



**Resident Curator Program
Fairfax County Historic Property
Site Candidate
Abbreviated Property Overview**



White Gardens House



**White Gardens House
John C. & Margaret K. White Gardens
6711 Princess Anne Lane , Falls Church, VA 22042
Mason Supervisory District
Owner: Fairfax County Park Authority**





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Resident Curator Program for Fairfax County Virginia and Properties of the Fairfax County Park Authority

Site Summary Purpose:

The Resident Curators program was approved for a feasibility study in 2013-2014 for future implementation based on Virginia state and Fairfax County legislation. The purpose of this site summary is to give potential curators a brief overview of the current property with available background information. All improvements/restoration of the properties proposed by curators will adhere to the specific guidelines of *the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for historic Properties*.

In January 2011, the General Assembly amended Va. Code Ann. § 15.2-2306 authorizing localities to develop resident curator programs. Va. Code Ann. § 15.2-2306(A)(4) enables localities to create, by ordinance, “a resident curator program such that private entities through lease or other contract may be engaged to manage, preserve, maintain, or operate, including the option to reside in, any such historic area, property, lands, or estate owned or leased by the locality.”

At the direction of the Fairfax County Board, staff in the Department of Planning and Zoning and the Park Authority have worked with the History Commission to evaluate the potential costs and benefits that might result from the implementation of a resident curator program. John Milner Associates prepared a report for the County that examines how states and localities across the country have implemented resident curator programs as a way to foster the maintenance and preservation of publicly owned historic properties. The report also provides recommendations for the establishment of a resident curator program in Fairfax County. The report was provided to the Board and was presented at the September 30, 2014 meeting of the Board's Development Process Committee.

Va. Code Ann. § 15.2-2306(A)(4) requires resident curator programs to be established by ordinance.

The program was approved in 2014 and Chapter 125, Resident Curator Program Ordinance, to *The Code of the County of Fairfax, Virginia* and establishes a resident curator program. This program, designed to preserve and maintain historic properties owned or leased by the County, will lease historic properties to individuals or businesses subject to regulations established by the County Executive or his designee. Such regulations will require that resident curators maintain and improve the leased properties according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, 36 CFR Part 68 (2013), as amended. Additionally, all leases for historic properties included within the resident curator program will provide for public access consistent with the historic property's nature and use.

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1. Summary of the Resident Curator Program Overview as of January 2015

By definition, a resident curator (RC) program enables an individual, a group of individuals, or an organization, to serve as the caretaker (or "curator") of a property. A RC program is intended to reduce the public costs associated with the care and preservation of the properties by enabling groups or individuals to take over the responsibility. In addition to caring for the day-to-day management of the property, the curators are responsible for the rehabilitation and continued maintenance of the property. Generally, properties that are included in RC programs are deemed historically significant and meet established criteria of eligibility for curatorship. This report focuses on properties, and existing programs, which include a preservation component.

Chosen through a pre-defined application process, the selected curator signs a lease which includes the agreed-upon work plan outlining the rehabilitation of the historic resource. The work associated with the rehabilitation process is funded by the curator, who in turn has the privilege of occupying the building and using the associated grounds as determined by the lease. Depending on specific guidelines or regulations applicable to the establishment or management of the program, and the historic significance, integrity, and function of each property, RC programs can be established to accept proposals including a variety of functions. In addition to residential curators, non-profit organizations and businesses can serve as curators.

2. Historic Curator Program Basics – Rehabilitate, Reuse and Maintain

See guidelines and John Milner study (Resident Curator Program Study Final Report John Milner Associates, Inc. 2014, provide link to PDF for general public view.)

3. Property name address, location area, brief history

The White Gardens House is located within John C. and Margaret K. White Gardens at 6711 Princess Anne Lane , Falls Church, VA 22042. It is within the Mason Supervisory District, and was constructed in 1939.

