

MADISON LEWIS WOODLANDS CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT



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Figure I.1. This current aerial view of the Madison Lewis Woodlands shows the approximate boundary of the Village-owned woodlands outlined in red. The site is located northeast of the village center on a sloping hillside behind residential homes built as part of the Robin Brae subdivision. Courtesy Microsoft LiveMap. (R-MLW-CurrentAerial-LiveMaps-2008-outlined.jpg)

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CHAPTER II: MADISON LEWIS WOODLANDS LANDSCAPE HISTORY

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Figure II.17. View along the curving drive shows the rustic pole and twig gate shown in the previous image and additional features at the entrance into the estate. A pedestrian gate is located to the side of the carriage gate. A simple roof provides shade, and wooden fence extends to either side of the gate. To the left, the fence connects with a wooden post and wire fence that restricts access onto the estate grounds. Deciduous trees of varying sizes line the drive with the woodlands visible beyond. Courtesy Steve Gross. (R-MLW-SG-GateDrive-1927-front.jpg)

Figure II.18. View looking across the Italian Garden from the edge of the pergola conveys the formal character of the garden space. Beds of flowering plants line the north and south edges with spruce hedge to the north. A central, circular stone fountain sprays a water jet high into the air, providing a focal point for the garden. Planting beds extend to both sides of the fountain. The far end of the garden is punctuated by a white marble bench with a bust and pedestal in front of it. A sundial on a pedestal is located near the left edge of the photo. A pruned catalpa tree stands to the left with the climbing vines of the pergola just beyond the frame. Courtesy Warwick Historical Society. (R-MLW-VW-BA-Garden-1910.jpg)

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Figure II.23. This view looking toward the southwest corner of the Fowler mansion shows the plantings that flank the drive, climb on the porch and appoint the landscape near the building. The planting character is quite showy and is in a different style from that of the naturalistic character of the estate woodlands. Courtesy Steve Gross. (R-MLW-VW-BA2-HousePlantings-1905.jpg)

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Figure II.25. A grass tennis court is seen in this view looking southeast toward the playhouse. The two-story wood-frame structure provides indoor play space for the Fowler family. A stone and wood well is seen to the left (north) with a wooden tête-à-tête bench placed near it under the canopy of a deciduous tree. Four deciduous trees are seen in a row along the front of the building. Beyond the building, the ground plane slopes up with a meadow ground plane that serves as a transition to the woodlands beyond. Courtesy Warwick Historical Society. (R-MLW-VW-BA-PlayhouseLawn-1910.jpg)

Figure II.26. The still water of the pond reflects a row of deciduous trees in this view looking southeast across the lawn to this constructed water feature. Several small evergreen trees are positioned along the edges. Simple benches and a dock are visible in the shade under the trees. Courtesy Steve Gross. (R-MLW-VW-BA2-Pond-1900.jpg)

Figure II.27. This view looking southeast toward the orchard, gazebo and pond provides a broader context on the designed landscape of the Fowler estate. Young orchard trees are located on the grassy hillside in the foreground, while the constructed pond, roof of a rustic gazebo, and open fields are beyond. Courtesy Steve Gross. (R-MLW-VW-BA2-PondOrchard2-1900.jpg)

Figure II.28. View looking south from the carriage house and stables show a drive curving downhill, past the orchard to the right and an arbor, center. The drive continues to the left to the woodlands. The arbor-covered secondary drive runs parallel to the orchard and leads to the constructed pond, visible at end of the drive. Courtesy Warwick Historical Society. (R-MLW-VW-BA-FromStable-1902.jpg)

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and carriage house and several other buildings. The building directly north of the constructed pond is the ice house and the building to the east of the stream is the playhouse. One ‘summer house’ is noted on the east side of the stream, circled by the carriage path. The purpose of the other three structures depicted on the plan is unknown. Courtesy Albert Wisner Public Library. (R-MLW-AWL-VillageAtlas-Detail-1903.jpg)

Figure II.30. View looking north along the Belair driveway shows the drive running under a porte-cochere that extends from the west façade of the house. A collection of trees is seen on the gently sloping hillside south of the house. Another tree is visible along the drive edge. Vines grow on the façade of the house and porte-cochere. Courtesy Steve Gross. (R-MLW-VW-BA2-HouseDrive-1905.jpg)

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Figure II.32. This view looks north across the constructed pond. A floating swan sculpture is visible and a small white boat is at the pond edge in front of the evergreen tree. The constructed stone wall that defines the pond edge is evident. A carriage path and additional plantings can be seen in the background. Courtesy Steve Gross. (R-MLW-SG-Pond-1920s-front.jpg)

