Fairfax County Park Authority

John C. & Margaret K. White Horticultural Park Master Plan

Approved July 26, 2006

FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY
WHITE HORTICULTURAL PARK

General Management Plan
and Conceptual Development Plan

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Cover images, clockwise from top left: *Rhododendron* 'Margaret K. White'; White residence; *Rhododendron* 'John C. White'; meadow. Source: FCPA, 2004.

Introduction

I. Purpose and Description of Plan

The Master Plan for the White Horticultural Park will guide its development from a private residence and garden to a public garden. The plan addresses resource management and preservation, cultural resource preservation, and site improvements, and recommends strategies to enhance visitor enjoyment and experience. This document serves as a guide for all future planning on the site. It should be referred to before any planning and design projects are initiated.

Part One: Background and Existing Conditions

I. Park Description and Significance

A. Location and General Description

John C. and Margaret K. White Horticultural Park is located at 3301 Hawthorne Lane in Falls Church, Virginia. It is in the Mason Supervisory District and the Jefferson Planning District. The park is 13.6 acres and has been owned by the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) since 1999. The site is bounded on all sides by established single family residential properties, ranging from one to three domicile units per acre. These include residences of the Knollwood subdivision to the west, the Icabod Grove subdivision to the south, the Sleepy Hollow Park subdivision to the east, and the Garner Acres subdivision to the northeast. The property is currently accessed via a private drive extending from Princess Anne Lane on the west. The property falls within county tax map 60-2 ((1)) 20, 21, and 22.

The property is characterized by a perimeter of maturing woodlands and an extensive collection of cultivated ornamental shrubs. Several structures are located on the site, including the family residence, a circa 1876 barn, and other small outbuildings. An older structure, known as the "Chicken House" or "Tool House," is located nearby, as is a small shed-like structure referred to as the "Camellia House." An early 20th century small dwelling was moved to another location on the property so that the existing White residence could be built in 1939. This earlier dwelling was primarily used for storage and was removed following its destruction by Hurricane Isabel in 2003.

B. Historical Background

The White Horticultural Park is named for its most recent owners, John C. and Margaret K. White. The park is situated on a larger parcel of land that in the early 18th century belonged to a vast 21, 000 acre estate patented by William Fitzhugh and known as "Ravensworth." This estate was eventually divided between successive generations, with the future White site a part of a parcel comprising 2,291 acres owned by Mordecai Fitzhugh by 1783. Research suggests that in 1760, Kitchen Prim, who owned two slaves, occupied the northeastern corner of "Ravensworth." This was likely a tenant of the Fitzhugh family. The land was predominantly farmed through the Fitzhugh tenure.[1]

[1] Cecile Glendening, "Margaret White Horticultural Center" historical summary memo to Michael Rierson, February 20, 2004, p. 1.

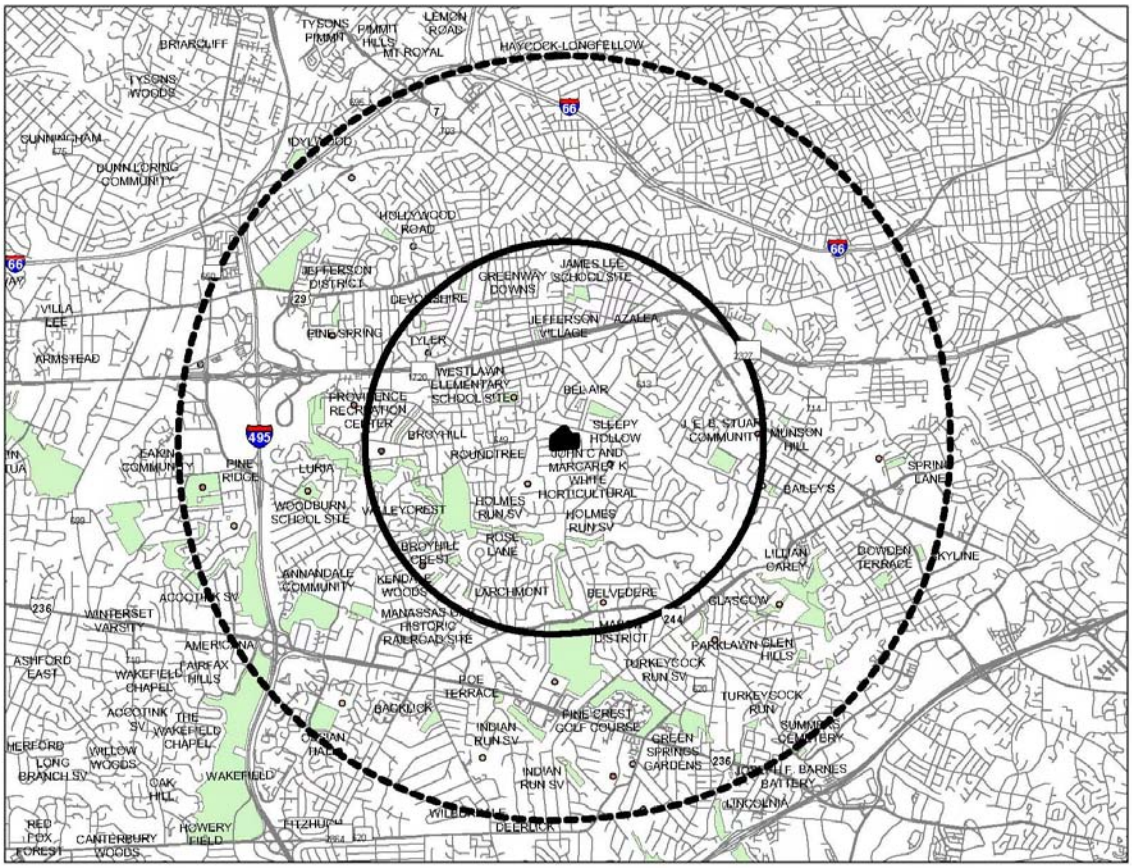

Figure 1, location map. The White property is shown in the center of the two circles. The small circle indicates a 1/2 mile radius from the site and the large circle indicates a 1 mile radius. The points represent school locations with recreational facilities. Source: FCPA, 2006.

In 1819, Carlise Fairfax Whiting owned 1,577 acres on Holmes Run, adjacent to Fitzhugh's property. Whiting willed 255 acres to his daughter, Ellen M. Whiting. Little evidence exists to indicate possible features of this land except a Chancery suit brought by Mordecai Fitzhugh against Dabney Ball, a tenant of Whiting's, regarding placement of a fence along the property line. The fence line may be the one shown on the 1939 plat surveyed for the deed to the White property, between parcel A and the rest of the Whiting property.

Following Mordecai Fitzhugh's land tenure, the property was frequently divided until Alfred Freeman owned a parcel consisting of 67 acres, described as "part Ravensworth." Tax records indicate $1,000 worth of buildings on the property. It is from this land that the 13 acres of the White property derives.

When John and Margaret White purchased the property in 1938, it was situated in an isolated, bucolic landscape dominated by a large oak tree. The couple soon began making improvements to the property and contracted with architect Joe Lapish to build for them a residence at the top of the hill. Twelve foot yews were removed from around the building site and Norway maples were removed from the property boundary. A large, enclosed porch was later constructed to replace a smaller one. The porch was designed to catch the summer breezes from the west and facilitate views onto the garden.