The park is located on what used to be a larger parcel of land in the early 18th century that belonged to William Fitzhugh known as "Ravensworth." Battaile Fitzhugh, a son of William, traded the parcel of land containing the White property to his brother Giles in 1796. The lands were merged with another parcel known as "Parcel 1.1.5" in an exchange of lands between Giles and his brother, Mordecai Fitzhugh. After Mordecai's death in 1858, the land was divided up "until Alfred Freeman owned a parcel consisting of 67 acres, described as 'part Ravensworth,'" in the 1880s. In 1938, John C. and Margaret K. White bought 13 acres that creates the Park today.

The barn is the only evidence of the property's agricultural history. There is not much known about the use of the barn prior to the 1938 modifications, but that

does not erase evidence of evolution of the property from the pig farm to neighborhood garden and park. Aerial photos from 1937 show that the area was surrounded by fields with little development present. The next year available for the aerial view is 1953; this view shows more development along the roads surrounding the property, but the development has not fully surrounded the property yet.

The area serves as an example of the pre-World War II suburban development which took place around the Washington Metropolitan area, converting predominantly agricultural settings into bedroom communities for the Nation's capital.

Mr. and Mrs. White moved to Fairfax right as a great shift happened in Fairfax County. To accommodate the many professionals and business people moving to the D.C. area, many people started to fan out into the greater D.C. Metropolitan area, including Fairfax County. County records "indicated the growing impact of accelerating in-migration as the federal bureaucracy expanded," for the first time in 1939. Farming in the area started to decline as a result of suburban and urban activities becoming more prominent in the area. During this time, automobiles started to take on a greater role in people's lives, and as a result, many people started to move out of the cities and into rural areas where they could be away from the noise of the cities.

Aiding this development was a savings and loan organization known as the Perpetual Building Association which was composed of members who invested in the institution. Benefits of membership included financial assistance with home mortgages, community activism, and professional guidance during the home-building process. With the help of the Architects Small Home Service, Perpetual was able to provide "architectural advice and assistance with construction supervision for new home builders as part of its lending services." The house that stands at White Gardens today was designed by Joe Harry Lapish, a local architect who studied at George Washington University, then the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, and was a part of the Architects Small Home Service group.

During this time after World War II, many families were moving out of the cities and into suburbs. Mr. White, having no desire to see the development around his property, started to plant trees around the edge of the property. This was the beginning of the cultivation of the property as a garden.

The first house built on the property was moved near the barn, and a new house was built on top of the site. The original house was severely damaged by Hurricane Isabel in 2003 and has been removed. In addition to building a new house, the Whites made several changes to the property. The barn, built in 1876, was modified in 1939. In 1955, an addition of a glass porch was added to the house by the McGaughan + Johnson architects firm. The greenhouse was

added later to cultivate camellias and other plants during the winter, but has recently been removed. In the 1950s, the White Family dug the spring-fed pond located in the southeast corner of the property.

In 1999 the County acquired the property, but Mrs. White received a life estate and oversaw the day-to-day workings of the Park until her death.

The Gardens:

Mr. & Mrs. White began planting various trees and other plants starting in the late 1940s and early 1950s. One of the first additions was the large Willow Oak, between the circular driveway and the house, planted in either 1942 or 1943. Most of the work was done by Mr. & Mrs. White after 1960, including digging up the pond with a tractor and scope. After Mr. White's death in 1979, and once Mrs. White became too old to do much work on the property, she hired a caretaker name John Kennedy who lived right next door. Mr. Kennedy mowed the meadow and took care of the flowers.

The Whites found inspiration for plantings throughout their travels. Don Hyatt, a friend of Mr. and Mrs. White, stated in his email that "with respect to garden design, I remember them saying that having visited mature rhododendron gardens in the UK, they realized that those plants needed to be viewed from a distance when they gained size," resulting in "garden rooms with plants around the perimeter of open areas rather than planning flower beds separated by paths." They also hiked along the Great Smoky Mountains, where many native azaleas and wildflowers grow, and brought a few ideas back to the garden. One major source for their rhododendron plants was Joe Gable, "a pioneer rhododendron hybridizer in Stewartstown, PA" who was featured in an article titled, "The Flowering Forest of Joe Gable," published in March 1954. Many of the different hybrids on the property came from Mr. Gable. Some of the camellia hybrids might have come from Dr. William Ackerman, the camellia expert at the National Arboretum and former member of the Camellia Society.

