

MADISON LEWIS WOODLANDS CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT



Chapter III: Madison Lewis Woodlands Landscape Existing Conditions

A. INTRODUCTION TO LANDSCAPE EXISTING CONDITIONS

Today, the Madison Lewis Woodlands comprise a 14-acre public park owned by the Village of Warwick. Collectively, the Madison Lewis Woodlands is composed of two distinct historic landscape areas: the garden space and augmented woodlands and rambles. The former Colonial Avenue entry drive and tree allée is another identifiable, intact landscape area; however, it is privately owned and continues to serve as a residential driveway. The formal character of the spruce-edged garden space is centered on a small fountain basin near the former house and stables. It provides an intriguing contrast with the scenic character of the woodlands with curving carriage paths through the dappled sunlight under the tree canopy. Introduced native and exotic plantings and rustic arbors, bridges and gazebos were added throughout the designed landscape, enhancing its natural character. The tree allée along the entry drive creates a shaded corridor that relates to the character of both the woodlands and the formal estate and while it is not part of the public park, it strongly conveys a sense of the historic landscape character.

The existing character of the park landscape has shifted from the end of the historic period. The natural process of vegetation growth and decline has altered the landscape character along with some spread of invasive species in selected locations. In spite of the change in overall character and loss of specific landscape features, continuity is discernable to the trained eye as remnants from the Fowler era are found in the garden and woodland setting, serving as vestiges of the former estate landscape character. Access to the park landscape is from the public street Robin Brae Drive; however, the physical location of the property is tucked behind residential properties along Maple and Colonial Avenues, north of the village center. Site identification and wayfinding is a challenge as users must have prior knowledge about the property location to know where to find it.

The existing conditions and character of the Madison Lewis Woodlands are presented in this chapter. The discussion is organized according to character-defining features, as described in the methodology section of Chapter I. Current issues are also discussed, giving insight into existing use and management of the preserve landscape. The narrative and accompanying images serve to identify, delineate and describe the existing character and features of the Madison Lewis Woodlands landscape and place the park in the context of its surrounds. The *2008 Existing Conditions Plan, EC-2008* is provided at the end of the chapter as an 11-inch by 17-inch fold-out at a scale of 1 inch equal to 160

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feet. The plan and images record the existing Madison Lewis Woodlands landscape as studied and photographed during field visits.

B. 2008 EXISTING CONDITIONS & CHARACTER

The following narrative describes the current condition and overall character of the Madison Lewis Woodlands landscape. The park landscape character can be better understood through an exploration of elements known as character-defining features. To the extent possible, these features can be compared over the historical periods of the former estate landscape in order to track the level of change that has occurred and to serve as a framework for future landscape preservation treatment efforts. Character-defining features are identified and described as a series of interrelated elements that together define the overall landscape character of the Madison Lewis Woodlands. The features include:

- *Spatial Organization, Land Patterns & Land Use*
- *Visual Relationships*
- *Topography & Natural Systems*
- *Vegetation*
- *Circulation*
- *Hydrology & Water Features*
- *Structures, Site Furnishings & Objects*

The Madison Lewis Woodlands landscape is comprised of two distinct landscape areas, each with a differing character. The first area is the former Italian Garden, which serves as the entry landscape into the woodlands and extends east across the stream and bridge crossing. This area is adjacent to the end of Robin Brae Drive and is the location where most visitors enter the property. As a result, the condition and character of this area largely contributes to both the overall character and to public perceptions of the site. The remaining garden features are remnants of the formal estate landscape and character. The second area is the woodlands and walking trails, which encompasses the majority of the 14-acre site. While the natural growth and decline of plants has shifted the historic landscape character within the woodlands, remnant features convey a sense of the naturalistic, enhanced woodlands. The Colonial Avenue entry drive and tree allée is a third landscape area that remains from the historic estate, although not owned by the Village. This area is located at the east edge of the park landscape and historically served as a secondary entrance into the estate grounds. Although this drive is a private driveway today, its intact historic character and features contribute to the overall understanding of the historic landscape.