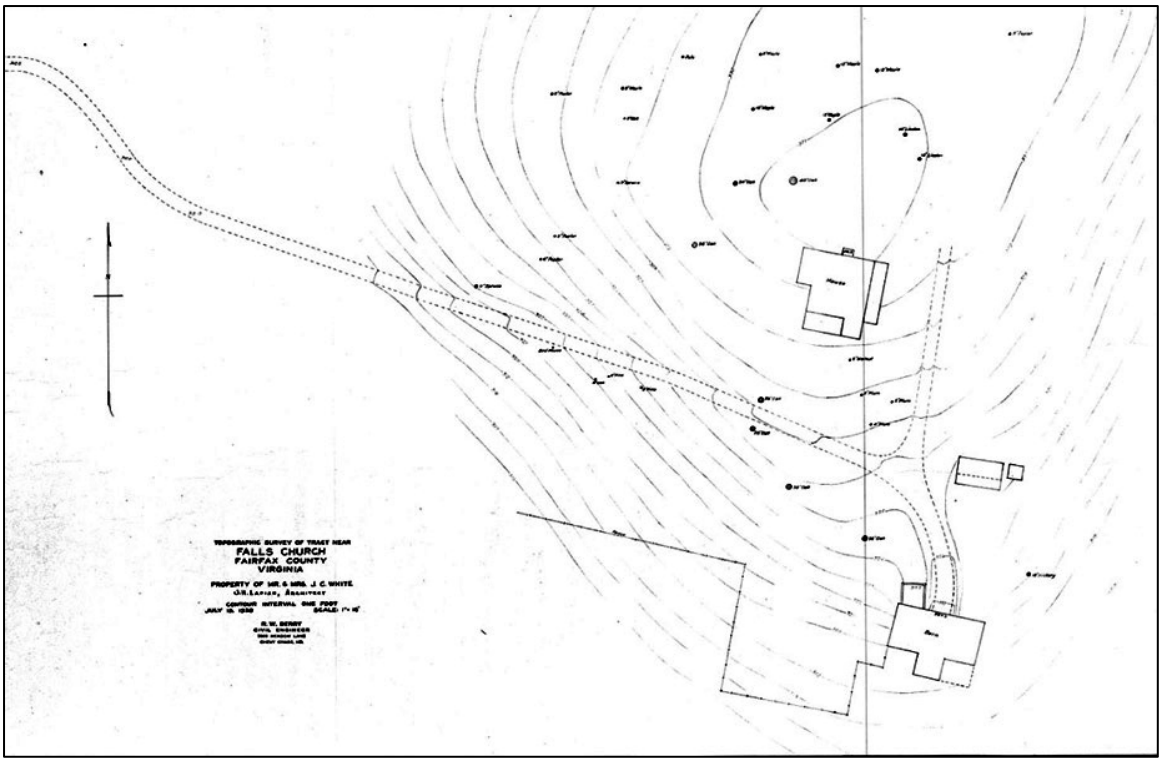

Figure 2, 1938 topographic survey of White property. Source: R.W. Berry, C.E., *Topographic Survey of Tract Near Falls Church, Virginia: Property of Mr. & Mrs. J.C. White.* J.H. Lapish, Architect 1:16, July 15, 1938 (Chevy Chase, MD).

C. Horticultural History and Physical Development

John "J.C." White, a horticulture enthusiast, made cuttings of rhododendrons, among other plants, and together with his wife Margaret, developed an expansive garden landscape. The Whites also planted several evergreens, boxwood, and rhododendrons. As Mrs. White recalls, all the boxwood growing on the property originated from two small plants that she and J.C. purchased.

To support their horticultural pursuits, J.C. added a greenhouse to the residence and a nearing frame (a structure for propagating woody plants from cuttings) in the yard, which he kept full of cuttings. J.C.'s earliest cuttings came from plants advertised in nursery catalogs in the 1960s. As Mrs. White recalls, they "never had an overall plan or garden design. It just grew over time."[2] In the early 1970s, the Whites joined the Rhododendron Society, and members of this group still continue to meet on the property and perform maintenance tasks.

D. Administrative History

In the late 1990s, Mrs. White faced the decision to sell her property for residential development. A neighbor suggested to her that she sell the property to Fairfax County to preserve as a horticultural park. Mrs. White followed up on the suggestion and the property was acquired by special warranty deed by the Fairfax County Park Authority in 1999. As part of the conditions of the deed, Mrs. White has a life estate agreement with the

[2] Margaret K. White, oral interview, January 2001. Transcribed June 15, 2001, on file at Fairfax County Park Authority archives.

Figure 3, White residence. Source: FCPA, 2002.

Figure 4, White residence greenhouse. Source: FCPA, 2002.

Park Authority. As of Summer 2006, Mrs. White continues to live in the residence. The Park Authority will not have possession of the site until the life estate terminates upon Mrs. White's death, although Mrs. White may choose to abandon the life estate at any time. The deed for the site specifies several important restrictions. The deed requires that the site be used as a horticultural park and not for golf or equestrian activities and/or athletic fields. The deed does allow the residence to be used for park-related purposes such as a museum or visitor center. Additionally, the residence may also be rented for residential use so long as any revenue produced is used for horticultural park purposes.

E. Park Classification System

The White property is designated as a "Resource-based Park" in the Park Authority's classification system. Acquisition, identification, and conservation of natural and cultural resources are for purposes of stewardship, and use of the site is defined within stewardship parameters. Development of resource-based parks includes opportunities for public interpretation, education, and enjoyment. To the extent that they do not adversely impact the horticultural resources themselves, portions of the site may be developed with new garden beds and support facilities.

F. Visitor Profile

To determine the visitor profile for this future horticultural park, it is useful to examine user experiences at existing horticultural parks. The Park Authority's existing horticultural parks vary in size and scope. However, these parks, and other models, provide an indication of the number and type of visitors that may visit the park.

For example, the Marie Butler Leven Preserve, located in a residential area of McLean, is a 20 acre horticultural park featuring native plant species envisioned by the original owners as an arboretum. This park is currently supported by a residential rental and a partnership with Earth Sangha, an organization devoted to preserving and fostering use of native species. Main users of the park are those who come to the site to enjoy passive recreation, to volunteer, or to walk on the trails through the wooded areas. This site is not staffed.

Green Spring Gardens is the Park Authority's primary horticultural site. This 27 acre site serves as a destination garden park for the region. It is professionally staffed and offers extensive horticultural services and programs. According to the *2004 Green Spring Gardens Visitor Survey*, a majority of the people visiting the park are women aged 45 or older. The

survey showed that at least 60% of visitors come at least monthly. These visitors come to learn about plants, purchase plants, exercise, attend programs, or simply enjoy the peace and quiet of the grounds and experience nature within an urbanizing environment. Approximately 50% of the visitors to Green Spring Gardens live within the closest two zip codes.

McCrillis Gardens is a small, 5 acre woodland garden park sited among a residential neighborhood in Bethesda, Maryland. It is operated through Brookside Gardens, a Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission property. A botanical art school is located in the former residence. Annual visitation at these gardens is about 4,500 and visitors are mostly adults who are neighbors of the site or horticultural enthusiasts. During peak bloom time in the spring, visitation increases, which accounts for much of the annual visitation numbers.

Based on the experiences at these sites, and the White Horticultural Park's out-of-the-way setting, visitation is anticipated to be relatively low and to include mostly local community members and horticultural enthusiasts who will visit the park to enjoy nature and the gardens, and to participate in passive recreation. Small-scale programs and special events will both further enhance visitors' experiences and support the park.

G. Planning Context

Future development focuses on preserving the horticultural and historic resources for the enjoyment of County residents. Land use recommendations specific to White Horticultural Park emphasize maintaining, preserving, and interpreting the existing landscape and history.

Figure 5, Marie Butler Leven Preserve, McLean, Virginia. Source: FCPA, 2005.

Figure 6, Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria, Virginia. Source: FCPA, 2004.

Figure 7, McCrillis Gardens, Bethesda, Maryland. Source: FCPA, 2005.

H. Park Purpose and Significance

Park Purpose. Park purpose statements are intended to guide decision making for all plan recommendations, resource allocations, and management issues. If a proposed use conflicts with any one of the purposes listed, it will be considered an incompatible use. By establishing park purposes, future plans remain flexible as legislative requirements and visitor preferences change. Deed restrictions limiting use to that of a horticultural park will also dictate the park use.

The purpose of White Horticultural Park is to

(1) preserve and enhance horticultural resources to ensure that the most sensitive resources are appropriately maintained and preserved for public enjoyment,

(2) promote stewardship through educational and interpretive programs, focusing on the rich horticulture and natural resources of the park, and

(3) provide a quality, passive user experience.