Figure II.33. This view looks northwest across the constructed pond. The rock fountain sprays water into the air, adding a focal point to the water feature. A sculpture of a swan floats on the still water near the fountain. A small boat is visible near the edge of the pond in front of the large evergreen tree and a stone wall defines the pond edge. The Fowler mansion is visible in the background surrounded by plantings. Courtesy Steve Gross. (R-MLW-SG-PondHill-1920s-front.jpg)

Figure II.34. A rustic wooded arbor with climbing vines arches over the constructed gravel path in this 1906 image. This photograph within the woodlands depicts the variable tree cover along the path with a rustic bench located alongside. Deciduous trees of varying sizes are interspersed throughout with a low rough ground plane. This view is a source for the construction details of the proposed entry arbor at the Robin Brae entry. Courtesy Warwick Historical Society. (R-MLW-VW-BA-FootpathArbor-1906.jpg)

Figure II.35. “Section One Bel-Aire Estates” plan by Pierson Booth shows the subdivision of the 38-acre Fowler estate. It also shows the buildings and drives that remained intact in 1952. The main house and curving entry drive remain along Maple Avenue. The drive continues north and east, connecting with the carriage house and barn. The ice house and pond remain southeast of the house. It appears that the playhouse that was located east of the pond and stream has been removed. Courtesy Garden Club of Orange and Dutchess Counties. (R-MLW- GC-RobinBraePlan-1952.jpg)

Figure II.36. The “Madison Lewis Woodlands Trail Guide” illustrates the trails through the woodlands, following the historic carriage paths. Simple illustrations and a key note the locations of specific plants that can be seen while strolling through the woodlands. Courtesy Garden Club of Orange and Dutchess Counties. (R-MLW-VW-GC-TrailGuide.jpg)

CHAPTER III: MADISON LEWIS WOODLANDS LANDSCAPE EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure III.1. The entry walk into the Madison Lewis Woodlands is lined by prolific tatarian honeysuckle, an invasive shrub. The wood chip covered walk leads into the former garden space. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes. (R-MLW-10June2008-0002.jpg)

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Figure III.2. These three white spruce trees form part of a former hedge that continues to mark the west edge of the former Italian Garden space. The prominent markings approximately five feet high on the trunks indicate that these trees were historically pruned to be maintained at a consistent hedge height. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes. (R-MLW-10June2008-0005.jpg)

Figure III.3. This view looking west across the garden space shows several existing landscape features. A path of bluestone pavers extends down the center of the image with the turf-filled stone fountain basin visible at the approximate center. A historic Andorra juniper grows to the south (left) of the basin. A large historic yew shrub is visible toward the rear of the garden space, right of center. Original white spruce trees mark the north and west edges with a considerable amount of volunteer and invasive vegetation growing throughout the space. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes. (R-MLW-10June2008-0023.jpg)

Figure III.4. Views of the gentle curve in the stream are partially obscured by vegetation. Large linden and walnut trees grow on the downslope between the path and stream. Fern, American hogpeanut, and garlic mustard cover the sloping ground plane. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes. (R-MLW-10June2008-0154.jpg)

Figure III.5. Natural features within the woodlands, such as these rock outcrops, contribute to the landscape character. Stone was added to features to enhance this natural character. Here, stone lines the path edge. Fern and barberry grow on the woodland floor, creating interesting textures in the dappled light. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes. (R-MLW-10June2008-0140.jpg)

Figure III.6. The large yellowwood visible at the center of the image likely predates the historic period. Its branching pattern indicates it matured in an open area, with few surrounding trees to inhibit the spreading growth. Other tree species found in this area include mature hemlock, white pine, and arborvitae. A stone pile is visible just beyond the yellowwood. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes. (R-MLW-10June2008-0055.jpg)

Figure III.7. The historic stone well, visible at center, is one feature remaining from the Fowler playhouse landscape. The row of sugar maple trees growing to the west (right) of the well mark the location of the former playhouse. The trees were planted along the front façade of the structure during the historic period. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes. (R-MLW-10June2008-0046.jpg)

Figure III.8. Stone piers that remain from the Fowler period mark the historic secondary entrance into the Belair estate grounds from Colonial Avenue. The drive is lined by a historic tree allée and while new plantings have been added, several of the existing trees date from the historic period. Although not included in the 14-acre public park, this feature provides insight into the intended diversity and effect of vegetation planted at the Belair estate. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes. (R-MLW-10June2008-0104.jpg)

Figure III.9. This view illustrates the area of the woodlands dominated by American linden trees. A number of black walnut trees also grow in this area, located toward the east edge of the property. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes. (R-MLW-10June2008-0125.jpg)

