

MADISON LEWIS WOODLANDS CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT



Chapter V: Madison Lewis Woodlands Landscape Preservation, Interpretation & Management

A. INTRODUCTION TO LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION TREATMENT

Madison Lewis Woodlands is a valuable resource in the Village of Warwick. Over time, the context of the site has changed as the surrounding landscape was developed for residential subdivisions. However, the remaining historic property exhibits continuity of character and features. During the Belair estate historic period, the natural character of the woodlands was augmented through the additions of drives, paths, bridges, arbors and native and exotic plantings. For the past four decades, the Madison Lewis Woodlands have served the Village as a public recreation landscape. Management and use of the 14-acre property by the Garden Club of Orange and Dutchess Counties emphasized the educational value of the site. Since ownership of the woodlands transferred to the Village in 2004, management and use of the site has been limited. In spite of the passive management and use, the value of the woodland landscape as a rich natural, cultural and educational resource remains widely recognized by the Village and its residents.

To enhance local understanding of the historic origins of this landscape, the Village should consider changing the name of the Madison Lewis Woodlands to reflect those who shaped this landscape. The name of the site today focuses on the people who were instrumental in preserving a part of the original Fowler estate, Belair. The name, Madison Lewis, reflects the preservation of part of the acreage, not the history or evolution of the landscape. In addition, this site contains more than a woodland area, with the historic garden space, and while not within the boundary, an adjacent historic entry drive. The Village should consider renaming the property to directly link it to Belair and the Fowler family. Additionally, the site today more adequately serves as a preserve or park, and this concept could also be incorporated into a new name. However, if local recognition of the Madison Lewis Woodlands is good and local sentiment prefers the current name, it can certainly remain.

The preferred landscape preservation treatment approach is articulated to address multiple goals for the Madison Lewis Woodlands cultural landscape and the Village of Warwick. Given the history, existing conditions and issues, analysis of landscape integrity and significance, and management and use objectives, an appropriate treatment alternative is selected to preserve remaining landscape character and features. The selected preservation treatment approach also accommodates current and

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future landscape character, functionality, maintainability and use. The approach considers and addresses the past, present and future of the Madison Lewis Woodlands to create enhanced recreational value and quality of experience for this public landscape. The purposes of treatment for this public landscape are to address public access and enjoyment, interpretation of this historic place, and suitable recreational opportunities with limited maintenance burden.

B. LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION TREATMENT ALTERNATIVES

As Madison Lewis Woodlands is a historic landscape, national preservation standards must be addressed as intervention alternatives are explored. Preservation treatment options for historic properties set forth in federal guidance present a range. Beginning with Preservation, which is a baseline in stewardship for any intervention, the approach can be toward more intensive authentic Restoration or Reconstruction or alternately to Rehabilitation which accommodates current needs while respecting historic character and features. The proposed renewal of the historically significant Madison Lewis Woodlands landscape references federal cultural landscape preservation guidance found in the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes (Guidelines)*, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques*, and *National Park Service Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management*.¹ This guidance aids in identifying and defining preservation treatments that can be applied to historic properties. These four approaches to the treatment of cultural landscapes propose different levels of intensity of intervention and activity within a landscape.

When considering treatment alternatives, the baseline intent is to identify, protect and enhance remaining historic character and features within the landscape. To address the preservation treatment of the Madison Lewis Woodlands cultural landscape, the amount and detail of available documentation, the understanding of the evolution from the late 19th century to today and an understanding of current landscape use and its value to the surrounding community are important aspects for consideration. The level of landscape continuity and change over time is a further consideration in terms of the ability to link historic landscape character to treatment options within the existing landscape. Anticipated public access, safety, financial resources, sustainability, and maintenance capabilities are also considered. To serve as a reference, applicable preservation treatment options for the Madison Lewis Woodlands are quoted from the *Guidelines* and summarized as follows.

Preservation

*Preservation is defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction.*²

A preservation approach focuses on stabilization and repair and is the most modest intervention. Applying only preservation is appropriate for stewardship and sustainability when many elements of the landscape are intact, interpretive goals can be met within the existing conditions, and financial resources and/or staffing are limited. Preservation can also be viewed as a provisional treatment until

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the acquisition of additional documentation to allow for restoration or reconstruction, or until resources are garnered to commence a more ambitious intervention. Preservation treatment emphasizes the goals of conserving, retaining, and maintaining the historic character and original fabric and underlies the other three, more intensive treatment approaches.

Preservation actions are directed to safeguard historic landscape resources by applying an appropriate stewardship approach. Preservation can be an initial and underlying treatment that values historic features and fabric and carries out stewardship actions. Preservation of specific remaining historic features within the Madison Lewis Woodlands landscape is warranted and appropriate; however, the deterioration and loss of some features and the historic value of the resource directs some more intensive interventions than those addressing preservation alone.

Restoration

*Restoration is defined as the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time, by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period.*³

In contrast to preservation, a restoration approach relies on high levels of documentation for accuracy to the target date with limited speculation. Restoration, as any treatment, applies preservation to stabilize and repair historic features, in the development of the treatment strategy. Safeguarding and respect for the tangible historic elements and features that remain is a primary objective. Secondly, a restoration treatment reinstates lost character by fully renewing degraded aspects and features of the cultural landscape. This treatment may also require the removal of features added after the time period designated for restoration.