4. Tax map/ Zoned

Tax Map:

Zoned: R-1 (Residential 1 DU/AC)

This property is zoned residential. Any other uses would need to be authorized by the County of Fairfax.

5. Square Footage

House: 2,340 SQ. FT.

Porch: 956 SQ. FT.

Barn: 800 SQ. FT.

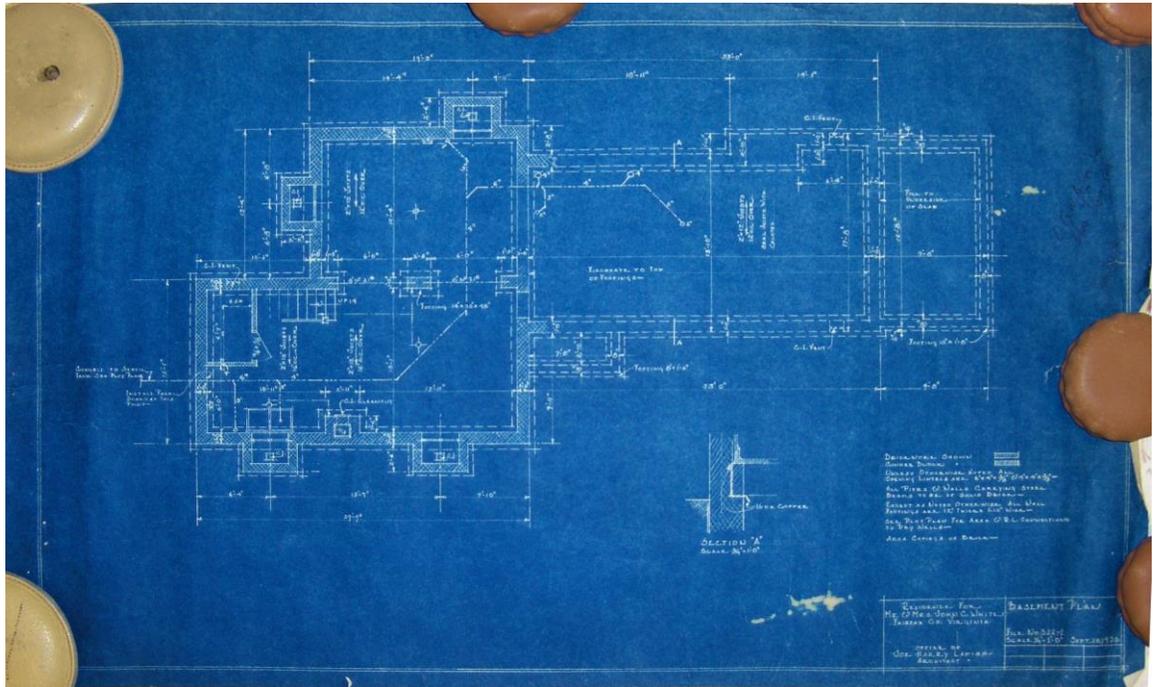
6. Property Description

- Utilities:
 - Well
 - Septic
 - Gas not available
 - Central A/C

