

# Wellington at River Farm Historic Overlay District Design Guidelines

Fairfax County, Virginia

*October 2021*



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT  
FAIRFAX COUNTY

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Chapter 01

<b>Introduction to the Design Guidelines</b>	<b>1</b>
Introduction to the District-Specific Design Guidelines	2
Using these Design Guidelines	5

### Chapter 02

<b>History and Significance</b>	<b>7</b>
Statement of Significance	8
Development History	9

### Chapter 03

<b>Historic Overlay District Overview</b>	<b>19</b>
Overview of Wellington at River Farm	20
HOD Boundary	25
Resource Inventory - Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources	25
Summary of District Character	30

### Chapter 04

<b>Design Guidelines</b>	<b>37</b>
Wellington at River Farm Historic Overlay District Design Guidelines	38
Guidelines for Preserving Architectural Character: Preservation & Rehabilitation of Existing Buildings	42
Guidelines for Architectural Compatibility & District Cohesion: New Construction & New Additions	63
Guidelines for Preserving Setting: Landscape, Streetscape & Archaeological Resources	77

### Chapter 05

<b>Appendix</b>	<b>87</b>
Appendix A – Glossary of Terms & Acronyms	88
Appendix B – Additional Resources	93



# 01

## Introduction to the Design Guidelines

## INTRODUCTION TO THE DISTRICT-SPECIFIC DESIGN GUIDELINES

Wellington at River Farm is located along the western shore of the Potomac River off East Boulevard Drive which parallels George Washington Memorial Parkway in Alexandria, Virginia. The property was developed in the eighteenth century on a portion of George Washington's River Farm and was expanded during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The land on which Wellington at River Farm was built was originally patented to Giles Brent in the seventeenth century before being inherited by William Clifton in 1739. George Washington purchased the land from Clifton in 1760. In 1790, Washington started the construction of Wellington at River Farm, then known as Walnut Tree Farm, as a gift to his nephew, George Augustine Washington, and his wife, Fanny Bassett. Construction halted in 1792 when Washington's nephew became ill and died the following year. In 1795, Tobias Lear—Washington's secretary—married the widowed Bassett and Washington gifted them a lifetime tenancy of the land and the house which was completed soon after. Following Lear's death in 1816, the house passed back to the Washington family and remained under their ownership until 1859. Wellington at River Farm passed through several owners throughout the remainder of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries before being purchased in 1919 by Malcolm Matheson and his wife, Julia. Under the Matheson's ownership, the house was enlarged and the gardens improved, and Wellington at River Farm obtained the appearance it largely retains today. The Matheson's renovated and enlarged the original eighteenth century house with Colonial Revival



Photograph of Wellington at River Farm during the Matheson period, c. 1931.  
Source: Smithsonian Institute

additions constructed between the 1920s and 1930s, and had various ancillary structures built including a caretaker's house, tenant house, and garages. The American Horticultural Society (AHS) purchased the property from Matheson in 1973, and the house remains under their ownership.

The Wellington at River Farm property was designated as a Historic Overlay District (HOD) by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on April 13, 2021, and is currently one of fourteen existing historic overlay districts in the County. Consistent with Virginia Code Section 15.2-2306(C), Fairfax County has established written criteria, set forth in Zoning Ordinance Article 3, Section 3101.3, to determine which properties to include within an HOD. The creation of HODs was authorized by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in order to protect and enhance the county's historic and architectural landmarks – sites deemed both valuable and vulnerable. Each designated HOD in Fairfax County has a unique setting, and associated landscape and architecture that reflects the generations of those associated with the HOD and the homes, neighborhoods and communities they built.

The content within this document will help project applicants and the broader community understand the history of the HOD, identify its character-defining features, and foster design solutions that protect and enhance the historic resource and retain the historic character of the historic district as whole. With this information, project applicants can use the guidelines to pursue design solutions that retain the historic character of the HOD.

The Wellington at River Farm Design Guidelines offer practical and flexible guidance for property owners, architects, contractors, and other professionals undertaking work within the Wellington at River Farm HOD. The guidelines provide helpful information and can be used as a tool early in the planning phase of a proposed project. The intent of the Design Guidelines is to guide sensitive new development and compatible additions, and limit demolition and inappropriate exterior alterations. The Design Guidelines will also be utilized by Fairfax County staff and the Architectural Review Board (ARB) to inform the project review and permitting process.

Applicants should also reference the Historic Overlay District General Design Guidelines ([FUTURE LINK](#)) which outlines the ARB review process, standards of review, as well as design principles and general guidance applied to all HODs.

This document incorporates findings and information included in the Fairfax County Inventory of Historic Sites Report on the property, the architectural survey form from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, and additional research provided by Tammy Mannarino of the Fairfax County History Commission.

## HISTORIC OVERLAY DISTRICT REGULATIONS AND PROJECT REVIEW SUMMARY

Proposed projects within the Historic Overlay District will be reviewed by the Fairfax County ARB. As described in the Zoning Ordinance Article 3, Section 3101.6: "Administration of Historic Overlay Districts," the term "project" applies primarily to exterior renovations, construction, demolition, or any uses that require a building permit, site plan, or rezoning application in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance. Fairfax County staff and the ARB will use the HOD Design Guidelines in their review and approval of county permit, site plan and rezoning determinations and recommendations. Consistent with current practice, ARB approval is only required for work that requires a permit.\*

For more information on the project review process, users should reference the General Historic Overlay District Design Guidelines ([FUTURE LINK](#)). Additional information on what work requires a building permit, site plan, or rezoning application, reference the Fairfax County Land Development Services website [here](#).

### Examples of Projects That Do Require Review and Permit Approval by the ARB:

- Demolition of buildings and structures
- New buildings, additions and structures
- Decks and screened-in porches (including alterations to existing)
- Sheds and playhouses over 256 square feet
- Swimming pools
- Retaining walls over three feet
- New exterior stairs or stoops
- Permits for signage

### Examples of Projects That Do Require Review and Recommendation by the ARB:

- Rezoning
- Special exceptions
- Special permits including encroachment into minimum yard requirements/setbacks and ground disturbance over 2500 square feet, such as septic fields
- Variances and illumination plans

### Examples of Projects That Do Not Require Review and Permit Approval by the ARB:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fences</li><li>• Residential window and door replacements</li><li>• Gutters</li><li>• Playground equipment</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• On-grade patios</li><li>• Driveways</li><li>• Interior alterations</li></ul> |
|--|--|

\* In the Wellington at River Farm HOD only, the ARB has the authority to review and approve any subdivision plats, plans, or construction plans on any property located within the historic overlay district.

## USING THESE DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Wellington at River Farm HOD Design Guidelines were developed as a resource to provide historical background and detailed guidance to project applicants, property owners, the building industry, and the community, and to facilitate ARB consideration of project applications. The design guidelines are not a part of, nor an amendment to, the County's Zoning Ordinance which continues to regulate land use types and the intensity of development within Historic Overlay Districts and throughout the County. The Zoning Ordinance regulates measurable items such as heights, setbacks, siting, and sizes of structures.

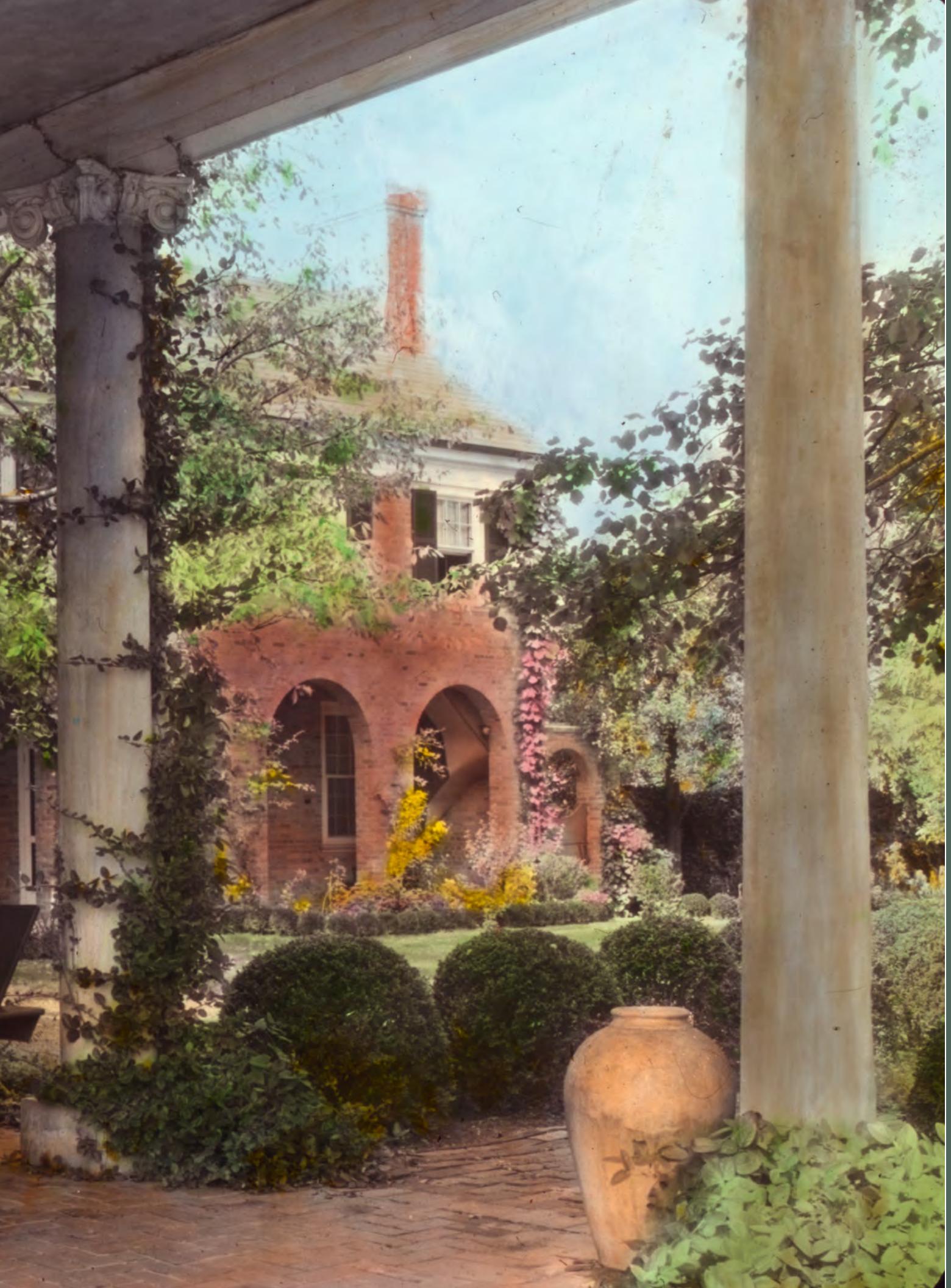
This document includes information about the district's history and significance in **Chapter 2. History and Significance**. The boundaries of the HOD are outlined in **Chapter 3. Historic Overlay District Overview**, which also includes the HOD's Resource Inventory, or list of contributing and non-contributing properties. Chapter 3 also includes a description of the physical character and character-defining features of the HOD. **Chapter 4. District-Specific Design Guidelines** includes guidance based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation that are in keeping with the provisions of Article 3, Section 3101.6 of the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance. The guidelines within Chapter 4 are organized by:

1. Guidelines for Preserving Architectural Character: Preservation and Rehabilitation of the Existing House and Grounds;
2. Guidelines for Architectural Compatibility & Neighborhood Cohesion: New Construction and New Additions; and
3. Guidelines for Preserving Setting: Topography, Landscape, and Archaeological Resources

The guidelines emphasize flexibility and encourage site-specific solutions rather than a one-size-fits all approach. They are guidelines, not requirements. The guidelines are not meant to discourage change or growth; rather, they have been developed with the specific intent to:

- Preserve, complement, and reinforce the historic character of the HOD;
- Reinforce the existing scale; and,
- Encourage the consistent use of materials compatible with the character of the historic district.

The **Appendix** includes a glossary of terms and acronyms and a list of additional resources.



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## History and Significance

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Wellington at River Farm is an 27.58-acre estate located off East Boulevard Drive to the east of George Washington Memorial Parkway along the west bank of the Potomac River in Fairfax County, Virginia. The main house of the Wellington at River Farm property was originally built in the mid- to late-eighteenth century—possibly under the ownership of George Washington—and served as the home of Tobias Lear and his wife, Fanny Bassett. After Lear's death in 1816, the house reverted back to the ownership of the Washington family. The estate evolved to its appearance today with the addition of gardens and ancillary buildings designed in the Colonial Revival Style in the 1920s-1930s under the ownership of Malcolm and Julia Matheson. Since the 1970s, the Wellington at River Farm buildings and gardens have been preserved and enhanced by the AHS since 1973 when it purchased the property.

The Wellington at River Farm property is significant for both its architecture and the surrounding landscape as a notable example of a modest eighteenth century house remodeled into an early-twentieth century Colonial Revival-style estate. The main house, its ancillary buildings, and its grounds are interlinked as a cohesive unit. The symmetry and orientation of the main house and its siting on the landscape makes it the focal point of the estate around which the ancillary buildings and surrounding landscape are arranged, including the visual axes and paths linking the house to the formal and informal gardens, the vistas of the Potomac River, and the carriage house, caretaker's house, and associated buildings. In addition, the renovation and additions to the main house, as well as the construction of the ancillary buildings, were all designed in the Colonial Revival style—built off of and encompassing the modest original eighteenth century house. This style is exemplified through the primarily symmetrical composition and orientation of the house, as well as the use of multi-light double-hung and casement windows, dormer windows, and material palettes dominated by brick and wood cladding. While the architect for all the additions has not yet been identified, documentation confirms that the caretaker's house, constructed in 1930, was designed by architect William I. Deming, a prominent local DC-based architect. Deming may also be responsible for other additions at Wellington at River Farm constructed by the Mathesons during the period.

The period of significance for the site reflects the dates during which the Mathesons were associated with the property from 1920 to 1973. It also reflects the period during which the renovations, additions, and ancillary buildings were completed and most of the current landscaping was put in place to give the estate the Colonial Revival aesthetic which it retains today.<sup>1</sup> Wellington at River Farm was listed in the Fairfax County Inventory of Historic Sites in 1969. The property is not currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nor the Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR).

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that while the period of significance does not include the years during which Wellington at River Farm was owned by George Washington and occupied by Tobias Lear, a preliminary analysis conducted by Fairfax County has concluded that the property has a moderate to high probability for the presence of both historic and prehistoric archaeological resources. If any archaeological resources are identified and evaluated as significant during an archaeological survey following the publication of this staff report, it is recommended that the period of significance be reevaluated.

## **DEVELOPMENT HISTORY**

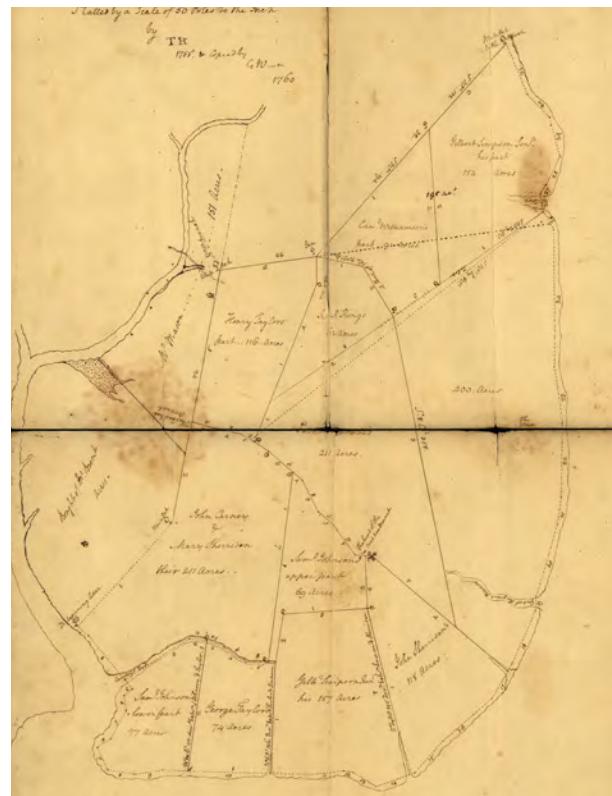
## **Initial Construction**

The land on which Wellington at River Farm is located was originally patented to the Brents, an English Catholic family, in 1651. The land stayed in the Brent family until 1739 when William Clifton inherited title of the land at Piscataway Neck upon marrying into the Brent family. Upon obtaining the land, Clifton renamed the property Clifton's Neck. In 1745, the Virginia General Assembly in Williamsburg authorized a public ferry to run between Clifton's Neck and Broad Creek in Maryland to connect with the King's Highway to the north. The highway was the main right-of-way from as far south as Georgia, northward to Philadelphia and New York.

