

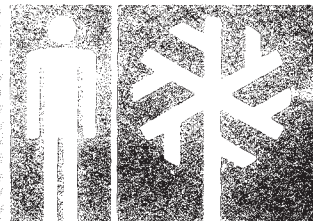
development concept

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MORRISTOWN
WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS UNIT

NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK / NEW JERSEY



B&W Scans

4.25.2005

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morristown

**national historical park
development concept**

washington's headquarters unit

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INTRODUCTION

During the 8 years of the Revolutionary War, the small New Jersey village of Morristown was the scene of significant military activities. In the winter of 1779-80, Morristown was picked for the second time as the base camp of the Continental Army, which encamped there for the next 7 months. General Washington arrived on 1 December 1779, and took up residence with his family in the home built by Colonel Jacob Ford, Jr.; landowner, iron manufacturer, and ardent patriot of the Revolutionary cause. Because it was an honor to have housed General Washington and his official family, and because the Ford Mansion did function as a "mini-Pentagon" for this very crucial period of the War for Independence, this area has been treasured, preserved, and commemorated by Americans for nearly 200 years.

Built just before the war began, the Ford Mansion stands today as a vital and tangible link with the beginnings of this country's history. Today the mansion appears as a quaint old house, neatly furnished and nicely landscaped. Except for a few plaques in the mansion, there is nothing to elicit in the visitor a sense of the momentous period that this old building passed through.

Time has taken its toll on the site and it would no longer be possible to restore this place to anything approximating its original appearance. To recreate the scene would require the reconstruction of a number of

outbuildings, the elimination of many surrounding homes, and an interstate highway. In order to show the visitor what it was like here when George and Martha Washington, Theodosia Ford and her four children, Alexander Hamilton, Tench Tilghman, General Henry Knox, Nathanael Greene, the Marquis de Lafayette, and others who resided here and moved through these rooms, it is necessary to present in words and pictures this important component of history. It is the intention of this report to suggest ways that this may be accomplished.

Washington's headquarters is one of four geographical units making up Morristown National Historical Park. In Morristown proper is Ford Mansion where Washington lived, the park's historical museum, the presumed site of Fort Nonsense built in 1777, Jockey Hollow located about 3 miles southwest of Morristown where the Continental Army camp sites of 1779-80 are located, and the site of the New Jersey Brigade encampment. These units combined, form a link with the past by which the visitor can obtain a better understanding and appreciation for the story of the American Revolution.

BACKGROUND

In 1872 upon the death of Henry A. Ford, grandson of Colonel Jacob Ford, Jr., the historic Ford Mansion was purchased by four prominent New Jersey men who wished to preserve this historic place for posterity. To further their objective they formed the Washington Association of New Jersey. This group maintained the house and kept it open to the public until 1933, when it became the nucleus for the establishment of Morristown National Historical Park. During the winter encampment of 1779-80, all but two rooms of this house were occupied by General Washington's official family, which besides the commander-in-chief included his wife, Martha, aides, and servants. The mansion, restored in 1939, and the historical museum located at the rear of the mansion comprised one of four uncontiguous units of the National Historical Park. Fort Nonsense, Jockey Hollow, and the New Jersey Brigade encampment site of 1779-80 are the other three units of the park.

The act of Congress that created the park also stipulated that the objects – including manuscripts, books, paintings, and other relics of historical value – pertaining to George Washington and the Revolutionary War, were forever to be maintained as a part of the national historical park. This phenomenal collection, assembled by the Washington Association of

New Jersey, is housed in the historical museum. As well as the historic mansion itself, this comprises one of the greatest treasures relating to the American Revolutionary War.

The Ford Mansion-historical museum complex, known as the Washington's headquarters unit is situated approximately ½ mile from the center of Morristown, New Jersey, and is bounded by Morris Avenue eastbound on the south, Washington Place on the east, Morris Avenue westbound on the north, and Interstate 287 (I-287), on the west. This proposal will be developed on 16.9 acres of land, which include 7.5 acres of existing Park Service land, 0.94 acre of land to be purchased within the near future and 0.7 acre of land that will be donated to the National Park Service also within the near future.

HISTORY

To understand the significance, problems, and the importance of this area is to first be aware of its history.

The task of keeping the Continental Army together during the winter encampment may not have been less difficult than leading them through summer campaigns. In December of 1779 Morristown became, for the second time, the base of the main body of the American Army. Morristown at that time was a rustic frontier community of about 250 people, close to New York City. The Morristown site offered peculiar advantages that Washington was quick to see — safe from attack because of the natural barrier furnished by the Watchung Mountains, he still could watch the British Army in New York City. So, after an exhausting campaign, and during "a very severe storm of hail and snow all day," Washington rode into the hilly little community and established his headquarters in the big white house of the recently widowed Mrs. Theodosia Ford. The stormy day of the General's arrival perhaps was like an evil portent; the weather grew harsher by the day as one snow storm after another raged through Morristown.

Simultaneously, with the General's arrival, Continental troops arrived and set up camp in Jockey Hollow, a hilly area just south of Morristown, and 3 miles from Washington's headquarters at the Ford Mansion. The half naked men, having pitched their tents on the frozen ground, began at once building log huts for more secure shelter from the elements "suffering much without shoes and stockings and working half leg deep in snow." The men

nevertheless spread a log house city over the hillsides of Jockey Hollow in less than 2 months. The weather was without mercy; it was the most severe and prolonged winter of the entire 18th century. Life for soldiers in Jockey Hollow was unexciting, uninspiring, and characterized by difficulties that possibly never existed to an equal degree at any other time during the War for Independence.