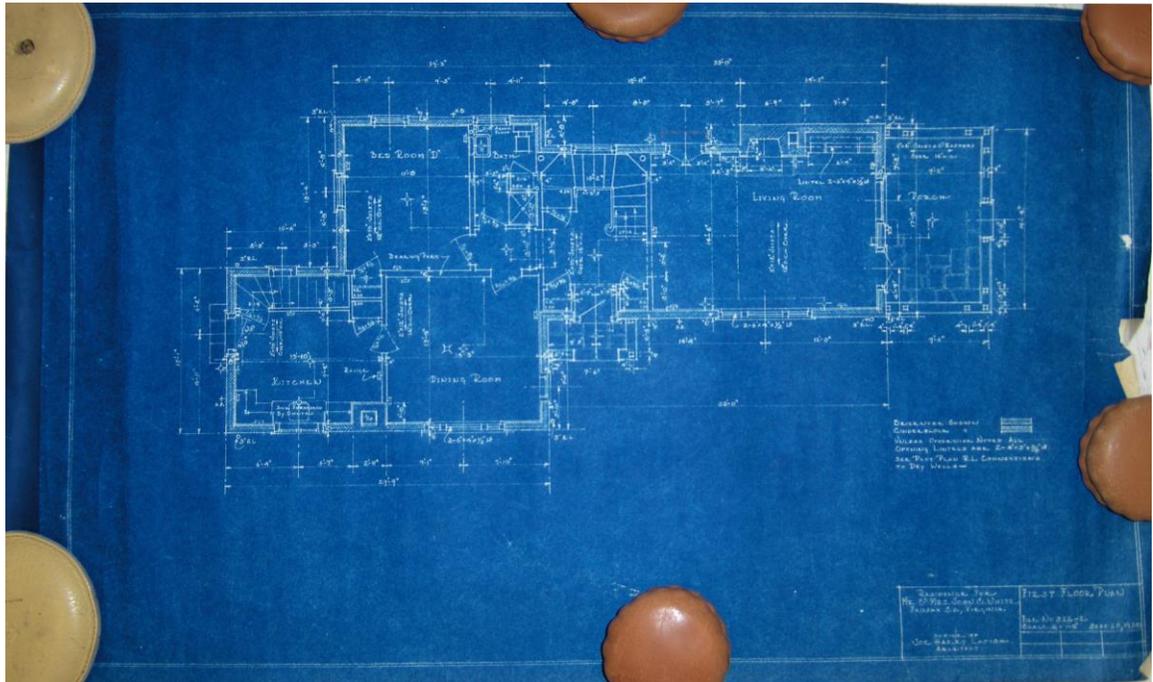
- Number of rooms or description/ Bathrooms/ Construction type
 - Primary Structure:
 - Two story
 - Brick exterior with wood accents
 - Light slate roof
 - Half basement
 - Four bedrooms
 - Three full baths
 - One fireplace
 - Enclosed porch
 - Barn:
 - Semi-bank
 - Two story
 - Timber frame construction
 - Foundation made from local stone
 - Asphalt shingle roof
 - Gable roof