Clifton expanded his landholdings to 1,800 acres and built a house on the property in the 1750s (not Wellington at River Farm, but another house further south). He also operated a ferry and an inn at the ferry landing, although the exact site has not been determined. Clifton advertised a portion of his landholdings for sale as early as 1755 after suffering financial setbacks due to business losses.

Washington expressed interest in the property and made Clifton an offer, but Clifton only wished to sell 1,300 acres rather than the full 1,800, retaining 500 acres and the house. Washington refused, and Clifton's affairs were eventually settled by court-appointed commissioners, Washington among them. In 1760, Washington obtained clear title to the land—all 1,800 acres—from Clifton and changed the name of the property to River Farm. River Farm became the northernmost of Washington's five farms. Although Washington patiently pursued acquisition of the property, he never lived or worked on the land, instead preferring to rent it. The first tenant farmer was Samuel Johnson in 1761, who paid a portion of his tobacco crop to Washington for being allowed to use the land. Washington briefly put the farm up for sale in 1773, but instead retained the property and provided it to his nephew, George Augustine Washington, and his wife, Fanny Bassett, for their use in 1786.

Washington likely started planning for construction of the house now known as Wellington at River Farm in approximately 1790 as a gift for his nephew and his wife.<sup>2</sup> In 1792, George Washington instructed his overseer to



1760 plan of Clifton's Neck, originally called Piscataway Neck, on which Wellington at River Farm was built. *Library of Congress.*

2 Sources give conflicting accounts for when the house was built. Some state that the house was built by William Clifton prior to 1760 (Volume 9 Yearbook of the Historical Society of Fairfax County Virginia claims as early as 1740) before it was sold to George Washington, but recent documentation indicates that construction of the house likely did not begin until 1790 and was not completed until c. 1795. Although the exact construction date is currently unknown, an archaeological investigation may be able to definitively determine when the house was built.



Tobias Lear as depicted in the 1780s. *New England Historical Society*.



The Wellington at River Farm property as depicted on an 1859 map. Note the depiction of the house, outlined in red, where the Snowdens were living at the time. *Library of Congress*.



Main house at Wellington at River Farm as it appeared in 1894. *Snowden*.

stop carpenters from purchasing more scantling (framing lumber) for the project, as his nephew was gravely ill. George Augustine Washington died in 1793. In 1795, Fanny Bassett Washington, George Augustine's widow, married Tobias Lear, whose wife Polly also died in 1793. Following their wedding in 1795, Washington gave Tobias Lear and Fanny Bassett a lifetime lease on the property. The Lears completed construction of the modest, two-story dwelling, and named it Walnut Tree Farm.

Born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire in 1762, Lear attended Harvard College and graduated in 1783. At the recommendation of a mutual friend, Lear was hired by George Washington in 1786 to serve as Washington's personal secretary and as tutor to Martha Washington's two grandchildren, George Washington Parke Custis and Nelly Custis. Lear served Washington not only as secretary but also as a personal confidante at Mount Vernon as well as in Philadelphia and New York City while Washington served as the nation's first President. Lear also served as Consul to Santo Domingo (Haiti) and Algiers, and was later Accountant to the War Department. In 1805, Lear was appointed United States Commissioner to deal with the hostile powers of the Barbary States.

The Lears referred to the house as Walnut Tree Farm, but it was subsequently referred to as Wellington at River Farm. A letter was identified in the Mount Vernon archives that was addressed to "George Fayette Washington, Wellington at River Farm" from his sister dated 1 March 1815 which is the earliest known reference to the Wellington at River Farm name. Tobias' wife, Fanny, predeceased him, and he installed his mother-in-law and children at the farm while he preferred to reside in Georgetown. He died by suicide in 1816.

Following Lear's death, the property reverted to Washington family ownership. Two generations of Washington's resided on the property after Lear's death: George Fayette Washington (a nephew of George Washington) and his son, Charles Augustine Washington (a grandnephew of George Washington). It is unclear as to what, if any, changes were made to the property during this period, but it was likely maintained by the Washington family. In 1859, nearly a century after George Washington purchased the property from Clifton, Charles Washington sold 652 acres of the property, including Wellington at River Farm, to three Quaker brothers, Stacey, Isaac, and William Snowden, of New Jersey. The Snowdens were one of many Quaker families from New Jersey and Pennsylvania that migrated to the Potomac

region of Virginia in the mid-nineteenth century. Together, the Snowdens divided the property, by then known as Wellington at River Farm, into three sections. Isaac Snowden and his wife lived in the house that still stands today.

In 1866, 280 acres, including Wellington at River Farm, were sold to a syndicate of three men: Valentine Baker, David Frost, and Daniel Smith. David Frost sold the portion of the property with the house to Valentine Baker in 1869. In 1890, the Bakers sold the property to Eugene and Orrin Frost.

By the turn of the century, the house was in a deteriorated state as evidenced by the earliest known photographs of the house (c. 1894). By this time, the house was comprised of three different sections. The main two-and-a-half story section constructed of masonry coated in stucco at the east end, a two-story wood frame section at the west end, and a connecting two-story (possibly wood frame) hyphen in the middle. The main section of the house was comprised of two stories of stone construction coated in stucco with a side-gabled wood shingle roof pierced by two shed dormers. The house, three bays wide, had symmetrical fenestration with two window bays and a single-leaf entry door at the east end of the first story, and three window bays at the second story. An 1894 photograph shows a wood frame porch with a pent or shed roof along the south elevation between the first and second stories. This had been replaced by 1908 with an entry stoop that only covered the entrance at the east end of the elevation. A corbelled chimney pierced the roof of the main house at the west end. The north (rear) elevation of the main block of the house showed ghost marks of a pedimented door surround or gabled stoop over the rear entrance.

The central mass (hyphen), two bays wide, had a secondary entrance on the south elevation, and windows at both stories to the east of the door. The west section featured two windows at each



Undated photo of Wellington at River Farm. *Washington Library*.



Wellington at River Farm in 1894. *Some Old Historic Landmarks of Virginia and Maryland* by W. H. Snowden.



Wellington at River Farm c. 1908. *Virginia Room, Fairfax County Public Library*.

story. The main house and west block were likely both free-standing buildings originally, with the west block likely an ancillary building, possibly as a kitchen house. A central hyphen was constructed to connect the two blocks to create a single building. (The alternative possibility is that the central mass was built as a small addition to the main house, and the west block was built later). A 1904 photograph from the *Evening Star* shows wood frame, shed roof additions along the rear (north) side of the central and west sections.

Wellington at River Farm was subsequently purchased in 1912 by Theresa Thompson, a member of a prominent local family that owned and operated Thompson's Dairy, a business active in the area until the 1960s. The Thompsons owned the property for approximately eight years before selling Wellington at River Farm in 1919 to Malcolm Matheson.

## **Matheson Period and Colonial Revival Expansion**

In 1919 , Wellington at River Farm was purchased by Malcolm Matheson and his wife, Julia. Malcolm Matheson, a native of New York, spent much of his early life in Florida before moving to Gloucester, Virginia in the 1910s. He and Julia Culbertson were married in 1911 and had three children—Malcolm Jr. (b. 1913), Margaret (b. 1916), and Lucy (b. 1918)—before moving to Wellington at River Farm. Malcolm Matheson worked as a building contractor, primarily with residential construction in the Washington area, but it is unknown whether he completed the work at Wellington at River Farm himself or whether it was done by another contractor.

The Mathesons, who continued to refer to the property as Wellington at River Farm, set about converting the modest late-eighteenth century federal period house into a large Colonial Revival style estate. The Mathesons renovated and enlarged the main house at Wellington at River Farm with Colonial Revival style additions starting in the 1920s. Colonial Revival styles became popular following the 1876 Centennial, and their popularity lingered until the 1920s, when an overwhelming resurgence occurred, largely influenced by the preservation movement's research and documentation of colonial architecture. Particularly influential was the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg, a widely publicized and celebrated example. Colonial Revival was especially popular in the Mid-Atlantic region, influenced by the many colonial river plantations found in Maryland and Virginia. Colonial Revival residential architecture was characterized by symmetrical facades with wood or brick exterior cladding (wood was more common during the 1920s, with brick dominating the style from the 1930s onward), symmetrical fenestration with double-hung windows, and dormers, all of which are exemplified at Wellington at River Farm.

In 1922, the first addition was constructed that comprised a grand stair hall along the west side elevation of the original house at Wellington at River Farm. The design of the stair hall addition contains features characteristic of the Colonial Revival-style, including an accentuated primary entrance covered by a pedimented portico with a large, paneled wood door, surmounted by a decorative fanlight transom and flanked by wide, ornate side lights. The original chimney still pierces the roofline and serves as a visual separation between the original section to the east and the 1920s construction to the west. The 1922 alterations also included the construction of a kitchen and dining room addition off the northwest corner of the new stair hall, and a flat roof wrap-around porch and colonnade at the first story. The porch features Colonial Revival detailing, including Ionic columns capped by a denticulated cornice and balustrade.

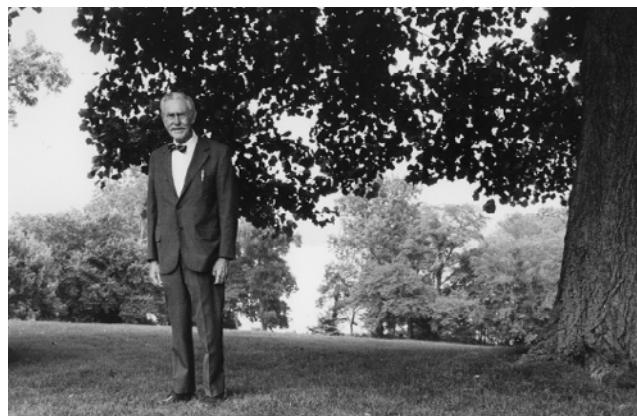
The original drive or approach to the house—a straight route leading from East Boulevard Drive along the west end of the original southern property line, was lined with eastern red cedars when the additions to the main house were completed in the 1920s. While a portion of the drive is still intact today, it is no longer the approach to the main house, having been traded in a 2001 land swap with the property to the south.

Between 1930 and 1931, a large two-story north wing addition was built to house a ballroom at the first-story and bedrooms on the floor above. A connecting passageway was constructed to link the 1930 north wing to the 1922 kitchen and dining room addition. The north wing bordered the west side of the terrace (originally grass but paved by AHS) and features a recessed arcade at the first story.

Additional changes to Wellington at River Farm include the 1930 construction of a Caretaker's Cottage designed by Washington-based architect William I. Deming.<sup>3</sup> A native Washingtonian, Deming graduated from George Washington University and worked for the federal government before joining Waddy B. Wood and Edward Donn, Jr. to form the private architectural firm Wood, Donn & Deming in 1902. During that time, Deming contributed to significant works including the Union Trust Building (1907) and the Masonic Temple (1908) in Washington, DC. After Wood departed from the firm in 1912, Donn & Deming continued to work together for another decade. In 1923, Deming left to form his own independent practice, designing a number of schools, commercial buildings, and residences—including a number of additions and new buildings at Wellington at River Farm for the Mathesons—during this period.

In addition to the construction of the Caretaker's Cottage to the west of the main house near the north property line, an addition was made to the carriage house, giving it the U-shaped plan that it retains today. Both of these buildings were designed in the Colonial Revival style

<sup>3</sup> Drawings and specifications for caretaker's house confirm Deming was the architect. Deming may have also been the architect of other improvements made during this period, including the renovation of the original house, as well as the kitchen/dining and ballroom additions; however additional research is needed to confirm Deming's involvement.



Malcolm Matheson at Wellington at River Farm. *American Horticultural Society*.



Main house and 1922 addition, 1931. *Library of Congress*.



Rear colonnade at Wellington at River Farm looking to the north wing ballroom addition, 1931. *Library of Congress*.



1930 drawing by architect William Deming showing the primary elevation of the Caretaker's Cottage. *Shirley Thomas*.



Original drive lined with cedar trees as it appeared c. 1930. Wellington at River Farm is visible in the background. *National Archives*.



Main house at Wellington at River Farm c. 1972. *Real Estate Booklet, Eugene F. O'Connor and Company*.

in keeping with the architectural character and aesthetic of the main house as envisioned by Matheson. A pool, located in the wooded area northwest of the main house near the property line, was also added at this time, as was a tennis court at the north end of what is now the Meadow Garden, and a dock and boathouse along the Potomac River near the southeast corner of the property. In 1937, the front gates of the White House—installed in 1819 under James Monroe—were removed during a White House renovation and brought to Wellington at River Farm. Several other ancillary buildings were constructed over the following years, including a wood-frame tenant house completed in 1935, and two garages completed by 1953.

In 1932, the George Washington Memorial Parkway opened to the west of the Wellington at River Farm property, parallel to East Boulevard Drive. Efforts to create a “national road” leading to George Washington’s Mount Vernon began as early as the 1880s as Washington’s home became increasingly visited by tourists. Efforts did not come to fruition, however, until the 1920s. After a number of failed efforts and proposed Congressional bills, the Moore-Swanson bill was introduced and passed in 1928 to build a memorial highway from Arlington Memorial Bridge to Mount Vernon. Originally named the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, the name was changed in 1930 to the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Work on the road began in 1929, with the first segment completed and opened in 1932 to coincide with the bicentennial of George Washington’s birth. In promotional materials and tourism guides for the Parkway, Wellington at River Farm was frequently featured along with other sites associated with Washington.

The Mathesons also developed the landscape and gardens surrounding the house during their ownership. They constructed brick walls surrounding the house and gardens and developed a formal garden with pergolas on axis with the wrap around porch at the original house.

They regularly opened Wellington at River Farm's gardens and grounds as part of home and garden tours, typically for the Garden Club of Virginia. The estate was also included in publications about Virginia gardens and sights along the George Washington Memorial Parkway, as well as numerous newspaper publications. Julia Matheson wrote an entry on Wellington at River Farm that was included in the 1931 edition of *Homes and Gardens in Old Virginia* which provided a basic history of the property and included an image of the formal garden to the north of the main house that was put in place by the Mathesons. Wellington at River Farm was again included in the 1962 edition of *Homes and Gardens*, in which its garden was described as having boxwoods that separate the "gardens from the lawn", and beds of tulips, forget-me-nots, lilacs, lilies, irises, and pansies.<sup>4</sup>

Malcolm Sr. and Julia Matheson continued to reside at Wellington at River Farm through the 1960s. Julia Matheson died in 1968, and Malcolm Matheson remained for several more years until he retired to Florida in 1971. After retiring, Matheson decided to sell the Wellington at River Farm house and property, then comprised of 27 acres. The Soviet Embassy offered to purchase the property for use as a retreat or dacha for its staff, but with the Cold War ongoing, Congress and the State Department barred the sale to the Soviet Union, and Matheson withdrew the property from sale. In 1973, Matheson put the property up for sale again, and it was purchased by the American Horticultural Society (AHS) for use as its national headquarters. Enid Haupt, a member of the Board of Directors of the AHS, provided \$1,000,000 from the Enid A. Haupt Charitable Trust to make the purchase of the Wellington at River Farm estate possible, with the stipulation that it be kept open for the enjoyment of the American people. In honor of George Washington, AHS again named the property River Farm. Matheson died at the age of 87 in April 1974, just one year after selling Wellington at River Farm to the AHS.



Aerials of Wellington at River Farm in 1937 (top), 1972 (middle) and 2019 (bottom). Historic aerials sourced from Fairfax County Aerial Imagery Collection.

<sup>4</sup> A history of Wellington at River Farm and its gardens was also included in *American Horticulturalist*, Volume 52, Number 3, Fall 1973.

## Timeline

**1760**

George Washington purchases the property from William Clifton

**1790 c.**

Construction of Wellington at River Farm begins under Washington for his nephew, George Augustine Washington, and his wife, Fanny Bassett

**1792-1795**

Work on the house stops when Washington's nephew dies; resumes in 1795 when his widow marries Tobias Lear and Washington gave them a lifetime lease on the property

**1816**

Property reverts back to the Washington family after Lear's death

**1859-1866**

The Snowdens owned the property during the Civil War

**1922-1930**

Renovations and additions to the main house, including a kitchen addition, porch, and colonnade (1922) and a north wing that included a ballroom (1930-1931)

**1930-1935**

Construction of an Overseer's/Caretaker's house (1930), Carriage House addition (c. 1930), and tenant house (c. 1935)

**1938-1953**

Construction of the two garages to the west of the Carriage House

**1973-Present**

AHS purchased Wellington at River Farm in 1973 and made changes made to the grounds and gardens, including a new driveway (1980s), small orchard (1981), Children's Garden (1983) and the Meadow Garden (2000s)



1931 photograph looking north from the main house at toward the formal gardens. *Homes and Gardens in Old Virginia*.