In addition to trying to solve the problems of hunger, nakedness, lack of money, and lack of troops; there was ever the need for recruiting, outfitting, and drilling new enlistments to take the place of those whose terms were up or who left of their own accord. In all his stern disciplinary experience as a soldier, General Washington had never known precisely this sort of nerve-wracking suspense he was now enduring. Defeat, failure, desertion, embarrassment, insufficient troops, and exhaustion were daily challenges. As if all these challenges were not sufficient to manage, the General, along with his staff at the Ford Mansion, kept watch upon the British to anticipate their projected moves, and plotted strategy for their campaign the following summer.

Under the headquarters roof, in the short interval of a few months, were gathered many of the important men in the history of America's trouble for independence. The Brigade Commanders — Knox, Hand, Clinton, St. Clair, Irvin, Stark, and others — met with Washington on frequent occasions at the Ford Mansion. Alexander Hamilton, Washington's aide, resided here also. Visitors from abroad like the Chevalier de LaLuzerne from France and Don Juan de Miralles from Spain brought hope of foreign aid. On 10 May 1780, the Marquis de Lafayette came with word that the King of France was sending a fleet of ships and 6,000 troops to assist his American ally. Washington's hopes for a summer offensive soared. The Army, having been inspired and held together by Washington's leadership and by the ideals of the Revolution, emerged at the end of the encampment and prepared to resume the battle against the British.

When we recall Washington's calmness in the midst of exasperating annoyances; his unselfish integrity when surrounded by cupidity, jealousy, and hatred; his faith that put courage into the hearts of men who marched hungry and left bloody footprints in the snow; we begin to realize his greatness. He could easily have delegated these responsibilities to someone else to go home to live in luxury, but instead, stayed to endure these challenges with his troops.

THE SITE

Defining the physical characteristics of the site and the factors that influence it, plus identifying the opportunities and constraints for development will be the basis for planning decisions at Washington's headquarters unit.

Topographically, the project site slopes moderately with a drop of 62 feet from a high point at the Ford Mansion to the edge of the new westbound Morris Avenue. Slopes varying from 2 feet in 100 feet, to 15 feet in 100 feet are evident here.

One area of the site has slopes not suitable for development. This area is west of the historical museum, adjacent to the new expressway. Slopes are 15 percent or greater. Land immediately north of and adjacent to Division Street is gently sloping and all vegetation has been cleared. This land is currently owned by the State of New Jersey, but will be deeded to the park upon completion of I-287.

Several species of trees and shrubs exist on the site now in Federal ownership. With one exception, all plants are specimen trees and shrubs that resulted from the planting plans done at the turn of the century and during the 1930s. To the north and west of the museum is a very dense stand of maple, oak, and ash trees. The location of this naturally reforested area coincides with the steep terrain mentioned above, as well as the area immediately behind the museum.

Two parcels of land totaling 0.94 acre on Washington Place adjacent to the mansion and museum remain in private ownership. Both parcels contain a private residence and outbuildings, are conveniently located to the new interstate highway, and have a high development potential making its acquisition imperative. These properties are essential to maintain a proper setting for the historic Ford Mansion. Another house adjacent to the Ford Mansion that is now being used by park personnel should also be obliterated.

Existing factors and the proposed development that surrounds the historic site affects the character and the ultimate program for development at the Washington's headquarters unit. I-287 is presently under construction and this, more than any other factor, will influence the sensitivity, the scale, and the character of this historic site. This intrusion will modify and complicate pedestrian and vehicular access, change orientation, and fragment this historic site from its surrounding community.

Arriving by the interstate, the visitor will be required to negotiate an engineering nightmare of off-ramps, frontage roads, and one-way collector streets to reach the park. Visible and audible from the historic Ford Mansion, every effort must be made to minimize this intrusion. Recently the Department of Transportation proposed to the Park Service that a segment of the interstate be covered. This covered portion would include pedestrian space with a planted area, parking space for visitors to Morristown National Historical Park, and pedestrian access between the cover and the park. (See Circulation Plan Map.)

The National Park Service and the Morristown/Morris County National Park's Centennial Association have both indicated approval in principle to this plan for a cover. The planning team endorses this plan in principle only. The team feels it preferable to devote the entire cover to pedestrian space, rather than using a portion of the cover for visitor parking.

The New Jersey Department of Transportation assured the National Park Service representatives of the State's intention to donate the parcel north of Division Street bounded by I-287, Morris Avenue westbound, and Washington Place, for visitor parking, thereby eliminating the need for parking on top of the cover. Tentatively, the contracts call for rough grading this area for eventual construction of a parking lot.

Upon completion of the interstate, Morris Avenue, which now carries both east and westbound traffic, will be converted to a one-way eastbound route, making it no longer possible for visitors to park at curbside in front of Ford Mansion. To carry traffic back to the Morristown central business district, westbound Morris Avenue is being constructed 400 feet north of the museum. Washington Place, a one-block long, two-way local street, which primarily serves the residents living along it, will eventually serve as automobile access and egress to and from the proposed visitor parking area.

Architectural investigation of the historic Ford Mansion, archeology, and research of historic documents have also revealed for us many other factors that affect physical planning here at Washington's headquarters unit. Information taken from a 1959 historic structures report of the Ford Mansion compiled by F. Ross Holland, Jr., Park Historian, reveals significant information about the mansion and its physical setting. The mansion, built in 1774 by Colonel Jacob Ford, Jr., was situated on 200 acres of gently rolling land that his father had given him years earlier. The house was constructed of brick with a wood exterior finish.