Park Significance. Park significance statements capture the attributes that make this site valuable and important to the community and the park system. Like purpose statements, the significance of a park may shift over time in response to the surrounding context or user needs and desires.

White Horticultural Park is significant because it has noteworthy horticultural resources that were cultivated by one family throughout most of the 20th century. This horticultural legacy is a key component of the site history as it conveys the cultural value of the landscape. It demonstrates the landscape's cultivation and stewardship, and ultimately, its preservation.

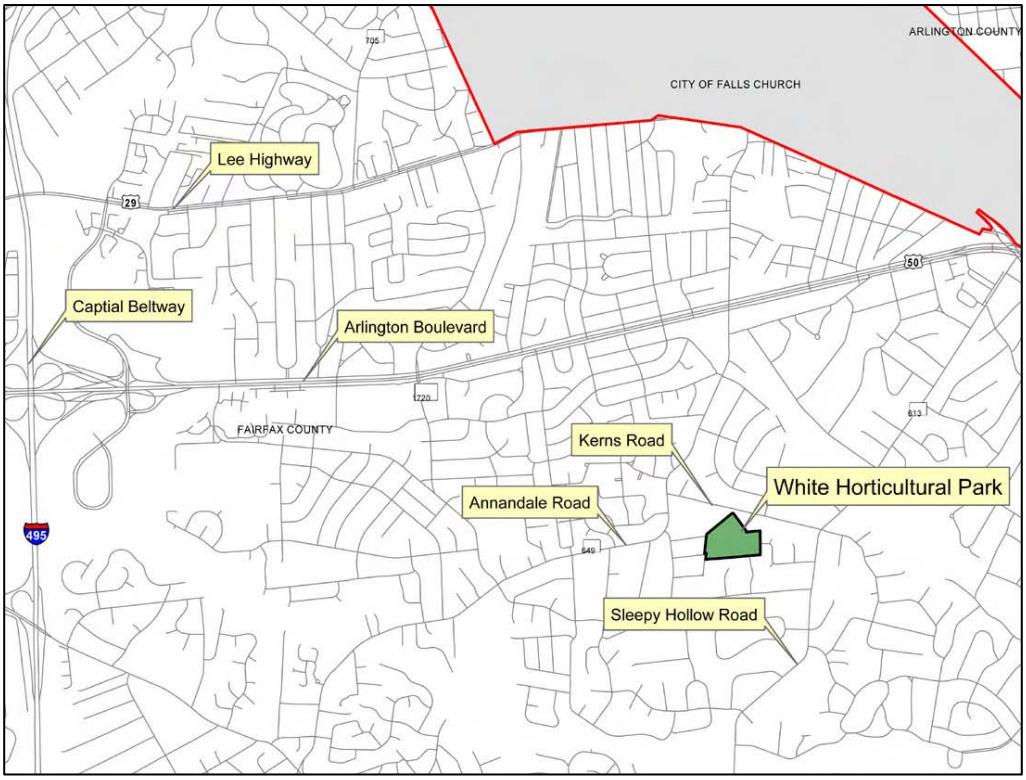

Figure 8, vicinity map. The White property is located near major roads, within a suburban residential neighborhood. Source: FCPA, 2006.

II. Site Inventory and Analysis

A. Park Context and Adjacent Properties

The area's residential development has significantly changed the surrounding context of the White site over the last half century. At the time the Whites purchased the land and built their home, the area was primarily farmland. As suburban development expanded in the Falls Church area following World War II through the mid-1960s, housing developments began to envelop the White property.

B. Existing Site Conditions

1. Existing Structures

Residence. The brick, two-story residence was built in 1939 when the Whites contracted with Joe Lapish to design and construct their home.[3] The house has ample living space on the first level, which includes the kitchen, living room, dining room, den, and bath. There are bedrooms on the upper level. A large, heated and air-conditioned glass porch wraps around the east and north façades of the house. A small greenhouse was added to the west façade, near the kitchen. The unfinished basement houses the furnace and laundry facilities.

Barn. The circa 1876 semi-bank barn is the sole surviving building that attests to the agricultural history of this property. The barn has not been a static structure but rather one of evolving function on an evolving landscape

[3] Original architectural drawings and specifications for the residence are held in the Park Authority historical collection.

and within a shifting social context. For example, there is evidence that the upper portion of the barn served as a play space for the White's children, while the area below functioned as a garage and storage space.

The current condition of the barn is such that it will probably not support public use. Modifications required for public use may change the fabric of the structure to such an extent that it would compromise its status as a contributing feature to the history of the property.

Support Buildings. In addition to the residence and historic structures at the core of the site, the White property has a small maintenance building, known to the White family as the "Chicken House" or "Tool House." This small shed is located at the end of the drive, to the east of the lower gardens. The shed provides both equipment and supply storage, and serves as a garage-type area for repairs.

Another building on the site is a small structure long referred to by the White family as the "Camellia House." The Camellia House is located south of the barn and has been used to protect potted camellias during the winter.

2. Horticultural Resources

Gardens. The White property has an upper garden and a lower garden, each comprised of garden beds and shrub beds.

The upper garden both encircles the White residence and lays directly north of the dwelling. This area creates a unique space where several paths converge to meet in an open lawn area bordered by undulating garden beds. Winding grass paths continue through the beds and into the woodlands beyond.

A large variety of azalea and rhododendron species, including two different cultivars named for the Whites, are the dominant shrubs found in the upper garden. An assortment of groundcovers and vines can be found throughout the beds.

Figure 9, White residence, glass porch at rear. Source: FCPA, 2002.

Figure 10, barn. Source: FCPA, 2002.

Figure 11, Chicken House. Source: FCPA, 2002.

Figure 12, upper garden. Source: FCPA, 2005.

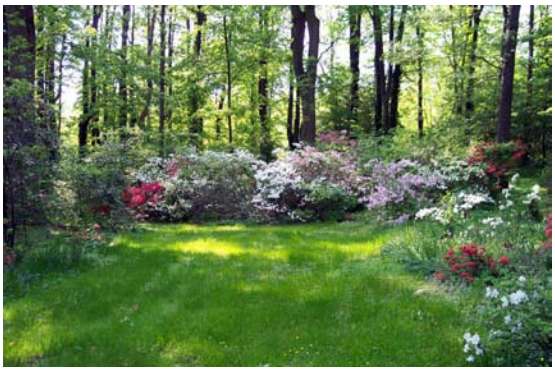

Figure 13, lower garden. Source: FCPA, 2005.

The lower garden includes areas south of the drive between the domesticated area around the house, barn, and outbuildings, and the woodland. This area consists of numerous shrub massings and garden beds of various sizes that are defined by the meandering paths that wind through the area. The northern portion has a thick canopy cover that creates very shady conditions. Dense masses of azaleas and clusters of rhododendron, *Rhododendron spp.,* occupy many of the beds, especially in the northern portion of the area. Patches of herbaceous plantings occur in many of the beds. Several areas have a heavy concentration of invasive plants.

Woodlands. Woodlands are found along the borders of the north, west, and east property edges. The woodlands represent three distinct areas based on unique characteristics and have been designated "north," "east," and "west." Each woodland area is a unique ecosystem consisting of living organisms interacting with each other and their environment.

The north woodland is a large patch providing interior woodland that is mostly free of non-native, invasive species. This area includes woodland north of the drive and surrounds the upper gardens. The largest of the three woodland areas, the north woodland has a moderate to steep slope downwards toward the northern property edge. In general, the dominant canopy trees consist of tulip poplar, *Liriodendron tulipifera*, red oak, *Quercus rubra.,* and hickory, *Carya spp.* Piles of yard debris surround the opening created by the loop at the woodland trail terminus.

The west woodland includes the wooded area south of the drive, along the western property boundary. This stand is very similar to that of the north woodland. Again, the major canopy species include tulip poplar, red oak, and hickory. The northern portion of this area has a heavy concentration of invasive non-native plants. Large piles of yard debris, mainly branches, surround a small clearing.

