BURR HOMESTEAD

SITE IMPROVEMENT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN



BURR HOMESTEAD COMMITTEE
and
FAIRFIELD COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM

TOWN OF FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT

March 1996

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Preparation of this document was assisted by a Community Forestry grant from the U.S. Forest Service's America the Beautiful Program provided through the Division of Forestry of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.

FOREWORD

This document contains a plan to improve and manage the grounds of the Town of Fairfield's historic Burr Homestead—an important symbol of the Town's heritage. The plan was prepared at the direction of the Burr Homestead Committee, in furtherance of Fairfield's Community Forestry Program.

The plan contains goals and recommendations to guide improvement and management of the Homestead grounds for public use and enjoyment. An important aspect of the plan is enhancement of the existing arboretum for scientific and educational purposes. The plan's provisions allow for flexible implementation in response to changing conditions, available funding, and volunteer assistance. The conceptual landscape design included in the plan provides a guiding framework that may be modified and adjusted as implementation proceeds.

Preparation of the plan is a first step for improving the Homestead grounds. Implementation must rely on coordinated Town and private efforts — a public-private partnership — because the Town alone may not have the resources needed to enhance and maintain the historic grounds and arboretum.

It is hoped that the plan will increase public recognition of a historic Town resource and stimulate the public involvement needed to improve the grounds and ensure their continued beneficial use by the citizens of Fairfield and other visitors to the Burr Homestead.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A number of individuals contributed to preparation of this plan which was prepared at the direction of the volunteer Burr Homestead Committee. Work on the plan was aided by a Community Forestry grant from the U.S. Forest Service's America the Beautiful Program. This grant was provided to the Town of Fairfield through the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Forestry. The Town of Fairfield provided matching services through the Community Forestry office of the Fairfield Public Works Department.

First Selectman Paul Audley provided support for the planning effort and established the Burr Homestead Committee to oversee the work. Ken Placko, Community Forest Manager and Town Tree Warden, supervised work on the management plan and, with Selectman Jill Kelly, helped to organize the Burr Homestead Committee. Committee members include: Mr. Placko; Ms. Kelly, who serves as Committee Chairman; Steve Young, Director of the Fairfield Historical Society; Scott Jamison, landscape designer and owner of Oliver Nurseries, Inc. of Fairfield; Doug Williams, professional arborist; Ron Manning, the Town's Superintendent of Public Works, Operations; Florence Anderson, representing the Historic Civic Center Advisory Committee; Ann Carter, Ellen Curtis, Diane Margo, Leanne Newcomb, Betty Seeberg, Patti Spaght, and Greta Sutphen, representing local garden clubs; and Ann Weiss from the Old Post Road Neighborhood Association.

From Oliver Nurseries, Scott Jamison, Jim Gerrity, and Melanie Fox reviewed site conditions and prepared the conceptual landscape design plan. Doug Williams also studied site conditions and provided recommendations for enhancement and maintenance of the Burr Homestead arboretum.

Steve Young provided information on the history of the Homestead and advice concerning plan implementation. Barbara Austen, Historical Society librarian, assisted with the historical research. Two photographs of the Homestead gardens thought to be from the late 1800's or early 1900's were provided by the Historical Society and computer-enhanced by Glen Bousquet, Graphic Design.

The management plan document was written and prepared by Geoffrey Steadman of Westport, Connecticut who also assisted the Community Forest Manager with preparation of the Town's application for the Community Forestry grant. Contemporary photographs of the Homestead grounds are from 1995 and were provided by Mr. Steadman.

Special thanks are extended to the citizens of Fairfield who have expressed their interest and support for improving the Homestead grounds. Their assistance will be vital for ensuring beneficial public use of the grounds in the future.

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INTRODUCTION

The Burr Homestead in the Town of Fairfield is a historic resource of national significance. An important symbol of the Town's heritage, the Homestead is associated with colonial times in Connecticut and some of the most prominent figures of the American Revolution. Important aspects of the history of the Burr Homestead originated also during the 19th and 20th centuries. The Homestead, owned by the Town of Fairfield, includes a 15-room mansion (see Figure 1) and about four acres of grounds that for parts of three centuries contained formal gardens and an arboretum of carefully tended trees and shrubs.

Located on the south side of the Old Post Road (739 Old Post Road), the Burr Homestead was a private residence from about 1700 to 1962 when it was purchased by the Town. It is part of the Town's Historic Civic Center which includes the Town Green, Old Town Hall, Sun Tavern, Old Academy, Old Burying Ground, Independence Hall, a Victorian cottage, and St. Paul's Episcopal Church.[1] (See Figure 2.) The Historic Civic Center, often described as the Town's historic focal point, is part of the larger Old Post Road Historic District which extends along the Old Post Road from the Post Road to Turney Road. (See Figure 3.) The Old Post Road Historic District was adopted by the Town in 1968 and added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1971.

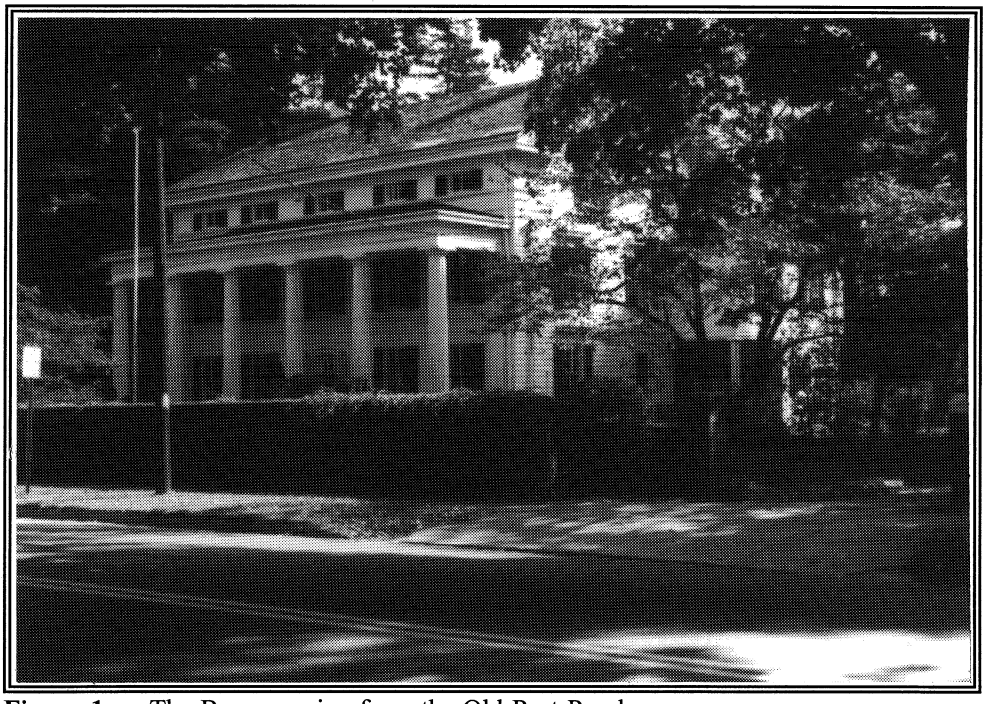


Figure 1: The Burr mansion from the Old Post Road.

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[1] The Fairfield Historical Society is a good source of information concerning the Historic Civic Center. Described in a publication of the Historical Society, the Town Green was a site for military drills in preparation for the French and Indian War and Revolutionary War. The Old Town Hall was built in 1720, subsequently underwent several architectural changes and additions, and still serves as Town Hall. The Sun Tavern visited by George Washington was built in 1783. The Old Academy is an 1804 structure within which Fairfielders once prepared for admission to college. The Old Burying Ground is Fairfield's earliest cemetery. Among the other structures in the Historic Civic Center are Independence Hall which was constructed in 1979 to expand the Town offices, a 19th century Victorian cottage, and St. Paul's Episcopal Church built in 1856. All of the sites and structures within the Historic Civic Center, excepting the Church, are owned by the Town of Fairfield.

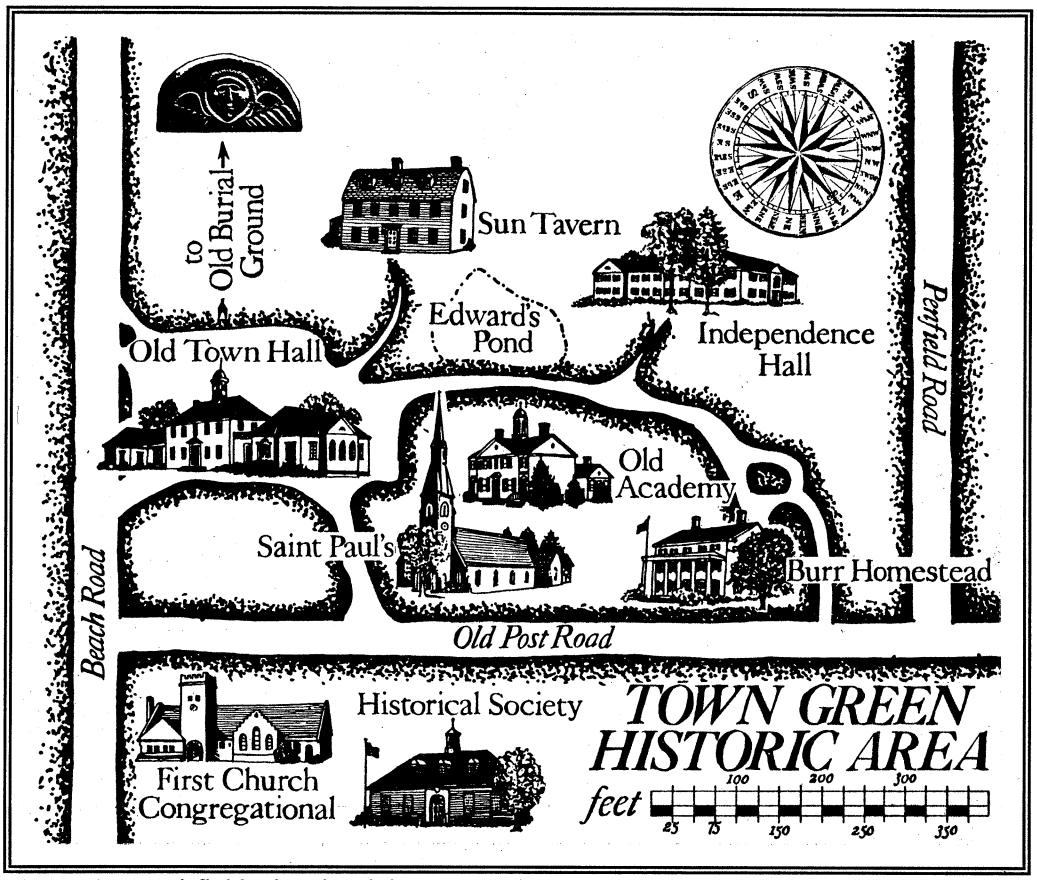


Figure 2: Fairfield Historic Civic Center. (Source: Fairfield Historical Society.)

The Burr Homestead is today used for various noncommercial public and private events. The scene of the marriage of John Hancock (President of the Continental Congress) and Dorothy Quincy in 1775, the Homestead may be reserved by Town residents for weddings and wedding receptions. It may also be used for exhibitions and fund-raising events sponsored by cultural, educational, civic, and charitable organizations. A seven-member Historic Civic Center Advisory Committee appointed by the Fairfield Board of Selectmen oversees use of the Homestead. Special events on the grounds have included the Taste of Fairfield food festival (held under tents placed on the south lawn), the Christmas Tree Festival, and the Enchanted Castle for children at Halloween. These events are all organized to raise money for charitable purposes. Funds received for rental use of the Homestead are deposited into the Town's General Fund.

The Fairfield Public Works Department maintains the Homestead grounds (see Figure 4) and mansion. The Representative Town Meeting (RTM), Board of Selectmen, Historic District Commission, and Fairfield Historical Society also have roles and functions with respect to managing the Homestead. The RTM is the Town's legislative body, responsible for approval of the Town budget. This responsibility includes approval of any Town funds allocated for enhancement and maintenance of the Homestead. The RTM in 1996 is considering a proposal from the Fairfield Historical Society whereby the Historical Society would administer operation of the Burr Homestead, Sun Tavern, and Victorian cottage on behalf of the Town. The Historical Society is a private organization that serves as a conservator of the Town's history.