Restoration can be focused on specific areas or features rather than applied site-wide. The recapture of overall landscape character, features and details can be the target of a restoration treatment or a specific selected landscape area, detail, or group of elements may be proposed for an accurate recapture. In some cases restoration of every detail to an earlier time is not possible due to lack of specificity of documentation, projected staffing, and/or available financial resources. Therefore, if warranted, a return to specific overall aspects of landscape character, like spatial organization, land patterns and visual relationships, can be applied without restoration to precise details of all elements and features. While a restoration approach can be tightly targeted, it generally requires a substantial intervention. This intervention is focused on elements of the original landscape that remain but are in a deteriorated state, beyond a preservation repair approach. It targets the reinstatement in-kind of documented features, such as replacement of specific trees to match the original ones in the original locations.

The Madison Lewis Woodlands landscape today includes remaining historic elements in terms of undisturbed topography, original trees, overall spatial organization and patterns of circulation, while specific landscape elements are missing or altered. Given the limited historic documentation of the landscape at specific points in time and its use as a public park to meet contemporary needs, restoration to an earlier time is not appropriate. Evolution of the landscape with respect for intact historic character and features is a more suitable approach.

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Rehabilitation

*Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alteration, and additions while preserving those portions or features that convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.*⁴

The third treatment approach, rehabilitation, incorporates preservation values with contemporary uses and issues of maintainability and sustainability. Rehabilitation treatment emphasizes compatibility with historic resources and safeguarding remaining historic character and elements. The rehabilitation philosophy combines respect for the historic resources with integration of contemporary uses, maintenance, code compliance, security, and other relevant concerns. An overall rehabilitation approach for the Madison Lewis Woodlands landscape is highly appropriate as it directs toward current and future conditions with sensitivity to the historic character, and recognition of both existing and potential diversity of recreational use, durability, maintainability, functionality and sustainability. Aspects of historic landscape character bolstering are particularly highlighted for the enhanced woodland. Sensitive application of a rehabilitation treatment strikes a balance between preservation and renewal that uses the extant historic landscape character and features and its current and anticipated future uses as a guide.

Reconstruction

*Reconstruction is defined as the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.*⁵

Selecting a reconstruction treatment implies limited historic integrity to the period of significance. Reconstruction of a lost, altered or significantly degraded landscape in its original location is not often undertaken. A reconstruction treatment may be an appropriate approach in a museum setting when documentation is complete, adequate resources are available, and interpretive goals direct full recapture of the lost feature. In large landscapes, a missing element or detail, such as a particular feature like a fountain, a unique structure like a pavilion, or a lost walkway can be reconstructed. Reconstruction is an aggressive intervention and is therefore uncommon because detailed documentation is required to construct an exact replica with limited speculation. However, partial reconstruction can address a documented feature or character. In the case of the Madison Lewis Woodlands, reconstruction is not an appropriate approach.

Summary

Based on this discussion, preservation and rehabilitation with an underlying respect for and preservation of remaining historic features and character is the most appropriate approach for the Madison Lewis Woodlands. The treatment focuses on stabilization and accommodation of diverse uses. Given available resources and Village capabilities, limited intervention with a light hand is appropriate for this cultural landscape. All landscape preservation treatments strive to protect and enhance extant historic features. In applying rehabilitation, contemporary features, uses and accommodations for maintenance, access, service, and safety are addressed while the historic landscape is respected. The recommended Madison Lewis Woodlands preservation and modest rehabilitation treatment, management, and interpretive approaches and initiatives are explored next.

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C. MADISON LEWIS WOODLANDS PRESERVATION
TREATMENT FOR DIVERSE RECREATIONAL USES

The exploration of preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and reconstruction treatments each address different levels of potential intervention for the Madison Lewis Woodlands. All treatments respond to maintenance and service needs, safety, access, and use concerns while simultaneously considering and resolving landscape preservation objectives. For the Madison Lewis Woodlands landscape, diverse current and future recreational use with interpretation of historic character in a naturalistic, well-maintained woodland landscape is the overall objective. A rehabilitation treatment with preservation of extant features is the most appropriate approach to achieve this goal and renew the valued neighborhood park. The selection of a rehabilitation treatment for the Madison Lewis Woodlands includes preservation as an underlying treatment that respects remaining historic landscape features and character and emphasizes management of existing features and interpretation of historic features, many of which are missing today. Basic interventions include management of extant historic landscape character and features, such as the overall spatial organization and the ecologically diverse woodlands, among other aspects. The proposed landscape rehabilitation provides flexibility to address contemporary and future values and issues while respecting this historically important landscape as a legacy of the formal estates that once characterized this area of the Village of Warwick. It also acts as a preservation philosophy that guides decision-making about ongoing management and physical interventions to the landscape that balances respect and accommodation of new needs.

Overall, the Village of Warwick envisions the Madison Lewis Woodlands as a type of outdoor museum and recreational resource that interprets the historic character of the woodlands and garden space as well as the broader Belair estate landscape while simultaneously offering diverse recreational opportunities. In general, recreation is divided into four types or categories: active, passive, social, and educational. While the Madison Lewis Woodlands will never have facility-based recreation, each of the four types of recreation can be accommodated in the woodland setting.