- Garage or Parking Spaces
 - Circular turn-around driveway

- Floor Plan



Basement



First Floor

- Labeled Photos of Park Entrance, Exterior, Interior of Property and Landscape



Approach to Dwelling



Southwest Façade of Dwelling



East Corner of Dwelling



Northeast Façade of Dwelling



North Corner of Dwelling



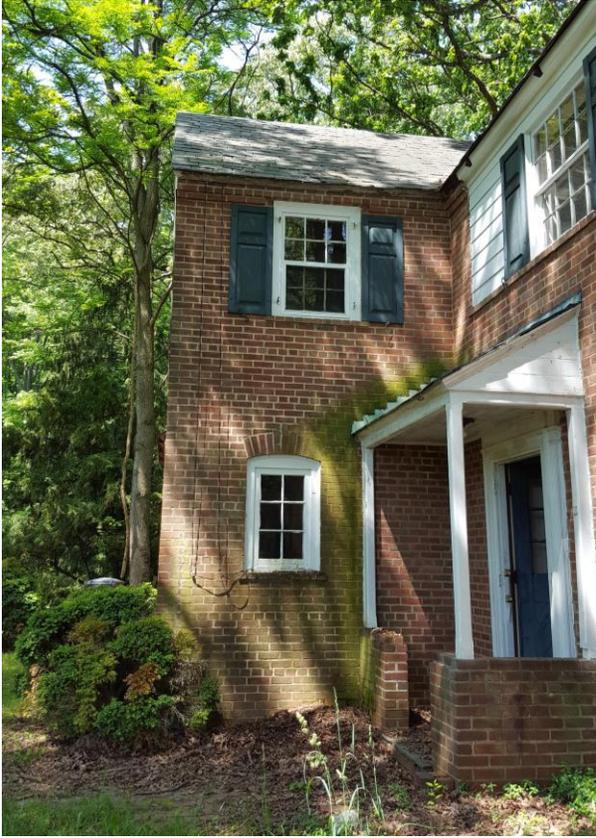
West Corner of Dwelling



South Corner of Dwelling



Greenhouse Outline



Entrance to Dwelling



First Floor Foyer First Floor Den



First Floor Dining Room



First Floor
Kitchen



First Floor Enclosed Porch

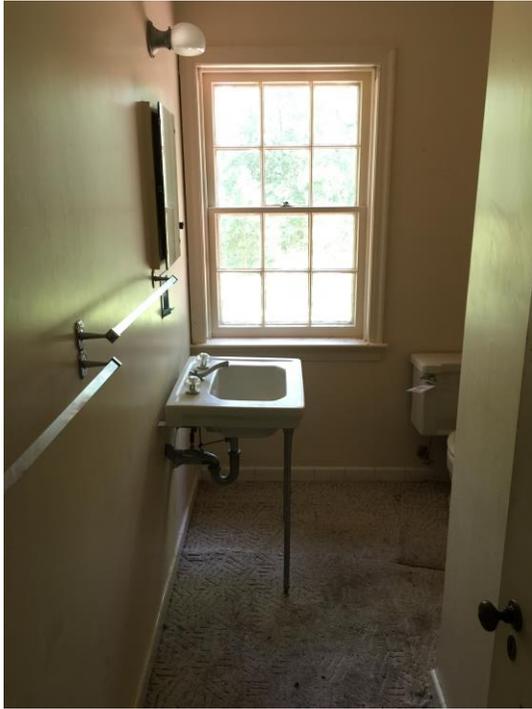


First Floor
