

# **Fort Willard Historic Site**



## **General Management Plan and Conceptual Development Plan**

**Fairfax County Park Authority**

**October 2006**

**Final Approved Feb. 28, 2007**



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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Purpose and Description of the Plan**

The purpose of the Master Plan is to create a long-range vision for the site. During the planning process, the site is considered in the context of the surrounding neighborhood and as one park of many within the Fairfax County Park Authority System. When approved, this document will serve as a useful long-term decision making tool for future planning on the site and should be referred to before any planning and design projects are initiated.

The Master Plan document consists of three parts- Background and Existing Conditions, the General Management Plan and the Conceptual Development Plan. The background information serves as the basis for decision making. The General Management Plan and Conceptual Development Plan describe how to best protect park resources, provide quality visitor experiences and serve as a blueprint for future park development. The purpose of the document is to serve as a guide for future planning and development.

The purpose of the General Management Plan (GMP) is to guide the management of resources, visitor use and general development of the park. The GMP describes existing conditions and constraints, details the desired visitor experience and identifies “management zones.” GMP’s are meant to be flexible to accommodate the changing needs of park visitors. Uses are described in general terms, so that as visitor needs change, the uses provided can change accordingly. The Conceptual Development Plan (CDP) describes the general location of the recommended facilities based on the guidance of the GMP.

### **B. Public Process**

On September 20, 2006, the Park Authority held a public meeting to initiate the park planning process and to solicit input from the community. The information gathered at the session was used in combination with site analysis research to develop design alternatives for park use and development. A Draft Master Plan was developed based on public input provided throughout the process as well as local park and recreation needs. A public hearing will be held in December 2006. The Plan will be revised following the public hearing and will be presented to the Park Authority Board for approval in the winter of 2007.

### **C. Park Description**

Fort Willard Historic Site is located at 6625 Fort Willard Circle, Alexandria, Virginia 22307-1168. It is divided into two parcels, totaling 1.62 acres, listed in the Fairfax County real estate tax records, as parcels 83-3 ((14)) B-1 & B-2. (see map on page 7). The site is owned by the Fairfax County Park Authority and is designated as a Resource based Park.

This park contains significant remains of a fort built by the Union Army. It is one of a series of forts which encircled Washington during the Civil War and was part of the Defenses of Washington. (see historic map on page 8). Principally the remnants consist of earthen fortifications, cannon embrasures or platforms and the remains of a bombproof (bomb shelter) and magazine (arms and gunpowder storage) area.

The site is located in the Mount Vernon Supervisory District and Mount Vernon Planning District.



**Figure 1: Other Area Parks Map**

**Figure 2: Aerial Photo of Site and Vicinity**

#### **D. Historical Background**

Fort Willard was built along with four other forts to protect the left flank of the defenses of Washington D.C. Fort Willard was the fifth of these forts built on a separate ridge overlooking Accotink Road (now known as Fort Hunt Road) and the flat ground next to the Potomac River. All the forts were connected by a military road.

According to Brevet Major General J.G. Barnard, the

author of "A Report on the Defenses' of Washington," there was little urgency seen for the fortification prior to the Manassas campaign, but after that disaster it was "eagerly demanded." In October of 1862 the Secretary of War, Edwin W. Stanton, appointed a commission "to examine and report upon a plan of the present forts and sufficiency of the present system of defenses for the city." Barnard quotes the commission's report:

*On examining the ground between the Mount Vernon*

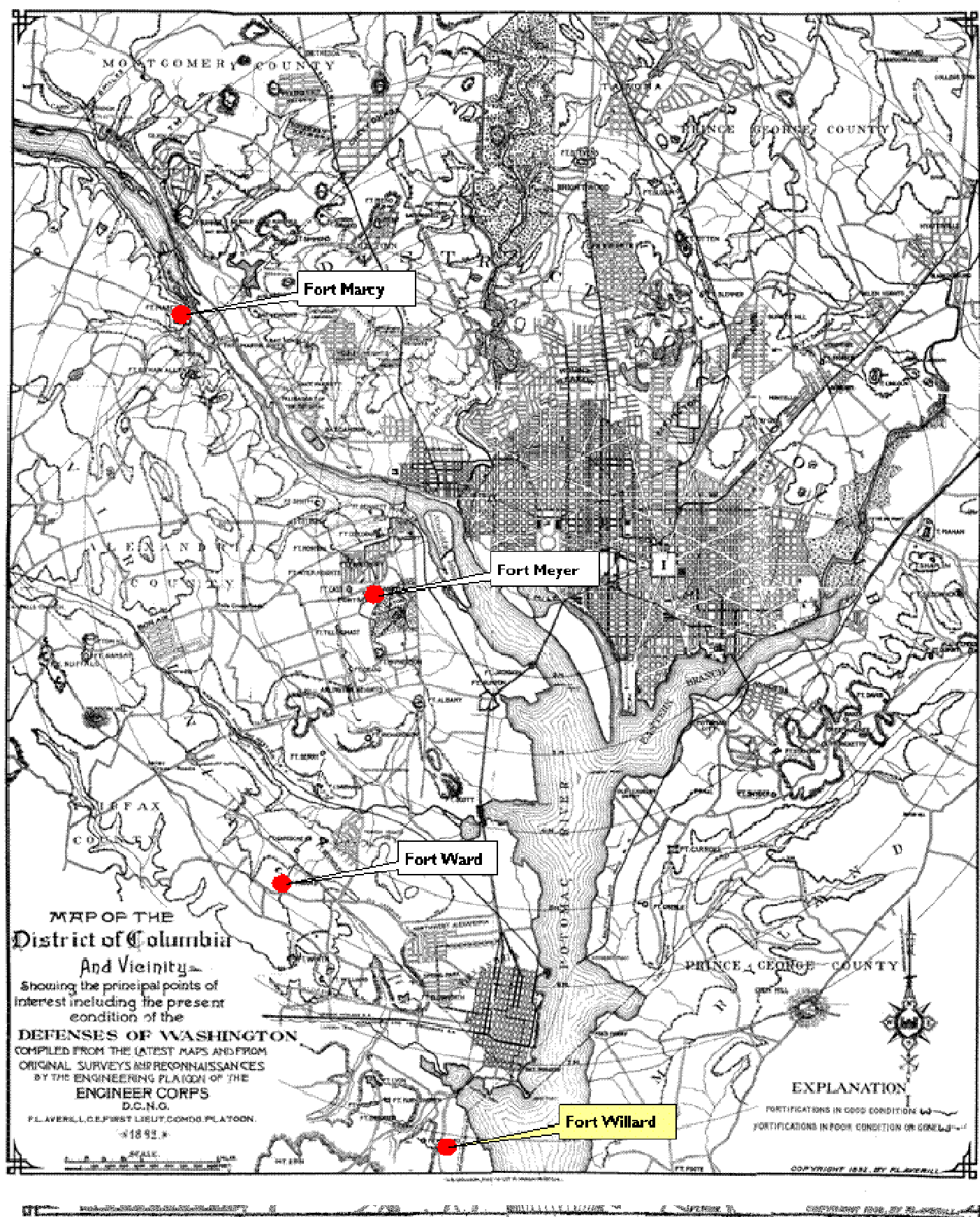


Figure 3: Remaining Defense of Washington Forts in Virginia

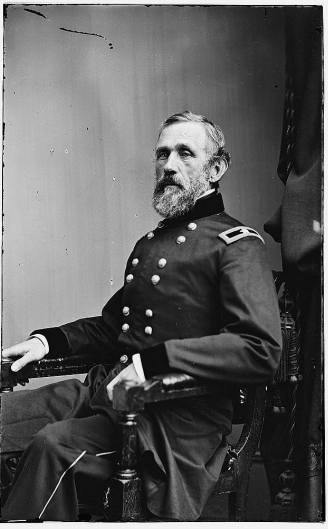


Figure 4: Photo of  
Major General Barnard

*and Accotink roads, the commission recommends a small work on the spur, with an advanced battery or batteries to sweep the river flats, the Mount Vernon road, and the ravine before mentioned. This work will better cover the Alexandria bridge, give additional strength to Fort Lyon, and to this left flank of our lines.*

Fort Willard, built in accordance with this recommendation, was a small, unflanked, enclosed work, heavily armed with artillery and with a range of bomb-proofs on one face. Two detached batteries were connected with it, one for more perfectly commanding the Accotink Road, and the other for sweeping the ravine. A military road united Fort Willard with the others of the system.

Fort Willard was part of a secondary defense line, more properly called the defenses of Alexandria, a city whose occupation by Confederate forces would pose a great threat.

The fort was named in honor of Colonel George L. Willard, who was killed at the Battle of Gettysburg, on July 2, 1863. The fort was originally built in 1862 by detachments of the 34<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry. The fort was a small, unflanked enclosure with a bombproof on the north wall of the fort and also contained a magazine. The perimeter of the fort is 240 yards. The fort had emplacements for 15

guns, and its armaments consisted of two 24-pounder (pdr.) siege guns, two 12-pdr. howitzers, four 4.5-inch ordinance rifles, four 6-pdr. guns, two 10-inch siege mortars and two 24-pdr. Coehorn mortars. It contained three 20 feet by 100 foot barracks, a guardhouse, officers quarters, a cook house and ordinance sergeants quarters. Two detached batteries supported the fort. The battery to the right of the fort was located at the end of modern Wakefield Court, and the battery to the left was located at the corner of modern Radcliff Road and Fort Drive, extending east on Fort Drive.

Some of the regiments garrisoned at Fort Willard included:

- 34<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Connecticut Heavy Artillery
- 10<sup>th</sup> New York Heavy Artillery
- 1<sup>st</sup> Wisconsin Heavy Artillery

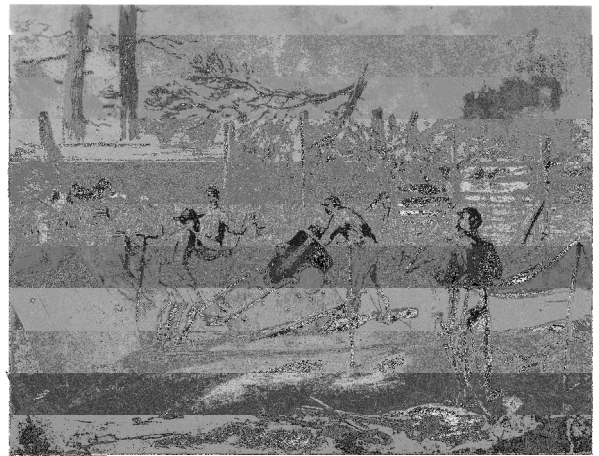


Figure 5: Typical Soldiers Life—  
Maintaining Equipment and the Fort

## **E. Administrative History of the Site**

This site was originally part of a larger farm owned by the Olmi family. The farm was developed as part of the Belle Haven section of Alexandria in the 1930's. The site was dedicated to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in 1978. A public facility use review was conducted in 1978 by the Planning Commission and this site was approved for public park use.

## **II. Park Classification and Purpose, Significance, Visitor Profile, Strategic Initiatives**

### **A. Park Classification and Purpose**

Fort Willard Historic Site is designated as a "Resource Based Park" in the Park Authority's park classification system. Acquisition, identification and conservation of natural and cultural resources are for purposes of stewardship, and use of the site is defined within stewardship parameters. Development of resource-based parks includes opportunities for public interpretation, education and enjoyment. To the extent that they do not adversely impact the fort itself, portions of the site may be developed with passive recreation elements and facilities.

Park Purpose statements are intended to provide an umbrella for planning and decision making. If a proposed use conflicts with any one of the purposes listed, it will be considered an incompatible use. By establishing the park purpose, future plans can remain flexible, as legislative requirements and visitor preferences change.

The purpose of Fort Willard Historic Site is to:

- Preserve, protect, enhance, and interpret the significant historic, cultural and natural resources of this portion of the Civil War fortifications and associated features.
- Provide the setting and tangible resources to create an education opportunity for a broad and diverse public constituency on the Civil War earthen works onsite and in the vicinity.
- Establish the site in context of the overall Civil War experience in Fairfax County.
- To the extent that it does not conflict with management of the historic resources onsite, manage the lands for wildlife habitat and human enjoyment thereof.

### **B. Park Significance**

These Civil War era Federal earthworks are significant because they are one of the last remaining of the Defense of Washington fortifications constructed by the Union Army. Fort Willard was one of 63 forts that were built surrounding Washington DC and is located in the southern portion of the Defenses of Washington.

Of the original 63 forts constructed by the Union army, only four remain in some form today. Fort Marcy, located near the Chain Bridge, was the northernmost Virginia post of the Defense of Washington. It is owned and operated by the National Park Service. Fort Meyer is an active military base today and is located at Arlington Cemetery. Fort Ward is a large fort that has been fully restored. It is owned and operated by the City of Alexandria. Fort Willard is the only fort, of the four remaining, that is owned by Fairfax County.



