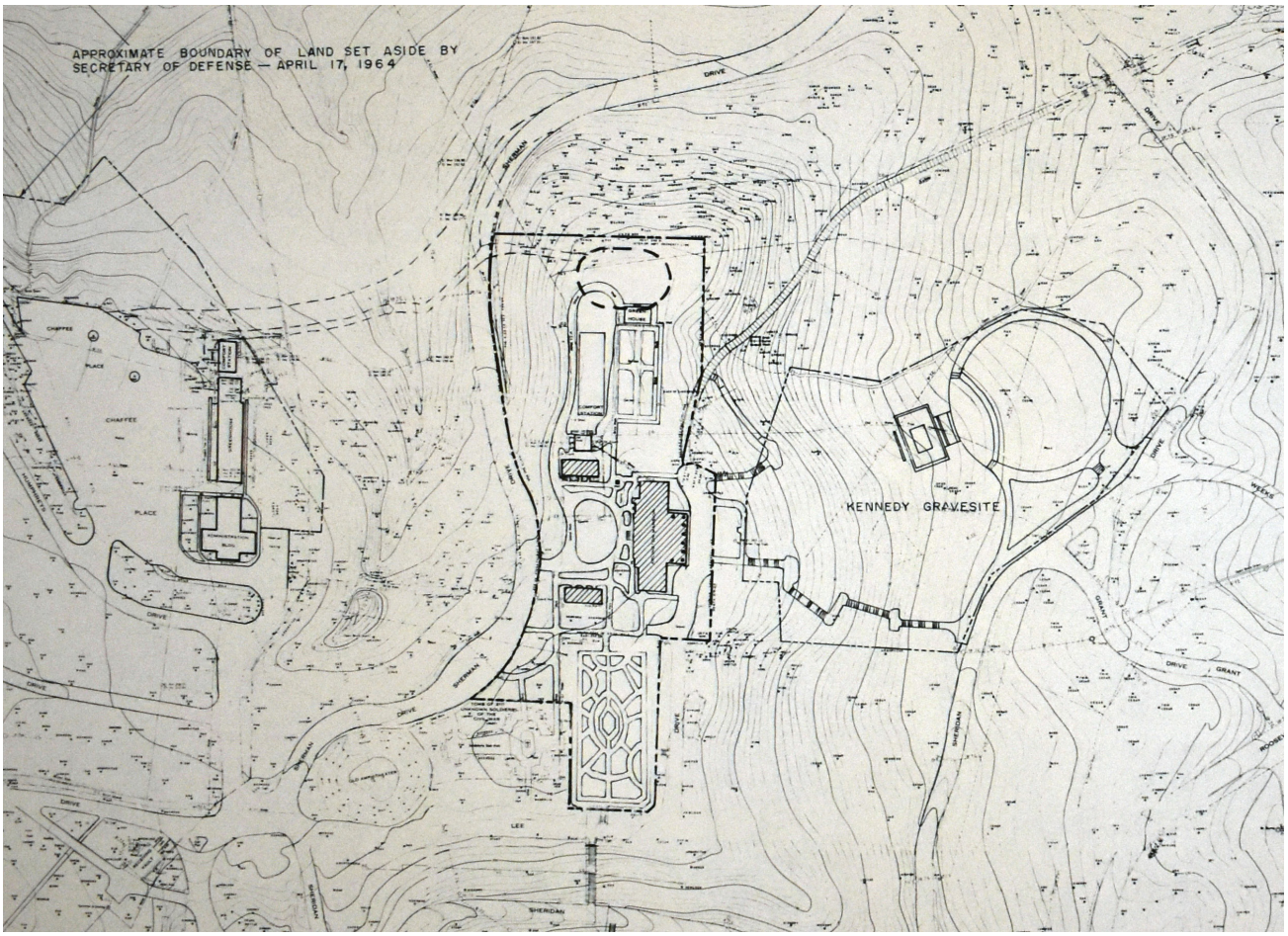


Figure 85. The 1966 Arlington House master plan with the Old Administration Building and the Curatorial Facility visible on the left hand of image, on the west side of the Arlington Woods ravine (Source: Arlington House Archives).

NPS MANAGEMENT

1998/2020

The Old Administration Building and Curatorial Facility are transferred from Arlington National Cemetery to the NPS in 1998, with Building 314 transferred in 2020.[224] The Old Administration Building currently functions as the administrative headquarters for the NPS site. Building 314 temporarily serves as a storage facility; at the time of this report's preparation in 2024-25, the building is being converted to use as NPS office space. The building to the north serves as a curatorial facility.



Analysis of Shifting Values Associated with the Site

Analysis of Shifting Values Associated with the Site

As the historical context and character area histories above demonstrate, the Arlington House cultural landscape has been transformed many times to accommodate new uses. With each new function (and its associated owner or steward), the landscape has been inscribed with new symbolic meaning and associations—often as a direct, deliberate contradiction to past eras and their symbolism. This analysis of the cultural landscape's documentation, evaluation, and recommended treatments thus rests on a full understanding of the shifting (and often contested) values associated with the site, based on its meaning as a **plantation**, a site of **commemoration and reconciliation**, and a **historic site**.

The summary below examines the connotations of each of these associations/uses, and the ways that those connotations have shifted over time, in order to contextualize the recommendations that follow.

PLANTATION SITE

Arlington House was constructed as a plantation, dependent on the enslavement of hundreds of Black laborers. GWP Custis, Mary Lee Fitzhugh Custis, Robert E. Lee, and Mary Anna Randolph Custis Lee were enslavers whose wealth, property, and family seat at Arlington House originated with the enslaved laborers who constructed and maintained the house and grounds. The site maintained this use for more than a half-century, until Robert E. Lee fled the house to lead the Confederate Army in the Civil War. Lee and the Confederate Army were primarily motivated by the defense of the institution of slavery, which underpinned his own plantation.

Even after the Civil War, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the 13th Amendment collectively abolished slavery, many plantations continued to rely on other forms of compulsive labor, including sharecropping and prison labor.[225] Thus, even in the decades after the war, plantation sites often reflected the dominant political culture of the country, including Reconstruction, Jim Crow laws, etc. When the first plantation homes opened to the public as historic sites in the United States, the history of slavery was minimized or entirely expunged, erasing the histories of enslaved people and the impacts of slavery in order to focus instead on the family life of the enslavers.

More recently, scholars Jennifer Eichstedt and Stephen Small concluded that:

> Most of the [historic] sites we have explored in depth tell a story of American history that centers around whites, males, and elites, and that these sites erase or minimize the presence, labor, and lives of enslaved Africans and African Americans. . . .These sites work to construct and maintain public white (male-dominated) racial identities that both articulate with and bolster a sense of (white) pride in a partial history of freedom, democracy, and hard work. . . . Slavery and African Americans are presented as almost incidental to the growth of the South and, by extension, the United States.[226]

It was not until the 1980s and 1990s that some plantation sites made an effort to include dialogue about the institution of slavery. In recent decades, some sites have analyzed and significantly updated their interpretation to address the history of enslavement and enslaved individuals.[227]

In 2001, Congress mandated that all Civil War-era sites managed by the NPS include mention that the war was fought over the issue of enslavement.[228] The bill also encouraged NPS sites to include a more robust, detailed account of enslavement wherever possible in the sites. After this directive, a new exhibit was unveiled at Arlington House in 2004 to incorporate a more detailed interpretation of the institution of enslavement at the site; the recent 2018-2021 rehabilitation made substantial changes to the interpretation of the site.

Prior to that rehabilitation campaign, the interpretation at Arlington House plantation largely focused for many decades on Robert E. Lee (see the discussions below related to the use of the landscape as a site of commemoration, and as a historic site). During the 2018-2021 rehabilitation, new and updated waysides and new interpretive programming focused on the plantation history of the site, including the enslaved community who lived and labored there. These new features seek to acknowledge a more complete and complex history of the house and grounds, its people, and the impacts of slavery.

New interpretive waysides were installed during the rehabilitation to "[explore] how the institution of slavery enabled the existence of Arlington House before, during, and after the Civil War." The post-rehabilitation visitor experience also "introduces multiple entry points into the story: through the origin story of Arlington National Cemetery, and through the experiences of people who lived at the mansion and its surrounding fields over generations, including enslaved workers, [Maria Carter Custis Syphax's family], and the Lee and Custis families."[229]

Adding to the dialogue, descendants of the Branham, Custis, Gray, Henry, Lee, Norris, Parks, and Syphax families began meeting virtually in 2021, and gathered

for the first time in person at Arlington House in 2023. Known as the Family Circle, this group has collaborated with the NPS to revise the site's interpretation in order to help visitors better understand the plantation history and impacts in the landscape. On April 22, 2023, members of the Family Circle signed a symbolic letter of commitment with the park to tell the holistic history at the site.[230]

With these ongoing efforts, the NPS has created a "Visitor Expectations and Language Resource" for Arlington House, which states that:

> Talking about the history and ongoing effects of the institution of racialized slavery in America is difficult. The impacts are personal, cultural, and run deep. They connect to our families, our shared history, and our lived experiences. Having hard conversations is a critical way to digest suppressed truths and is necessary for true reconciliation of American society. To facilitate having these conversations, some shared language is necessary. We all know how good it feels when someone is "speaking our language"; we feel safe and included. By using supporting, shared language to talk about enslavement and chattel slavery, we empower ourselves and each other to create brave, curious and empathic spaces for conversation.[231]

The Visitor Expectations include the following *Key Messages at Arlington House:*

- Making space for dialogue;
- Understanding American history helps us understand the present;
- Building visibility of people who were enslaved at Arlington is essential to the story of Arlington House; and
- Changing land use by changing groups of people created layers of meaning at Arlington House.

The *Non-Negotiable Statements: Key Truths of Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial*, are also enumerated for public audiences:

1. Slavery was the primary cause of the Civil War.
2. The reason why the Confederacy went to war was the preservation of the institution of chattel slavery. This may differ from the individual reasons why some men enlisted to fight for the Confederacy.
3. Based on the Syphax family history and documentation, including Maria Carter Custis Syphax's emancipation and the land gifted to her by George Washington Parke Custis, we believe that Maria Syphax was the daughter of George Washington Parke Custis and an enslaved woman named Arianna Carter. The nature of their relationship is unknown, however the power dynamics of enslavement negate the idea of consent.
4. Enslaved people exercised agency in various ways within the institution of enslavement.
5. There is no such thing as a "good master" as there is no good aspect of owning people.
6. The term "loyal slave" is irrelevant because enslaved people did not have

a choice.

7. Race was used as a justification for chattel slavery in the United States.
8. Systematic oppression—over-policing of Black people, the prison industrial complex, inequitable application of laws in housing, criminal justice, education, and other social programs—in the United States today is rooted in system of race-based chattel slavery and legacy of enslavement in this country.
9. The US Congress established this memorial because they believed that Robert E. Lee was an advocate for peace and reunification after the War.
10. We value the voices of enslaved people and their descendants to help illuminate the lives and experiences of those bound to Custis and Lee.
11. Visitors will be heard but confederate-supporting ideas (e.g. the myth of the Lost Cause) won't be validated because they contradict the ideals of this site.

The "Visitor Expectations and Language Resource" can be found here: https://www.nps.gov/arho/planyourvisit/visitor-expectations-and-language-resource.htm

Concurrent with these initiatives, the NPS' National Capital Region launched a program called Legacies of Enslavement and Race in NCA Parks to provide resources and tools that would help park staff understand and tell the history of race and enslavement in NCA parks and how it continues to affect our world today. As part of the program, each park was tasked with filling out a self-assessment rubric to evaluate how well the NPS is researching and interpreting a comprehensive and conscientious story of enslavement.

SITE OF COMMEMORATION / RECONCILIATION

Arlington House was constructed in part as a site of commemoration, as George Washington Parke Custis considered his plantation house to be a tribute to George Washington.

Later, the landscape became a site of commemoration for Civil War dead before the war was even over. On June 15, 1864, Quartermaster General Meigs recommended to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton that the Arlington House plantation be officially adapted for use as a cemetery, and Stanton approved the recommendation. Two months later, in August 1864, 26 bodies were buried along the perimeter of Arlington House's south flower garden. Two years later, Meigs ordered the construction of a tomb for unidentified Civil War dead in the flower garden; it eventually included the remains of 2,111 unknown soldiers.[232]

At the turn of the 20th century, ANC set aside a section of the cemetery for the burial of Confederate soldiers, in a gesture of reconciliation; a Confederate Memorial was eventually constructed in that section. Although this designated

area (Section 16) is outside of the study area boundaries for this CLR, it is related to a similar shift in the commemorative import of Arlington House itself in the early 20th century. By the 1920s, advocates such as Frances Parkinson Keyes were lobbying for the dedication of Arlington House as a memorial to Robert E. Lee. Although the US Army initially objected, out of concern that the plantation house would become a shrine to Lee and the Lost Cause, Congress eventually passed a bill in 1925 to restore Arlington House "as nearly as practicable to the condition in which it existed immediately prior to the Civil War."[233] This was presented as a conciliatory action between the United States and supporters of the former Confederacy.

In examining this period (that is, from the end of the Civil War into the early 20th century), historian David Blight posits that there were three primary schools of thought with respect to how the Civil War was remembered by American citizens. One conception, expressed in the politics of Reconstruction, included an emancipationist vision that sought full citizenship and Constitutional equality for Black Americans. A second conception of the Civil War was a white supremacist vision that sought white social and political domination, using terror and violence against non-white people. A third conception was a "reconciliationist" vision that emphasized seeking common ground between the North and South to move past the Civil War. This vision focused on the commonalities between the North and South, abandoning sectionalism for the sake of unity, often overlooking or bypassing enslavement as the cause of the Civil War and omitting the goals of emancipation. Blight concludes that "reconciliation overwhelmed the emancipationist vision in the national culture."[234]

President William McKinley included sectional reconciliation between the North and South as an explicit policy in his inaugural address in 1897. The Reconciliation movement framed the Civil War primarily as a fight between white Americans, downplaying the violence of the conflict, the role of Black Americans in the Civil War, and the failure to secure full civil rights for formerly enslaved individuals.

Advocates of the Lost Cause—an ideology that claims that the principles of the Confederate states were both just and justified—and Reconciliationists reshaped white Americans' public understanding and collective memory of the Civil War. The primary idea of the Lost Cause was that the South had fought a principled war for states' rights. These former rebels blamed the conflict on Northern (that is, federal) military aggression while praising the virtuous Southern secession. They de-centered slavery as the cause of the war, regarding the institution of slavery to be a humane and Christian institution.

Proponents of the Lost Cause published several articles in the new *Southern Historical Society Papers* (co-founded by former Confederate general Jubal Early), which promoted a selective memory of the war that vindicated the Confederacy. In his writings, Early sought to vindicate the Lost Cause by communicating a pro-Confederacy history.[235] In the early 20th century, the messaging was effective; as author Eric Foner writes, "The Confederacy lost the war on the battlefield but won the war over memory."[236]

These efforts by Reconciliationists and Lost Cause supporters undermined the potential realization of the social and political promises of racial equality and full citizenship after the Civil War. Historian Katie Hemphill notes that the Reconciliationist narrative obscured the causes of the Civil War, as the movement argued "that men on both sides of the war were equally correct and justified in their cause"; this assertion "paved the way for white Southerners to retake control of state governments and regain power in national politics."[237] In turn, these politicians adopted and enshrined systems of legal racial segregation and discrimination against Black Americans.

Politicians' adoption of a Reconciliationist perspective coincided with the push to create memorials to the Civil War, largely within public spaces. Indeed, Reconciliationists and Lost Cause supporters manipulated the historical memory of the Civil War and its aftermath by promoting the installation of monuments and memorials. These structures established specific subjects and themes as worthy of public memory and commemoration.

Among the organizations promoting this narrative was the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), founded in 1894 for female descendants of Confederate Civil War soldiers. This national organization led efforts to commemorate the war and promote the message of the Lost Cause. Between 1895 and the 1920s, the UDC installed dozens of Confederate monuments across the South, in courthouse squares, around state houses, and in urban parks, among other public locations. Robert E. Lee was one of the most frequent subjects depicted in the monuments and/or referenced in memorial inscriptions.

In examining this period, many historians propose that these new monuments were visible reminders of a pro-Confederate Southern identity and the Jim Crow South's curtailment of the rights of Black Americans. It is not a coincidence that this era marked the height of violent actions by the Ku Klux Klan and other hate groups in the United States. Scholar Clint Smith writes that, "These monuments were built in an effort to reinforce white supremacy at a time when Black communities were being terrorized and Black social and

political mobility impeded…Social and political backlash to Reconstruction-era attempts to build an integrated society was the backdrop against which the first monuments arose."[238] The statues conveyed a selective history of the Civil War and were directly related to legally mandated segregation and widespread disenfranchisement of Black Americans across the South.

These monuments and memorials to the Lost Cause were met with resistance, including by W.E.B. Du Bois and Frederick Douglass, who described monuments to Robert E. Lee as "bombastic laudation of the rebel chief."[239] These voices, however, were overwhelmed by the dominant push (led by white Americans) for national reconciliation.

It was against this backdrop of reconciliation and Lost Cause mythology that Lee was remembered by many as a great general, and Arlington House became a historic site managed by the federal government. (See below for an analysis of the values associated with the landscape as a historic site.) In the enabling legislation to create a historic site at Arlington House, Lee was lauded for his efforts towards reconciliation following the Civil War.[240] The National Park Service writes, "The memory of Lee changed over time as each new generation re-wrote the history of Lee and the Confederacy during the 1890s."[241] Lee himself advocated for Ladies Memorial Associations to mark the graves of Confederate casualties, rather than war monuments on battlefields that he believed would "keep open the sores of war." Nevertheless, memorials to the Lost Cause and to Lee himself continued to grow in number after Lee's death in 1870.[242]

While Lee remained popular and lauded as a Reconciliationist throughout the 20th century, events in the past decade have compelled deeper analysis of Lee's legacy and Confederate iconography, particularly in the public realm. The 2015 massacre of nine Black Americans at a Bible study meeting in the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina, by a white supremacist ignited a movement to remove the Confederate flag and other iconography from public spaces. Additionally, the 2017 white supremacist "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia was organized in response to the proposed removal of a statue of Robert E. Lee from a public park formerly called Lee Park. The rally and death of a counter-protestor sparked nationwide debate over Confederate monuments, racial violence, and white supremacy. The Lee statue in Charlottesville was ultimately removed on July 10, 2021.

Three months prior to the white nationalist rally, New Orleans' then-mayor Mitch Landrieu delivered a speech in spring 2017 regarding the removal of four Confederate monuments within his city, including one of Robert E. Lee, stating,

"To literally put the Confederacy on a pedestal in our most prominent places of honor is an inaccurate recitation of our full past. It is an affront to our present, and it is a bad prescription for our future."[243] Landrieu's words signify a significant shift in the understanding of Confederate monuments in public space.

In the aftermath of the white nationalist rally in defense of the Lee monument in Charlottesville, dozens of statues, plaques, and memorials were removed or challenged. The American Historical Association published a statement in 2017 on the removal of confederate monuments, stating:

> Understanding the specific historical context of Confederate monuments in America is imperative to informed public debate… Memorials to the Confederacy were intended, in part, to obscure the terrorism required to overthrow Reconstruction, and to intimidate African Americans politically and isolate them from the mainstream of public life. A reprise of commemoration during the mid-20th century coincided with the Civil Rights Movement and included a wave of renaming and the popularization of the Confederate flag as a political symbol… Events in Charlottesville and elsewhere indicate that these symbols of white supremacy are still being invoked for similar purposes.[244]

Ongoing public dialogues after the 2017 rally in Charlottesville resulted in the removal of several Confederate monuments, including several of Lee. The debate was reignited following the murder of George Floyd during an arrest on May 25, 2020. The murder led to widespread protests about police brutality, white supremacy, and racial injustice around the world in addition to several legislative proposals intended to address system racism, qualified immunity, and police brutality. The protests renewed a reckoning over Confederate iconography and led to several name changes from Confederate individuals and the removal of Confederate monuments. The Southern Poverty Law Center recorded that 482 Confederate symbols have been removed, renamed, or relocated from public spaces since the Charleston massacre in 2015.[245]

In December of 2020, a statue of Confederate general Robert E. Lee was removed from the United States Capitol and was replaced with a statue of Barbara Johns who, in 1951, led a student strike for equal education at Robert Russa Moton High School in Farmville, Virginia. Her protest gained the support of the NAACP and her case was one of five that were consolidated into the pivotal Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka lawsuit. The Supreme Court ruling in that case declared segregation unconstitutional in 1954.

Further, in December of 2022, the US Military Academy at West Point took down a portrait of Lee, a West Point graduate, dressed in his Confederate uniform from its library. This action was part of the Department of Defense directive issued in October of 2022 to address racial injustice and remove installation

that "commemorate or memorialize the Confederacy." In seeking the removal of Lee's name from public structures at West Point, graduates of the institution offered this conclusion: "Some argue that removing such symbols is tantamount to erasing history and calls for founders like George Washington to be 'canceled.' We categorically reject this straw-man argument. Robert E. Lee was not just a racist and a slave owner. He chose to betray his country in the defense of his right to subjugate the black race."[246]

In December of 2023, a Confederate memorial was removed from Arlington National Cemetery. Following a temporary halt from a judge that had been requested by a group called Defend Arlington, on Tuesday, December 19, US Army workers successfully removed the memorial erected by the UDC and built by the sculptor Moses Jacob Ezekiel in 1914.

The memorial has been criticized for its sanitized depiction of slavery, and the plan to remove it from the country's most famous cemetery is part of a military-wide effort to take down Confederate symbols from bases, ships and other facilities. The monument featured depictions of two Black people that reify the subservient positions they occupied under slavery and the Confederacy.

In 2017, following the white nationalist rally in Charlottesville in support of a Confederate monument, a group of Ezekiel's descendants wrote a letter demanding that the statue within ANC come down. Their letter stated: "Like most such monuments, this statue intended to rewrite history to justify the Confederacy and the subsequent racist Jim Crow laws. It glorifies the right to own human beings, and, in its portrayal of African Americans, implies their collusion… As proud as our family may be of Moses's artistic prowess, we—some twenty Ezekiels—say remove that statue."[247]

Despite the letter, the memorial was not removed at that time. In 2021, Congress established a Naming Commission to create a plan for the removal of statues and monuments commemorating the Confederacy at military sites. The Department of Defense mandated that Arlington National Cemetery's memorial be removed by January 1, 2024 (all iconography across all military installations in the US was required to be removed by this date). Forty Republican members of Congress signed a letter arguing that the "Reconciliation Monument" not be removed as it commemorated the "reconciliation and national unity" between North and South. Nonetheless, the monument was ultimately removed prior to the January 1 deadline.

In the aftermath of the war, Lee became one of the most memorialized figures of the Confederacy with interpretations of his legacy, Confederate iconography, and the Arlington House plantation differing widely over the decades. The complex and varied evolution of how Robert E. Lee and the Confederacy are remembered within the historic site and beyond are reflected in the legislative history and changes in the landscape over the decades. From early decisions in 1925 on interpretation through the removal of the Confederate Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery in recent months, the evolution reflects larger cultural conversations about the impacts of the Civil War, how the Civil War is remembered, and what we choose to collectively value.

HISTORIC SITE

Beginning with the Civil War and into the early 1900s, Arlington House was managed by the federal government. In the 1920s, preservationists requested that the US Army turn over Arlington House to the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) to restore the plantation house in honor of Robert E. Lee. Various veterans' groups objected to this proposal, and the Army denied the request, concerned that the UDC would use the house to glorify the Lost Cause. In 1925, Congress struck a compromise between the two sides, declaring that the property would remain in the hands of the government, but it would honor Lee's efforts to promote reconciliation after the Civil War.[248]

On May 4, 1925, the 68th United States Congress unanimously voted to enact Public Resolution 74, which authorized the restoration of the plantation house. The enabling legislation read:

> Whereas, now honor is accorded Robert E. Lee as one of the great military leaders of history, whose exalted character, noble life, and eminent services are recognized and esteemed, and whose manly attributes of precept and example were compelling factors in cementing the American people in bonds of patriotic devotion and action against common external enemies in the war with Spain and in the World War, thus consummating the hope of a reunited country that would again swell the chorus of the Union.
>
> Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of War be, and he is hereby authorized and directed, as nearly as may be practicable, to restore the Lee Mansion in the Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia, to the condition in which it existed immediately prior to the Civil War and to procure, if possible, articles of furniture and equipment which were in the Mansion and in use by occupants thereof. He is also authorized, in his discretion, to procure replicas of the furniture and other articles in use in the Mansion during the period mentioned, with a view to restoring, as far as may be practicable, the appearance of the interior of the Mansion to the condition of its occupancy by the Lee family.[249]

US Representative Louis Cramton, a Republican from Michigan whose father had fought against Robert E. Lee, declared that "it is unprecedented in history for a nation to have gone through as great a struggle as we did in the Civil War" to become "so absolutely reunited." Praising Lee's efforts, Cramton asserted that "there was no man in the South who did more by his precept and example to help bring about that condition [of reconciliation] than did Robert E. Lee."[250]

Although the legislation specified a restoration timeframe of "immediately prior to the Civil War," the plantation house was actually restored to the period of George Washington Parke Custis. (The Department of the Army managed Arlington National Cemetery, encompassing over half of the original plantation's acreage, while the War Department began to restore Arlington House.) Under the direction of Charles Moore, chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts, no furniture manufactured after 1830 was included in the restoration efforts, thus negating the Lee family's influence on the house. The design decisions reflected the popularity of the Colonial Revival movement of the 1920s (and likely attempted to subvert Lee's presence). Throughout the 1930s, the Quartermaster's Office continued to approve landscape treatments influenced by the Colonial Revival style.

The site was transferred to the National Park Service (NPS) in 1933. A few years later, after Moore died in 1937, the NPS updated the interior of Arlington House to include items associated with Lee. Although there were few major changes to the site during World War II due to budget constraints, the site's historian, Murray Nelligan, conducted new research on the Lee era of the house, reestablishing the links between the Lee family and the interpretation of the site.

In 1955, new legislation was introduced to formally recognize the restored house as the Custis-Lee Mansion and a national memorial to Robert E. Lee.[251] The 1955 act, timed with the anniversary of Lee's surrender at Appomattox and coinciding with the burgeoning of the Civil Rights Movement, stated:

> Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Congress of the United States, at this anniversary time, does hereby pay honor and tribute to the everlasting memory of Robert E. Lee, whose name will ever be bright in our history as a great military leader, a great educator, a great American, and a truly great man through the simple heritage of his personal traits of high character, his grandeur of soul, his unfailing strength of heart.[252]

Republican Representative Joel Broyhill of Virginia, who introduced the legislation to the House of Representatives, was a staunch segregationist. Broyhill was part of a large group of Southern congressmen and senators who, in 1956, signed a "Southern Manifesto" that declared their opposition to integration

of public places in the United States. In the US Senate, the legislation was introduced by Senator Estes Kefauver, one of only three Southern Democrats who refused to sign this segregationist document. The bill passed unanimously in the Democratically controlled House and Senate, and was signed into law by Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

With the new site name (and with Mission 66 funding), the NPS formally shifted the central interpretative focus of the site to Lee, and began restoring the "Custis-Lee Mansion" to reflect the character of the site as of 1861, when Lee held the property. Historian Murray Nelligan and other scholars defined the conditions of the site at the time Lee departed to lead the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia. In the 1960s and 1970s, after the NPS assumed control of the south flower garden and created a master plan for the overall site, the agency recreated the 1861 conditions across the landscape and within the plantation house. The key interpretative change of the site, according to the 1966 Master Plan, was emphasizing Lee's "character, nobility, and humanity."[253]

In 1972, Congress authorized the renaming of the Custis-Lee Mansion to "Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial," further affirming the site as a memorial to Robert E. Lee and removing the reference to the Custis family. This made Arlington House the only federal memorial to honor an individual who fought against the federal government. (Joel Broyhill of Virginia again introduced the renaming legislation, claiming that the Arlington House site needed to be differentiated from the Lee residence at Stratford Hall in Virginia.) The legislation passed unanimously in the Democratically controlled 92nd Congress, and was signed into law by Republican President Richard Nixon.

Three years later, Congress voted in 1975 to restore Robert E. Lee's citizenship, stating "this entire Nation has long recognized the outstanding virtues of courage, patriotism, and selfless devotion to duty of General R. E. Lee, and has recognized the contribution of General Lee in healing the wounds of the War Between the States."

In 2022, legislation was introduced to Congress for the redesignation of the site as "Arlington House." In a September 2022 *Washington Post* op-ed written by Stephen Hammond, a descendant of the Syphax family, and Lee Crittenberger Hart, a descendant of the Lee family, the columnists argued in support of the name change, writing:

> Our families realize that the name 'The Robert E. Lee Memorial' focuses solely on one side of those who lived at Arlington House and excludes and dimin-

> ishes the lives and histories of those who were enslaved. . . .There are important aspects of the Arlington House history that, until recently, have been either understated or omitted from the overall interpretation at the site. It is time to include all sides of the history of Arlington House.[254]

On June 27, 2023, the Congressional testimony in support of the name change (H.J. Res. 76) indicated that the legislation was both at the request of descendant family members and "an effort to promote a society that is more just and equitable for all, regardless of race, by moving on from a public symbol that honors a figure that fought to protect slavery" (H.J. Res. 76) Donna Kunkel, descendant of Maria Carter Custis Syphax, spoke of the proposed change: "I feel that the current name glorifies a soldier who took up arms to maintain the institution of slavery. This place is so much more than a Lee Museum. Its name should reflect the lives of all who lived, worked, and died there, both enslavers and enslaved."[255] The legislation was introduced in the 119th Congress on February 27, 2025; at the time of this CLR's completion in spring 2025, the bill currently has 110 co-sponsors.



Synthesis of Existing Documentation

Synthesis of Existing Documentation

Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial (Arlington House), encompasses 16.08 acres of land managed by the National Park Service, surrounded by Arlington National Cemetery (which is managed by the US Department of the Army). The Arlington House site includes: an early 19th century plantation house; two living quarters for enslaved families; a front plaza along the east façade, overlooking Arlington National Cemetery, the Potomac River, and Washington, D.C.; a rear work yard; a flower garden; a kitchen garden; a museum; a bookstore and comfort station; and NPS administration buildings, in addition to various circulation, small-scale features, and vegetation. Twelve acres of forest, known as Arlington Woods, are located west of the main developed area, and included within the site's administrative boundaries as well as the study area boundaries for this CLR.