Enclosed Porch

Second Floor Landing



Second Floor Bedroom



Second Floor Bathroom



North Façade of Barn



South Façade of Barn



East Base of Barn



Interior of Barn



Interior of Barn



Line of Beech Trees in North Woodland



Garden



Meadow / Field Area



View of Barn and Meadow from Woodland

7. Conditions assessment performed

- Historic Structures Report performed in 2017

8. Current use/ past use

Vacant/Residential

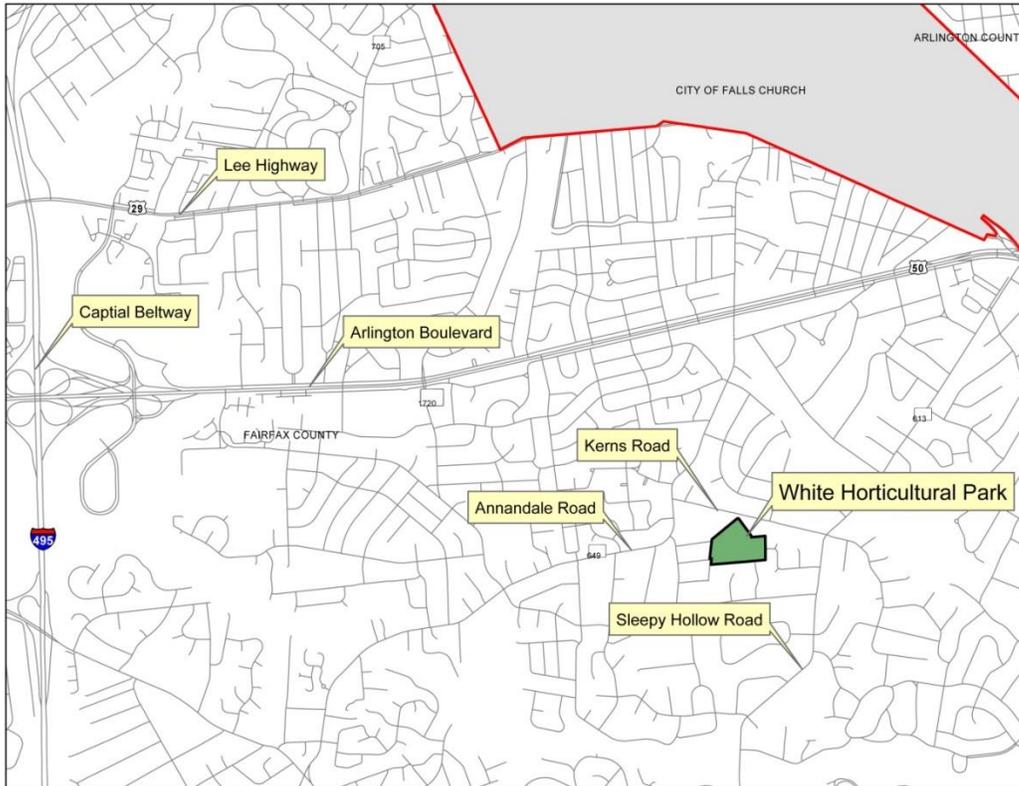
9. Historic Status

Inventory of Historic Sites – Incomplete Nomination

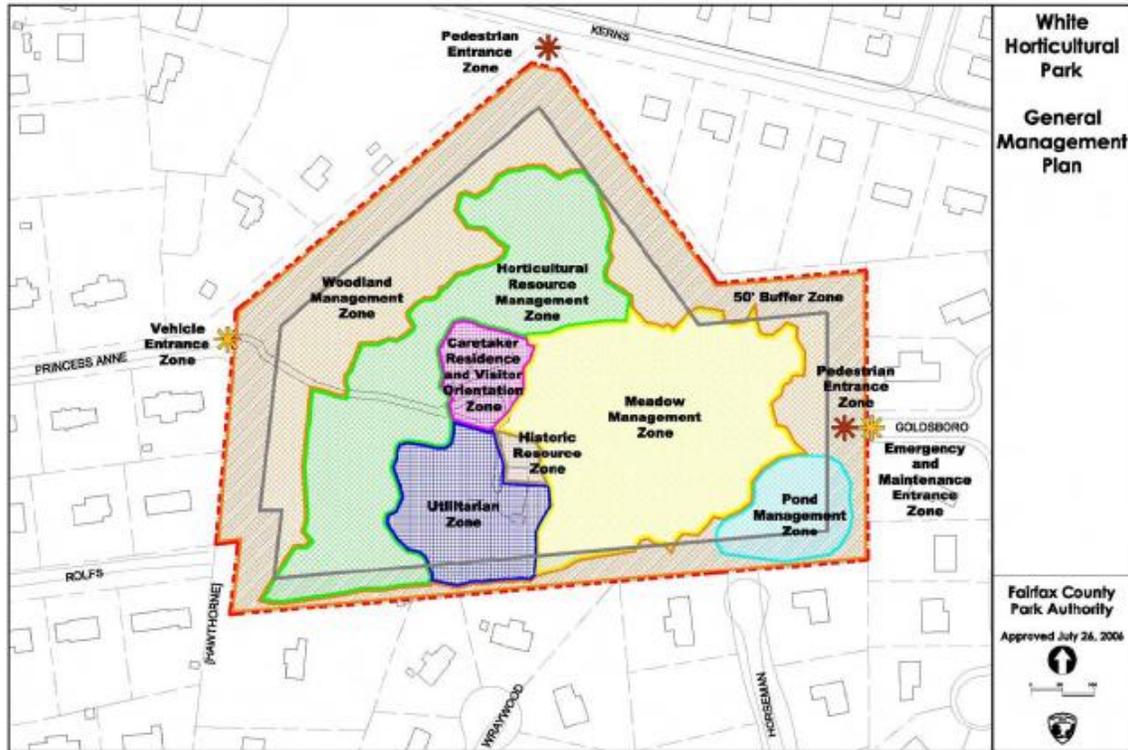
National Register of Historic Places – Not Evaluated