Spatial Organization, Land Patterns & Land Use

Spatially, the overall Madison Lewis Woodlands landscape is defined by the relationship of the shaded garden space, woodland canopy, walking trails, and natural stream. The surrounding residential properties provide an edge for the spatial definition of the Madison Lewis Woodlands. Remnant historic features provide a sense of the historic spatial organization and land use.

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The spatial organization of the former garden area differs from the woodlands area. The boundaries of the former garden area are defined by vegetation. A prolific massing of invasive tatarian honeysuckle shrubs (*Lonicera tatarica*) marks the southwest corner of the former garden area, lining the entrance path into the public landscape. (See Figure III.1.) The north and west edges are delineated clearly by a row of spruce trees that were present during the historic period. Markings on the trunks indicate that these trees were historically cut and maintained as hedges at about six to seven feet high. (See Figure III.2.) Although the trees have grown to maturity, they continue to demark the garden edges. Dense volunteer growth is also located along the west edge. A mix of volunteer trees and shrubs grow along the south and east edges. A number of volunteer trees, primarily Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) grow in the center of the garden space, interrupting the otherwise open ground plane.

Remnant features hint at the historic spatial organization of the Italian Garden. Two large yew shrubs (*Taxus* species) grow near the west edge of the garden area. Historically, these shrubs were positioned at either end of the pergola. Today, they mark the location of the missing structure. The central sunken fountain basin indicates the former focal point of the Italian Garden. A flagstone path extends east and west of the fountain with a secondary path stretching north, toward the evergreen trees. These paths illustrate the historic division of space within the garden. (See Figure III.3.)

The woodlands are spatially organized primarily by the circulation and the surrounding properties. The Madison Lewis Woodlands is surrounded by residential properties. The character of these properties, particularly the mown turf ground plane, contrasts that of the woodlands. Within the woodlands, pedestrian paths now spatially organize the landscape, defining smaller, informal spaces within the woodlands. Many of the paths follow historic carriage path alignments with a few more recently added paths present. Remnant landscape features, such as the limestone outcrops, well, and a stone gazebo foundation, reveal the organization and use of the historic woodland landscape.

The current use of the park landscape is a result of the shift in land patterns and use of the surrounding properties. Following World War II, many of the estates that encompassed this northern portion of the Village of Warwick were demolished and the lots subdivided for suburban residential development. The 14-acre parcel, however, was set aside for public use. Thus the shift of the surrounding land patterns from sprawling estates to smaller single-family lots effected the change in the park landscape from a portion of a private estate to a public recreation site.

Visual Relationships

Visual relationships at the Madison Lewis Woodlands are defined by the woodlands vegetation, pedestrian paths, and surrounding residential properties. Visually, the public park is obscured from public view. The landscape is surrounded by private residential lots. Some of the lots extend into the wooded area, making it difficult to discern the property boundaries between private and public land. Visually, the boundaries of the woodlands area are not readily evident in the landscape. Views from within the property are defined by the relationship between vegetation and circulation features. The plant materials and winding paths create a series of scenic, shifting views as one moves through the landscape. Today, site vegetation is managed less than it was historically. As a result, views from areas that formerly served as scenic overlooks have been partially obscured. Notably, the stream and constructed pond are difficult to view from within the woodlands. (See Figure III.4.) Views of the

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former Italian Garden are also screened primarily by volunteer vegetation that has grown along the perimeter of the former garden space. While broad views into the surrounding landscape are minimal, the pedestrian paths and vegetation frame a series of views within the park landscape. Potential exists to create additional views throughout the park landscape.