Figure 6: Magazine Area 2006

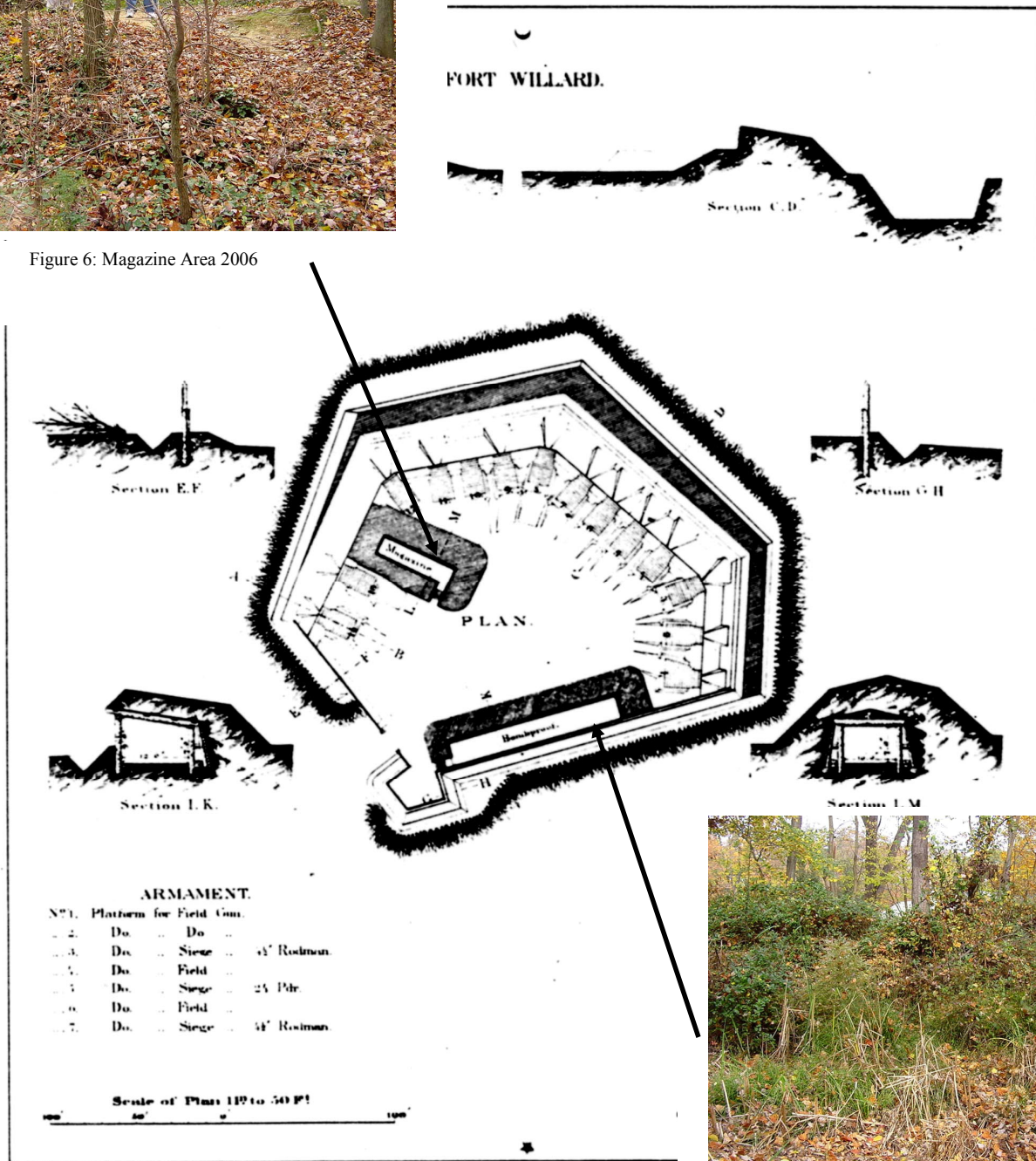


Figure 7: Bombproof 2006

**Figure 8: Fort Willard Plan**

courtesy of the US Military Academy archives

The archaeological potential is inherent both in the fortifications themselves and in the relationship between the fortifications and the many features associated with the camp complex. There remains the potential that archaeological research at the site can identify or confirm the presence of specific military units that occupied the area. But even without such artifacts, the fortifications contain an archaeological record of the field engineering methods employed by General Barnard early in the war. Such information also provides a reference point for comparisons between Union construction techniques during the initial phase of hostilities. The archaeological information obtained concerning the construction techniques used to build the fort will be used in the fortifications treatment plan that will guide the partial restoration of the site.



Figure 9: Typical Fortifications Circa 1862

The presence of such well preserved and well defined earthworks presents a unique opportunity to examine this type of feature archaeologically. Although, there were many forts and encampments

associated with the Civil War, the overwhelming majority of them would have been destroyed as a result of subsequent agricultural and development activities.

After the Civil War, the site most likely lay fallow for many years. As development began to occur in the Washington DC area, the other fort sites began to disappear. In the 1930's the Belle Haven subdivision began to be developed and the fort site was reserved in an area that eventually became Fort Willard Circle. The relative isolation of this site within a quiet residential neighborhood has allowed for the archaeological and cultural features at Fort Willard Historic Site to remain relatively undisturbed and only subject to the natural processes of erosion and tree growth.

### **C. Visitor Profile**

Visitors to the site will generally include community members, County residents and visitors, and Civil War enthusiasts and scholars. The park has a significant historical role. Due to its relative isolation within a large-lot subdivision, this site likely will attract few "accidental" visitors. Visitors to this park will have chosen it as a destination prior to arrival based on its significant earthworks. Through this experience they may be encouraged to visit other Civil War sites in northern Virginia.

## **III. EXISTING CONDITIONS**

### **A. Existing and Planned Land Use, Zoning**

The site is located in the Belle Haven Community Planning Sector of the Mount Vernon Planning District of the County's Comprehensive Plan. This

planning sector is planned for low-density residential uses at a density of 3-4 dwelling units per acre. The park site is currently undeveloped.

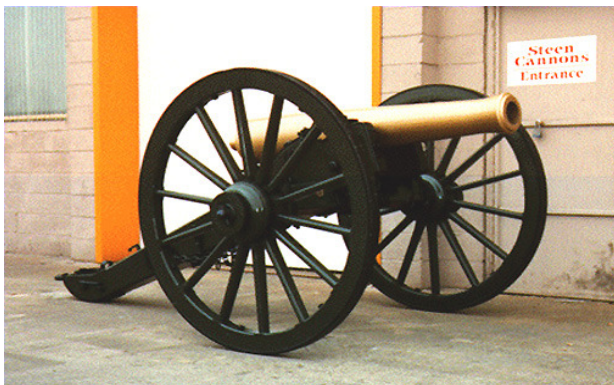
The site and surrounding parcels are zoned R-4 which allows residential uses at a density of 4 units per acre.