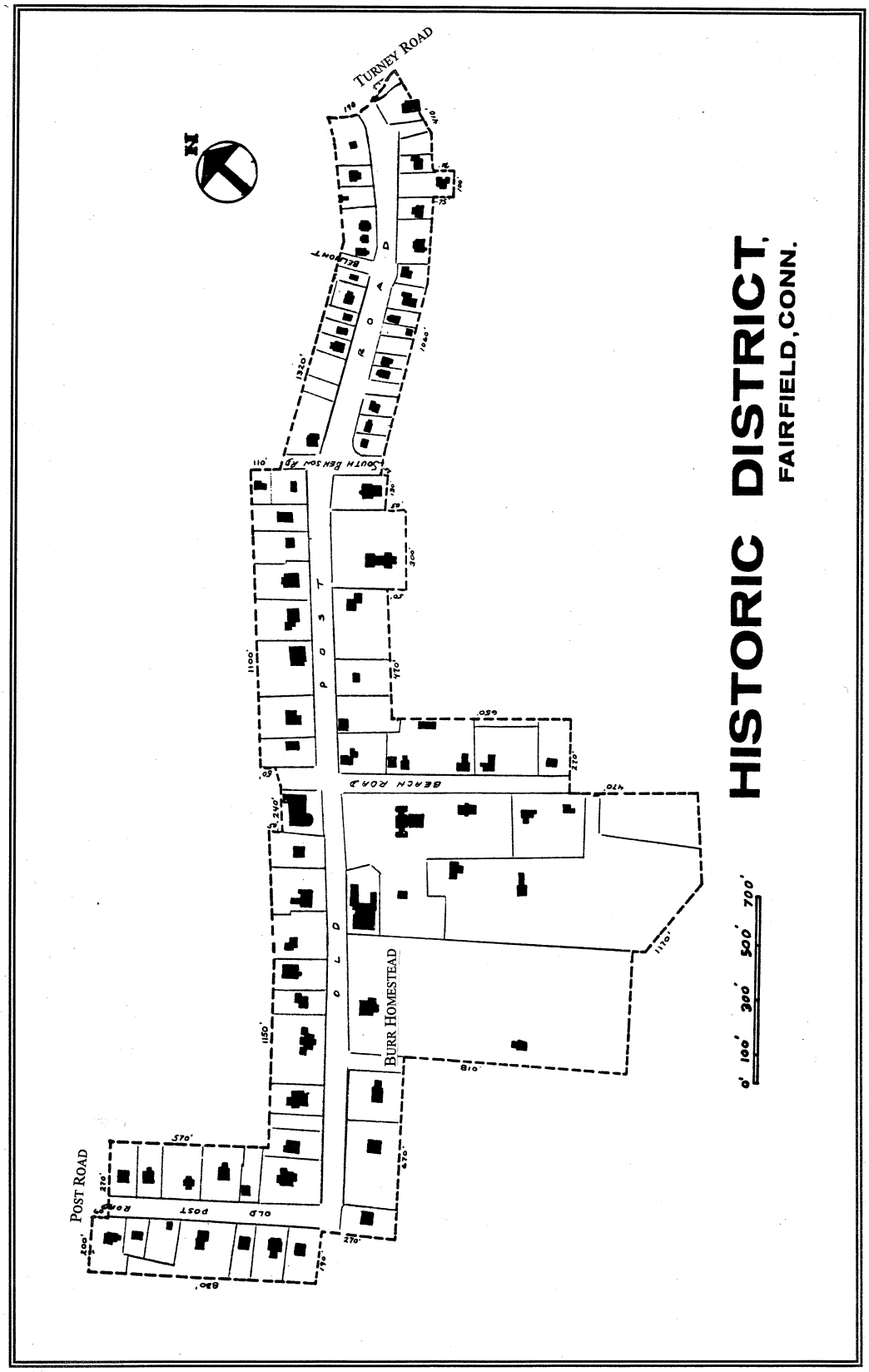


Figure 3: Old Post Road Historic District. (Source: "Final Report," Fairfield Historic District Study Committee, April 1963.)

The Board of Selectmen has some important oversight responsibilities for managing the Homestead. Among its many duties, the Board of Selectmen is responsible for appointing the members of the Town's numerous commissions, boards, and special committees, including those with responsibilities affecting the Burr Homestead. The First Selectman is the Town's chief executive officer, responsible for administration of all offices of Town government. In past years, the Director of the Historic Civic Center was responsible for scheduling rentals of the Homestead to individuals and groups; since the Director's retirement, this responsibility has been handled through the First Selectman's office.

Decisions by the Fairfield Historic District Commission may also affect the Homestead. No structure, for example, located within a Town historic district may be altered without the Commission's approval. Accordingly, any proposed alterations to the Burr mansion or other Homestead structures are subject to approval by the Historic District Commission.

Despite the historic significance of the Burr Homestead and its use for private functions and special events, the grounds are not actively managed and have, in fact, been somewhat neglected. The grass is mowed and the grounds are kept free of litter, but little attention has been given to maintenance of the arboretum, which by definition is a place where trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants are cultivated for scientific and educational purposes. A number of old trees, including elms and hemlocks, have succumbed to disease and pests. The gardens that helped define the Homestead's elegance and stateliness from the 1700's into the 20th century no longer exist. As a result, the historical significance of the Homestead grounds has been diminished, and the full potential of the grounds as a public place for the citizens of Fairfield is not being realized.



Figure 4: Burr Homestead grounds looking south from the rear entrance to the mansion. Formal gardens were once maintained in this area, along with a central path with a view toward Long Island Sound. The structure in the foreground was once a decorative fountain; in the background is a marble exedra.

Recognizing the historic significance of the Burr Homestead grounds and the unmet opportunity for beneficial public use, Town officials are now giving increased attention to improving the grounds. As a first step, the Town's Community Forest Manager, with support from the Board of Selectmen, proposed that the Town prepare a site improvement and management plan. To help prepare and implement the plan, the Town in 1995 applied for and received a Community Forestry grant from the U.S. Forest Service's America the Beautiful Program.[2] This grant was provided to the Town through the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Forestry. The Town provided matching planning and technical services through the Community Forestry office.

The First Selectman established a volunteer committee — the Burr Homestead Committee — to oversee preparation and implementation of the plan. The Burr Homestead Committee includes: the Community Forest Manager; a Selectmen who serves as Committee Chairman; the Director of the Fairfield Historical Society; a landscape designer; professional arborist; the Town's Superintendent of Public Works, Operations; and representatives of local garden clubs, the Historic Civic Center Advisory Committee, and the Old Post Road Neighborhood Association. In the course of preparing the plan, the Committee conducted research into the historical use of the Homestead, reviewed existing site conditions, reached agreement on a conceptual landscape design plan, and developed recommendations concerning plan implementation. The planning effort, including the work of a planning consultant retained to assist the Burr Homestead Committee, was supervised by the Community Forest Manager.

The Site Improvement and Management Plan for the Burr Homestead is presented in this document. The plan, prepared as part of the Town's Community Forestry Program,[3] contains goals and recommendations to guide improvement and management of the grounds for public use and enjoyment. An important aspect of the plan is enhancement of the existing arboretum for scientific and educational purposes. The plan's provisions allow for flexible implementation in response to available funding and volunteer assistance. A conceptual landscape design plan has been prepared to provide a guiding framework that may be modified and adjusted as implementation proceeds.

Preparation of the plan is a first step for improving the Homestead grounds, including the historical arboretum. Implementation of the plan must rely on coordinated Town and private efforts — a public-private partnership — because the Town alone may not be able to allocate the resources needed to enhance and maintain the historic grounds.

It is hoped that the plan will result in increased public recognition of this historic Town resource, stimulate the public involvement needed to improve the Burr Homestead grounds, and help ensure the continued beneficial use of the Homestead by the citizens of Fairfield and other visitors.

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[2] The America the Beautiful Program was initiated by the U.S. Forest Service in 1990 to provide for the planting and care of trees in cities and towns throughout the country. Matching funds for urban forestry projects are provided to eligible nonprofit organizations and municipalities on a competitive basis. The program is designed to encourage citizen involvement in creating and supporting long-term and sustained urban and community forestry programs. In Connecticut, the America the Beautiful grants are available through the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Forestry.

[3] The Community Forestry Program is implemented through the Fairfield Public Works Department. The program focuses on the maintenance, improvement, and replenishment of the trees and forestry resources that contribute greatly to the Town's character and quality of life. Fairfield, a seven-time winner of the "Tree City USA" title awarded by the National Arbor Day Foundation, has long recognized the importance of its trees and forestry resources. The Town has employed a Tree Warden since 1951 whose powers and duties are authorized by the Connecticut General Statutes and Article II of the Fairfield Code. The responsibilities of the Tree Warden have evolved over the years and today the Tree Warden is considered the Town's Community Forest Manager.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BURR HOMESTEAD[4]

The Burr Homestead is located on one of the original "Four Squares" of property established when the Town of Fairfield was settled in 1639. About 1700 (some accounts say 1732), Peter Burr, Chief Justice of the Colony, built a house facing the Post Road near the Town green. The substantial proportions of the Burr home have been described as unusual for the architecture of the time. The house, later owned by Peter's son Thaddeus and then by his grandson Thaddeus II, stood "on a slight eminence, beneath a canopy of elms... its dormer windows, its projecting gables and ivy-covered wings presented quite the appearance of a baronial structure..." (From an article by Helen Harrison in the *Bridgeport Daily Standard*, September 13, 1913.) The Burrs were among Fairfield's most distinguished citizens and the Homestead became one of the Town's cultural and social centers — closely identified with prominent leaders of the American Revolution.

Thaddeus Burr II occupied the Homestead at the time of the Revolution. He was a member of the Town Committee on War and the Governor's Council, Deputy of the General Court, and High Sheriff of the County — "a gentleman of large fortune and generous nature... a conspicuous figure in the life of the colony and state." (From *Fairfield Ancient and Modern* by F.S. Child, 1909.) It is written that many Revolutionary councils and planning sessions took place in the Burr mansion and that among the visitors to the Homestead were George Washington, John Adams, Samuel Adams, John Hancock, the Marquis De Lafayette, Benjamin Franklin, James Otis, and Thaddeus Burr's cousin Aaron Burr. Indeed, throughout the history of the Burr Homestead, "poets, statesmen, generals, public benefactors, and private citizens in every walk of life were welcomed and charmed by the atmosphere of the home." (From *Old Homes of Connecticut*, edited by Bertha Chadwick Trowbridge, 1923.)

On the morning of April 22, 1775, a messenger is said to have come to the Burr Homestead with news of the British march from Boston to Lexington and Concord. The British action caused Hancock, who was to be President of the Continental Congress and first signer of the Declaration of Independence, to flee Massachusetts along with his aunt Lydia, fiance Dorothy Quincy, and Samuel Adams. The group took refuge at the Burr Homestead before Hancock and Adams proceeded to Philadelphia.

Hancock and Quincy were married at the Homestead on August 28, 1775. "Everyone of note attended the affair, attired in their best silks and satins and displaying diamond-dusted coiffures and priceless gems. Men strutted in plum-colored velvets and sported powdered perukes, white silk stockings and lace cuffs. The wedding equipage was drawn by six ebony stallions guided by outriders in gold-trimmed livery." (From an article by Charles S. Peden, in the *Fairfield Citizen-News*, September 22, 1995.)

Fairfield had a substantial influence on the united colonies during the Revolutionary War and, because of its strong support for independence, was plundered and essentially burned to the ground by the British on July 7, 1779. General William Tryon, commander of the British troops, is said to have promised Mrs. Burr that the Burr mansion would not be burned with the rest of the town. If those were his orders, however, they were not obeyed. Burr's wife Eunice later described how "ruffians entered the house, stripped the silver buckles from her shoes, smashed furniture and tore down curtains. When they left, more soldiers entered. They demanded drinks, overturned furniture and hurled insults at her. General Tryon, who had been entertained by the Burrs, sent a guard to protect her. It did no good. The 'monsters,' as she called them, entered again and dragged an elderly woman around the floor by her hair

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[4] Information concerning the history of the Burr Homestead presented in this section was obtained from the library of the Fairfield Historical Society and from the Fairfield Public Library and Pequot Library.

and set the house on fire. A black servant who had tried to save her was shot, bayoneted, and then thrown into the fire." (From an article by Charles S. Peden in the *Fairfield Citizen-News*, September 22, 1995.) General Tryon later said that "the village was burnt to resent the fire of the rebels from their houses and to mask our retreat." (From *Gardens of Colony and State*, compiled and edited for the Garden Club of America by Alice G.B. Lockwood, 1934.)

The Burrs rebuilt the mansion in 1790 (some accounts say 1793), erecting a dignified and handsome federal-style house with a central hall, dormer windows, and gambrel roof. It is written that the new mansion was modeled after John Hancock's house in Boston. Hancock, then Governor of Massachusetts, supposedly offered to supply the glass and timber for his friends' new house if it would be modeled after his own.

The grounds surrounding the Burr Homestead were carefully attended by the Burrs. A broad path extended toward Long Island Sound from the south side of the mansion and there were borders and beds of shrubs and flowers. "The Burrs entertained very largely and there are frequent allusions in the Diaries and Journals of the time indicating Mrs. Burr's love of flowers, which she was always pleased to give to guests as they came, or as they left the hospitable mansion." (From *Gardens of Colony and State.*)

Thaddeus Burr II had no children and left the house to his nephew, General Gershom Burr. Obidiah W. Jones, a wealthy merchant known as the "pioneer American flour king," bought the Homestead from the Burr family. Jones, who purchased the Homestead in 1825 according to one account, or in the 1830's according to others, completely remodeled the mansion in the popular Greek revival style of the time. He took out the dormer windows, lifted the roof, removed the porch, built stables, and added a six-columned portico. Subsequent owners were to make further additions and alterations.