The east woodland is a corridor of edge habitat because species composition differs slightly from the other woodlands. This area is a relatively thin strip of woodland partially encircling the eastern lower field area along

Figure 14, north woodlands. Source: FCPA, 2005.

Figure 15, west woodlands. Source: FCPA, 2005.

Figure 16, east woodland. Source: FCPA, 2005.

the eastern property line. The east woodland functions as a natural bottomland and receives the runoff that drains from the large meadow. A natural spring was enlarged and dammed to create the pond in the southeast corner of the site. The species composition within this area is a mixture of ornamental and native plants. The major tree species include red oaks, tulip poplar, red maple, *Acer rubrum,* redbud, *Cercis canadensis,* dogwoods, *Cornus spp.,* and a few shortleaf pines, *Pinus echinata.* Most of the plants along the edge of this area are covered in woody vines.

Meadow/Open Lawn. The meadow/lawn area is a maintained field that gently slopes towards the pond and eastern edge of the site. Plant composition is a variety of grasses and herbaceous species maintained at an approximate height of 6 to 8 inches. A few trees and small shrubs are scattered in the southern part of the field. Nearby, there are two small shrub massings consisting of azalea, *Rhododendron spp.,* bush honeysuckle, *Lonicera spp.,* and paulownia, *Paulownia spp.* Along the northern edge of the field, three crape myrtles, *Lagerstroemia indica,* form a straight line perpendicular to the woodland edge.

3. Support Features

Paths, trails, and drives. Paths, trails, and drives are typical features found in many areas of the site. They are grouped together here as "supporting features" because they have similar characteristics, conditions, and issues.

The network of paths in the garden areas typically consists of mown lawn or other herbaceous groundcover. These paths widen in some areas to create small open spaces of lawn.

Several brick walks are found throughout the property, but mainly lead to and from the house. A long brick walk begins near the entrance to the property at the drive, winds through the woodland towards the house where it follows the edge of the loop drive, and then continues perpendicular to the drive before terminating at the barn. Two short walks from the house intersect this long walk

Figure 17, meadow/open lawn. Source: FCPA, 2005.

Figure 18, paths. Left, brick path in the upper garden; top right, grass path through the upper garden; bottom right, earthen path through woodlands. Source: FCPA, 2005.

at the loop drive. A short section of brick makes up one of the upper garden paths.

The woodland trails consist of mainly earthen paths. Numerous sections of these trails show signs of deterioration; they are rutted and can become very muddy. The drive to the house and barn is gravel and in fair condition.

Fencing. There are several types of fencing surrounding the property. Along the south edge of the site, there is a short box-wire fence. Along the west edge of the site, there is a painted wooden post-and-board fence. There is a gate for Hawthorne Lane located along the western property edge; however, it has not been used for some time. Along the northern property edge is a wooden split-rail fence in fair condition. Along the northeast property edge is a rusted chain-link fence.

Pond. The spring-fed pond was hand dug by the Whites in the late 1950s and is located in the southeast corner near the end of Horseman Lane. It measures approximately 90 by 50 feet. It is well-shaded by surrounding tree canopy. Small fish and ducks have been observed in the pond which indicates wildlife use.

Quarry. An unique cultural feature within this site is a stone quarry. It is a rock outcrop that

Figure 19, hand dug pond. Source: FCPA, 2005.

Figure 20, quarry. Today, the earth mound created by quarrying activities is largely obscured by vegetation. Source: FCPA, 2005.

forms a small hill at the woodland edge near the residence.

According to Mrs. White, stone quarried here was used for the barn's foundation. Mrs. White also recalls that stone from this quarry was used to pave a small road that once crossed the property. Most of those roadway stones were removed by Mr. White to make way for gardens.

4. Natural Resources

Hydrology. One of the most significant natural resource features on this site is the spring-fed pond. Its role in the landscape as a headwater, as well as its function as a freshwater source for wildlife, makes it an important feature for preservation. There are no other surveyed or located surface water features.

The pond is a man-made element with a dam at the outflow end. The pond and the short segment of stream appear to be the headwaters of a tributary to Tripps Run which flows north of Kerns Road.

Topography. The site is part of a rolling land form that consists of upland hills and ridges separated by bottomland stream valleys. The White property is mostly on the slopes of this larger landscape feature, with the residence located on a crest. Two areas of slopes greater than 15% are located near the quarry northeast of the residence and along the existing driveway.

The pond is within a small bottomland area in the southeast portion of the property. The swale between the pond and Horseman Road, the pond itself, and the short segment of stream are the only lowland areas.

Geology and Soils. Soils in this area of the County have not been mapped and specific information is not available.

Forest Delineation. Forested areas are usually highly regarded for their ecosystem benefits, including absorption of pollution, increased water quality, temperature moderation, and contribution to quality of life for people and habitat for wildlife. The forest type is relatively consistent throughout the property, as an upland oak-hickory forest.

The understory is mostly dominated by invasive non-native or aggressive native species. Because of the long history of cultivation on the property, many non-native species are present that may provide limited benefit for wildlife; however, invasive non-native species are usually poor substitutes for the ecosystem functions of native species characteristic of the oak-hickory forest. Several of the older trees (both native and non-native) may present long-term maintenance or safety hazards.

The westernmost edge of the forest is especially disturbed. Land use in this area is not clear, but the presence of overhead lines suggests that trees over 15' tall may be a safety hazard and thus may be an incompatible land use in this area. The north woodland has the highest natural resource value, and it is the largest contiguous area of forest.

Rd.
Rd.
Rd.

6. Utilities

Overhead utility lines run along the western property edge. An easement once used as a travel lane is now fenced off. Vegetation covers the ground of the power easement; however, it is still an open corridor. A power line runs in a west-to-northeasterly direction, starting at the drive into the White site.

According to Dominion Virginia Power, within the power easement, plants less than 10′ tall are permitted in the conductor zone and plants less than 15′ feet tall are allowed outside the conductor zone. Prior to any planting in the area, an encroachment request must be submitted to the area inspector. Dominion Virginia Power provides a suggested list of plants for transmission right-of-ways, although additional species may be acceptable if information on height and general plant characteristics is provided. The service lines to the house and barn may be an issue and any low-lying lines, especially over the paths, should be considered hazardous and rectified.

The property is currently served by two wells and a septic system. One well serves the house. The other well is located in the upper garden area. The septic field is located below the driveway west of the barn and maintenance shed. Connections to public sewer and water are available from all surrounding streets.

Figure 22, utility lines in western woodland. Source: FCPA, 2005.

7. Access and Parking

Currently, the entrance to the White property is located at the west, off Princess Anne Lane. Vehicular access to Princess Anne Lane is from Holloman Road. The drive is a narrow, wooded, and unpaved lane that travels up relatively steep topography.

Parking is provided along the loop driveway in front of the house and in a small existing gravel parking area located between the barn, shed, and Chicken House.

Figure 23, Princess Anne Lane, view of site entrance. FCPA, 2006.

Figure 24, existing gravel drive to residence. Source: FCPA, 2005.

Part Two: General Management Plan

The General Management Plan (GMP) is intended to be a long-range document establishing and articulating a management philosophy and framework for both proactive decision making and problem solving for park planning and development.

The GMP sets the tone for resource preservation, management, and development, as well as for visitor experience. The GMP consists of the following text and a graphic, illustrative plan. *See* Figure 25, General Management Plan.

I. Management Framework

The management framework integrates the site's history and existing conditions with the management philosophy and management objectives for the park. Proposed uses are intentionally general to allow flexibility for future decision making. The framework guides future planning and use of the park while insuring the integrity and quality of the site's resources.

A. Management Issues

In considering the future planning and management for White Horticultural Park, a number of issues require consideration. Some issues may be resolved through administrative or operational actions, some through design solutions; others may not be resolved within the life of the plan for various reasons.

- The present entrance is not adequate for public park use, nor does it meet emergency vehicle standards.
- The change in use from a private residence to public park will bring additional traffic to residential streets.
- The residence is showing signs of deterioration, including moisture damage.
- Public use of the residence will need to be managed.
- Piles of debris need to be removed for aesthetic and safety reasons.
- Non-native invasive species management and controls are needed.
- Help from volunteers and donor support will be needed to sustain the park.
- Security on-site and in the surrounding neighborhoods is a concern.
- ADA and emergency accessibility will need to be provided.