Arlington House was administratively listed in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register, or NR) in 1966 (NRHP #66000040), with a completed nomination accepted on April 16, 1980. The period of significance was recorded as 1803 through 1861, and the historic district was listed as significant in the areas of Architecture and Military. The boundary of the 1980 nomination encompassed 27.9 acres.

In 2013, a National Register nomination was completed to reflect additional documentation and a boundary increase for the historic district. (The NR number was the same as the 1966 NR number; it was also listed by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, or VDHR, under VDHR #000-0001, #44AR00I7, and #44AR0032.) Accepted on January 30, 2014, the updated documentation listed the historic district under Criteria A, B, C, and D of the National Register. The district is significant at the National, State, and Local levels in the areas of Architecture; Landscape Architecture; Military; Politics/ Government; Others: Commemoration; Conservation/Historic Preservation; Ethnic Heritage: Black; Archeology: Prehistoric; Archeology: Historic Non-Aboriginal. The periods of significance in the updated document spans from 3000-1200 BCE, and 1802-1935. The boundary increase for the historic district added approximately 3.1 acres to the existing National Register boundary, creating a 31-acre study area. The historic district includes land managed by the NPS and the US Department of the Army.

On April 11, 2014, the Keeper of the National Register signed a National Register nomination for Arlington National Cemetery Historic District (NRHP #14000146). The nationally significant historic district was listed under Criteria A, B, and C, and Criteria Considerations D, F, and G, in the areas of Military; Landscape Architecture; Politic/Government; and Architecture. The period of significance is listed as 1864 through the present. Encompassing 624 acres, the boundary includes both Arlington National Cemetery and Arlington House; the boundary largely follows the cemetery perimeter with the exception of veering away from the cemetery boundary to include Memorial Avenue and Arlington Memorial Bridge to the east of the cemetery.

A Cultural Landscape Report, Volume 1, for Arlington House was completed in 2001. The document does not follow a traditional CLR format, as it consists of only a detailed history of the site. A draft Existing Conditions description and Analysis and Evaluation for the CLR was completed in 2001, but never certified or published alongside the history narrative. The draft determines that the historic site is eligible under Criteria A, B, C, and D of the National Register, and lists three periods of significance: 1802 to 1861; 1861 to 1865; and 1865 to 1880.

A Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) was completed in 2009 (CLI #600049), encompassing the 16.08 acres managed by the NPS. The CLI received park superintendent concurrence on July 24, 2009, and received State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurrence on August 4, 2009. The period of significance is listed as 1802-1880. The CLI listed the historic site as eligible under National Register Criteria A, B, C, D, and Criteria Consideration F, in the areas of Military; Politics/Government; Social History; Architecture; Archeology – Historic/Non-Aboriginal; and Archeology –Historic/Aboriginal. The landscape was assessed in Good condition in 2009 (get more recent condition assessments from park).

Arlington House was documented circa 1940 for the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) as a Public Works Administration project (HABS VA-443; also listed as HABS VA 7-ARL-1). Additional HABS documentation was completed several decades later, including for the “Old Potting House” in 1994 (VA-1342). In 2002-2003, HABS measured drawings were completed for the “South Slave Quarters” (VA-443-A), the “North Slave Quarters” (VA-443-B), and the “Potting Building” (VA-443-C) (the same building previously called the “Old Potting House” in the 1994 documentation). In 2007, the Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS) documented the deodar cedar tree in the rear work yard on the west side of the Arlington House plantation house (HALS VA- 10); that survey included data pages and photographs.

In addition, various buildings and structures within the project area have been the subject of Historic Structures Reports.[****]

A summary of existing documentation, including the year completed, period(s) of significance, National Register criteria, and area(s) of significance, is included in the table below.

Table 1. Existing documentation related to the Arlington House cultural landscape.

Documentation Project	Year Completed	Period(s) of Significance	National Register Criteria [never published]	Area(s) of Significance
Arlington House Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) - *never published*	2001	1802-1861; 1861-1865; 1865-1880	A, B, C, D	Not included
Arlington House Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI)	2009	1802-1880	A, B, C, D, Criteria Consideration F	Military; Politics/ Government; Social History; Architecture; Archeology: Historic, Non-Aboriginal; Archeology: History, Aboriginal (Note: The level of significance is not specified)
Arlington House National Register Historic District	2014	3000-1200 BCE; 1802-1935 CE	A, B, C, D	Architecture (National); Landscape Architecture (National); Military (National); Politics/ Government (National); Other: Commemoration (National); Conservation/ Historic Preservation (National); Ethnic Heritage: Black (State); Archeology: Prehistoric; Archeology: Historic Non-Aboriginal (Local)

**** The Historic Structures Reports include: Harry Lee Arnest III and John D. Sligh, *Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial Historic Structure Report, Architectural Data Section (Phase II)* (November 1985); Charles W. Snell, *Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial Historic Structure Report, Historic Data Section Volume I of II, 1802-1933*, edited by Harlan D. Unrau (December 1985); Charles H. McCormick, *Historic Structures Report, Part I: Historical Data Report, Custis-Lee Mansion* (July 1968); Charles McCormick, *Historic Structures Report, Part I, Historical Data Section Custis-Lee Mansion* (1968); Charles W. Snell, *Historic Structure Report, Historic Data Section, Volume II of II, 1933-1942*, edited by Harlan D. Unrau (December 1985); *Supplementary Material, Historic Structure Report, Historical Data Section* (November 1985); *Historic Structures Report - Engineering Study of Central Block Roof Support System, Arlington House* (August 1982); Lee Arnest, *Historic Structure Report, Architectural Data Section: Phase I* (1983); Frank Matero, *Report on the Investigation of the Exterior Paints: Conditions and Treatments, Arlington House* (July 1979); *Historic Structures Report Part I and II, Exterior Repainting of the Custis-Lee Mansion* (June 1965).



Summary of Landscape Alterations since 2009

Summary of Landscape Alterations since 2009

The most recent landscape inventory for Arlington House dates to 2009, when a Cultural Landscape Inventory was completed. The CLI predates two major rehabilitation campaigns, one completed in 2012, and the other one completed in 2021.

SUMMARY OF ARCHEOLOGICAL WORK

The central four acres of the Arlington House property, encompassing the plantation house, enslaved quarters, and grounds, is designated as an archeological site (44AR0017). Additionally, within the 12 acres of Arlington Woods located on the west side of Sherman Drive, is a multi-component prehistoric and 19th Century historic archeological site (44AR0032).

During the rehabilitation project, work was completed in the 18 ft x 16 ft west room of the south enslaved quarters. Workers completing a floor leveling task within the modern fill dug too deep, reaching historic period soils. While shovel-skimming, four north-facing glass bottles within a subfloor storage pit were uncovered adjacent to and northeast of the fireplace hearth. The discovery was reported to the archeological monitor on site.

Ensuing archeological investigations by GWMP archeologists following the unanticipated discovery identified that the subfloor storage pit and four bottle were likely associated with Selina and Thornton Gray and their family who occupied the west room in the mid-19th century. Around 1847, Selina married Thornton Gray in the parlor of Arlington House. Selina Gray was Mary Custis Lee's enslaved housekeeper. Gray represents the second generation of the families that Custis held in slavery at Arlington House. Thornton was part of the second generation of enslaved workers who initially labored at Mount Vernon. Together, the couple had eight children all born enslaved at Arlington House and lived at the west end of the south enslaved quarters.

The brick flooring under which the unanticipated discovery was made was likely established during the circa 1929 rehabilitation of the quarters by Arlington National Cemetery and re-laid in 1959 by the NPS in 1959 and re-laid once again in the 1990s with a sand layer and plastic vapor barrier.[256]

A 2021 report completed by Matthew Virta, former Cultural Resources Program Manager for GWMP, that documents the unanticipated discover, states:

> Analysis of the findings indicate that the pit functioned as a type of shrine and had contained what may be an enslaved people's "spirit bundle" with "conjuring bottles"; exhibiting West African religious connections (Haq 2016, Samford 2007) and creolized Hoodoo Rootwork religious/folk magic practices (Chireau 2003, Kraus etal 2010, Leone 1999, Unger 2009) that demonstrate resistance to their state of bondage and their perseverance for freedom. Placement of a spirit bundle and/or conjure bottles by an enslaved individual as part of a ritualistic religious/magical shrine served variously to ward off evil, promote self-preservation, cast spells to harm others, and host a protective Nkisi spirit or entrap malevolent entities (Haq 2016, Hoggard 2019, Lane 2008, Manning 2012), functioning as a talisman to combat the harsh and de-humanizing realities of slavery and to safeguard the future.[257]

Since this discovery, the National Park Service has not updated its depiction of the room where Thorton and Selina Gray and children were enslaved to reflect this new information.

SUMMARY OF RECENT REHABILITATION WORK

A large-scale rehabilitation of Arlington House and grounds was completed between 2018 and 2021. The rehabilitation included alterations and improvements to the grounds, visitor circulation and access, paving materials, plantings, signage, and waysides. The rehabilitation also entailed the conservation of more than 1,000 artifacts; the acquisition of 1,300 antiques or reproductions, including several associated with African American history; the rehabilitation and expansion of the comfort station at the north end of the site (converting it to use as a bookstore); and extensive work on the two enslaved quarters and the plantation house. Updates included interpretative of the north and south enslaved quarters to emphasize the enslaved families' connections to Arlington House, in addition to the historic use of the buildings and how the architecture was adapted to restrict access for the enslaved laborers.

For the house itself, the project stabilized the foundation, restored exterior finishes and hardware, recoated decorative masonry faux-marble finishes (some of which have already deteriorated since the rehabilitation campaign), completed interior painting, repaired plaster, rehabilitated windows and doors, and reset the brick portico floor. The work also included new or improved electrical, lighting, security, climate management, and fire suppression systems. The historic grounds and kitchen gardens were rehabilitated to allow for accessibility. Following the rehabilitation work, Arlington House reopened to visitors in June 2021.

The following is a summary of the major changes to the landscape during the rehabilitation project, beginning with the **front plaza** on the eastern edge of the CLR boundaries, and proceeding west to the **rear work yard, flower garden, kitchen garden, bookstore and museum area,** and **changes along Sherman Drive**. The summary concludes with a synthesis of alterations to the **sitewide vegetation** and the **sitewide waysides and signage.**

Note: Although this summary is intended as a useful reference for site managers, and a baseline for the Part 2 treatment recommendations, it is not exhaustive; an updated Cultural Landscape Inventory should be completed to catalogue all existing conditions and landscape characteristics.

FRONT PLAZA

During the rehabilitation, most circulation features throughout the landscape—including on the plaza on the east side of the plantation house—was converted from a light-colored gravel to a light-colored permeable bonded aggregate porous hardscape, to prevent erosion (see Figure 86).

On the south side of the house, within the porous hardscape is an organically shaped section of a darker rolled asphalt that indicates an area that does not meet accessibility standards (see Figure 87).

There are sections of turf on the east sides of the north and south wings, carrying around to the south side of the plantation house. While there were turf areas on the east side of the plantation house prior to the rehabilitation, the new sections are larger and more formalized than the pre-rehabilitation conditions. The existing turf areas are delineated by low steel edges.

The front plaza is accessible via Custis Walk, which runs north-south along the eastern edge of the flower garden. Although Custis Walk is managed by ANC, and thus outside the study area boundaries of this CLR, it is nevertheless worth addressing recent alterations to Custis Walk that have affected the NPS-managed landscape of Arlington House. Prior to the rehabilitation, the drive was a wider gravel road that allowed for maintenance vehicle access from the south side of the historic site to the front of the house. During the rehabilitation, Custis Walk was re-paved by ANC with the same light-colored porous aggregate hardscape used elsewhere around Arlington House. It was also reconfigured to be a narrower pedestrian path that no longer accommodates vehicles (see Figure 88 and Figure 89). This has affected the maintenance practices of the Arlington House cultural landscape, and informs the treatment recommendations for this CLR.



Figure 86. Different colored paving material within front plaza area (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 87. Custis Walk visible on left, parallel to the Flower Garden picket fence (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 88. Custis Walk as it approaches the Arlington House plantation house (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 89. Front plaza area, looking northwest (Urban Heritage Project 2023).

REAR WORK YARD

Located west of the plantation house, the rear work yard is bound on the north and south by the enslaved quarters, on the east by the house, and on the west by the mulch beds, plantings, and sidewalk along Sherman Drive.

At the center of the rear work yard, the large deodar cedar tree (planted in 1874) remains in place, located within a large rectangular mulch bed that predates the rehabilitation (see Figure 90).

The materials of the work yard's circulation were updated in the rehabilitation campaign. As of 2023, the perimeter of the work yard (the north, east, and south sides) is composed of the same light-colored permeable-bonded aggregate paving found throughout the site (see Figure 91). Within that perimeter, a wide dark-colored gravel border surrounds the tree mulch bed (see Figure 92).

There are movable wood benches within the work yard that can be reconfigured for interpretative programming near the cedar tree (see Figure 90). In summer of 2024, additional benches have been placed in the rear yard.



Figure 90. The cedar tree in the rear work yard, with movable benches within the mulch bed (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 91. Rear work yard circulation features. The rear elevation of the Arlington House primary building is visible on the left, and the south enslaved quarters is visible behind the cedar tree (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 92. Rear work yard, looking east (Urban Heritage Project 2023).

FLOWER GARDEN

The flower garden is located south of the plantation house and work yard. During the rehabilitation, a new white picket fence replaced the previous post-and-chain fence around the flower garden (see Figure 93 and Figure 94). The overall configuration of curvilinear walkways and planting beds through the flower garden was maintained from the pre-rehabilitation configuration, while the paving materials were updated. The walkway through the center of the garden (oriented north-south, with a circular component in the center) is composed of a light-colored porous aggregate hardscape, while the connecting walkways throughout the rest of the garden are a crushed dark gravel (see Figure 95, Figure 96, and Figure 97). The accessible paths are delineated from the mulched garden beds by low steel edges. The flower garden's planting plan is comparable to the previous (1996) flower garden plan, with some updates to plant species due to unavailability or the removal of plants that are now considered invasive.

A planting calendar is included in the 2020 Landscape Management Plan. At the time of survey in June 2023, plants within the flower garden included *Celosia,* boxwood (*Buxus* sp.), roses (*Rosa* sp.), marigolds (*Asteraceae* sp.), coneflowers (*Echinacea purpurea*), and black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia hirta*), among other flowers and plants.



Figure 93. White picket fence around the flower garden (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 94. Flower garden pathway along the picket fence, looking north (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 95. Flower garden central walkway, looking south (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 96. (right) Flower garden central walkway, looking north (Urban Heritage Project 2023).

Figure 97. (below) Curvilinear pathways through the flower garden, looking southwest (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



KITCHEN GARDEN

On the north side of the plantation house and work yard is the kitchen garden (see Figure 98 and Figure 99). The kitchen garden is used as an active vegetable garden, covering approximately 8,000 square feet, and maintained by volunteers from Arlington Friends of Urban Agriculture who participate in the Plot Against Hunger program. The Plot Against Hunger program "collects fresh produce from gardens at homes, faith-based organizations, schools, and community gardens, and gleans produce at local farms to donate to local food pantries for our neighbors in need of supplemental groceries" (Arlington Food Assistance Center 2022).

During the rehabilitation, the walkways of the kitchen garden were formalized and reconfigured to create a central north-south walkway through the center of the garden (akin to the historic alignment of the path through the center of the garden) and non-historic perimeter walkways on the east and west sides of the garden, leading away from the center axis (see Figure 100 and Figure 101).

Figure 98. Vegetation within the kitchen garden, looking south. The north enslaved quarters is visible in background, outside the garden fence (Urban Heritage Project 2023).





Figure 99. Vegetation within the kitchen garden, looking south/southeast. The north enslaved quarters and the plantation house are visible in the background (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 100. Kitchen garden central walkway, looking north, with apple trees growing on either side (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 101. Pathway through the kitchen garden, looking north from the main garden gate (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 102. View of the kitchen garden, looking east. Note that the perimeter pathways do not align (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 103. View of the gravel path along the east side of the kitchen garden, looking north, with holly hedge border visible on right (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 104. The kitchen garden path continues north to access the bookstore and museum area beyond the hedges (Urban Heritage Project 2023).

The central walkway is on axis with the main walkway though the flower garden and is also composed of a light-colored porous aggregate hardscape. The pathways along the outsides of the kitchen garden are a crushed dark gravel. The perimeter walkways do not align perfectly to create a rectangle around the periphery of the Kitchen Garden, but rather are slightly staggered on either side of the main walkway. (see Figure 102 and Figure 103). Five apple trees were planted on either side of the kitchen garden's central walkway to create an allée (10 trees total) through the main north-south axis of the kitchen garden (see Figure 100). The garden is enclosed by a white picket fence on the west and south sides and part of the east side. A holly hedge constitutes the remaining boundary on the east side and all of the north side of the garden; a few hollies were replanted during the rehabilitation, while all other hollies were retained (see Figure 101, Figure 102, and Figure 103). The main walkway through the kitchen garden continues north through a break in the holly hedges to access the bookstore and museum area (see Figure 104).

A list of period-appropriate plants is included in the 2020 Landscape Management Plan. At the time of survey in June 2023, plants within the kitchen garden included sunflowers, raspberries, kale, peas, corn, squash, tomatoes, and broccoli, among other plants.

BOOKSTORE AND MUSEUM AREA

Located north of the kitchen garden, a bookstore was added onto the existing comfort station. The façade was updated and softened with the addition of the pergola, which has been planted with vines (see Figure 104 and Figure 105). New plantings were installed west/northwest of the existing building and south of the addition.

The museum is located southeast of the bookstore. New plantings were added on the north side of the museum during the rehabilitation.



Figure 105. View along the central walkway leading to the bookstore, looking north. The bookstore addition marks the terminus for the path. The museum building is located out of frame, to the right of the addition (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 106. View of the bookstore and addition, facing west/northwest (Urban Heritage Project 2023).

CHANGES ALONG SHERMAN DRIVE

Sherman Drive travels along the west side of the developed portion of the Arlington House grounds and provides vehicle access to the historic site (and portions of ANC). Tourist shuttles that transport visitors from Arlington National Cemetery's Welcome Center arrive at Arlington House via Sherman Drive. Although Sherman Drive (and adjacent sidewalk) is owned and managed by ANC, it is how the majority of visitors approach the NPS site.

Between Sherman Drive and the flower garden, a set of concrete stairs was repaired and widened during the rehabilitation to provide access to the main developed area of the historic site (see Figure 107). A new accessible ramp was added immediately south of the stairs (see Figure 108 and Figure 109). On either side of the stairs and access ramp, sloped grass panels mark the change in grade from Sherman Drive to the elevated grounds around the plantation house. A path leads from the stairs and ramp into the historic site on the south side of the south enslaved quarters and north side of the flower garden (see Figure 110 and Figure 111).

A paved sidewalk runs north along the east side of Sherman Drive from approximately the James Tanner Amphitheater (outside the project boundaries) to an area west of the south end of the rear work yard (though on a different grade). Benches were added along the sidewalk for visitors waiting for the shuttle back to the Welcome Center. A bluestone stairway that connects the paved sidewalk on Sherman Drive to the plantation house grounds at a higher grade was added during the rehabilitation (see Figure 112 and Figure 113). The stairway site previously served as a driveway access point to the rear yard; it was removed to



Figure 107. Stairway leading into the rear work yard from the Sherman Drive (Urban Heritage Project 2023).

eliminate operational use of parking behind the plantation house and in front of the quarters.

On either side of the stairs are mulched areas with plantings added during the rehabilitation (see Figure 114 and Figure 115). Within the sloped mulch beds are several dense plantings of beauty berry (*Callicarpa americana*), fragrant sumac (*Rhus aromatica*), and three new serviceberry trees (*Amelanchier arborea*), in addition to other tree plantings.

Where the sidewalk ends just north of the stairway, there is a wider, irregularly shaped maintenance pull-off composed of roll curb with grass pavers, to be used for service vehicles and administrative use (see Figure 116). Further north on the east side of Sherman Drive is a mechanical bunker that was installed by 2012 (see Figure 117). Dense clusters of trees north and south of the bunker help to screen the structure; they include white oaks (*Quercus alba*), red oaks (*Quercus rubra*), mulberry (*Morus alba*), elms (*Ulmus* sp.), black maples (*Acer nigrum*), and tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), among others (see Figure 118).



Figure 108. View of Sherman Drive (at right of photograph), with visitor benches along the sidewalk and a set of stairs leading from the drive into the developed area of the historic site (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 109. Benches on Sherman Drive sidewalk for visitors awaiting the shuttle (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 110. The walkway from the Sherman Drive stairs/ramp leads to the central developed portion of the historic site. The flower garden is visible on the right, and the south enslaved quarters and the mansion are visible in the background (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 111. The pathway from Sherman Drive approaching the central developed area, with the south enslaved quarters visible on the left and the flower garden visible on the upper right (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 112. View of the stairway from Sherman Drive sidewalk to the developed area of the historic site, looking east (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 113. Stairway from the Sherman Drive sidewalk, with plantings visible on either side (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 114. Plantings in the sloped mulch bed between Sherman Drive and the rear work yard (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 115. Plantings in the sloped mulch bed between Sherman Drive and the rear work yard (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 116. Maintenance pull-off along Sherman Drive (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 117. Mechanical bunker on Sherman Drive, installed in the early 2010s and partially screened by shrubs and trees (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 118. Mechanical bunker along Sherman Drive with surrounding vegetation (Urban Heritage Project 2023).

SITEWIDE VEGETATION

Several mature trees were impacted by the rehabilitation process due to inadequate tree protection and impacts from trenching. Additionally, some vegetation that obscured views was removed.

Rehabilitation work included the addition of several new plantings. Shrubs and trees were added to the sloped mulch beds between the Sherman Drive sidewalk and the rear work yard (see Figure 112, Figure 113, Figure 114 and Figure 115). Two trees were added to the south side of the plantation house (see Figure 119). Additionally, several trees were added east of the bookstore and near the museum (see Figure 120 and Figure 121). On the west side of the south enslaved quarters, a pre-rehabilitation gravel path was replaced by grass and shrubs (see Figure 122).

As noted in the kitchen garden section, the holly hedge that establishes the northern boundary of the kitchen garden was replanted during the rehabilitation (see Figure 103). Ten fruit trees were planted along the main walkway through the kitchen garden (see Figure 100).



Figure 119. Young magnolia tree planted on south side of the plantation house (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 120. Trees planted during the rehabilitation located near the bookstore and comfort station (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 121. Plantings near the museum, north of the kitchen garden (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 122. Grass and plantings on the south side of the south enslaved quarters (Urban Heritage Project 2023).

SITEWIDE WAYSIDES AND SIGNAGE

Beginning in 2006, Arlington House underwent updates to the interpretation of the site, with the intention to be more inclusive. New waysides were added to the site during the rehabilitation. Today, there are a total of 15 waysides within the landscape surrounding Arlington House, 13 of which were added during the rehabilitation. The NPS and the Family Circle reviewed all of the wayside panels inside and outside of the house, creating a prioritized list for revision. At the time of report creation, the park has initiated a project to revise the three highest priority exterior wayside panels.

The existing waysides include the following headings (see Figure 123, Figure 124, and Figure 125):

- Division and Reunification (there are two versions of this sign in the landscape)
- The Gray Family
- Arlington Woods (updated from a previous Arlington Woods wayside)
- Hallowed Ground
- Path to Freedom
- Growing Season
- Piecing the Past Together
- Platform of Power
- Kingdom of my Childhood (wayside present prior to rehabiliation)
- Long Haul
- Paying Tribute

There is also a tactile plaza interpretive element (with the heading "Division and Reunification") for the visually impaired, located north of the flower garden; this element was added during the rehabilitation (see Figure 126).

Additionally, there are eight wayfinding signs to orient visitors, and two standard brown NPS-branded identity signs for the historic site, one of which is outside the project area on ANC-managed land (see Figure 127). There are also a limited number of portable, two-sided poster displays used for sharing temporary or changing information. The NPS is also experimenting with placement of a table with materials (e.g., NPS stamps, maps, brochures, Junior Ranger Programs, pop-up displays).

Figures 128-131 depict the proposed conditions from National Capital Planning Commission File #7738, Preliminary and Final Site and Building Plans for Arlington House, 2017.



Figure 123. View facing south of the wayside addressing the Freedman's Village located at the southern end of the flower garden, overlooking Arlington National Cemetery (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 124. Wayside near the flower garden (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 125. Wayside at the south enslaved quarters (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 126. Tactile wayside feature located north of the flower garden. View looking west/northwest (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 127. Wayfinding signage upon entering historic site from Sherman Drive. View looking north (Urban Heritage Project 2023).

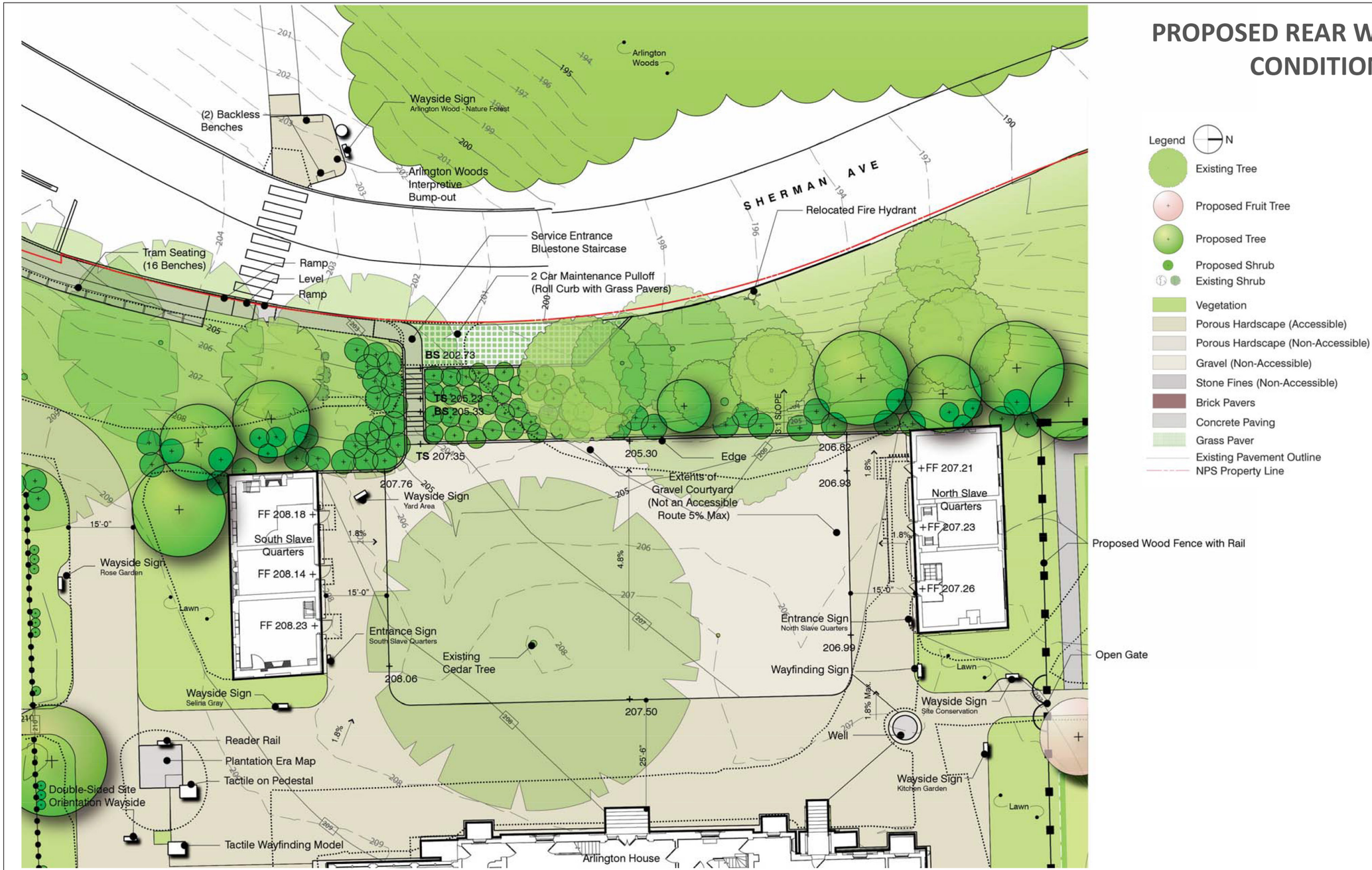


Figure 128. Proposed Rear Work Yard Conditions (Source: GWWO, Inc. and WRT/ Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC, "Rehabilitate the Historic Arlington House and Grounds," Commission of Fine Arts Submission for Final Approval, March 2017).