Archeological excavations, done between 1936 and 1939, have given us some hints as to what the site might have looked like at the time the Jacob Ford family was living there and during the period of the encampment of

1779-80. The remains of an old stone fence were discovered, extending from the southwesterly corner of the mansion out to Morris Avenue. Also, early photographs indicate such a fence did exist here. In the rear of the house the foundations from an outbuilding measuring roughly 10 feet by 25 feet were found. The purpose of this building is not known.

Adjacent to the kitchen wing, the foundations of a structure measuring 10 feet by 14 feet were excavated. Evidence today indicates that this was the foundation of the "shed or lean-to" that Colonel Ford had previously constructed.

Two cisterns were also on the grounds. No other archeological remains have been discovered on the Ford Mansion grounds; however, researching historic documents, conjecture of that information, and imagination can fabricate for us what the historic setting might have looked like.

We know for instance that because the house was about ½ mile from the center of Morristown, and because it was situated on 200 acres of land, and that Colonel Ford himself was considered a squire by the people of the community, that this country estate at least included outbuildings, pasture for the grazing of horses and other domestic animals, and space perhaps for a kitchen garden. Across the road from the Ford Mansion, where the equestrian statue of Washington now stands, log barracks were built for the body of troops acting as the commander-in-chief's lifeguard during the period of the 1779-80 encampment. There are historic documents that also indicate George Washington ordered the construction of a log kitchen and the construction of two buildings, located to the immediate west of the mansion, that served as offices for Washington and Hamilton. From this available information it is quite apparent the formal 20th century landscape treatment now existing at Washington's headquarters unit is not in sympathy with the historic setting of the Ford Mansion.

VISITOR PROFILE

The majority of visitors to Washington's headquarters unit are one-visit tourists. A great many visitors are residents of the Morristown vicinity and a substantial number arrive from the suburban/industrial section of the New York-New Jersey metropolitan area.

Research has shown that Morristown National Historical Park is not a destination oriented park. Predominately a day-use area, visitors arrive primarily by private automobile and do not expect to spend a great deal of time here. With the completion of the interstate highway, it is anticipated that an even greater number of visitors will start their tour of the historical park here at Washington's headquarters unit.

Needs and desires of visitors vary according to age, lifestyle, origin, and tour group. For the tour participant, a visit is simple, follows a very specific pattern—a greeting from a member of the park staff, viewing the orientation film, a tour of the historical museum, and a visit to the Ford Mansion. Total time here is about 1 to 1½ hours.

Fewer in number but with a comparable lifestyle, a second group of visitors arrive in their own cars either singly or in groups, and spend a longer time at this area. Taking a leisurely pace, they are more inquisitive about the park's attractions.

A third group, with but a very short time to spend here while traveling through Morristown, is satisfied with a quick orientation to the historical park and a tour through the Ford Mansion.

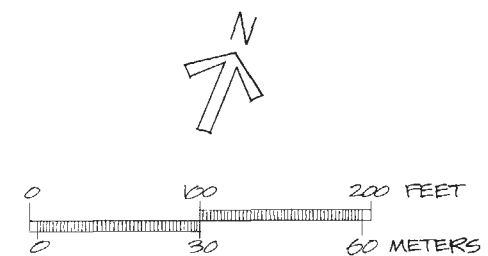
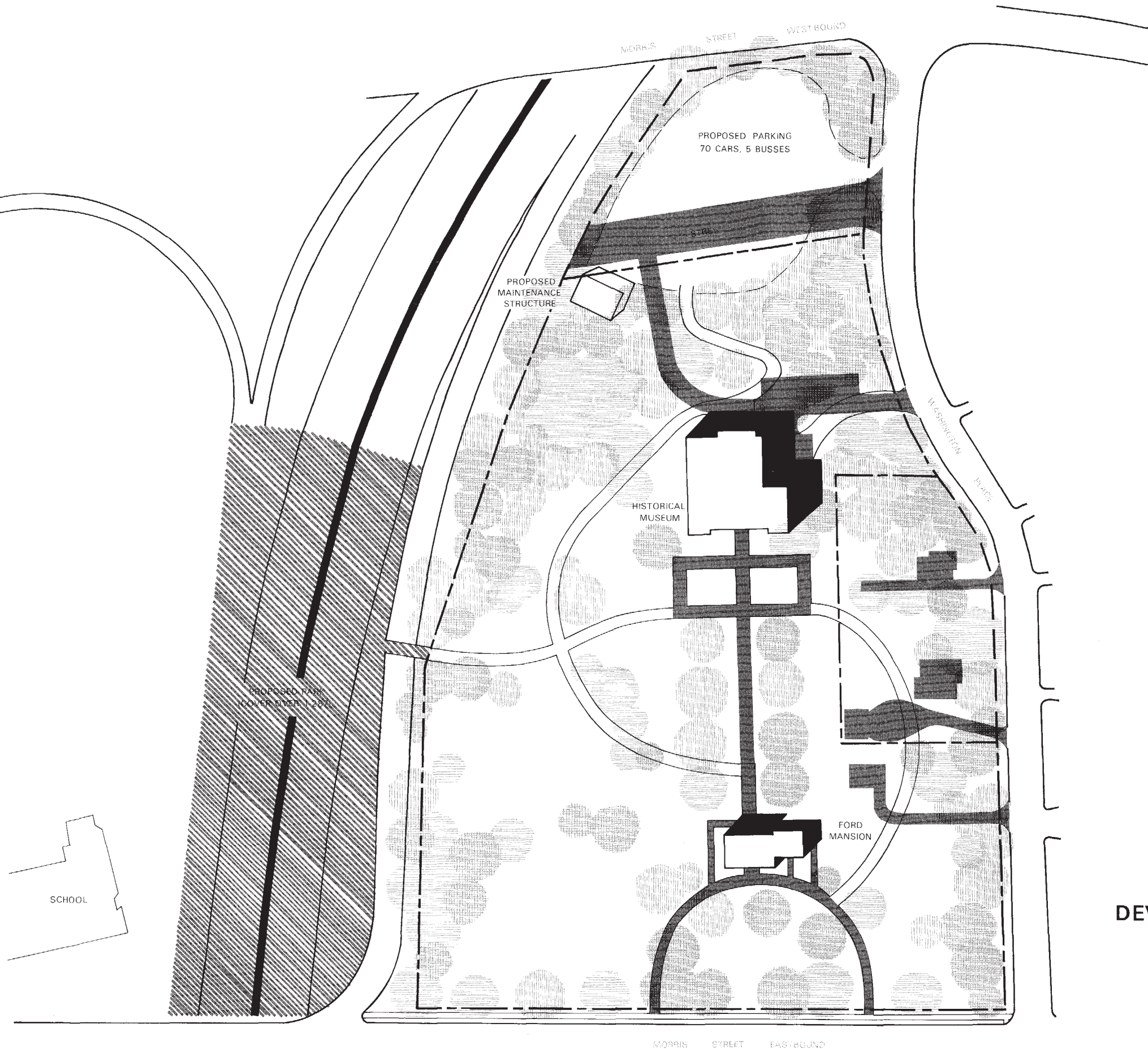
One other group, the individuals who make repeated visits to the Washington's headquarters unit, comes here for scholarly pursuits, to use the library, to study the exhibits, or to tour the Ford Mansion for contemplative purposes.