B. Management Objectives

In order to achieve the park purpose, the following objectives have been developed to guide specific strategies for dealing with management issues:

- Respect the deed covenant, which mandates the primary use of this property as a horticultural park.
- Preserve, enhance, and support horticultural resources. The White property is significant in both the quantity and quality of its horticultural resource collection.

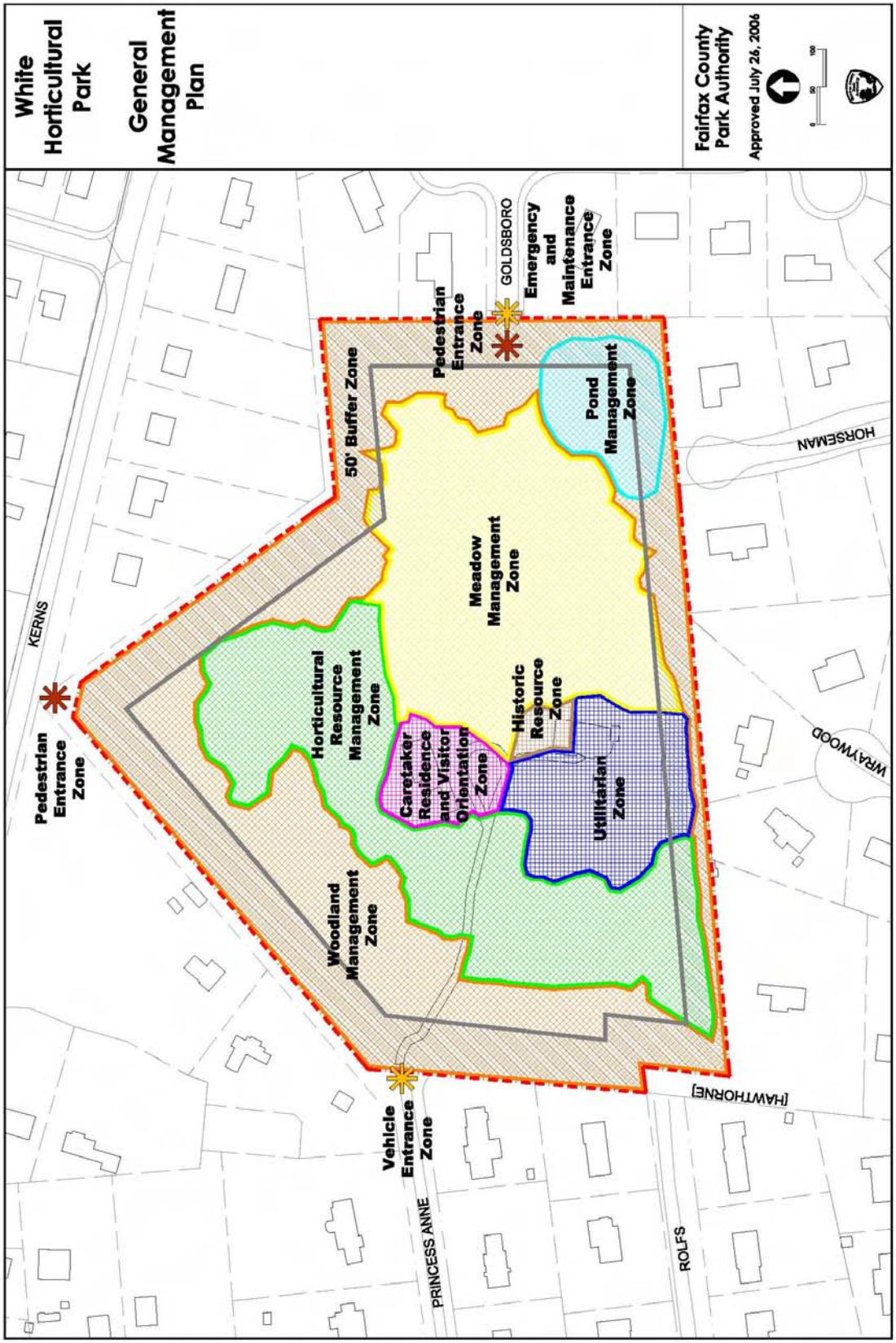

Figure 25, General Management Plan. Source: FCPA, 2006.

- Provide public access for the enjoyment of the horticultural resources contained within the park.

- Minimize impacts to neighbors. The White Horticultural Park is surrounded by established suburban residential neighborhoods. Care must be taken in the development and operation of the park to minimize adverse impacts to adjacent and nearby residents.

- Minimize impacts to natural resources. As previously noted, the White Horticultural Park is surrounded by established suburban residential neighborhoods, therefore the existing woodlands and pond are of high value. Care must be taken in the development and operation of the park to minimize adverse impacts to the existing resources.

- Link park purpose, goals, and operations to complement, but not duplicate, the Green Spring Gardens and Hidden Oaks Nature Center missions. Both of these parks are located less than three miles from the White property and share complementary resources and educational opportunities.

C. Visitor Experience

A visitor to the White Horticultural Park will enjoy the park setting and learn about its horticultural, natural, and historic resources from interpretive panels and public programs. The most common visit will be a self-directed stroll among the natural and horticultural resources. An unique part of the experience at White Horticultural Park will be that of the transition from the more formal horticultural gardens to the naturalistic woodlands.

Some visitors may be interested in participating in small-scale tours, programs, and special events. However, the program and subsequent design of the site should accommodate all types of users by incorporating amenities such as trails, benches, and interpretive signage that will allow those not participating in planned activities to experience and enjoy the site.

The need and demand for revenue-generating activities may increase visitation. These activities should be carefully planned and orchestrated to minimize impacts to surrounding neighbors.

D. Management Zones

When developing a management framework, the opportunities found within the site are evaluated to determine the most appropriate uses for each part of the park. This process results in zones that delineate general areas of the site, identify the primary purpose of each area, and suggest appropriate land use activities. These delineated management zones provide the foundation for future decision making in the park. One of four possible approaches is recommended for each zone: preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, or reconstruction.

As part of this master plan, a horticultural landscape management plan was developed by John Milner Associates ("JMA"). The JMA plan and detailed recommendations for management of the horticultural resources was used as a guide in the development of the general management recommendations presented in this section. The JMA plan will serve as a guide for professional horticulture staff and volunteers for preservation and treatment.

1. Horticultural Resource Management Zone

The Horticultural Resource Management Zone is comprised of the "Upper Garden" and "Lower Garden." These two areas contain the highest concentration of rare and significant

ornamental shrubs. Both also contain many mature large-canopy trees that define the vertical and overhead planes, provide shade for the azaleas and rhododendrons, and reinforce the sense of these spaces as "outdoor rooms." The canopy of mature trees is integral to the success of the ornamental, shade-loving shrubs.

The recommended management approach for the Horticultural Resource Management Zone is preservation of these horticultural resources, including their overall spatial organization and character. A preservation approach maintains the existing integrity and character of a cultural landscape by arresting or retarding deterioration caused by natural forces and normal use, as well as changes that may be introduced by new uses. It includes both maintenance and stabilization. In light of the dynamic qualities of the landscape, maintenance is essential for the long-term integrity of the gardens.

Detailed recommendations for the Horticultural Resource Management Zone may be found in the horticultural landscape management plan.

2. Caretaker Residence and Visitor Orientation Zone

The Caretaker Residence and Visitor Orientation Zone is comprised of the residence, greenhouse, foundation plantings, surrounding yard, brick pathways, and existing driveway loop area. This area is designated as the primary visitor orientation area and, as such, should contain a kiosk, or similar structure, providing park information and interpretive media.