Virginia land use law requires that public and utility uses demonstrate compliance with the local comprehensive land use plan. The process is typically referred to as a “2232 Determination” because of the section number of the Virginia State Code that legislates the process. Park plans are reviewed for compatibility with section 2232 criteria (specifically location, character, and extent) to determine compliance of the park master plan with the County Comprehensive Plan and adjacent land use. A 2232 determination for the Fort Willard Historic Site was approved by the Planning Commission in 1978. No further approvals from the County Planning Commission are necessary in regards to the appropriateness of the site as a park.

## B. Cultural Resources

The known principal site features in the park include an earthen fortification, a small redoubt battery containing nine cannon embrasures, a bombproof and magazine, a moat, and an sentry gate area.

Figure 10: Reproduction Cannon



The fort was named in honor of Colonel George L. Willard, who was killed at the Battle of Gettysburg, on 02 July 1863. The fort was originally built in 1862 by detachments of the 34<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry. The fort was a small, unflanked enclosure with a bombproof on the north wall of the fort and

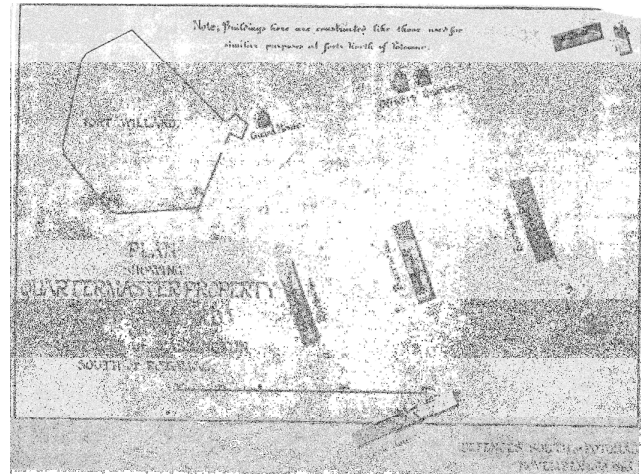


Figure 11: Fort Map with Outbuildings

also contained a magazine. The perimeter of the fort is 240 yards. The fort had emplacements for 15 guns, and its armaments consisted of two 24-pdr. (pounder) siege guns, two 12-pdr. howitzers, four 4.5-inch ordinance rifles, four 6-pdr. guns, two 10-inch siege mortars and two 24-pdr. Coehorn mortars. It contained three 20 feet by 100 foot barracks, a guardhouse, officers quarters, a cook house and ordinance sergeants quarters. Two detached batteries supported the fort. The battery to the right of the fort was located at the end of modern Wakefield Court, and the battery to the left was located at the corner of modern Radcliff Road and Fort Drive, extending east on Fort Drive.

## C. Natural Resources

### I. Topography and Slopes

The outer portion of the site has very gently sloping

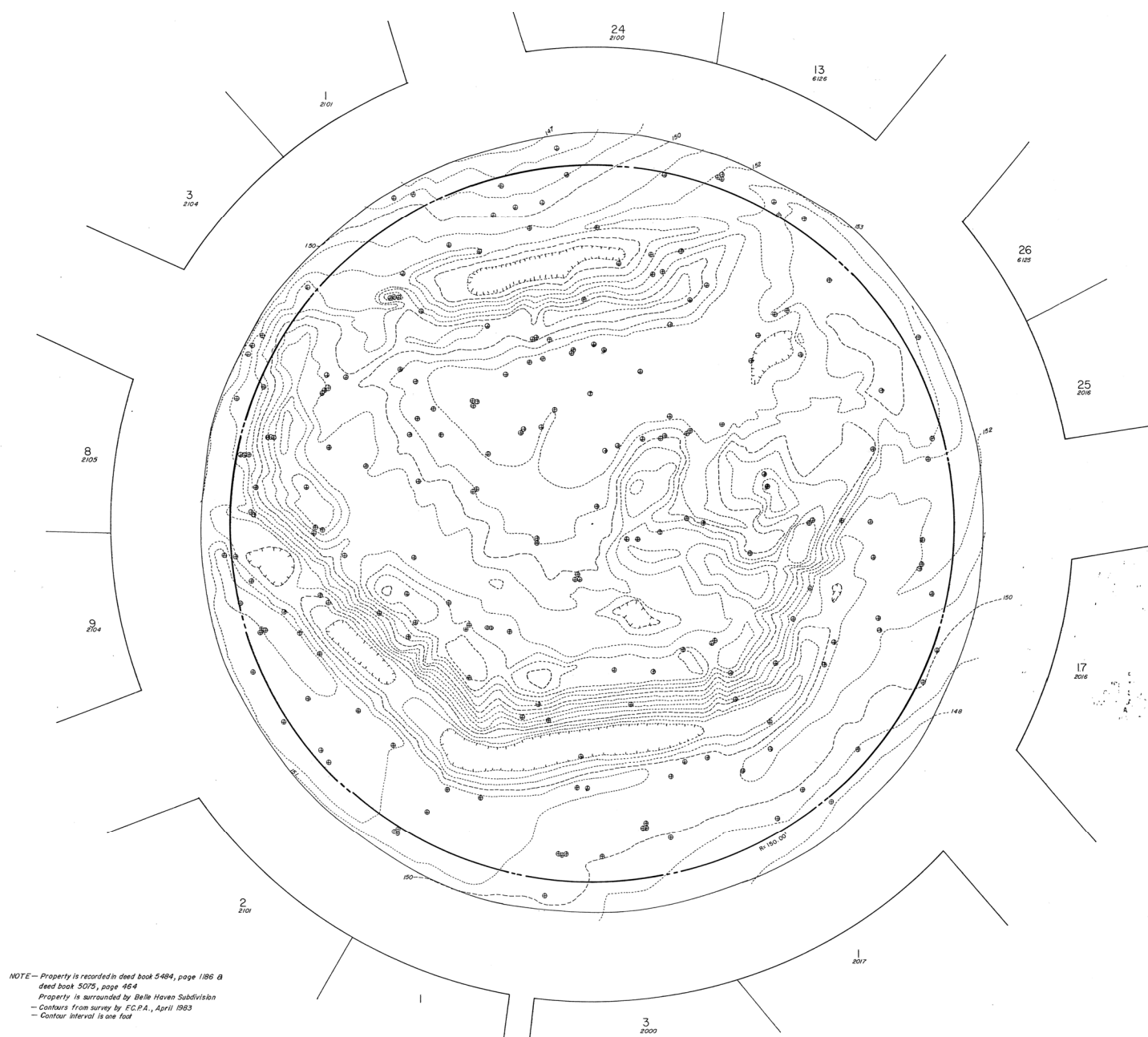


Figure 12: Site Topography Map

topography, with the remains of the fortification located within the center of the site. The fort earthworks themselves comprise the major topographic elements. The moat averages approximately four feet in depth along the southern portion of the fort. The embankments and moats average six feet in height to three feet in depth consistently around 75% of the perimeter of the fort. No streams are present on this parcel.