Active Recreation

Active or exertive recreation is defined as aerobic exercise that increases heart rate, is a fitness activity and usually generates sweat. It can involve facilities or equipment like fields or courts for team or individual fitness pursuits like running an exercise circuit. However, formal facilities are not a necessary component of active recreation nor are they appropriate for the Madison Lewis landscape. Active recreation can be accommodated at the Madison Lewis Woodlands through use of the trails for exercise running, walking, and cross-country skiing in winter.

Passive Recreation

Passive recreation is broadly defined as park enjoyment in informal ways. Passive recreation was cited as “recreative” by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. in the 19th century, and meant to recreate one’s self through experience of scenic landscapes.⁶ It encompasses a range of casual and informal uses of parks and open spaces. It is often cited by users as simply spending time in a green, scenic environment. Passive activities include strolling, sitting, reading, hanging out, dog walking, picnicking, sunbathing, enjoying being outdoors, watching a sporting event and other related park uses. The scenic quality of

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the woodlands canopy, pedestrian paths, shaded former garden area, and rocky outcrops all enhance the passive recreational experience at the Madison Lewis Woodlands.

Social Recreation

Social recreation involves groups, friends, or families using the park for celebrations, picnics, reunions, performances, dances, fairs and festivals, sports spectating, etc. Known as gregarious, or friendly and polite contact with people of all classes in Olmsted's lexicon, social recreation can take place within the broader landscape, be focused on facilities, like picnic tables and pavilions and can accompany other types of recreation.⁷ For example, participating in an educational program, or walking with a group of friends can be considered as inclusive to several forms of recreation. The existing trails and community tour programs provide opportunities for social recreation at the Madison Lewis Woodlands. The social aspect of the landscape can be enhanced in the future with the inclusion of benches, rustic gazebos, and additional interpretive features.

Educational Recreation

Educational recreation and interpretation of the landscape is casual or structured place-based learning about park and local history, ecology, geology, horticulture, garden design, art, etc. Educational recreation in a park setting often occurs by using the park as an outdoor classroom and focusing on elements found within the park landscape. Educational recreation can be addressed in a park atmosphere through guided or self-guided tours, hikes, informational signs, park programs, lectures and exhibits. During the Garden Club era, use of the site emphasized the landscape as an outdoor classroom that educated visitors about the diverse plant materials. No informational or interpretive signs have been erected in the woodland landscape. Recently, Village organizations have held guided tours at the Madison Lewis Woodlands, focusing on the history of the landscape as part of the former Belair estate and its continued use as a public park. Opportunities to foster educational recreation include guided and self-guided tours, including brochures or digital tours that can be downloaded, and also history or ecology lesson plans for schools developed with local teachers. Educational recreation is also understood as interpretation of the historic landscape and is explored in the following section.

Landscape Interpretation

Interpretation is an important element of educational recreation for the Madison Lewis Woodlands. While the garden space, woodlands, and privately-owned Colonial Avenue drive retain a certain level of continuity, the important parts of the historic Belair landscape have been lost to changes in land use with new roads and residences. Therefore, interpretation of remnant features can be undertaken to provide an understanding of the historic landscape use and character. Features such as the formal garden fountain basin, woodland trails, gazebo foundation, Fowler era vegetation, patterns of spatial organization and visual relationships can all be interpreted within the landscape. Educational opportunities can be enhanced through interpretation of historic landscape character and features as well as with programs focusing on plant materials and forest and natural resource management.

At the Madison Lewis Woodlands, broad characteristics that contribute to the character and historic understanding of the property remain evident today, most notably, the spatial organization, topography, natural systems, and intended effects and patterns of circulation and vegetation. Specific features, including former carriage paths, the privately-owned Colonial Avenue entry drive and tree

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allée, and remnant stone features also remain intact. The landscape patterns combined with the remnant historic features and the existing character provide valuable opportunities to interpret the historic landscape. Interpretation is important to the future of the park to enhance use and understanding of the historic and existing landscape.

Historically, the Belair estate was defined by the character and relationships of landscape features. While much of the overall estate has been lost, remnant spatial patterns, vegetation, and stone features convey a sense of the former landscape character. Understanding interpretive themes provides an opportunity to enhance the existing landscape. Specific interpretive themes and projects are presented in the following sections.

D. MADISON LEWIS WOODLANDS REHABILITATION & MANAGEMENT APPROACH

Currently, the Village of Warwick provides limited management of the Madison Lewis Woodlands with no dedicated staff and few assigned tasks for landscape care. In the absence of active management, the natural processes of weathering are obvious. Historic features remain, but in a deteriorated state. Stone paths, cobble gutters, rustic structure foundation stone, former fountains, former garden spaces with pruned hedges and historic planted trees are discernable to the trained eye, but not entirely obvious to the park visitor. There are several components of landscape rehabilitation and management recommended to include:

- Stabilization of historic masonry features
- Reconstruction of rustic features of the former estate
- Stabilization and ongoing maintenance of trails
- Improvement of parking access
- Suppression of exotic invasive species to enhance ecology, habitat and visual qualities
- Interpretation of the remaining features and history of the Belair estate and the Village of Warwick and the natural systems, ecology and habitat present today

These aspects of the public landscape address character and features that are in specific locations. In this discussion, the approach to these resources is discussed in a series of topics that follow. Thereafter the specific projects that have been identified are presented by area keyed to a site map.