The recommended management approach for the Caretaker Residence and Visitor Orientation Zone is rehabilitation. Rehabilitation provides for the improvement of facilities to allow for a rich and fulfilling visitor experience, and is accomplished by carefully implementing necessary functional site improvements while preserving the overall landscape character and individual horticultural features. Specifically, a rehabilitative approach embraces the need to convert the existing residence to a caretaker's residence, with part of the first floor to be used to support garden/horticultural programs and visitor support services. Additionally, rehabilitation is consistent with necessary changes associated with circulation improvements to the driveway and paths, as well as modifications that may be necessary to make the residence ADA accessible. Further, a rehabilitative approach will provide for the addition of new elements into the landscape, such as a kiosk.

Public restrooms should be available within the residence when the residence is in public use. An exterior entrance to these restrooms should be explored. Composting toilets should also be explored as an option.

Figure 26, composting toilet system. Unlike a septic system, a composting toilet system uses the biological process of aerobic decomposition by micro-organisms, air, and heat to break down organic wastes. Source: Courtesy of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, www.epa.gov.

Public water and sewer connections should be provided to the residence. The existing well should continue to be used for irrigation. The septic system should be abandoned.

Detailed recommendations for Caretaker Residence and Visitor Orientation Zone may be found in the horticultural landscape management plan.

3. Historic Resource Management Zone

The Historic Preservation Management Zone is comprised of the circa 1876 barn and its immediate environs. The barn supported the agricultural operations of the property while it was still a farm, and was later renovated by the Whites for domestic uses.

The recommended management approach for the Historic Preservation Management Zone is preservation, which seeks to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of any historic structures and the surrounding landscape. The primary consideration for all activities within this zone is the protection or preservation of the park's historic resources. Activities in this area may include restoration or renovation of the facilities, excavation or preservation of archaeological sites, and development of educational or interpretive programs. While it is understood that support for the activities within other zones may occur here, such activities should give due consideration to the cultural resources in this area and not compromise their value.

The Park Authority has assessed the barn's structural condition and has stabilized the structure. However, in its present condition, the barn probably will not pass an occupancy test and prerequisites to occupancy, such as fire controls, may change the fabric of the structure to such an extent that it may loose its status as a contributing element in the site's history. Further study is required to determine the feasibility of using the barn for public activities.

Detailed recommendations for the Historic Preservation Management Zone may be found in the horticultural landscape management plan.

4. Utilitarian Management Zone

The area proposed as the Utilitarian Management Zone, like the adjacent proposed Historic Preservation Zone, was once the center of past agricultural operations. This area supported Mrs. White's vegetable garden, a grove of fruit and nut trees, and two outbuildings that the Whites used to support their horticultural pursuits.

The recommended management approach for the Utilitarian Management Zone is rehabilitation. This approach provides for the improvement of existing facilities and the addition of other facilities, as needed and as appropriate.

The primary purpose of the Utilitarian Maintenance Zone is to provide an appropriate location for equipment storage and the staging of maintenance operations. All maintenance uses should be located in this zone and sufficiently buffered from other zones in the park. This zone contains the existing maintenance facility, which should be replaced as necessary to meet the operational needs of the park.

Detailed recommendations for the Utilitarian Management Zone may be found in the horticultural landscape management plan.

5. Woodland Management Zone

The woodland communities throughout the site contain tree species typical of an early oak-hickory forest and provide much needed wildlife habitat in a predominantly suburban environment. As such, the recommended management approach for the Woodland Management Zone is preservation, which seeks to sustain the existing landscape.

Detailed recommendations for the Woodland Management Zone may be found in the horticultural landscape management plan.

6. Pond Management Zone

The Pond Management Zone is located in the southeast corner of the property. It encompasses the spring-fed pond, the perennial stream, and the surrounding woodlands. The primary purpose of this zone is to preserve and, where appropriate, enhance the ecological value and integrity of the pond, stream, and existing vegetation.

The recommended approach for the Pond Management Zone is rehabilitation. This approach permits enhancements that may be made to improve the pond's water quality and aquatic habitat.

The pond may serve as a unique interpretive feature within the park, creating opportunities for educating the public about water resources, wetland plants, and the importance of natural features in urban park lands. However, inclusion of hardscaping in this zone, if any, should be minimal and limited to trails and activities associated with natural resource and habitat management.

Detailed recommendations for the Pond Management Zone may be found in the horticultural landscape management plan.

7. Meadow Management Zone

The Meadow Management Zone is comprised of the existing open field that gently slopes towards the pond and eastern edge of the property. This zone affords open and expansive views from the residence area.

The recommended management approach for the Meadow Management Zone is preservation, which seeks to sustain the existing landscape.

Detailed recommendations for the Meadow Management Zone may be found in the horticultural landscape management plan.

8. Buffer Zone

Buffer zones protect natural and cultural resources from adjacent development and, likewise, adjacent development from park activities. The perimeter Buffer Zone is designated as the area from the property boundary to approximately 50' inward. Because White Horticultural Park is nestled within a residential neighborhood, a 50' buffer is provided to ensure a measure of privacy and minimize adverse effects on both the park and adjacent residences.

The Buffer Zone overlays the Woodland Management Zone and thus the recommended management approach for the Buffer Zone is preservation. However, rehabilitation, where appropriate, through the addition of plantings, may be considered to limit sight lines and sound travel.

9. Vehicle Entrance Zone

The Vehicle Entrance Zone creates the visitors' first impression of the park and builds anticipation of what lies within. However, unlike other zones, the location of the Vehicle Entrance Zone is heavily influenced by external factors, such as traffic patterns, impacts, and safety. Therefore, the decision as to where to locate the Vehicle Entrance Zone is both a management and a design issue.

Separate entrance zones for visitors and emergency and maintenance vehicles should be established. Visitors will enter from Princess Anne Lane and emergency and maintenance vehicles will enter from Goldsboro Road.

The visitor experience will be enhanced by the location of the vehicle entrance at Princess Anne Lane which has historically served as the site entrance for over 60 years. The shaded, landscaped drive will provide the visitor with an excellent lasting impression of the park. This location should serve as the main entrance to the park on the condition that when the site plan is submitted to the County, approval is granted to the Park Authority's request for waivers to the PFM standards for the following:

- public street width and improvements along Princess Anne Lane that will retain the approximate existing street width and character along Princess Anne Lane;
- emergency access road requirements; and
- entrance and vehicle access road size, width, slope, and radius requirements.

To support the request for waivers, the location of an emergency and maintenance only entrance would be established from Goldsboro Road and Grasscrete® pavers would be used along the edge of the meadow to provide access to wooded sections and buildings wihtin the site.

The recommended management approach for the Vehicle Entrance Zone is preservation. This approach supports the use of the historic driveway and entrance while preserving its original character and landscape through sensitive design. Valuable horticultural resources, including very large *Rhododendron* and rare *Galax* groundcover, exist along the sloped north side of the driveway.

The recommended management approach for the Emergency and Maintenance Entrance Zone is rehabilitation. This approach will permit the modifications necessary to successfully convert the site from a private residence to a public park.

Figure 27, *Galax sp.* Source: Courtesy of USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database.

Both the Vehicle and Emergency and Maintenance Entrance Zones of necessity overlay portions of the Woodland Management Zone, the Caretaker Residence and Visitor Orientation Zone, and the Utilitarian Zone.

Any exterior lighting that may be installed in these zones, or any other zone, should consider staff and visitor safety without adversely impacting the horticultural landscape or neighboring residences. Low-impact development techniques should be explored to minimize the effect of the additional pavement on site. Landscape buffering should be used to limit the impact of the entrance road both on the Woodland Management Zones that border the property and on possible views to and from other areas of the site and neighboring properties.

10. Pedestrian Entrance Zones

The Pedestrian Entrance Zones are designed to encourage visitors to walk into the park. Like the Vehicle Entrance Zone, Pedestrian Entrance Zones will generate the initial impression of the site for visitors. The

Pedestrian Entrance Zones of necessity overlay portions of the Woodland Management Zone.

Key pedestrian trails should meet ADA standards. Some of the more rustic trails in remote parts of the park may not meet ADA standards. Any exterior lighting that may be installed in these zones, or any other zone, should consider staff and visitor safety without adversely impacting the horticultural landscape or neighboring residences.