After the Jones family, the house was owned by a Mr. Wheeler and then by A. Holland Forbes who was prominent in the development of aeronautic science in the United States. Forbes removed some partitions within the house and cut French doors to the front on the west side. The house was sold to DeVer Warner in 1914 who extended the west wing to the second story and enlarged and enclosed the sun parlor at the rear. In the 1930's, Warner commissioned the Works Progress Administration to build a brick wall around the property to keep out the trolley noise. The house was included in the Historical American Buildings Survey in 1934.[5]

The Homestead grounds, including the formal gardens and arboretum, are prominently mentioned in many historical accounts. It seems that each private owner contributed in some way to enhancement of the grounds. During the Warner's ownership, the gardens were described as a maze of rare plants and ancient trees extending toward Long Island Sound. Winding bluestone walks led to a garden house by a reflecting pool and to a greenhouse of exotic flowers. (From an article by Charles S. Peden in the *Fairfield Citizen*, July 11, 1973.) The garden club and other local organizations were entertained by Mrs. Warner under the roof of the garden house, a small, open structure that provided shelter from the elements and was later moved to the eastern side of the lawn. The grounds were "banked deep with evergreens;" there was an orchard and vegetable garden, an immediate garden around the house, and a tall, thick hedge of arborvitae which provided separation between the orchard, vegetable garden, and immediate gardens. Many great

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[5] Inclusion in the Historical American Buildings Survey certified that the Burr Homestead was judged by the Advisory Committee of the Historic American Buildings Survey to be of national historic significance — "possessing exceptional historic or architectural interest and... worthy of most careful preservation for the benefit of future generations and... to this end a record of its present appearance and condition has been made and deposited for permanent reference in the Library of Congress."

trees graced the lawn, "but most magnificent of all were the old elms set in a wide semi-circle around the house, sheltering it as they did the first Homestead in which lived the father and grandfather of Thaddeus Burr." (From an article by Helen Harrison in the *Bridgeport Sunday Post*, August 21, 1927.) Figures 5 and 6 show garden scenes said to be from the late 1800's or early 1900's. Figure 7 shows the garden plan during the Warner's ownership — notice the rose, evergreen, and vegetable garden sections.

The following undated passage by Frank S. Child (from "An Historic Mansion—Being an Account of the Thaddeus Burr Homestead, 1654-1915") is believed to apply to the Homestead in the early 1900's, and is particularly descriptive with respect to the grounds and gardens:

> *The mansion stands in the midst of spacious grounds, shaded by magnificent old trees, the box-bordered walk leading from the street gate to the pillared veranda. At the rear where Mrs. Burr fondly tended her marigolds and roses, her pinks, hollyhocks, and peonies, there now spreads before the eye an old fashioned garden, sweet and bright with flowers which remind us of days when cocked hats and powdered wigs and lofty coiffures and quilted silk bonnets were in vogue. The massive arbor vitae hedge which shields the garden from the east wind dates back generations. Varied vistas of the sea are framed by masses of shrubbery and the graceful foliage of stalwart elms. The old charm of the Burr Homestead still lingers about the place. Art, nature, history vie with each other in their generous gifts and interesting associations.*

The Burr Homestead was still a private residence in the late 1950's. Executors of the Warner estate reportedly were desirous of preserving the "dignity and serenity of a last bit of genuine Americana" and agreed to sell the property to the Town of Fairfield with certain conditions, including the condition that the exterior architecture be preserved. (See the article by Charles S. Peden in the *Fairfield Citizen-News*, September 22, 1995.) In 1959, the Fairfield Representative Town Meeting (RTM) gave its approval for Town purchase of the property; the Homestead was then acquired in 1962.

At first, the mansion was used to house some of the Town's administrative offices. Those offices were moved to Independence Hall when that new Town facility was built in 1979. Since then the Homestead has served as a historic background for noncommercial functions and events. It should be noted that the Homestead was included in the Old Post Road Historic District adopted by the RTM in 1968. The Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1972.

In 1977, the Town received the gift of a sculptured marble bench and platform known as an exedra. This semi-circular structure, of the sort used in ancient Greece and Rome for open-air conversation, was placed on the Homestead grounds in 1979.

Also in 1979, the Town first permitted use of the Homestead mansion and grounds for weddings and wedding receptions. In that year the Board of Selectmen appointed a seven-member Historic Civic Center Advisory Committee to advise the Selectmen on matters concerning the Historic Civic Center, including the Burr Homestead. In 1980 and 1983, the Homestead was enhanced by elaborate "Decorator's Showcases"; floors were refinished, rooms repainted, and the grounds manicured for these fund-raising events.

Although the Homestead has served the public for over 30 years now, the Town has not been able to dedicate the same level of attention to the grounds and mansion as the private owners did. The Board of Selectmen and RTM in 1996 are considering a proposal from the Fairfield Historical Society whereby the Historical Society would administer operation of the Burr Homestead on behalf of the Town.



Figure 5: Reflecting pond and fountain in the late 1800's or early 1900's. (Source: photograph by Mabel Osgood Wright, courtesy of Fairfield Historical Society; computer-enhanced by Glen Bousquet, Graphic Design.)



Figure 6: Formal gardens in the late 1800's or early 1900's. (Source: photograph by Mabel Osgood Wright, courtesy of Fairfield Historical Society; computer-enhanced by Glen Bousquet, Graphic Design.)

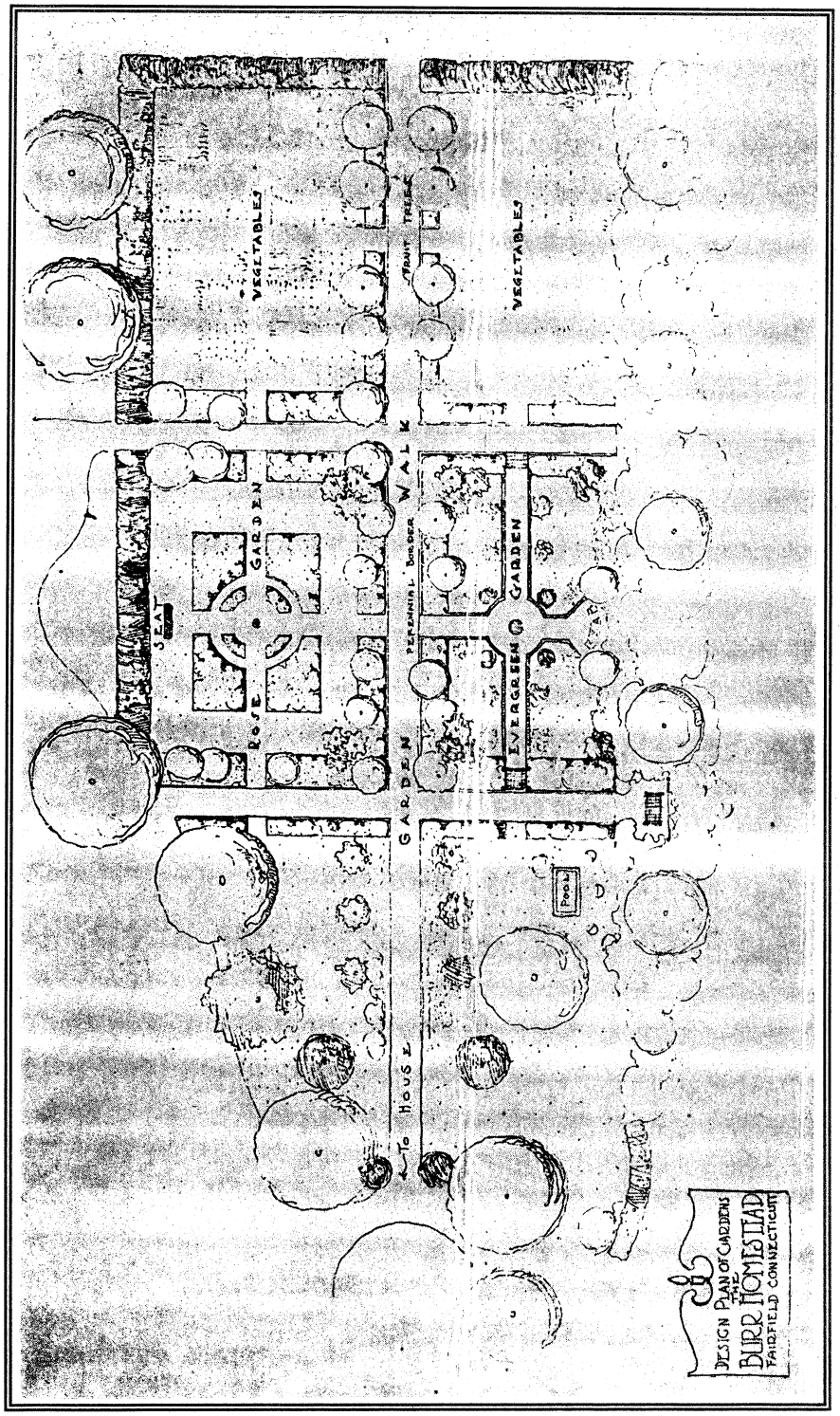


Figure 7: Historical garden plan. (Source: *Gardens of Colony and State* compiled and edited by Alice G.B. Lockwood, 1934.)

DESCRIPTION OF THE GROUNDS AND SOME MANAGEMENT CONCERNS IN 1996

The Burr Homestead today encompasses a little over four of the approximately 20 acres that make up Fairfield's Historic Civic Center. Construction of Independence Hall on the Homestead grounds in 1979 somewhat reduced the original Homestead acreage on which the formal gardens and arboretum had been established. The Homestead is bounded on the north by the Old Post Road; on the west by Penfield Road; on the east by Independence Hall, the Old Academy,[5] and St. Paul's Episcopal Church; and on the south by a parking area for Independence Hall and a former residence now owned by the Town and used for administrative offices. A sketch of existing conditions on the Homestead grounds in 1996 is included as Figure 8.

The brick wall built in the 1930's to keep out trolley noise still provides a six-foot barrier between the Homestead and the Old Post Road. (See Figure 1.) On the west side of the property, this wall extends from the Old Post Road about 240 feet south along Penfield Road. The rest of the western boundary is marked by a chain-link fence. The brick wall also extends south for about 120 feet along the east side of the Homestead property, providing separation between the grounds and St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

Described earlier, the mansion is now used for private and public functions of a noncommercial nature, including weddings, exhibitions, and fund-raising events. The east wing of the house includes a caretaker's residence dating back to the last private ownership. Thousands of visitors have enjoyed the mansion since it was purchased by the Town, but the resulting wear and tear is now of concern to Town officials and others. The need for refurbishment of the mansion is being addressed in 1996 by the Board of Selectmen, Representative Town Meeting, Historic District Commission, and Fairfield Historical Society.

The public may enter the mansion from the north (front) and south sides. The front walk from Old Post Road leads through a gate in the brick wall and across a narrow lawn. (See Figure 9.) Vehicles enter and leave the grounds via a paved driveway. (See Figure 10.) The driveway leads from Old Post Road to a circular turn-around on the south side of the mansion where passengers are dropped off and picked up at the mansion's south entrance.

The current flow of vehicle and pedestrian traffic on the Homestead grounds is a matter of concern. No formal parking locations are designated on the grounds, but some visitors park along the edge of the driveway and turn-around, and on the grass adjoining the turn-around. (See Figures 11 and 12.) This parking practice damages the adjoining lawn, may interfere with vehicles dropping off and picking up visitors, and has compacted the soil around the base of the copper beech tree on the west side of the mansion, thereby threatening the life of this historic tree described later in this section. There really should be no need for on-site parking since most Homestead events take place on weekends when ample public parking area is available at nearby Independence Hall. A pedestrian walkway connects the south side of the mansion with the north entrance to Independence Hall. There are also some public parking spaces parallel to Old Post Road near the front of the mansion. Notwithstanding these nearby public parking opportunities, the informal opportunities for on-site parking on the Homestead grounds are, at the present time, a temptation for visitors who do not wish to park a short distance away and walk to the mansion.

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[5] The Old Academy was originally located between the Burr Mansion and St. Paul's Episcopal Church. It was moved to its present location in 1958.

(Source: Prepared by Geoffrey Steadman with reference to drawing prepared by Oliver Nurseries, Inc.)