Topography & Natural Systems

The natural topography of the Madison Lewis Woodlands mimics the broader topographical pattern of the surrounding region. The site is located in a geographic area known as the Warwick Valley, characterized by the scenic peaks and valleys of the Appalachian Mountains. The entrance to the park is located at the valley of two surrounding hillsides; the locations of the former mansion, orchard, and vegetable garden, and the carriage house and barn are site upslope to the west of the woodlands entry. As one enters the public site, the woodlands slope uphill to the east. The curved pedestrian paths negotiate the change in grade. In total, the Madison Lewis Woodlands exhibit approximately 35 feet in grade change, with the entry area and former Italian Garden at the low-point. The high-point is located within the woodlands, near Colonial Avenue.

The natural form and topography of the landscape was impacted by the natural process of glacial retreat. As glaciers gradually retreated across the region, the sloping landmass was formed, revealing rocky outcrops. Additional erratic stone was left in the landscape from the melting glacier. Limestone outcrops and large erratic stones are found in the woodlands today, adding to the landscape character.

The topography and natural systems evident in the park today contribute to the overall landscape character. These features greatly impact the evolution of the landscape. Carriage and pedestrian paths were laid out in response to the changes in grade. Stone was added to rustic features, serving as gazebo foundations, path edges, and bridge abutments, augmenting the naturalistic landscape character. (See Figure III.5.)

Vegetation

The vegetation found within the Madison Lewis Woodlands is characterized by the mix of deciduous and evergreen trees and understory plants. The park landscape includes a diverse composition of native and exotic plant materials. While the woodlands itself existed prior to the creation of Belair, the Fowler family augmented the natural character of the woodlands by planting additional non-native species, increasing the plant diversity and creating an intriguing woodlands landscape.

As a result of the Fowler planting efforts, a number of woodland types are present today. Maple trees, predominantly sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) with a number of volunteer Norway maple are found throughout the downslope area, extending from the woodlands entrance and garden space to the bridge crossing. Additionally, the entrance walk leading into the former garden space is lined with prolific invasive honeysuckle shrubs. Spruce trees mark the north and west garden edge. Low-growing forget-me-nots (*Myosotis* species) are found throughout the ground plane of the former garden. As visitors move through the garden space, toward the stream and bridge crossing, a large drift of pachysandra (*Pachysandra terminalis*) covers the ground with a few invasive species present, including garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) and barberry (*Berberis* species). Other herbaceous species

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found near the stream and bridge include jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*) and bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*).

Just beyond the bridge crossing, at the foot of the uphill slope, a number of mature trees convey a sense of the landscape character carefully created during the Fowler era. The canopy of a large yellowwood tree (*Cladrastis kentuckea*) is located alongside the path near a rock pile that may be a remnant stones from a former foundation. The spreading branch pattern of the yellowwood indicates that the tree matured in an open setting and was likely one of the early plantings undertaken at the woodland edge. Other notable trees that likely date from the historic period located in this downslope area include hemlock (*Tsuga* species), white pine (*Pinus strobus*), and arborvitae (*Thuja* species). (See Figure III.6.)

The pedestrian path branches north and south. The historic stone and wood well is located to the south. Just west of the well, a row of four sugar maple trees remains from the former playhouse landscape, marking the location of the Fowler playhouse building and tennis court. Three standing dead spruce tree (*Picea* species) trunks continue the tree row beyond the sugar maples. (See Figure III.7.) The path continues, gently heading uphill. Several herbaceous plants are found growing on the woodlands floor. These include pachysandra, skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*), and dame's rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*). Hayscented fern (*Dennstaedtia punctilobula*) is also found throughout. As the path continues south and east, a grouping of invasive tatarian honeysuckle and Norway maple grows downslope, obscuring potential views of the constructed pond. A considerable amount of deadfall litters the path.