View of the north and east sides of the main house at Wellington at River Farm. *Old Virginia Houses*.



The front of Wellington at River Farm as it appeared in 1962. *Homes and Gardens in Old Virginia*.

## American Horticultural Society Ownership

Wellington at River Farm remained largely unchanged over the next twenty years before it was purchased by AHS in 1973. Although the buildings remain largely intact as they appeared in the Matheson era, changes have been made to the grounds over the last fifty years. After being purchased by AHS, the swimming pool, tennis court, and the dock and boathouse were abandoned and largely left for nature to reclaim. A new curvilinear drive was added in the 1980s across what was formerly an open lawn that extended largely uninterrupted from the main house to East Boulevard Drive. The curved drive circles around a portion of the lawn where various species of fruit trees were planted in 1981 as a small orchard. The narrow strip of land containing the original driveway or approach to the house remained part of Wellington at River Farm until 2001 when it was traded to the adjoining property to the south in return for additional waterfront property for Wellington at River Farm. Consequently, while the cedar-lined portion of the drive remains intact, it is no longer the approach to nor a part of the Wellington at River Farm property. The oval shaped portion of the drive directly in front of the house replaced a smaller circular drive in 2007.

In 1983, AHS created a Children's Garden to the north of the main house and terrace to stimulate children's interest in plants and nature. In 2008, the area of the lawn east of the ha-ha wall on the downward slope toward the Potomac was converted to a meadow garden. Additional gardens established by AHS at Wellington at River Farm include a wildlife garden and "the garden calm" which is located between the main house and carriage house beneath a mature Orange Osage tree. Under AHS, Wellington at River Farm has continued to be accessible and open to the public, acclaimed for its gardens, views of the Potomac River, and as a popular location for weddings, bird watchers, and other visitors.



Wellington at River Farm Development Chronology Map.



# 03

## **Historic Overlay District Overview**

## OVERVIEW OF WELLINGTON AT RIVER FARM

Wellington at River Farm is an important historic property and cultural landscape that spans 27.58 acres south of the City of Alexandria located at 7931 East Boulevard Drive, Alexandria. At the center of the property is the historic Wellington at River Farm House – an important late-eighteenth century residence that was expanded and evolved into an early-twentieth century Colonial Revival-style country estate. The property features an open lawn interspersed with young and mature trees primarily clustered around the main house and ancillary buildings. A non-original paved approach leads from East Boulevard Drive to a circular drive along the south side of the house. Formal and informal gardens to the north and east, along with the bordering wooded areas, offer shade, privacy, and abundant outdoor space. The property slopes downward to the east toward the Potomac River, which forms the eastern property boundary, where a dock was formerly located to provide access to the river.

### Zoning in the HOD

The County's Zoning Ordinance regulates land use types and the allowable intensity of development within Historic Overlay Districts and throughout the County. The Zoning Ordinance guides measurable items such as heights, setbacks, siting, and sizes of structures.

Wellington at River Farm is located within Fairfax County's R-2 Zoning District (Residential District, Two Dwelling Units/Acre). The R-2 District is established to provide for single-family detached dwellings at a density not to exceed two (2) dwelling units per acre; to provide for affordable dwelling unit developments at a density not to exceed two and four-tenths (2.4) dwelling units per acre; to allow other selected uses which are compatible with the low density residential character of the district; and otherwise to implement the stated purpose and intent of the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance.

### Zoning Ordinance Amendment and Open Space Easements

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approved a Zoning Ordinance Amendment (ZOA) for Historic Overlay Districts on September 14, 2021. The ZOA was prepared in response to a directive by the Board of Supervisors to analyze state code changes contained in Senate Bill SB1457.

<b>Residential District (R-2)</b>						
<b>Lot Size Requirements and Bulk Regulations</b>						
	Min Lot Width	Max Floor Area Ratio	Min Front Yard	Min Side Yard	Min Rear Yard	Max Height
<i>R-2: Residential District - 2 Dwelling Units per Acre</i>	Conventional Lot Subdivision Interior lot: 100 ft. Corner lot: 125 ft.	0.20 for uses other than residential or public  0.25 for public uses	Conventional Subdivision Lot: 35 ft.  All other structures: Controlled by a 45° ABP but not less than 35 ft.	Conventional: 15 ft.  All other structures: Controlled by a 40° ABP but not less than 15 ft	Conventional: 25 ft.  All other structures: Controlled by a 40° ABP but not less than 25 ft	35 ft
ABP: Angle of Bulk Plane DU: Dwelling Unit						



Views within the Wellington at River Farm HOD, January 2021.



Photo key aerial map. 2019 aerial from Fairfax County Aerial Imagery Collection.

In 2021, the General Assembly adopted SB1457 which amended Virginia Code § 15.2-2306: Preservation of historical sites and architectural areas, to add a new subsection (D). This new subsection authorizes a locality utilizing the urban county executive form of government to include a provision in an ordinance adopted that would (i) allow public access to any historic area, landmark, building, structure, or land; or (ii) provide that no subdivision may occur within any historic district unless approved by the review board or, on appeal, by the governing body of the locality as being compatible with the historic nature of such area, landmarks, buildings, or structures therein. This provision applies only to a parcel or parcels that collectively are (i) adjacent to a navigable river and a national park and (ii) in part or as a whole subject to an easement granted to the National Park Service or Virginia Outdoors Foundation on or after January 1, 1973.

On April 13, 2021, the Board of Supervisors approved the creation of the Wellington at River Farm HOD. As a follow to the motion for the HOD creation, the Board also directed staff to analyze SB1457 and recommend possible changes to the Zoning Ordinance. The Wellington at River Farm HOD is located adjacent to the George Washington Memorial Parkway (previously known as the Mount Vernon Memorial Parkway), which is a unit of the National Park Service listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is bounded by the Potomac River, a navigable

river to the east, meeting the first part of the conditions contained in SB1457. Additionally, the Wellington at River Farm HOD is encumbered by two existing easements that were added after January 1, 1973.

The first open space easement is located on the eastern edge of the property along the Potomac River and was granted to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) in 1978. The 8.15-acre easement includes the following restrictions:

- No subdivision of the property subject to the easement;
- Management of existing trees;
- No alteration of existing topography; and
- No building, structure, or mobile home in the easement area.

In addition, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation inspects the property periodically to ensure the conditions of the easement are being met.

The second open space easement, held by the National Park Service (NPS) and granted in 1979, runs along the western edge of the property and adjacent to the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The easement encompasses 2.209 acres and includes the following restrictions:

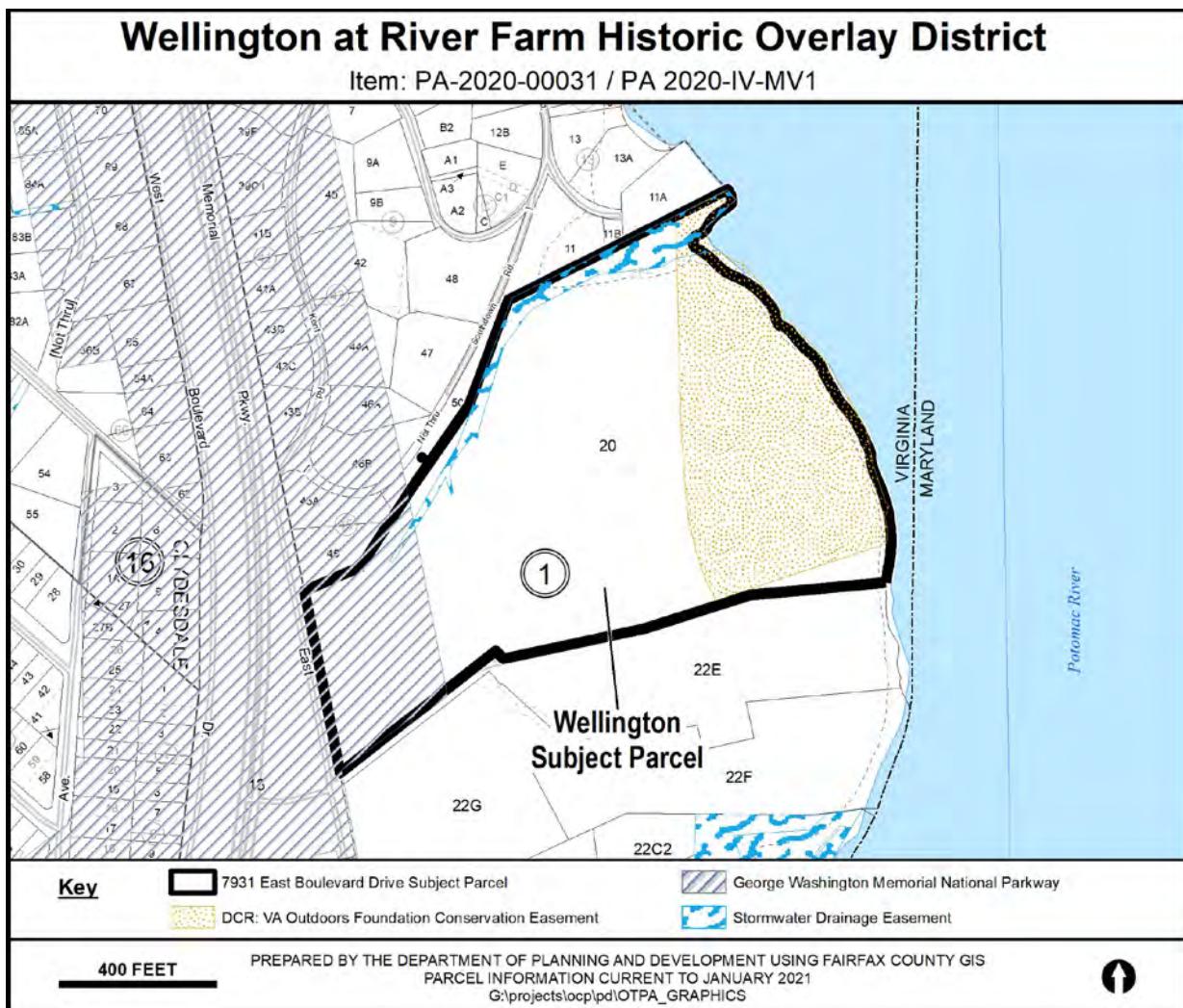
- The encumbered part of the property is to be used as open space only;
- A driveway on and across the easement area must be approved by the Secretary of the Interior;
- The easement area cannot be subdivided;
- No signage or storage is allowed; and
- Existing trees must be managed. Any tree larger than six inches in diameter and more than 30 feet in height can be removed only with written permission from the Secretary of the Interior (dead trees excluded).

With the existence of either one of these two easements, the Wellington at River Farm HOD meets the second criteria contained in SB1457, which appertains to a parcel(s) within an HOD that is subject, in whole or in part, to an easement granted to the National Park Service or Virginia Outdoors Foundation on or after January 1, 1973. Thus, the HOD meets the requirements of SB1457.

The changes to the Wellington at River Farm HOD include requiring any subdivision—including a subdivision plat, subdivision plan or construction plan—to be reviewed and approved by the ARB. Furthermore, new subsection 3101.19.C(4) is proposed to be added allowing the Board, in conjunction with proposed development or as otherwise appropriate, to impose or accept any condition or restriction it deems necessary to ensure any use proposed within the Wellington at River Farm HOD will be compatible with and will not adversely affect any residential area and may include a condition to allow public access to the Wellington at River Farm HOD and its landmark, buildings, structures, and land as permitted by local, state, and federal law.

### Resource Protection Areas

The eastern property line and a portion of the northern property line are located within a Resource Protection Area (RPA). Resource Protection Areas are regulated waterbodies and associated corridors of environmentally sensitive land that lie alongside or near the shorelines of streams, rivers and other waterways. In their natural condition, RPAs protect water quality, filter pollutants from storm water runoff, prevent erosion, and perform other important biological and ecological functions. Development, uses and activities within RPAs must comply with the County's Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance (CBPO), Chapter 118 of the Code of the County of Fairfax to protect and restore the quality of state waters.



Wellington at River Farm Easement Map.

## HOD BOUNDARY

The Wellington at River Farm HOD Boundary consists of the single parcel property of 27.6 acres. The boundary excludes surrounding parcels and residential development that is not associated with the historic significance, character, and aesthetic of Wellington at River Farm. The boundary includes the main house and all surrounding ancillary buildings that reflect the evolution of the estate under the ownership of the Mathesons, spanning from 1919 to 1973, which is also the period of significance. The land within the boundary is directly related to and has bearing upon the character of the historic site. By following the parcel lines, the boundaries protect the contours and important features of the landscape surrounding the house.

## RESOURCE INVENTORY - CONTRIBUTING AND NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

Buildings and resources in the Wellington at River Farm HOD are classified as either contributing, or non-contributing. The label “contributing” indicates that the resource is one of several that defines the historic character and significance of the district. They are distinct from “non-contributing” resources, which may be located within a historic district (and subject to certain restrictions as a result) but are not character-defining because they have been altered or were constructed outside the district’s significant period of development.

Resources are considered contributing if they retain integrity to the period of significance (1919-1973). Integrity is defined by the National Park Service as the physical characteristics that allow a resource to convey its historical significance. For Wellington at River Farm, examples of this would include integrity of architecture, materials, landscaping, building siting or topography. Non-contributing resources have either experienced substantial design modifications that post-date the period of significance, or have undergone full or partial demolition, resulting in lost or compromised integrity. Brief descriptions of contributing resources are found on the following pages.



Main House.

## Main House

### *Contributing*

The main house on the Wellington at River Farm estate is the primary contributing resource within the HOD. This includes the original block (east bays) of the house built in the eighteenth century when the property was owned by George Washington as part of his River Farm. Under the Mathesons, the house was extensively expanded in the 1920s and 1930s with several Colonial Revival additions. A new entry and stairhall were added to the main block in 1922, expanding the house from two to three bays. The kitchen wing at the northwest corner of the house (west bays). The porch along the north and east sides of the main block was also likely added at this time. The house was expanded again in 1930 with a north ballroom wing projecting north from the kitchen addition possibly designed by architect William I. Deming. The house and property were added to the Fairfax County Inventory of Historic Sites in 1969; however, they are not currently listed in the Virginia Landmarks Registry nor the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).



Caretaker's Cottage.

## Caretaker's Cottage

### *Contributing*

The Caretaker's or Overseer's Cottage is located several hundred feet to the west of the main house near the north property line. Designed by William I. Deming in the Colonial Revival style, the one-and-a-half-story house was built in 1930. The house remains in use today by AHS as a staff residence.

## Tenant House

### *Contributing*

The tenant house, built c. 1935, is located near the north property line between the Caretaker's Cottage and the Carriage House. More modestly finished than the main house and the caretaker's cottage, the one-story tenant house features German Novelty wood siding, exposed eaves, and metal roofing. AHS currently uses the building as storage.



Tenant House.

## Carriage House

### *Contributing*

The Carriage House or Stable is located northwest of the main house at Wellington at River Farm. The building has a roughly U-shaped plan with the open court facing south. Built in two phases, the Carriage House features an east wing built c. 1920 clad entirely in brick, while the central and west wings, built in 1930, are primarily clad in wood weatherboard with brick end walls. Originally, there was no interior connection between the east wing and the central block. After acquiring the property in 1973, however, AHS constructed a hyphen that linked the two wings.



Carriage House.

## North and South Garages

### *Contributing*

The north and south garages were some of the last buildings constructed at Wellington at River Farm. Although the exact construction date has not been identified, they were built sometime between 1937 and 1953. The garages are located immediately west of the carriage house. A portion of the south garage has been adapted for use as the AHS's gift shop.



North Garage.