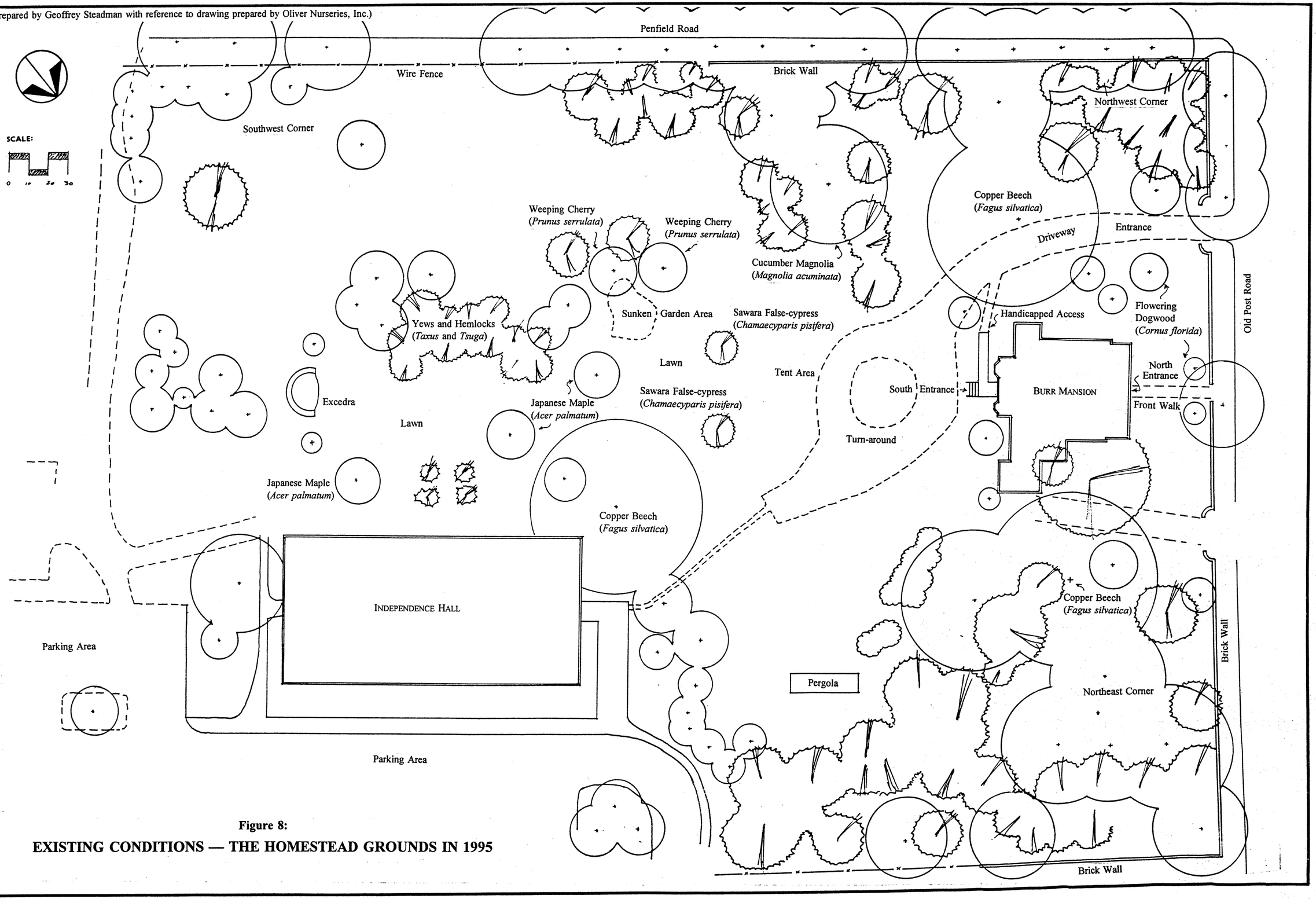


Figure 8:

EXISTING CONDITIONS — THE HOMESTEAD GROUNDS IN 1995

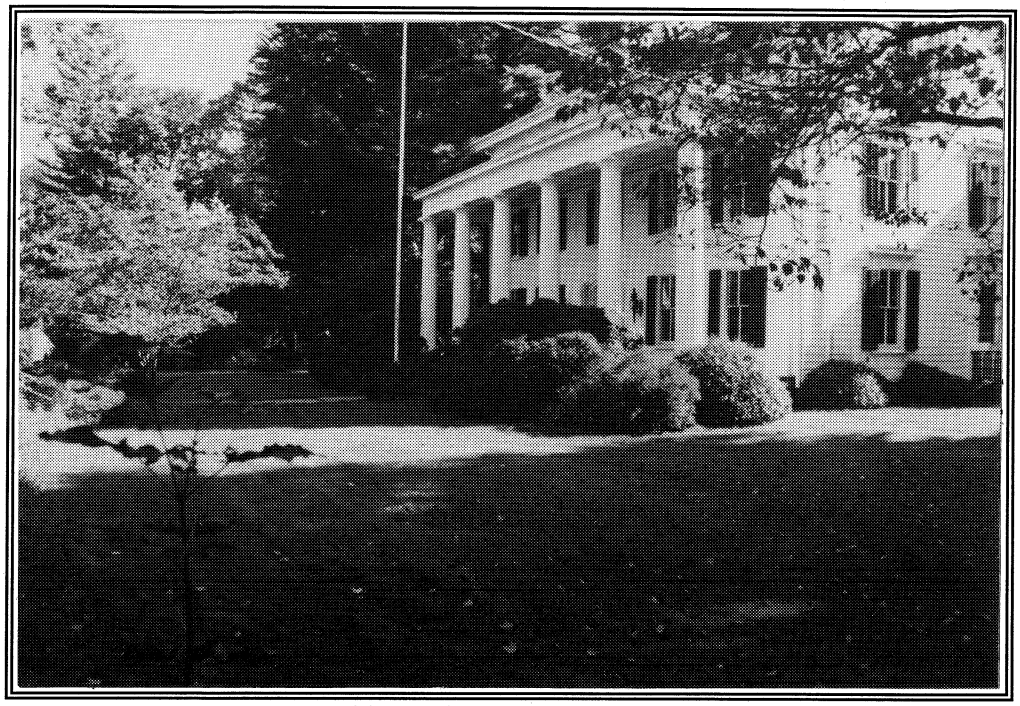


Figure 9: Front entrance and lawn of the Burr mansion.

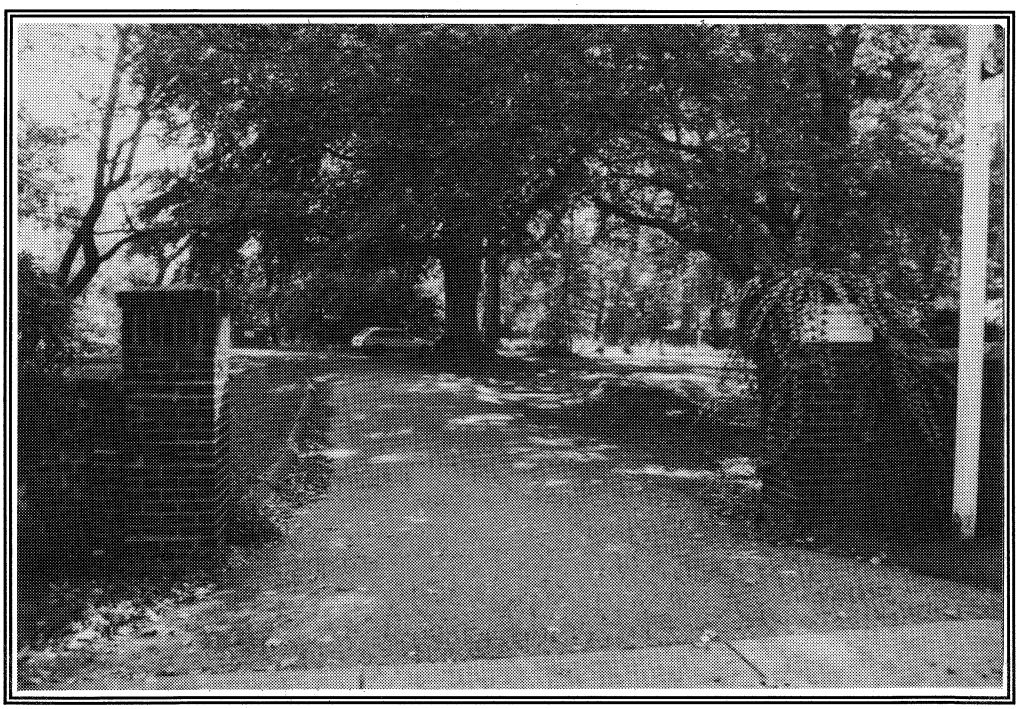


Figure 10: Driveway entrance to the Homestead from Old Post Road; copper beech tree adjoining the driveway in center of photo.

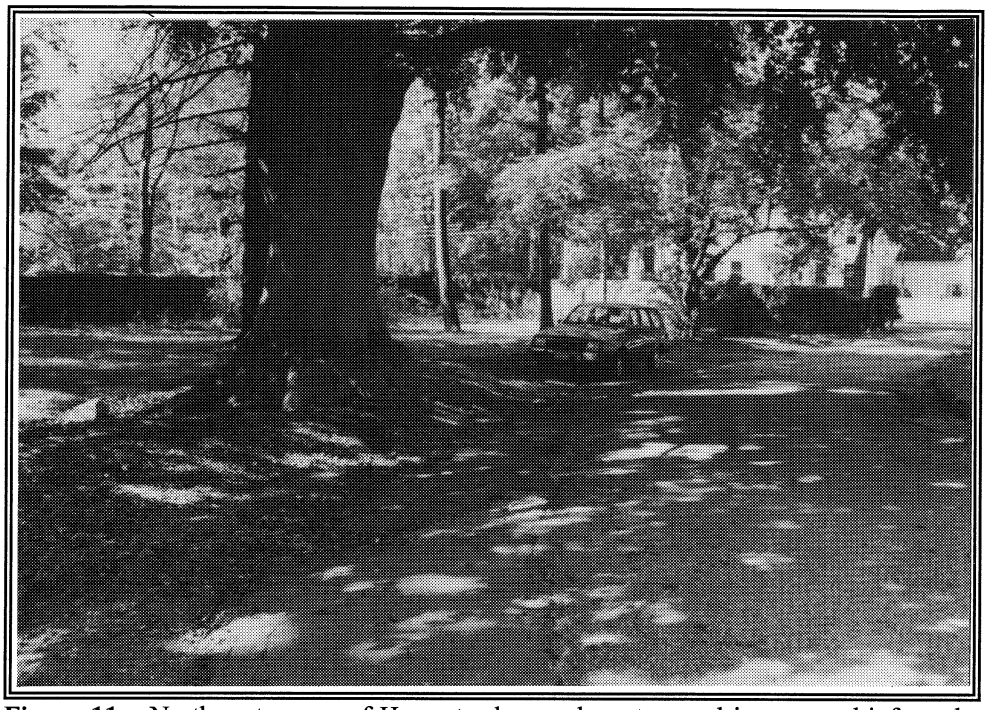


Figure 11: Northwest corner of Homestead grounds; entrance driveway and informal parking area near copper beech tree.

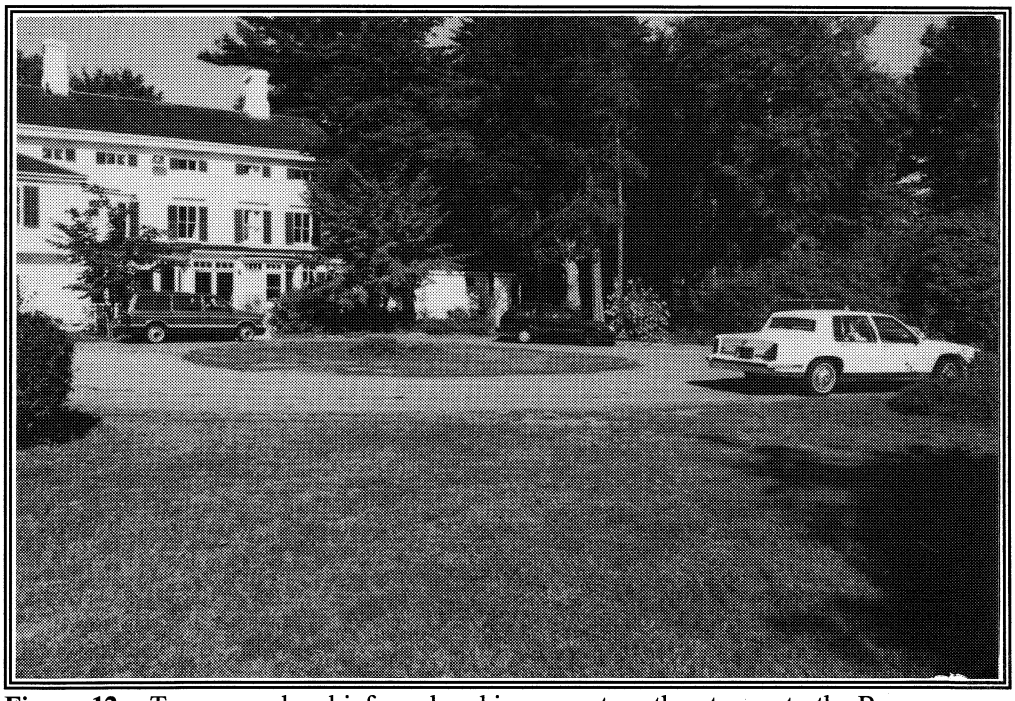


Figure 12: Turn-around and informal parking area at south entrance to the Burr mansion.