The trail curves east and continues navigating the uphill slope. At the top of the slope, the grade becomes relatively even and structures bordering the woodlands become visible. A flowering field with mown turf walking paths edges the woodlands, near the Colonial Avenue drive. Although the field, turf paths and driveway are located within a private residential property, the driveway historically served as the secondary estate entry drive. The long, compacted earth drive is shaded by an interesting mix of deciduous and evergreen trees. While some amount of volunteer tree and shrub growth is present, many of the trees date from the historic period. The mix of species includes beech (*Fagus* species), linden (*Tilia* species), crabapple (*Malus* species), cherry (*Prunus* species), oak (*Quercus* species), native black cherry (*Prunus serotina*), spruce, chestnut (*Aesculus* species), hickory (*Carya* species), hemlock, black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), and sugar maple. Of these trees, the evergreen range in size from 12 inches to 29 inches in diameter. The deciduous trees range from 19 inches to 45 inches in diameter. A large yew stands at the end of the driveway, between the two northern stone piers and a kousa dogwood (*Cornus kousa*) grows between the two southern piers. Other plants found along the drive that do not date from the historic period include mock orange (*Philadelphus coronarius*) and a few invasive plants, such as Norway maple and tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*).

The Colonial Avenue entrance is an important remaining feature of the Fowler estate. The former entry drive was carefully planted with an arboretum-type manner. The rhythm and variety of mature trees remaining from the estate reveal the intended character and effect of plantings implemented during the Fowler period. (See Figure III.8.) This drive could serve as a public right-of-way and a scenic, pedestrian entrance into the woodland. With the creation of a public right-of-way and

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increased vegetation management to care for and retain historic trees and remove invasive trees, the entry drive could serve as a strong interpretive landscape feature.

The driveway extends northwest toward the woodlands from Colonial Avenue. As it reaches the woodlands edge, subtle shifts in grading indicate the route of the original carriage path. The upland forest area is dominated by American linden trees (*Tilia americana*) with numerous black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) and a few ash (*Fraxinus* species) trees also present. (See Figure III.9.) As the path continues under the shady canopy and through the limestone outcrops, the woodlands transition into an area dominated by sugar maple. Clusters of white spruce and pine trees with scattered white birch (*Betula papyrifera*), hemlock, beech and cherry trees are intermixed. (See Figure III.10.) Several of the trees, notably the birch and sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), are non-native species planted in the natural woodlands. These non-native species are not resowing themselves as the native trees are and several have already declined, with a number of dead trees fallen throughout the forest floor.

Beyond the transitional area of sugar maple, white oak (*Quercus alba*) becomes the dominant species with red oak, maple, American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), and hemlock also present. As the path continues north, it begins to gently slope downhill. A few American rhododendron (*Rhododendron maximum*) grow alongside the path, probable remnants of Fowler era plantings. The shrubs exhibit evidence of deer browsing the foliage. In addition to the shrubs and oak trees, maple and hickory trees are also present in this area. A patch of hayscented fern grows to the east of the path. (See Figure III.11.)

Toward the center of the woodlands, another fern patch surrounds a rock outcrop. Invasive barberry and garlic mustard are interspersed with the fern. Five-leaf akebia (*Akebia quinata*), a rapidly growing woody vine, climbs the plants and nearby rocks. (See Figure III.5.) Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostochoides*), fairy candle (*Cimicifuga racemosa*), and Solomon's seal (*Polygonatum commutatum*) grow at another nearby rocky outcrop. Prominent tree species in this area include white oak and maple. A stand of hemlock and white spruce with a number of white pine is also present. Near the intersection of two pedestrian paths, an infestation of honeysuckle encompasses the understory.

As the pedestrian path curves around a bend, it narrows next to a number of large linden and walnut trees that grow between the path and the stream. Ferns and American hogpeanut (*Amphicarpaea bracteata*), a native vine, covers the sloping ground plane with several garlic mustard plants growing on the hillside as well. The vegetation here allows for partial views of the nearby stream and residential backyard beyond. (See Figure III.4.)

At the Madison Lewis Woodlands, vegetation is an essential feature to the overall character of the landscape. The mix of native and exotic species indicates the landscape style and character implemented through considerable planting efforts during the years of the Fowler family occupancy at Belair. The change in use and management of the property from a private estate to a public recreation site has impacted the landscape character. Today, some invasive species are found in selected areas within the understory, which impacts the native species and wildlife. Deadfall is found throughout the understory and, in some instances, crosses the pedestrian trails. In spite of the shifting woodland character, the existing vegetation serves as a prominent trace of the historic landscape character.