PROPOSED FRONT WALKWAY CONDITIONS

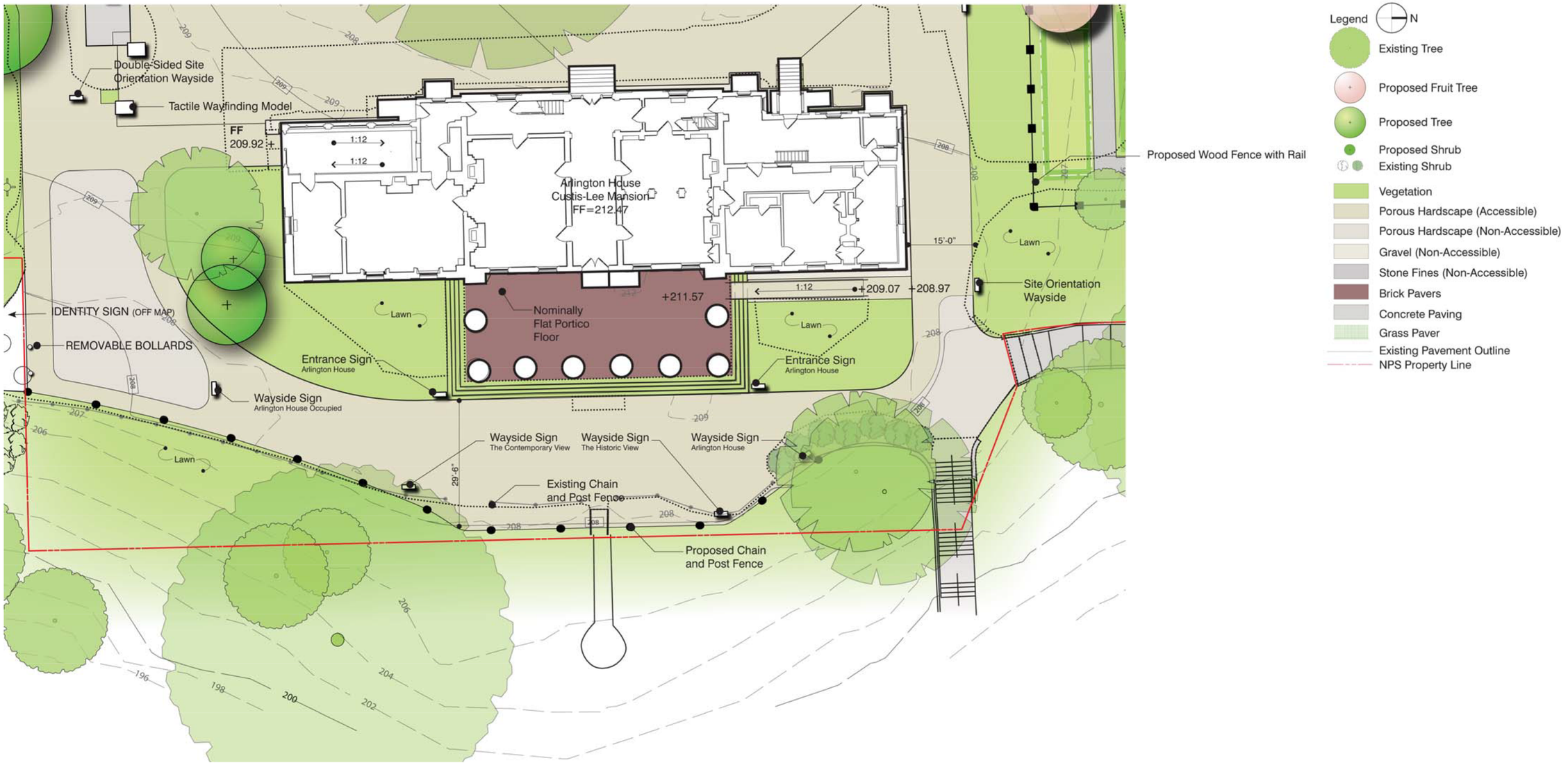


Figure 129. Proposed Front Walkway Conditions (Source: GWWO, Inc. and WRT/ Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC, "Rehabilitate the Historic Arlington House and Grounds," Commission of Fine Arts Submission for Final Approval, March 2017).

PROPOSED KITCHEN GARDEN CONDITIONS



Figure 130. Proposed Kitchen Garden Conditions (Source: GWWO, Inc. and WRT/ Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC, "Rehabilitate the Historic Arlington House and Grounds," Commission of Fine Arts Submission for Final Approval, March 2017).

PROPOSED FLOWER GARDEN AND SHERMAN DRIVE ENTRANCE CONDITIONS

In addition to the new entry path and stair, a bump-out for the main entry sign will be provided, to ease pedestrian congestion on the primary path.

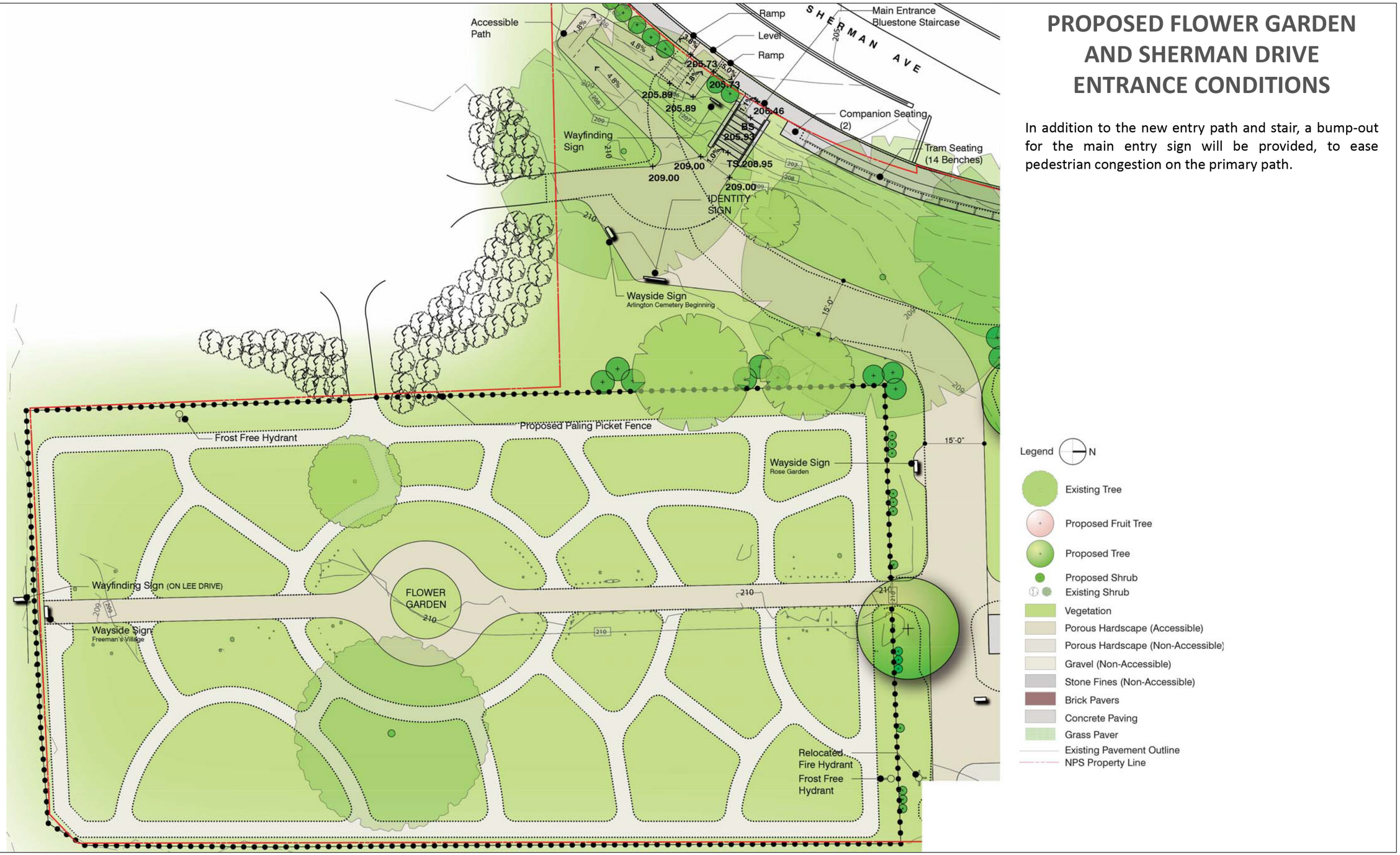


Figure 131. Proposed Flower Garden and Sherman Drive Entrance Conditions (Source: GWWO, Inc. and WRT/ Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC, "Rehabilitate the Historic Arlington House and Grounds," Commission of Fine Arts Submission for Final Approval, March 2017).



Recommendations for Documentation Updates + Re-Evaluations

Recommendations for Documentation Updates + Re-Evaluations

Based on the research and analysis conducted for this Part 1 assessment, this CLR recommends several updates to the existing documentation—including the boundaries, and the periods and areas of significance—and re-evaluation of existing features. Although we recognize that these updates are not yet in place, and will require further study, they help inform the treatment recommendations in the Part 2.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVISED BOUNDARIES

The boundaries of the Arlington House National Register Historic District should be revised and expanded to include the administrative area, including all associated buildings and landscape features, based on current use and function of this area.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVISED SIGNIFICANCE + EVALUATION

This Cultural Landscape Report adopts a period of significance from 1802 through 1935 for the Arlington House cultural landscape; this period aligns with the existing National Register period of significance for the site. The period begins with the construction of Arlington House by enslaved persons and concludes with the first major restoration of the house and grounds. At the direction of Congress, the War Department restored Arlington House and grounds as a historic site, completed in 1935. The historic site is a physical link to the decisions and ideology associated with those early restoration efforts. There is also a period of significance from 3000 through 1200 BCE in association with locally significant, intact archeological sites that have yielded or have the potential to reveal important information about prehistoric occupation and use of the area.

Arlington House is significant at the National level under Criteria A, B, C, and D, in addition to Criteria Consideration F, in the areas of Architecture; Landscape Architecture; Ethnic Heritage – Black; Politics/Government; Archeology; Military; Social History; Conservation/Historic Preservation; and Commemoration.

Although this National Register-listed period of significance already recognizes decades of history, change, and significance after the Custis and Lee families' affiliation with the landscape, the landscape's existing conditions, treatment, and interpretation do not necessarily address that full scope.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVISED INVENTORY + EVALUATION OF FEATURES

Given the extensive recent changes to the landscape—particularly during the 2018-2021 rehabilitation campaign—the cultural landscape needs an updated inventory of existing features (such an inventory is beyond the scope of this modified CLR process). As the period and areas of significance are revised, the updated list of features may require re-evaluation. For example, while the NPS administrative buildings were evaluated as non-contributing in the previous report, this CLR presumes that a re-evaluation may consider them to be contributing features based on the expanded period of significance.

Below are a series of charts noting key features within the Arlington House landscape according to landscape characteristic. (An updated CLI may identify additional features; these charts are not exhaustive.) The charts record whether the features were included in the 2009 CLI analysis and evaluation, and, in certain instances, why features listed in the 2009 report are not evaluated for this report. Recommended evaluation updates are noted with "Presumed Contributing" and "Presumed Non-contributing."

Table 2. Natural Systems and Features - Documented Features and Recommended Updates

Feature	Date Established	Featured Evaluated in 2009 CLI?	Contributing Status as of 2024	Related FMSS Records
Arlington Woods	N/A	Yes (Arlington Woods is inventoried under Land Use as Contributing)	Contributing	N/A
Spring-fed stream in Arlington Woods	N/A	No	Presumed contributing	N/A
Geomorphology of the western edge of the coastal plain, east of the fall line	N/A	No	NA (not managed by NPS)	N/A
Soils (USDA classification is Arlington National Cemetery)	NA	No	NA (not managed by NPS)	N/A

Table 3. Topography - Documented Features and Recommended Updates

FEATURE	DATE ESTABLISHED	FEATURED EVALUATED IN 2009 CLI?	CONTRIBUTING STATUS AS OF 2024	RELATED FMSS RECORDS
Flat hilltop upon which buildings and grounds are located	c. 1801	No	Presumed contributing	N/A
Arlington Woods ravine	NA	No	Presumed contributing	N/A
Change in grade between main developed area and Sherman Drive	c. 1864	No	Presumed contributing (currently a steeper slope than prior to the rehabilitation)	N/A
Slope of grass turf between admin area and plantation house area	NA	No	Presumed contributing	N/A

Table 4. Land Use - Documented Features and Recommended Updates

Feature	Date Established	Featured Evaluated in 2009 CLI?	Contributing Status as of 2024	Related FMSS Records
Interpretation	1925	Yes ("Use of Potting Shed as Interpretive Center" considered Non-contributing)	Presumed contributing (represents a recommended update from previous documentation)	N/A
Commemoration	1802 (commemoration of G. Washington?); 1925	No	Presumed contributing	N/A
Administration	1861 (US Army)	No (although Land Use in CLI included the Curatorial Facility and Old Administration Building as Non-contributing)	Presumed contributing	N/A
Agriculture	Early 1800s	Yes (listed as Vegetable Garden and Flower Garden) - Contributing	Contributing	N/A
Additional Land Use Features Listed in 2009 CLI				
Features		**Contributing Status as of 2009**	**Why no longer included as of 2024**	
Arlington Woods		Contributing	Moved to Natural Systems + Features	N/A

Table 5. Spatial Organization - Documented Features and Recommended Updates

FEATURE	DATE ESTABLISHED	FEATURED EVALUATED IN 2009 CLI?	CONTRIBUTING STATUS AS OF 2024	RELATED FMSS RECORDS
Relationships between plantation house, enslaved quarters, work yard, flower garden, kitchen garden, and museum and bookstore to the north	c. 1802-1818	Yes (listed as "open yard area") – Contributing	Contributing	Flower Garden FMSS Location: 26440 FMSS Asset: 3100 FMSS Name: Arlington House South Flower Garden Kitchen Garden FMSS Location: FMSS Asset: 3100 FMSS Name: Arlington House Vegetable Garden
Administrative and curatorial area	Early 1900s	No	Presumed contributing	N/A
Arlington Woods	NA	Yes – Contributing	Contributing	N/A
Additional Land Use Features Listed in 2009 CLI				
FEATURES		**CONTRIBUTING STATUS AS OF 2009**	**WHY NO LONGER INCLUDED AS OF 2024**	
Building Locations		Contributing	Included within overall spatial relationship	N/A
Open Yard Area		Contributing	Included within overall spatial relationship	N/A
Garden Terrace Topography		Contributing	Unclear why categorized under Spatial Organization	N/A

Table 6. Cluster Arrangement - Documented Features and Recommended Updates

Feature	Date Established	Featured Evaluated in 2009 CLI?	Contributing Status as of 2024	Related FMSS Records
Cluster of Arlington House plantation house, north enslaved quarters, south enslaved quarters, and Open Work Yard	c. 1802-1818	Yes – Contributing	Contributing	N/A
Cluster of bookstore/ restrooms and museum	Postdates period of significance	No	Presumed non-contributing	N/A
Administrative area	c. 1907	Yes – Contributing	Contributing	N/A

Table 7. Views and Vistas - Documented Features and Recommended Updates

FEATURE	DATE ESTABLISHED	FEATURED EVALUATED IN 2009 CLI?	CONTRIBUTING STATUS AS OF 2024	RELATED FMSS RECORDS
Views from Arlington House front plaza to Arlington National Cemetery, the Potomac River, and Washington, D.C.	By 1818	Yes – Contributing	Contributing	N/A
Views to President John F. Kennedy grave	1965-1967	Yes – Non-contributing	Non-contributing	N/A
Views within work yard punctuated by the plantation house and north and south enslaved quarters	c. 1802-1818	No	Presumed contributing	N/A
Views between kitchen garden, rear work yard, and flower garden	c. 1802-1818	Yes – Contributing	Contributing	N/A
View north and south along Custis Walk (front plaza area)	By c. 1865	Yes – Contributing	Contributing	N/A

Table 8. Circulation - Documented Features and Recommended Updates

Feature	Date Established	Featured Evaluated in 2009 CLI?	Contributing Status as of 2024	Related FMSS Records
East-west oriented walkway between Custis Walk and Sherman Avenue	c. 1802-1861	Yes – Contributing	Contributing	N/A
Main walkway through the flower garden	c. 1802-1861	Yes – Contributing	Contributing	N/A
Main walkway through the kitchen garden	c. 1802-1861	Yes – Contributing	Contributing	N/A
Secondary walkways through the kitchen garden	2018-2021	No	Presumed non-contributing	N/A
Secondary walkways through the flower garden	1960s rehabilitation	No	Presumed non-contributing	N/A
Walkway from kitchen garden to bookstore and museum area	c. 1802-1861	Yes – Contributing	Contributing	N/A
Rear work yard	c. 1802-1818	Yes (categorized under Land Use as Contributing)	Contributing	N/A
Front plaza area	c. 1802-1818	Yes – Contributing	Contributing	N/A
Stairs and ramp from Sherman Drive to work yard	c. 2018-2021	No	Presumed non-contributing	N/A
Path from Sherman Drive to the admin area next to Arlington Woods	c. 1880-1929	No	Presumed contributing	N/A
Sidewalks around the Old Administration Building	c. 2016	No	Presumed non-contributing	N/A
Sidewalk in Administrative Area (from Old Administration Building towards the Curatorial Facility)	c. 2016	No	Presumed non-contributing	N/A
Brick sidewalk to the Curatorial Facility	Unknown	No	Unknown	N/A

Table 9. Buildings and Structures - Documented Features and Recommended Updates

FEATURE	DATE ESTABLISHED	FEATURED EVALUATED IN 2009 CLI?	CONTRIBUTING STATUS AS OF 2024	RELATED FMSS RECORDS
Arlington House	1802/1803-1818	Yes – Contributing	Contributing	CRIS-HS Resource ID: 000059 FMSS Location: 26432 FMSS Asset: 4100 FMSS Name: Arlington, The House
North Enslaved Quarters	Early 1800s (1803-1818)	Yes – Contributing	Contributing	CRIS-HS Resource ID: 000060 FMSS Location: 26435 FMSS Asset: 4100 FMSS Name: Arlington House North Slave Quarters
South Enslaved Quarters	Early 1800s (c. 1810)	Yes – Contributing	Contributing	CRIS-HS Resource ID: 011956 FMSS Location: 26436 FMSS Asset: 4100 FMSS Name: Arlington House South Slave Quarters
Museum (potting shed)	1888 (date in NR)	Yes – Contributing	Contributing	CRIS-HS Resource ID: 011957 FMSS Location: 26433 FMSS Asset: 4100 FMSS Name: Arlington House Museum
Bookstore / visitor restrooms	c. 2010 and reconfigured during 2018-2021 rehab	No	Presumed non-contributing	N/A
Old Administration Building	1907	Yes – Non-contributing	Presumed contributing	FMSS Location: 26434 FMSS Asset: 4100 FMSS Name: Arlington House Administration Building (OAB)
Curatorial Facility (not in NR)	1941	Yes – Non-contributing	Presumed contributing	FMSS Location: 26438 FMSS Asset: 4100 FMSS Name: Arlington House Curatorial Building
Building 314	1931	No	Presumed contributing	N/A
Mechanical bunker	2012	No	Presumed non-contributing	FMSS Location: 113328 FMSS Asset: 4100 FMSS Name: Arlington House Mechanical (MEP Bunker)

Feature	Date Established	Featured Evaluated in 2009 CLI?	Contributing Status as of 2024	Related FMSS Records
Stairs and handrails	c. 2018-2021	Yes (under Small-scale features) – Non-contributing	Non-contributing	N/A
Picket fence – Kitchen Garden	c. 1802-1861	Yes (listed as non-contributing)	Presumed non-contributing, but compatible	N/A
Picket fence – Flower Garden	1940s	Yes – Non-contributing	Presumed non-contributing, but compatible	N/A
Additional Land Use Features Listed in 2009 CLI				
Features		**Contributing Status as of 2009**	**Why no longer included as of 2024**	
Comfort Station		Non-contributing	Removed	N/A
Maintenance facility		Non-contributing	Formerly north of the museum; removed	N/A

Table 10. Vegetation - Documented Features and Recommended Updates

FEATURE	DATE ESTABLISHED	FEATURED EVALUATED IN 2009 CLI?	CONTRIBUTING STATUS AS OF 2024	RELATED FMSS RECORDS
Deodar cedar tree in work yard	1874	Yes – Contributing	Contributing	N/A
Cedar trees north of the plantation house, east of the kitchen garden	Possibly added during 1930s rehabilitation; further research required	No	Undetermined	N/A
Mulch tree bed for deodar cedar	Postdates period of significance	No	Presumed non-contributing	N/A
Turf around plantation house and enslaved quarters	There during the period of significance; re-established during Rehabilitation	No	Presumed non-contributing, but compatible	N/A
Flower garden plant varieties (including historic rose cultivars)	Current varieties date to rehabilitation but reflect historic varieties	No	Presumed non-contributing, but compatible	N/A
Kitchen garden plant varieties	Current varieties date to rehabilitation but reflect historic varieties	No	Presumed non-contributing, but compatible	N/A
Fruit tree allée in kitchen garden (all apple trees)	Current allée dates to restoration, but reflects the allée present during the historic period.	No	Presumed non-contributing, but compatible (The allée configuration is historic, but the tree type is not.)	N/A
Holly hedge border around three sides of the kitchen garden	1940s	No	Presumed non-contributing	N/A
Shrub and tree plantings from the rehabilitation	2018-2021	No	Presumed non-contributing	N/A
Turf south of Arlington Woods (sloped grassy area)	c.1861-1865	No	Presumed non-contributing, but compatible	N/A
Witness trees in Arlington Woods	NA	Yes – Contributing	Contributing	N/A

Table 11. Small-Scale Features - Documented Features and Recommended Updates

Feature	Date Established	Featured Evaluated in 2009 CLI?	Contributing Status as of 2024	Related FMSS Records
Interpretive signage	Varied, postdates the period of significance and includes 2018-2021 rehabilitation	Yes (listed as signage) – Contributing	Non-contributing, but compatible	N/A
Wayfinding signage	Varied, postdates the period of significance and includes 2018-2021 rehabilitation	Yes (listed as signage) – Non-contributing	Non-contributing	N/A
Benches	Postdate the period of significance	Yes – Non-contributing	Non-contributing	N/A
Cut rectangle / mounting stone	c. 1833	Yes – Contributing	Contributing	N/A
Utility features	Postdates period of significance	Yes – Non-contributing	Non-contributing	N/A
Trash receptacles	Postdates period of significance	Yes – Non-contributing	Non-contributing	N/A
Curbing	Postdates period of significance	Yes – Non-contributing	Non-contributing	N/A
Drinking fountains (built into restroom building)	c. 2018-2021	Yes – Non-contributing	Non-contributing	N/A
Fire hydrants	Postdates period of significance	Yes – Non-contributing	Non-contributing	N/A
Concrete square in Flower Garden	Postdates period of significance	No	Presumed non-contributing	N/A

FEATURE	DATE ESTABLISHED	FEATURED EVALUATED IN 2009 CLI?	CONTRIBUTING STATUS AS OF 2024	RELATED FMSS RECORDS
Additional Land Use Features Listed in 2009 CLI				
FEATURES		**CONTRIBUTING STATUS AS OF 2009**	**WHY NO LONGER INCLUDED AS OF 2024**	
Planters		Non-contributing	Relocated next to Old Administration Building	N/A
Concrete and stone pads		Non-contributing	Formerly under benches; no longer present	N/A
Stone tree wells		Non-contributing	Formerly in Arlington Woods; no longer present	N/A
Tombstone riprap		Non-contributing	Formerly lined the stream within Arlington Woods; no longer present	N/A

Table 12. Constructed Water Features - Documented Features and Recommended Updates. (Note: This feature is mapped in Drawing 7, alongside the Buildings and Structures.

Feature	Date Established	Featured Evaluated in 2009 CLI?	Contributing Status as of 2024	Related FMSS Records
Well	c. 1850s (visible in drawings); covered stone well head from the 1930s	Yes – (Underground portion of the well is listed under Buildings and Structures in CLI as Contributing. Stone well head listed under Small-scale features in 2009, listed as Non-contributing)	Contributing	Location: 39933 Asset: 7100 Name in FMSS Data: Arlington House Historic Well

Table 13. Archeological Sites - Documented Features and Recommended Updates

FEATURE	DATE ESTABLISHED	FEATURED EVALUATED IN 2009 CLI?	CONTRIBUTING STATUS AS OF 2024	RELATED FMSS RECORDS
Site 44AR0017 (all of developed area, including south enslaved quarters, west room recent discovery)	Period of significance	No	Presumed contributing	FMSS Location: 27333 FMSS Asset: 3100 FMSS Name: Arlington House Grounds 3100 (site) 27.91 acres
Site 44AR0032	Period of significance	Yes (listed under Circulation) – Contributing	Contributing	FMSS Location: 27333 FMSS Asset: 3100 FMSS Name: Arlington House Grounds 3100 (site) 27.91 acres



Cultural Landscape Report

Arlington House

George Washington Memorial Pkwy
Arlington, VA

Key Features

Urban Heritage Project | PennPraxis
Department of Historic Preservation
Weitzman School of Design
www.cultural-landscapes.org

In cooperation with:
National Capital Region, National Park Service

Sources
1. Ortho Imagery, 2024
2. Original data: GWMP CR GIS, NPS
3. Data field-checked and collected in June, July, August 2023

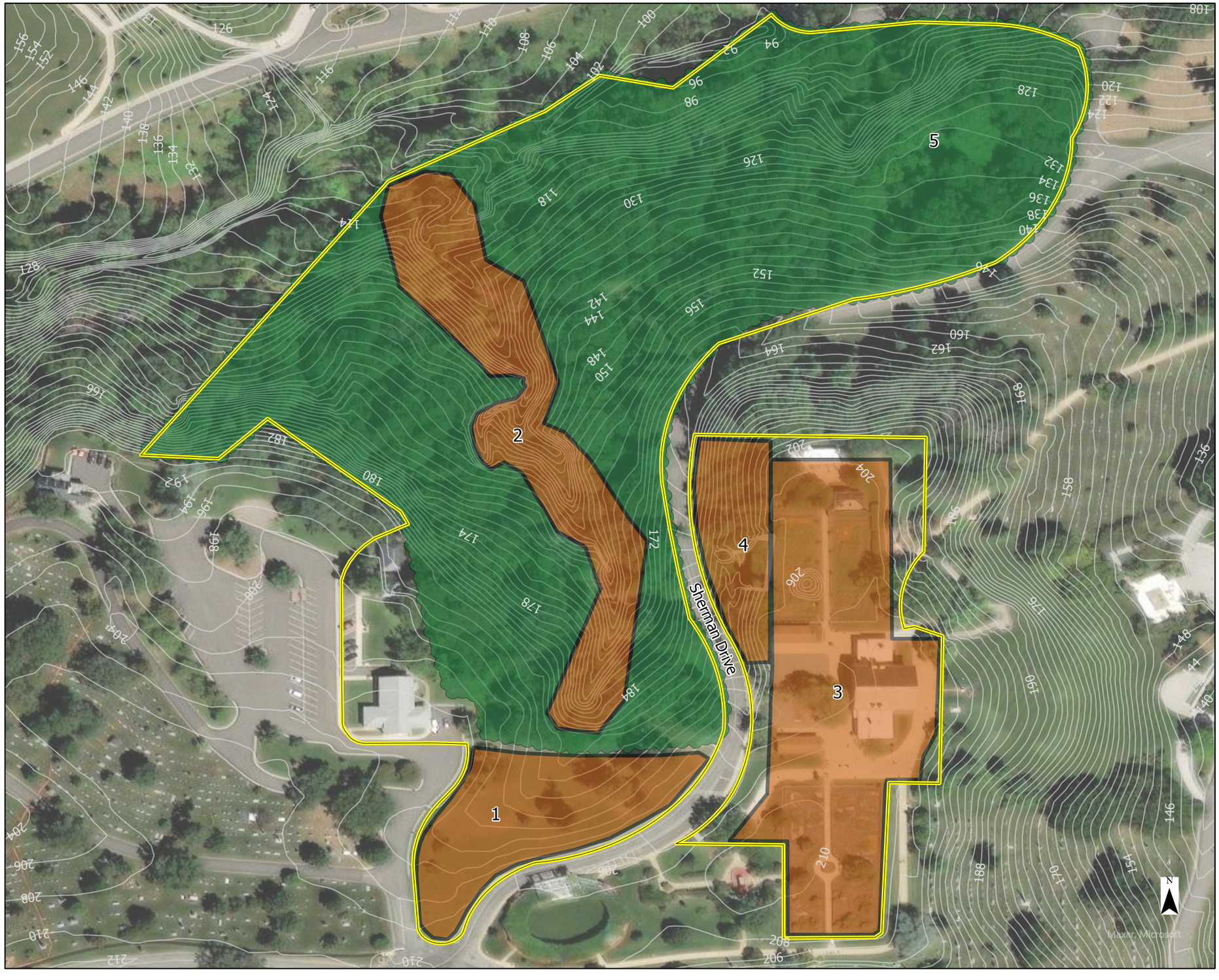
Drawn By
Meg Frisbie, ArcGIS Pro 3.2.2, 2024

Legend
- Arlington House CLR Boundary
- 1. Front Plaza
- 2. Arlington House
- 3. Rear Work Yard
- 4. North Enslaved Quarters
- 5. South Enslaved Quarters
- 6. Flower Garden
- 7. Kitchen Garden
- 8. Museum
- 9. Bookstore/Comfort Station
- 10. Arlington Woods
- 11. Old Administration Building
- 12. Building 314
- 13. Curatorial Facility
- 14. Deodar cedar

Notes
1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N

0 0.01 0.03 0.06 Miles

Drawing 2



Cultural Landscape Report

Arlington House
George Washington Memorial Pkwy
Arlington, VA

Natural Systems and Features + Topography - Existing

Urban Heritage Project | PennPraxis
Department of Historic Preservation
Weitzman School of Design
www.cultural-landscapes.org

In cooperation with:
National Capital Region, National Park Service

Sources
1. Ortho Imagery, 2024
2. Original data: GWMP CR GIS, NPS
3. Data field-checked and collected in June, July, August 2023

Drawn By
Meg Frisbie, ArcGIS Pro 3.2.2, 2024

Legend
- Arlington House CLR Boundary
- Natural Systems, Contributing
- Topography, Contributing
- Contour lines, 2 ft. intervals