Stabilization of Historic Masonry Features

Steps should be taken to preserve and enhance extant historic features of stone and other masonry materials. Many of the remnant features are stone or cast stone (high quality concrete) to include the fountain basin, bluestone pavers, well, gazebo foundation, bridge abutments, stairway, and cobble gutter. These features need to be stabilized to slow deterioration. In general they require gentle cleaning, repointing and various degrees of replacement of missing stones. Cleaning should be performed by hand with simple liquid dish detergent and natural bristle brushes or very low pressure power washing with the same simple detergent. For repairs to stone work, mortar is often failed and requires replacement. It is important to use proper mortar when making repairs to historic masonry.

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Portland cement mortar is too hard and is also usually bright white. Using it will often cause deterioration of the softer historic stone or cast stone. Soft lime mortar with color additives to match cleaned historic mortar is preferred. Engage a knowledgeable mason and oversee the repair work so that the repair work is appropriate to the historic masonry. Each of these masonry features also provides an opportunity for interpretation. (See Figure V.1.)

Rustic Features Reconstruction

Historically, several rustic wood features were constructed throughout the Belair estate in the garden space and within the woodlands. These features, which included bridges, gazebos, arbors, benches, fences, and gates, contributed to the scenic, naturalistic character of the landscape. Over time the wood, probably native common red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), deteriorated and the features were eventually removed. While interpretation of the historic estate landscape can be addressed through remnant features evident on site today, potential exists to reconstruct contemporary interpretations of the historic rustic features that once contributed to the character of the Madison Lewis Woodlands. Possible structures to reconstruct include a garden entry arbor, two gazebos, one bridge, benches and a long arbor on a woodland trail. (As seen in historic images, Figures II.6, II.7, II.15, II.25 and II.34.) These projects should be considered in terms of long-term goals and resources available. Construction of these features would help recapture the historic landscape character of the preserve.

Trail Stabilization & Ongoing Maintenance

The woodland trails are integral to the use and character of the Madison Lewis Woodlands. The trails are the primary recreational feature and convey the historic use and quality of the scenic, enhanced woodlands. Many of the trails today follow the former carriage path alignments. At least one trail has been added since the end of the historic period. This trail, located north of the historic well, extends upslope at a steep incline, making it more susceptible to erosion. In contrast, the historic carriage paths negotiate the sloping woodlands with gentle inclines that wind through the understory. Future trail additions should be laid out to better address the sloping topography of the woodlands for long-term stability.

Recapturing former circulation alignments could be considered. While some existing trails follow historic carriage paths, other historic paths have been abandoned and new paths have been added. Historically, carriage paths provided direct routes to the woodland gazebo and bridge crossing at the dry depression. These paths have not been retained today, although site grading provides clues toward historic path alignment. Recapturing these historic trail alignments, which are generally visible in the existing topography, would offer additional paths for recreation and interpretation opportunities. Additions of trails or more accurately trail segments should be considered in light of interpretive and recreational value and trail maintenance.

Important tasks to maintain existing trails include clearing deadwood from the woodland trails and pruning trees as needed. These tasks are also related to issues of user safety. Currently, a few mature trees are located along the woodland trails that are in need of pruning. Primarily, these trees have large dead branches hanging from the canopy. The trees should be pruned to remove these branches. Trees located within the interior of the Madison Lewis Woodlands should be reviewed to identify those that should be pruned. If a tree poses no threat of falling on the existing trail, extra care and pruning is not necessary. Clearing deadwood and pruning of trees near the pedestrian trails should

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be undertaken to enhance the character and safety of the Madison Lewis Woodlands. Additionally, volunteer growth and excessive leaf litter should also be cleared from the trail surface.

Because of the topography of the woodland area, erosion along trails can become an issue. To address this, water bars can be placed at not more than 15 foot intervals to shunt surface water flows to the side of the path and adjacent slopes. Doing so redirects surface water flows and limits the amount of path erosion over time. Water bars are constructed of cobblestone, “V” or “U” shaped formed steel or other durable materials. They are placed at an angle with one end farther downhill creating a break in the path that catches moving water and shunts it to the side. The remnant historic cobble gutter could be used as a model for adding more gutters and providing path-crossing water bars to control path drainage.

Parking Access Improvement

Public access into the public park is somewhat confusing. Separation between the private residences on Robin Brae Drive, the adjacent public street, and available space for vehicular parking is unclear. The functionality of this primary park entrance is important to the overall character and use of the Madison Lewis Woodlands. When the Village of Warwick gained ownership of the Madison Lewis Woodlands, a Deed of Restrictive Covenants specified that an unpaved parking area for up to five vehicles could be laid out. However, a formal parking area for park users has not been established. By creating a small, unimposing parking area, access will be improved. Additionally, a clearer distinction will be made between public land and adjacent and private ownership. This initiative to develop a small parking area will define an identifiable entry into the parkland without negatively impacting historic features. (See Figure V.3, presented later in this narrative.)