Figure 13: Ornamental evergreens adjoining the south lawn; Burr mansion at right.

The Homestead grounds in 1996 bear little resemblance to the carefully tended arboretum and formal gardens of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The private owners employed full-time gardeners; the Town, however, does not have the resources at the present time to provide much more than a basic level of grounds maintenance. As a result, active grooming of the trees and shrubs has been a relatively low priority on the work list of the Public Works Department. The flower gardens that once provided much color and beauty but required constant care and attention are now just a memory.

The historical garden design, typical for its day, relied heavily on symmetry. It was based on a central, linear axis intersected by secondary pathways that created several distinct yet related garden compartments. (See Figure 7.) The Homestead's central axis extended from the entrance gate at the Old Post Road, up the front walk, through the central hall of the mansion, out the back entrance, through the formal gardens on a bluestone path known as the Garden Walk, and south toward Long Island Sound.

There is now a large expanse of lawn on the south side of the mansion where the gardens and Garden Walk were once located. (See Figures 4 and 13.) Tents are sometimes erected on this south lawn to accommodate special events. Excepting the short path to Independence Hall, there are no longer any formal walkways to guide those who would stroll through the grounds.

With no gardens or paths to tie the various elements of the Homestead grounds together, the historical relationship of the mansion to the grounds is no longer apparent. Enough of the historical elements remain, however, to provide a framework for enhancement — perhaps not for a return to the formal and elaborately designed display gardens of past centuries (the maintenance requirements could be prohibitive), but certainly for creation of a memorable public space with a clear historic linkage.

Some of the interesting elements of the Homestead grounds are an old sunken garden, garden house, and marble exedra. The sunken garden, where a fountain once tumbled into a reflecting pool under dripping branches (see Figure 5 and the article by Helen Harrison in the *Bridgeport Sunday Post*, August 21, 1927), is now overgrown with weeds and unrecognizable near the south lawn. (See Figure 14.) The garden house (see Figure 15) was once used to entertain guests near the sunken garden. It is now located on the east side of the lawn, close by Independence Hall. The garden house was renovated by the Town in 1993 but appears functionally isolated from the rest of the grounds. The marble exedra faces the mansion from the south end of the old central garden axis. (See Figures 4 and 16.) The exedra also appears isolated and seems more related to Independence Hall than to the mansion and Homestead grounds.

Other than the exedra, there are no benches or other types of seating amenities for strollers on the grounds. Without paths, benches, or management attention, the northeast, northwest, and southwest corners of the property are generally neglected and not used by visitors. (See Figures 11, 17, and 18.)

There are many trees and shrubs on the Homestead grounds but only a slight resemblance to the historic arboretum. Due to lack of maintenance, the potential scientific, educational, and esthetic values of the current arboretum are not being realized. The stately elms, once described as the most magnificent of many great trees to grace the old Homestead, all perished from the dutch elm disease. A number of hemlocks have succumbed to the pest known as the wooly adelgid. Nevertheless, many hardwoods, evergreens, and ornamentals remain, and there are several outstanding individual trees, including three copper beech trees (*Fagus sylvatica*) about 80 to 90 feet tall and 42 to 66 inches in diameter. (See Figures 11 and 17.) These trees, estimated to be 100 to 120 years old, have been described as living symbols of continuity through several eras of change affecting the Homestead. The copper beech is native to Europe and therefore considered an exotic species on the Homestead grounds. Two of these trees flank the mansion — one is on the west side, the other on the east — and the third is near the northwest corner of Independence Hall. Parking off the paved surface of the Homestead driveway has compacted the soil and seriously damaged the root structure of the 66-inch diameter copper beech tree on the west side of the mansion. This condition requires immediate attention if the tree is to survive.

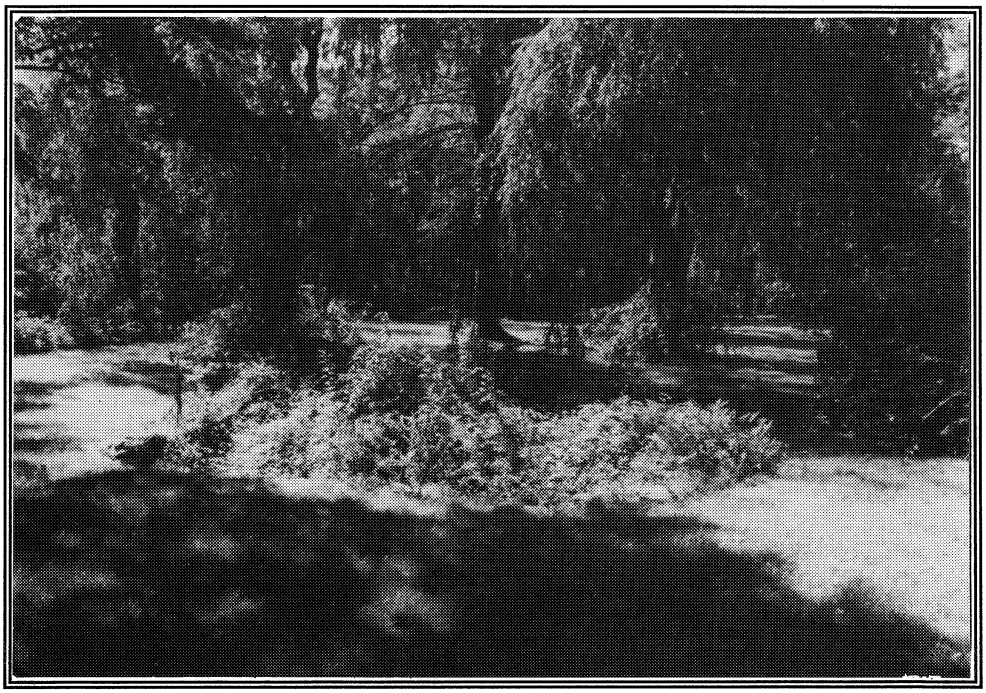


Figure 14: Overgrown location of old sunken garden and reflecting pool shown as Figure 5; weeping cherry trees in the background.



Figure 15: Garden house; Burr mansion in the background.



Figure 16: Marble exedra looking south.

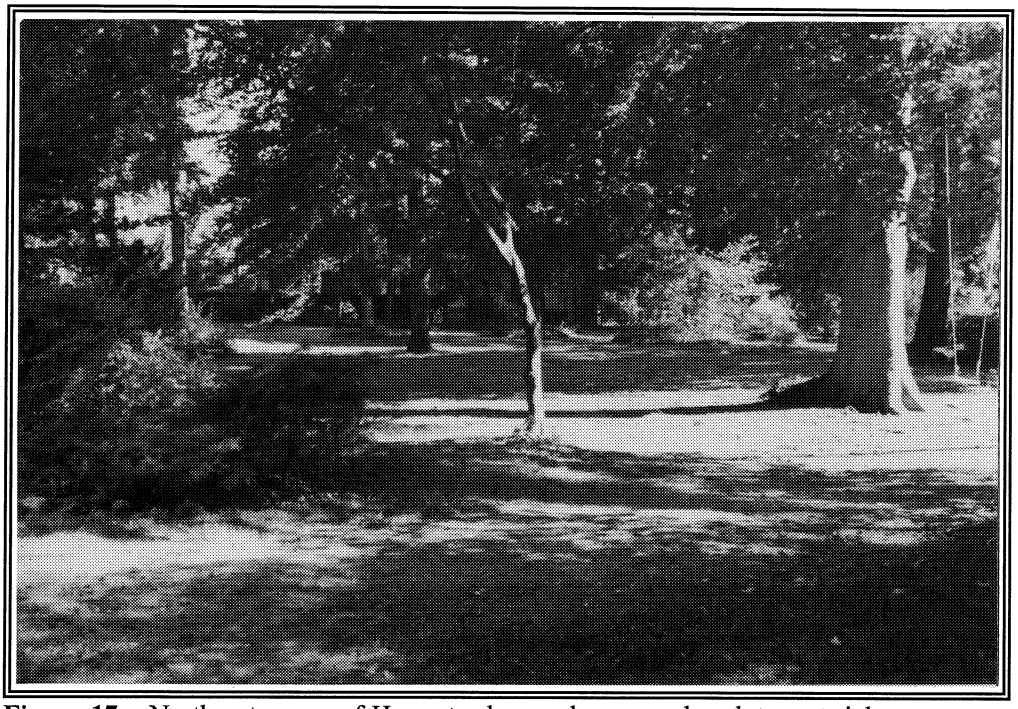


Figure 17: Northeast corner of Homestead grounds; copper beech tree at right.



Figure 18: Southwest corner of Homestead grounds.

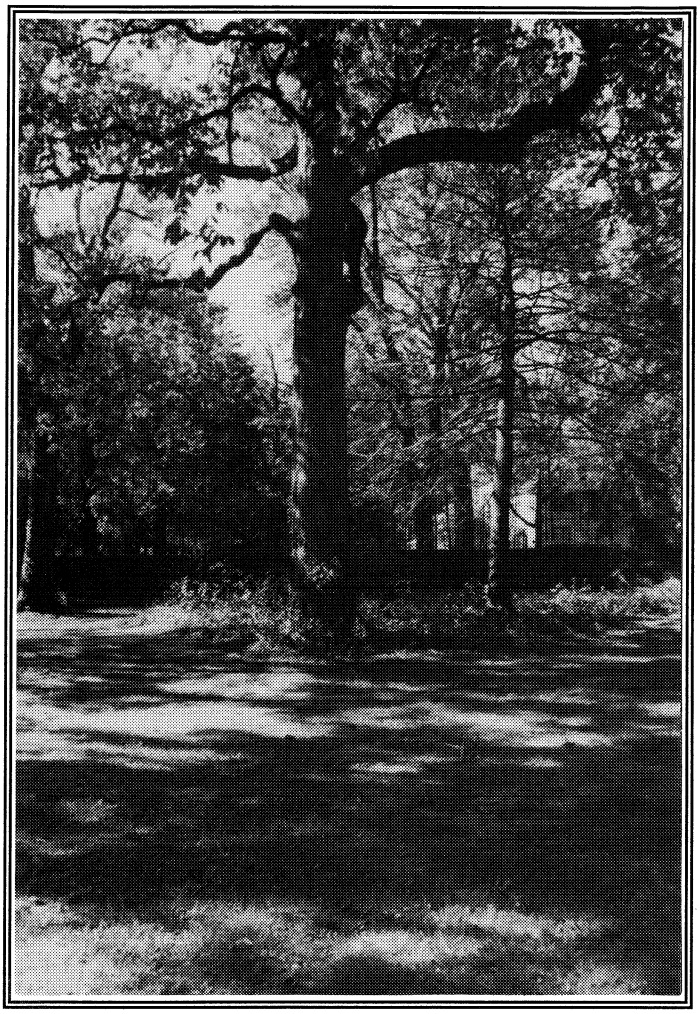


Figure 19: Cucumber magnolia tree; the brick wall along Penfield Road is in the background.

Other prominent trees include a cucumber magnolia (*Magnolia acuminata*) 80 to 90 feet tall near the Penfield Road side of the property (see Figure 19); two weeping flowering cherries (*Prunus subhirtella*) near the sunken garden (see Figure 14) and two sawara false-cypress trees (*Chamaecyparis pisifera*) on either side of the old central garden axis (see Figure 20).

A number of other native and exotic species of trees and ornamental shrubs are also found on the Homestead grounds. These include species of pine (*Pinus* spp.), spruce (*Picea* spp.), maple (*Acer* spp.), hemlock (*Tsuga* spp.), and linden (*Tilia* spp.), as well as flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) and Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*). Mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), azalea (*Rhododendron* spp.), rhododendron (*Rhododendron* spp.), arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*), boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*), and yew (*Taxus* spp.) are also present. The arborvitae that remains in the area behind the exedra was originally part of a massive hedge that once framed the south and east sides of the gardens. The boxwood shrubs near the front entrance to the mansion are judged to be over 100 years old.

In recent years, a number of memorial trees, including flowering dogwoods and several kwanzan cherry (*Prunus serrulata*) trees have been planted on the grounds. An English oak (*Quercus robur*) was planted in 1992 by the Town's First Selectman to honor the retirement of Eleanor Wilbur, a former Town representative to the State Legislature.