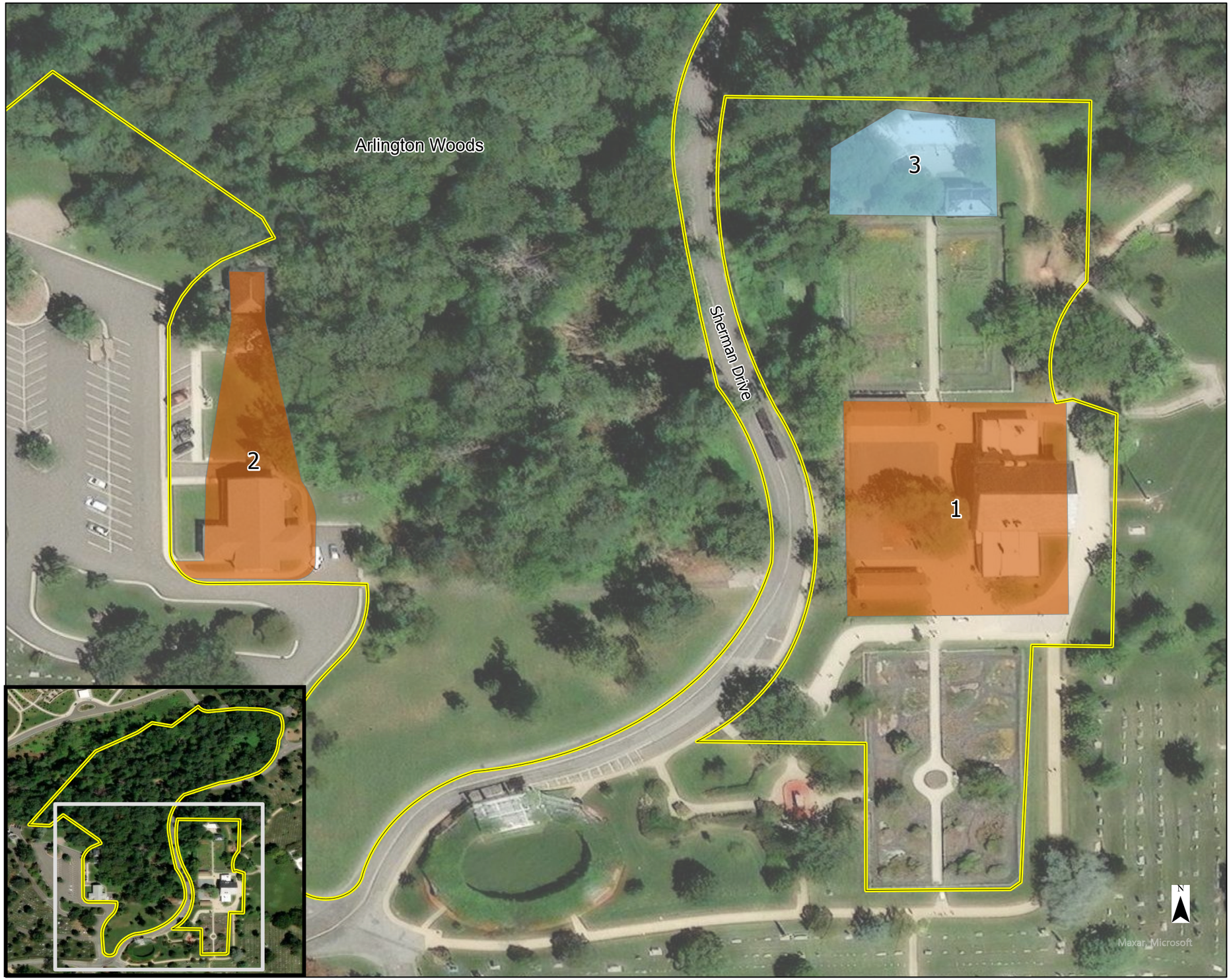
Features
1. Sloped turf^
2. Arlington Woods ravine^
3. Flat topography of hilltop^
4. Grade change from hilltop to Sherman Drive^
5. Arlington Woods

^ Feature not documented in the 2009 CLI

Notes
1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
2. Previously recorded features align with the contributing status in the 2009 CLI

0 50 100 150 200 250 300
Feet

Drawing 3



Cultural Landscape Report

Arlington House
George Washington Memorial Pkwy
Arlington, VA

Cluster Arrangement - Existing

Urban Heritage Project | PennPraxis
Department of Historic Preservation
Weitzman School of Design
www.cultural-landscapes.org

In cooperation with:
National Capital Region, National Park Service

Sources
1. Ortho Imagery, 2024
2. Original data: GWMP CR GIS, NPS
3. Data field-checked and collected in June, July, August 2023

Drawn By
Meg Frisbie, ArcGIS Pro 3.2.2, 2024

Legend
- Arlington House CLR Boundary
- Cluster Arrangement, Contributing
- Cluster Arrangement, Non-contributing

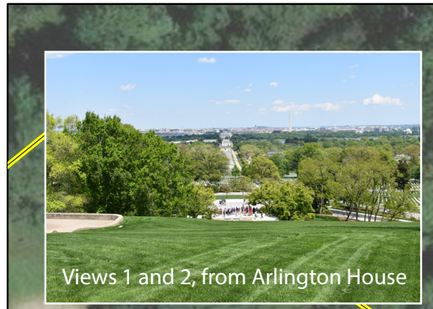
Features
1. Cluster of Plantation House, North Enslaved Quarters, South Enslaved Quarters, and Rear Work Yard
2. Administrative Area Cluster
3. Bookstore and Museum Cluster^

^ Feature not documented in the 2009 CLI

Notes
1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
2. Previously recorded features align with the contributing status in the 2009 CLI

0 25 50 100 150 200
Feet

Drawing 4











Cultural Landscape Report

Arlington House
George Washington Memorial Pkwy
Arlington, VA

Views and Vistas - Existing

Urban Heritage Project | PennPraxis
Department of Historic Preservation
Weitzman School of Design
www.cultural-landscapes.org

In cooperation with:
National Capital Region, National Park Service

Sources
1. Ortho Imagery, 2024
2. Original data: GWMP CR GIS, NPS
3. Data field-checked and collected in June, July, August 2023

Drawn By
Meg Frisbie, ArcGIS Pro 3.2.2, 2024

Legend
- Arlington House CLR Boundary
- Views + Vistas, Contributing
- Views + Vistas, Non-contributing

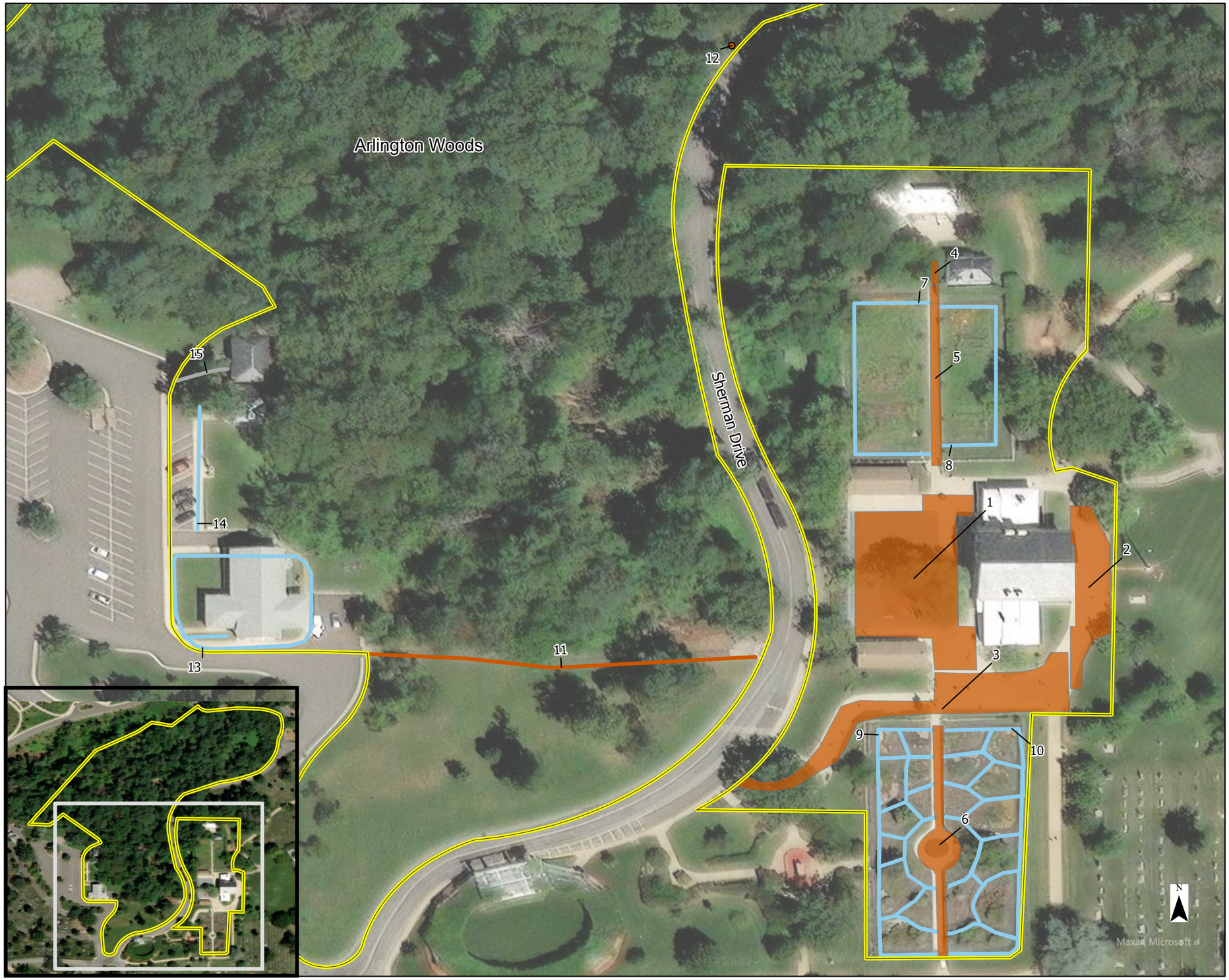
Features
1. Views from Plantation House to Arlington National Cemetery, the Potomac River, and Washington, D.C.
2. Views to John F. Kennedy gravesite
3. Views north and south in plantation house Front Plaza
4. Views between the Flower Garden, Work Yard, and Kitchen Garden
5. Views within the Work Yard^

^ Feature not documented in the 2009 CLI

Notes
1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
2. Previously recorded features align with the contributing status in the 2009 CLI

0 25 50 100 150 200
Feet

Drawing 5



Cultural Landscape Report

Arlington House

George Washington Memorial Pkwy
Arlington, VA

Circulation - Existing

Urban Heritage Project | PennPraxis
Department of Historic Preservation
Weitzman School of Design
www.cultural-landscapes.org

In cooperation with:
National Capital Region, National Park Service

Sources
1. Ortho Imagery, 2024
2. Original data: GWMP CR GIS, NPS
3. Data field-checked and collected in June, July, August 2023

Drawn By
Meg Frisbie, ArcGIS Pro 3.2.2, 2024

Legend
- Arlington House CLR Boundary
- Circulation, Contributing
- Circulation, Contributing
- Circulation, Non-contributing
- Circulation, Undetermined
- Circulation, Contributing

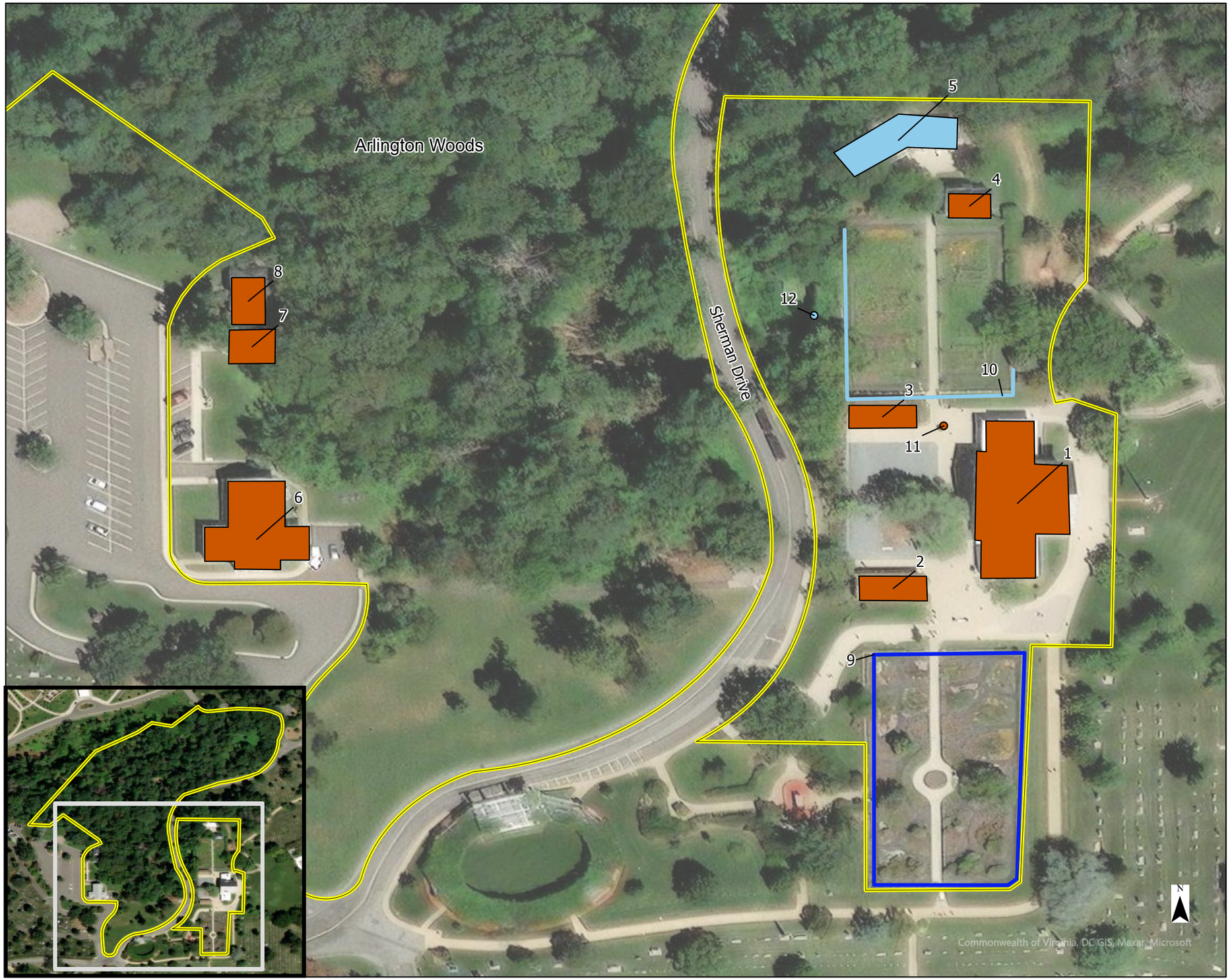
Features
1. Rear Work Yard
2. Front Plaza
3. Lee Drive and Sherman Ave Connector
4. Walkway from Kitchen Garden to Museum and Bookstore
5. Kitchen Garden Central Walkway
6. Flower Garden Central Walkway
7. Kitchen Garden Secondary Walkway - West^
8. Kitchen Garden Secondary Walkway - East^
9. Flower Garden Secondary Walkway - West^
10. Flower Garden Secondary Walkway - East^
11. Walkway to the Administrative Area^
12. Road Trace
13. Sidewalk around Old Administration Building^
14. Sidewalk in Administration Area^
15. Sidewalk to Curatorial Facility^

^ Feature not documented in the 2009 CLI

Notes
1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
2. Previously recorded features align with the contributing status in the 2009 CLI
3. The social trail visible northeast of the kitchen garden is no longer extant

0 25 50 100 150 200
Feet

Drawing 6



Cultural Landscape Report

Arlington House

George Washington Memorial Pkwy
Arlington, VA

Building + Structures - Existing

Urban Heritage Project | PennPraxis
Department of Historic Preservation
Weitzman School of Design
www.cultural-landscapes.org

In cooperation with:
National Capital Region, National Park Service

Sources
1. Ortho Imagery, 2024
2. Original data: GWMP CR GIS, NPS
3. Data field-checked and collected in June, July, August 2023

Drawn By
Meg Frisbie, ArcGIS Pro 3.2.2, 2024

Legend
- Arlington House CLR Boundary
- Buildings + Structures, Contributing
- Buildings + Structures, Non-contributing
- Buildings + Structures, Non-contributing
- Buildings + Structures, Non Contributing-Compatible
- Buildings + Structures, Contributing
- Buildings + Structures, Non-contributing

Features
1. Arlington House
2. South Enslaved Quarters
3. North Enslaved Quarters
4. Museum (Potting Shed)
5. Bookstore/Comfort Station^
6. Old Administration Building*
7. Building 314^
8. Curatorial Facility*
9. Picket fence - Flower Garden
10. Picket fence - Kitchen Garden
11. Well
12. Mechanical bunker^

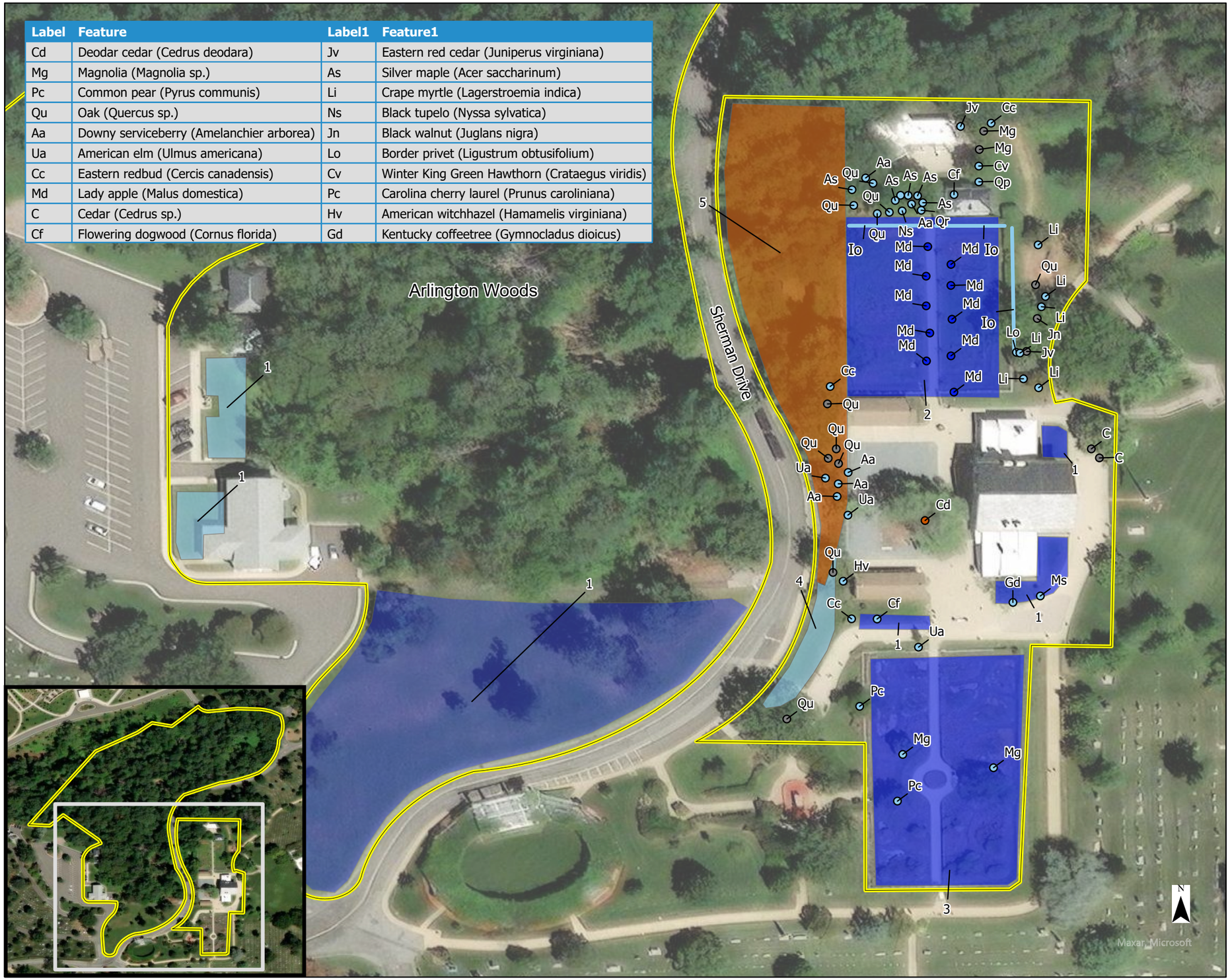
^ Feature not documented in the 2009 CLI
* Feature presumed contributing, previously recorded as non-contributing in the 2009 CLI

Notes
1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
2. Features without an asterisk align with the contributing status in the 2009 CLI

0 25 50 100 150 200
Feet

Drawing 7

Label	Feature	Label1	Feature1
Cd	Deodar cedar (Cedrus deodara)	Jv	Eastern red cedar (Juniperus virginiana)
Mg	Magnolia (Magnolia sp.)	As	Silver maple (Acer saccharinum)
Pc	Common pear (Pyrus communis)	Li	Crape myrtle (Lagerstroemia indica)
Qu	Oak (Quercus sp.)	Ns	Black tupelo (Nyssa sylvatica)
Aa	Downy serviceberry (Amelanchier arborea)	Jn	Black walnut (Juglans nigra)
Ua	American elm (Ulmus americana)	Lo	Border privet (Ligustrum obtusifolium)
Cc	Eastern redbud (Cercis canadensis)	Cv	Winter King Green Hawthorn (Crataegus viridis)
Md	Lady apple (Malus domestica)	Pc	Carolina cherry laurel (Prunus caroliniana)
C	Cedar (Cedrus sp.)	Hv	American witchhazel (Hamamelis virginiana)
Cf	Flowering dogwood (Cornus florida)	Gd	Kentucky coffeetree (Gymnocladus dioicus)



Cultural Landscape Report

Arlington House
George Washington Memorial Pkwy
Arlington, VA

Vegetation - Existing

Urban Heritage Project | PennPraxis
Department of Historic Preservation
Weitzman School of Design
www.cultural-landscapes.org

In cooperation with:
National Capital Region, National Park Service

Sources
1. Ortho Imagery, 2024
2. Original data: GWMP CR GIS, NPS
3. Data field-checked and collected in June, July, August 2023

Drawn By
Meg Frisbie, ArcGIS Pro 3.2.2, 2024

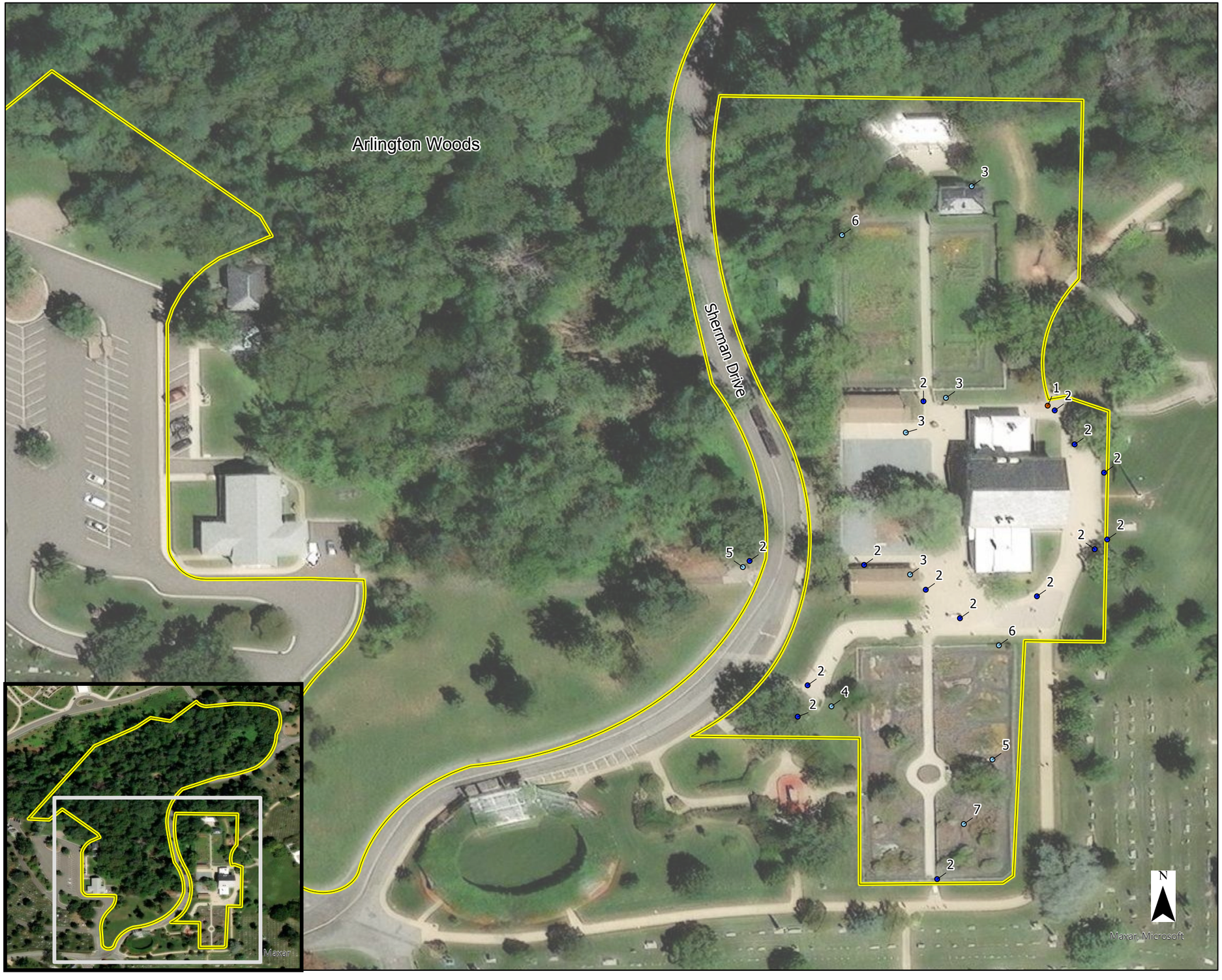
Legend
- Arlington House CLR Boundary
- Vegetation, Contributing
- Vegetation, Non-contributing
- Vegetation, Non-Contributing, Compatible
- Vegetation, Non-contributing
- Vegetation, Contributing
- Vegetation, Non-contributing
- Vegetation, Non-contributing, Compatible
- Vegetation, Undetermined

Features
1. Turf^
2. Kitchen Garden Plots
3. Flower Garden Planting Beds
4. Shrubs^
5. Planted Woods^

^ Feature not documented in the 2009 CLI

Notes
1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
2. Individual tree points focus on trees added during the 2018-2021 rehabilitation
3. All features shown in approximate scale and location from fieldwork and photographs
4. Features without an asterisk align with the contributing status in the 2009 CLI

Drawing 8



Cultural Landscape Report

Arlington House

George Washington Memorial Pkwy
Arlington, VA

Small-scale Features - Existing

Urban Heritage Project | PennPraxis
Department of Historic Preservation
Weitzman School of Design
www.cultural-landscapes.org

In cooperation with:
National Capital Region, National Park Service

Sources
1. Ortho Imagery, 2024
2. Original data: GWMP CR GIS, NPS
3. Data field-checked and collected in June, July, August 2023

Drawn By
Meg Frisbie, ArcGIS Pro 3.2.2, 2024

Legend
- Arlington House CLR Boundary
- Small-scale Features, Contributing
- Small-scale Features, Non-contributing
- Small-scale Features, Non-contributing, Compatible

Features
1. Cut rectangular stone
2. Interpretive waysides
3. Sign (wayfinding, building name, etc.)
4. NPS Identity sign
5. Bench
6. Fire hydrant
7. Concrete block^

^ Feature not documented in the 2009 CLI

Notes
1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
2. Previously recorded features align with the contributing status in the 2009 CLI

0 25 50 100 150 200
Feet

Drawing 9

Cultural Landscape Report
Arlington House

George Washington Memorial Parkway
Arlington, Virginia



Part 2

Treatment Framework | Physical Treatment Recommendations | Planning, Partnerships + Policies Recommendations

Prepared by:

Meg Frisbie
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Urban Heritage Project | Weitzman School of Design | University of Pennsylvania | Philadelphia, PA

2025



Treatment Framework

Treatment Framework

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a treatment strategy for the long-term preservation and management of Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial (Arlington House, ARHO), based on the research, inventory, and analysis conducted for Part 1 of this Cultural Landscape Report (CLR).

According to National Park Service (NPS) policy, the CLR serves as the primary supporting document guiding the treatment of a cultural landscape and is required before major interventions. Treatment is the collective set of actions taken within a cultural landscape, intended to ensure the protection and preservation of the resources and characteristics that contribute to its historic character. Treatment guidance may range from broad guidelines and principles to specific tasks. The overall goal of treatment is to provide a basis for the sound stewardship of the cultural landscape according to the National Park Service's *Cultural Resource Management Guidelines* (1997) and the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (1996).

The treatment recommendations that follow were developed through discussion and collaboration with park staff, and were refined based on a treatment workshop held virtually in May 2024. The treatment workshop included National Park Service staff from the park and region, including personnel from resource management, visitor services, exhibit specialists and curators, and GWMP's deputy superintendent.

ENABLING LEGISLATION

On May 4, 1925, the 68th United States Congress enacted Public Resolution 74, which authorized the restoration of the Custis-Lee plantation house. The house would remain under the management of the War Department and would focus on Lee's efforts to promote reconciliation after the Civil War. The enabling legislation read:

> Whereas, now honor is accorded Robert E. Lee as one of the great military leaders of history, whose exalted character, noble life, and eminent services are recognized and esteemed, and whose manly attributes of precept and example were compelling factors in cementing the American people in bonds of

> patriotic devotion and action against common external enemies in the war with Spain and in the World War, thus consummating the hope of a reunited country that would again swell the chorus of the Union. (Public Resolution 74)

In 1955, new legislation was introduced to formally recognize the restored plantation house, a national memorial to Robert E. Lee. Commemorating the forthcoming centennial of the Civil War and 90th anniversary of the surrender at Appomattox, the 84th Congress of the United States enacted Public Law 84-107, officially designating the site as the "Custis-Lee Mansion." The legislation stated:

> Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Congress of the United States, at this anniversary time, does hereby pay honor and tribute to the everlasting memory of Robert E. Lee, whose name will ever be bright in our history as a great military leader, a great educator, a great American, and a truly great man through the simple heritage of his personal traits of high character, his grandeur of soul, his unfailing strength of heart.[258]

In 1972, the 92nd United States Congress authorized the renaming of the Custis-Lee Mansion to "Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial," further affirming the site as a memorial to Robert E. Lee and removing the reference to the Custis family.[259] This action was signed into law by President Richard Nixon.

Inspired by a June 2020 *Washington Post* opinion editorial by David Rubenstein—titled "I funded the rehabilitation of this Robert E. Lee memorial. Congress, please rename it"—a Syphax family historian contacted U.S. Rep. Don Beyer (D-Va.) seeking support for a name change for the site. In December of 2020, during the 116th Congress, Representative Beyer introduced a bill to rename Arlington House.