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Circulation

Circulation at the Madison Lewis Woodlands is an integral element in the character and use of the cultural landscape. Use of the public park focuses on the pedestrian paths that traverse the sloping, shady understory. Vehicular circulation is limited. The primary entrance to the park is located at the end of Robin Brae Drive, a public village street. According to the Declaration of Restrictive Covenants, set forth when the Village of Warwick gained ownership of the site, unpaved parking for up to five vehicles is permitted at the site. A formal parking area has not been implemented. Instead, visitors arriving by vehicle park at the end or along the edge of the street. Because adjacent residents access their private driveways from Robin Brae Drive, the separation between public and private land is somewhat unclear.

A number of path types are used at the Madison Lewis Woodlands. The path connecting the end of Robin Brae Drive with the former garden space measures approximately six to seven feet in width and is covered with wood chips. (See Figure III.1.) Once inside the garden space, no formal paths have been laid out. However, remnant bluestone pavers indicate former paths through the garden. The stone path extends east and west of the central fountain. At the west edge, additional pavers extend north and south. These were likely the floor of the garden pergola. The stones extend south beyond the edge of the former pergola, indicating that a stone path may have extended from rustic arbor at the garden entry toward the pergola. Additional stones extend north from the fountain with a threshold stone near the northern spruce row. (See Figure III.3.)

Beyond the former garden space, the stone pedestrian paths transition to compacted earth, although some of the trails have become covered with low-growing herbaceous plants and leaf litter. Gravel has also been laid over portions of the trail. The paths vary in width in response to the changes in topography and other landscape features. In general, the paths range from approximately three to six feet in width.

Within the woodlands, the paths define two main trails. Both trails start at the foot of the hillside, near the bridge crossing. The paths gently curve under the shady canopy, navigating the change in elevation. One trail loops around the perimeter of the woodlands. The second trail largely follows the same path as the first before cutting through the center of the woodlands landscape. For the most part, the trails follow the historic alignment of carriage and strolling paths. One notable exception is a path located north of the well, which travels straight upslope, creating a steep incline. In the long-term, this path is not sustainable as it is more susceptible to erosion.

Few of the former carriage paths have not been continually used as walking trails. Near the east woodland edge, subtle shifts in grading indicate the original carriage drive has been abandoned and a new path created nearby. This is likely a result of the subdivision of the land for private residential development. Within the woodlands, another portion of a former carriage path is evident at the large limestone outcrops. Here, stone abutments remain, indicating the location of the rustic bridge that crossed the dry depression. (See Figure III.12.)

Circulation is an important feature at the Madison Lewis Woodlands. During the Fowler period, use of the woodlands focused on the carriage and strolling paths, which led to the garden area, mansion,

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and rustic gazebos. Since the end of the historic period, paths have remained as essential features of the public landscape. Today, use of the park has emphasized education of plant materials, interpretation and understanding of the former Belair estate landscape, and recreational strolling. These uses rely heavily on the pedestrian paths that negotiate the sloping landscape and traverse the pleasantly shaded understory.

Hydrology & Water Features

Hydrology and water features at the Madison Lewis Woodlands are limited. A stream crosses the site in a north-south direction. It is located near the west edge of the site, separating the garden space from the woodlands. (See Figure III.13.) The gently meandering character of the stream augments the naturalistic landscape character. Partial views of the stream are gained from within the landscape. A remnant former pump house is located within the woodlands, set into the sloping ground plane. Metal piping that once provided water for the garden space and other plantings remains with portions evident along the woodlands trails. The former well also provided water during the Fowler period. These built features are important to the broader water-related features as they provide insight into the care and maintenance of the former estate grounds. The sunken fountain basin in the former garden space is another water feature. Historically, the fountain sprayed into the air, creating a central focal point in the formal garden. Today, the fountain no longer functions, but the remaining basin serves as a reminder of the former garden character.