The recommended management approach for the Pedestrian Entrance Zones is rehabilitation. As with the Emergency and Maintenance Entrance Zone, this approach will permit the modifications necessary to successfully convert the site from a private residence to a public park.

Safety measures such as crosswalks and signage may be required to enhance safe street crossing. Pedestrians may also use the vehicle entrance. The vehicle entrance will allow pedestrian access but, to discourage excessive foot traffic through the adjacent neighborhood, it will not include pedestrian amenities such as a sidewalk connection to adjacent streets.

E. Educational and Interpretive Programs, Visitor Amenities

White Horticultural Park's services will include educational and interpretive programs, and visitor amenities, to enhance the visitor experience. Consistent with the park's mission, interpretive programs are intended to promote responsible resource stewardship, and provide for a wide range of experiences for the general visitor, as well as targeted audiences.

1. Programs

Interpretive and Educational Programs. Interpretive and educational programs increase visitor knowledge of horticultural and natural resources by emphasizing the Park Authority's stewardship mission. Generally, programs will be developed that support the Park Authority's mission, highlight site resources, and reach diverse audiences. Additional programs should be provided, as funding and staff allows, that provide a comprehensive interpretation of the White home landscape development and of the significance of the historic barn as a representation of the area's agrarian past.

Self-guided tours, using pamphlets to guide and inform visitors, should be explored as a means of expanding educational tours without significantly increasing staff or encouraging large groups.

Partnerships and Associations. Cooperation with others is integral to the development of the park's interpretive services. Partnerships may provide time and funding that will support improvements to and expansion of services provided to the public. Volunteers are vital to horticultural site operations and programs. White Horticultural Park currently maintains the following partnerships/ associations:

- Potomac Rhododendron Society
- Friends of the White Horticultural Park

Partnerships and volunteer programs should continue to be fostered to provide valuable assistance in meeting the needs for visitor contact, park programming, and resource management.

2. Visitor Amenities

Visitor Experience. The Caretaker Residence and Visitor Orientation Zone will serve both as the caretaker residence and the primary orientation point for visitors. The program and design of the zone should accommodate various types of users by including amenities such as trails and seating areas that will allow those not participating in planned activities to experience and enjoy the park site. Part of all

visitor experiences should be an awareness of the transition from residential neighborhoods to a community park and, once within the park, from the more formal horticultural areas to the naturalistic woodlands. To achieve this desired effect, all decisions should be consistent with the park purpose (*see* Part One, I.H.).

Basic visitor amenities such as water fountains, benches, toilets, and animal-proof trash cans should be provided. A variety of visitor support services, such as orientation, maintenance, limited programs, and interpretive services, should be provided. All visitor services should be fully accessible. The level of services provided should reflect the park program of offering primarily self-directed activities.

ADA Adaptations. In accordance with Park Authority policy, walkways and trails should be accessible to all visitors, in compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and other legislative mandates, to the extent feasible under site constraints. Based upon the park's anticipated educational and interpretive programs, it is expected that pedestrian walkways and trails into the park and among key features (*e.g.,* parking areas, kiosk, house, gardens, demonstration areas) will be ADA compliant. Woodland trails among key interpretive features or exhibits also should be ADA compliant. Woodland trails that do not access key features, and are intended to be more rugged in character, should be designated as "backcountry" trails and do not need to be ADA compliant.

Part Three: Conceptual Development Plan

The Conceptual Development Plan (CDP) builds upon the General Management Plan by locating and describing specific elements within the site that support the purpose of White Horticultural Park.

The CDP is comprised of descriptions of these elements and design guidelines, and an graphic plan that illustrates the general location of the recommended facilities. *See* Figure 30, Conceptual Development Plan.

I. Design Considerations

A. Access

One issue faced in the conversion of a private residence to a public park is vehicular access and parking. The need to revise the existing entrance road, drive, and parking, or to create new ones, demands consideration of the relationship among the visitor's experience, necessary support services, public safety, and external opportunities and constraints.

Public input on the subject of park access was obtained through numerous public meetings and workshops, and from public comments received by the Park Authority. The impacts of certain, specific elements on both surrounding neighborhoods and horticultural resources were considered in evaluating five possible scenarios. The following elements and their impacts were evaluated: entrance road; associated parking; sidewalk connections; existing and projected traffic conditions; horticultural impacts; visitor experience; and the relative costs of the five possible scenarios.

The level of visitation at this park is intended to be fairly low in order to reduce impacts to neighbors and the site. To further reduce impacts to neighbors, a separation of the visitor entrance from emergency and maintenance functions is reflected on the GMP and CDP.

Sufficient parking will be needed to accommodate visitors and occasional small groups, and to ensure that visitors do not park on nearby neighborhood streets. To address this need, the CDP provides for a 25 space parking lot.

Certain, specific standards are mandated for public roadways. To accommodate emergency vehicles, any roadway connecting to the entrance to the site must be an 18′ to 24′ wide stable surface with curb and gutter or 4′ to 6′ grass shoulders.

Typically, extending, or widening, a driveway and adding a parking lot to any site increases stormwater runoff simply by adding additional hardscape to the site. The CDP anticipates the use of pervious paving materials to help mitigate this increase in stormwater runoff. The use of properly

Figure 28, fire access lane paved with Grasscrete® pavers. Source: Courtesy of Grass Concrete Limited, 2005.

Figure 29, bioswales at Providence RECenter, Falls Church, Virginia. Source: FCPA, 2005.

engineered, vegetated bioswales and products such as Grasscrete® should be investigated and implemented as appropriate.

B. Residence Adaptive Reuse

The residence on the White site presents many opportunities. Consideration may be given to the conversion of the first floor of the residence to public space. The second floor may be set aside for use as an on-site caretaker's residence. Exterior access to expanded restroom facilities within the residence may be provided.

The residence is a significant example of Colonial Revival Period architecture, and any adaptive reuse modifications should respect its historic integrity. Further, any adaptive reuse of this or any structure within White Horticultural Park must be ADA compliant, to the extent feasible under site constraints. All future planning and design of the site should balance the authenticity of the existing landscape with the need for visitor services and facilities.

C. Horticultural Resources

The locations of trees, and the size and arrangement of plants within shrub beds, are among the important contributing elements to the overall design of the White landscape. Plant maintenance decisions, such as the need to replace a dead shrub or to trim tree branches obstructing a view, are both a plant management issue and a landscape design issue. As with site structures, plant care should balance the authenticity of the existing landscape with the need to provide visitor services and facilities. The horticultural landscape management plan prepared by JMA should be used to inform future horticultural resource management.

II. Conceptual Development Plan Elements

Some of the proposed elements are new to the site and some are adapted from existing features, but all are intended to support the horticultural functions of the park and enhance the visitor experience. *See* Figure 30, Conceptual Development Plan.

A. Caretaker Residence and Program Space

The residence may serve two purposes. The first floor may be utilized for public use, such as garden/horticultural programs and as meeting space for small groups, while the second floor may serve as a caretaker's residence. Any public use will require that all facilities be ADA compliant. However, modifications of the structure should be architecturally compatible with the Colonial Revival design of the residence and should only be undertaken under the direction of a historical architect or cultural resource professional.

B. Interpretive Features

An interpretive kiosk, appropriately sized and sited to capture yet not intrude upon

important views to/from the residence, will become a point of orientation for visitors. The design of the kiosk, or of any new structure, should be architecturally sympathetic with the Colonial Revival design of the residence.

Small, permanent interpretive signs and/or activity stations will be installed along the pathways and trails. Again, all signs and stations should be coordinated in style and color, and should be stylistically compatible with the existing aesthetics of the site.

C. Trails

The existing trails will be expanded and connected to create a woodland perimeter trail.

D. Support Structures

A plant propagation area may be developed within the southwestern area of the site. The existing shed (the "Chicken House" or "Tool House") may be modified to serve as a propagation structure wherein plants may be started. A non-permanent, polyvinyl structure may also be constructed seasonally to continue the propagation process. The existing Camellia House will continue to shelter potted camellias during the winter.