Since 2020, with the support of the Family Circle, legislation has been re-introduced in the 117th, 118th, and 119th Congresses to redesignate the historic site as Arlington House National Historic Site. During the 117th Congress, the bill was co-sponsored by five Virginia Representatives Bobby Scott, Gerry Connolly, Abigail Spanberger, Jennifer Wexton, and Jennifer McClellan, and by D.C. Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton. In the 118th Congress, the legislation had 150 cosponsors. Within two weeks of the bill being reintroduced on February 27, 2025, in the 119th Congress, co-sponsors stood at 110 members of Congress.

DEFINITIONS OF POLICIES, GUIDELINES, AND STANDARDS

The treatment and use of the cultural landscape must be considered within a framework of applicable laws, agreements, and policies. These mandates govern a wide range of management issues, including the preservation, protection, and

interpretation of the landscape's cultural resources. Key laws, regulations, and functional requirements that apply to the recommended treatments include the following:

Treatment of the cultural landscape is subject to the **National Park Service Organic Act (1916),** which established the National Park Service and defines its purpose "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and by such a means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."[260]

The **National Historic Preservation Act of 1966**, as amended, protects buildings, sites, districts, structures, and objects that have significant scientific, historic, or cultural value. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to consider the effects of their undertakings on properties listed, or potentially eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places. All actions affecting a park's cultural resources must comply with this law, which is implemented through 36 CFR 800.

Executive Order 11593, Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment (1971), mandates that "the Federal Government shall provide leadership in preserving, restoring, and maintaining the historic and cultural environment of the Nation."

The **Commemorative Works Act (1986),** set forth at 40 U.S.C. §8901 et seq., specifies the requirements for development, approval, and location of new memorials and monuments in the District of Columbia and its environs. The Act preserves the urban design legacy of the historic L'Enfant and McMillan Plans by protecting public open space and ensuring that future memorials and monuments in areas administered by the National Park Service and the General Services Administration are appropriately located and designed. When amended in 2003, the Act established a Reserve, or no-build zone on the National Mall, a proposal called for by NCPC in its Memorials and Museums Master Plan.

The **National Park Service Resources Management Guidelines (NPS-28) (1998)** provides guidance on management and landscape preservation, including biotic systems, which are defined as plant and animal communities associated with human settlement and use. NPS-28 directs management of specimen vegetation—such as trees, shrubs, and orchards—to ensure health and vigor and, if appropriate, provide for propagation of the next generation, especially for rare plants or those unavailable in commerce. For natural systems, NPS-28

calls for managing landscape patterns to allow for natural dynamics. Exotic plant species, which are often found in cultural landscapes, should be monitored and controlled to avoid spreading and disrupting adjacent natural plant communities. In addition to biotic systems, NPS-28 states that historic circulation features are to be rehabilitated to accommodate health and safety codes in ways that minimize impact on historic character.

In 2001, Congress mandated all Civil War-era sites managed by the NPS to include that the war was fought over the issue of enslavement. The bill also encouraged NPS sites to include a more robust, detailed account of enslavement in the sites. After this directive, a new exhibit was unveiled at Arlington House in 2004 to incorporate a more detailed interpretation of the institution of enslavement, with significant changes made to the interpretation of the site during the recent rehabilitation from 2018-2021.

Arlington County has a comprehensive plan (created in 1960) that is reviewed every five years; the most recent review encompassed the period between July 1, 2016, and June 30, 2022. The purpose of the plan is to guide development of the County through the provision of high standards of public services and facilities. Goals and objectives incorporated into the plan include smart growth policies, mixed-use development, mixed-income housing, neighborhood conservation and commercial preservation. The Master Transportation Plan included in the Comprehensive Plan is intended to facilitate high quality transportation services, move more people without more traffic, and promote safety.[261]

Arlington National Cemetery develops periodic master plans, and the National Park Service provides comment on them—particularly with respect to mutual management interests. The most recent **Arlington National Cemetery Real Property Master Plan** was drafted in 2022.

Finally, according to the **George Washington Memorial Parkway Superintendent's Compendium (2023),** "no demonstrations are authorized within the Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial."[262]

SUMMARY OF MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

The purpose of Arlington House, as stated in the enabling legislation, is to "honor Robert E. Lee by recognizing his life, family, and accomplishments through the preservation, restoration, and interpretation of the historic home, furnishings, outbuildings, and grounds."[263] A foundation document for the historic site

was completed in 2014, which listed the fundamental resources and values as: Arlington House; Slave Quarters; Museums Collections; Sense of Reverence; and the Cultural Landscape of Arlington House.

The significance statements for the historic site are as follows:

- Arlington House was designated by Congress as the first national memorial to Robert E. Lee, honoring him as a great military leader and educator who fervently devoted himself to peace and reunification of the nation after the Civil War.
- Arlington House and its surrounding plantation was the permanent home for Robert E. Lee, his family, and enslaved persons, from 1831, when he married Mary Anna Randolph Custis, great granddaughter of Martha Washington, until his resignation from the U.S. Army in 1861.
- Arlington House was built by George Washington Parke Custis, the step-grandson of George Washington, as the first memorial to President Washington and a showplace for the display of many family heirlooms, known as the "Washington Treasury."
- At Arlington House, Robert E. Lee made his decision to serve Virginia and resign his commission from the U.S. Army at the onset of the Civil War, eventually becoming one of the most victorious and iconic generals in the Confederacy, and resulting in the loss of his family home.
- Arlington House and plantation became a strategic Union military headquarters in 1861 when the U.S. government occupied the site following the outbreak of the Civil War; three years later a large portion of the property was dedicated as Arlington National Cemetery, beginning a tradition of military burials that transformed the site into the nation's most sacred military shrine.
- The mature forest behind Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial has remained uncut since before George Washington Parke Custis established the plantation in 1802, providing a living link and backdrop to this historic landscape.
- Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial, museum collections continue to grow with more than 41,000 artifacts, including original artifacts associated with George and Martha Washington and one of the largest collections associated with Robert E. Lee in the United States.

VISITOR EXPECTATIONS AND LANGUAGE RESOURCE

Most recently updated in June 2024, a document titled *Visitor Expectations and Language Resource* has been established by the park to provide guidelines on how NPS staff and the public should engage with the history of Arlington House.* The introduction to the document states:

> Talking about the history and ongoing effects of the institution of racial-

* National Park Service, "Visitor Expectations and Language Resource," accessed April 26, 2024, https://www.nps.gov/arho/planyourvisit/visitor-expectations-and-language-resource.htm.

> ized slavery in America is difficult. The impacts are personal, cultural, and run deep. They connect to our families, our shared history, and our lived experiences. Having hard conversations is a critical way to digest suppressed truths and is necessary for true reconciliation of American society. To facilitate having these conversations, some shared language is necessary. We all know how good it feels when someone is "speaking our language;" we feel safe and included. By using supporting, shared language to talk about enslavement and chattel slavery, we empower ourselves and each other to create brave, curious and empathic spaces for conversation.[264]

The document emphasizes the power of listening and the power of mistakes, and includes the following *Key Messages at Arlington House* (which are further described in the *Visitor Expectations* document):

- Making space for dialogue;
- Understanding American history helps us understand the present;
- Building visibility of people who were enslaved at Arlington is essential to the story of Arlington House; and
- Changing land use by changing groups of people created layers of meaning at Arlington House.

The values of Arlington House are listed as follows:

- Honesty
- Holistic
- Dialogue
- Honor
- Accountability

The *Non-Negotiable Statements: Key Truths of Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial*, are listed as follows:

- Slavery was the primary cause of the Civil War.
- The reason why the Confederacy went to war was the preservation of the institution of chattel slavery. This may differ from the individual reasons why some men enlisted to fight for the Confederacy.
- Based on the Syphax family history and documentation including Maria Syphax's emancipation and the land gifted to her by George Washington Parke Custis, we believe that Maria Syphax was the daughter of George Washington Parke Custis and an enslaved woman named Arianna Carter. The nature of their relationship is unknown, however the power dynamics of enslavement negate the idea of consent.
- Enslaved people exercised agency in various ways within the institution of enslavement.
- There is no such thing as a "good master" as there is no good aspect of owning people.
- The term "loyal slave" is irrelevant because enslaved people did not have

a choice.

- Race was used as a justification for chattel slavery in the United States.
- Systematic oppression – over-policing of Black people, the prison industrial complex, inequitable application of laws in housing, criminal justice, education, and other social programs – in the United States today is rooted in system of race-based chattel slavery and legacy of enslavement in this country.
- The U.S. Congress established this memorial because they believed that Robert E. Lee was an advocate for peace and reunification after the War.
- We value the voices of enslaved people and their descendants to help illuminate the lives and experiences of those bound to Custis and Lee.
- Visitors will be heard but confederate-supporting ideas (e.g. the myth of the lost cause) won't be validated because they contradict the ideals of this site.

The document then provides a language resource that contrasts "the difference between words commonly used in slaveholding society, versus the language used by the National Park Service and its partners. The National Park Service uses these terms to create a brave, curious and empathic place for dialogue at Arlington House."

FAMILY CIRCLE

On April 22, 2023, descendants of the Branham, Custis, Gray, Henry, Lee, Norris, Parks, and Syphax families—a group collectively known as the Family Circle—gathered at Arlington House and signed a letter of commitment with the park. The letter states:

> Whereas, the Arlington House Plantation also known as Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial (hereinafter known as Arlington House) was established by George Washington Parke Custis in 1802 after inheriting land and enslaved people from his grandmother Martha Washington,
>
> Whereas, enslaved labor was used to build the structures, serve the enslavers, and maintain the plantation crops and livestock,
>
> Whereas, the names and the stories of the enslaved people at Arlington House have been given less agency than they deserve,
>
> Whereas, the National Park Service, the George Washington Memorial Parkway (hereinafter known as the Park) as stewards of historic spaces, has the responsibility and duty to interpret the history factually and completely,
>
> Whereas, a list of non-negotiables has been established by the Park to provide guidelines to the staff and public on how the National Park Service will engage the public when interpreting Arlington House,
>
> Whereas, with the help of the Park, after 160 years, Arlington House descendant family members have chosen to come together to form a family circle to

work on healing and repair and use their unified voice to encourage our country to do the same.

Therefore, the Park, and representatives of the Branham, Custis, Gray, Henry, Lee, Norris, Parks, and Syphax families (hereinafter known as descendant families) share a mutual interest in the preservation and interpretation of Arlington House.

The general purpose of this letter is to affirm the shared interests of the Park and descendant families in shaping and sharing how descendant family histories and legacies are presented to the public, how the national significance of Arlington House has changed and continues to change over time, and how management of Arlington House will be more accurate, inclusive, and holistic if based on collaboration between the Park and descendant families.

Both parties are guided by the Arlington House values:

- Honesty. We will speak openly, using relevant facts and always testing our assumptions about the history, ourselves, our colleagues, and our visitors.
- Holistic. We will tell the whole story of the lives of enslaved people and the institution of slavery at Arlington House, recognizing that speaking openly about this history might engender discomfort in ourselves, our colleagues, and our visitors. The story will be inclusive of multiple historical perspectives and will be grounded in current research.
- Dialogue. We will welcome the sharing of multiple perspectives from our colleagues, our collaborators, and our visitors, and will provide physical and rhetorical space for the airing of those perspectives.
- Honor. We will acknowledge and recognize the lives of those enslaved at Arlington House, with respect, humanity, empathy, and agency. We will engage with each other, our visitors, and the history in a manner that is authentic and demonstrates these core values.
- Accountability. We are committed to supporting each other in delivering this new holistic visitor experience with the necessary training, historical research, and emotional care.

SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

In order to gain a range of perspectives on the Arlington House cultural landscape, the project team completed several site visits, interviewed several stakeholders, and met with members of the Family Circle.

The project team walked the entire site with Suzanne Bouchard, GWMP Horticulturist, and Greg Cox, GWMP Museum Curator, in summer 2023. Additionally, a site visit specific to Arlington Woods was completed in February 2024, with Suzanne Bouchard, Megan Bailey (GWMP Acting Cultural Resources Manager), and Brent Steury (GWMP Natural Resources Program Manager). Blake Troxel, consulting forest ecologist for this CLR, was part of the Arlington Woods site visit, as well.

In addition to site visits, the CLR team conducted virtual engagement interviews with employees and volunteers from the NPS, Arlington National Cemetery (ANC), and with external researchers. Across the stakeholder interviews, several themes emerged, including interpretation of the site's landscape and history; operations within the kitchen garden; Arlington Woods; and coordination with Arlington National Cemetery (ANC).

Stakeholders Interviewed:

- Dr. Allison Finkelstein – Senior Historian, Arlington National Cemetery/ Soldier's and Airman's Home National Cemetery
- Caitlin Smith – Cultural Resources Program Manager, Arlington National Cemetery
- Dr. Cheryl LaRoche – Professor and co-principal investigator of the forthcoming *The Families of Arlington House: Ethnohistory Overview and Assessment of Arlington House (ARHO) Descendant Families* [in progress as of June 2025]
- Cassie Anderson – former South District Visitor Services Supervisor, George Washington Memorial Parkway, National Park Service
- Brent Steury – Natural Resources Program Manager, George Washington Memorial Parkway, National Park Service
- Mireya Stirzaker – Natural Resource Specialist, George Washington Memorial Parkway, National Park Service
- Chris Elbich – Interpretation Planner, Harpers Ferry Center, National Park Service; previously worked in interpretation at ARHO from 2015-2018
- Sandy Newton – Volunteer, Friends of Urban Agriculture/Arlington Historical Society

The project team also met virtually with members of the Family Circle in February 2025 and April 2025, and shared a draft of this CLR with the group for review. Seven members of the Family Circle provided comments that significantly informed the final version of this document.

INTERPRETATION OF THE LANDSCAPE AND HISTORY

Pre-Rehabilitation (Prior to 2018)

It was reported that the interpretation did not attempt to be particularly detailed, as the wayside format does not lend itself to depth. The scope of the waysides did not extend beyond Arlington House history and did not address the whole story of Civil War or the institution of chattel slavery. Additionally, many decisions on the landscape adhered to logistical needs, physical constraints, and visitor needs, rather than strict historical accuracy. For example, while bare soil and pea gravel are historically accurate, they are not ideal for accessibility, cleanliness, and sustainable maintenance; thus, different materials were used in the rehabilitation.

In advance of the 2018-2021 rehabilitation and related updates to the site's interpretative program, the NPS hosted several community events. Additionally, descendant family members, researchers, and subject matter experts were included in conversations with NPS. Based on all of these discussions, the NPS sought to convey the full history site in updated signage.

Post-Rehabilitation

ANC staff reported an overwhelmingly positive response from visitors to the new interpretation that opened to the public in 2021. However, they note that the new exhibits were outdated the moment the site reopened, as interpretation should not be a checkbox, but an ongoing process.

In collaboration with the Family Circle, site managers are overseeing "an interpretive 180 [degrees]" to transform the site's interpretation, adopting a different ethic and approach overall. Previously, interpretation strategies typically featured more of a lecture style, whereas now, the site's interpretive program is much more interactive and participatory to spark empathy and critical thinking.

This site is intentional in articulating non-negotiables of the site and making them clear to the public on the Arlington House website. These non-negotiables were originally created without the input of descendant families, but have been updated to reflect their input.

The park is also evaluating the appropriate process to review and update exhibits and waysides: how should changes be made on a rolling basis, and who should determine them? For example, the new exhibits essentially segregate the interpretation: the plantation house tells the stories of the Custises, and the enslaved quarters tell the story of the enslaved laborers; this strategy does not recognize the ways these spaces were used by all of the individuals living on the plantation. Interpretation is still focused on the domestic sphere of Arlington House, focusing on the enslaved who were closest to the Custis-Lee family rather than those across the entire landscape. Additionally, the current interpretation does not include an overarching context for the site or the Civil War.

Stakeholders discussed sharing decision-making power with the Family Circle's descendant families. This intention is offset by the fact that the NPS wants to be more supportive and less demanding of the descendant families, maintaining respect for their time and obligations.

Since the cemetery and the plantation house site occupy land that is a site of trauma and enslavement, multiple stakeholders posed the question of how the site

should prepare visitors to enter and move through the historic site thoughtfully. At present, there are no parameters to guide how visitors interact with the space or introduce visitors to the negative history of space they are entering. The open space, closed doors, and building elevations do little to orient the visitor to the space.

The Family Circle made the NPS aware of the "Memorializing the Enslaved in Arlington" initiative, a collaboration (in the early stages) between the Black Heritage Museum of Arlington and the Arlington Historical Society. The Family Circle proposed a collaborative effort that would integrate into the county's project. The project seeks to, "recover the largely unknown history of the county's enslaved population and to chronicle their lives. This project will help bring African American experiences to light, confront a difficult history, and honor our shared humanity."[265] A future goal of the project is to physically mark the locations in the county where slavery occurred, including at Arlington House, with plaques or "stumbling stones."

Stakeholders spoke to the goal of balancing historical accuracy with essence, of thinking beyond a tangible forensic accuracy to consider a reconciliatory truth that explores what stories have been included and excluded on the site. Interviewees also mentioned the opportunity for creative interventions in the landscape such as public art and reflective spaces—places for visitors to broadly explore self-awareness, with the hope that the future of Arlington House could hold room for innovation and improvements.

OPERATIONS WITHIN THE KITCHEN GARDEN

The kitchen garden is used as an active vegetable garden, covering approximately 8,000 square feet, and maintained by volunteers affiliated with Arlington's Friends of Urban Agriculture. Gardeners participate in the Plot Against Hunger program, which "collects fresh produce. . .to donate to local food pantries for our neighbors in need of supplemental groceries."[266] The kitchen garden produced approximately 600 pounds of food in 2023 for donations to local food banks. The kitchen garden is maintained according to the site's mssion and is a collaborative effort between NPS and the volunteers. Plot Against Hunger is not a primary partner but a secondary partner to the garden's primary use as active interpretation.

The kitchen garden is tied to other elements of the site history and ANC property, such as the former site of additional enslaved quarters downhill from the current site (towards the Potomac River). Laborers had their own gardens outside those cabins and would have had to garden at night (likely burning pitch to light their

work). Enslaved laborers grew okra, peppers, eggplant, lima beans, and white asparagus, among other crops.

Volunteers have done extensive research about the Custis, Lee, and Civil War eras to better understand the history of the garden and make sure the plantings reflect what would have been grown during those periods. The apple trees, which were planted along the walkway during the 2018-2021 rehabilitation, are not accurate; they should be stone fruit trees. Potatoes were grown during the Custis era and a popular crop to receive at food banks. Kitchen garden volunteers adopt sustainable garden practices according to the Sankofa method, a farming method that involves looking to the past to inform the future, including the use of hoes rather than plows. They do not use power tools.

Historically, there were several structures (e.g. cold frame, rabbit warren, ice house) within the kitchen garden that are no longer present. Stakeholders suggested that it would be helpful to reintroduce some of these structures to support the garden's activity and growth.

Challenges in the kitchen garden include bringing in supplies and hauling out compost and trash. The rehabilitation resulted in the prohibition of motorized carts or vehicles along Custis Walk, limiting the ability to bring supplies in and out of the kitchen garden. While volunteers would like to see composting happen on-site, ANC apparently does not want a compost pile visible from the cemetery. Rather, at present, ARHO volunteers have to bag their waste and haul it all to the dumpster by the administration building (or to their cars, for disposal elsewhere).

Since this location was used as a staging area for the work on the plantation house during the rehabilitation, the garden soil is still recovering and requires amendments.

The kitchen garden has the potential to give additional presence on-site to the enslaved laborers and to highlight the current partnerships of the site (e.g. where the food is donated to). However, volunteers are generally too short-handed to provide interpretation to visitors passing through the garden. Additional challenges include funding and ANC security restrictions that complicate access to the site.

ARLINGTON WOODS

Stakeholder conversations emphasized that Arlington Woods was three times larger approximately 20 years ago. In the past two decades, portions of the wooded area have been removed in thirds, leaving just 1/3 of the woods

remaining, totaling 12 acres. Congressional legislation has transferred the land to ANC for additional gravesite development, including as part of the Millenium Project.

While trees within cultural sites are typically replaced when they die, in natural areas such as Arlington Woods, the NPS relies on natural regeneration. The NPS tries to control the exotic plants within natural areas and otherwise allows natural areas to regenerate.

Within Arlington Woods is a native honeysuckle vine, the only instance found within GWMP. A rare form of *Vinca minor* with a double flower has also been identified in Arlington Woods. There are also some unique exotic plants, such as a shrub cherry, the only coastal plain occurrence in Virginia. English ivy and non-native honeysuckle have also been identified within the woods, in addition to the wisteria that escaped from the ANC arbor and established in the woods. It is presumed that at some point before Arlington House became a historic site, someone from the plantation likely introduced these plantings—and other exotics and unusual natives—into the woods.

Historians have also confirmed that the woods would have been used for hunting and foraging of berries and mushrooms, among other resources. However, the link between Arlington Woods and the people who lived at the Arlington House plantation over the years is an area for further study to discern cultural traditions, associations, and use.

A volunteer team, known as the Weed Warriors, seeks to eradicate the exotic plants in Arlington Woods. The volunteer team worked approximately twice per month during the growing season in 2023.

Trail cameras within Arlington Woods have captured images of: coyotes, red fox, whitetail deer, eastern grey squirrel, raccoons, and possum, among other animals.

COORDINATION WITH ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY (ANC)

ARHO staff and ANC staff maintain regular meetings to share updates and collaborate on a range of projects, including coordination on descendant community outreach, messaging and interpretation, and project compliance, such as upgrades/replacement of an existing gas line and forthcoming changes to Sherman Road (reported in 2024). Both teams recognize that the ownership lines between ARHO and ANC are arbitrary, but they try to respect the different boundaries, jurisdictions, and site intentions.

The public does not necessarily perceive or understand ANC and ARHO as two different sites; for visitors, they are likely experienced as one entity. This perception demands a certain level of coordination beyond the mere legalities of compliance.

ANC follows the interpretive themes and non-negotiables established by the NPS, including the history of the plantation before the Civil War and establishment of the cemetery. As this messaging evolves, staff from both sites seek to align their interpretive programs.

Currently, most visitors arrive at Arlington House by way of the ANC tram, which provides some interpretation of the historic site en route to the hilltop site. Stakeholders acknowledge that the tram is an imperfect way to get visitors around and also provide site history, as it is not the most personal or nuanced experience. However, it does maximize access for ANC visitors to reach Arlington House.

SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT analysis (assessing Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats) is a strategic planning tool that helps identify key internal (strengths /weaknesses) and external (opportunities / threats) influences for a specific park or system of parks. This analysis gives a holistic sense of the current situation and dynamics facing the park at this point in time, and provides the space to evaluate current and future contexts for park planning.

The analysis on the opposite page was completed in 2024 by the authors of this CLR. (The bullet points within each quadrant of the diagram are not arranged in priority order.)

Table 14. SWOT analysis for the Arlington House cultural landscape.

Strengths	Weaknesses
• High-profile site • Multiple distinct character areas within a relatively small site • Access via the Metro (rare opportunity for a plantation to be interpreted for such a large urban audience) • Access to DC's audiences and ANC's visitors • Remnant forest canopy (perhaps the largest stand of urban forest within Arlington County), offering traces of the historical character in this area • Value of individual specimen trees (e.g. white oaks, American beech) • Biodiversity value • Working relationships between the cultural resources/history staff at ANC and GWMP • Family Circle as a partner • Multiple volunteer groups • Partnership with the Friends of Urban Agriculture • Major investment by David Rubenstein/recent rehabilitation • Intensive preservation-centric focus throughout the 20th century • "Visitor Expectations and Language Resource" as a guiding baseline	• Historical over-emphasis on Robert E. Lee • Complicated ownership boundaries • Deference to ANC's space needs and priorities • Security restrictions/difficulty of access • Over-reliance on volunteers • Over-restored landscape character • Unintended negative impacts of the recent rehabilitation • Deteriorated paving materials • Vulnerability of the archives • Operational challenges without vehicle access to the grounds • Lack of capacity for active forest management • Interpretive burden on staff for sharing negative history as a site of trauma • Site's name is a barrier to community support and public engagement
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Shared, non-hierarchical management with the Family Circle • Updates to the "Visitor Expectations and Language Resource" in consultation with the Family Circle • Collaboration with ANC • Organizational partnerships (e.g. Arlington Historical Society) to interpret the larger site that once existed • Active forest management strategy • Institutional partners as a community of practice	• Irreversible loss of Arlington Woods's historic extents (Sherman Drive widening, etc.) • Age of Arlington Woods' historic oak trees • ANC expansions that would require land transfers

KEY FINDINGS AND PRINCIPLES

Based on the input of stakeholders and park managers, the CLR authors have established these principles and assumptions to guide the treatment approach and recommendations that follow. They include design and preservation principles, grounded in the appropriate management policies and treatment standards, and assumptions about the current and future context of the landscape.

- The cultural landscape is essential to the history and understanding of Arlington House, especially the labor of enslaved and free Black people; it should not be managed as a secondary feature of the plantation house.
- This landscape should acknowledge the full breadth of history and development that shaped it, spanning not only the plantation history but also the site's role in the Civil War and the establishment of Arlington National Cemetery, and its subsequent transition into use as a historic site.
- The enslaved laborers who built and maintained Arlington House should be among the primary figures in the interpretation of the site.
- Any interpretation about GWP Custis, Robert E. Lee, and their families should respond to the fundamental fact that their wealth, property, and status was dependent on the people whom they enslaved.
- This CLR anticipates the site's proposed redesignation ("Arlington House," rather than "Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Mansion"). It embraces a future context in which Lee is not centered and the treatment, interpretation, and management are re-aligned to empower the Family Circle as decision-makers.
- The treatment strategy for Arlington House should represent multiple eras and the full period of significance; it should reject a narrow span of landscape character.
- The treatment strategy should prioritize the legibility of distinct character areas (e.g. the flower garden's contrasts with the kitchen garden) rather than rigid adherence to a particular material palette sitewide, in order to preserve and interpret the distinct cultural significance of each area.
- These distinct character areas can be used as spaces for ongoing community engagement.
- The forest of Arlington Woods is essential to the historic character and design of the landscape, and a significant remnant of the historical forest canopy in Arlington County. Any landscape treatments should prioritize the health and preservation of this natural area as intact forest canopy.
- Arlington Woods are approaching a critical tipping point; they have been so reduced from their historic extents that their integrity as a cultural resource is at risk.
- The woods should be connected to the visitor experience more than at present; the woods should be treated as their own character area, rather than just a backdrop.
- The 2018-2021 rehabilitation was transformative for the site—and the buildings in particular—but it did have negative impacts on the character and operations of the site that should be redressed.

- The Visitor Expectations and Language Resource are a fundamental baseline to guide this CLR—though we understand that they may be updated in consultation with the Family Circle.
- The treatment recommendations aspire to be totally aligned with the input and intentions of the Family Circle.
- Arlington National Cemetery's space needs have, in the recent past, taken precedence over those of the National Park Service; we learned nothing that suggested a change in this dynamic. The treatment strategy for Arlington House reaffirms that NPS should continue to assert the character and management needs of this cultural landscape, and wherever possible avoid deferring to the cemetery that surrounds it.

TREATMENT APPROACH

For cultural landscapes, a treatment philosophy defines an overall goal of enhancing historic character and perpetuating those characteristics and features that convey historic significance based on the landscape's historic integrity, park policies and planning, natural resource protection, park operations, and other resource management issues.

The Secretary of the Interior is responsible for establishing professional standards on the preservation of cultural resources listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, revised in 1992, were codified as 36 CFR Part 68 in the 12 July 1995 Federal Register (Vol. 60, No. 133). The standards identify four primary treatment approaches: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. Each treatment ranges by level of physical intervention and includes specific guidelines and standards as described below.

Preservation is the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of a historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the on-going maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project.

Rehabilitation is the act or process of making possible a compatible use of a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features that convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

Restoration is the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by

means of the removal of features from other historic periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code required work to make the property functional is appropriate within a restoration project.

Reconstruction is the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and details of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, or objects for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time in its historic location.

OVERALL TREATMENT STRATEGY DETERMINATION

This CLR recommends **rehabilitation** as the primary treatment for the cultural landscape.

The recommended treatment of rehabilitation for Arlington House provides the flexibility needed to preserve the historic resources of the landscape, while improving site conditions, bolstering the distinctions between character areas, and reframing the site's interpretation.

According to the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, rehabilitation treatment actions must conform to the following standards:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be supported by documentary and physical evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

TREATMENT DATE

1802-1935

STATEMENT OF DESIRED LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The desired landscape would **represent multiple eras of history, development, and significance;** it would reject a restoration to any single owner, occupant, or era. The desired landscape embodies the historic location, setting, design, feeling, association, and workmanship of the site across multiple periods; it places less priority on rigid adherence to the historic materials of a single period.

Each of the landscape's zones (e.g. flower garden, kitchen garden, etc.) would have its own distinct character; together, **these character areas would be complementary,** embodying multiple dimensions of a working landscape. The landscape would demonstrate its association with labor; in most character areas, **formality is inappropriate and not the goal.**

The landscape's desired treatment **prioritizes the legacy of enslaved and Black Americans** as the most consistent presence at the site from its construction through the takeover by the federal government. The desired character would also **make space for additional elements** (planted, built, or small-scale features) to recognize their historical presence and significance.

Finally, the character of the Arlington House landscape would **complement the character of the Arlington National Cemetery context**; it would not seek to copy it or defer to it.

To achieve this holistic effect for the overall landscape, the treatment recommendations that follow also describe the desired landscape character for each zone within the project site.



Treatment Recommendations

Treatment Recommendations

PHYSICAL TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

SITEWIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Add stumbling stones throughout the landscape to honor the enslaved people who lived at Arlington House, consistent with the recommendations from the Family Circle and the ongoing "Memorializing the Enslaved in Arlington" project by the Arlington County Virginia Historical Society and the Black Heritage Museum of Arlington.**
    - Stumbling stones should be accompanied by appropriate interpretation (e.g. plaques and/or waysides).
    - In addition to placements throughout the site, stumbling stones should be added near all entry points to the site (e.g. the front plaza and the rear work yard, adjacent to Sherman Drive), to ensure that visitors encounter these acknowledgements at the start of any tour through the site.