9. Developmental plans or restrictions/maps and land use

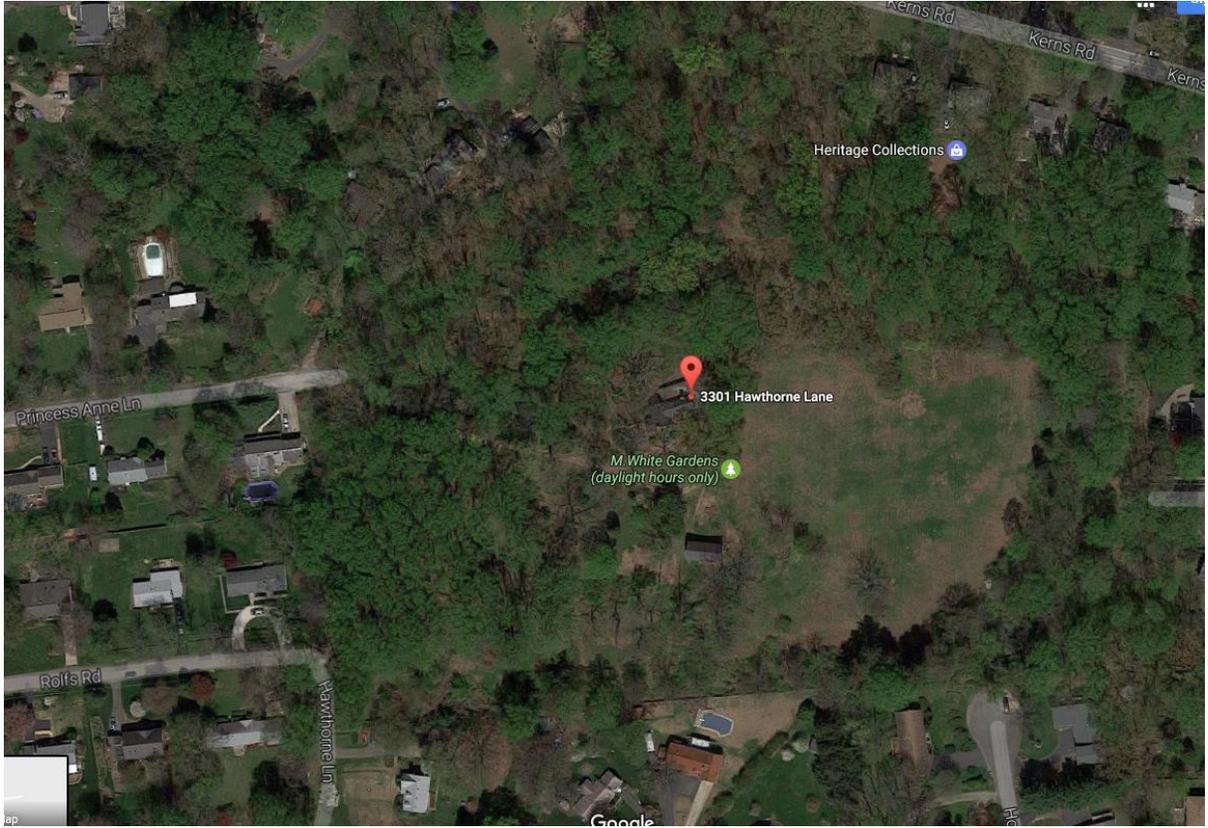
- Map of larger area



- Map of Park Area



- **Aerial/GIS of Property Location in Park**



10. Supplemental

- Summary of Historic Structures Report or Historic Structures Assessment
A Historic Structures Report for this property is being prepared by Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., and is expected to be completed in December 2017.
- Recommendations Summary
None
- Treatment Plan Summary
A Treatment Report for this property is being prepared by Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., and is expected to be completed in December 2017.

11. Appendices

- Memoranda of Agreement or Understanding (MOAs or MOUs)
None
- Cultural Resource Management Plan
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gmp/crmpfinal.pdf>
- Master Plan or Conceptual Development Plan
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gmp/whitemp.pdf>
- Historic Structures Report or Historic Structures Assessment
[Link](#)
- Cultural Landscape Report
[Link](#)
- White Gardens House Appraisal
Please contact Fairfax County Park Authority, Resident Curator Program