Other water features that were included in the 38-acre Belair estate remain in the landscape today, although they are located outside the 14-acre Village-owned property. These include the constructed pond, located south of the entrance at Robin Brae Drive and the feeder canal sculpted into the landscape to connect the stream and pond. (See Figure III.14.) Views of the pond may be possible through selective vegetation management. Although these features are not located within the public landscape, visual relationships can be created, enhancing interpretive opportunities. Further, visual access to these features provides a better understanding of the use of water features in the historic landscape.

Structures, Site Furnishings & Objects

Structures, site furnishings and objects at the Madison Lewis Woodlands are primarily features that remain from the historic period. The remaining historic features are predominantly stone. These include the former well, stone foundation of a rustic gazebo and the stone abutments evident at the existing bridge crossing and at the former bridge location within the woodlands. (See Figures III.12 and III.15.) Portions of the walking trails have stones to mark the edge of the path. A deteriorated stone stairway extends off the side of the trail and leads to an overlook area. Rough stones left in their natural form line the sides of the stairway while the remaining steps are constructed of long, flat flagstones. (See Figure III.16.) A remnant cobble gutter is also evident in the landscape today, lining a portion of a former carriage drive that branches north at the main trailhead. The slightly concave gutter is approximately 14 inches across and is comprised of stone measuring between 2 and 4 inches.

Limited features have been added to support use of the park landscape. Two wooden signs have been installed. One is located at the entrance into the garden space near the end of Robin Brae Drive. The second is located at the foot of the wooded hillside, east of the stream and bridge crossing. The first sign notes the name of the site as “Lewis Woodlands.” The second sign notes the site contains

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nature trails that were part of an Eagle Scout service project. A third sign was located near the second that identified the ownership of the woodlands by the Garden Club of Orange and Dutchess Counties “for the use of Warwick Valley Central School Nature Studies.” This sign has recently been removed although the concrete and metal footings remain in the landscape. The wooden bridge that crosses the stream east of the garden space is another contemporary feature. It supports use of the park by providing access across the stream and, although it is not an exact replica of the historic bridge, it reflects the former landscape use. (See Figure III.17.)

Overall, the existing structures, site furnishings, and objects contribute to the character of the Madison Lewis Woodlands. A few features remain from the historic period, conveying a sense of the historic character of the designed landscape. New features that have been added since the end of the historic period are minimal. Additional features could be added that both support use of the public landscape and interpret the former historic landscape character.

C. 2008 LANDSCAPE ISSUES

Through field reconnaissance and meetings, existing landscape issues have been identified that relate to preservation of historic character and features, user safety, vegetation management, and access. These issues hinder optimal use, functionality, and maintainability of the Madison Lewis Woodlands. Resolution of these issues needs to be considered in future treatment and management objectives.

Current management of historic character and features within the park is limited. A considerable number of features remain from the historic Fowler period, revealing a sense of the former landscape character. Preservation of these features has not been undertaken. Additionally, historic features, such as the stone fountain basin, nearby paths, and stone well, are impacted by other landscape features, particularly vegetation. The former garden space, including the fountain basin, is filled with volunteer growth. Roots of maturing trees and other vegetation have caused the bluestone pavers to shift, creating an uneven ground plane. A relatively young tree growing at the base of the well can cause damage to the historic stone feature in the future. The overall historic character is also impacted by the evolution of landscape features. Removal of built features, which were primarily rustic style bridges, gazebos, and arbors, with limited interpretation diminishes the ability of the landscape to convey its historic character. An appropriate management and preservation strategy needs to be implemented to resolve these issues.