Invasive Species Suppression & Ongoing Management

One important element of landscape management is the suppression of exotic, invasive species currently colonizing areas of the Madison Lewis Woodlands. The most prominent invasive plant materials include tatarian honeysuckle (*Lonicera tatarica*), Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) trees, barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), and garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*). The tatarian honeysuckle is focused in specific, sunny areas of the site while the garlic mustard and Norway maple are more scattered. Exotic invasive plants are aggressive, tending to increase in number while effectively competing against native plants while limiting native plant growth and reproduction and degrading the habitat value of the area. Exotic, fast growing species are considered “bully” plants, offering no positive benefits and limiting growth of plants that do offer positive environmental benefits. In a designed landscape, historic exotic plants that are well-behaved, staying where planted, have a place in the overall composition. In contrast, invasive non-native plants that migrate and proliferate throughout the landscape are undesirable as their growth tactics out-compete other plants and alter the landscape character. This can also cause issues for wildlife that depend on native plants as a food source. Eliminating the existing invasive plants and suppressing future invasive growth will augment the landscape character and provide a better understanding of the historic composition that was implemented by the Fowlers.

Suppression methods differ among the invasive plants depending on plant species type. Young woody plants of ½ inch to 1-½ inch caliper can be removed with Weed Wrench or Talon tools made for this purpose. These tools allow manual removal of plant and root mass while limiting disturbance

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to the root zones of the nearby plants. An effective protocol for invasive exotic tree and shrub suppression for plants larger than Weed Wrench size, such as well established Tree of Heaven, Norway maple, European buckthorn, honeysuckle and barberry, is a double cutting method, where the plant is cut with the second cut as close to grade as possible, followed by painting herbicide, typically Glyphosphate or Triclopyr, directly on the cut stems or trunks. Stems wet from cutting absorb the herbicide as they dry out, effectively killing the plant and avoiding any herbicide migration into the surrounding area. Without herbicide use, cut trees and shrubs will resprout vigorously. Coordination between tree cutting crews and painting of stems and trunks by a licensed pesticide/herbicide applicator is required. Herbicide should be applied to the cut trunks within six hours of cutting or less. This cut and paint method limits herbicide migration into other areas of the landscape and is safer and more effective because it focuses only on undesirable plants, killing roots through absorption into plant tissue.

Herbaceous invasive plants need to be managed by hand removal. Garlic mustard, present in selected areas of the woodlands, can simply be hand pulled and removed for composting or disposal. However, suppression of this plant requires a more long-term commitment to management. Seeds from this plant can remain in the soil for up to five years. As a result, new plants can grow even after removal. A small but dedicated local volunteer group can, over a six or seven year period, eliminate garlic mustard from these woodlands and then undertake an ongoing monitoring process to keep it out of this public landscape.

In summary, active suppression of invasive plants has been undertaken in many public landscapes and considerable technical literature addressing testing, tools, techniques, safety issues and effective control has been developed. While specific techniques are recommended here, others are also viable. Selection of an invasive species removal technique is dependent on available personnel, funding, and proximity of non-target species. The control of specific target species should be carried out in three steps:

- Researching best practices to obtain data on successful control
- Planning the suppression effort
- Persisting with the suppression until the species is under control

Invasive species control should address target species and rely on best practices and field tests to refine the most suitable approach. Hand removal of target plants using teams of people on volunteer work days has been effective in public parks and preserves. The Village of Warwick could establish a “Weed Team” for the Madison Lewis Woodlands that works on suppression efforts several times a year. Within five years, control of target species should be well along and ongoing efforts will require a lesser level of effort. With invasive species suppressed and eventually removed, existing understory plants can be managed to thrive and spread through the woodlands, including desirable young trees, ferns and wildflowers.

Wayfinding & Interpretation

An attractive, durable entry sign should be developed that identifies this public landscape and provides wayfinding guidance in the form of a simple trail map with features noted. There can also be trail blazes in color that aid in wayfinding. Signage should be compatible with the naturalistic

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landscape character. When considering a signage system, it is important to consider issues such as climate and vandalism. Sign materials should be able to hold up over time to the Warwick climate. Signs should be constructed with durable materials that cannot be easily vandalized.

The approach to interpretation at the Madison Lewis Woodlands focuses on remnant historic features and spatial patterns evident in each of the three distinct areas of the landscape: the former garden space, the woodlands, and the Colonial Avenue entry drive. The proposed approach for the Madison Lewis Woodlands uses arrival sequence and visual and physical progression to frame an engaging, informative visitor experience. By identifying interpretive themes for each area, visitor experience and understanding of the historic landscape can be improved.

In the former garden space, the overall interpretive theme can focus on early 20th century country estate gardens. Country estates established at the same time as Belair typically included gardens with formal plantings and built features such as fountains, benches, and pergolas. The Belair Italian Garden included these features. Today, evidence of the historic spatial organization and remnant pavers and stone fountain basin combined with the historic white spruce hedge and yews provide a sense of the former garden. Interpretation of this space should emphasize the historic spatial definition with a secondary focus on the formal plantings. Another important theme for the garden interpretation is its relationship to other areas of the former estate landscape. Historically, the formal garden provided a transition between the Fowler mansion, vegetable garden and orchard, and the woodlands. Interpretation of adjacent features, such as the former vegetable garden, will highlight the spatial and visual relationships once defined within the garden space.

For the woodlands, an important interpretive theme is the creation of a woodland ramble. The Fowler family enhanced the existing woodland with native and non-native plantings, curving carriage drives, and rustic built features. With these improvements, the Fowlers created a scenic, naturalistic landscape within the formal estate grounds. Today, the historic character, use, and context of the woodlands as part of a larger estate can be better understood through interpretation of built features, continued trail maintenance, and vegetation management. Multiple interpretive opportunities exist within the woodlands. The trail passes through distinct woodland types, highlighting the diversity of plant materials implemented during the historic period. Treatment of these areas should focus on vegetation management. Overall, the vegetation should be managed for ecological and habitat value, diversity of species and education value. This approach would interpret both the character of the vegetation and the woodlands landscape during the Fowler period and the educational focus of the Garden Club period, using the existing landscape.