Now, because of no off-street parking, the visitor usually approaches the site from Morris Avenue. His first contact with the park is at the Ford Mansion. So, generally, not until he has toured this historic house is he directed to the historical museum. This is like reading the last chapter of a book, first. The setting for the story is not given to the visitor until last.

Because we are adjacent to an interstate highway, perfect timing, proper sequence, and order are of utmost importance more than ever before, if the visitor is to receive a quality experience here at this historic site. To avoid the possibility of this becoming just another stop along an interstate highway, it is essential that the visitor's experience be preceded by:

A period of time that allows him to adjust his senses from that of the sensory-depriving experience of the automobile and the interstate highway, and develops a transition of mood from that of 20th-century concrete, cars, and chaos to a mood that responds to the 18th-century needs, urgencies, and struggle for "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

The historic museum was constructed in 1935 for the display and safe storage of numerous relics, books, manuscripts, and other objects of historical interest relating to George Washington and the encampment of 1779-80.



- EXISTING PARK BOUNDARY
- PROPOSED ACQUISITION
- EXISTING WALK
- PROPOSED WALK
- TO BE OBLITERATED

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN
WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS UNIT
 Morristown National Historical Park

APPROVED
 MAY 1974

In addition to the three main exhibit rooms, the building contains a large auditorium capable of seating more than 200 visitors and is equipped with a complete theatrical stage. This is where the orientation film is shown and where people from the community gather occasionally throughout the year for various functions. (The Washington Association of New Jersey meets here annually on George Washington's birthday.) The administrative offices, the library, and information and other interpretive facilities are also located here. Over the years, however, this relationship of functions and activities has resulted in a conflict of both function and use. The current circulation pattern based on the fact that the visitor parks and approaches the historical museum from the direction of the Ford Mansion, is not only inconsistent with present interpretive efforts but also generates conflicts in the museum. Research has indicated that there are also inconsistencies in the carrying capacities between the Ford Mansion and the historical museum. Only 100 visitors per hour can conveniently tour the historical museum. One-hundred-and-fifty visitors can tour the Ford Mansion per hour. This plan seeks to solve these problems by increasing the visitor use capacity of the museum, by creating more functional and useful spaces here, by improving the circulation, and by developing a quality experience for the visitor touring the museum.