** At the time of report production, a project called "Wayside Exhibit and Stumbling Stone Installation" was in the planning and compliance phases to take place from winter of 2024 through spring of 2025. The project is part of a larger undertaking to install five new exterior wayside installations and ten bronze discs, known as 'stumbling stones' in and around Arlington House. The installation of five stones is just the first step to install stumbling for every enslaved person know to live in the plantation. Within the boundaries of Arlington House, all of the wayside panels were reviewed by the Family Circle and NPS for revision. New exhibit panels are planned for the three highest priority waysides (two will have new sled bases and the third will maintain the current base with the addition of a new exhibit panel). Additionally, four stumbling stones to be placed within the bonded aggregate material surrounding Arlington House. The stumbling stones are discs measuring 4-6 inches round with non-skid bronze plaques, measuring less than ¼ inch thick and with beveled sides. The discs lay flat within the sidewalk, asphalt, or aggregate material. Potential locations for the stumbling stones include near the kitchen garden, enslaved quarters, and near the rose garden. The remaining waysides and stumbling stones are to be placed at the Mount Vernon Trail, near the Theodore Roosevelt Island Pedestrian Bridge or either at Gravelly Point or the Netherlands Carillon. The Arlington House plantation had the largest enslaved concentration of enslaved persons in Arlington County. The installation of 5 stones is just the first step to install stumbling for every enslaved person know to live in the plantation..



Figure 132. A prototype of the Arlington House stumbling stones (Source: Stephen Hammond; shared with CLR authors by GWMP)

- Conduct a test plot for a stumbling stone in a high-traffic area. Consult with a historical landscape architect throughout the selection and testing process.
- The bonded aggregate paving—installed recently, as part of the rehabilitation—is failing in many areas. (Erosion of the surface material has exposed the grid tiles beneath; the aggregate is not bonded in some places, and compacted in others; the aggregate has low permeability, resulting in blockage, clogging, and rainwater puddling; and the loose material is being tracked into the buildings.) Some of these condition issues may originate in the installation and maintenance practices, rather than the material itself; regardless, replacement is necessary.
- This CLR recommends replacing the existing paving with ¾" minus crushed stone with fines (aggregate installation). (For additional options that our team has evaluated, in consultation with the National Capital Region and other parks, refer to the appendices.)
    - This option employs the use of a local stone aggregate and fines to create a stable circulation surface. The angular crushed stone enmeshes with the fines and holds the paving in place.
    - This option is a low-cost and easy-maintenance choice, as it does not require special training or proprietary materials for repairs.
    - This option was identified as among the best, most accessible paving materials in the 2014 National Trail Surface Study written by the National Center on Accessibility. (A similar version, Trail Surface Aggregate, is discussed in the appendices.)



Photo 128 Three Quarter Inch Minus Limestone trail segment where water pooled after rain. March 13, 2008.



Photo 129 Three Quarter Inch Minus Limestone trail segment where water pooled after rain. March 13, 2008.

Figure 133. This excerpt from the National Trails Surface Study shows how ¾" minus limestone trails performed after one year (Source: National Center on Accessibility).

- ° This paving material is easily installed by any contractor.
- ° It requires a stable, machine-compacted base. The National Trail Surface Study recommends two 3" lifts and 50 percent dust/fines.
- ° For layout guidance (including some recommended alterations to the existing circulation layouts), refer to the treatment recommendations in each character area.
- ° For additional maintenance considerations for this paving type, refer to the appendices; alternative paving types are also presented in that appendix.

- Conduct a test plot to evaluate the material, color, and composition of the selected pavement ahead of full installation. Consult with a historical landscape architect throughout the selection and testing process.
  - ° Color selection should be more muted than the dominant existing tone, which is too overly bright.
  - ° Color tone should be as consistent as possible throughout all paving; if accessibility considerations require contrasts in the paving, make the contrast as minimalist as possible.
- Establish a tree replacement plan for existing mature trees and trees that were lost/removed in the recent rehabilitation and extreme weather events.
  - ° As trees die, replace in the same locations.
  - ° Replace trees in-kind or with appropriate high-limbed deciduous trees that were documented within the landscape during the period of significance (e.g. willows and locusts).
  - ° If historical species are inappropriate based on invasive status or growing conditions, native species may be substituted (in consultation with a historical landscape architect), provided they have a similar spatial structure.
  - ° Additional guidance is offered in specific character area discussions below.
- Establish a drip line around the site's buildings (removing turf where necessary) to prevent damage to the buildings from weed wackers and mowers and to deter pests.
- With drip lines in place, soften the edges of the buildings by planting appropriate shrubs and flowers (outside the drip line), consistent with the planting palette throughout the full period of significance.

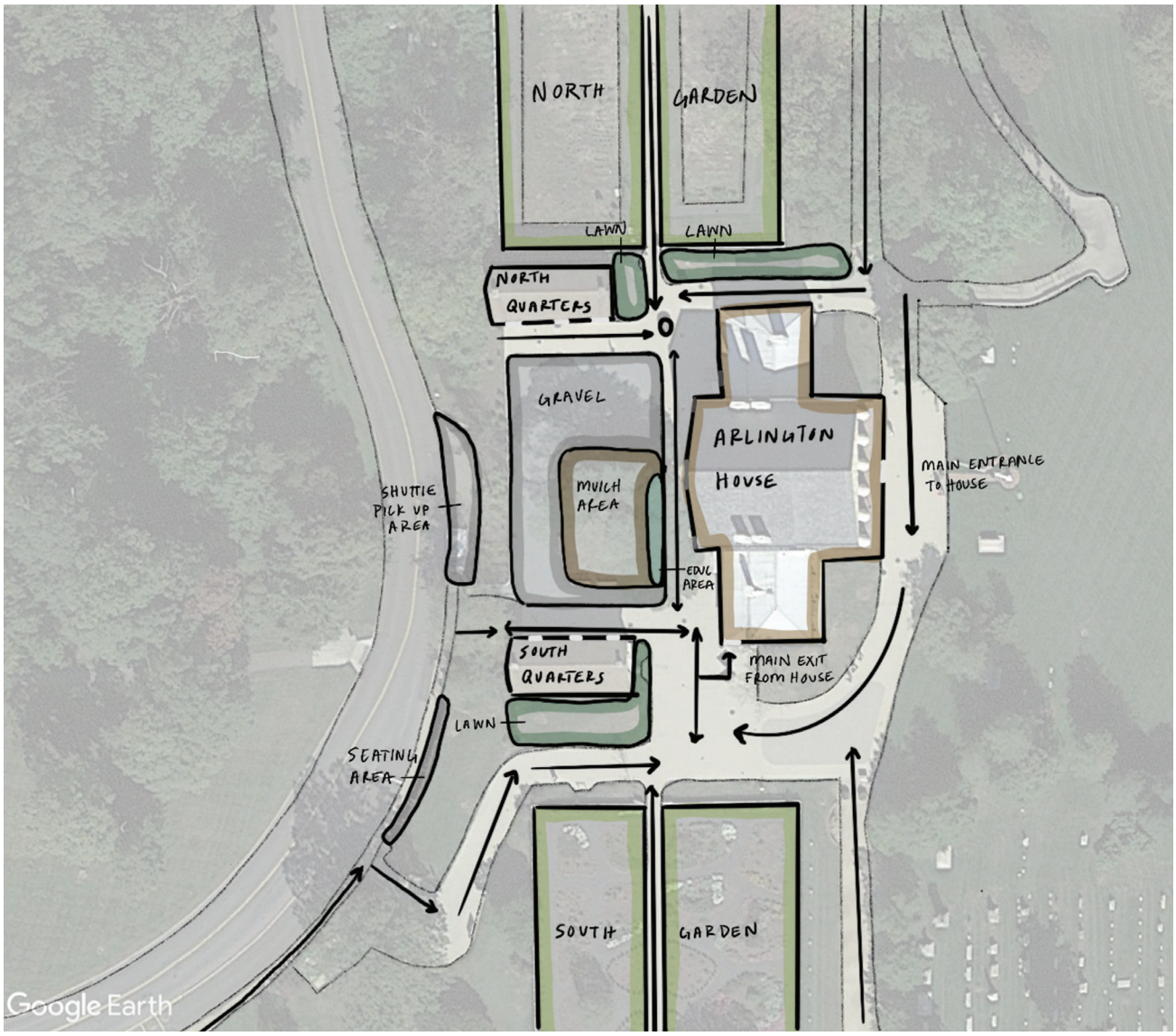

Figure 134. A diagram of existing character areas at Arlington House and typical routes through the site (Urban Heritage Project 2024).

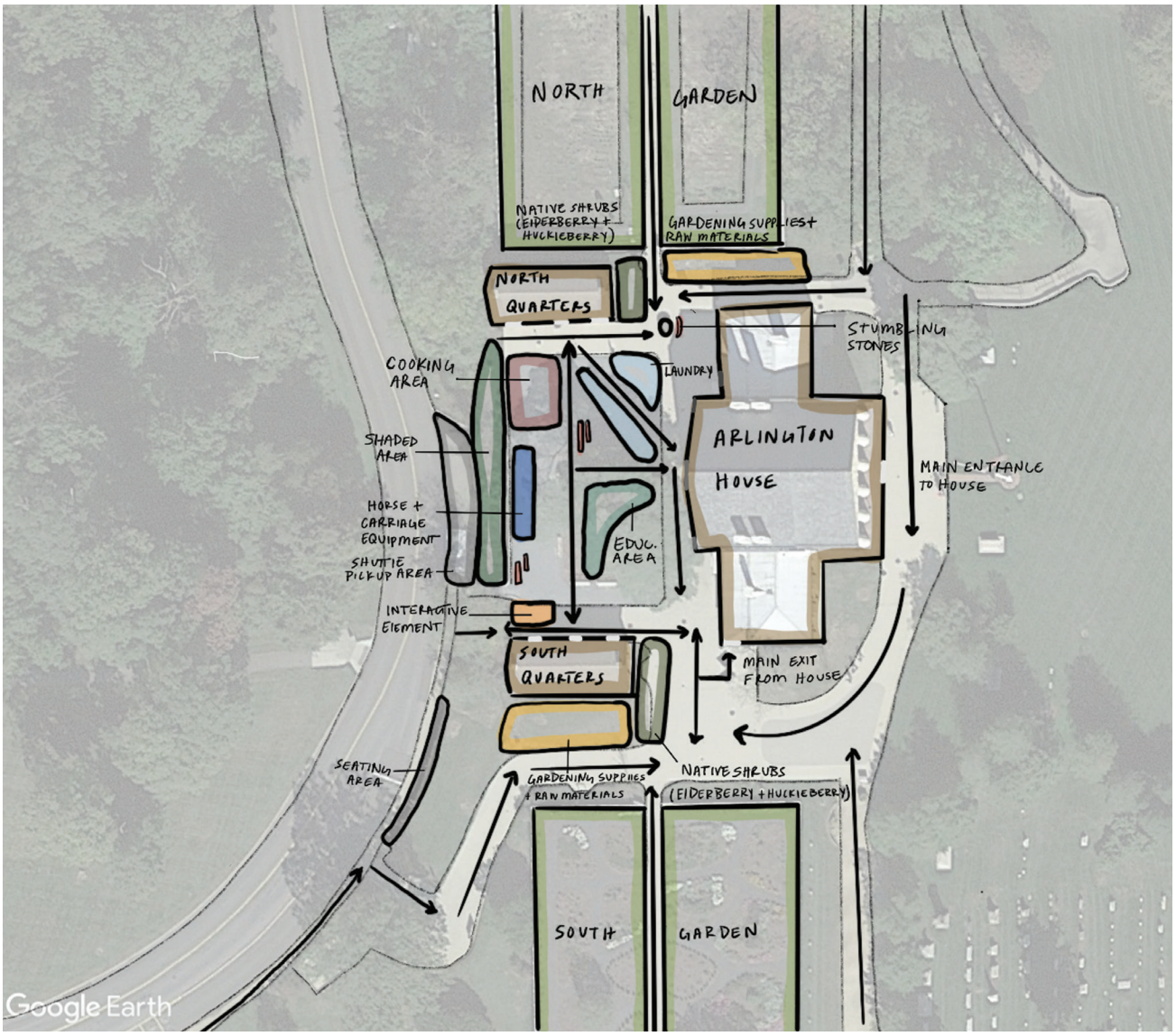

Figure 135. A diagram of potential character areas, visitor routes, and new interpretive features, based on this CLR's treatment recommendations (Urban Heritage Project 2024).

FRONT PLAZA

Desired landscape character: The plaza should continue to function as a mostly open space for gathering and appreciating the hilltop location and long views to related landscapes and landmarks. It should remain flat, and should offer easy access to the house's porch and front entrance.

- Maintain this area as open space, and the most formal of the character areas.
  - Preserve direct sightlines from the plantation house and front plaza to the Lincoln Memorial.
  - Avoid planting additional trees in front of the house, within the plaza.
- Replace the circulation paving (see sitewide recommendations above).
  - The circulation pattern in this area should include a broad plaza directly east (in front of) the plantation house.
  - The paving pattern leading from that plaza around the house, to the other character areas, should be reduced wherever possible (e.g. paths rather than plazas on the north and south sides of the house), to avoid an overly hardscaped appearance that is inappropriate for this landscape. (The presence of too much paving risks creating a landscape character that resembles a parking lot or theme park.)
- As stumbling stones are added to the landscape (see sitewide recommendations above), ensure that stumbling stones (and any associated interpretation) are placed near all points of entry to the site in the Front Plaza (e.g. at the top of the steps on the northeast corner of the site, and at the southeast corner of the site where the plaza meets Custis Walk). Such placement would ensure that enslaved laborers remain at the center of the site's interpretation, and would frame the visitor experience from the moment they enter the cultural landscape.
- Establish a drip line around the house, consistent with the sitewide recommendations.
- Plant shrubs and flowers in the turf panels adjacent to the house (outside the drip line), consistent with the sitewide recommendations.
  - Shrubs and flowers (annuals and perennials) in this character area should be selected based on their formality and structure (e.g. wildflower-like plantings would not be appropriate).
  - Plantings should generally be lower than the bottom sill of the windows, to avoid obscuring those openings.
  - Plant material like shrubs should not be planted close enough to structures to impact the building exteriors (e.g. stucco) and require significant cutbacks that would harm the plant's health.



Figure 136. The front plaza should be maintained as a broad open space in front of the plantation house (on the east elevation) (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 137. The paved area should be reduced wherever possible—e.g. on the north and south sides of the plantation house—to avoid an overly hardscaped condition and aesthetic that is inappropriate for this working landscape (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 138. Stumbling stones should be introduced near all points of entry to the site, including at the top of these staircases on the front plaza, so that visitors encounter these interpretive features as soon as they enter the Arlington House cultural landscape (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 139. New shrub and flower plantings should be added to the turf panels framed by the front plaza. These plantings should be established outside the drip line around the plantation house (Urban Heritage Project 2023).

WORK YARD

Desired landscape character: The work yard should be rehabilitated and reinterpreted as a working landscape. Evidence of the necessary operations to maintain the landscape (including flower/kitchen garden maintenance) and labor related to the house should not be hidden or diverted elsewhere.

- Preserve and maintain the existing deodar cedar tree.
- Preserve and maintain the existing well.
- Incorporate the cedar tree and well into future interpretation plans. (Refer to the Planning, Partnerships, and Policies recommendations on page 261 for more about interpretation.)
- Reintroduce shade trees to add canopy, consistent with the sitewide recommendations.



Figure 140. The deodar cedar tree is a significant feature in the rear work yard, and should be retained (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 141. With the exception of the deodar cedar, the work yard is bare of mature trees. This, combined with the amount of hardscaping and gravel, creates an inappropriate landscape that resembles a parking lot. Compare these conditions with the shaded setting that existed during the period of significance (e.g. 1854, at left, and 1864, at right) (Urban Heritage Project 2023).

- This area should receive the most new trees, to compensate for mature trees that were lost during the recent rehabilitation and to re-introduce the shaded character behind the house that existed during most of the period of significance.

- Replace the circulation paving (see sitewide recommendations above).
  - The circulation pattern in this character area should be reconfigured to reintroduce open, undirected circulation in this character area.
  - As paving/gravel/mulch is replaced, redesign the layout to eliminate 90-degree corners and rectilinear paths. The overall layout should be utilitarian, rather than formal.
  - Limit the paving to the least square footage necessary, to avoid an overly hardscaped design and to allow the most opportunities for new tree plantings (see above, and sitewide recommendations).
  - Limit the mulch beds to the minimum necessary area around the cedar tree (based on growing conditions) and any additional tree plantings; do not extend mulch beyond those appropriate buffers.



Figure 142. The work yard exhibits broad expanses of paving in various color tones. The existing paving is failing in many areas; as the paving is replaced, the circulation pattern in this area should be reconfigured to be more open, undirected, and utilitarian (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 143. The existing paving contrasts with the wide bed of gray gravel, and is laid out in a rectilinear arrangement. The paving and gravel should be reduced in area and should share a similar, muted color palette, and should be reconfigured as a more utilitarian and informal arrangement. The mulch beds for the existing cedar tree and for any new tree plantings should be as limited in area as possible (Urban Heritage Project 2023).

- Replace the existing gray gravel in a tone comparable to the new bonded paving, to avoid sharp contrasts in materials.
- Maintain accessibility to all the door openings from the rear work yard.

- As stumbling stones are added to the landscape (see the sitewide recommendations above), ensure that stumbling stones (and any associated interpretation) are placed near all points of entry to the site in work yard (e.g. at the top of the steps from Sherman Drive). Such placement would ensure that enslaved laborers remain at the center of the site's interpretation, and would frame the visitor experience from the moment they enter the cultural landscape.
- Benches may be retained as moveable features to serve visitors of all ages and abilities. Avoid introducing new fixed benches that would give the work yard a park-like quality, rather than its desired character of a working landscape.
- Reintroduce small-scale features that demonstrate the site's historic association with labor and offer opportunities for interpretation.
  - Appropriate features could include: mulch piles to support the gardens; period-appropriate garden tools; evidence of food preparation; stacks of firewood; laundry lines and associated washtubs; buckets for the well; etc.
  - Avoid overly formal treatments of these features; they should be utilitarian in character.
  - Features could be arranged around the edges of the work yard, to avoid interference with interpretive activities.



Figure 144. As part of the overall treatment strategy for stumbling stones, they should be added at all points of entry to the landscape, including as visitors enter the work yard from the Sherman Drive area (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 145. The existing benches may be retained as moveable features, to accommodate visitors of all ages and abilities. New benches should not be added (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 146. At present, the well is the only feature in the rear work yard that alludes to the landscape's historical association with labor. Additional small-scale features should be introduced to reinforce those interpretive connections. Like the well, these features should avoid overly formal treatments and should be utilitarian in character (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 147. A conceptual view of the potential treatment of the rear work yard. New small-scale features (e.g. a cooking fire, work bench, and laundry lines) would demonstrate that this character area was a landscape of labor, and a redesigned layout of the circulation paths and lawns would better reflect the historic conditions (Urban Heritage Project 2024).



Figure 148. A conceptual view of the potential treatment of the rear work yard, including stumbling stones and evidence of labor (e.g. wheelbarrow, garden tools, and a bucket for the well) that would have defined this area of the landscape historically (Urban Heritage Project 2024).

SOUTH FLOWER GARDEN

Desired landscape character: The flower garden's historic function (cultivation of ornamental flowers, in contrast with the practical vegetable plantings in the kitchen garden) should be retained; the existing palette (which is not historic) should be rehabilitated. The planting plan should adopt a changeable approach, rotating the material palette of the beds (within the existing layout). The perimeter conditions should be rehabilitated to reinforce the visibility of the garden according to its historic function. A focal point should be reintroduced at the center of the garden.

- Preserve and maintain the existing layout of the walks and planting beds.
    - Replace the paving along the central path (see sitewide recommendations above). Maintain the accessibility of this path.
    - Remove vegetation that grows in gravel paths.
- Preserve and maintain the existing perimeter fence.



Figure 149. The existing layout of beds and walks should be retained (although the planting plan itself postdates the period of significance). The paving on the central path should be replaced, consistent with the sitewide recommendations (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 150. The perimeter fence should be preserved and maintained (Urban Heritage Project 2023).

- Rehabilitate the planting plan to embrace changeability, contrasts that enrich the visitor experience, and continuous change and evolution of plantings and plans.
    - Rotate the beds on a regular basis.
    - As beds are rotated, new water infrastructure could be introduced to support successful maintenance of the site plantings. (The overall layout of paths/beds should be restored after any disturbance.)
    - As extant plants die, replace with ornamental flowers and shrubs.
- Flowers and shrubs should be selected to ensure:
    - A colorful palette from spring-fall;
    - A mixture of annuals and perennials;
    - Native plants wherever possible;
    - Character consistent with the conditions during the period of significance, in terms of density, height, and variety of plantings (more than any particular material palette); and
    - Vegetation that does not exceed the height of the fence (in other words, with the exception of the existing trees, plantings should not impede the overall visibility of this garden). Avoid hedges within the garden.
- Flowers and shrubs that were documented in this character area during the period of significance and would be appropriate—provided they meet the above stipulations—include:
    - (pre-Civil War) heart's ease, roses, and geraniums;
    - (Civil War) roses;
    - (post-Civil War) ornamental grasses.
    - Additional archival research may identify other appropriate plantings that meet the above conditions.



Figure 151. The planting plan for the flower garden should be changeable, embracing a higher tolerance for change for these plantings (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 152. Shrubs and flowers around the perimeter of the flower garden should not exceed the height of the fence, in order to maximize the visibility of this character area (Urban Heritage Project 2023).

- Reintroduce a central feature, consistent with the historic conditions (which included, at different points, an arbor/trellis and a Temple of Fame; see pages 65-85 for more information).
    - Create this structure in consultation with the Family Circle, as part of the overall strategy to interpret and center the enslaved laborers of this landscape. (In this garden in particular, such a structure would de-center the Custis/Lee women and their association with this area.)
    - Avoid false historicism or a strict restoration approach in the design.
    - The structure should use appropriate materials (e.g. wood or metal; not plastic).
    - Cultivate flowers/trailing vines to grow on the structure, consistent with the conditions stipulated above.
    - Avoid additional structures in the flower garden, other than this new central feature.
    - In addition to the Family Circle, all alterations should be made in consultation with a historical landscape architect.
- Store organic material for the flower garden in the kitchen garden. See that section below for further detail.



Figure 153. A central feature should be reintroduced in the flower garden, comparable to the arbor/trellis or Temple of Fame that existed in this location during the period of significance. The structure should be created in consultatation with the Family Circle, and should interpret the enslaved laborers who sustained this landscape (Urban Heritage Project 2023).

NORTH KITCHEN GARDEN

Desired landscape character: The flower garden has typically taken precedence over the kitchen garden, in terms of visibility. As the conception and interpretation of the cultural landscape shifts to recognize the working aspects of the site, that imbalance should be addressed to give more weight to the kitchen garden as a productive center of the historic landscape.

- Maintain the existing layout, with a central north-south path flanked by beds and perimeter paths.
  - Replace the paving material along the central path (see the sitewide recommendations above). Maintain the accessibility of this path.
  - Remove vegetation that grows in gravel paths.
- Preserve and maintain the perimeter fence. Do not introduce additional fencing within the garden.
  - If necessary, screening can be affixed to the interior of the fence to serve as a deer deterrent. Consult with a historical landscape architect to select appropriate screen material.
- Preserve and maintain the perimeter hedge.
  - Although the existing holly palette was established after the period of significance, it is appropriate as a hedge screen around the garden. Moreover, it contributes to the deer deterrence measures for this garden. Therefore, as hollies die and gaps emerge, replant with additional hollies. Additional deer fencing may be installed, if in keeping with the other treatment recommendations for this character area.
  - If hollies must be replaced in general, replant the entire hedge to maintain the screen conditions. Select a new hedge species based on similar spatial characteristics and deer deterrence.



Figure 154. The perimeter fence and shrub screen are appropriate for this character area, and should be maintained (Urban Heritage Project 2023).

- Regrade the planting beds to address negative impacts caused by recent construction and erosion. Beds should slope slightly downward on the east, west, and south edges of the garden to ensure proper drainage; avoid steep slopes, which would contribute to erosion.
- Prioritize the existing relationships with local food banks, and continue to contribute crops from the kitchen garden.
- The planting list for the garden beds can vary, but should be primarily dedicated to vegetables and fruit (in accordance with the existing Landscape Management Plan).
    - Although the crops in the kitchen garden should generally align with the palette documented in historic records from the period of significance, it should balance that historical accuracy with the tastes of the food bank recipients. Avoid growing crops that are historically accurate but would go to waste due to lack of demand.
    - A limited number of deer-resistant annuals and herbs can be introduced in strategic locations (e.g. near the entrance to the garden), deviating from the fruit/vegetable palette in those instances only.
- Although the presence and layout of the fruit trees are appropriate, the existing species are not. As these trees die out, replace with stone fruit trees.
    - Introduce variety among the fruit trees; avoid monoculture plantings.



Figure 155. Arlington House should maintain the kitchen garden as a productive landscape, and should maintain the organizational and volunteer partnerships that link the kitchen garden's crops with local food banks (Urban Heritage Project 2023).



Figure 156. Although the presence of fruit trees is appropriate, the existing species are not. As these trees die out, they should be replaced with stone fruit trees (Urban Heritage Project 2023).

- A limited number of support structures would be appropriate for this garden, given the historic evidence that confirms such structures were present during the period of significance. Compatible structures may be introduced if they support the historic use of this area for agriculture.
    - Appropriate structures should serve and enhance the garden's operations and/or storage.
    - Storage does not need to be relegated off-site; that separation would not have existed historically, and impedes the historic function of the landscape.
    - Storage may refer to tools (preferably manual/hand-operated), waste, and organic material (e.g. compost).
    - Organic material for both the kitchen garden and the flower garden may be stored in the kitchen garden.
    - Ornamental growing structures (e.g. arbors and trellises) are appropriate only if used for agricultural purposes (e.g. growing grapes, rather than decorative climbing vines).
    - All structures should use appropriate materials (e.g. wood or metal frame; no plastic).
    - Structures should be as small as possible.
    - Structures should be placed away from the central axis. They should be placed as close to the garden edges/corners as possible, without disturbing the perimeter paths.



Figure 157. Structures that support the practical and productive use of the kitchen garden are appropriate. Additional structures (such as storage) can be introduced to serve similar functions in this character area (Urban Heritage Project 2023).

- As crops are rotated, additional water infrastructure can be introduced. (The overall layout of paths/beds should be restored after any disturbance.)
- If staff/volunteers are too short-handed to interpret in person, add interpretive elements to the garden to share the current agricultural program with visitors.
    - These elements may be temporary (e.g. printed signs on stakes) as a short-term solution in advance of a sitewide interpretive plan update.
    - Interpretation should reinforce the co-existence of the historic and existing crops. It should also emphasize the laborers who cultivated this garden.
    - Sign information could include URLs and/or QR codes to direct visitors to additional information online.

BOOKSTORE AND MUSEUM CHARACTER AREA

Desired landscape character: This zone of the landscape has a higher tolerance for change, since it has been altered so many times in the history of the site. This area already hosts some back-of-house functions (e.g. bookstore and restrooms), as well as the museum (which currently interprets Robert E. Lee, though this presumably will change in the near future), and is an appropriate location for additional operational support.

- Maintain the existing hedges as a screen. As plant material dies, replace in-kind.
- Replace the circulation paving (see the sitewide recommendations above).
    - The circulation pattern in this area can include an open plaza in front of the bookstore/restrooms.
- Maintenance staff and volunteers need more back-of-house storage, and this area is the most appropriate, as such uses would not compromise significant views, features, or integrity. Consider inserting a small additional structure near the mechanical bunker.



Figure 158. The bookstore and restrooms should remain screened by hedges (Urban Heritage Project 2023).

SHERMAN DRIVE AREA

Desired landscape character: Sherman Drive itself is managed by Arlington National Cemetery, but the adjacent resources are managed by GWMP as part of the Arlington House site. The planned widening of the drive will diminish the integrity of the cultural landscape; the desired landscape character should foreground the free flow between different cultural landscape character areas, which is impeded by widening the road. Introducing new plantings to mitigate the expanding Drive may be considered as part of the rehabilitation.

- Replace the circulation paving (see the sitewide recommendations above).
- Work with ANC to introduce a crosswalk at the tram stop to link the sidewalks on either side of the road and invite visitors to explore the forest edge (see the Arlington Woods recommendations that follow).
- Maintain vegetation to screen the mechanical bunker along Sherman Drive.
- Replace failing retaining wall in same location.
- Add canopy trees to provide more shade for the queuing tram riders.



Figure 159. At present, there is no safe crossing to guide pedestrians across Sherman Drive (see the curb cut at the bottom right of the photograph). NPS should work with ANC to create a crosswalk in this location, to protect staff traveling to/from the administrative area and to invite visitors to explore the forest edge, consistent with the recommendations for Arlington Woods that follow, which call for altered conditions on the southern edge of the existing canopy (Urban Heritage Project 2023).

ARLINGTON WOODS

Desired landscape character: This remnant of forest should be rehabilitated not only to encourage regeneration of the historic oak canopy, but also to invite contemplation about the full weight of the site's history, associations, and use. The woods should be incorporated into the visitor and interpretive experience more than they are at present.

The general forest condition of the Arlington Woods can be considered fair overall. While a number of impressive canopy specimens remain intact, many of the mature canopy trees—reminiscent of the original forest character—are in advanced stages of decline. These over-mature oak trees are showing signs of advanced fungal decay and structural decomposition, such that the existing canopy is at risk of rapid conversion (over the next ~50 years) from an oak-dominated stand to one where the historically valued species are no longer a defining component of Arlington Woods. Visual evidence of advanced decay and decline indicate that the overall condition of the historic canopy is fair to poor, and without intervention, the oak species may not persist once mortality progresses. For further analysis of forest conditions and issues, refer to the appendices for field note observations by Blake Troxel, consulting forest ecologist for the project.

- Protect the last remaining stand of intact historic forest as part of the Sherman Drive widening project. Consult with ANC to establish project boundaries that disturb as little of the woods as possible.
- Inventory understory species and conditions.
    - Conduct a statistically robust survey to better understand the current composition of understory species and potential conditions for the natural regeneration of desired canopy species.
    - Use the collected data to inform site-specific prescriptions for the management of invasive species; the encouragement of natural re-generation; and the rehabilitation of desired ground-story, mid-story, and over-story species.
- Rehabilitate the oak canopy.
    - The historic oak canopy is in a state of decline, decay, and structural decomposition and should be rehabilitated to maintain the historic character of the last remaining stand of an original forest that once covered more than 1,000 acres of the surrounding countryside.
    - If natural regeneration is not viable, human-assisted regeneration methods should be implemented.
- Encourage natural oak regeneration.
    - Once a survey is completed, determine if the appropriate conditions exist to allow for the natural regeneration of advanced oak seedlings.