Of primary concern are issues of user safety, which can be addressed with tree care and trail maintenance. The park landscape exhibits natural processes of vegetation growth and decline. Deadfall is found throughout the landscape. (See Figures III.4, III.11, III.12, III.15 and III.16.) Additionally, several trees are either standing dead or have dead branches in the canopy. This poses an issue with regard to the safety of users, particularly when declining trees are located near the walking trails. The standing dead trees and dead branches have the potential to fall across the trail. Additionally, deadfall littering the trails impedes use and functionality of the site.

Because vegetation is the dominant landscape feature at the Madison Lewis Woodlands, issues of vegetation management are an important component of the overall character and existing and future

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condition of the landscape. Changes in the character of vegetation and specific plant materials have affected historic character and spatial and visual relationships. Historically, the garden and woodlands areas of the Fowler estate were carefully tended, displaying a mix of natural growth and plantings that included both native and exotic species. The result was a scenic, naturalistic landscape that complemented the character of the broader estate grounds. Because the vegetation has been minimally managed, this historic character has shifted. Invasive species have spread in specific areas, competing with native vegetation and planted features. Non-native species intentionally planted during the historic period will not sustain themselves into the future without adequate planning and care. Through planning efforts, vegetation in the Madison Lewis Woodlands can be managed to enhance use, perception of both original and planned elements of the landscape in terms of character, and spatial and visual relationships and overall user experience.

Access to the preserve is another existing issue. Because the park is tucked behind private, residential properties, visitor access is unclear from surrounding public streets. The relationship between the private driveways and public access into the site is not clearly defined. As a result, the user base is comprised primarily of Village residents whose properties border the park. Pedestrian access into the publicly owned landscape from the east is limited.

The addition of new features into the preserve landscape is an issue that needs to be considered. Because of the ongoing use as a public recreation park, features have been added to the landscape to accommodate use. It is important to consider the character of new features to ensure compatibility with the historic character and yet remain distinguishable as contemporary additions. Furthermore, new features need to adequately address use, safety, maintainability, and sustainability. While many of the pedestrian paths are remnant carriage drives used during the Fowler period, new segments have been added, providing additional recreational opportunities. The historic paths curve through the understory, using gentle slopes to negotiate the change in grade. One trail added as part of an Eagle Scout service project is located south of the yellowwood tree, and has been laid out to run straight up hill. Given the topography of the site, this trail is not sustainable into the future and will likely exhibit erosion issues.

Issues identified at the Madison Lewis Woodlands focus on preservation of historic character and features, user safety, vegetation management, maintenance, and access. Vegetation management is a prominent issue that interrelates with and impacts landscape character, historic features and user safety. Future planning and treatment efforts should consider these issues. With an appropriate approach defined, these issues can be addressed and the historic landscape character, sense of place, and user experiences enhanced.

D. 2008 EXISTING CONDITIONS LANDSCAPE SUMMARY

The existing Madison Lewis Woodlands cultural landscape is a remnant portion of the larger Belair estate. While much of the estate grounds have been subdivided and developed for residential homes, the former garden, naturalistic woodlands, and Colonial Avenue entry drive and tree allée remain with intact evidence of the former landscape character. The existing landscape conditions and character are determined largely by the relationship between character-defining features. Exploration

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of these features reveals that while remnant historic features provide a sense of the former landscape character, the continued evolution and management of the woodlands have impacted the existing conditions and character. Broad patterns of historic spatial organization, visual relationships, topography, circulation, and vegetation are evident in the landscape today. Specific features such as the rustic bridges, gazebos, and arbors, and formal garden plantings no longer remain. Use of the landscape focuses on vegetation and circulation features. However, many other factors contribute to the overall use, functionality, maintainability, and character of the landscape. A number of issues were identified that aid in understanding the existing conditions and character. These include preservation of historic character and features, user safety, vegetation management, and access. In spite of these issues, the Madison Lewis Woodlands is a valuable public landscape that evokes a sense of the history of the Belair estate and the Village of Warwick. With an understanding of the existing conditions to serve as a baseline, the public park landscape can be greatly enhanced through an analysis of the level of change that has occurred and the careful planning for and implementation of future treatment of the historic estate landscape.

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