Unfortunately, the Burr Homestead's trees and shrubs, and particularly the ornamental varieties, have not received the careful attention needed for maintenance of a healthy arboretum. The over-mature and pest-damaged trees should now be removed, along with the undergrowth and vines causing further injury to the arboretum. Undergrowth is particularly prevalent along and in the neglected edges and corners of the grounds. Substantial pruning is required, and mulch is needed around the base of many trees and shrubs to help retain water, protect the root system, and provide necessary nutrients. Maintenance is needed on an on-going rather than one-time or occasional basis.

Complete restoration of the Burr Homestead's historical gardens and arboretum in 1996, however, is neither practical nor desirable. There are a number of plant species available today that are of better value (in terms of resistance to pests and disease) and require less maintenance than some of the trees and shrubs planted on the Homestead grounds in the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries. The flowering gardens of

the past required continuous and careful attention by full-time gardeners. Such attention will likely be difficult to achieve at the present time. Also, the gardens and arboretum today should be managed to provide benefits for the general public whereas the original grounds were essentially a private preserve. Achievement of the public benefits that would be associated with enhancement of the Burr Homestead grounds have so far been limited by lack of Town and private funds, and by lack of a specific entity with responsibility for long-term enhancement and management of the grounds. Public participation, through funding and volunteer maintenance support, is essential for grounds enhancement.

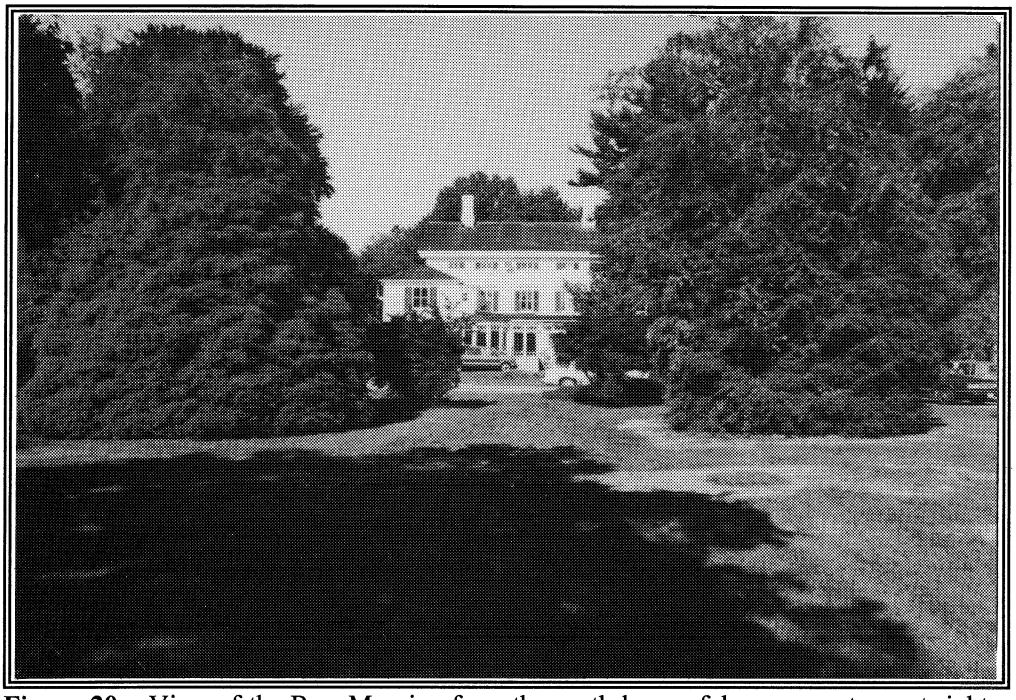


Figure 20: View of the Burr Mansion from the south lawn; false-cypress trees at right and left in the foreground.

SITE IMPROVEMENT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Site Improvement and Management Plan for the Burr Homestead is based on 13 principal goals and has 18 components consisting of short-term and long-term recommendations for enhancement and maintenance of the Homestead grounds, including gardens and arboretum. The goals should be thought of as basic and general guidelines for managing the grounds; achievement of the goals should be supported by all citizens and public officials. The goals establish a foundation for the plan components and recommendations that follow. The goals are numbered for reference purposes and not to denote priority.

MANAGEMENT GOALS

GOAL 1: RECOGNIZE HOMESTEAD RESOURCES AND VALUES.

Recognize that the Homestead grounds, including gardens and arboretum, provide important cultural, educational, scientific, environmental, and other resources and values that contribute importantly to the overall quality of life in Fairfield, and that the grounds should be managed in the public interest for the benefit of all Town residents and the general public.

GOAL 2: BENEFICIAL PUBLIC USE.

Provide opportunities for beneficial public use of the Homestead grounds, consistent with the capacity of the grounds to support that use without significant adverse impacts on environmental quality, cultural resources, and public health, safety, and enjoyment.

2.a. Provide opportunities for use of the Homestead grounds for noncommercial public and private functions and charitable events, subject to Town review and approval.

2.b. Provide opportunities for use of the Homestead grounds for leisurely walking, nature observation, educational and scientific purposes, and other compatible activities by individuals and organized groups.

GOAL 3: FUNCTIONAL GARDENS AND ARBORETUM.

Establish and maintain functional gardens and an arboretum of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants for cultural, scientific, educational, and esthetic purposes on the Homestead grounds. Establish and maintain the gardens and arboretum in accordance with a coordinated landscape design that: (a) links and encompasses all elements of the site, including the historic mansion; (b) preserves the historical design of the Homestead grounds to the extent feasible; and (c) may be maintained in a practical manner with reasonable expenditures of funds and effort.

GOAL 4: ACTIVE AND COORDINATED MANAGEMENT.

Actively manage use and conservation of the Homestead grounds, including gardens and arboretum, in the public interest and for the benefit of all Town citizens and the general public. Coordinate efforts to implement the Site Improvement and Management Plan among all relevant governmental authorities and private groups with management responsibilities and interest.

4.a. Coordinate the actions of the Board of Selectmen, Representative Town Meeting, Historic District Commission, Public Works Department, Community Forestry Program, Fairfield Historical Society, and other relevant agencies and organizations, as those actions may affect the Burr Homestead grounds.

4.b. Designate a specific entity with principal responsibility for coordinating management of the Homestead grounds and overseeing implementation of the Site Improvement and Management Plan.

GOAL 5: PUBLIC—PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP FOR ONGOING MANAGEMENT.

Develop and maintain public awareness of the Burr Homestead's cultural, educational, scientific, environmental, and other resources and values, and establish a base of public support for on-going management of the Homestead grounds. Establish and maintain a comprehensive program for ongoing management of the Homestead grounds that combines private sector support and volunteer efforts with Town resources and services.

GOAL 6: ONGOING MAINTENANCE.

Establish a comprehensive and ongoing program of pruning, planting, fertilizing, mowing, and other maintenance activities for the purpose of maintaining a healthy and functional arboretum and gardens, conserving and enhancing environmental and cultural resources, providing safe and enjoyable public use, and sustaining other beneficial functions.

GOAL 7: DEDICATED FUNDING SOURCE.

Establish and maintain a dedicated source of funds to support ongoing management of the Homestead grounds, including gardens and arboretum. Obtain and allocate funds, including private contributions, for improvement and maintenance of the grounds.

GOAL 8: EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC USE.

Support use of the Homestead grounds, including gardens and arboretum, for educational and scientific use, consistent with the capacity of the grounds to support that use. Support use of the grounds for educational field studies—including horticultural, arboreal, and historic studies—by primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, conservation and natural history groups, and interested individuals.

GOAL 9: PASSIVE RECREATIONAL USE.

Support use of the Homestead grounds for such passive recreational use as leisurely walking, nature observation, and quiet relaxation, consistent with the capacity of the grounds to support that use. Provide appropriate amenities, including formal paths and seating accommodations to enhance pedestrian use.

GOAL 10: CULTURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION.

Preserve the Homestead's landscape features and garden ornaments having historical significance; protect those features and ornaments from the potentially negative impacts of public use.

GOAL 11: ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION.

Conserve and enhance the environmental quality (including scenic quality), natural resources, and ecological functions associated with the Homestead grounds, including gardens and arboretum. Plan and manage use of the grounds in a manner consistent with the capacity of the grounds to support that use in an environmentally sound manner.

GOAL 12: SAFE AND EFFICIENT VEHICLE AND PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION.

Improve vehicle and pedestrian circulation on and near the Homestead grounds to eliminate potential conflicts and adverse impacts on the grounds and enhance public enjoyment.

GOAL 13: FLEXIBILITY IN RESPONSE TO CHANGING CONDITIONS.

Monitor the condition and use of the Homestead grounds on an ongoing basis and consider any revisions to the Site Improvement and Management Plan that may be needed to respond to changing conditions and circumstances.

PLAN COMPONENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following plan components and recommendations are intended to guide enhancement and maintenance of the Burr Homestead grounds. The components and recommendations are numbered for reference purposes and not presented in order of priority. Implementation may proceed in phases, as funds are available. Also, since the Site Improvement and Management Plan is not a detailed construction blueprint, the plan components and recommendations may be modified over time as implementation proceeds. The plan provides flexibility to ensure that implementation proceeds in a manner that maximizes public benefits and is consistent with changing conditions. Some of the plan components and recommendations are illustrated on the Conceptual Landscape Design Plan presented as Figure 23.

1. PEDESTRIAN PATHS AND AMENITIES:

a) A system of formal, clearly defined pedestrian paths should be established to outline garden boundaries and link the various elements of the Homestead grounds. Consideration should be given to establishing the formal garden paths with surfaces of crushed stone or gravel set on a stone dust/gravel base. The borders of the garden paths should be marked with steel edging. (See Figures 21 and 22.)

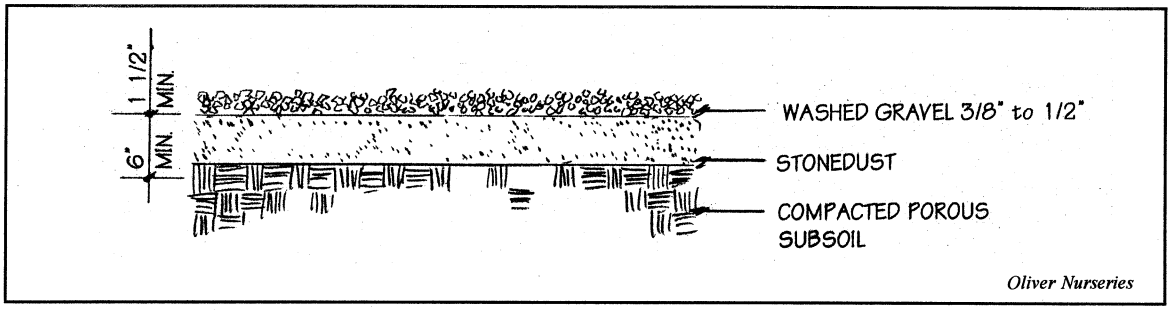


Figure 21: Detail for gravel pathway.

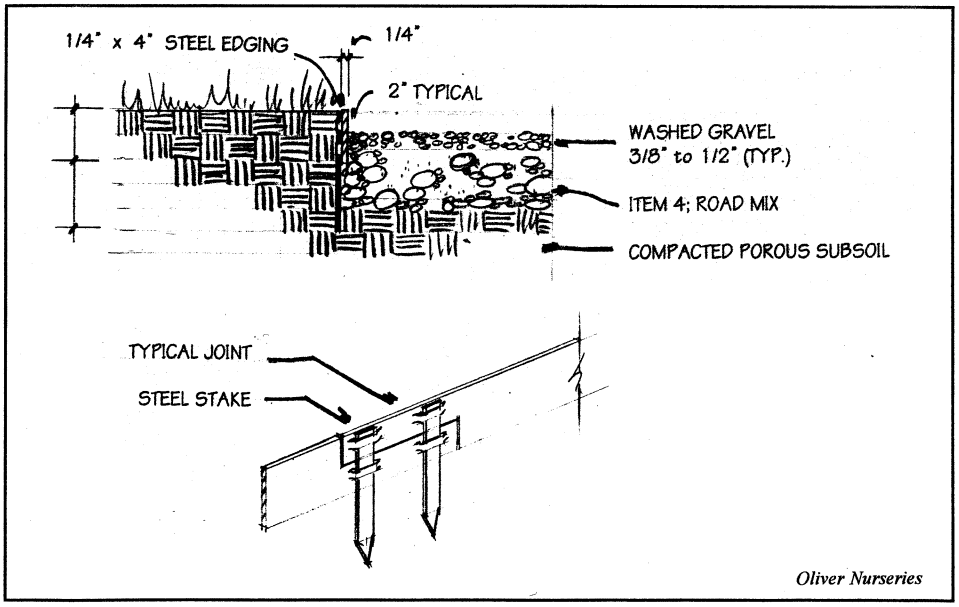


Figure 22: Detail for steel edging to mark the borders of garden paths.