- Perform selective thinning techniques that allow for a slight increase of sunlight onto the forest floor to stimulate existing advanced oak regeneration, but not as to "release" competitive species.
- Once the oak seedlings have reached a height of 4–6', a larger harvest of canopy species should be considered to release the advance oak regeneration.
- Natural regeneration of an oak stand is a process of repeated disturbances to favor oak, and should not be thought of as a single-disturbance event. On high quality sites, it is recommended to perform this process gradually, over 20 years or more.[***]

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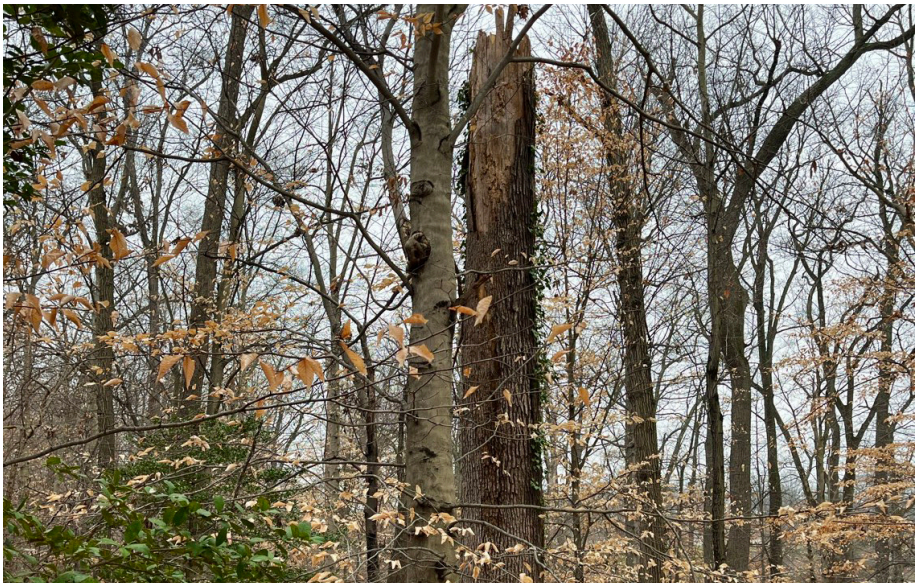

Figure 160. A large white oak canopy tree in the interior of the stand exhibits a broken top and is in late stages of decay (Urban Heritage Project 2024).



Figure 161. Example of a large, declining oak with several other oaks in a state of advanced decay nearby. The canopy has large gaps present from poor health of surrounding trees (Urban Heritage Project 2024).

- Initiate assisted oak regeneration.
- Should the survey indicate that there are insufficient resources to encourage regeneration naturally, human assisted regeneration techniques may be necessary.
- White Oak, Red Oak, and Chestnut Oak acorns should be collected *in situ* from Arlington Woods during mast years, and transported to a local nursery for germination and growth.
- Once seedlings are viable for transplant, relocate them back into the Arlington Woods. Identify natural canopy gaps or locations with enough light to stimulate seedling growth. This may also require the creation of new canopy gaps and/or removal of mid-story trees.
- Protect seedlings from herbivory with exclosures if necessary, and routinely manage for competing vegetation.
- Once seedlings have reached a height of 4–6', a larger harvest or creation of canopy openings should be considered to release the advance oak regeneration.



Figure 162. A high-value White Oak specimen tree: 50" diameter, 140' tall (Urban Heritage Project 2024).



Figure 163. Example of edge condition with large white oaks creating wide canopy openings from blow downs allowing non-native species to thrive (Urban Heritage Project 2024).

- Plant new oak trees along the southern edge of the existing canopy, where the woods meet the lawn, to extend the woods south.
    - Additional plantings should be part of the overall oak regeneration strategy.
    - New trees in this area would reduce the amount of lawn and offset the loss of forest from the Sherman Drive widening.
    - Although this area is not a substantial part of the visitor experience, the expanded woods could offer interpretive opportunities along the existing path. Since many visitors arrive via tram, this experience could be an opportunity at the beginning and/or end of their visit.
    - With forest cover on either side of the path, pedestrians would have an opportunity to consider the historic character of Arlington Woods and the full import of the site's history.
    - As part of that interpretive strategy, remove the damaged tree stump by Sherman Drive and replace with another interpreted stump, if an appropriate version is available. If no appropriate substitute is available, update the interpretive panel to address the woods in general.
- Continue to manage invasive non-natives.
    - Establish an invasive management plan with ANC, to coordinate efforts and strategies.
    - Staff should continue to manage invasive and non-native vegetation that competes with desired native species (i.e. continue to prune back English ivy vines from the trunks of desired tree species, etc.).
    - Take steps to ensure that future construction zones (i.e. Sherman Drive road widening) do not create conditions for invasive species along the forest edge to thrive and advance further into the stand interior.
    - Continue to engage volunteers to help manage these invasives.
- Preserve the historic road trace as a contributing feature.



Figure 164. Additional tree plantings should be introduced at the southern edge of the existing stand, extending the forest south of the existing path, into the existing lawn (Urban Heritage Project 2024).

NPS ADMINISTRATIVE AREA

Desired landscape character: This area would continue to support NPS operations at the site, hosting GWMP offices and ARHO archives—with improved building conditions for the vulnerable collections and safety/comfort of staff.

- Prioritize building upgrades to the curatorial facility to ensure safe and appropriate archival storage.
- Improve storage and archival storage in the attic of the administrative building
- Add new interpretive elements to interpret the history of the segregated comfort station. The history of this building links the plantation-era segregation of the site with more recent 20th century layers of the site's development, use, and exclusion.

PLANNING, PARTNERSHIPS + POLICIES

RECOMMENDATIONS

DOCUMENTATION UPDATES

- The 2001 CLR has a fairly short and incomplete statement of significance; the 2009 CLI has a statement of significance that was adapted from the CLR's unpublished Analysis & Evaluation section. A new statement of significance should be drafted, reflecting the most robust understanding of the site's extended period of significance and multiple areas of significance.
- Update the National Register Historic District boundaries to include the administrative area.
- Update the CLI inventory of existing features.

PARTNERSHIPS

- Confirm the Family Circle as co-equal partners and decision-makers for the historic landscape and its interpretation.
- Partner with the Arlington Historical Society to align new interpretive stumbling stones at Arlington House with the broader "Memorializing the Enslaved in Arlington" project.
- At present, the NPS relies on significant volunteer effort to maintain the flower garden and the kitchen garden. Although these partnerships seem to be productive and positive, NPS staff should maintain oversight to ensure consistency with the established landscape management plan and ensure appropriate funding/supplies for volunteer needs.
- Maintain the existing partnership with Arlington Friends of Urban Agriculture / Plot Against Hunger.
- Continue to coordinate with ANC:
    - Share any updates to the "Visitor Expectations and Language Resources" to ensure ANC and ARHO are aligned;
    - Coordinate capital project scopes and mitigation to minimize impacts to ARHO resources, including Arlington Woods;
    - Ensure future cemetery section signage integrates the Syphax history, in alignment with ANC's A-76 Cultural Resources Study; and
    - Create new opportunities with ANC to expand the interpretive presence of Arlington House within the ANC Welcome Center.
- Explore new partnership opportunities with Joint Base Myer Henderson-Hall (JBMHH) to interpret the history of that site in relation to Arlington House. (The JBMHH land was part of the original footprint of the Arlington Plantation and the 17 acres given to Maria Carter Custis Syphax.)

INTERPRETATION

- Continue developing a holistic new interpretive plan for the site, in consultation with the Family Circle. (This should not impede necessary updates to the existing interpretation in the short term, but should represent a long-term plan for the site.) The new plan should:

- Interpret all areas of the site, including not only the design and historic character of the plantation house and landscape, but also the people and labor that made the landscape possible;
- Make clear the full arc of site history and shifting values;
- Incorporate continuing research on the historical understanding of Arlington House and its contexts, including the ethnographic research led by Dr. Cheryl LaRoche (in progress at the time of this CLR's completion);
- Desegregate the interpretation, so that Black history is told throughout the site rather than just in and around the enslaved quarters;
- Center Black agency and consider a parallel timeline that foregrounds Syphax milestones alongside Custis/Lee events;
- Prepare visitors for a site of trauma with clear steps (e.g. orientation video, reflection zone), similar to Whitney Plantation's model.
- Quantify dispossession of the land and include acreage lost in 1944 condemnation and a count of disinterred graves to ground the narrative in lived impact;
- Interpret the distinct character areas, including their complementary roles in the historical development of the landscape and their overlapping users. This should include Arlington Woods, and the forest's historical flora and fauna that were associated with the operations of the plantation;
- Reinforce the historic and existing connections—geographic, social, physical, etc.—between the Arlington House landscape, Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington Woods, and Freedman's Village;
- Interpret the loss and reinstatement of Lee's citizenship and President Ford's signing of PL 95-67 in 1975; and
- Continue to de-center Robert E. Lee in the site's interpretation.

AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The research process for this modified CLR identified several other areas of potential inquiry (some of which have been mentioned in the treatment recommendations above, but are reiterated here as a comprehensive list). Although these studies were outside the scope of this CLR, they would contribute to the long-term understanding and management of Arlington House.

- Historic context and legislative history of the Syphax property (*Note: This context should be considered a priority, as it supports several treatment recommendations in this CLR*);
- Historic context of the relationship between Arlington Woods and the Arlington House working landscape (e.g. beekeeping and other activities that took place in the woods, cultivated plant specimens that show up in the woods, agriculture for private use that took place in the woods, etc.)
- Historic context and legislative history for the 1920s plantation house restoration;
- Historic context and physical history for the segregated comfort station;

- Additional social context of the site during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s;
- Additional background on the 1955 Broyhill legislation, when the site was renamed and became a memorial to Robert E. Lee;
- Historic context and legislative history for the 1972 bill that renamed the site as "Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial";
- Additional context and landscape history related to seed propagation and cultivation on site (including in Arlington Woods)

FUTURE PLANNING + DESIGN

In the next phase of work, the Family Circle and the National Park Service should collaborate on exploring the design of new potential elements of the cultural landscape. Specific opportunities surfaced in this CLR include a **new feature at the center of the South Flower Garden** (see pages 65-85 and 244-247) and **reimagining the spaces west of the house**, including the enslaved quarters.

The Family Circle and the National Park Service should explore a potential reconstruction to reintroduce a building that would demonstrate how and where most of the plantation's enslaved residents lived, spent time, died, and were buried. The current landscape configuration utilizes two buildings—the north and south enslaved quarters—to represent an entire, disappeared landscape of a working plantation, including buildings, fields, cemeteries, etc. With the goal of designing a more truthful and vivid experience in the complex, fraught, and radically changed landscape of the site and its surroundings, one of the ideas put forward is the **reconstruction of an enslaved person's cabin**. This idea should be explored and considered deeply among the options in the next phase of the project.

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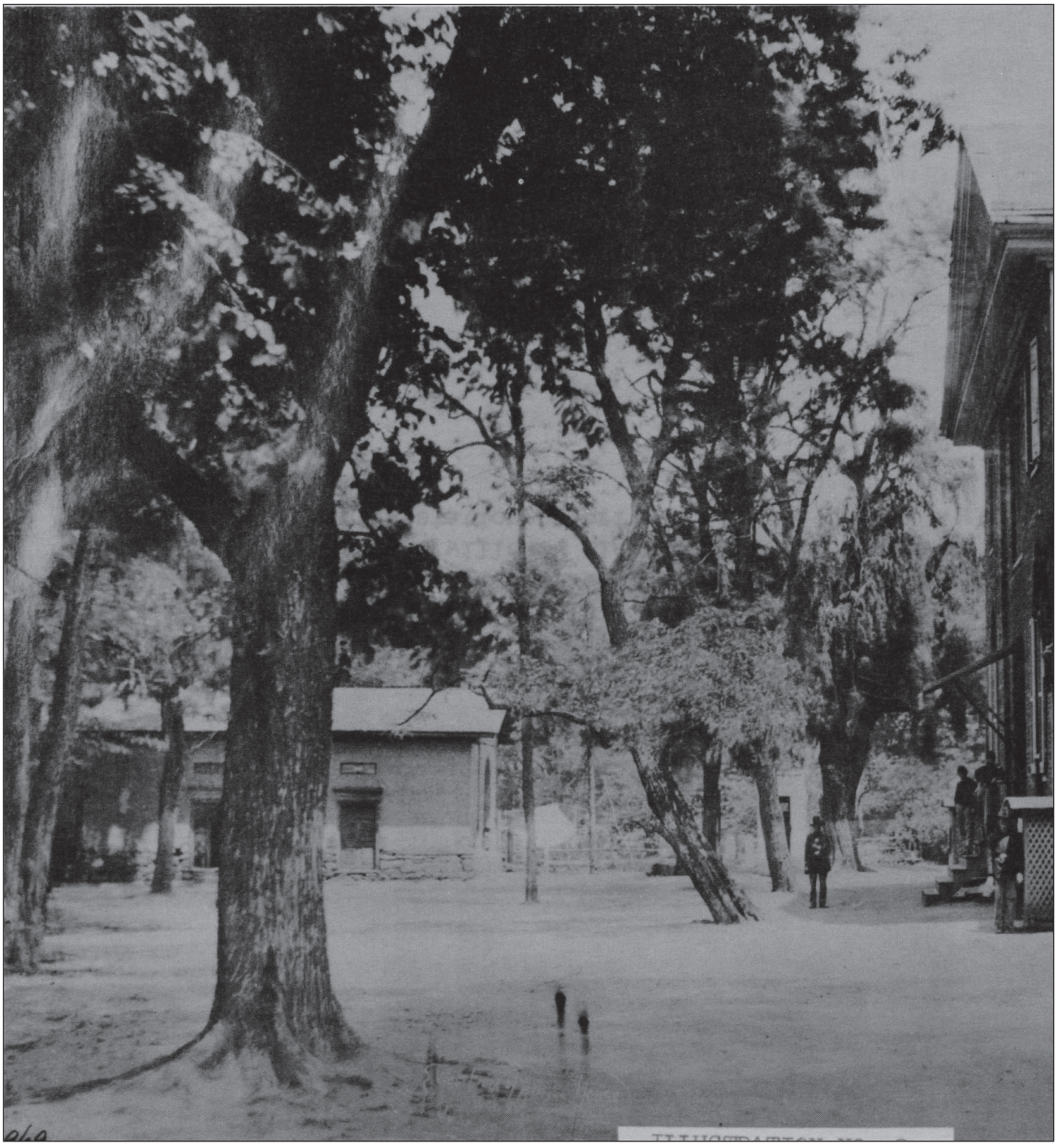

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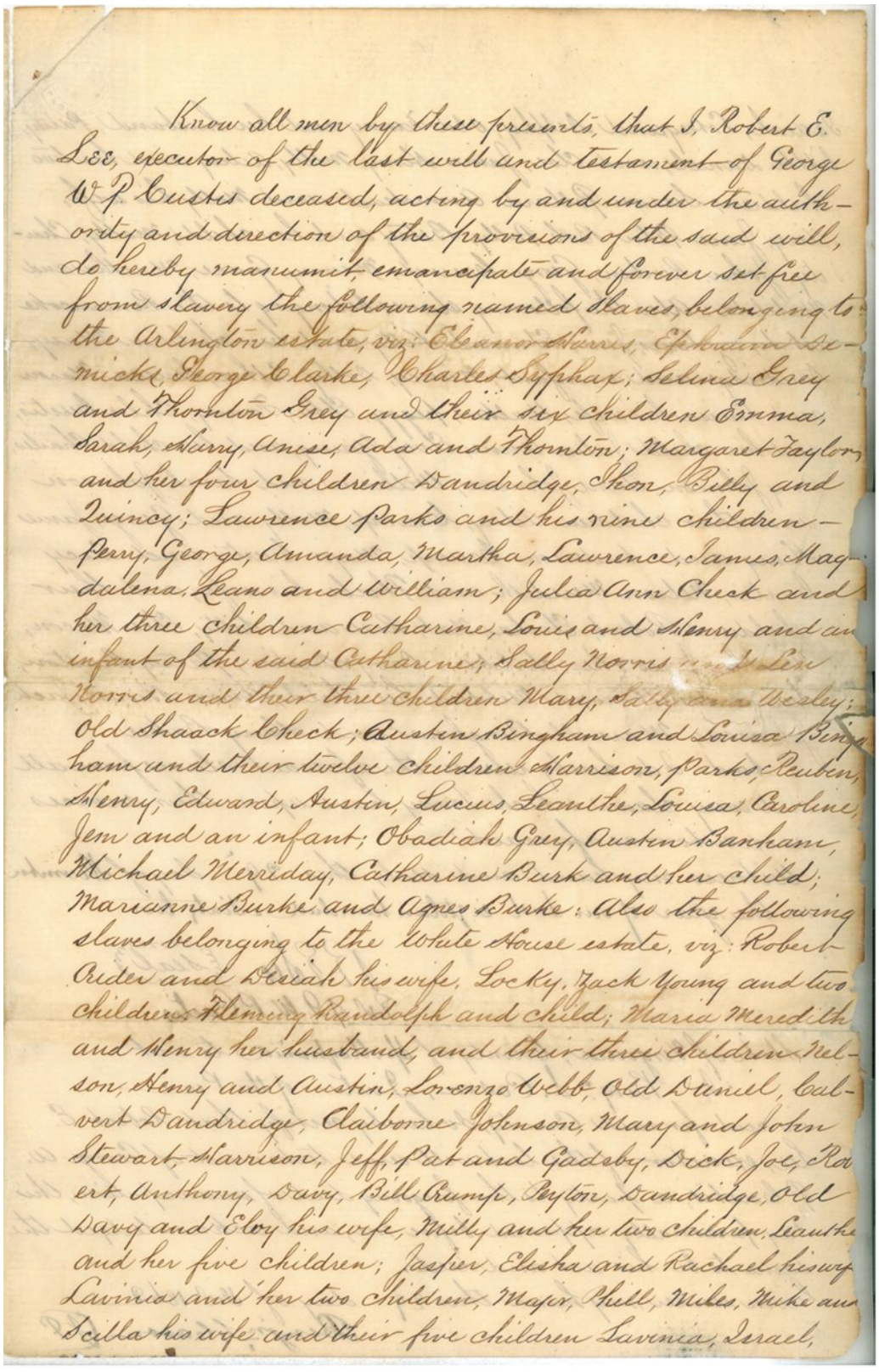
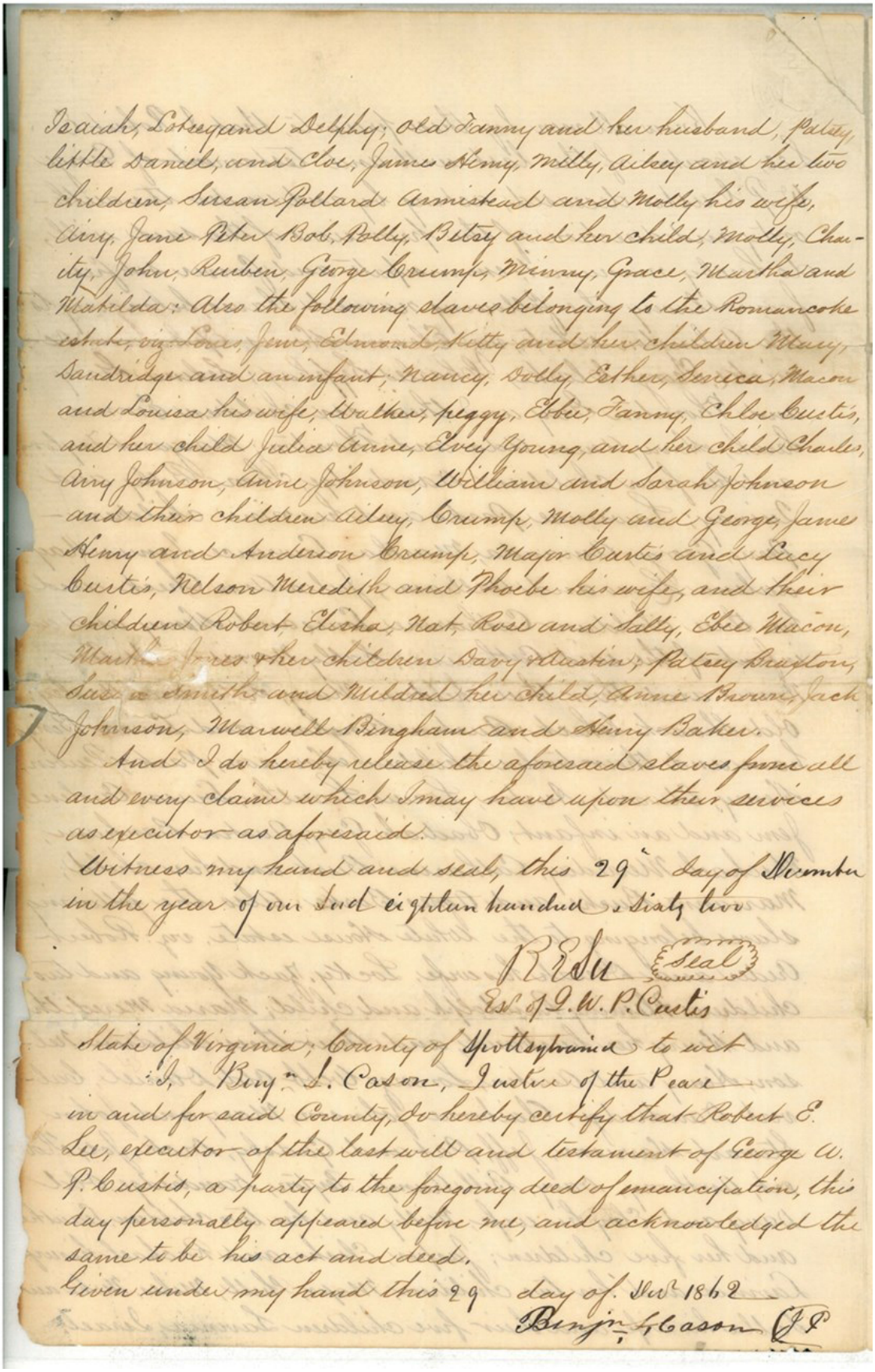
Appendices

Appendix A
1862 Manumission Document Excerpt



Know all men by these presents, that I, Robert E. Lee, executor of the last will and testament of George W. P. Custis deceased, acting by and under the authority and direction of the provisions of the said will, do hereby manumit, emancipate and forever set free from slavery the following named slaves, belonging to the Arlington estate, viz: Eleanor Norris, Ephraim Selmicke, George Clarke, Charles Syphax, Selina Grey and Thornton Grey and their six children Emma, Sarah, Harry, Anise, Ada and Thornton; Margaret Taylor and her four children Dandridge, Thos, Billy and Quincy; Lawrence Parks and his nine children — Perry, George, Amanda, Martha, Lawrence, James, Magdalena, Leano and William; Julia Ann Check and her three children Catharine, Louis and Henry and an infant of the said Catharine; Sally Norris and Lee Norris and their three children Mary, Sally and Wesley; Old Shaack Check; Austin Bingham and Louisa Bingham and their twelve children Harrison, Parks, Reuben, Henry, Edward, Austin, Lucius, Leanthe, Louisa, Caroline, Jem and an infant; Obadiah Grey, Austin Banham, Michael Merriday, Catharine Burk and her child, Marianne Burke and Agnes Burke: Also the following slaves belonging to the Wolute House estate, viz: Robert Crider and Deziah his wife, Locky, Zack Young and two children, Fleming Randolph and child; Maria Meredith and Henry her husband, and their three children Nelson, Henry and Austin; Lorenzo Webb, Old Daniel, Calvert Dandridge, Claiborne Johnson, Mary and John Stewart, Harrison, Jeff, Pat and Gadsby, Dick, Joe, Robert, Anthony, Davy, Bill Rump, Peyton, Dandridge, Old Davy and Eloy his wife, Milly and her two children, Leanthe and her five children; Jasper, Elisha and Rachael his wife, Lavinia and her two children, Major, Hull, Miles, Mike and Scilla his wife and their five children Lavinia, Israel,

Figure 165. (this page and following pages) First page of the Lee Manumission Document, 1862 (Source: National Park Service, "Lee Manumission Document https://www.nps.gov/arho/learn/historyculture/lee-manumission-document.htm).



Isaiah, Lotsey and Delphy; old Fanny and her husband, Patsy, little Daniel, and Cloe, James Henry, Milly, Ailey and her two children, Susan Pollard Armistead and Molly his wife, Amy, Jane Peter Bob, Polly, Betsy and her child, Molly, Charity, John, Reuben, George Crump, Minny, Grace, Martha and Matilda: Also the following slaves belonging to the Romancoke estate, viz: Louis, Jane, Edmond, Kitty and her children Mary, Sandridge and an infant; Nancy, Dolly, Esther, Seneca, Macon and Louisa his wife, Walker, Peggy, Ebbe, Fanny, Chloe Custis, and her child Julia Anne, Elvey Young, and her child Charles, Amy Johnson, Anne Johnson, William and Sarah Johnson and their children Ailey, Crump, Molly and George, James Henry and Anderson Crump, Major Curtis and Lucy Curtis, Nelson Meredith and Phoebe his wife, and their children Robert, Elisha, Nat, Rose and Sally, Ebee Macon, Martha Jones & her children Davy, Austin, Patsy Braxton, Susan Smith and Mildred her child, Anne Brown, Jack Johnson, Maxwell Bingham and Henry Baker.

And I do hereby release the aforesaid slaves from all and every claim which I may have upon their services as executor as aforesaid.

Witness my hand and seal, this 29th day of Novemb in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred & Sixty two

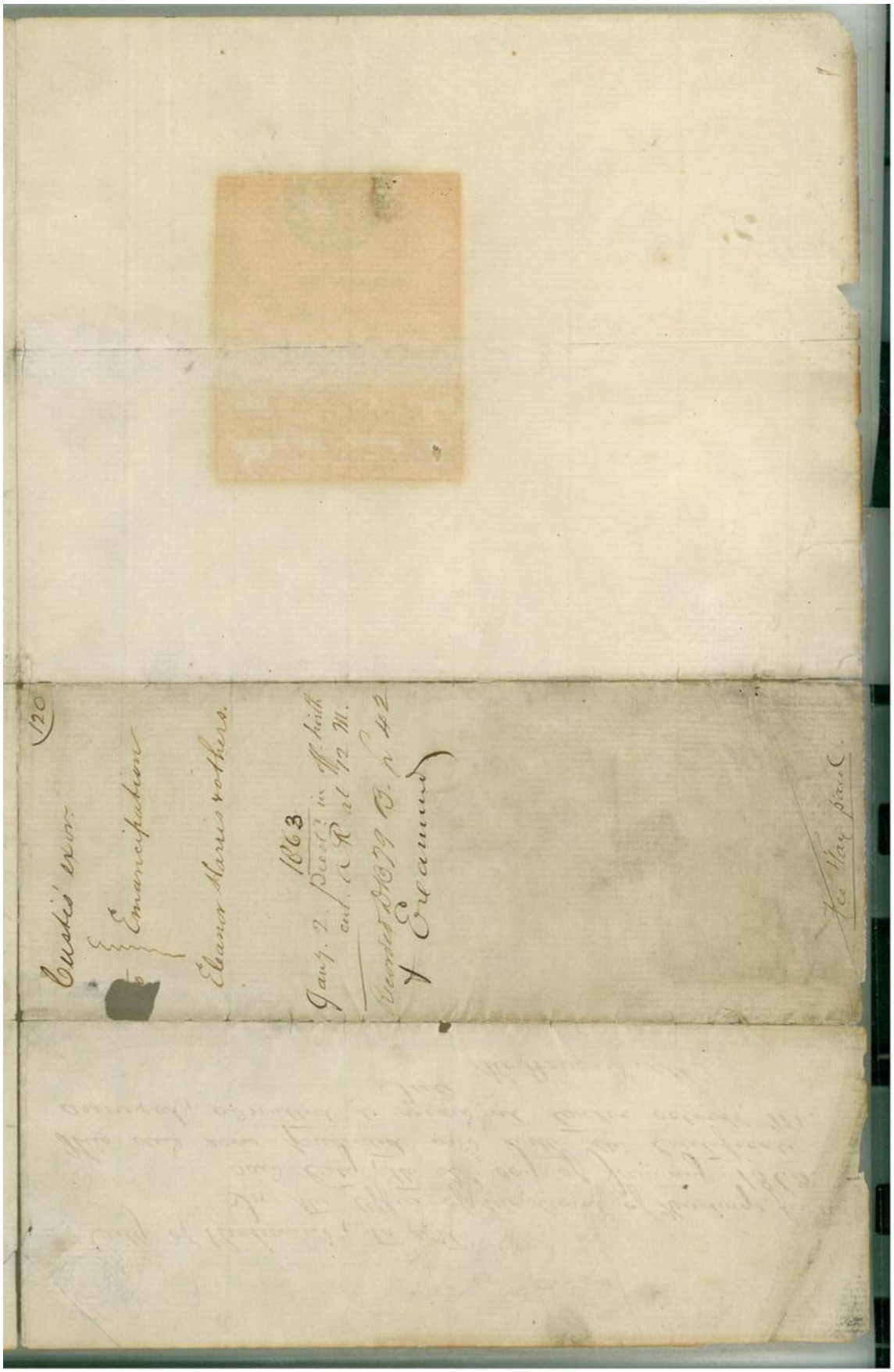
R E Lee (Seal)
Ex of G. W. P. Custis

State of Virginia, County of Spottsylvania to wit

I, Benj. F. Cason, Justice of the Peace in and for said County, do hereby certify that Robert E. Lee, executor of the last will and testament of George W. P. Custis, a party to the foregoing deed of emancipation, this day personally appeared before me, and acknowledged the same to be his act and deed.

Given under my hand this 29 day of Nov 1862

Benjn. F. Cason J P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Appendix B
Forest Ecology Field Notes

ARLINGTON HOUSE FIELD NOTES

March 15, 2024

Weitzman School of Design
University of Pennsylvania
210 S 34th St
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Dr. Randal Mason:

Below are notes interpreting vegetation conditions, ecological dynamics, landscape management issues and opportunities for the Arlington House forest site (Arlington Woods). The information may be used to assist in formulating treatment recommendations for the Arlington House cultural landscape report (CLR).