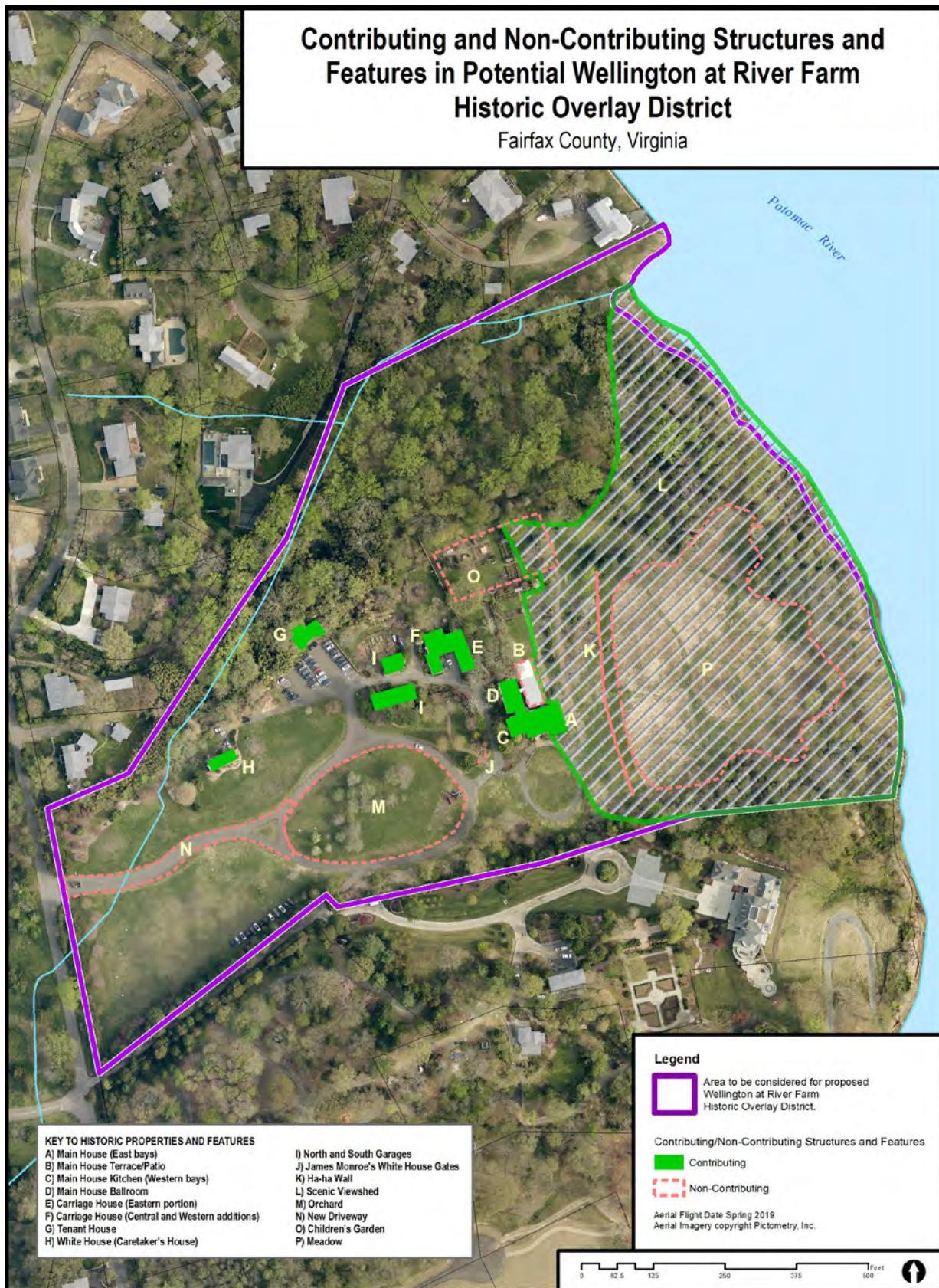
Potomac River Vista.

## Scenic Viewshed of the Potomac River

### *Contributing*

To the east of the main house is a wide vista with expansive views of the Potomac River. A brick ha-ha wall (non-contributing) separates the formal lawn from the open landscape of the Meadow Garden (non-contributing) on the downward slope below. The Potomac River vista is a significant component of Wellington at River Farm's landscape, around which many of the alterations and additions to the main house were designed. These include the expansive wrap-around porch and wide picture window, integrating the house and grounds as a single entity.

Non-contributing resources at Wellington at River Farm include the James Monroe White House Gates (moved to Wellington at River Farm in 1937) added under the ownership of the Mathesons, and the ha-ha wall which has not been definitively dated. Other non-contributing resources include landscape features added under the ownership of AHS as they all post-date the period of significance. These non-contributing resources include the paved surface lot adjacent to the tenant and caretaker's houses, the orchard planted in 1981 at the center of the circular portion of the drive, the 1983 Children's Garden, the rear slate terrace added in the 1990s, and the 2008 Meadow Garden. The contemporary driveway paved in the 1980s is also non-contributing as it post-dates and breaks up the historically uninterrupted west lawn and diverts attention away from the visual axis of the original driveway which led directly to the main house from East Boulevard Drive.



Wellington at River Farm HOD Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources.

## SUMMARY OF DISTRICT CHARACTER

Wellington at River Farm is characterized by its bucolic character with the main house sited at the central high point of the property making it the focal point around which are arranged an assemblage of ancillary buildings and landscaped grounds. Within the boundaries of the HOD, Wellington at River Farm remains a cohesive country estate primarily composed of Colonial Revival architecture representing its period of evolution and significance (1919-1973) under the ownership of the Mathesons. Although the original late-eighteenth century main house was heavily altered with multiple additions by the Mathesons, these additions and new outbuildings constructed during the 1919s and 1930s are significant to understanding Wellington at River Farm as an early to mid-twentieth century Colonial Revival-style estate, the character and appearance of which it largely retains today.

Today, Wellington at River Farm is approached from East Boulevard Drive (which runs parallel along the east side of George Washington Memorial Parkway) via a contemporary curving driveway which culminates with a more formal oval driveway directly in front of the main entrance to the house located on the south elevation. The design of the estate takes the surrounding landscape into account, with the ancillary buildings and parking lot clustered to the northwest of the main house away from the open lawns, gardens, and vistas. The driveway that leads to the house crosses a sprawling lawn interspersed with and bordered by trees. The open landscape continues to the east of the house where the land drops off toward the Potomac River, leaving the house to dominate the site and offering wide vistas of the river and surrounding landscape. A ha-ha wall on the sloping grade separates the more formal lawn from the meadow garden below which is planted with various grasses and wildflowers and framed by trees to enhance the view. To the north of the house are formal gardens accessed by a brick paved path that serves as an important visual axis connecting the main house to the gardens. A dense, wooded buffer on the northern portion of the property shields the buildings and grounds at Wellington at River Farm from the surrounding development. Narrow wooded buffers along the south and west property lines, which includes the original historic cedar lined approach to the main house at Wellington at River Farm, partially obscures the adjacent house and property to the south and the George Washington Memorial Parkway to the west.

### Character-Defining Features

Character-Defining Features are those features that distinguish the HOD and help identify its unique setting. They include the overall shape of the building, its materials, craftsmanship, decorative details, as well as the various aspects of its site and environment such as landscape elements. In the case of Wellington at River Farm, character defining features include the Colonial Revival design of the main house additions and ancillary buildings, formal gardens, varied open and wooded landscapes, and the vista of the Potomac River to the east. Defining characteristics of Wellington at River Farm are identified on the following pages.

## BUILDING SITING

- House and ancillary buildings set back from East Boulevard Drive and primarily oriented southward
- House sited on the high point of the property to take advantage of the topography of the site and views toward the Potomac River
- Ancillary buildings located to the north and east of the house due to the steep sloping topography and to prevent obscuring views of the Potomac to the east



## FORM AND MASSING

- Main house features a central rectangular form with side and rear wings generally forming an L-shaped footprint
- Rectilinear ancillary buildings generally with low rectangular forms
- Carriage house follows a U-shaped footprint



## BUILDING HEIGHT

- Dominant two-and-one-half story main house with one-and-one-half story addition
- Ancillary one-story buildings on flat or low-sloped portions of the landscape



## ROOF SHAPES AND ELEMENTS

- Side gable roofs, typically with shallow and/or returning eaves
- Flat roof porch partially concealed by balustrade
- Brick chimneys at gable ends, along side elevations, and piercing rooflines
- Roof features including hipped and gabled dormer windows and cupolas
- Roofs covered with varied materials including slate, asphalt shingle, and metal cladding





## WINDOWS

- Symmetrical or regularly spaced fenestration patterns
- Double-hung wood sash windows with multiple lights
- Large, plate glass window in first-story sitting room to provide maximum view of the Potomac River, connecting house and landscape
- Metal casement windows located in north wing dormers and the Carriage House
- Traditional ornamentation such as wood surrounds, moldings and trim on frame buildings and cast stone or brick rowlock sills on masonry buildings



## DOORS

- Single-leaf paneled wood door at main entrance with large sidelights, fanlight transom, and pedimented portico with Ionic columns
- Secondary entrances primarily single-leaf wood doors, sometimes include sidelights and/or transoms
- Double-leaf, glazed, wood frame doors opening to porches and colonnades at the main house
- Doors set within porches, porticos, colonnades and arcades at the main house; porches and entry stoops at ancillary buildings
- Historic wood panel door and hardware at original main entrance



## DESIGN FEATURES AND MATERIALS



- Stone, brick, or concrete masonry foundations and walls
- Stucco coating at the original building volume, painted white
- Painted wood cladding (weatherboard and German Novelty siding)
- Red brick masonry exteriors on most ancillary buildings and north wing of the main house
- Porch/Terrace colonnade starting over the original entrance at the east end of the south elevation, and enveloping the north and east sides of the original building volume

## LANDSCAPES AND STREETSCAPES

- Generally open landscape to the west of the main house, interspersed with and bordered by trees; mature trees around the house and grounds
- Dense wooded area to the north and narrow wooded buffer to the south screens Wellington at River Farm and its grounds from adjacent development and from East Boulevard Drive
- Narrow line of eastern red cedar trees and fencing along the west property line paralleling help obscure East Boulevard Drive and George Washington Memorial Parkway from view
- Significant vistas looking east toward the Potomac River from the main house, the view west from the Potomac River to the main house, and the view east from East Boulevard Drive toward the main house
- Formal gardens with brick walkways, arbors, and formal plantings of shrubs and flowers
- Visual north-south axis of the brick lined path connecting the formal gardens to the main house
- Straight and meandering brick paved walkways linking the house with the surrounding buildings and gardens; stone paved terrace



View toward the house from the original approach.



Original driveway and perimeter plantings along East Boulevard Drive.



Formal garden and brick walls.



White House gate.

## Alterations and New Development

Wellington at River Farm retains much of its architectural and landscape character-defining features representative of its period of significance. There have been minor alterations to several of the buildings and to the landscape of the property, the most significant being the abandonment of the original entry drive and construction of a new circular drive from East Boulevard Drive dating from the 1980s-1990s. Despite these changes, the main house, ancillary buildings, and landscape organization at Wellington at River Farm remain largely intact, allowing the HOD to convey its collective historic significance as an intact early- to mid-twentieth century Colonial Revival style estate.

Outside the Wellington at River Farm HOD, the majority of development in the immediate vicinity consists of residential developments that started in the mid-twentieth century, but which has continued through the 2010s. While additional development outside of Wellington at River Farm is likely, the potential for future development within the HOD is limited due to protections afforded the historic site from its located within Resource Protection Areas (RPAs), and two easements placed on the property and a subsequent Zoning Ordinance Amendment approved by the Board of Supervisors that limit future development. These include a conservation easement held by the Virginia Outdoor Foundation (VOF) encumbering 8.15 acres on the east side of the property that specifically prohibits subdivision and the construction of buildings or structures in the easement area. The second is a conservation easement held by the National Park Service (NPS) that encompasses 2.2 acres on the west side of the property prohibiting subdivision or signage, though it does allow for driveways within the easement but not without approval of the Secretary of the Interior.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Details for both easements are laid out in greater detail on page 24.



Map of Wellington at River Farm and identified vistas (yellow).



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# 04

## Design Guidelines

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## **WELLINGTON AT RIVER FARM HISTORIC OVERLAY DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES**

The purpose of these HOD-specific guidelines is to maintain, strengthen, and enhance the historic and architectural character of the district. As stated in Section 3101.6(G) of the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance, these guidelines are designed to preserve the historic integrity of the district. They offer practical guidance for property owners, the design community, County staff, and the ARB when determining the appropriateness of proposed work during the project planning and review process.

The guidelines strongly encourage preservation where possible, but also support historically compatible changes that are in keeping with the district's Colonial Revival architectural character and formal landscape. While repair and retention of historic elements and materials is always the preferred course of action, replacement can also be an appropriate solution. Ideally, elements and materials can be replaced-in-kind.

To promote both traditional preservation practices and allow for necessary alterations, the design guidelines provide information on maintenance, repair, and replacement, and also offer guidance for new construction, additions, and site elements. Not all categories covered in the design guidelines are items that require a building permit. Rather, the guidelines are meant to be a comprehensive document that provides general guidance covering a wide range of project types.

To limit changes that are out of character with Wellington at River Farm, the guidelines are meant to encompass the entire HOD, inclusive of both contributing and non-contributing resources. These guidelines do allow for more non-conformity when applied to non-contributing resources; however, changes made to non-contributing resources are still likely to affect the character of the district and are thus subject to review.

For more information on what work requires and does not require ARB review, see "Historic Overlay District Regulations and Project Review Summary" on page 4.

## What Design Guidelines Can and Cannot Do

This Design Guidelines publication is a Fairfax County Department of Planning and Development policy document that expands upon the requirements outlined in the Zoning Ordinance. The design guidelines outline recommendations, not requirements. The intent of the guidelines is not to stunt innovative design nor preserve Wellington at River Farm as a snapshot in time. The guidelines do not provide absolute or case-specific advice, or address exceptions or unusual conditions. Sometimes a creative, thoughtful design solution—one that does not neatly fit the written guidelines but may result in a better project while remaining compliant with zoning law and building code—will be approved by the ARB. There may be constraints inherent to a specific property or its materials that will preclude the “ideal” solutions recommended throughout this document and require a more practical approach. The guidelines are meant to be flexible in nature, to help in the delicate balancing act of preserving the best of the past while building the best of today.

### Guidelines Do:

- Aid citizens, property owners, and design professionals to better understand the ARB’s review process and meet ARB Standards, which are based on the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.
- Provide objective criteria the ARB can use to better protect and preserve the unique and valuable historic resources of Fairfax County.
- Provide a better understanding of an HOD’s physical and historic character.
- Assist the evolution of HODs in a sensitive manner that meets contemporary needs while retaining characteristic features.
- Outline a degree of adaptability appropriate within HODs that is well-aligned with preservation standards.

### Guidelines Don’t:

- Dictate that all historic buildings must remain as they were originally.
- Resolve all design challenges and concerns within an HOD.
- Give case-specific advice, or address exceptions or unusual conditions.
- Give absolute direction as to specific standards or requirements, such as square footage.
- Regulate interior design.
- Regulate or increase new construction or rehabilitation activities (that is the role of the private market).
- Improve maintenance of existing properties (locally adopted maintenance codes contain those requirements).
- Become part of, nor an amendment to, the County’s Zoning Ordinance which continues to regulate land use types and the intensity of development within Historic Overlay Districts and throughout the County.

## Organization of Guidelines

The following District-Specific Guidelines for the Wellington at River Farm HOD are organized based on three general treatment approaches and project types:

1. Guidelines for Preserving Architectural Character: Preservation and Rehabilitation of Existing Buildings
2. Guidelines for Architectural Compatibility & District Cohesion: New Construction and New Additions.
3. Guidelines for Preserving Setting: Topography, Landscape, and Archaeological Resources.

Within each section, guidelines are shown as either “Recommended” or “Not Recommended.” Work treatments and techniques that are consistent with the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation* are “Recommended” and those that are inconsistent with the Standards are “Not Recommended.” The *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation* (36 CFR 67) are published by the National Park Service and are the benchmark for appropriate preservation practice nationwide. They are used by the Fairfax County ARB and staff during review of proposed projects in the HOD. While the Standards provide a general framework and the key principles that should be considered as part of a proposed project, exceptions to these guidelines may be permitted in consultation with the ARB on a case-by-case basis depending on project- and site-specific considerations.



Photograph of Wellington at River Farm by Frances Benjamin Johnson for the Carnegie Survey of Architecture of the South, c. 1931. *Library of Congress*.

## Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* are used by Fairfax County ARB and staff in their review of proposed projects in the HOD. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards (36 CFR Part 67), developed by the National Park Service and used by many local jurisdictions, offer four distinct approaches to the treatment of historic properties—preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction—with accompanying Guidelines for each. They apply to historic buildings of all periods, styles, types, materials, and sizes.

The *Standards for Rehabilitation* provide the basis for the HOD Design Guidelines and include ten basic principles created to help preserve the distinctive character of an historic building and its site, while allowing for reasonable change to meet new needs. The *Standards for Rehabilitation* are as follows:

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

## **GUIDELINES FOR PRESERVING ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER: PRESERVATION & REHABILITATION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS**

This section contains guidelines that address general maintenance issues for existing buildings at Wellington at River Farm. As a general best practice in historic preservation, retention and repair of original features is always preferred, but in cases where a material or system has aged or deteriorated such that it requires replacement, it should be replaced in kind. In kind replacement refers to the replacement of an original feature with a new feature of the same material, design, and scale. Preservation and rehabilitation projects should follow a treatment hierarchy that begins with minimally invasive actions such as repair and, when appropriate, progresses to replacement of original features in kind. If features have already been altered, then restoration to an original appearance is encouraged but not required. When thoughtfully carried out, preservation, rehabilitation, and maintenance of buildings in the Wellington at River Farm HOD can be successfully implemented without negatively impacting the district's historic character.