## **2. Vegetation and Wildlife.**

The vegetation of the park also reflects the time after the Civil War. It is likely that the fort fell into disrepair after the war and the vegetation and trees on the site are all volunteers since the Civil War.

### *Invasive Vegetative Community*

The site contains numerous invasive plant species common in urban areas. These include tree of heaven (ailanthus), white mulberry, mimosa, Norway maple, Chinese privet, English ivy, multiflora rose, Chinese wisteria, Japanese honeysuckle, periwinkle and ground ivy. These species approach 100% coverage over some small areas of the park, and have a presence throughout. However, the presence of healthy, aggressive native plants filling similar niches combined with the lack of deer herbivory indicates that Fort Willard may be a site with very good chance of success at controlling invasive species and promoting natives over time. The treatment and/or management plans for the site should include a vegetative component that includes controlling invasive plants and promoting natives through replanting.



Figure 13: Non-Native Invasive Plant Material

### *Native Vegetative Community*

The forest type at Fort Willard is similar to that at Mount Vernon District Park. The dominance of chestnut oak in the overstory combined with the presence of large sweetgums, pin oaks, walnut, persimmon, hackberry and an understory dominated by sassafras seems to exhibit a forest community that is more typical of areas further west (mountains) combined with coastal plain influences. The same condition exists at nearby Mount Vernon District Park. The fact that the species assemblage and diversity on the tiny Fort Willard historic site approaches that of the much larger Mount Vernon District Park indicates that (as is evident on the 1937 aerial photo) the fort experienced forest regeneration as part of a much larger area following the Civil War and the surrounding forest was subsequently cut down leaving the remnant at Fort Willard.

### *Wildlife Community*

Although Fort Willard is surrounded by houses, the site is useful for a variety of wildlife. Gray squirrels were observed on site as were several common bird species. Due to its proximity to other forested areas and the Potomac River and the high incidence of large trees on the surrounding private parcels, Fort Willard could be expected to host a wide variety of bird species during seasonal migrations, and may even provide breeding or over-wintering habitat for some less common species. Small mammals and a wide array of invertebrate species may also find suitable habitat on this property.

## **D. Park Access**

Access to the park is via Fort Willard Circle.

Currently, the only available parking is along the curb. Pedestrian access is currently accomplished from the shoulder of the road and along unimproved, previously established foot paths.

### **E. Existing Facilities**

The site is undeveloped except for three park benches along the outer circle. The earthworks are currently encircled by a wood fence for security. There is a switchback gate at the fort entry which allows pedestrian use only. This design has been effective at keeping out bicycles and other damaging vehicles.



Figure 14: Existing Site Furnishings

### **F. Utilities**

No utilities are currently developed or used on the park site although there are utility poles and a fire hydrant located within the VDOT right of way located at the outer edge of the circle. The surrounding development is served by electric, telephone, and public water and sewer.

### **G. Description of Adjacent Properties**

The Fort Willard Historic Site is located within the established Belle Haven residential neighborhood. This neighborhood consists of medium to large lot single family homes. There is no through traffic in this area.

## **IV. Management Framework**

### **A. Desired Visitor Experience**

The desired visitor experience at this park is for visitors to:

- View the earthen fortifications, cannon embrasures and other features from a vantage point that will not adversely affect the condition of these resources.
- Learn, enjoy, and become educated about the cultural features in the context of the Civil War occupation and use of the property.
- Connect the features found at this site to Civil War features elsewhere on Park Authority property, in the county and in the region.
- Enjoy the outer park amenity portion of the site.

### **B. Resource Management**

#### **I. Cultural Resource Management**

The parcel containing the bombproof and magazine will be subject to archaeological investigation to further address research questions that staff has about this resource. The results of the archaeological study will be used to better understand and interpret the site and to be used as the basis for the development of a *Fortifications Treatment Plan*. The goal of the survey is to

document and map any archaeological resources that may be present on the parcels and to interpret these resources to the public.

The earthworks are fragile, non-renewable cultural resources that require treatment for their preservation and maintenance. It is essential that a treatment plan be prepared as soon as possible to outline the best practices to be applied to preserve the earthworks and gun platforms. Careful consideration will be given to selective tree removal on and within the fort so that minimal damage will occur to existing features due to weak and dead trees falling with root balls tearing up the fort itself. Additionally, landscape plans will specify 'preservation' plant materials that will be used to minimize erosion of the earthen banks of the fort. The treatment plan will also address the best means for allowing park visitors to experience the site while protecting the historic resources.

An interpretative plan will be developed to propose ways to best interpret the site. A partnership will be developed among members of the community, the area crews, and the Cultural Resource Management and Protection section to monitor and protect the site from relic hunting and vandalism. Site conditions will be monitored.

## 2. Natural Resource Management

There are significant canopy trees of good quality onsite. Some of these trees may be thinned to allow for interpretation of the cultural resources. Field visits with staff from the Natural Resource Management and Protection section will be needed to determine how best to decide which areas can be preserved. This presents an opportunity to

interpret both natural and cultural resources concurrently.

It is noted that site goals include restoration of portions of the fort and on-going archeological study of the site as a whole. For the areas to be restored, trees will likely be cut off low to the ground and the stumps left in place to minimize destabilization of earthworks. It may be desirable to accelerate the rotting time of these stumps in order to promote the establishment of stabilizing grasses on the earthworks. In areas where excavations are to take place but it is not intended to remove the trees, efforts should be made to avoid critical root zone. Trees should be monitored for evidence of damage



Figure 15: Effects of Human and Natural Erosion

associated with excavation, and perhaps the treatment and/or management plans should address removal of trees in areas that could degrade cultural features over time. Replanting should occur in areas where the root systems will not interfere with cultural features and the canopy cover and roots would protect the features from erosion and excessive understory growth.

Managing for the native trees, shrubs and

herbaceous vegetation inside the fenced areas and the trees and appropriate shrubs and ground covers outside of the fenced areas will remain a priority for most of the site. Priority species for this management should include oaks, hickories, walnut, sweetgum and persimmon. Trees that could cause problems over time due to regular limb breakage and shorter lives include cherries and locusts. Likewise, red and ash-leaved maples could pose a management problem due to their root structure and high seeding rates and should be selected against in favor of the preferred species listed above.