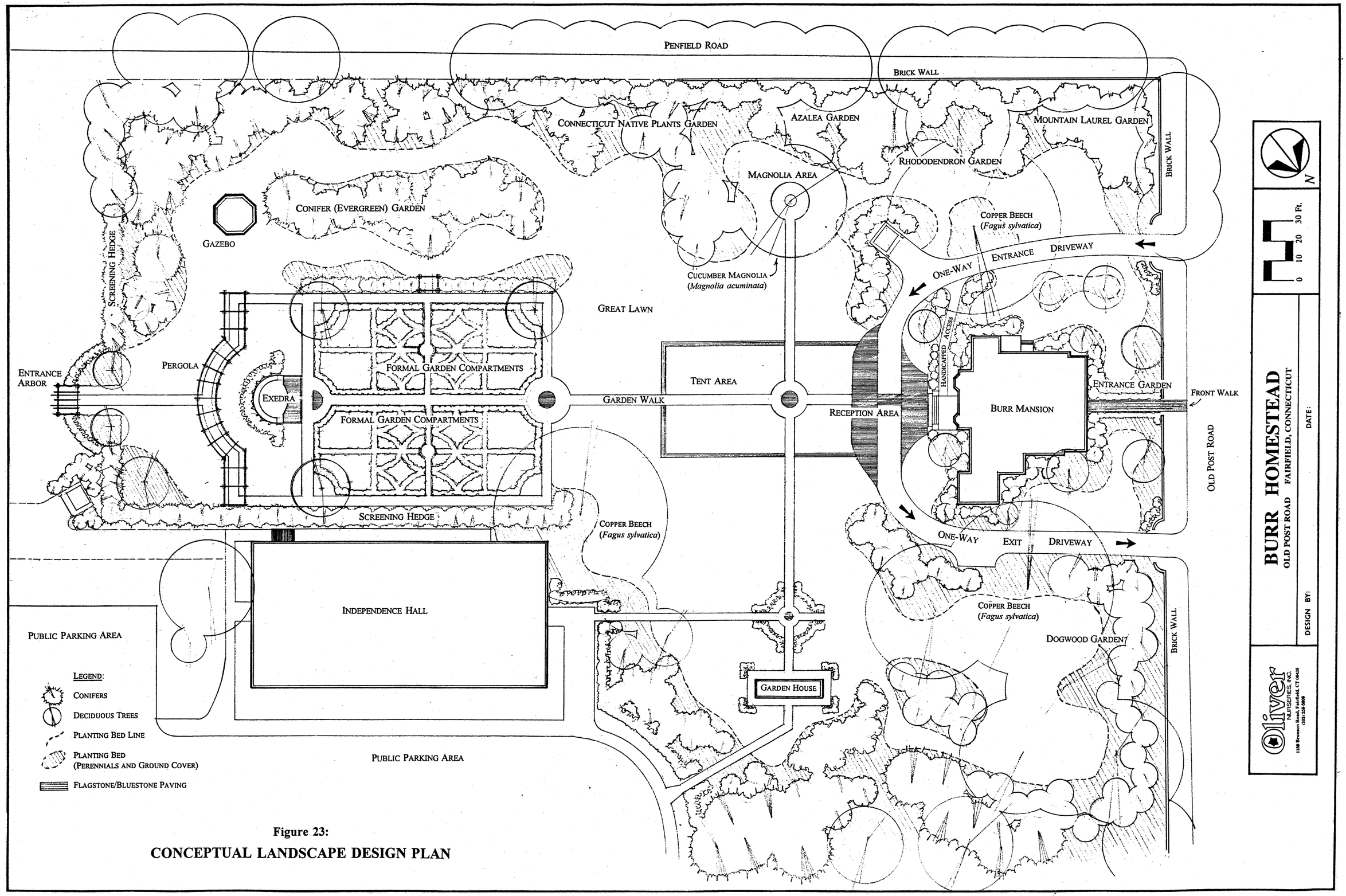


Figure 23:

CONCEPTUAL LANDSCAPE DESIGN PLAN

b) Circular "nodes" marked by garden ornaments should be created at the intersection of the formal garden paths. Consideration should be given to refurbishing the old fountain structure now located in the driveway turn-around at the south entrance to the Burr mansion (see Figure 4), and to relocation and reuse of this structure as a decorative garden ornament.

c) Informal paths of wood chips or marked by other means should be established to guide pedestrians walking in the northwest, northeast, and southwest corners of the property.

d) The existing paved, diagonal path connecting the north entrance of Independence Hall with the existing driveway turn-around at the south entrance to the Burr mansion should be eliminated. A new path, parallel to the central Garden Walk, should be constructed from the north entrance of Independence Hall. This new path should intersect with the new garden path connecting the garden house and magnolia tree areas (see nos. 5 and 6 on page 28), thereby providing a pedestrian connection between Independence Hall and the south entrance to the mansion.

e) A new, diagonal path should be constructed to connect the public parking area on the east side of Independence Hall with the Homestead grounds. This new path should lead to the garden house and the new garden path connecting the garden house and magnolia tree areas. (See nos. 5 and 6 on page 28.)

f) A new entrance path to the Homestead grounds, framed by an arbor (a lattice-work structure covered with climbing shrubs or vines), should be constructed along the central Homestead axis, from the south parking area at Independence Hall to the exedra—pergola area. (See Figure 24 and no. 4 on page 27.)

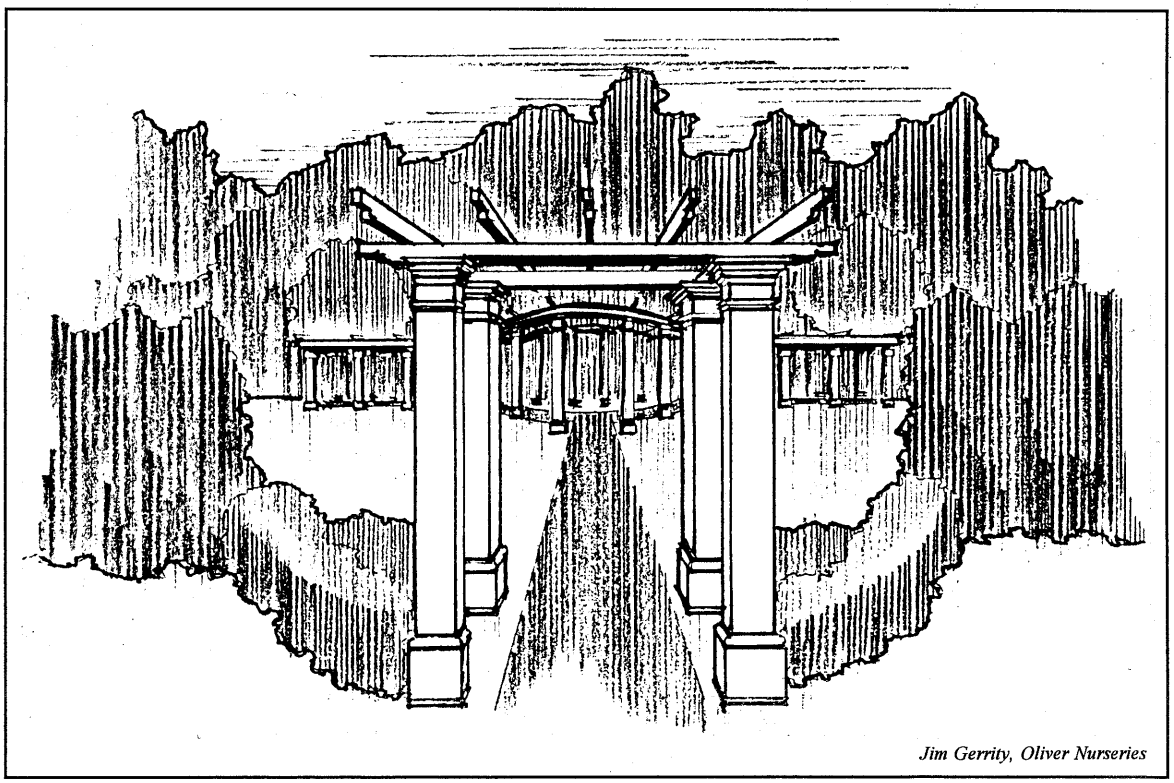


Figure 24: Conceptual sketch of new entrance path to Homestead grounds from south parking area at Independence Hall; new path leads through an entrance arbor to the exedra—pergola area.

g) Ornamental benches or other seating amenities of an appropriate scale and material should be provided at several locations on the grounds to enable strollers to sit, rest, and observe the gardens and arboretum.

2. VEHICLE ACCESS AND PARKING:

a) The existing driveway turn-around at the south entrance to the mansion should be eliminated. A one-way vehicle entrance and exit system should be established to reduce the potential adverse impacts of vehicle traffic on pedestrian and garden areas. Vehicle ingress should be from the Old Post Road through the existing entrance and driveway area on the west side of the north property line. The existing driveway should be extended around the south and east sides of the mansion to provide for vehicle egress through the existing gate on the east side of the north property line.

b) A new reception (loading/unloading) area should be established at the south entrance of the mansion to accommodate the dropping off and picking up of visitors.

c) The traffic circulation and reception areas should be paved with different materials to clearly distinguish the loading/unloading area. Consideration should be given to using fine gravel set on bituminous asphalt for the traffic circulation areas, and to using bluestone set on concrete (or stamped concrete) for the reception area. (See Figures 25 and 26.)

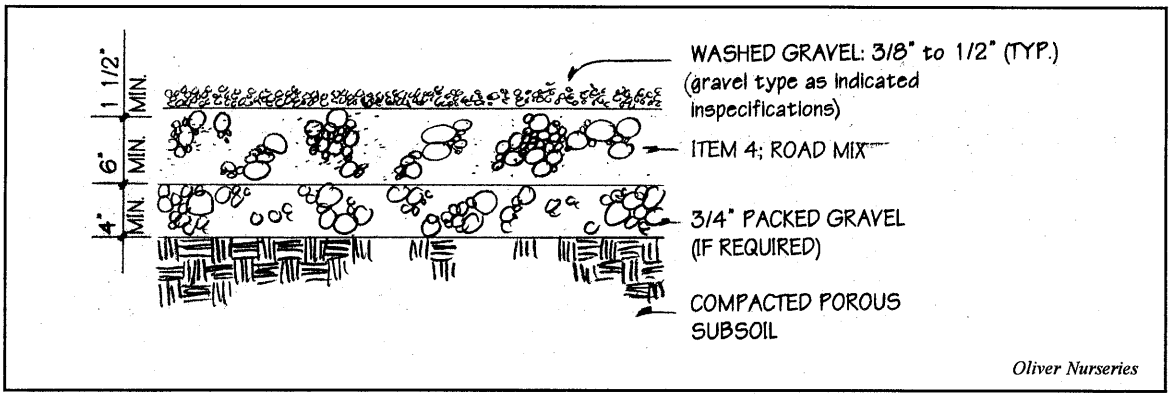


Figure 25: Detail for gravel driveway on road-mix base.

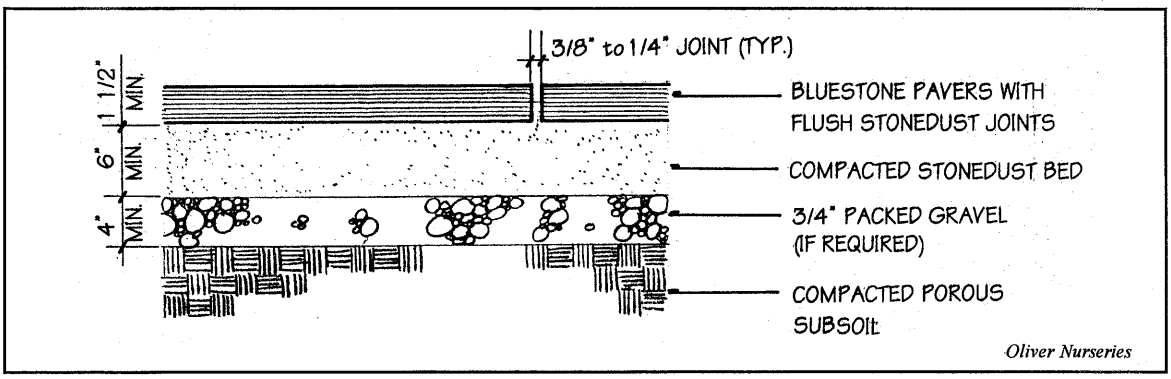


Figure 26: Detail for bluestone pavers set on stonedust.

d) The width of the driveway around the mansion should be as narrow as practical (at least 12 feet is required for emergency vehicles) to help reduce the potential adverse impacts of vehicle traffic on pedestrian and garden areas, and to protect the root systems of the existing copper beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) trees on the west and east sides of the mansion.

e) Curbing should be placed along the edge of the driveway and reception areas to help restrict vehicles to paved areas and discourage drivers from parking on the grass and garden areas. Consideration should be given to using stone curbing.

f) Restricted parking space for caretaker/tenant use and handicapped use should be provided on the Homestead grounds. Homestead visitors should be directed to public parking areas at Independence Hall, Old Town Hall, and along Old Post Road.