### Project Review and Permit

#### Requirements:

The following types of projects require a permit and review by the ARB:

- Partial or total demolition
- New construction or additions
- Major exterior alterations
- Porches and decks (including alterations to existing)
- Retaining walls, stairs, and stoops
- Approval of site plans

For a complete list of projects that require a building permit and thus review by the ARB visit: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/landdevelopment/when-permit-required>

### **Building Elements & Features**

The following sections address recommended and not recommended treatments for the below building elements and features:

- Foundations
- Walls and Exterior Cladding
- Roofs, Roof Features, and Roof Materials
- Entrances, Porches and Terraces
- Windows, Window Features, and Glazing Materials
- Details and Ornamentation
- Mechanical Systems and Plumbing

## Foundations

The foundation forms the base of a building and is extremely important to the overall stability of the entire structure. With the exception of the original block of the main house, most buildings at Wellington at River Farm have concrete slab foundations. Concrete slab foundations are always low in profile and visibility; sometimes they are clad in brick veneer. Oftentimes the concrete slab is the only visible above-ground foundational element. Additional foundation types at Wellington at River Farm include concrete block, brick, and parged stone masonry foundations that feature partially exposed basement levels. As a building element, foundations (along with the walls and other architectural elements) contribute to the architectural character of Wellington at River Farm.

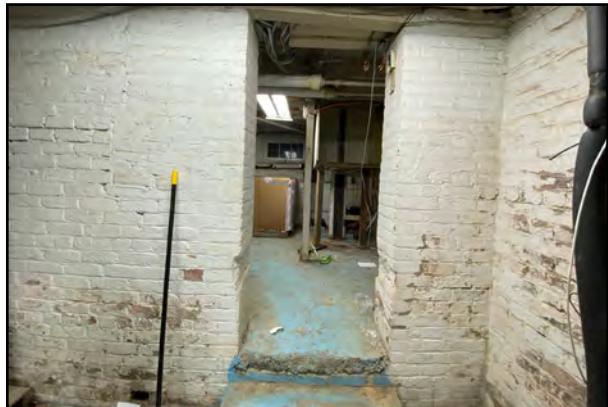
### GUIDELINES

#### *Recommended (Appropriate Treatment):*

- Retain, preserve and repair existing concrete slab or concrete block, brick, or stone foundation.
- Ensure that water flows away from the foundation; if necessary, install gutters and downspouts.
- Prevent tree roots or other vegetation from causing structural disturbance to the foundation (transplant smaller plantings away from the foundation and avoid planting new vegetation close to the building).

#### *Not Recommended (Inappropriate Treatment):*

- Use of non-original materials, such as wood, used for replacement foundations or foundation veneer.
- Replacement foundations that visually contrast or compete with the walls above.
- Altering the original height of the foundation.



Detail of concrete foundation (top), foundation continuing as exterior wall with stucco finish and exposed brick (center), and a brick masonry foundation in the basement of the main house (bottom). Beneath the original section of the house, much of the brick is finished with an applied stucco coating.

## *Walls and Exterior Cladding*

Buildings in the Wellington at River Farm HOD utilize a variety of construction techniques, demonstrating the multiple building campaigns, including brick and stone with stucco coatings, brick masonry, concrete block, and timber framing. Buildings in Wellington at River Farm constructed of concrete block or timber framing typically feature weatherboard wood siding or brick veneer cladding. German Novelty wood siding is less common but present within the HOD. Walls feature standard fenestration, typically evenly/symmetrically spaced window and door openings. Original exterior cladding materials, along with supporting architectural elements, strongly contribute to the Colonial Revival aesthetic of the HOD.

### **GUIDELINES**

#### ***Recommended:***

- Perform basic maintenance to maintain and prolong the life of original cladding materials, such as weatherboard wood, or German Novelty wood siding; brick masonry; and stucco coatings.
- If necessary, repair and replace damaged or deteriorated structure or cladding, based on documented precedent or designed to be compatible with the size, scale, style, and color of the building and existing materials.
- Take efforts to match historic exterior materials, keeping in mind the color, texture, profile, dimensions, and overall appearance of the original material.
- For wood cladding:
  - Retain existing wood cladding and maintain their painted finishes.
  - Where necessary, repair rotted or missing sections rather than replacing the entire element.
  - Where necessary, replace wood cladding in-kind with new wood cladding that matches the historic material, dimensions, profile, texture, detailing and overall appearance.
- For brick masonry cladding:
  - Retain original or historic masonry features such as walls, cornices, window surrounds, steps, flooring, and columns, which are important in defining the overall character of the building.
  - When necessary, repair or replace damaged or deteriorated masonry units in-kind with units that match the size, texture, color, pattern and physical properties of the historic brick, as well as mortar joint size and tooling.
  - Repoint deteriorated mortar with historically compatible mortar that matches the original material in color, texture, physical properties such as strength and porosity, detailing, and tooling.
- For stucco coatings:
  - Retain the historic stucco on the main house and regularly maintain the exterior coating to deter or slow down deterioration.

- Repair stucco by removing loose material and patching with a new material that matches the historic in composition, color, tint, and texture.
- Paint stucco as necessary with a compatible paint or lime wash that will not damage the surface coating.

**Not Recommended:**

- New or substitute materials where not originally present (such as vinyl or aluminum installed over original siding), or that does not match the original in scale, texture, and form.
- Smooth materials, such as plywood or metal sheathing, or other materials that contrast with the Colonial Revival aesthetic of the Wellington at River Farm HOD.
- For wood cladding
  - Replacing existing wood siding with cement fiberboard or other synthetic or alternative materials if it is architecturally incompatible with the historic materials.
  - Use of mastic paint or other incompatible coatings and finishes that trap moisture and cause rotting/deterioration of the underlying wood.
- For brick masonry cladding
  - Use of waterproof or water repellent coatings on uncoated masonry that can worsen moisture problems.
  - Application of paint or other coatings to masonry that were historically unpainted or not coated in stucco.
  - Potentially damaging masonry treatments such as sandblasting, surface grinding, high pressure cleaning, or use of chemicals as these methods can cause irreparable damage to the historic masonry.
  - Use of incompatible mortar, concrete, or caulking compounds that could damage the historic brick.



Exposed red brick siding typical of many of the Colonial Revival buildings and additions



Wood weatherboard siding is used in combination with brick cladding on the stable or carriage house

- For stucco coatings
  - Use of stucco coatings that are stronger than the historic or do not match the historic appearance.
  - Use of commercial caulk or other compounds to patch stucco.
  - Use of incompatible mortar, concrete, or caulking compounds that could damage remaining historic stucco or the underlying brick.



Brick masonry with applied stucco coating exterior of the main house at Wellington at River Farm



Wood German Novelty siding from the tenant house



Wood frame building with brick masonry end walls



Deteriorated stucco coating on large aggregate concrete masonry

## Roofs, Roof Features, and Roof Materials

The roof is one of the most important elements of any building or structure. It physically protects the building from the elements and provides visual character. Roof materials, roof form, eaves, gutters, and chimneys contribute to the building's appearance and are important features to retain and preserve. Typical original roof types at Wellington at River Farm (primarily gable, though there are several shed and low-pitch or flat roofs present) feature a medium slope, emphasizing the building's massing. Some gable roofs also include evenly spaced, hipped or gable dormers, or small, centrally placed cupolas. The roofline can be either symmetrical or asymmetrical. Roof forms at Wellington at River Farm typically feature small overhangs.

The standard gable roof form throughout the Wellington at River Farm HOD offers a cohesive aesthetic while simultaneously offering visual interest and some degree of individuality through the use of different types of dormers and varied roof pitch. Original roof cladding material was typically slate.

Exterior chimneys are seen on several buildings within the HOD. These prominent architectural elements are typically located at gable ends—either flush with or projecting from the elevation—or piercing the center of the roofline.

### **GUIDELINES**

#### **Recommended:**

- Retain original gable roof forms, maintaining the shape, structure, planar form, and cupola, if original.
- Retain original soffit, and wood or masonry fascia.
- Replace roofing material when it has reached the end of its service life with new materials consistent with the original appearance of the roof. For slate roofs, replace damaged individual slates as necessary with a slate that matches the original size, shape, texture, and weathered color of the original.
- Retain historic copper gutters and downspouts; repair and provide ongoing maintenance to ensure their functionality.
- Where necessary, replace gutters and downspouts or install new gutters and downspouts. In most Wellington at River Farm buildings the historic profile of the gutter is a half-round (as opposed to an ogee, "k", or regular gutter) which extend the roofline and hook to circular downspouts which conduct water away from the building foundation. New gutters should be fabricated of metal and should match the size, profile, and finish of the original. Unless fabricated of copper, new metal gutters and downspouts should be finished with an enamel or baked-on coating.
- Retain original chimneys and conduct maintenance as needed.
  - Structurally stabilize the chimney.
  - Prevent water from entering the chimney structure by removing disintegrating brick and replacing in-kind, and resurfacing cap with hot or cold tar.
  - Repair flashing where roofing meets the chimney and leaky mortar chimney caps.

- Re-point with compatible mortar as needed, following the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*; duplicate original mortar in strength, composition, color and texture.
- If necessary, gently clean masonry using low pressure water and detergents.
- If a hood, shield or screening is needed to protect the chimney flue, minimize its visual presence to the overall design and scale of the chimney.

**Not Recommended:**

- Altering the original roof shape, form, height, or roof pitch; introducing flat rooflines or differing roof forms not found elsewhere in the Wellington at River Farm HOD, such as mansard roofs.
- Removing original chimneys.
- Applying aluminum or vinyl fascia that cover the original wood or masonry fascia.
- Installing new gutters and downspouts in locations that would obscure or damage architectural features.
- New roof penetrations such as skylights or protruding vents.
- Incompatible cladding material on highly visible roof slopes, such as terra cotta tile, wood



Gable roof with hipped dormers; note the flat roof porch at the first story level.



Standard gable roof with exterior end chimney and gable dormers



Lower pitched gable roof of one of the garages.



Gable roof with overhanging awning; note the cupola for ventilation and ornamentation.

shake, highly variegated asphalt shingles, visible rubber roofing materials such as EPDM and TPO, rolled roofing with seams that create visual horizontal bands, or other non-original materials.

- Inappropriate masonry treatments at chimneys
  - Potentially damaging masonry treatments such as sandblasting, surface grinding, high pressure cleaning, or use of chemicals that will abrade the masonry.
  - Use of stucco to attempt repair of damaged brick or in an attempt to prevent or ameliorate moisture problems.
  - Use of incompatible mortar that could damage brick.
  - Use of mortar crowns (metal or asphalt), as they frequently leak and fail.
  - Application of paint or other coatings to masonry that has been historically unpainted.



Side gable roof with pedimented gables, arched hoods, and incorporated end chimney.



Brick end chimney on the north wing of the main house



Detail showing soffit and wood fascia beneath the roof eaves.



Side gable garage with low pitch varied gables

## Entrances, Porches, Terraces, and Porticos

Entrances are key character-defining features of a building due to their visibility and prominent placement. The siting of the main house and the majority of the ancillary buildings at Wellington at River Farm —most of which are oriented facing south—clearly distinguishes the primary elevations and main entrances, while secondary entrances are located on the side and rear elevations of the buildings.

Most original entry doors at Wellington at River Farm are multi-panel wood doors, some with glazing, flanked by multi-light sidelights, or topped with a transom. The main house entry features a two-panel single-leaf wood door flanked by sidelights with decorative metal caning. Narrow wood pilasters separate the sidelights from the door. A wide fanlight transom with metal caning surmounts the entrance. The door, sidelights, and transom are all set within wood frames.

Entry doors are often accessed via a porch, portico, or terrace. Porches and porticos have roofs whereas terraces are open air. Some porches at Wellington at River Farm, such as the Caretaker's House and Tenant House, are recessed, incorporated within the building's main roof form supported by columns. The main house features a pedimented entry portico with fluted Ionic columns and pilasters over the main entrance. The house also features a wrap-around porch that provide sweeping views of the Potomac River and surrounding landscape. The porch, featuring Ionic columns, begins at the east end of the south elevation over the original entrance and extends along the east and north sides of the original block of the house before terminating at the projecting 1919s addition. An original porch on the west side of the house has since been enclosed as a sun porch with multi-light casement windows.

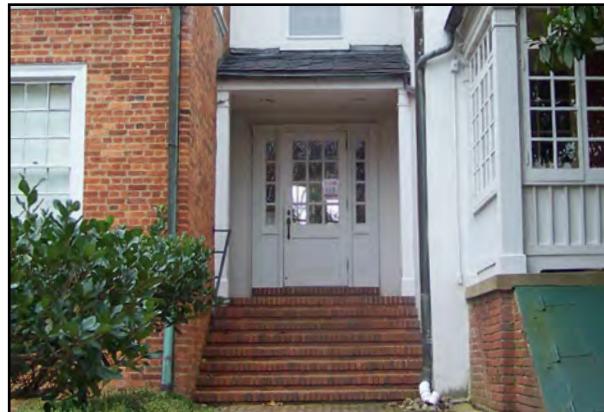
### GUIDELINES

#### *Recommended:*

- Retain original entry doors, porches and terraces and their functional and decorative features (doors, transoms, pilasters, columns, balustrades, stairs, roofs, and projecting canopies).
  - Perform basic maintenance to prolong the life of historic doors and porches.
  - Prevent corrosion of metal-frame doors with gentle cleaning.
  - Prevent deterioration of flooring materials (brick and stone).
- Perform regular maintenance through appropriate surface treatments, such as cleaning, paint removal, and reapplication of protective coatings.
- Install weather-stripping, storm doors, and/or clear (or low-emissivity) film to glazing in order to reduce air infiltration and improve energy efficiency.
- Replace doors that cannot be repaired with new doors that match the historic in-kind or are compatible and fit within the existing opening.
  - Reuse original hardware (knobs, escutcheon plates, and locks) or install new hardware that reflects the stylistic identity of the building.
- If a historic porch or portico cannot be repaired as a result of deterioration or damage, the replacement should ideally match the general appearance of the original feature. In many



Primary entrance (paneled door) with sidelights, fanlight transom, and pedimented portico.



Secondary entrance beneath an entry stoop features a multi-light paneled wood door with sidelights.



Secondary entrance on the side elevation of the stable/carriage house.



Main entrance of the Caretaker's Cottage on a porch incorporated beneath the main roof of the house.



South end of the porch on the main house looking toward the Potomac River.



Northeast corner showing the transition from porch (at left) to colonnade, with the outdoor terrace at right.

cases, alternative materials that are more durable may be acceptable.

- Incorporate new porches on secondary or less-visible elevations or in a manner that is compatible with the building and with the HOD.

***Not Recommended:***

- Removing original entry door openings, doors, porches, or porticos.
- Undertaking alterations that would change the size, proportions, or materiality of doors, porches, or porticoses in any way that alters the historic appearance of the building.
- Adding an incompatible new entrance, porch or deck to a visible elevation.
- Replacement of doors, hardware, or entry lighting with new fixtures that are inconsistent with the aesthetic of the Wellington at River Farm HOD, such as fully-glazed, single-light doors, metal doors, or adding minimally ornamented elements.
- Removing prominent trim around a door opening.
- Modern or substantial porch or deck railings that are incompatible with the character of the buildings and entrances.



Original main entrance to the house, now serving as a secondary entrance opening onto the wrap-around porch added by the Matheson's



Entrance within a recessed entry stoop incorporated beneath the primary roof

## Windows, Window Features, and Glazing Materials

Windows are one of a building's most important character-defining features. Their placement, configuration, materiality, and detailing play a major part in defining the style, scale, and character of any building. Buildings at Wellington at River Farm feature traditional window types, primarily double-hung wood-sash windows with multiple muntin configurations (six-over-six, nine-over-nine, six-over-one, and nine-over-one). Buildings also feature fixed, casement, and the occasional bullseye window. All windows are located in wood frames and typically feature traditional ornamentation such as muntins and trim.

Window glazing at Wellington at River Farm is primarily non-tempered, multi-pane glass. Maintenance and repair of original windows should always be a first course of action, followed by retrofitting windows for better energy efficiency (see "Sustainability" on page 61).