While invasive plant species do not appear to be a major problem at this site, once development of the park is complete, the invasive species that were noticed should be addressed. Because invasives are such a large problem throughout the County, the Park Authority does not have adequate resources to address the issue in all the parks. An invasives project at Fort Willard Historic Site might be carried out through volunteers or an Eagle Scout project.

There are no known wildlife concerns in the park. Citizens often volunteer to keep lists of wildlife sightings in parks and such activities would be welcomed at Fort Willard Historic Site.

## **C. Interpretation and Visitor Services**

### **I. Information and Interpretative Media**

Interpretation at the site should include a series of interpretative signs designed to educate the public as to the historical events that occurred during the Civil War. One of the interpretative signs should address how this park ties in with other Civil War sites in the County and region. This signage should

be consistent with other signage in the County and address appropriate Civil War themes. Interpretative materials would include information available on the Park Authority website, as well as brochures and other media. Due to the relative isolation of this park site, it is important to provide appropriate site promotion, map guidance, and signage. The specifics of site interpretation will be developed as part of the Fortifications Treatment plan.



Figure 16: Typical Interpretive Sign

### **2. Integration With Other Civil War Sites**

A goal of the Park Authority is to create a coordinated interpretation of Civil War activities on separate but related sites

that ultimately results in a unified interpretative experience of Civil War sites and events that took place throughout Fairfax County and surrounding municipalities. While the primary focus of this general management plan is to establish appropriate uses for Fort Willard Historic Site, it is a goal of this plan to lay the initial groundwork for an integrated interpretation of the numerous Civil War resources present on other Park Authority property, as well. The desired outcome is to provide the visitor with a more complete idea of where those specific resources fit within a larger historic context.

Programs such as Virginia Civil War Trails have shown that providing standardized recognizable signage and linking sites through programs, web sites, brochures and other media improves public knowledge of local history, increases awareness and support for preservation and maintenance of the sites, and boosts the local economy due to increased

**Chart A**

• Annandale Community Park	• Dranesville Tavern
• Lewinsville Park	• Historic Huntley
• Mount Air Historic Site	• Frying Pan Meeting House
• Lake Accotink Park	• Mt. Gilead Historic Site
• Military Railroad Park	• Ellanor C. Lawrence Park
• Freedom Hill Fort	• Sully Woodlands
• Lanes Mill	• Recreation Lake
• Sully Historic Site	• Ox Hill Battlefield Park
• Wakefield Park	• Confederate Fortifications
• Cub Run Stream Valley—Railroad Abutments	• Manassas Gap Railroad Historic Site
• Confederate Fortifications (Union Mills)	• Salona
• National Park Service Sites	• City of Alexandria and Arlington County Sites

tourism. Using the Virginia Civil War Trails as a model, it is recommended that a comprehensive approach be developed for interpretive signage and programming of Civil War resources within the park system. Integration with other federal, state, local, and private Civil War sites should be considered also. A list of Park Authority sites are listed in Chart “A”.

The planning and development of all parks with associated Civil War interpretative opportunities should address this issue of linkage. Through appropriate planning of Fort Willard Historic Site with reference to other related sites, the public will be able to trace significant events through a series of parks (both local and national) across the region to facilitate a more global understanding of the actions of that turbulent time in the history of the United States.

#### **D. Site Considerations**

The site contains highly significant, fragile, non-renewable archaeological resources. Using information from the archaeological studies, a *Fortifications Treatment Plan* will be developed to direct the treatment of the cultural and natural resources on this site. This plan will make recommendations for the treatment of the fortifications, gun platforms and other features, including guidance as to planting and/or ground cover suggested for the site; a proposal for the removal or preservation of trees and other plantings; recommendations for any trail system, etc. Trees rooted in the earthworks are of particular concern.

Since visitation to the site could adversely affect archaeological resources as a result of human erosion, a trail system will have to be developed that will allow visitors to see the resources without

adversely affecting the resources. Controlled access walkways should pass near enough to the land features to permit easy viewing and interpretation but not allow visitors to detour from the designated trail.

Security is another major site consideration. Because of concerns for any artifacts that remain at the site, relic hunting is a continuing issue. In order to discourage relic hunters, provisions will have to be taken in the form of signage, community watch, education, and potentially, prosecution. Perhaps an agreement could be arranged with members of the surrounding community to assist the Park Authority in this task.

No parking will be located within the site so as not to disturb significant cultural resources. Curbside parking is currently available for the site along Fort Willard Circle.

The site has little to no areas of 20<sup>th</sup> century refuse. It is recommended that the park be cleaned of non-artifactual refuse.

## **V. General Management Plan**

The General Management Plan integrates research, site analysis, and basic data presented in this document. Management zones have been defined to provide a framework for decision-making. Existing uses, existing conditions and recommendations from Park Authority staff were considered in the development of the management zones. The framework provides broad flexibility within a range of potential uses for each management zone. The General Management Plan Map on page 21 depicts the management zones.

The "Potential Uses" stated for the zone describe what uses are acceptable for each zone. If a use is

not listed for a zone, by its omission it is considered an incompatible use for that zone. The potential uses are intentionally general to allow flexibility when making decisions following further studies of the site.