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Figure III.12. View along a former carriage path that is not part of the preserve trail system reveals remnant historic features. The stone feature visible at the center of the image is a historic stone abutment that supported a rustic bridge, which crossed the dry ravine beyond. In the background, a historic stone stairway is visible. Fallen trees are strewn across the ground plane and over the historic stone feature. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes. (R-MLW-10June2008-0177.jpg)

Figure III.13. A natural stream runs through the site from north-south, separating the garden space from the woodlands and walking trails. The character of the stream compliments that of the woodlands, although views of the stream are obscured. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes. (R-MLW-10June2008-0033.jpg)

Figure III.14. A view looking southeast across the historic constructed pond shows a portion of the rusticated rock fountain at the pond center with a volunteer tree growing through it. The pond is a remnant character-defining feature of the Belair estate landscape, although today it is privately owned. Views of the pond are limited from the public landscape. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes. (R-MLW-11Feb2008__004.jpg)

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Figure III.16. A view along a gently curving stone stairway shows the remains of the historic estate feature. Several of the flat, bluestone treads have been removed. Stones continue to line the edge of the stairway. Fallen trees inhibit use of the historic feature. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes. (R-MLW-10June2008-0138.jpg)

Figure III.17. A bridge constructed across the stream provides access to the woodland walking trails. The bridge was added after the end of the historic period. Stone abutments below the bridge are remnant historic features. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes. (R-MLW-11Feb2008__070.jpg)

**CHAPTER IV: MADISON LEWIS WOODLANDS LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS,
INTEGRITY & SIGNIFICANCE**

Figure IV.1. This image shows an overlay of a contemporary aerial with the 1903 Atlas of the Village of Warwick with much of the historic estate landscape, with the exception of the Colonial Avenue entrance drive. As evident in the overlay, overall patterns of spatial organization remain, particularly in the former garden space, while individual landscape features have been altered or removed. Aerial courtesy Google Maps, Atlas courtesy Albert Wisner Public Library, overlay courtesy Heritage Landscapes. (R-MLW-Overlay-CurrentAerial-GoogleMaps-1903-Atlas-PondAlign.jpg)

Figure IV.2. This image shows an overlay of a contemporary aerial with the 1903 Atlas of the Village of Warwick detail of Belair, focusing on the Colonial Avenue carriage drive. The entrance into the Madison Lewis Woodlands remains today, although it functions as a private driveway. Aerial courtesy Google Maps, Atlas courtesy Albert Wisner Public Library, overlay courtesy Heritage Landscapes. (R-MLW-Overlay-CurrentAerial-GoogleMaps-1903-Atlas-ColonialAlign.jpg)

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**CHAPTER V: MADISON LEWIS WOODLANDS LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION,
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Figure V.1. Remnants of the Fowler estate remain in the woodlands today. Remnants such as the gazebo foundation should be uncovered and interpreted. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes. Historical image Courtesy Village of Warwick. (R-MLW-VW-SummerHouse-1910.jpg and R-MLW-Gazebo-10June2008-0179.jpg)

Figure V.2. The walk from Robin Brae Drive to the Madison Lewis Woodlands offers many opportunities to improve the landscape character, including removing invasive species, removing the wood chip path, and establishing lawn. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes. (R-MLW-Existing Path-10June2008-0002.jpg)

Figure V.3. The entrance to Madison Lewis Woodlands can be improved with removal of invasive vegetation and existing wood chip path in addition to the recapture of the historic arbor. Parking can also be provided on site. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes. (R-MLW-Existing Path-10June2008-0002.jpg)

Figure V.4. The former garden space can be greatly improved through removal of invasive species, clearing and resetting the historic stone walk, and maintaining and interpreting historic vegetation dating to the Fowler period. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes. (R-MLW-Path-10June2008-0007.jpg)

Figure V.5. The area around the basin in the former garden area provides many opportunities for preservation and renewal. Smaller volunteer trees and invasive species should be removed, and Fowler-era features should be maintained. Courtesy Village of Warwick, annotated by Heritage Landscapes. (R-MLW-Fountain-VW-004.jpg)

Figure V.6. The threshold between the former garden and vegetable garden areas can provide a place for seating in a peaceful, contemplative space with interpretative opportunities. A key interpretive opportunity is the former pruning line of the Fowler spruce hedge. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes. (R-MLW-SpruceHedge-10June2008-0018.jpg)

Figure V.7. The woodland area around the Fowler yellowwood has become shady over time with new regenerative growth. Small trees in this area of the woodland should be removed to open views and sunlight to the yellowwood tree. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes. (R-MLW-Yellowwood-10June2008-0040.jpg)