### GUIDELINES

#### *Recommended:*

- Retain and perform regular maintenance to all windows, original window openings, features, and materials through cleaning and repainting or refinishing.
- Avoid interior changes that would require removal or alteration of a window opening on a primary or visible elevation.
- Install weather-stripping on operable windows to reduce air infiltration and improve energy efficiency after basic repairs have been made.
- When possible, repair deteriorated or damaged portions of a window rather than the entire window unit. This includes removal and repair of sash, including reglazing where necessary, and making repairs to the frame.
  - For wood windows, partially decayed sections of wood can be dried, treated and waterproofed, patched or filled, and repainted to extend the life of the unit.
  - For steel units, bent, heavily corroded, or other damaged frames should be repaired in place when possible or removed and repaired if the damage is extensive.
- Replace windows if necessary due to extensive or irreparable deterioration or damage.
  - Fit new windows properly within the original openings.
  - Replace in kind, following the design, finish and visual qualities of the historic window including the operability, pane configuration, dimensions, profiles, and framing elements (small variations in profile may be acceptable if those variations do not significantly impact the visual character of the historic window design).
  - Select wood for replacement wood window frames to match original double-hung windows, and select appropriate wood or steel to match the original casement window material; alternatives to the original steel casement window inserts (such as aluminum or aluminum-clad wood windows) may be acceptable if it closely matches the visual characteristics of the original window.
  - Installing new, historically compatible shutters based on historic documentation.

**Not Recommended:**

- New window penetrations inserted at primary or visible elevations.
- Removing (infilling) or altering original window openings on primary or highly visible elevations.
- New replacement windows that are not consistent with the Colonial Revival aesthetic of the HOD.
- Non-original window materials, such as vinyl, that do not match the visual characteristics of the original wood or steel windows (though alternative materials may be acceptable for high-moisture areas, such as bathrooms).
- Changing the design or operability of the original window, especially when visible, such as replacing an operable window with a fixed window, using an arched, bay, or single-light window.
- Replacing ornamented units with simple and clean modern window features and frames.
- Replacing clear glass with non-clear heavily tinted or highly reflective glass (low emissivity coating is acceptable due to minimal tint).



Bullseye windows, while not common at Wellington at River Farm, are occasionally used.



A large, single-light fixed window at the first-story of Wellington at River Farm that looks toward the Potomac. Fixed windows are atypical for Wellington at River Farm, and are not generally recommended.



Double hung sash at the first and second stories as well as the dormer windows



Double hung sash at both stories, typical of most windows at Wellington at River Farm.



A former porch on the west side of the main house that has been enclosed with casement windows



Double hung windows at the first story and casements placed in the dormers.



Double hung sash windows on the stable/carriage house



The caretakers cottage utilizes both double-hung and casement windows.

## Details and Ornamentation

Details and ornamentation are often main identifiers of a building's style. Typical decorative elements of Colonial Revival architecture found at Wellington at River Farm include accentuated doors with decorative surrounds, columns and pilasters, cornices (simple boxed cornices as well as elaborate examples with dentils or modillions), and moldings and trim. Less common examples of ornamentation include balustrades and cupolas. Material palettes—such as extensive use of brick (typically brick veneer) and wood—also help to make the Colonial Revival style identifiable.

### GUIDELINES

#### *Recommended:*

- Retain any original decorative features, including cornices at the roofline, balustrades and columns at porches and porticos, exterior moldings and trim (including window and door surrounds), decorative brickwork, and original cupolas and weather vanes that help define the Colonial Revival character of the buildings.
- Protect and maintain decorative elements by ensuring that historic drainage features (such as roof overhangs, gutters, and downspouts) divert rainwater away from their surfaces; find and eliminate sources of moisture that may cause damage.
- Repair and maintain decorative features through non-abrasive and non-corrosive cleaning methods, and stripping and repainting or refinishing materials—where applicable—with compatible paints and historically appropriate colors.
- Where replacement is necessary, match the original or historic profiles, materials, details, and profiles in-kind.



The stable cupola is both functional and decorative.



Half turn stair with iron rail located at the end of the arcade in the north wing.



Detail of the dentilled cornice and balustrade of the porch; the gable end in the background has a full entablature.



Detail of Ionic pilaster on the porch of the main house.



Dentilled cornice terminating at right with an eave return at right.



Example of hardware on original door.



Detail of Ionic columns and pediment of the primary entry portico.



Brick arcade detail.

***Not Recommended:***

- Removal of original historic ornamentation and features.
- Alterations to the main house or ancillary buildings that would require the removal or alteration of any decorative features or ornamentation.
- Addition of non-original details that are inconsistent with the Colonial Revival aesthetic of the Wellington at River Farm HOD.
- Addition of detailing and ornamentation that has no historic precedent or is not based on historic documentation.



Cast iron railing on brick stairs leading down from the porch to the colonnade



Decorative aux star shaped pattress plates on the caretaker's house



Bulls eye windows serve both functional and decorative purposes



Interior view of the main entrance with decorative sidelights and transom.

## Mechanical Systems and Plumbing

Modifications and repairs of heating, cooling, plumbing, electrical, and other building systems that date to the mid-twentieth century pose significant challenges. When systems are beyond repair and replacement becomes necessary, efforts should be made to install new systems in a manner that limits modification to the building exterior. Incompatible replacement of systems (impacting the walls, fenestration, or roof form) have the potential to adversely effect the historic materials and aesthetic of the HOD.

### **GUIDELINES**

#### **Recommended:**

- Conduct regular maintenance to extend the life of existing systems.
- Replace or install new exterior equipment at ground level to the rear or side of the building, obscured from view with appropriate screening.
- When replacing, consider systems that do not require highly visible rooftop equipment, or place new roof-mounted mechanical equipment in a setback location away on a non-primary roof slope.
- Locate new rooftop equipment in areas that are not highly visible, such as rear roof slopes or side elevations with limited visibility.

#### **Not Recommended:**

- Placing new systems in a conspicuous location highly visible from the street or neighboring properties (for example, window-mounted air conditioning units at façades).
- Rooftop equipment such as satellite dishes, antenna, chillers, ductwork, conduit, piping, etc., that are placed in highly visible, prominent locations (unless alternatives do not exist).



Modern ductwork added beneath the first floor framing



Piping and ductwork in the basement of the main house

## **Adaptation**

Instances requiring adaptation of Wellington at River Farm's Colonial Revival buildings need not conflict with the preservation practices. Health, safety, accessibility, and sustainability concerns are all justifiable reasons to modify a building, and alterations that follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards are encouraged.

## **Health, Safety and Accessibility**

Many historic buildings were constructed with materials now understood to be hazardous, such as lead paint. Many were not designed to be readily accessible for people with disabilities. It is understood that modifications to historic buildings may be necessary to meet the needs of current residents. Work that meets the standards set by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) will be approved by the ARB. Concessions will be made in terms of compatibility and impact to historic resources. County Staff is available to discuss ways in which necessary health and safety modifications can be implemented in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Design discussions with Staff are encouraged. Whenever possible, health, safety and accessibility modifications should aim to preserve character-defining features while simultaneously providing the required level of accessibility and safety.

## **GUIDELINES**

### ***Recommended***

- Retain character-defining elements and materials to the extent possible.
- Install an ADA-compliant ramp that is simple in design, such as that found on the east elevation of the ballroom addition to the main house.
- If necessary due to steep terrain or steps, install a lift or elevator of compact size.
- Implement accessibility modifications of appropriate scale that are visually compatible with the Colonial Revival aesthetic.
- If possible or desired, implement modifications at secondary or less visible elevations rather than the building façade.
- If a new door is necessary, consider utilizing the location of an existing door or modify an existing window rather than creating a new opening.

### ***Not Recommended***

- Changes that cause irreversible damage to character defining features, in instances where alternatives exist that satisfy both heath/safety/ADA standards and preservation standards.
- Extensive re-grading (leveling) of land to accommodate new ramps, etc.

## Sustainability

Projects to improve sustainability or efficiency should take a holistic and comprehensive approach. The preservation and rehabilitation of an existing building means saving the embodied energy used in the manufacturing of its materials and the labor of its construction. Sustainability upgrades should update existing features and systems while limiting impacts on the historic character of the building and surrounding contributing resources. However, some new treatments may be acceptable and even encouraged.

Note that while ARB review will only apply to the building exterior, the following information also deals with the interior, since many energy conservation issues relate to these areas. Additionally, note that much of this guidance would also apply to New Construction and Additions, to be discussed in the following section.

## GUIDELINES

### *Recommended*

- Conduct regular maintenance to extend the life of existing systems.
- Use fans, dehumidifiers, and interior window shades.
- Maintain and add deciduous trees to the property to increase shade in the summer and sun absorption in the winter.
- Complete an energy audit to evaluate thermal performance and identify deficiencies in the building's envelope and in its systems.
- When planning retrofits, retain character-defining elements and materials to the extent possible and attempt to minimize any negative impacts on them.
- Properly insulate the building envelope from air leaks, and insulate windows, ducts, water heaters, and hot water pipes to improve energy efficiency and comfort.
  - Limit heat loss through walls by exploring insulation solutions that do not require removal or alteration of exterior cladding.
  - Install interior removable storm windows over single-glazed opening windows (note that interior storm windows over well-sealed fixed windows will cause excess condensation between the panes).
  - Replace weather stripping on opening windows or apply clear window film.
  - Keep fireplace dampers closed when not in use and install them where needed.
- Explore heating and cooling systems upgrades that improve energy performance and conservation.
- Install low-profile solar (photovoltaic) panels; solar shingles; a green roof; or cool roof products on flat roofs, non-visible elevations, or in a non-visibly obtrusive manner whenever possible.
  - Take efforts to minimize the visual presence of solar panels, solar shingles, solar modules, mechanical and electrical connections, and mountings wherever possible.
  - Use solar products and mounting systems that compliment historic roof materials.

- If possible, consider placing solar products on an existing non-historic addition, or on a garage, or shed structure.
- Choose sustainable, recycled, energy efficient, and high-quality materials for any renovation projects.
- Choose locally made products to reduce transportation costs and reduce overall environmental impacts.

#### ***Not Recommended***

- Installation of solar panels and associated equipment on buildings or in the landscape in a manner that severely interrupts the original roof form or landscape as viewed from the street.
- Incompatible replacement of window glazing, sashes and/or frames (ie. heavily tinted glazing or vinyl frames).
- Removal of historic roofing structure, materials or features to accommodate new systems.

## GUIDELINES FOR ARCHITECTURAL COMPATIBILITY & DISTRICT COHESION: NEW CONSTRUCTION & NEW ADDITIONS

This section provides guidelines related to the design and construction of new buildings and new additions within the HOD. Opportunities for new construction are limited due to a portion of the property being located in a Resource Protection Area, along with the development restriction established by the two easements.

Additions are projects which result in increased square footage and/or the alteration of an existing roof form. Additions (particularly vertical additions) can dramatically alter the appearance of a historic building. Though not encouraged, when carefully planned, new construction and new additions can complement the Wellington at River Farm HOD.

It is reasonable that property owners want to increase their usable space, or introduce modern amenities beyond those envisioned by when designing main house additions and new buildings at Wellington at River Farm in the 1919s and 1930s. Therefore, the following guidelines are intended to help project applicants design compatible new construction and additions.

Ultimately, new construction and new additions should take cues from Wellington at River Farm's Colonial Revival architecture and should complement the historic character of the HOD's main house and existing buildings. New construction and additions should be sensitively located to respect the overall organization of the site, existing contributing buildings, and significant landscape elements.

Additions should be thoughtfully designed to be compatible with the existing buildings in terms of scale, material selection, and design. Guidance outlined in the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards* directs that additions should be compatible yet differentiated from the original building, to avoid being mistaken as part of the original architecture. It is important to note that differentiation does not mean inharmonious. Successful additions within the HOD should provide additional living space while also complementing the existing district character.

### Project Review and ARB Approval Requirements:

The following types of projects require a permit and review by the ARB:

- Approval of site plans
- Partial or total demolition
- New construction or additions
- Major exterior alterations
- Porches and decks (including alterations to existing)
- Retaining walls, stairs, and stoops
- Signage

For a complete list of projects that require a building permit and thus review by the ARB visit:  
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/architectural-review-board>

## Site Design (New Construction and Additions)

The design of the estate takes the surrounding landscape into account, with the ancillary buildings and parking lot clustered to the northwest of the main house away from the open lawns, gardens, and vistas. New construction and additions should embrace the visual clues of the building siting so as not to overshadow or obscure the main house and organization of existing ancillary buildings, nor any of these important landscape components and views. For site design guidelines focused on landscape features (parking, outbuildings, plantings, and fences), please see "***Guidelines for Preserving Setting: Landscape, Streetscape & Archaeological Resources***" on page 77. For the purposes of the Guidelines for Architectural Compatibility and Neighborhood Cohesion, site design includes the physical placement and positioning of the building or addition and its visual impact. In regard to building siting of new construction and additions, it is important to follow the historic precedent established by the Mathesons, where new buildings are consistently set back and away from the primary (south) and east elevations of the main house to prevent drawing attention away from the focal building of the property and to refrain from obscuring open vistas and viewsheds towards the original house and Potomac River.

### GUIDELINES

#### **Recommended:**

- New additions that result in the least possible loss of historic materials and historic landscape features so that character defining features of the HOD are not obscured, damaged, or destroyed.
- Site new construction and additions in a way that considers relation to the paved drives, the original main house, and the ancillary buildings; maintaining the existing spatial relationships between these elements should be prioritized.
- Design new construction and additions to be set back from the driveway and sited with respect to the landscape and to avoid disrupting significant views.
- Locate new additions to existing buildings on rear or side elevations – not the front façade or on highly visible elevations.
- Maintain the original orientation of the existing buildings. If the primary entrance is located on the south-facing facade it should remain in that location. Design new construction to follow the prevailing orientation and building patterns.
- Limit the size of new additions and new construction so that it does not visually overpower the historic buildings within the HOD.
- Locate and design additions in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the building would be unimpaired.

#### **Not Recommended:**

- New additions that are attached in a manner that obscures, damages, or destroys character-defining features of the contributing buildings.
- New construction or additions that require significant grading of land in a deviation from its natural contours.

- New construction or additions that are sited east or south of the main house and buildings.
- Additions that are prominently visible from East Boulevard Drive or from primary elevations (note that site specific conditions will always guide such decisions, and may require more flexible solutions).

## Size, Scale, and Massing



New construction and additions should be designed and sited at Wellington at River Farm in a manner that takes the relationship between the existing buildings and surrounding landscape into account, and should not overshadow existing building, nor block or diminish viewsheds.



The main house at Wellington at River Farm dominates the landscape; any new construction should take this into account and not overshadow the main house and other existing buildings

The size of a building reflects its height, width and square footage and the scale of a building describes the comparative size of a building relative to a neighboring building or in relation to a human. At Wellington at River Farm, buildings are of similar size (typically one- or two-and-a-half-stories). There are no high or mid-rise buildings at Wellington at River Farm. The term massing refers to a building's three-dimensional geometric composition or visual "bulk," and is highly influenced by how the building is situated on its site. The gable end buildings, composed of basic cubic and triangular geometric forms that rise above the landscape, express a visual heaviness or weight with their massing, typical of Colonial Revival architecture.

## GUIDELINES

### **Recommended:**

- In general, use massing that relates to that of existing historic buildings within the HOD. Existing buildings should be used as a guiding principle to design compatible new additions or new construction.
- Design of new one- to two-and-a-half-story buildings and additions that are standard in size and scale, in keeping with typical residential building sizes of the 1919s-1930s and surrounding buildings.
- New additions that are deferential in scale, meaning they are modest, subordinate, and allow the main house to communicate its primacy within the landscape.
- New additions that are sensitively attached to existing building volumes, ideally set back from the primary plane(s) of the building with a roofline that does not rise above the height of the original building in a manner that would overpower the historic form.
- Incorporation of a simple, recessed, small-scale hyphen (connection), to physically and visually separate the addition from the historic building.
- Consideration of one-story additions that are deferential to the original building, before pursuing second-story additions, which may impact the roof form and linear massing of the original building.



The one-story garages are some of the smallest buildings in terms of height, respecting the scale and massing of the adjacent stable/carriage house and the main house



The site of the carriage house sits slightly lower than the main house, and is located to the northwest of the house, away from its primary elevation.

- Use of rectilinear, and U- or L-shaped building footprints that are common within the HOD.
- Simple forms with clean lines and traditional ornamentation typical of the Colonial Revival character of Wellington at River Farm.
- Reinforce the human scale by including appropriate decorative and functional elements that reinforce the Colonial Revival character of the HOD such as the use of porches.
- Differentiate between the addition and the existing building by using different wall planes, rooflines or cornice levels.
- Design a new addition to be compatible with and respectful of the existing building. The new work should be differentiated from the old and should be compatible with its massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and the HOD.

