

A. Purpose of Report

This report is intended to document and understand the history, significance and physical condition of this cultural resource. In light of these findings, the report then proposes alternative treatment options to provide a range of choices that can be evaluated in light of a number of criteria including available funding and desired use.



Three-dimensional view of front of house in its current configuration.



2006 aerial photograph of Laurel Hill House.

I. INTRODUCTION

B. Location of Property

The Lorton Adaptive Reuse Area, located on the southwestern side of Silverbrook Road, west of I-95, is part of a 2,400-acre parcel of land acquired by Fairfax County from the federal government in 2002. The 2,400-acre parcel is also home to the Laurel Hill Golf Club, mountain biking and hiking trails, a disc golf course, a future equestrian center, and the Lorton Arts Foundation artist's center at the former prison workhouse.

The Adaptive Reuse Area is approximately 80 acres and is also part of a larger 511-acre historic district – the District of Columbia Workhouse and Reformatory Historic District – that was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in February 2006. The Laurel Hill House is located to the south of the ball field in the Adaptive Reuse Area.



Regional context map from master plan from Laurel Hill Master Plan. Developed by Fairfax County.



This blow up of the area around Laurel Hill House is from the Conceptual Development Plan. Laurel Hill Park developed by Fairfax County.

I. INTRODUCTION

C. Preservation Objectives

This study is an acknowledgement that, as a contributing building to the District of Columbia Workhouse and Reformatory Historic District, the Laurel Hill House merits careful consideration concerning its ultimate disposition within any larger plan for the area. This report can serve as background for the design review stipulated in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) governing the property. Because management responsibility for the house may transfer to the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA), the historic preservation policies and guidelines of the FCPA were also consulted during the preparation of this report. Given the deteriorated condition of the building and the loss of much of its architectural integrity, a range of treatment options are proposed that aim to provide flexibility as allowed within the guidelines and in light of unresolved questions regarding funding and use.

D. Methods of Evaluation

The methods of evaluation for the Laurel Hill House began with the collection of necessary background data on the building. This preliminary work included historical research, an existing conditions survey, creation of measured drawings and gathering of record photographs. Once this data was collected and analyzed, conclusions about the building's significance and treatment recommendations were made.

Prior to this study, significant historical research for the Laurel Hill House had been accomplished in a separate study whose subject was the neoclassical gardens related to the house. This garden study was prepared by John Milner Associates for the Fairfax County Park Authority. Many of the historical findings of that report are used again in this study.

An existing conditions survey was performed to document the physical spaces and architectural elements and to assess the current condition of materials and systems. In conjunction with historic research, this condition assessment helps to determine the historic integrity of the building including the various changes made over time.

The structure of the building received a condition assessment prepared by engineers from the office of Wiley Wilson. The existing building systems did not receive an engineering assessment because they are clearly obsolete and in need of complete replacement. The condition of the site was evaluated from a landscape architecture perspective. The findings of these condition assessments are summarized in Section II D.5 of this report.

Measured drawings for the building were prepared through a combination of detailed field measurements and a digital photogrammetric survey. The resulting CAD scale plans and elevations serve as an important analytical tool as well as the base for proposed treatment plans. Record photographs of the various spaces are included in the report and keyed into the floor plans.