
***THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE AT THE LLOYD HOUSE,
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA:***

**A REPORT ON RESEARCH AND FIELD OBSERVATIONS UNDERTAKEN IN 1990
TO DOCUMENT THE SITE'S HISTORY, EXISTING CONDITION AND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

PREPARED FOR

THE GARDEN CLUB OF ALEXANDRIA

BY

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH AT THE LLOYD HOUSE

In December of 1989, DOELL & DOELL approached Steven Shephard of *Alexandria Archaeology* concerning the prospect of conducting a limited archaeological program at the Lloyd house garden site during the summer of 1990. Although he indicated that his office had already selected *The Boyhood Home of Robert E. Lee* as its primary site for the 1990 season, he suggested that it might be possible to conduct a very limited testing program at the Lloyd House during the summer. In June of this year, Dr. Shephard confirmed that an archaeological survey of the Lloyd House landscape was tentatively scheduled for the first two weeks of July, and that the excavations would be carried out by a team of volunteers working under his supervision.

In preparation for this field work, and at the request of Dr. Shephard, DOELL & DOELL reviewed all historical and archaeological research pertaining to the Lloyd House landscape. This was done in order to develop realistic goals and objectives, as well as high-probability test locations, for the archaeological survey program. Subsequently, DOELL & DOELL prepared a series of plans (Existing Conditions Plan, Site Analysis Plan, and Proposed 1990 Archaeology Strategy; please see APPENDIX A) which helped to summarize the site's landscape history and our archaeological objectives for 1990.

Working in collaboration with Steven Shephard, DOELL & DOELL identified an archaeological strategy that was designed to accomplish the following goals and objectives within the 6-day testing period:

- (1) to obtain a sample of the soil stratigraphy and the archaeological record within the area south of the Lloyd House and the kitchen house site, as well as in the courtyard west of the house, and the area west of the stable house site;
- (2) to archaeologically test areas with high potential for indicating historic land uses and compartmentalization throughout the Lloyd House site, with a particular emphasis on potential historic garden areas;
- (3) to test propositions concerning the historic landscape at the Lloyd House, specifically:
 - Was the area south of the Lloyd House and the kitchen house site cultivated as a garden during the Lloyd residency?

- Did this area rise in an even grade from the Washington Street fence, or did it step-up in terraces or "falls" which coincided with increases in the height of the brick wall and changes in the architecture of the Lloyd House, the kitchen house and/or other outbuildings?
- Was the area west of the Lloyd House, north of the kitchen house site, and east of the stable house site originally cultivated as a garden or used as a driveway or courtyard during the Lloyd residency? If the latter, what material (swept dirt, brick, stone pavers, etc.) covered its surface?
- Does a large rectilinear depression (8' x 18') in the turf south of the kitchen house site mark the location of a former Lloyd outbuilding, garden pattern, or other 19th-century land use?
- Did a path parallel to the south façade of the Lloyd House link a gate on Washington Street with the kitchen house?

(4) to identify areas of the Lloyd House site or expand/modify the stated propositions for future archaeological study beyond the scope of this limited testing program.

The scheduled archaeological field work was conducted over a four week period in 1990: on July 3rd; July 5-7th, 12-14th, 21st and 26th. Weather was typical for Alexandria during the month of July -- hazy sunshine, high temperatures ranging from 85-100 degrees and very high relative humidity. Although the extreme heat on several days probably reduced the productivity of the crew, it was the heavy rains associated with late afternoon and evening thunderstorms which most affected the work. On several occasions, archaeological trenches filled with water, obliterating crisp soil profiles and turning hard clay into soupy mud. In order to accomplish the established work scope, Dr. Shephard extended the initial 7-day survey period to include two additional days during the second half of July.

Gerald Doell was present at the Lloyd House site on 6 days of the initial field work period, meeting with Steven Shephard and his crew, assessing and interpreting archaeological findings, photographing trench profiles and features of note, and re-assessing priorities and strategies in light of archaeological and archival findings, weather conditions and time limitations.

In summary, a total of 10 units were opened at the Lloyd House site, exposing approximately 86 square feet of surface area. Each unit was assigned a permanent reference number (eg. N50 E5) which indicated its location north/south and east/west on a grid system for the site established by Steven Shephard. The zero point for the grid system (N0 W0) was established as a point 9 feet west of the Washington Street fence, and 6 feet north of the brick wall.

Please refer to the attached plan (Figure 1) which illustrates the unit locations excavated by *Alexandria Archaeology* during July of 1990. A brief description of the archaeological objectives and findings for each trench are listed below:

Courtyard and Stable Area:

- N50 E5** This test unit was excavated to look for evidence of a path which may have extended from a gate in the Washington Street fence to the kitchen house or a wing/attachment to the Lloyd House. No evidence of a 19th-century path was found, only a poured concrete retaining wall of 20th-century origin indicating that this site was heavily disturbed. Additional testing is warranted to confirm or refute the presence of this path.
- N78 W55** This small test unit on the brick courtyard west of the mansion was excavated to determine whether this area was used as a garden, drive or courtyard. The results were inconclusive, however, since a layer of dirt and sand was reached only after removal of the modern brick, 2 inches of sand mixed with concrete, and 3 inches of asphalt. Difficulty of excavation precluded exploration of this area at this time.
- N98 W65** Placed on-line with an opening in a brick wall which formerly stood on the Queen Street property line, this trench was excavated to look for evidence of a path or walkway to the kitchen house and/or evidence of a brick courtyard. It is highly likely that a portion of the paving brick from John Lloyd's "back yard" was discovered in this area approximately 5-6 inches beneath the modern brick level, since ashes and 19th century household debris lie beneath them.
- N96 W113** This test unit west of the stable site was excavated to determine whether an alley or drive existed in this location during the 19th-century. Since soil levels were very thin and contained an abundance of 20th century materials, the results were inconclusive.