### **A. Resource Protection Zone**

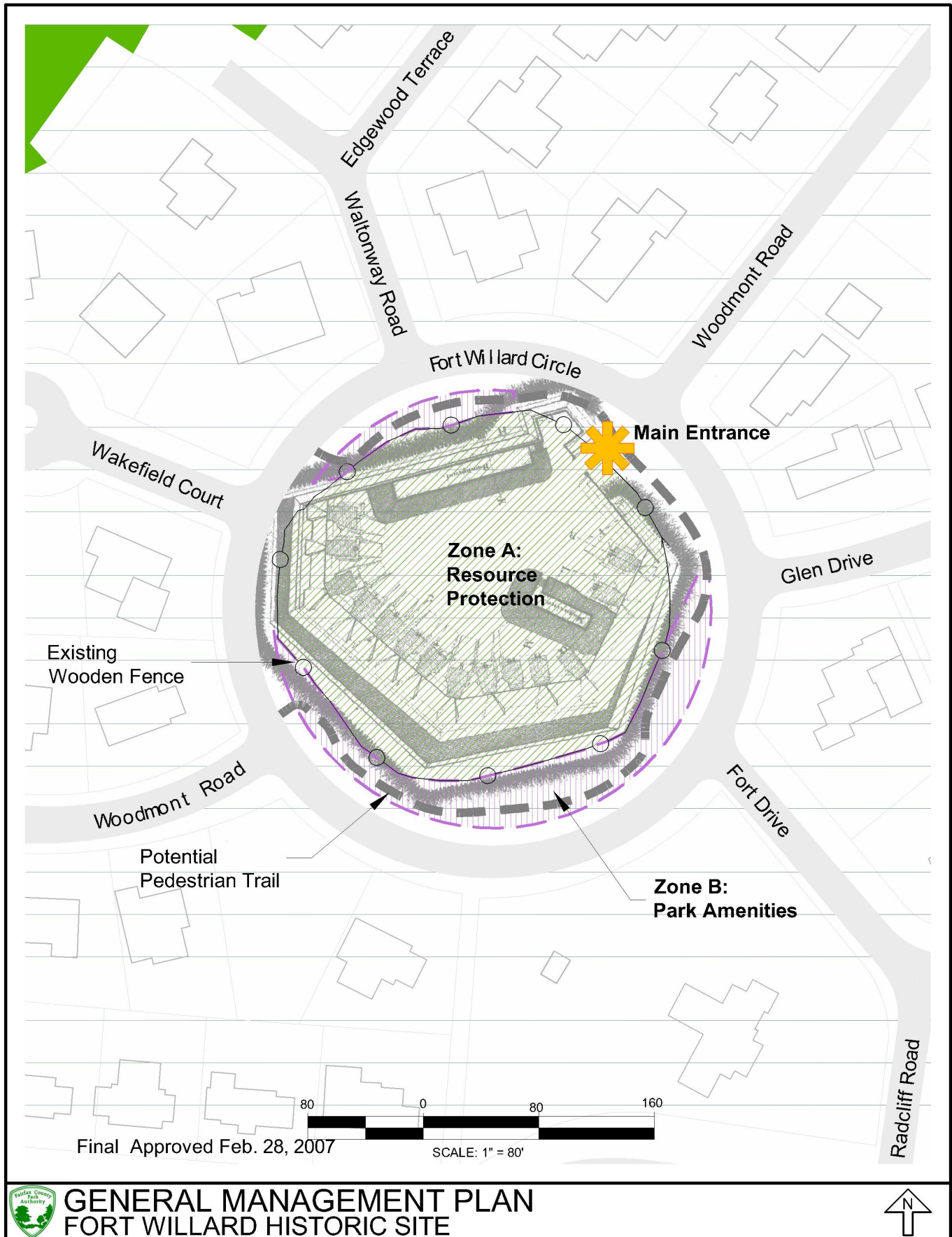
"Zone A" will be designated as a Resource Protection Zone. This comprises approximately 80% of the site. The site will be managed to protect the existing cultural and natural resources of the site. The boundaries of this zone will reflect the fort perimeter as determined by archaeology and the Fortifications Treatment Plan.

#### **POTENTIAL USES:**

In the Resource Protection Zone, the emphasis will be on the preservation, protection, and interpretation of cultural and natural resources contained therein. These resources will be subject to ongoing research. An interpretation program will be developed as part of the Fortifications Treatment Plan to further the Park Authority goals in developing ongoing educational opportunities for the public.

The GMP proposes integrating a trail in the Park Amenity Zone that will allow visitors to view the resources without impacting them. Trails should be located on the outer portion of site in light of the goal of conserving the significant cultural resources. The Fortifications Treatment Plan for the fort will help determine the appropriate location and extent of trails and/or signage within the Resource Protection Zone.

There will be a point of transition from the 21<sup>st</sup>



century landscape to the Civil War landscape. This will provide orientation to the site and will be the initial point for the interpretation and education mission of the site.

**PROPOSED RESTORATION AREAS AND ELEMENTS:** (approximately the front 25% of the fort facing Woodmont Road)

- Sentry/Guard Bunker area
- Two cannon embrasures
- Portions of the bombproof and magazine areas
- Information/interpretive signage/kiosks

**B. Park Amenity Zone**

The fort should continue to have a fence and/or vegetative barrier to protect the earthworks and to control access to the fort via a single entry point. This fence should be aligned with the Fort footprint. The area outside of this fence is designated “Zone B” Park Amenity Zone. This zone will provide an area for the neighborhood to utilize the site on a regular basis without damaging the fort itself. This area can support passive recreation and amenities such as:

**POTENTIAL USES:**

- Trails
- Benches and/or Trash containers
- Information signage
- Landscape elements
- Neighborhood events and gatherings

**C. Site Management Recommendations**

The Fortifications Treatment Plan and further archaeological studies will be used to provide the detailed guidance for the site management of natural and cultural historic resources at Fort Willard Historic Site. The primary goal is to continue to preserve and maintain the earthworks, other Civil War features, historic landscape, and archaeological resources to prevent further deterioration. A detailed boundary survey with appropriate onsite monuments is recommended to assist in this effort.

**VI. Conceptual Development Plan**

The Conceptual Development Plan (CDP) on page 23 describes the planned site elements, identifies design concerns, and illustrates the general location of the recommended facilities based on the guidance of the General Management Plan.