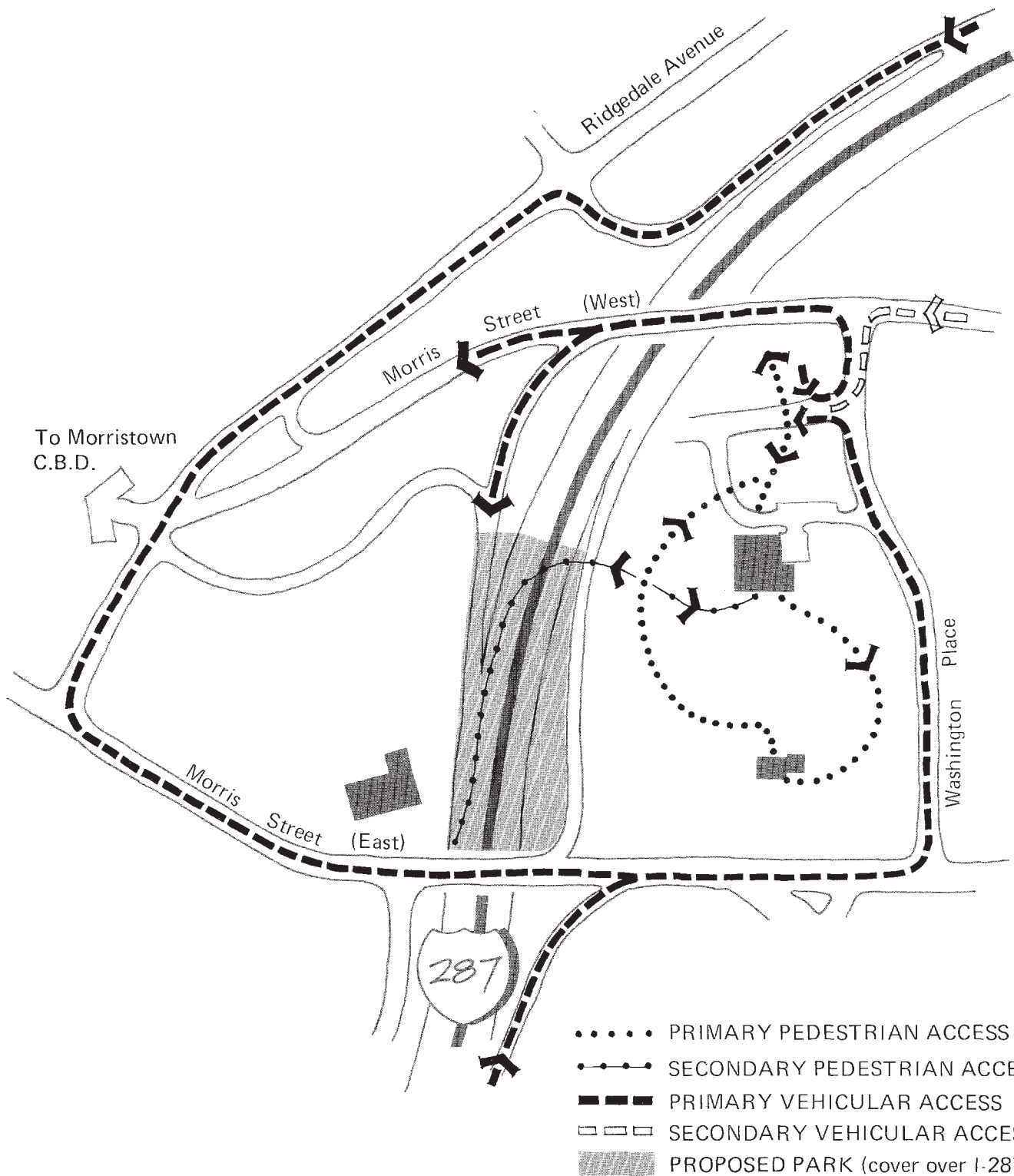
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This development concept plan is to ensure that the historic Ford Mansion, the museum, and its environment are protected and interpreted through an orderly system of planned actions so that the visitor receives the highest quality experience. Along with the design criteria mentioned above, and considerations that were mentioned in the master plan and the interpretive prospectus, this plan will provide the visitor to the Washington's headquarters unit with safe and easy access, adequate parking, and a logical circulation pattern. This plan seeks to develop the area so that it will be in character with the historic Ford Mansion and will harmonize with the attractive surrounding residential community.

Several changes in the present development are the intent of these suggestions:

First, the Circulation Plan Map illustrates the reversal of circulation patterns (vehicular and pedestrian); and it shows the relationship of the