The Colonial Avenue entry drive provides a valuable opportunity to interpret an historic entry sequence, including drive, stone piers and plantings that were a component of the Belair estate landscape. With the subdivision of lands following World War II, this feature was included in a residential lot and was not retained as part of the Madison Lewis Woodlands. However, because of its value as a relatively intact historic feature, the possibility of establishing a public right-of-way for pedestrian access along this drive should be pursued. Today, the historic plantings of a range of tree species are evident to both sides of this drive lined in a semi-formal allée, or double row of trees, many of which remain from the historic period. This allée is a design feature and also an informal arboretum, illustrating the intended diversity and effect of plantings added during the historic period.

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The overall character of the drive with the dappled light, gravel drive surface, and rough stone piers, reveals the historic entry experience, hinting at the broader character of the Belair estate. Management of the historic trees and enhanced public access from this drive will add to the interpretation of this historic landscape area.

Understanding of the landscape can be enhanced with interpretive features. The traditional approach to this is to develop and install wayside markers with images and text that relate to specific places. These are widely used in national parks. However, interpretive panels of this type are expensive to develop and install and are prone to vandalism. As an alternative a marker system with an audio visual downloadable tour could be developed. The text and images can highlight the historic uses and character of specific areas and features within the landscape. The tour can also note ecological features of the landscape, particularly plant types. Simple markers can be placed in the landscape to indicate the stations of the tour. When implementing a marker system, a unified design vocabulary needs to be determined so they are easily identified in the landscape and work with the entry sign, blazes and other aspects of the wayfinding and signage system. Another advantage of a digital tour is that it can start small, and be augmented when resources are available. It is also easy to change over time. Once developed, a downloadable tour file with text and historic images could be made available at the public library or village website where users can download it directly to personal MP3 players or cell phones. Implementation of both a marker system and an audio tour makes interpretation of the historic estate grounds available to a wider range of users.

Summary

This section provides guidance for the rehabilitation and ongoing management of this unique public landscape. While providing a range of recreational opportunities, the actions taken to stabilize, preserve and rehabilitate this landscape are in concert with the overall objectives of the Village. These include initiatives that will:

- Enhance use and the visitor experience through wayfinding and interpretation of historic character and natural features
- Preserve and highlight remaining Belair estate historic character and features to include masonry elements, topography, drives and paths, and vegetation
- Enhance natural systems, habitat and ecological value
- Suppress invasive species to improve landscape character and ecology
- Support the historic diversity of plant materials
- Improve access through stabilizing trails and providing parking
- Reconstructing missing rustic wood features
- Remove hazards to address user safety

All of these are important considerations related to the rehabilitation and management of the Madison Lewis Woodlands landscape. With thoughtful planning, a landscape preservation treatment approach can be implemented that addresses these issues, improves landscape character and ecology, and enhances the recreational and interpretive value of the Madison Lewis Woodlands. The following discussion of projects combines the elements explained in this text to focus on specific project areas within the landscape.

E. MADISON LEWIS WOODLANDS SPECIFIC LANDSCAPE TREATMENT PROJECTS

During field work sessions, Heritage Landscapes identified specific areas and projects that can be implemented to enhance interpretation of the historic landscape. The projects are presented on the annotated figures and the *Potential Project Areas & Interpretation Opportunities Plan, PA*, included at the end of the chapter as an 11-inch by 17-inch fold-out at a scale of 1 inch equal to 160 feet. Overall, the landscape interpretation approach uses existing features and spatial organization to interpret historic character and landscape features with consideration for current and future use and management.

Enhanced Public Entry

The entry into the Madison Lewis Woodlands from Robin Brae Drive is a particularly important area of the historic landscape. Because it serves as the primary public entrance into the site, it strongly contributes to both the landscape character and public perception of the site. The character, use, and functionality of this important entry landscape can be enhanced through a number of projects. Views into the former garden space have become obscured primarily through growth of invasive and volunteer vegetation. The prolific honeysuckle that lines the mulch entry walk should be cleared following the procedures outlined in the previous section, and the wood chip path should be removed. (See Figure V.2.) A new stone walk can be constructed between the large yew and spruce hedge adjacent to a small, gravel parking area alongside Robin Brae Drive to the south of the entrance walk. Installation of a rustic style rose arbor similar in character to the missing historic garden arbor can be constructed across the new entrance walk. Inclusion of this feature interprets the historic character of the garden space and provides a focal point to draw users into the space. A sketch of the proposed entry area is shown in the *Proposed Access Sketch Plan* in Figure V.3.

Former Garden Space

Within the former garden space, landscape character can be greatly improved primarily through vegetation management. (See Figure V.4.) All volunteer growth, including trees, should be cleared, particularly through the center of the garden space. The two remaining historic yew shrubs at the west garden edge should be pruned and maintained. The Andorra juniper (*Juniperus horizontalis* ‘Andorra’) located at the east edge of the fountain basin should be retained and trimmed. The mature spruce trees that mark the north and west garden edges should be maintained with the existing volunteer undergrowth and deadwood removed. Vegetation growing in the historic stone fountain basin also needs to be removed. This can be addressed through minimal efforts to include a basic clean-out twice a year. (See Figure V.5.) Additional forget-me-nots (*Myosotis sylvatica*) can be planted on the ground plane.