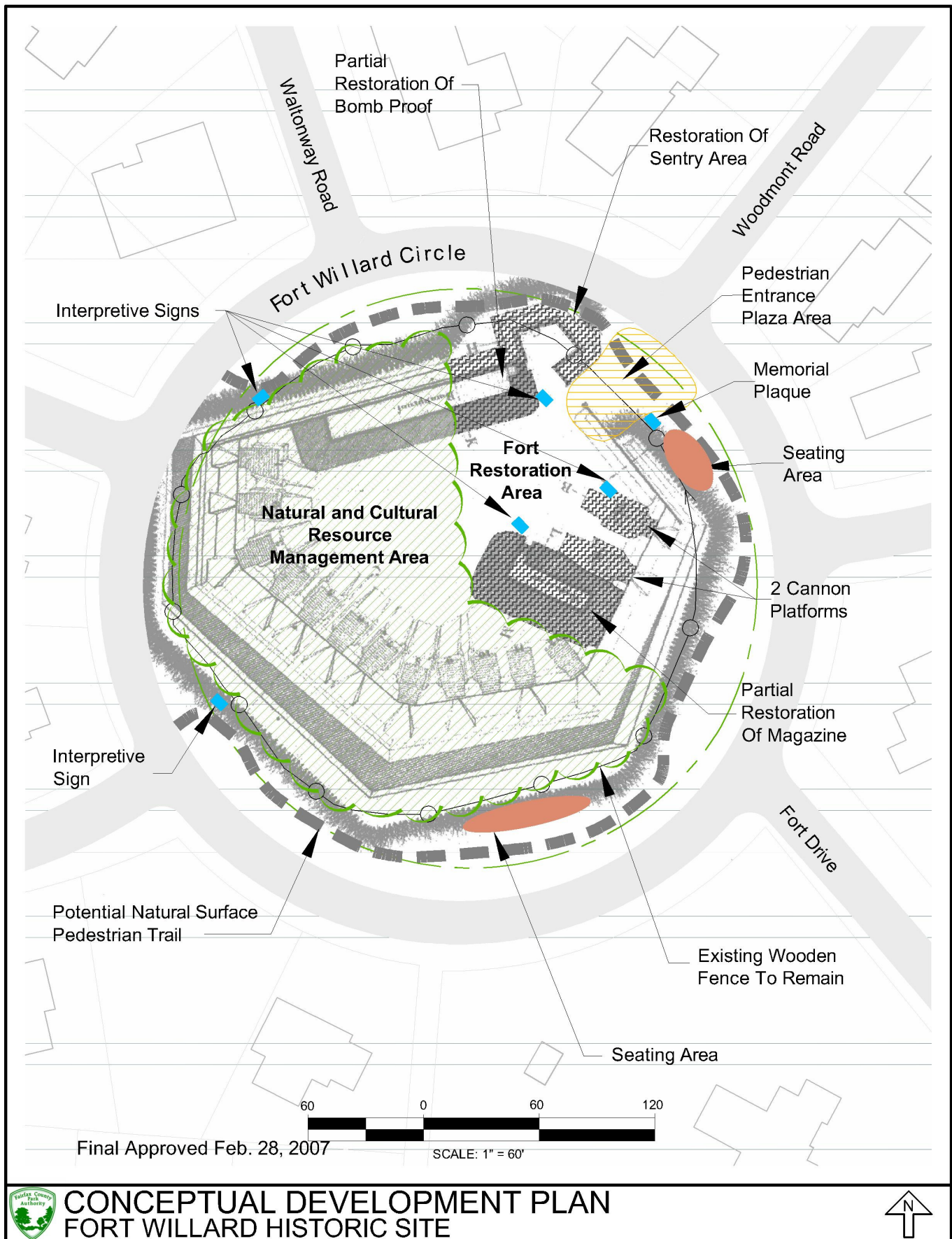
The location of many of the proposed site elements shall be guided by the Fortifications Treatment Plan.

**A. Fort Restoration Elements**

The fort is proposed to have a portion (25%) restored to the conditions as they were during the Civil War. This restoration would follow the guidelines of the Treatment Plan and will contain the following elements:

- Restoration of the Sentry Box and entry area
- Restoration of two cannon embrasures
- Partial restoration of the Bombproof
- Partial restoration of the Magazine area

Restoration efforts of these elements may include full or partial restoration as funding permits.



The restoration would involve removal of vegetation as needed to create a more authentic environment for the fort. Removal of invasive plants, dead trees, and dense undergrowth that impedes the site's safety and provides educational benefits as part of the restoration.

## **B. Park Amenity Zone Elements**

### **1. Pedestrian Access**

Pedestrian access points will be along the potential trail as it intersects with Fort Willard Circle. The restored sentry post/fort entry should serve as the focal point for the site. It may be designated with special pavers and/or landscaping. This area will also serve as a neighborhood gathering spot for special events.

### **2. Trails**

A key experience for this site will be the opportunity to view the entire fort and preservation area from a potential natural surface trail. This trail will be entirely contained outside the fence area within the Park Amenity Zone. This trail location offers the maximum preservation potential for the fort in its entirety. This trail should be a minimum of 6' wide and may be natural surface or other suitable material.

### **3. Interpretive Signs**

Interpretative signs should be placed within the entry area and interior sections of the fort. The historic displays could be as simple as individual signs or more elaborate elements such as kiosks. The interpretative signs should be designed within the framework of existing Resource Management

Division and Park Operations guidelines for interpretive trail signs. The interpretative signs should include the fort and its history within the Civil War and the site's relationship to the Civil War sites in the region. The interpretive signs should be instrumental in developing an identity for the park to distinguish it from other parks in the area.

Restoration of the Bombproof and Magazine areas should not be interpreted as a return to fully functional areas. They will be designed to give the historically accurate appearance of the elements but will not be functional spaces.

## **E. Natural and Cultural Resource Management Area**

The Natural and Cultural Resource Management Area will remain undeveloped. The focus on this area is to preserve the un-restored portion of the fort and earthworks. This area will be closed off from visitor access. No trails are proposed in this section. This portion of the fort will be fully visible from the Park Amenity Zone.

Archaeological studies may be conducted within this area to further the understanding of the site and its role in Fairfax County history.

## **VII. Design Concerns**

The delicate nature of the fort and its location within an established residential neighborhood creates some challenges for the on-going use, design and maintenance of the site. These challenges can be addressed with careful adherence to the Fortification Treatment Plan, timely communication with the neighborhood and thoughtful integration of the proposed site elements.

### A. VDOT Right of Way and Maintenance

This site is located entirely within the Fort Willard Traffic Circle, a VDOT right of way (ROW). Consequently, the site does not extend completely to the curb. There is approximately a twelve foot setback from the back of the curb to the Park Authority property boundary. It is important to coordinate maintenance responsibilities especially related to canopy trees currently located within the ROW. Any maintenance issues or concerns should be communicated with VDOT.

Any proposed site elements that result from this plan that encroach on this ROW will need to be coordinated with VDOT.

### B. Human Erosion

One of the most challenging aspects of managing the site will be to protect the fort from further damage from use. This site has been used by the local walkers and bicyclists for more than 30 years. In that time trails have been formed and bike ramps created that have caused serious erosion to the fort embankments. The current fence has been instrumental in restricting bicycles with the inclusion of a “Y” gate allowing only pedestrian access to the center of the site. The relocated entrance will allow

for full access to the site. The Park Authority will reserve the right to install a “y” gate in the future if necessary to protect this delicate resource.

Pedestrian access should continue to be focused on the outer portions of the site and the historic fort entry site. It is recommended to close off the preservation area of the site to all access except for park maintenance as may be required.

### C. Maintenance and Adopt a Park Program

Site maintenance may need to include some specialized techniques or plant materials to promote soil stabilization on the earthworks.

The Belle Haven Citizen's Association (BHCA) has expressed an interest in working with the Park Authority through the Adopt-a-Park program. Any maintenance or other projects done with this program will be for the outer portion of the site only. The interior fort area should continue to be maintained by the Park Authority. This will ensure the best opportunity for preservation of the fort.



Figure 19: Park Amenity Area