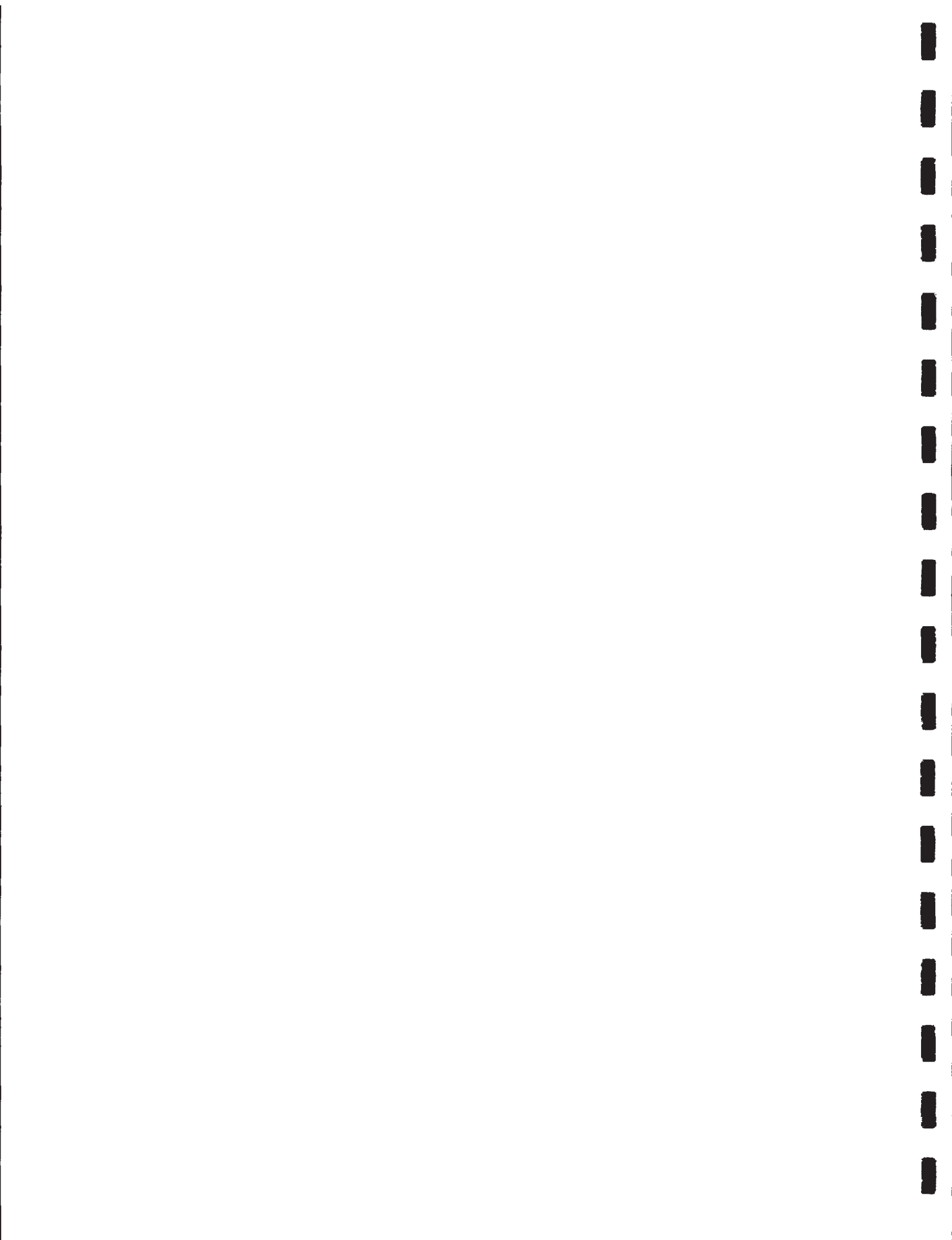




CIRCULATION PLAN **WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS UNIT** **Morristown National Historical Park**

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interstate highway to parking, the relationship of access to the park and orientation within the museum, and a visit to the Ford Mansion. All visitors will be directed through improved signing to off-street parking behind the historical museum. Upon the completion of I-287, the New Jersey Department of Transportation will deed to the National Park Service 0.7 acre of land adjacent to the north edge of Park Service property bounded on the west by I-287, on the north by Morris Avenue westbound, on the east by Washington Place, and on the south by Division Street. The town of Morristown will vacate Division Street. When these lands become available to the National Park Service, parking for approximately 63 cars and 4 buses will be situated here. Where possible the parking should be screened with vegetation. The present drive, behind the museum, will be removed with the exception of the portion required for a service entrance.

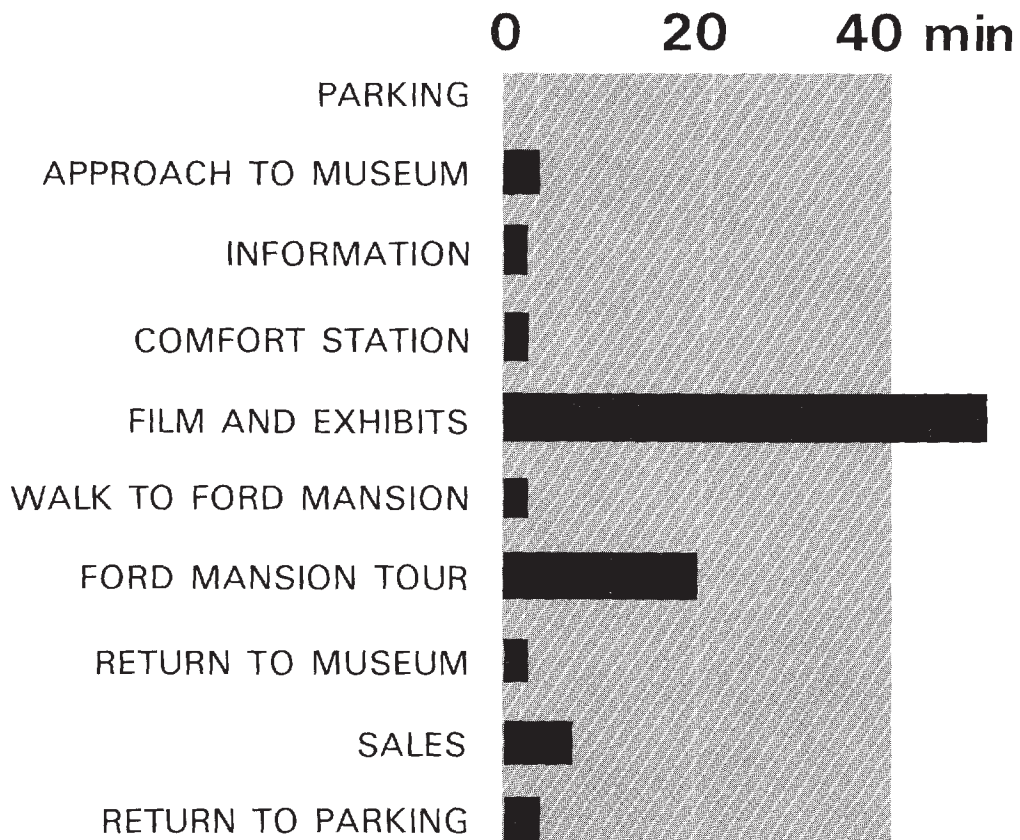
Second, moving from the openness of the interstate and the parking area into the dense protective cover of the natural grove of maple, oak, and ash trees will serve as a transition zone to gear down the visitor's senses from the urgencies of his automobile and will help set the stage for the experience to follow.