**Not Recommended:**

- Unsympathetic additions that visually and/or physically dominate the landscape and the primacy of the original house.
- New construction or additions that appear modern, monolithic, or out of scale with the HOD's buildings.
- New construction or additions with expansive footprints that are not in keeping with the historic development patterns.
- New construction or additions that require extensive disturbance of the surrounding landscape or mature trees (land leveling or tree removal).
- Irregular, non-linear building footprints and massing.
- New constructions or additions that disrupt identified viewsheds.

## Proportion and Symmetry

Proportion and symmetry are closely related architectural principles that should be considered



The hyphen that connects the main block of the house to the ballroom wing. This is a successful example of a hyphen as it is smaller in scale as it simply functions to serve as an interior connection.



The main house is the tallest and largest building at Wellington at River Farm, with all of the surrounding buildings slightly lower in terms of size and scale.

in the design of new construction or additions. Proportion is the relationship of one architectural dimension to another, such as the height to width ratio of a building or a window, or the size of a window opening in comparison to the façade size. Symmetry is the reflection of shared forms, shapes, across a central axis to create a unified whole. At Wellington at River Farm, the use of Colonial Revival architecture follows a traditional adherence to formality and symmetry. While several of the buildings wings with various detailing and features that prevent them from being perfectly symmetrical as a whole, symmetry is very much evident in the siting of the buildings and their individual elevations.

## GUIDELINES

### *Recommended:*

- Appropriate height-to-width ratios and proportionate fenestration openings.
- Symmetrical fenestration patterns in keeping with existing patterns in the HOD.
- Centered or slightly off-center door placement, typically balanced with sufficient visual weight (i.e. windows) flanking the door.

### *Not Recommended:*

- Disproportionately tall or wide buildings or fenestration openings.
- Informal asymmetry commonly seen in modern architectural styles.



Caretaker's house with symmetrical fenestration and facade composition.



Symmetrical composition of the east elevation of the main house north wing.

## Building Elements and Features

The following building elements and features have been previously defined and illustrated within the “Guidelines for Preserving Architectural Character: Preservation and Rehabilitation of Existing Buildings.” Please refer to those guidelines for definitions, neighborhood context, and additional photographs of foundations; walls and exterior cladding; roofs; entrances and porches; windows; details and ornamentation; and mechanical systems and plumbing. Applicable guidelines that are specific to new construction and additions have been provided below.

### Foundations

#### GUIDELINES

##### *Recommended:*

- Existing buildings, including the Main House and Caretaker’s House, are constructed on raised foundations that are consistent with the wall material giving the buildings a more cohesive appearance.
- New buildings should be constructed on slab-on-grade foundations.
- Limit the exposure of foundation materials unless a continuity of the exterior wall, and match the historic material patterns (concrete, brick, or stone).
- Ensure that water flows away from the foundation.
- Respect the height, contrast of materials, and textures of foundations on existing buildings within the HOD.

##### *Not Recommended:*

- Inappropriate materials (such as wood) used for foundations or foundation veneer.
- Foundations that visually contrast or compete with the walls above.



Brick cladding of the exterior continues to the foundation.



Parged masonry exterior used to cover and protect the exterior wall and foundation.

## *Walls and Exterior Cladding*

### **GUIDELINES**

**Recommended:**

- Use of typical wall cladding materials seen throughout the Wellington at River Farm HOD such as redbrick masonry, weatherboard or German Novelty wood siding.
- Use of brick and/or concrete masonry cladding or wall panels.
- Use of interior and exterior chimneys (typically at gable ends either flush with or projecting from exterior wall surface).
- Exterior cladding that matches or is compatible with the original building, and is traditional in appearance with modest visual and textural qualities.
- Limited number of different cladding materials.

**Not Recommended:**

- Synthetic cladding materials, such as vinyl or aluminum siding.
- Smooth materials of simple visual character, such as plywood, metal sheathing, fully glazed elevations, or other non-original materials that contrast with the Colonial Revival aesthetic of the Wellington at River Farm HOD.



Brick siding



Stucco siding.



Wood weatherboard and brick, both common siding types, are sometimes paired on the same building

## Roofs, Roof Features, and Roof Materials

### GUIDELINES

**Recommended:**

- Design of roofs on new additions or new construction should look to the predominant roof types, slopes, materials, and textures of existing buildings within the HOD.
- Existing buildings are constructed with side-facing gable roof forms.
- Existing roof slopes have a moderate or standard pitch (gable).
- When designing new additions or construction, use roof projections such as gable or hipped dormers; central cupolas for ventilation and/or decorative purposes.
- Rooflines for additions to existing buildings should be compatible in pitch and form with the original roof and the style of the building. They should be secondary to those of the existing structure.
- Design new additions so that they do not destroy historic materials or character-defining features.
- Combination roofs such as a gable roof with a flat or shed roof porch.
- Use of slightly overhanging eaves (occasionally returning eaves at gable ends) and narrow fascia boards (some examples of narrow band of molding in place of fascia).
- Installation of gutters and downspouts that are compatible with the character of existing gutters and downspouts on historic buildings in the HOD to conduct water away from the building and its foundation.



The buildings at Wellington at River Farm typically feature side gable roofs.



Side gable with dormers and arched hood over doorway.



Gable roof with hipped dormers.

- Use of slate or asphalt shingle roof cladding.
- For new construction, integration of any rooftop-mounted equipment with adequate screening into the overall design.

**Not Recommended:**

- Flat roofs or low pitched roof slopes.
- Removing an original chimney to accommodate a new addition.
- Introducing wide overhanging eaves, applied aluminum or vinyl fascia.
- Incompatible roof penetrations such as pyramid skylights.
- Incompatible roof cladding material on highly visible roof forms: tile, shake, highly variegated shingles, composite shingles, rubber roofing materials such as EPDM and TPO, rolled roofing with seams that create visual horizontal bands, or other materials not historically used at Wellington at River Farm.
- Installation of roof-mounted mechanical or other equipment that is highly visible and disrupts or alters the historic roof form.



Gable end north wing addition of the main house with dormer windows and brick end chimney that rises above the ridge of the roof.



Side gable house with dormer windows and brick end chimney

## Entrances, Porches and Porticoes

### GUIDELINES

**Recommended:**

- Historic configurations include multi-panel wood doors and several partially or fully-glazed multi-light wood-frame doors.
- Transoms and sidelights used at primary entrance and significant secondary entrances.
- Doors that are traditional in appearance.
- Doors placed at primary or side elevations, accessed via porticoes, porches, or recessed entry vestibules/porches projecting from the exterior wall or main roof form of the building.
- Hardware and lighting in keeping with the stylistic identity of the district.
- Porch, portico, and entry vestibule flooring of brick or stone pavers.
- When designing new construction, relate doors to the door styles found on existing buildings within the HOD. Consider incorporating features that are appropriate to the Colonial Revival style of the HOD such as transoms, sidelights and decorative elements.

**Not Recommended:**

- Flat wood or metal entry doors with single-light transoms, sidelights, or panels.
- Lack of trim or ornamentation around a door opening.
- Hardware or lighting that is incompatible with Wellington at River Farm's Colonial Revival aesthetic.
- Wood decks and narrow metal railings.



Primary entrance to the main house



Porch and colonnade of the main house with the arcade visible in the background.

## *Windows, Window Features, and Glazing Materials*

### **GUIDELINES**

#### **Recommended:**

- Traditionally designed openings are generally recessed on masonry buildings and have a raised surround on frame buildings. New construction should follow these methods as opposed to designing openings that are flush with the rest of the wall.
- When designing new construction or additions, look to the original windows on of existing historic buildings for examples of appropriate window types.
- Placement, proportion, alignment, configuration, materiality, size, and detailing of windows in keeping with the historic building and precedent throughout the district.
  - Jack arches or low profile steel lintels and cast stone or rowlock brick sills for window openings on masonry buildings.
  - Full surround with wood trim and wood lintel for frame buildings.
- Historic configurations: double-hung sash and casement windows.
- Historic materials: wood frames for double-hung and steel for casement windows.
- Alternative materials for casement windows may include aluminum or aluminum-clad wood if they match the profiles of existing casement windows.
- Historic profiles with visible wood frames.
- Vertical rectangular frames for double-hung sash and gable casement windows.
- Use of high-quality materials for compatibility and longevity.

#### **Not Recommended:**

- Fenestration proportions, patterns or types without precedent in the Wellington at River Farm HOD.
- Use of vinyl windows as they are unable to replicate historic profiles and their frame width, profile, color and sheen are significantly different than wood or steel.
- Arched, awning, or hopper windows.
- Single-light fixed windows, or simulated divided-light windows with faux muntins.
- Narrow trim or frames.
- Highly reflective or tinted glass.



Detail of muntins holding window panes in place.



Double-hung windows, the most common type at Wellington at River Farm and typical of the Colonial revival style



Metal casement windows on the north side of the carriage house



Wood casement windows on the enclosed porch of the main house



Example of one of many dormer windows at Wellington at River Farm



Window with louvered shutters on the caretaker's house

## *Details and Ornamentation*

### **GUIDELINES**

**Recommended:**

- Use of traditional Colonial Revival decorative elements, including moldings and trim.
- Modestly ornamented surfaces.
- Traditional exterior hardware and lighting.
- Use of high-quality materials throughout.
- Use of architectural details and decoration that are consistent with the Colonial Revival style character of the HOD and the existing buildings.
- Size details and related features so that their scale respects classical proportions as exhibited on existing buildings within the HOD.

**Not Recommended:**

- Incompatible or lack of detailing, particularly around door and window frames.
- Modern styles such as International style, Mid-century Modern, or Postmodern that contrast with the Colonial Revival aesthetic of Wellington at River Farm.

## *Mechanical Systems and Plumbing*

### **GUIDELINES**

**Recommended:**

- Systems that do not require rooftop equipment.
- Necessary systems and exterior equipment installed at ground level to the rear or side of the building, obscured from view with appropriate screening.
- Roof-mounted mechanical equipment (if absolutely necessary) placed on a flat roof section in a setback location away from the edge of the roof, painted to match or closely resemble the roof material.

**Not Recommended:**

- New systems placed in conspicuous locations highly visible from the street or neighboring properties (for example, window-mounted air conditioning units at façades).
- Rooftop equipment such as satellite dishes, antenna, chillers, ductwork, conduit, piping, etc., that is visually prominent.

## **GUIDELINES FOR PRESERVING SETTING: LANDSCAPE, STREETSCAPE & ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

Landscape and streetscape are inclusive of natural landscapes and woodlands, water courses, designed landscapes and gardens, circulation and street patterns, and the relationship between buildings and their surroundings – all of which strongly contribute to the setting and distinct character of Wellington at River Farm. The HOD contains historic pathways and gardens originally designed for the Matheson family. The Mathesons landscaped the grounds to blend with and enhance the Colonial Revival aesthetic of the main house and surrounding buildings that dominate the site. Views to and from the mansion were taken into account and enhanced, including the original tree-lined approach from East Boulevard Drive and the wide vista of the Potomac River. Today, the remaining historic pathways and gardens on the grounds of Wellington at River Farm are maintained by AHS. Other features, such as the current driveway, parking lot, and additional pathways were added by AHS to enhance the site for use by the general public.

The following guidelines provide guidance for preserving landscape and streetscape, and also how to appropriately approach any archaeological resources within the Wellington at River Farm HOD.

### **Fencing and Walls**

Fences and walls at Wellington at River Farm were introduced to demarcate property boundaries, and as important landscape design elements. Most of the walls are brick masonry in keeping with the Colonial Revival aesthetic of Wellington at River Farm. A low brick wall separates the Wellington at River Farm property from its neighbors to the north and south. Taller brick walls were incorporated surrounding the house and gardens to provide a sense of seclusion and privacy within those areas. The walls also function to delineate the formal gardens from less formal or open areas of the landscape. A brick ha-ha wall, east of the main house on the downward slope to the Potomac River, separates the lawn from the meadow garden below.

Alternative wall and fencing types include non-historic split rail wood fencing, added by AHS, used primarily along the west property line fronting East Boulevard Drive. In addition to walls and fences to demarcate the property boundaries and provide a degree of privacy, the perimeter of the property is also shielded from view by wooded areas that limit views from East Boulevard and from the north and south adjoining properties.

### **GUIDELINES**

#### **Recommended:**

- Retain original brick walls surrounding the house and gardens and avoid any changes that would require the removal or alteration of any historic walls.
- Perform basic maintenance to maintain and prolong the life of wood fencing and brick masonry walls.
- If necessary, repair and replace damaged or deteriorated fencing or walls based on documented precedent or designed to be compatible with the size, scale, style, and color of

the existing materials.

- Use of low plantings or hedges to demarcate new gardens or added elements instead of fencing.
- For brick masonry walls
  - When necessary, repair or replace damaged or deteriorated masonry units in-kind with units that match the size, texture, color, pattern and physical properties of the historic brick, as well as mortar joint size and tooling.
  - Repoint deteriorated mortar with historically compatible mortar that matches the original material in color, texture, physical properties such as strength and porosity, detailing, and tooling.
- For wood fencing
  - Repair rotted or missing sections of wood members rather than replacing the entire fence.
  - Take efforts to match historic fencing appearance, keeping in mind the type of wood and rail size.
  - Where necessary due to extensive damage or deterioration, replace wood fencing in-kind with new members matches the original type of wood, dimensions, detailing and overall appearance.

***Not Recommended:***

- Installation of new, tall or visibly impenetrable fences or walls installed across historically open areas or vistas that would alter the relationship between the existing buildings and landscape.
- New or substitute materials that are not compatible with the original.
- For brick masonry walls:
  - Application of paint or other coatings to historically unpainted brick masonry walls; use of waterproof or repellent coatings on uncoated masonry that can worsen moisture problems.
  - Potentially damaging masonry treatments such as sandblasting, surface grinding, high pressure cleaning, or use of chemicals as these methods can cause irreparable damage to the historic masonry.
  - Use of incompatible mortar, concrete, or caulking compounds that could damage the historic brick.
- For wood fencing:
  - Use of mastic paint or other incompatible coatings and finishes that trap moisture and cause rotting/deterioration of the underlying wood.



Examples of brick walls and wood fencing at Wellington at River Farm. Brick walls are primarily used around the house and gardens while wood fencing is typically used along or near the property boundaries and at the entrance to the property along East Boulevard Drive.

## Driveways and Parking Lots

Wellington at River Farm originally had an unpaved, straight, drive lined by mature eastern red cedar trees that extended along the south property line from East Boulevard Drive to the south front of the main house. Some portion of this historic driveway remains intact on the property along the west side of the main house continuing to the carriage house and garage buildings to the west. The primary portion of this drive and its associated landscaping leading from East Boulevard Drive is also intact but now located on the parcel bordering the HOD to the south due to a land swap that occurred in the 1980s . At that time, a curvilinear drive was added in its place across the formerly open lawn, altering the appearance of a large and important component of the landscape facing the street, and eliminating the tree lined perimeter that provided a sense of seclusion. An existing paved surface lot was also added by AHS adjacent to the historic garages north of the caretaker's house and directly abutting the tenant house.

Although a new drive and paved surface lot were added to the property, additional paved driveways and surface lots are generally discouraged unless absolutely necessary. The addition of new driveways accessing the property from East Boulevard Drive is restricted by a conservation easement on the western portion of the property held by NPS.

### GUIDELINES

#### *Recommended:*

- Maintain and repair existing driveways to accommodate circulation on the site.
- Minimize new roads and/or paving unless absolutely necessary, and limit the use of paving materials to that best suited to site-specific topography and soil limitations.
  - Unpaved road surfaces, such as crushed and compacted stone, for new drives or approaches when possible.



View of the curvilinear drive into Wellington at River Farm from East Boulevard Drive.



The original cedar lined drive, now part of the adjacent property.



View of the main house from the meandering approach.

- Concrete or asphalt if deemed necessary due to soil erosion issues.

**Not Recommended:**

- Oversized driveways or parking lots that encroach upon the landscape or overshadow the buildings themselves.
- Vast expansion of existing driveways requiring encroachment on the landscape.
- Installing paving up to the building foundations with impermeable surfaces as this can increase building temperature, cause damage to the foundation, and trap moisture.



Section of the curvilinear drive looking east across what was once expansive open lawn, uninterrupted by a paved drive



The curved drive forks to form a circuitous route that leads to the main house, parking lot, and secondary drives before circling back to return to the main entrance to the property



Paved drive leading from the parking lot past the ancillary buildings toward the main house



View of the parking lot with the tenant house at the north end

## Landscape Design

Wellington at River Farm is known for its mixed setting of open areas interspersed with trees, formal gardens, and woodland buffers with a variety of tree and other plant species. Significant landscape structures, such as brick garden walls and paths, accentuate and enhance the gardens. Other features, such as the ha-ha wall, appear hidden within the open portions of the landscape to allow views of the Potomac River from the main house to dominate while wooded buffers on the periphery of the property serve to insulate Wellington at River Farm from surrounding residential development and the George Washington Parkway.