3. CENTRAL HOMESTEAD AXIS:

a) The central Homestead axis which historically extended from the entrance gate at the Old Post Road, up the front walk, through the central hall of the mansion, out the back entrance, through the formal gardens on a path known as the Garden Walk, and south toward Long Island Sound should be maintained as a central design aspect of the Homestead grounds. The Garden Walk should be re-established as a formal pedestrian path between the south entrance of the mansion and exedra—pergola area (see no. 4 below).

4. EXEDRA—PERGOLA AREA:

a) The exedra should be maintained in its present location as a focal point of activity and interest on the southern part of the Homestead grounds. The exedra may be used as a formal setting for educational activities and organized events adjoining the formal garden area (see no. 8 on page 29).

b) The exedra area should be enhanced with appropriate ornamental plantings and by placement of a garden pergola (an open-work covering over which climbing plants may be trained) that will provide a sheltered walkway and a framing background for the exedra when viewed from the Garden Walk. (See Figure 23.)

c) A new entrance path to the Homestead grounds, framed by an arbor (a lattice-work structure covered with climbing shrubs or vines), should be constructed along the central Homestead axis, from the south parking area at Independence Hall to the exedra—pergola area. (See no. 1 on page 24.)

d) "Adoption" of the exedra—pergola area by an organization or individuals for the purpose of enhancement and maintenance (subject to oversight by a special Town-established committee) should be considered.

5. GARDEN HOUSE:

a) The garden house should be maintained in its present location as a focal point of activity and interest on the Homestead grounds. The garden house may be used as a formal setting for educational activities and organized events. The garden house should be enhanced with appropriate ornamental plantings.

b) "Adoption" of the garden house by an organization or individuals for the purpose of enhancement and maintenance (subject to oversight by a special Town-established committee) should be considered.

c) A formal garden path, intersecting the Garden Walk and the new garden path leading to Independence Hall, should be established to link the garden house area with the Magnolia tree area (see no. 6 below).

d) A new, diagonal path should be constructed to connect the public parking area on the east side of Independence Hall with the Homestead grounds via the garden house area. (See no. 1 on page 24.) This new path should lead to the garden house and the new garden path connecting the garden house and magnolia tree areas.

6. MAGNOLIA TREE AREA:

a) The immediate area around the cucumber magnolia (*Magnolia acuminata*) should be enhanced and maintained as a focal point of activity and interest on the Homestead grounds. The area around the magnolia tree should be enhanced with appropriate ornamental plantings.

b) Appropriate seating amenities should be provided in the area around the tree to enable Homestead visitors to sit, rest, and observe the gardens and arboretum. Consideration should be given to establishing a circular bench around the base of the tree if such a bench can be constructed and maintained in a manner that does not adversely impact on the tree's vitality.

c) "Adoption" of the magnolia tree area by an organization or individuals for the purpose of enhancement and maintenance (subject to oversight by a special Town-established committee) should be considered.

d) A formal garden path, intersecting the Garden Walk and the new garden path leading to Independence Hall, should be established to link the magnolia tree area with the garden house area. (See no. 5 above.)

7: GREAT LAWN:

a) An open expanse of lawn, bisected by the Garden Walk, should be maintained between the formal garden area (see no. 8 on page 29) and the garden path linking the magnolia tree and garden house areas (see nos. 5 and 6 above). An ongoing program of turf maintenance should be designed and applied to this Great Lawn area.

b) Adequate space should be provided on the Great Lawn for tent placement needed to accommodate special events on the Homestead grounds. A space of at least 80 by 120 feet, including space for a tent 60 by 100 feet in size and a buffer area for tent stakes and lines, should be designated for tent placement. The boundaries of the tent placement area should be marked with a border of flagstone laid on edge. Consideration should be given to establishing a more hardy type of turf and substrate for use in the tent placement area than elsewhere on the Great Lawn.

8. FORMAL GARDENS:

a) Formal gardens should be re-established in the area between the Great Lawn and exedra. Two large garden compartments, each approximately 40 feet by 110 feet, bisected by the Garden Walk, and framed on two sides by long perennial borders (perhaps boxwood hedges) should be established. Within these compartments, consideration should be given to development and maintenance of smaller, functional, and cohesive garden areas.

b) "Adoption" of garden compartments by organizations or individuals for the purpose of development, enhancement, and maintenance (subject to oversight by a special Town-established committee) should be considered.

9. GAZEBO:

a) A gazebo of appropriate scale and materials should be constructed and maintained as a focal point of activity and interest on the Homestead grounds. (See Figure 27.) The gazebo should be constructed in the southwest part of the grounds to encourage beneficial use of this previously neglected area. The gazebo may be used as a formal setting for educational activities and organized events. The area around the gazebo should be enhanced with appropriate ornamental plantings.

b) "Adoption" of the gazebo area by an organization or individuals for the purpose of enhancement and maintenance (subject to oversight by a special Town-established committee) should be considered.

10. SCREENING VEGETATION:

a) A screening hedge of evergreen vegetation should be established between the eastern compartment of the formal garden and the west side of Independence Hall.

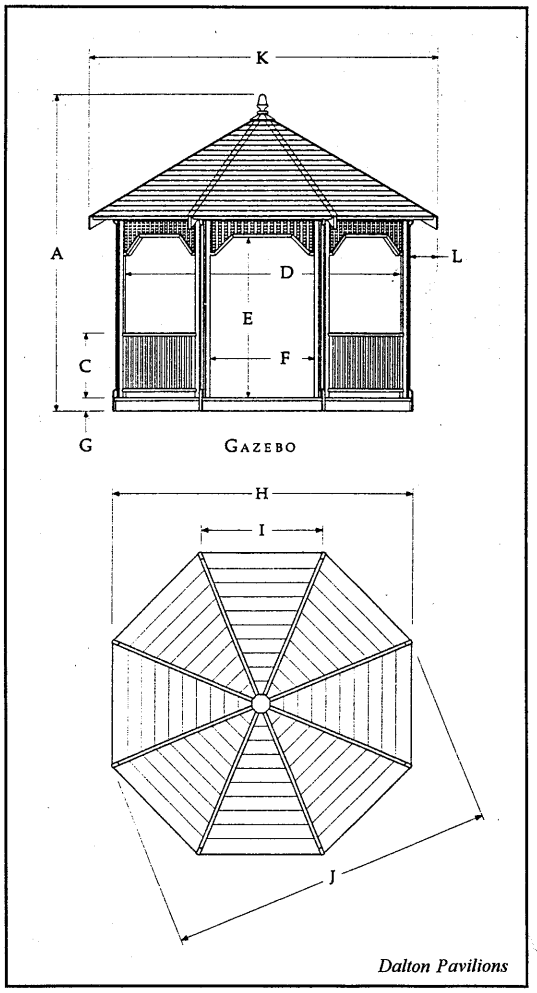


Figure 27: Gazebo detail.

b) A screening hedge of evergreen vegetation should be established between the exedra—pergola area and the south parking and entrance area of Independence Hall. Consideration should be given to re-establishing (replanting) an arborvitae hedge in this area.

c) Screening vegetation should be established along the western property boundary to screen the grounds from Penfield Road. Consideration should be given to establishing an informal nursery exhibiting different species of screening plant materials.

c) Screening vegetation should be established along the eastern property boundary to screen the grounds from St. Paul's Episcopal Church and the Old Academy grounds.

d) The dumpster areas near the mansion and south parking lot at Independence Hall should be screened from view with appropriate plant materials.

11. ORNAMENTAL VEGETATION:

a) Ornamental vegetation of varying sizes, shapes, and colors, and including rhododendron (*Lepidotes* and *Elepidotes* types), azalea (*Rhododendron* spp.), and mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), should be established in the northwest corner of the property bounded by the brick wall, driveway entrance, and magnolia tree area.

b) Ornamental vegetation of varying sizes, shapes, and colors, and including different species of dogwood (*Cornus* spp.) and viburnum (*Viburnum* spp.) should be established in the northeast corner of the property bounded by the brick wall, recommended exit driveway, and garden house area.

c) Appropriate, low-growing ornamental shrubs should be re-established around the perimeter of the mansion to enhance the building appearance and provide a landscaped transition between the mansion and adjoining turf and garden shrubs.

d) Focal points of interest and activity on the Homestead grounds, including the exedra—pergola, garden house, and magnolia tree areas, should be enhanced with ornamental vegetation.

12: MEMORIAL TREES:

a) Specific locations may be designated for the planting of memorial trees on the Homestead grounds. Memorial tree species and planting locations should be selected to contribute to implementation of the landscape design plan for the Homestead grounds.

b) Existing memorial trees on the Homestead grounds should be preserved and may be relocated as necessary to achieve implementation of the landscape design plan and goals for arboretum enhancement.

13. ENTRANCE GARDEN:

a) A garden of ornamental plants and shrubs should be enhanced and maintained near the front entrance to the mansion, between the brick wall and the recommended entrance and exit driveways. The boxwood shrubs and dogwood trees near the front entrance should receive regular pruning and other maintenance attention. Ivy growing on the brick wall should be maintained to help ensure that these plants do not cause damage to the wall.

14. CONNECTICUT NATIVES GARDEN:

a) A garden of Connecticut native trees, including oak (*Quercus* spp.), ash (*Fraxinus* spp.), maple (*Acer* spp.), elm (*Ulmus* spp.), beech (*Fagus* spp.), hornbeam (*Carpinus* spp.), and other species, should be established on the western part of the grounds.

15. INTERPRETIVE SIGNS:

a) Interpretive signs of appropriate scale and material should be designed and placed on the Homestead grounds to provide historic, scientific, and other information of interest to Homestead visitors. These signs should be consistent in scale and material with interpretive signs used elsewhere in the Historic Civic Center.

b) To enhance use of the grounds as an arboretum, individual trees and shrubs of interest should be identified with markers of appropriate material and small size. Consideration should be given to preparing a map and/or pamphlet that may serve as a walking guide to the arboretum's trees and shrubs for the benefit of visitors to the Homestead grounds.

16. ACTIVE MANAGEMENT:

a) Immediate attention should be directed toward protection of the 66-inch and 42-inch copper beech trees on the west and east sides of the mansion, respectively. Parking should be immediately prohibited near the base of the west tree. The existing driveway here should be narrowed and a curb provided to keep vehicles away from the base of the tree. The recommended new exit driveway should avoid the area near the base of the east tree. The new exit driveway should be provided with a suitable curb to keep vehicles away from the base of this tree. The soil around the two beech trees should be aerated and fertilized to stimulate root and top growth. A mulch of wood chips should be spread around the base of the trees to help retain water, protect the root system, and provide necessary nutrients.

b) Consideration should be given to removal of the existing pine tree adjoining the northeast corner of the mansion. This tall tree has reached maturity and exceeded its ornamental life. Due to its proximity to the mansion, the threat of storm damage, and the potential moisture-damaging effects of pine needles collecting on the roof, the tree's presence is becoming detrimental to the building.

c) Damaged hemlock (*Tsuga* spp.) trees should be removed from the border areas on the west and east sides of the grounds.

d) Consideration should be given to transplanting existing Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*) trees to designated areas in accordance with implementation of the landscape design plan and goals for arboretum enhancement.

17. Ongoing Maintenance:

The following maintenance activities should be carried out as part of an ongoing, comprehensive grounds maintenance program implemented with private sector and volunteer support:

a) Pruning of trees and shrubs to respond to damage caused by natural events, pests, and disease, and to otherwise maintain vegetation in a healthy and attractive condition.

b) Fertilizing to encourage root and top growth, while avoiding chemical fertilizers which may adversely affect environmental quality.

c) Spraying to prevent and control the growth of pests and disease, with products and methods that are environmentally safe and economically feasible.

d) Mowing to maintain the attractiveness of open lawn areas.

e) Placement of mulch in the form of wood chips to help retain water, protect root systems, provide necessary nutrients, define areas to be avoided by pedestrian traffic, control undergrowth, and reduce the need for mowing. To the extent feasible, the mulch area should extend outward from the trunk of the tree to the "drip line," thereby covering an area with a diameter equal to the diameter of the crown of the tree.

f) Maintenance of paths and structures to maintain esthetic quality and beneficial and enjoyable public use.

g) Removal of undergrowth, through mechanical and other means including placement of mulch, to maintain esthetic quality and eliminate undesirable competition affecting arboretum species.

18. Public Support and Involvement:

a) A program for maintenance "adoption" of specific garden components and points of interest by individuals and organizations should be established. Maintenance efforts by adoptive individuals and organizations should be subject to oversight by a special Town-established committee.

b) A program for "adoption" of individual trees and shrubs by individuals and organizations for the purpose of providing identifying markers and arboretum maintenance should also be established.

c) Special fund-raising events and activities should be organized to obtain funds to be used specifically for grounds enhancement and maintenance.