E. Equipment Storage Building

A new, small equipment storage building of two or three bays is proposed for the area behind the barn. Showers for staff may be included in this new structure. As with the proposed kiosk, new buildings or modifications to the existing shed in the proposed propagation area should be architecturally compatible with existing structures.

F. Vegetative Screening

Vegetative screening should be supplemented along the southern and eastern edges of the site to enhance the buffer between the park and the neighboring residences.

G. Barn

The existing barn will be further stabilized as needed and preserved as an architectural, historic, and aesthetic landscape feature. Public use of the barn will be determined following a feasibility study.

H. New Gardens

New gardens, in keeping with the existing woodland and meadow garden themes, may be added to the park. Proposed designs for new gardens will require review and approval by Park Authority horticulturalists and/or other professional staff.

I. Meadow/Open Lawn

Overall, the mixture of grasses and herbaceous plants that make up the meadow/open lawn appears to be in good condition, as are most of the scattered trees and shrubs in this area. The meadow/open lawn will be preserved as open space and managed as meadow habitat.

J. Furnishings

Seating will be placed near trails, and along the edge of the meadow and woodlands for resting and contemplation. Perimeter fence will be installed at strategic places. Gates may be added at key points for controlled access to the property.

Furnishings should be coordinated in style and color, and should be stylistically compatible with the existing aesthetics of the site.

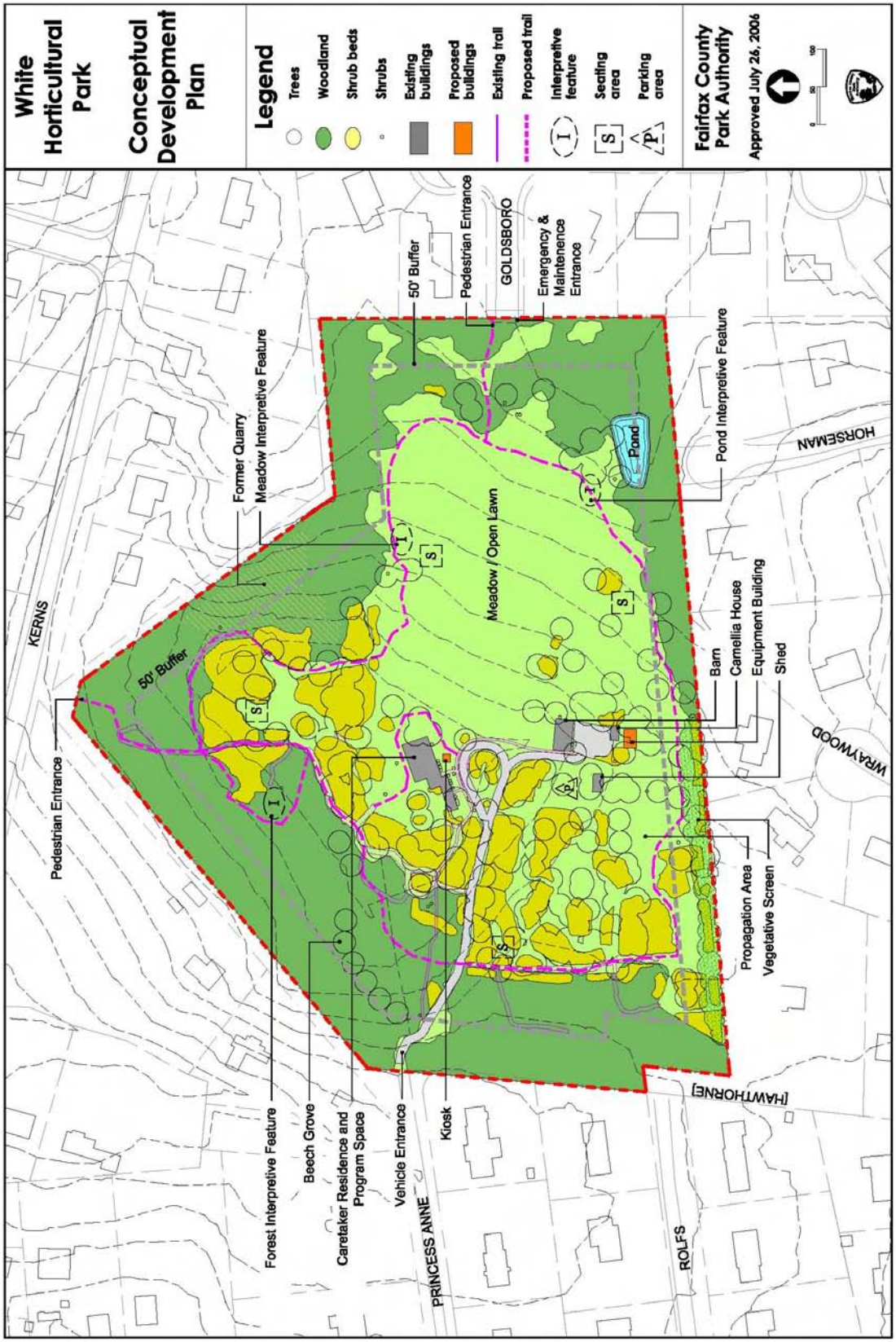

Figure 30, Conceptual Development Plan. Source: FCPA, 2006.

III. Future Design, Development, and Management Concerns

A. Sustainability Issues

1. Site Personnel

Oversight and/or staffing by professional horticulturalists and specially trained grounds staff will be required. Managing and maintaining high quality horticultural resources requires staff with specialized education, training, and experience. During peak gardening season, additional volunteer hours per week would enable the staff to maintain quality plant displays. Ideally, the primary horticulturalist would have at least a two year degree in horticulture plus a few years of experience. Seasonal staff with specialized training would be beneficial.

In addition to horticultural and grounds staff, the site requires an administrative person to manage site use and any revenue generating activities. This person would have some management and educational skills as well as horticultural skills as needed to support revenue-generating activities.

2. Revenue Needs

Although revenue generation is not the focus of this park, a variety of opportunities exist that may assist in generating revenue, and thus operational funds, for White Horticultural Park. These include fundraising activities, plants sales, residential rental, educational programs, and meeting space provisions.

Fundraising for the site may be facilitated with unique, documented plant collections; strong educational programs for adults and children; and/or facilities to host regular programs and events. Experience at other Park Authority properties reveals that benefactors more readily fund strong, creative, and well organized programs.

Programs for adults and children are another potential revenue source. Ideally, such programs would be different enough from those offered at other Park Authority properties, such as Green Spring Gardens and Hidden Oaks Nature Center, to attract new audiences. Fewer larger programs (over 50 people) have the potential to generate greater revenue for the site than more frequent smaller programs (10-15 people) because the proportion of fixed costs are greater for small programs. A balance among content, group size, and neighbor impacts will need to be considered as program planning occurs.

Inexpensive meeting space for small groups such as community associations, garden clubs, and special interest clubs, is generally limited in the County. Frequent use of the residence for meetings would necessitate adequate support staff and facilities to accommodate these community groups.

Figure 31, White residence, glass porch at back.
Source: FCPA, 2005.

3. Security

Because much of the park is visually remote, security is of concern. An on-site caretaker will have security responsibilities, such as coordinating with local public safety officials for additional patrols; working with neighbors to ensure concerns are reported; developing a "park watch" program; and/or participating in existing neighborhood watch programs.

The vehicle entrance will allow pedestrian access but, to discourage excessive foot traffic through the adjacent neighborhood, it will not include pedestrian amenities such as a sidewalk connection to adjacent streets. Securable gates or bollards should be placed at the vehicle entrance and the emergency and maintenance entrance.

Restrooms should be located within or directly adjacent to the residence.

Figure 32, wooded area. Source: FCPA, 2005.

Fairfax County Park Authority

12055 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax County, Virginia 22035-1118
703-324-8700
TTY 703-803-3354

Visit the parks on line at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks

Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. For information, Fairfax County Park Authority, 703-324-8563, TTY 703-803-3354.