Once the character of vegetation in the former garden space is addressed, improvement to built features can be undertaken. The historic stone path that extends east, west, and north of the fountain basin is an important remnant feature. It provides cues as to the historic circulation and use of the garden space. The remaining stones should be lifted and reset in stone dust on the ground plane to provide a flat walking surface. Missing stones should be replaced. Additional stones can be added to the path made from stones from the removed pergola to extend the path across the west edge of the

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garden space, under the reconstructed arbor and connecting to the gravel parking area. A threshold stone remains in the landscape at the end of the path extending north from the fountain basin. The remnant stone is sited at the former spruce hedge. Here a bench and interpretive marker can be placed. (See Figure V.6.) The marker can interpret the historic character and features of the garden space and the adjacent private yard, which historically served as the family vegetable garden.

With the completion of these projects, the landscape character of the former garden space will be improved to address the historic character and features and accommodate contemporary use and maintenance of the space. With the removal of the volunteer and invasive vegetation, the historic spatial organization of the area can be better understood. Additionally, these projects will define a scenic, shade garden that can be maintained and managed with minimal effort.

Bridge Crossing & Stream

The landscape character at the east edge of the garden space and at the bridge crossing can be enhanced primarily through vegetation management. As in the garden space, invasive species should be cleared. Following this effort, existing plant materials should be managed to spread through the understory. This includes the herbaceous species, jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*), bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) and periwinkle (*Vinca minor*). Two sugar maple trees (*Acer saccharum*) found near the west side of the bridge likely remain from the historic period and should be maintained into the future. Historic images provide details of the original bridge for reference. In order to enhance use and functionality of the bridge, an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) approved ramp can be constructed on the ends of the existing bridge, providing additional access across the stream.

Historic Yellowwood

Beyond the garden space and bridge crossing, treatment and interpretation of the woodlands area will rely on vegetation management and renewal. Monitoring of the health of the historic yellowwood tree (*Cladrastis kentuckea*) is needed. Changes to this area may also be undertaken to reestablish the former open, sunny slope. This majestic yellowwood tree grew broadly in the sun during the historic period; however, the slope is now shady with young trees closing in the area. A more open condition could be reestablished with selective clearing. Selected surrounding small trees, shrubs and invasive species should be removed to open views and sunlight to the historic tree. (See Figure V.7.) This historic tree was likely among the earliest estate plantings and conveys a sense of the historic landscape character. Obvious age and decline indicate a need to inspect the tree regularly and provide needed care. Removal should be deferred as long as possible while maintaining safe conditions. The tree may be kept in the landscape by placing a warning barrier around it. Several additional yellowwood trees have been seeded by this giant and are located nearby. Eventually, the tree should be removed, perhaps with the stump retained and with a new yellowwood planted next to it. The new tree could be grown from the wood or seeds of the original for interpretive value and to demonstrate community commitment.

Former Playhouse Site

At the former playhouse and bowling alley site volunteer growth should be cleared from the footprint of the building, extending from the south of the historic well to the extant row of sugar maple. The former tennis court should also be cleared of growth. These efforts help to recapture the former

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landscape organization and provide a sense of the historic use and character. An interpretive marker placed near the well could include an historical image of the former playhouse and tennis court lawn, noting the remnant trees. The remnant pump house located upslope from the playhouse site can also be interpreted to provide insight into the historic maintenance and function of the estate grounds.

Potential Pond Overlook

Another interpretive opportunity exists to provide a scenic overlook of the constructed pond. Through management of existing honeysuckle, Norway maple, and deadfall, it may be possible to create a viewshed to the water feature from the existing trail. Although the pond is located on private property, this project establishes a visual relationship between the publicly-owned preserve and the pond, giving a sense of the historic relationship between the scenic woodlands and the constructed water feature.

Public-Private Interface

Farther south and east, the boundary between public and private lands could be made clearer. Private and Village-owned property visually blends together without visual clues as to boundary locations. In some areas recognition of boundaries could potentially be enhanced through vegetation management. For example, the formerly topped and trimmed spruce trees establish a clear edge in the former garden area that has open, mown adjacent residential properties. Another possible approach is to place corner markers and posts at some reasonable interval, say 25-foot spacing, along property lines. A more intensive approach would be to construct a cedar log fence at the property line. The fence would be rustic style, as seen in Figures II.9 and II.17, and could also interpret the character of missing landscape features.

Historic Drive & Tree Allée

The driveway from Colonial Avenue is a potential access and interpretive feature. In private ownership today, it serves as an access to a residential lot. The allée and historic stone piers at the Colonial Avenue edge of the drive are valuable for site interpretation. The four stone piers recall the use of stone throughout the historic landscape and mark the former entrance drive. A double row of a diverse group of mature trees dating to the historic estate period lines the drive, creating a shaded allée. This historic planting is another estate feature. The mix of trees found along the allée provides a strong sense of the intended effect and diversity of plant materials added to the landscape during the historic period. Generally, all deciduous trees measuring around 28 inches in diameter and above and all evergreen trees measuring around 16 inches in diameter and above are extant from the historic period. Several small volunteer trees have self-seeded around the historic trees. In addition, a number of invasive trees are present, including tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), Norway maple, and box elder (*Acer negundo*). If a public right-of-way or right-of-access for pedestrians was established, volunteer and invasive plants should be removed and the allée managed for the continued health and growth of mature historic trees. Installation of a small sign indicating that the driveway can also serve as a pedestrian entrance to the public lands would be appropriate. It may also be appropriate to provide interpretive information about the piers, trees and historic entry while respecting the use of the drive as a private residential driveway.