Third, the historical museum will be the point at which the visitor is introduced to the park in general, and more specifically, to this historic site. It is here that basic visitor services — information, orientation, interpretation, comfort facilities, and a sales-shop will be available. To ensure that these services are provided in a timely, sequential, and orderly manner, partial renovation of the historical museum based on criteria discussed earlier will be necessary.

Fourth, after having gone through a transition of moods the visitor now has a proper frame of mind to emerge into the 18th-century setting for the story that that will be told in the Ford Mansion. Over a one-directional path, the visitor will walk from the historical museum across the landscaped grounds and around to the front entrance of the Ford Mansion. In the mansion the visitor will learn what it was like when George and Martha Washington, Theodosia Ford and her four children, the General's military family, Alexander Hamilton, Lafayette, and others moved through these rooms. The visitor leaving the mansion, hopefully having received both inspiration and insight into what it was like living here during the winter encampment and a deeper understanding of George Washington's greatness, will again follow the one-way path over the grounds, either back to the historical museum for further study of the exhibits or back to his automobile in the



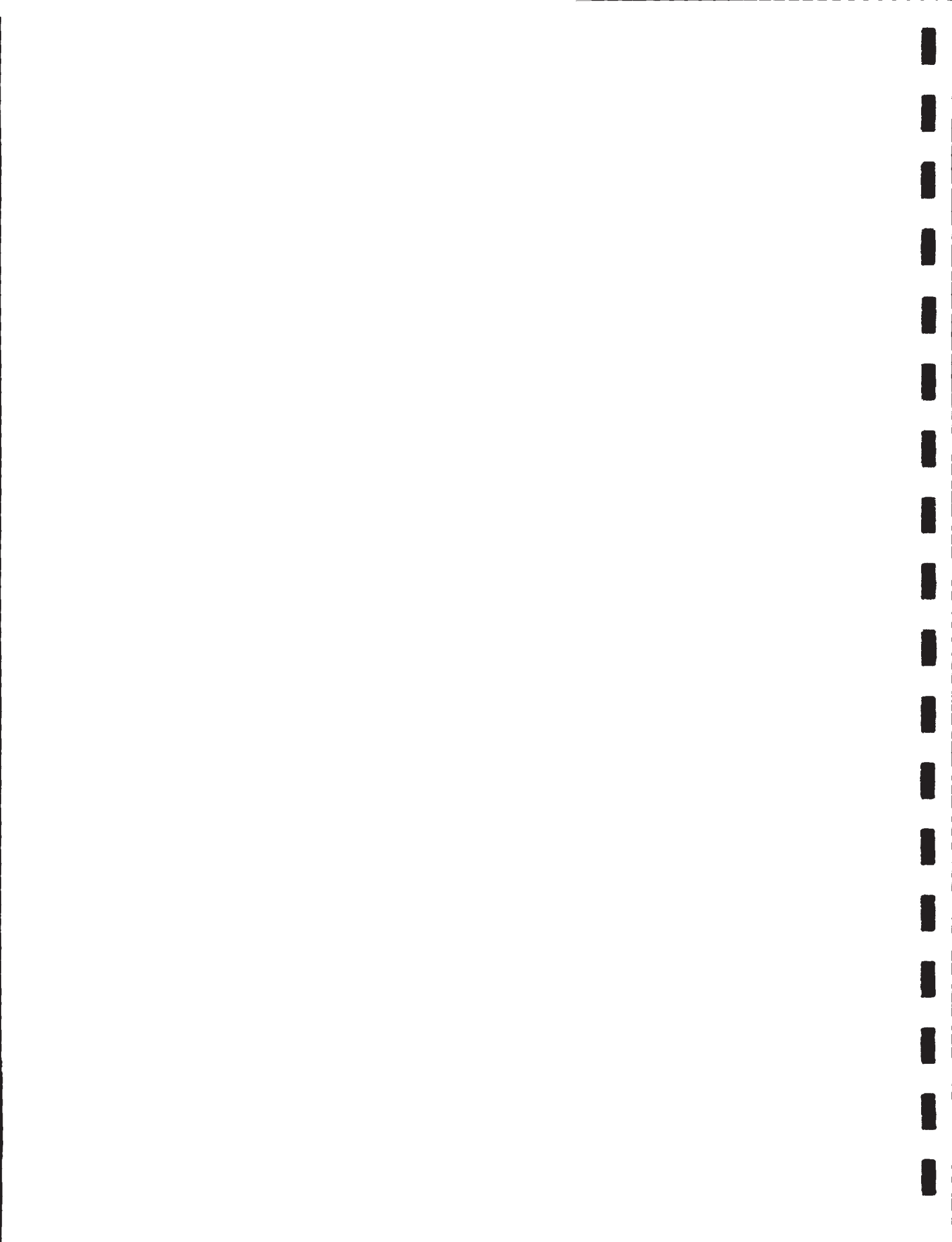
ACTIVITIES BY TIME SEQUENCE



approximate time in park

1 hr 37 min

MUSEUM - FORD MANSION AREA
Morristown National Historical Park



parking lot. From here it is hoped that the individual or group will travel to the other areas of the park – Fort Nonsense, Jockey Hollow, and the New Jersey Brigade site of 1779-80.