While portions of the land and several of the significant mature trees of the Wellington at River Farm landscape are partially protected due to the two conservation easements held by NPS and VOF, the landscape is primarily maintained and cared for due to the efforts of AHS.

### GUIDELINES

#### *Recommended:*

- Retention and care of existing mature and specimen trees and shrubs, including:
  - Eastern red cedar trees adjacent to East Boulevard Drive, as well as crape myrtle, southern magnolia, and other flowering trees that provide a buffer to surrounding homes and the George Washington Memorial Parkway.
  - Native oaks, maples, and poplars along the north property line.
  - Significant oaks and bottomland tree species including black cherry, black locust, and American holly along the eastern side of the property adjacent to the Potomac River.
  - Significant Osage Orange tree in the meditation garden between the main house and carriage house.
  - Ornamental tree and shrub species along the south side of the property, including southern magnolias, dawn redwoods, Kentucky coffee trees, flowering dogwood, and English and American boxwoods.
  - Various other tree and shrub species in the gardens (Meditation Garden, Wildlife Garden, Children's Garden, and Demonstration Garden), including English and American boxwoods, Kentucky coffee trees, southern magnolias, camellia, paperbark maple, lacebark elm, and black walnut, to name a few.
- Preserve character-defining features within the landscape. These include: masonry walls and walkways, stairways, plantings, fences, gates, etc.
- Place new trees and landscaping away from foundations or basement walls to avoid moisture infiltration from watering or damage from roots. Select new plant and tree species according to their mature size to account for the long-term impact of mature growth.
- Maintain traditional plant materials and tree cover. Where tree removal is necessary due to damage, health, or hazards, replace with like species.
- Replace significant trees and plants that die with the same species.
- Develop an invasive plant species management plan to control and remove invasive plants such as bamboo from the landscape.

- Landscape design that respects the open lawns and wooded boundary areas of the property.
- Use of brick pavers around house perimeter and outdoor walkways.
- Preservation of the formal garden and walled garden to the north of the main house that were present when the Mathesons occupied the property.

**Not Recommended:**

- Removal of original landscaping, such as mature trees, unless dead or diseased.
- Dense or tall plantings that block identified views and vistas.
- Introduction of new features that are visually incompatible with the existing landscape features in size, scale, design, materials, color and texture.
- Work that would impact the natural topography of the site. Document and evaluate topographic variation such as shape, slope, elevation, aspect and contour before undertaking work.



Assorted images of recommended landscaping, reflecting formal designs and diverse plantings.

- Use of vines, ivy, or other growing plants directly on building or site walls, as they can cause damage to underlying materials.

## Archaeological Resources

Per the Lower Potomac Planning District, Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan (Amended 10-16-2018), any development or ground disturbances within the area, both on private and public land, should be preceded by heritage resource studies, and alternatives should be explored for the avoidance, preservation or recovery of significant heritage resources that are found. Where heritage resources are documented, efforts should be made to preserve them; however, where preservation is not feasible, the threatened resources should be thoroughly recorded and in the case of archaeological resources, the artifacts recovered.

The county may require archaeological investigation for development applications involving land disturbing activity of 2,500 square feet or more located wholly or partially within or contiguous to an HOD, in accordance with Article 3, Section 3101.6(F) of the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance. A limited Phase II survey completed in 1987 identified some historic artifacts but no additional archaeological investigations have been conducted at the site. In 2020, the Archaeology Collections Branch of the Fairfax County Park Authority conducted a preliminary analysis and concluded that the property has a moderate to high probability for the presence of both historic and prehistoric archaeological resources. While there are undoubtedly areas that have been subject to disturbance, it is anticipated that there should be archaeological remains of outbuildings that would have been on the property. A Phase I systematic archaeological survey could identify those areas that are either intact or disturbed, and areas with intact deposits could then be evaluated for their integrity. The Archaeology and Collections Branch of the Fairfax County Park Authority can be reached at 703-534-3881, TTY 711 or parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov.

## GUIDELINES

### **Recommended:**

- Consider the potential for archaeological resources early in planning and development. Perform a historic resource study and consult with the Fairfax County Park Authority - Archaeological and Collections Branch to determine appropriateness for archaeological investigations.
- Minimize disturbance of terrain, thus reducing the possibility of destroying unknown archaeological features or materials.
- Locate new construction away from any known archaeological resources.
- Inform the Fairfax County Park Authority if archaeological resources are discovered.
- Delay construction, where disturbance of the site is unavoidable, so that the site may be properly recorded by a qualified archaeologist before it is disturbed.

***Not Recommended:***

- Siting new landscape, construction, or other work on or near a known archaeological resource.
- Altering, damaging, or destroying character-defining (including archaeological) features, while making modifications to a cultural landscape.



05

## Appendix

## APPENDIX A – GLOSSARY OF TERMS & ACRONYMS

**Adaptive Reuse:** A new use for a building other than its historic use, usually involving some modifications

**Addition:** Any living space outside a building's original walls, including porch, wing, or ell, which has at least partial solid walls and requires a continuous foundation.

**Alteration:** Any change made to a building's original structure or systems.

**Architectural Review Board (ARB):** The ARB of Fairfax County is responsible for public interest(s) as embodied in the Historic Overlay District Ordinance. Its job is to protect and enhance the resources that give a district its historic architectural, or archaeological significance.

**Arbor:** An impermanent shelter consisting of a leafy, shaded recess formed by tree branches, a trellis, or lattice work, commonly found in gardens.

**Arcade:** A covered walk or space open at one or both sides and supported by a series of arched openings.

**Arch:** The curved or pointed top on a wall, door or open entryway. Arches come in many different shapes and styles, often supported by columns or piers.

**Awning:** A roof-like cover of metal or canvas extending over a window or doorway to provide environmental protection.

**Baluster:** A short post or pillar in a series that supports a rail, forming a balustrade.

**Balustrade:** A series of balusters supporting a rail that form a low enclosure or parapet, often found on roofs, balconies, terraces, and staircases.

**Bay:** Any number of principal divisions of a wall, roof, or other parts of a building marked off by vertical or transverse supports. Usually refers to the width or depth of a building.

**Bead molding:** A small, cylindrical molding enriched with ornaments resembling a string of beads.

**Capital:** The head or crowning feature of a column.

**Clapboard:** Overlapping horizontal boards that cover the wood-framed wall of a building, also called weatherboard.

**Colonial Revival:** Architectural styles common throughout the United States that seeks to revive elements of American colonial architecture (e.g. Federal and Georgian). The styles became popular following the 1876 Centennial, and their popularity lingered until the 1920s when a resurgence occurred.

**Colonnade:** A series of regularly spaced columns supporting an entablature and typically one side of a roof.

**Column:** A vertical support, usually supporting weight from above.

**Concrete:** Cement mixed with coarse and fine aggregates (pebbles, crushed stone, or brick), sand and water in specific proportions. There are three types of concrete: pre-cast, reinforced and pre-stressed.

**Cornice:** Any projecting ornamental molding that finishes or crowns the top of a building, wall, or arch.

**Cultural Landscape:** A geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person, or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.

**Dentils:** A series of small decorative blocks forming a molding in an entablature.

**Dormer window:** A window placed vertically in a sloping roof that has a roof of its own, often gabled, hipped or shed.

**Double-hung window:** A window having two vertically sliding sashes, each in separate grooves or tracks closing a different portion of the window.

**Eaves:** The overhanging under-edge of a roof.

**Easement:** A real estate ownership right granted to an individual or entity to make a limited, but typically indefinite, use or restriction of the land of another individual or entity.

**Elevation:** A synonym for façade, though used to reference secondary (side and rear) façades.

**Façade:** The primary elevation of a building often distinguished by its architectural ornament.

**Fanlight:** A window, often semicircular or semi-elliptical, with decorative tracery suggesting a fan that is often placed over a door.

**Fascia:** A horizontal piece (such as a board) covering the joint between the top of a wall and the projecting eaves; also called fascia board.

**Fenestration:** The design, proportioning, and disposition of windows, doors, and other exterior openings of a building.

**Fieldstone:** Rough, irregularly shaped pieces of rock that can be used to cover the surface of a building, make a walkway, line a garden bed, etc.

**Fixed window:** A window that does not move or open.

**Gable Roof:** A pitched roof form where two angled flat roof surfaces meet at a straight ridge.

**German Novelty Siding:** A type of siding, which unlike clapboard siding is non-beveled and not lapped in installation. Instead it is edge-matched with a shiplap or, less often, tongue-and groove so that it installs flat on wall framing.

**GIS:** Graphic information system.

**Ha-Ha Wall:** A walled ditch dividing a garden or landscape design element that creates a vertical barrier while preserving an uninterrupted view of the landscape beyond.

**Header:** A brick laid in a wall so that only its end appears on the face of the wall. To add a varied appearance to brickwork, headers are alternated with “stretchers,” bricks laid full length on their sides.

**Hipped Roof:** A roof form where all sides slope between the roof ridge and eaves (no gables).

**Historic Character:** The physical appearance of a property as it has evolved over time, i.e., the original configuration, together with losses and later changes. The qualities of a property conveyed by its materials, features, spaces, and finishes are referred to as character defining.

**Historic Architecture:** Architecture that is heavily influenced by past movements, sometimes freely interpreted.

**Historic Overlay District (HOD):** Historic Overlay Districts provide regulations over and above the regular zoning protection to better protect those unique areas, sites, and buildings that are of special architectural, historic, or archaeological value to local residents and visitors.

**History Commission:** The Fairfax County History Commission, established in 1969, helps identify, document, record, and preserve our county's history.

**Hyphen:** A connecting link between two larger building elements.

**Infill:** A new structure built in a block or existing row of buildings.

**Integrity:** Authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's historic period.

**Inventory of Historic Sites:** A catalog of historically significant sites within Fairfax County.

**Ionic Order:** One of the five orders of classical architecture, the origins of which are traced to the Ionian Greeks of Asia Minor. The most distinctive characteristic of the order is the capital, which is crowned by spiral scrolls or volutes.

**Jack Arch:** A straight or flat arch with a horizontal inner curve.

**Landscape:** The physical and aesthetic setting of a place, including natural and man-made features, spatial relationships, views, and circulation routes.

**Light:** A piece of glass located within a window.

**Lintel:** A horizontal beam or stone bridging an opening, most often a door.

**Massing:** The distribution of a building's volume through space; the perception of the general shape, form, and size of a building.

**Molding:** Horizontal bands having either rectangular or curved profiles, or both, used for transition or decorative relief.

**Mullion:** A large vertical member separating two or more windows or doors.

**Muntin:** The members used to create the smaller window panes in a window.

**Non-contributing resource:** A building, site or structure that does not add to the historic significance of a property or district, often determined by date of construction or level of integrity.

**NPS:** National Park Service.

**NRHP:** National Register of Historic Places. The NRHP is the nation's most comprehensive inventory of historic resources; it is administered by the National Park Service and includes buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts that possess historic, architectural, engineering, archaeological, or cultural significance at the national, state, or local level.

**Patio:** Paved recreation area, usually at the rear of a home.

**Pedestal:** In classical architecture, the base supporting a column or colonnade.

**Pediment:** A low-pitched gable above a portico; also a similar feature above doors, particularly in Colonial Revival style buildings.

**Pent:** A lean-to or shed attached to a structure with a single sloped roof and either open or closed on the sides.

**Pergola:** A garden feature forming a shaded walkway, passageway, or sitting area of vertical posts or pillars that usually support crossbeams and/or an open lattice upon which vines typically grow.

**Phase I Archaeological Survey:** An archaeological investigation in which the goal of which is to determine the presence or absence of archaeological resources. Phase I archaeological survey may include shovel testing at regular intervals; examination of plowed fields or erosional zones; or the excavation of backhoe trenches in deeply buried contexts to remove fill that overlays the ground surface from the past.

**Pilaster:** A shallow post or a rectangular column-like projection. Primarily decorative.

**Pitch:** The degree of a roof's slope.

**Porch:** The roofed entrance to a house.

**Portico:** A roofed entrance to a house that is often columned with a gable roof. It is smaller than a porch.

**Rehabilitation:** The act or process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions or features which are significant to its historical or cultural values.

**Repoint:** To remove old mortar from a brick wall and replace it with new mortar.

**Resource:** Any building, structure, site or object that is part of or constitutes an historic property.

**Resource Protection Areas (RPAs):** regulated waterbodies and associated corridors of environmentally sensitive land that lie alongside or near the shorelines of streams, rivers and other waterways which drain into the Potomac River and eventually into the Chesapeake Bay.

**Restoration:** The act or process of accurately recovering the form, features and details of an historic property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of later work or by the replacement of missing earlier work.

**Retrofit:** To refit original parts of a building with new parts.

**Sash window:** A window formed with sashes, or sliding frames running in vertical grooves.

**SOI Standards:** Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

**Setback:** The distance between a building and the street.

**Shed:** A single sloping roof with the higher end commonly abutting a wall or roof of a larger structure.

**Shutters:** Window or door screens featuring horizontal slats that may be articulated, allowing control over air and light transmission. The styles include louvered and paneled. They were historically made of wood, although metal and vinyl non-functioning shutters now exist.

**Sidelights:** Narrow, vertical windows flanking a door.

**Siding:** A weatherproof material used a cladding or sheathing the external walls of a wood frame building.

**Sill:** The lower horizontal part of a window or door frame. Materials vary widely, from wood to marble.

**Soffit:** The underside of any architectural element (as of an overhang or staircase).

**Stucco:** A type of plaster used on exterior walls

**Transom:** A small, usually rectangular window over a door. Some transoms open to cross-ventilate a home, while others are only decorative

**Trim:** The framing or edging of openings and other features on the facade of a building or indoors. Trim is often a different color or material than the adjacent wall.

**Veneer:** A thin layer of material (brick, stone, wood, etc.) of a superior quality applied over another, more common type of material.

**Vernacular:** Local architecture that generally is not designed by an architect and is characteristic of a particular area, often an interpretation of more high style building traditions.

**Weatherboard:** Overlapping horizontal boards that cover the wood-framed wall of a building, also called clapboard sheathing or cladding.

## APPENDIX B – ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### National Park Service

The National Park Service Preservation Briefs and other relevant publications provide additional guidance and technical recommendations to supplement the information provided in these design guidelines. The following links should be referenced to inform project planning.

<http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm>

National Park Service Preservation Tech Notes

<http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/tech-notes.htm>

National Park Service Technical Preservation Services – Sustainability

<https://www.nps.gov/tps/sustainability.htm>

### Preservation Briefs

<http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm>

“Preservation Brief 3: Improving Energy Efficiency in Historic Buildings.” National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/3-improve-energy-efficiency.htm>

“Preservation Brief 9: The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows.” National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/9-wooden-windows.htm>

“Preservation Brief 13: The Repair and Thermal Upgrading of Historic Steel Windows.” National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/13-steel-windows.htm>

“Preservation Brief 14: New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings: Preservation Concerns.” National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/14-exterior-additions.htm>

“Preservation Brief 24: Heating, Ventilating, and Cooling Historic Buildings.” National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/24-heat-vent-cool.htm>

“Preservation Brief 29: The Repair, Replacement and Maintenance of Historic Slate roofs.” National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/29-slate-roofs.htm>

“Preservation Brief 32: Making Historic Properties Accessible.” National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/32-accessibility.htm>

“Preservation Brief 36: Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management

of Historic Landscapes.” National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/Tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/36-cultural-landscapes.htm>

### *Bulletins and Guidelines*

“Installing Solar Panels and Meeting the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards.” National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/tps/sustainability/new-technology/solar-on-historic.htm>

“National Register Bulletin Number 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation.” National Park Service. [https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15\\_web508.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15_web508.pdf)

“Repair and Upgrade Windows and Doors.” National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/tps/sustainability/energy-efficiency/weatherization/windows-doors.htm>

“Replacement Windows that Meet the Standards.” National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/guidelines/sustainability.htm>

“The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.” National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/guidelines/sustainability.htm>

“The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, & Reconstructing Historic Buildings” <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf>

“The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties + Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes.” <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/landscape-guidelines/index.htm>

### **Websites**

American Horticultural Society Webpage. <https://www.ahsgardening.org/about-river-farm/history/>

Fairfax County Architectural Review Board Webpage. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/architectural-review-board>

Fairfax County History Commission Webpage. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/history-commission/>

Fairfax County Land Development Services Webpage. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/landdevelopment/>

Fairfax County Park Authority, Archaeology and Collections Webpage. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/archaeology-and-collections>

[gov/parks/archaeology-collections](http://gov/parks/archaeology-collections)

Article 3, Section 3101.1 of the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance. <https://online.encodeplus.com/regs/fairfaxcounty-va/doc-viewer.aspx?tocid=001.004.002>