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Woodland Ecological Diversity

During the Fowler period, the woodlands were comprised of a diverse mix of native trees and shrubs that established themselves on the site and others that were transplanted from nearby properties as well as exotic species selected by the Fowler family during travel overseas. The combination of native and exotic plant materials created a diverse, naturalistic woodland. In order to maintain this diversity into the future, a long-term plan is needed. While the native plants will resow, establishing themselves into the future, the exotic trees generally will not. As a result, as the exotic trees decline, the intended diversity of vegetation will not persist. In order for the diverse mix of native and exotic trees and shrubs as laid out by the Fowler family to continue into the future, the exotic species will need to be replanted. A plan that establishes procedures for the long-term renewal of woodland diversity needs to be set forth.

Downhill Stream View

Near the west edge of the site, partial views of the stream exist today. Historically, the visual and spatial relationship of the estate grounds to the natural stream was important. This relationship can be recaptured through management of vegetation growing on the downslope between the trail and stream. A number of large American linden (*Tilia Americana*) and black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) are located here. A few of the trees can be selectively removed to open stream views. Invasive species found in the understory should be removed and other plant materials should be added, notably ferns and jack-in-the-pulpit. One issue affecting the character and quality of both the stream view and the stream itself is the mown turf ground plane of the adjacent residential yard. The ground plane is mown to the stream edge, causing issues of environmental quality for the stream and other water bodies in the watershed. The Village of Warwick should pursue potential environmental control on the adjacent property to resolve this issue.

Summary

The existing Madison Lewis Woodlands landscape holds traces of the historic landscape that serve as clues of the former character. By preserving remnant features and managing woodland vegetation, the historic landscape character of the former garden space and the woodlands can be recaptured and interpreted. By pursuing the possibility of creating a public-right-of-way along the Colonial Avenue entry drive and tree allée can serve as a strong interpretive feature. The projects and interpretation opportunities outlined above provide a logical approach to the preservation, interpretation and management of the Madison Lewis Woodlands.

F. LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION, INTERPRETATION & MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

At the Madison Lewis Woodlands, the landscape preservation, interpretation and management approach seeks to communicate the rich landscape history of the unique public space. The recommended rehabilitation approach is a broad philosophy that guides decisions about the preservation, stewardship, and future of the park landscape. Ultimately, a rehabilitation-based treatment protects and enhances the historic character and features of the Madison Lewis Woodlands landscape while incorporating the need for contemporary use and improvements. The overarching objective of the renewal is to create a sensitive balance between neighborhood park access, use, safety,

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functionality, recapturing the former scenic character and quality, and limited maintenance burden. The character and sense of place defined by extant features should be used to guide future efforts. With a more active management approach, the character and functionality of the landscape can be improved. A prominent issue is vegetation management. Through suppression of invasive species, selective pruning, and clearing of deadfall, the woodland character is addressed. Long-term management plans are also needed in order to retain the historic diversity of native and exotic plant species. Other components that are recommended to recapture the former landscape character while improving use and functionality today include: trail stabilization and maintenance; parking access improvement; rustic feature reconstruction; and historic estate and natural systems interpretation.

This unique historic public landscape is a village treasure and it deserves the careful attention and stewardship into the future outlined in this planning report. Specific project areas and interpretation opportunities have been highlighted as part of the Madison Lewis Woodlands landscape preservation, interpretation and management approach. Renaming the site to reflect its history and origins is one key component for interpretation. Notable project areas to be addressed include the historic garden entry from Robin Brae Drive, the garden space, former playhouse site, interface between public and private lands, and stream views. Many of these projects can be accomplished with volunteers or groups under Village guidance and supervision. With improved site access and enhancement of remnant historic features, the Madison Lewis Woodlands and its role as part of the Belair estate can be interpreted. Through the implementation of the outlined preservation treatment, interpretation and management approaches the Madison Lewis Woodlands can encompass a range of recreational opportunities while providing a clear understanding of the unique historic landscape.

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CHAPTER V: ENDNOTES

¹ Charles A. Birnbaum, with Christine Capella Peters, *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, (Washington DC: 1996); National Park Service, *NPS-28: Cultural Resource Management Guideline* (Washington DC: 1998); *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques*, U.S. department of the Interior National Park Service, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, Park Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes Program (Washington DC: 1998).

² Birnbaum, with Peters, *Guidelines*, 18.

³ Birnbaum, with Peters, *Guidelines*, 48.

⁴ Birnbaum, with Peters, *Guidelines*, 90.

⁵ Birnbaum, with Peters, *Guidelines*, 128.

⁶ Frederick Law Olmsted, *Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns*, 1870, reprinted 1970.

⁷ Frederick Law Olmsted, *Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns*, 1870, reprinted 1970.