Fifth, interpretation here at the Washington's headquarters unit will focus on the story briefly summarized in the beginning, as well as the other themes that were developed in the interpretive prospectus. This is but one of four geographically separated units of Morristown National Historical Park. Because this is a separate but interrelated story, a separate interpretive package should be developed here that can stand on its own but is firmly related to the total story of Morristown National Historical Park. The following graph shows a breakdown of the activities by sequence in 2-minute periods that reflect the time visitors will be spending here with the interpretive program.

Sixth, esthetically the site will be improved by further enhancing the setting for the historic Ford Mansion and providing dense groupings of vegetative material to properly screen out the visual and audible intrusions of the interstate highway. When the National Park Service acquires the 0.94 acre of land along Washington Place, then the two residences and their outbuildings, which have lived useful lives, should be razed. The site should be leveled and planted with species of trees and shrubs that are indigenous to the area, harmonize with the landscape treatment, and are historically significant. The alignment of the proposed one-way pedestrian path should be in sympathy with the existing topography. To accommodate individuals arriving at the site on bicycles, racks should be judiciously situated in close proximity to the north entrance of the historical museum. Just as this place functioned as a gathering place during the period of the encampment, likewise today these grounds should be used for gatherings, outdoor lectures, and other related activities during daylight and evening hours of peak visitation periods.

Seventh, management and protection facilities primarily located in the historical museum will serve this development. For maintenance purposes, a small structure, approximately 600-square feet in size, is to be used for snow removal equipment, lawn tools, and so forth. It should be located in close proximity to the parking area and adjacent to the I-287 boundary line. All necessary utility extensions exist on the site. All utilities will remain below ground.

The drawing on page 9 gives the development concept plan and illustrates, in graphic form, recommendations contained in the foregoing discussion.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

It has been mentioned above that, in principle, the team endorses the New Jersey Department of Transportation's proposal for a cover over that portion of I-287 adjacent to the park. Although it is not to be constructed on park property, the impact of such a structure on the integrity of the park is most significant, and hopefully, strict design standards will be adopted.

Data on the actual design of this structure is at this time quite limited. According to a fact sheet supplied by the New Jersey Department of Transportation, the area of the cover would encompass 2.25 acres. It would extend northward from the existing Morris Avenue about 630 feet and would be 200 feet wide over the depressed highway. At Morris Avenue there is no change in elevation. However, the extreme north end of the cover would appear as an enormous raised box culvert, over 16 feet in height from the surrounding land. On the west, an existing elementary school with its playground will adjoin the raised structure. Immediately to the east lies the Ford Mansion and the historical museum. I-287 will influence the sensitivity, the scale, and the character of this historic site, and this intrusion will modify and complicate access, orientation, and circulation in the vicinity of this historic site. The proposed cover for the interstate as planned by the New Jersey Department of Transportation would appear as an enormous, concrete, bulky, corpulent, massive, and distracting structure, dwarfing the scale of everything surrounding it and could indeed be a worse travesty than the proposed interstate itself. Therefore, because of its potential negative impact upon this historic site, the team is qualifying its endorsement of the cover mentioned earlier. The team will only endorse the proposed cover for I-287, if strong design standards are enforced; if imaginative, original, and innovative ideas are explored for the use of alternative materials for its construction; and if the impact upon the historic scene is reduced to a minimum. To bring about these goals, a great deal of cooperative effort among the various organizations concerned will be necessary, as well as dynamic leadership on the part of the National Park Service. Indeed a cover over this segment of the interstate highway could be an effective solution to the visual and audible intrusions of the interstate highway. However, "providing parking for 80 cars with vehicular access from Division Street across National Park Service land, planting grass and shrubbery in 18 inches of soil, and surrounding this massive structure with chain link fencing" nowhere approaches the solution to this problem. The National Park Service must take a very strong position on this proposal to ensure that the goals mentioned earlier are fulfilled.

APPENDIXES

A: CONSTRUCTION COST ESTIMATE

B: BIBLIOGRAPHY

C: PLANNING TEAM AND CONSULTANTS

A: CONSTRUCTION COST ESTIMATE

	Estimate
Obliterate three residences and outbuildings.	\$ 20,000
Fill basements, level, grade and plant sites.	14,000
Remodel historical museum.	230,000
Equipment building — block — 600 sq. ft. @ \$35/S.F.	21,000
Brick sidewalks — 2,650 lin. ft. x 10 ft. wide = 26,500 S.F.	122,000
Removal — sidewalk — 650 lin. ft.	4,000
Removal — pavement & curbing 82,420 sq. ft.	34,000
New driveway — 8,207 sq. ft.	25,000
Parking — 63 cars & 4 buses, 77 spaces.	125,000
Curbing — 3,450 lin. ft.	13,000
Interpretive plaza — brick paving, seating & walks — 180 S.F.	13,000
Plant material, landscape screening, bicycle racks, and miscellaneous site development.	50,000
Signing, markers, and interpretation.	30,000
Utilities, water line with sprinkler system, (0.94 acre only).	15,000
Electricity to interpretive plaza, equipment building, lighting in parking areas, walks and interpretive plaza.	33,000
Miscellaneous materials & services (10%).	<u>75,000</u>
Construction cost	\$ 824,000
Gross amount	\$ 1,204,000

Construction cost based on June 1974 cost.
Land acquisition cost not included.

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Publication services were provided by the graphics and editorial staffs of the
Denver Service Center, June 1974.

United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service NPS 761A