A single field visit was conducted on the following date:

- 12 February 2024

GENERAL FOREST CONDITION

Virginia's forest types encompass a diverse array of ecosystems ranging from oak-hickory and mixed oak forests dominating upland areas to pine-oak forests thriving in dry, infertile soils, and bottomland hardwood forests flourishing along rivers and streams. However, forest communities in which oaks predominate are the most common, with the oak-hickory group covering roughly 60 percent of Virginia's forestland[1]

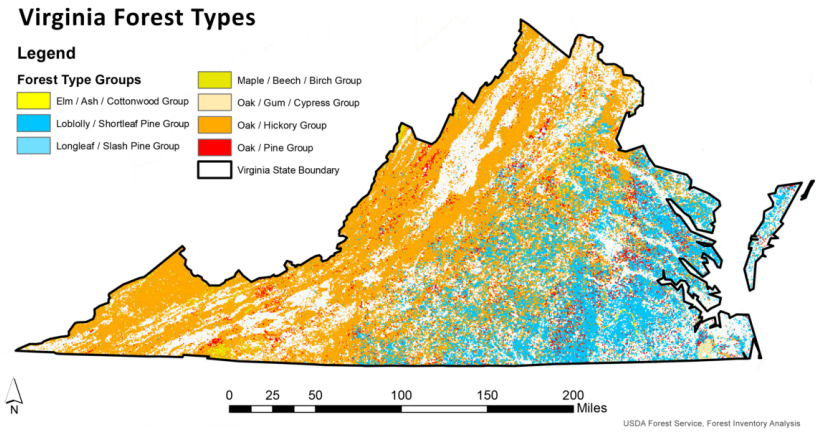

Figure 1. United States Forest Service (USFS) Forest Type Groups map

[1] https://dof.virginia.gov/forest-markets-sustainability/learn-about-forest-markets-sustainability/virginias-forest-composition/

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As depicted by the United States Forest Service (USFS) Forest Type Groups map in Figure 1, the Arlington Woods site is entirely representative of the Oak-Hickory group. According to the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, "these mixed hardwood forests are widespread in mesic habitats throughout the Coastal Plain and Piedmont regions (see Figure 2). Forests in this group occupy mesic uplands, ravines, lower slopes, and well-drained sites on deep, acidic, relatively nutrient-poor soils"[2]. Typical over-story species composition contains mixtures of American beech (Fagus grandifolia), oaks (Quercus spp., varying by region), tulip-tree (Liriodendron tulipifera), and hickories (Carya spp.), but a wide variety of hardwood associates also occur within this forest type.

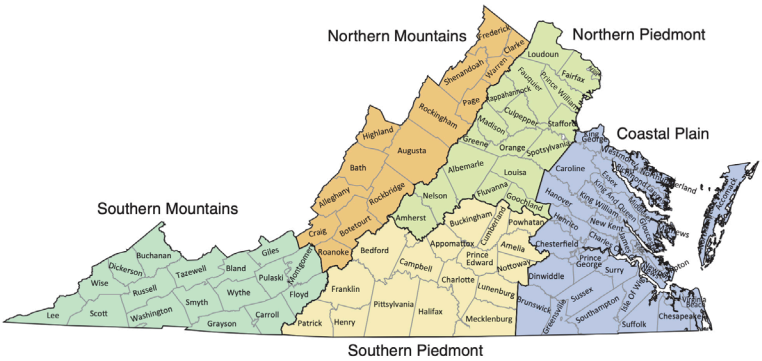

Figure 2: Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) Survey Units

Where the Arlington National Cemetery is located today, there once stood an extensive 600-acre oak forest encircling the Arlington House. Now, "hidden largely from view in a deep ravine and spring-fed stream valley behind Arlington House is the 12-acre Arlington Woods" a rare remnant of an old-age forest that once covered more than 1,000 acres of the surrounding countryside.[3] Today Arlington Woods may be one of the last remaining natural forest stands to represent this historic forest condition within the significantly fragmented urban forest canopy of Arlington County.[4] Some exemplary specimens of White Oak (*Quercus alba*) and Northern Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*) remain dominant within the current canopy, however visual evidence of advanced decay and decline indicate that the overall condition of the historic canopy is fair to poor, and without intervention the oak species may not persist once mortality progresses.

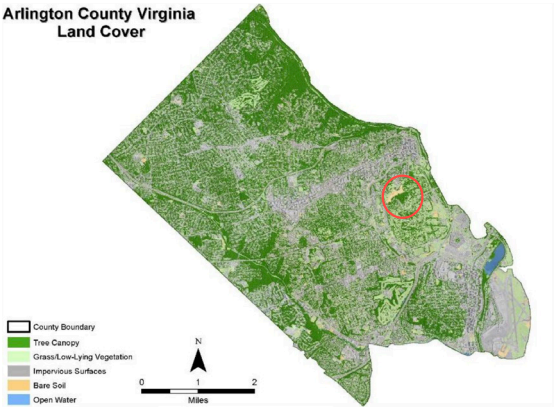

Figure 2: Arlington County 2017 Urban Tree Cover Assessment. Location of Arlington Woods indicated with red circle.

[2] https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/natural-communities/nctb4

[3] Arlington Woods through the Ages, Rod Simmons, 2014

[4]https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/parks-amp-recreation/documents/tree-canopy-report-2017.pdf

Common species identified through visual assessment during the field visit, and generally found in and around the Arlington Woods are identified in the table below (this does not represent an exhaustive list of forest species existing within the Arlington Woods).

Common Name	Scientific Name	Plant Type
White oak	*Quercus alba*	Over-story
Red oak	*Quercus rubra*	Over-story
Chestnut Oak	*Quercus montana*	Over-story
Tulip-tree	*Liriodendron tulipifera*	Over-story
Hickory sp.	*Carya sp.*	Over-story / Mid-story
American Beech	*Fagus grandifolia*	Mid-story / Under-story
Red maple	*Acer rubrum*	Mid-story
American holly	*Ilex opaca*	Under-story
Tree of Heaven	*Ailanthus altissima*	Non-native
Dogwood	*Cornus florida*	Under-story
English Ivy	*Hedera helix*	Non-native Ground-cover
Japanese honeysuckle	*Lonicera japonica*	Non-native
False Holly	*Osmanthus heterophyllus*	Non-native
Periwinkle	*Vinca sp.*	Non-native Ground-cover

The general forest condition of the Arlington Woods can be considered fair overall. While a number of impressive canopy specimens remain in tact, many of the mature canopy trees - that are reminiscent of the original forest character - are in advanced stages of decline. These over-mature oak trees are showing signs of advanced fungal decay and structural decomposition such that the existing canopy is at risk of rapid conversion (over the next ~50 years) from an oak dominated stand to one where the historically valued species are no longer a defining component of the Arlington Woods.

Without the existence of adequate advanced oak regeneration, the rehabilitation of the oak canopy may require concerted intervention. Advanced regeneration in oak species refers to the process by which young oak seedlings establish and grow in the understory of a forest before the overstory canopy is opened up, typically due to disturbances such as harvesting or natural events like storms and natural senescence. This strategy enables oaks to maintain their presence in the forest ecosystem by ensuring a continuous presence of younger individuals ready to take advantage of available resources and growing conditions. Advanced regeneration relies on the ability of oak seeds to remain viable in the soil for extended periods until conditions become suitable for germination and growth. Once the overstory canopy is opened, either naturally or through human intervention, these pre-established seedlings can rapidly grow and occupy the newly available growing space, ensuring the persistence of oak dominance in the forest ecosystem.

Further study of the quantity and quality of advanced oak regeneration should be conducted to determine if adequate stocking exists to maintain the historical oak dominance into the future forest condition. If it is determined that adequate stocking does not exist on site to perform natural

regeneration methods, staff intervention will be necessary to ensure the persistence of oak dominance in the Arlington Woods. This may included the collection of acorns, the growth of nursery stock, the planting and protection seedlings, and the continued management to stimulate oak regeneration while suppressing competitive species and vegetation.

In localized areas around the woods, there are examples of healthy and vigorous canopy, mid-story and understory trees representative of a diversity of structure and composition found in the *Inner Piedmont Low-Elevation Chestnut Oak Forest* and the *Piedmont Acidic Oak - Hickory Forest* on the upper slopes, and the *Piedmont Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest* on the lower slopes near the stream. However, in some areas, the understory appears to be over-represented by American beech, which may inhibit the succession of the current forest structure and composition as the existing trees are replaced by a larger component of beech. This is may be a result of heavy deer browse, but the impact of herbivory should be studied further to determine its affect on the future forest composition.

While the existence of several non-native, invasive species were reported by NPS staff within the stand interior, a higher density of non-native species was primarily observed along the edges of of the stand and within the proposed area of the road/sidewalk expansion plan. Care should be taken to prevent the unimpeded regeneration of non-native species during the post construction phase.

Many of the forest conditions are documented in greater detail in the 1998 Forest Survey conducted by Garrow and the 2014 Forest Assessment conducted by Simmons, however, specific observations and CLR recommendations for Arlington Woods are listed in the section below.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Protect Last Remaining Stand of Intact Historic Forest

    1.1. A portion of the Arlington Woods is planned to be converted for the Sherman Dr. road and sidewalk expansion project further reducing the total acreage of the historic stand by up to an additional ~1 acre.

    1.2. Plans should be made to determine if the protection preservation of the last remaining stand of the Arlington Woods is warranted by a coalition of appropriate stakeholders.

    1.3. Should protection and preservation be justified, plans should be developed for the preservation and rehabilitation of the historic forest condition.

2. Rehabilitate Oak Canopy

    2.1. The historic oak canopy is in a state of decline, decay, and structural decomposition and should be rehabilitated to maintain the historic character of the last remaining stand of an original forest that once covered more than 1,000 acres of the surrounding countryside.

    2.2. Steps should be taken to encourage natural oak regeneration to ensure the persistence of oak dominance in the forest ecosystem.

2.3. If natural regeneration is not viable, human assisted regeneration methods should be implemented.

3. Inventory Understory Species and Conditions

3.1. Conduct a statistically robust survey to better understand the current composition of understory species and potential conditions for the natural regeneration of desired canopy species.

3.2. Use the collected data to inform site specific prescriptions for the management of invasive species; the encouragement of natural regeneration; and the rehabilitation of desired ground-story, mid-story and over-story species.

4. Encourage Natural Oak Regeneration

4.1. Once a survey is completed, determine if the appropriate conditions exist to allow for the natural regeneration of advanced oak seedlings.

4.2. Perform selective thinning techniques that allow for a slight increase of sunlight onto the forest floor to stimulate existing advanced oak regeneration, but not as to "release" competitive species.

4.3. Once the oak seedlings have reached a height of 4-6 feet, a larger harvest of canopy species should be considered to release the advance oak regeneration.

4.4. Natural regeneration of an oak stand is a process of repeated disturbances to favor oak, and should not be though of as a single disturbance event. On high quality sites, it is recommended to perform this process gradually, over 20 years or more.[5]

5. Initiate Assisted Oak Regeneration

5.1. Should the survey indicate that there are insufficient resources to encourage regeneration naturally, human assisted regeneration techniques may be necessary.

5.2. White Oak, Red Oak, and Chestnut Oak acorns should be collected in situ form the Arlington Woods during mast years, and transported to a local nursery for germination and growth.

5.3. Once seedlings are viable for transplant, relocate them back into the Arlington Woods. Identify natural canopy gaps or locations with enough light to stimulate seedling growth. This may also require the creation of new canopy gaps and/or removal of mid-story trees.

5.4. Protect seedlings from herbivory with exclosures if necessary, and routinely manage for competing vegetation.

[5] https://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/chap/chap_2015_schweitzer_001.pdf

5.5. Once seedlings have reached a height of 4-6 feet, a larger harvest or creation of canopy openings should be considered to release the advance oak regeneration.

6. Continue to Manage Invasive Non-Natives

6.1. Staff should continue to manage invasive and non-native vegetation that competes with desired native species (i.e. continue to prune back English ivy vines from the trunks of desired tree species, etc.).

6.2. Take steps to ensure that future construction zones (i.e. Sherman Dr. road expansion) does not create conditions for invasive species along the forest edge to thrive and advance further into the stand interior.

PHOTOS AND NOTES OF INTEREST



High-value White Oak specimen tree: 50" diameter, 140' tall.



High-Value Beech specimen: 36" diameter; host to native slug Megapallifera mutabilis,



South View: Existing plan to widen Road with impact along the forest edge. Blue flags indicate potential tree impact/removal. Possible cut and fill roughly 50 feet extending into the existing forest.



North View: Existing plan to widen Road with impact along the forest edge. Blue flags indicate potential tree impact/removal. Possible cut and fill roughly 50 feet extending into the existing forest.



Example of a wide canopy gap resulting form the broken top of a large White Oak specimen.



View of the bottom of the Arlington Woods. A small stream with wetland species. Exhibits more of an open condition as trees are much shorter in stature and smaller in diameter.



Appears to be fewer larger trees downslope along the road edge. Also observed large canopy gaps and openings.



Large White Oak Canopy tree with broken top and in late stages of decay in interior of stand.



Tree tag indicating previous inventory. Example of English ivy vines to be removed.



Example of a large, declining oak with several other oaks in state of advanced decay nearby. The canopy has large gaps gaps present from poor health of surrounding trees.



Example of aggressive erosion and channeling on site.



Megapallifera mutabilis, the changeable mantleslug. It eats primarily algae, and lives in live trees such as American beech.



View downslope of representative of the general site condition.



View cross slope representative of the general site condition.

9



Observed vinca sp., English ivy, and Japanese honeysuckle throughout the forest floor.



Example of edge condition with large white oaks creating wide canopy openings from blow downs allowing non-native species to thrive.



Large, high-value White Oak specimens visible from forest edge.



Large canopy gap and undesirable species along forest edge.

Appendix C
Paving Recommendations + Alternatives

ACCESSIBLE PAVING CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Prepared by Jacob Torkelson

August 2022

This memo was developed out of conversations with NCRO and PRWI staff, following a site visit to Prince William Forest Park's Cabin Camp 5 on August 10, 2022. It was written by Jacob Torkelson and edited by Molly Lester and Randall Mason, University of Pennsylvania. Content assistance was provided by Angelina Ribeiro Jones, NCAO, in consultation with Julie McGilvray, NCAO, Tim Layton, NCAO, Gregg Kneipp, PRWI, and Anne Marie McKinney, PRWI.

This memo presents several alternative paving materials/methods that are appropriate for the historic setting of the Arlington House cultural landscape.

Paving materials/methods are listed below in order of preference (from most to least preferred):

- Option A: ¾" minus crushed stone w/ fines (aggregate installation)
- Option B: Crusher fines with stabilizer/binder
- Option C: Decomposed granite with stabilizer/binder
- Option D: Aggregate w/ stabilizer grid
- Option E: Permeable pavements
- Other Standard Options:
    - Exposed aggregate or integral color concrete
    - Chip and seal asphalt (Macadam)
    - Rainbow Turf

Each option is evaluated with pros and cons and includes brief information on installation, maintenance, and helpful resources for further study.

OPTION A: ¾" MINUS CRUSHED STONE W/ FINES (AGGREGATE INSTALLATION) (PREFERRED OPTION)

This option employs the use of a local stone aggregate and fines to create a stable, accessible trail surface. The angular crushed stone enmeshes with the fines and holds the path in place. This option allows new accessible paths to blend well into the historic landscape. It is also a low-cost and easy maintenance option, as it does not require special training or proprietary materials for repairs. This option was identified as among the best, most accessible paving materials in the 2014 National Trail Surface Study written by the National Center on Accessibility.* A similar version, Trail Surface Aggregate, was developed by the Penn State University Center for gravel roads and is discussed below.

INSTALLATION

- This paving material is easily installed by any contractor.
- It requires a stable, machine-compacted base. The National Trail Surface Study recommends two 3" lifts and 50 percent dust/fines.
- For best results, installation will require edging of some kind. This should be as low profile as possible to blend with the historic setting. Under no circumstances should the edging be highly visible; synthetic edging materials should be avoided.

MAINTENANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- This material is prone to wash outs during weather events but can be easily repaired with basic tools.
- It requires occasional reapplication of material, notably along edges where water infiltrates and removes material or where significant wear is caused by pedestrians.
- In areas of high erosion or use, such as vehicle crossovers, a more durable material can be paired with the aggregate, such as exposed-aggregate or integral color concrete.
- This material can be driven over by machines, such as mowing equipment or trucks. However, depending on the edging selected, specifically designated vehicular crossovers may be necessary to preserve the edging.

TRAIL SURFACE AGGREGATE (TSA)

The Center for Dirt and Gravel Roads at Penn State University developed a specific aggregate mixture for accessible gravel trails. It is a slightly modified version of the preferred option described above. It uses high densities of stone aggregate to withstand high pedestrian traffic, while providing a firm and accessible surface to visitors. However, it requires greater planning on routing and surface crowning, as it does not employ edging.**

* WeConservePA, Trails for All People: Guidance for Accessibility and Inclusive Design, accessed July 5, 2022, https://penntrails.com/project/universal-access-trails-manual/.

** For more on Trail Surface Aggregate, see: https://dirtandgravel.psu.edu/about-the-center/trails/.

PROS

- The use of local aggregate can blend the paths with the historic landscape
- Aesthetically compatible with historic conditions
- High load capacity for vehicles
- Good option for steep slopes
- Low cost
- Easy to maintain

CONS

- Requires periodical regrading, compacting, and reapplication of material
- Prone to water/erosion along its edging
- Can present challenge for snow/ice removal in winter months



Photo 128 Three Quarter Inch Minus Limestone trail segment where water pooled after rain. March 13, 2008.



Photo 129 Three Quarter Inch Minus Limestone trail segment where water pooled after rain. March 13, 2008.



Photo 130 Three Quarter Inch Minus Limestone trail segment almost one year after installation.



Photo 131 Three Quarter Inch Minus Limestone trail segment remained firm under foot. March 17, 2009.

Figure 3: This excerpt from the National Trails Surface Study shows how ¾" minus limestone trails preformed after one year. (National Center on Accessibility)[***]

*** National Center on Accessibility, "National Trails Surface Study," 2014, 71, https://www.americantrails.org/resources/national-trail-surfaces-study.

OPTION B: CRUSHER FINES WITH STABILIZER/BINDER

Trails paved with crusher fines blend excellently with their natural settings and provide a durable, permeable, and natural trail surface. Crusher fines are the leftover debris from rock crushing operations. The range of sizes in crusher fines, as well as their rough edges, create an interlocked, stable trail surface. Paired with subgrade and proper drainage, these trails withstand most weather conditions and are accessible. However, improper site preparation, installation, or maintenance may present accessibility challenges.

INSTALLATION

- Trails paved with crusher fines should be given the same careful site preparation given to paved trails.
- Crusher fine trails work best with grades less than 5%; steeper slopes must employ other materials such as a stabilizer grid, concrete, or asphalt to meet accessibility requirements.
- Trail design should consider the installation of grade breaks and should focus on effective crowning.
- Crusher fines alone are not considered an accessible surface; to make the trail surface more durable, a stabilizer should be employed to bind the surface materials together.

MAINTENANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- Drainage under and around the trails is the chief concern for crusher fines trails.
- Crusher fines should never be regularly saturated with water.
- Concentrated flows or run-off should not be able to pass over the trail surface.

PROS

- Accessible when combined with a stabilizer
- Can blend well with the historic landscape using local materials
- Permeable; reduces surface runoff
- Low cost

CONS

- Prone to erosion when not properly graded or compacted
- Can present accessibility challenges to some users when not well-compacted
- Fines can spread well beyond the area installed, resulting in a widened trail
- Requires periodical regrading, compacting, and reapplication of material
- Suitable only to gentler slopes
- Requires edging to keep the material in place
- Stabilizers/binders are proprietary and may require specialized installation or training



Figure 4: This trail was installed at Wupatki National Monument, AZ using crushed fines and native stone edging. (American Trails)****



Figure 5: A crusher fines trail paired with a stabilizer is an accessible option for historic rural settings. (Lois Bachensky, USDA Forest Service via American Trails).

**** Lois Bachensky, "What You Need to Know About Building Trails with Crusher Fines. Finely crushed compacted rock is a popular trail surface improvement throughout America." USDA Forest Service via https://www.americantrails.org/resources/building-crusher-fines-trails.

OPTION C: DECOMPOSED GRANITE WITH STABILIZER/BINDER

Decomposed granite is the natural byproduct of granite weathering. Decomposed granite pathways, like aggregate and crusher fines, employ small pieces of stone to create a stable trail surface. However, decomposed granite generally has rounded edges and is much finer than aggregate and crusher fines.

In areas prone to erosion, natural binders can be used to stabilize the surface. Binders also help the material to be more accessible. Decomposed granite is durable and can cost less than asphalt or concrete over its lifetime. It can also blend well in historic settings when the parent granite matches the geology of the landscape.*****

INSTALLATION

The simple appearance of decomposed granite obscures the complexities of its installation process.****** A good summary of considerations related to decomposed granite pathways in historic settings is located here: https://landscapearchitecturemagazine.org/2016/11/08/the-right-path/

MAINTENANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Decomposed granite is a durable material that, when properly installed, should require little maintenance. Considerations should include:

- Scattering of surface materials
- Decomposed granite tends to spread beyond the area where it is initially installed, requiring reapplication semi-annually
- Winter conditions
- Decomposed granite cannot be plowed with a regular edge plow. Effective methods include adding a PVC pipe over the plow edge to keep gravel in place. However, this method can leave behind a thin layer of ice and snow.
- Sanding or salting the surface is inadvisable, as it is visually dissimilar. However, decomposed granite can be spread along the ice surface to create traction.

***** Neil Budzinski and Matthew Girard, "The Right Path: A forensic approach found the best decomposed granite solution for Kenyon College," *Landscape Architecture Magazine*, November 8, 2016, https://landscapearchitecturemagazine.org/2016/11/08/the-right-path/.

****** See also, Kafka Granite Company technical specifications: https://www.kafkagranite.com/pathway-materials/stabilized-pathway-mix.

PROS

- Visually compatible with historic settings
- Very stable when well-compacted
- Highly permeable; handles run-off well
- Can be made accessible with the use of a binder

CONS

- Tends to scatter around the site in which it is installed, and requires regular replenishment
- Can stick to the shoes of visitors and be tracked indoors
- Requires periodical regrading, compacting, and reapplication of material; high maintenance
- Requires edging to keep the material in place
- Not vehicle friendly
- Stabilizers/binders are proprietary and may require specialized installation or training



Figure 6: Decomposed granite trail at Wupatki National Monument, Tucson, Arizona.*****

******* For more on accessible trails at Wupatki National Monument, see https://www.nps.gov/wupa/planyourvisit/accessibility.htm; Image source: https://acoupledaystravel.com/wupatki-national-monument/

OPTION D: AGGREGATE WITH STABILIZER GRID

This option is a modified version of Option A that employs a stabilizer grid in addition to the compacted aggregate with crusher fines. This option employs a local stone aggregate paired with a stabilizer grid in areas of high erosion or use. In areas where a stabilizer grid is employed, it is surfaced with aggregate to mask the grid. This option allows new accessible paths to blend well into the historic landscape while making gravel an accessible choice for paving. Aggregate with a stabilizer grid is a great option for steep slopes, where it would otherwise easily wash away. This option is only viable with regular maintenance and is not recommended by the NPS Park Cultural Landscape Program.[*******]

TYPES OF STABILIZER GRID

- GEOPAVE
- TrueGrid
- Gravel Pave II
- Safety Deck II

INSTALLATION

- Requires the same level of preparation for the site as does concrete or asphalt, including grading the site and preparing a compact base
- After preparation, due to the flexible nature of the grid, it can be installed quickly
- Can be cut and adapted to any shape, including curved trails
- Once the base and grid are installed, heavy equipment can be driven over the surface to spread the aggregate and crusher fines
- The stabilizer grid can be filled with any aggregate, including locally-sourced examples that could help paths blend with the historic landscape

MAINTENANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- Snow and ice melt faster on a stabilizer grid than on concrete. They can also easily be snow-plowed. However, plowing can remove some aggregate that builds up in piles when the snow melts. Plowing can also expose the aggregate grid, damaging the historic setting unless it is recovered.
- This option will require regular reapplication of aggregate on the stabilizer grid surface to disguise the underlying grid structure
- Heavy use of gridded paths by pedestrians or vehicles will make the grid visible unless regular maintenance is conducted. Left exposed, the underlying plastic grid will detract from the historic setting of the cultural landscape.

******** "Path & Trail Surface Alternatives for Cultural Landscape Applications." Field Notes, National Park Service, 22.

PROS

- Reduces stormwater runoff in the landscape and allows water to penetrate directly into the ground
- The use of local aggregate can blend the paths with the historic landscape
- Aesthetically compatible with historic conditions (when grid is disguised with aggregate)
- High load capacity for vehicles
- Good option for steep slopes

CONS

- Requires periodical regrading, compacting, and reapplication of material (especially to disguise grid)
- Prone to water/erosion along its edges of grid
- Can present challenge for snow/ice removal in winter months
- Stabilizer grids are proprietary and may require specialized installation or training
- Difficult to remove once installed



Figure 7: When used on a natural trail, a stabilizer grid can provide an accessible, natural-looking alternative to gravel or asphalt. Among its downsides, however, is the visibility of the underlying grid where gravel has worn away. It should only be used in areas that need additional reinforcement but not in areas where aggregate can be used alone. (GEOPAVE)******

******** https://www.prestogeo.com/gallery_presto/products/porous-pavements/geopave-aggregate-porous-pavement/

OPTION E: PERMEABLE PAVEMENTS

Porous pavements are circulation treatments that allow stormwater to pass through surface pores before infiltrating a sub-surface reservoir or underdrain and proceeding into the ground. When properly maintained, they can reduce surface runoff, snow loads, and surface temperatures. They can be colored to match surrounding soils and blend into the historic environment.

TYPES

- Porous Asphalt (e.g., Flexipave, Filterpave)
- Pervious Concrete

INSTALLATION

- Varies by type; see VA DEQ Stormwater Design Specification No. 7: Permeable Pavement, 21-24.

MAINTENANCE CONSIDERATIONS

The maintenance regimes for porous pavements vary greatly by site and use. Some sites require minimal maintenance, while others require attention immediately after construction. Among the factors that influence this are available resources for maintenance, soil type, and weather conditions.********

Preventative maintenance tasks should include

- Regular use of regenerative air vacuum sweeping to clear the surface pores, adapted to the site based on the frequency of use. Vacuum sweeping should always be dry and should not include water spray, as this could cause further subsurface clogging.
- Keep adjacent soils from washing onto the pavement and clogging pores. This can be done with a gravel shoulder and drain adjacent to the paths or with edging that prevents flows onto the permeable surface.
- Annually remove debris from the surface, including leaves, weeds, soils, or other stains.
- Repair and replace in-kind broken joints or cracks; this cannot be done using traditional asphalt or concrete sealing methods.

Avoid

- Sanding
- Re-sealing
- Re-surfacing
- Power washing
- Storage of snow with sand or salt on the surface
- Storage of mulch or soil on the surface
- Construction staging on or adjacent to the pavement without surface protection

******** VA DEQ Stormwater Design Specification No. 7: Permeable Pavement, 9.2 Maintenance Tasks, pages 25-27, Accessed June 29, 2022, https://chesapeakestormwater.net/2012/03/design-specification-no-7-permeable-pavement/.

PROS

- Reduces stormwater runoff in the landscape and allows water to penetrate directly into the ground
- Can be colored to match historic settings

CONS

- Requires a high level of maintenance
- Performance degrades overtime as pores clog, even if maintained
- Cannot be sanded or salted during winter conditions (pores will clog)
- High-cost relative to other, traditional options



Figure 8: This permeable asphalt path (Flexipave) was installed at Yellowstone National Park. (TheCivilEngineer.org)******

******** "Flexi-Pave: An asphalt replacement that can absorb 3,000 gallons of water per hour," TheCivilEngineer.org, accessed June 29, 2022, https://www.thecivilengineer.org/news-center/latest-news/item/1527-flexi-pave-an-asphalt-replacement-that-can-absorb-3-000-gallons-of-water-per-hour.

OTHER STANDARD OPTIONS (BRIEFLY NOTED)

The below options should not be used as the sole paving material in the cultural landscape. They may be considered in areas where the use of any of the previous materials is not possible. Such areas may include building skirting, steep grades, or road crossings.

OPTION F: EXPOSED AGGREGATE OR INTEGRAL COLOR CONCRETE

Exposed aggregate concrete can use a local aggregate to blend well with the surrounding soils. Integral color concrete can be matched, formed, and stamped to appear as other materials such as stone, wood, or brick. It can be employed in historic settings to blend well with the landscape. Both exposed aggregate and integral color concrete have a high initial cost but frequently outlive most other paving materials.

When done incorrectly, however, concrete can add an air of artificiality or urbaneness to a historic setting. This can be due to improper coloring, artificial texturing and stamping, or the material's overuse in the landscape.

Concrete should not be used as a primary material but could be employed in areas of high traffic, such as where pedestrian paths cross roadways. Here, the concrete could be colored or should employ an aggregate that matches the surrounding soils to blend with the historic landscape.

OPTION G: CHIP AND SEAL ASPHALT (MACADAM)

Chip and seal asphalt, or macadam, is one of the oldest hard-surfacing paving methods employed on trails. It consists of an asphalt base surfaced with aggregate stone. In limited cases, this surface stone can be local aggregate, and the paving can blend better with historic settings. This is a low-cost, accessible option; however, it does not often blend well with historic landscapes, owing to the dark color of the underlying asphalt.********

OPTION H: RAINBOW TURF

Rainbow turf is a synthetic paving material made of recycled tires. It offers a low-impact, slip-resistant surface. It can be easily installed and last a long time. However, the product has a high initial cost and must be installed by a licensed installer. Without the use of proprietary synthetic binders, which require specialized training and maintenance, it is not an accessible paving material.********

******** "Path & Trail Surface Alternatives for Cultural Landscape Applications." Field Notes, National Park Service, 23.
******** Ibid., 21.

APPENDIX C REFERENCES

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