South of the kitchen house site:

N13 W73

N20 W53

N20 W73

These three test pits were excavated near a rectangular depression in the turf directly south of the kitchen house site speculated to be the location of a former outbuilding. The results were inconclusive, however, and failed to show any evidence of a structure. Additional testing is warranted to assess the nature and origin of this depression.

South of the Lloyd House:

S7 W33

This test unit was excavated at the base of the brick wall along the southern property line, at a point where the wall stepped-up 15 inches in height. It was hoped that the excavation might determine the construction date for the wall (probably 1833, the Lloyd Papers), the presence of a garden in this area, and the historic grade of the property (i.e. terraces or a gradual rise). Unlike many other areas of the site, the soils in this trench were deep, seemingly undisturbed, and contained some 19th-century artifacts (a mini-ball, a bone ring). No evidence of any terracing was detected. Additional testing is warranted to assess the extent of these "undisturbed" soils and their possible association with historic gardening on the property.

N9 W25

This diagonal trench was excavated to investigate whether remnants of an ornamental garden (paths, planting beds, etc.) were located in this area directly south of the Lloyd House. No such evidence was found.

N16 W18

Like the previous test unit (N9 W 25), this diagonal trench was excavated to determine whether remnants of an ornamental garden (paths, planting beds, etc.) were located directly south of the Lloyd House. A narrow, linear soil strata (running east-west) composed of pebbles embedded in clay was discovered in this trench, with deeper, more organic soils adjoining the clay/pebble strata on the north. Both features lie just above sterile soil, and the artifacts they contain date from the initial development of the property in the late-18th and early 19th-centuries. It is even possible that the pebble/clay soils may be the remnants of an unusual type of a path while the organic soils may mark the location of a planting bed. Additional archaeological testing in this area is warranted to assess the nature, extent and origin of these features and their possible association with historic gardening on the property.

In summary, the limited testing program conducted by *Alexandria Archaeology* at the Lloyd House in July of 1990 successfully accomplished most of the goals and objectives identified by DOELL & DOELL and archaeologist Steven Shephard. Although it would have been exciting and rewarding for everyone involved with the project to have uncovered a significant portion of John Lloyd's garden during the July field work, this did not occur. There were, however, a number of interesting discoveries which may lead us directly to the garden in subsequent excavations.

By its very nature, archaeological testing is similar to assembling a large jig-saw puzzle. We may have already uncovered several parts of the garden, but the pieces of the "puzzle" are so small that we cannot comprehend the "big picture". Consequently, the Garden Club should not be discouraged by what may appear, to some, as a lack of positive results. It is important to remember that the July testing program uncovered less than 1% of the possible Lloyd garden site. In other words, 99% of the presumed garden site remains to be explored; with additional testing, it is highly likely that remnants of John Lloyd's garden will be found.

For a more complete discussion of the 1990 archaeological testing program and an interpretation of the results, please refer to APPENDIX B which contains a copy of the A Report of Archaeological Excavations at The Lloyd House, 220 N. Washington Street, Alexandria, Virginia, in July 1990 prepared by Steven J. Shephard, Ph.D. for *Alexandria Archaeology*.

FIELD OBSERVATIONS AT THE LLOYD HOUSE

In addition to researching the history of an historic landscape and investigating its archaeological features, it is equally important to identify and record the existing or "as found" condition of the landscape. Ideally, it is best to begin this task with a current and accurate topographic site survey drawn at a scale of 1 inch = 10 feet and a contour interval of 1 foot or less, plus spot elevations. Since this type of map did not exist for the Lloyd House property, however, DOELL & DOELL had to improvise -- compiling an interim base map from a number of contemporary and historic sources, including:

- "restoration plans" for the property prepared by by Macomber, Curtice and Slaymaker during the mid-1970s;
- 1980 Contract Construction Drawings for the Lloyd House Garden prepared by the City of Alexandria, Department of Transportation;
- and a 1956 property line survey of the Lloyd House prepared by Edward S. Holland, a local surveyor.

During the morning hours of each day from July 5-7 and July 12-14, 1990, Gerald Doell used this base map (despite its lack of topography and inherent inaccuracies) to record field observations at the Lloyd House. Using a 100-foot tape measure to triangulate from known points of reference, Doell plotted the location of all landscape features on the site, including all structures (buildings, walls, fences), vegetation, circulation systems, utilities, site furniture (benches, lighting, signs, etc), anomalies (mounds, depressions, etc.), and miscellaneous cultural features (paving patterns, flower beds, etc.). The height, spread, and diameter (or caliper) and condition of all trees and shrubs were also noted. Color photographs (slides) were also taken to document noteworthy features and the overall character of the site. In addition, landscape features in the public rights-of-way along Washington and Queen Streets adjoining the Lloyd House were also observed and recorded.

Although most landscape features presently on the site appear to date from "restoration programs" of the 1960s, 1970s, or 1980s, a few features are worthy of note since they may date from the Lloyd residency:

□ brick wall along the southern property line.

Historical references in the John Lloyd Papers suggest that this 116-foot long wall was constructed by John Lloyd in 1833 to separate the grounds of his residence from the grounds of Benjamin Hallowell's school. An abundance of soft, orange, deteriorating bricks in the wall also support historical evidence that the wall was partially constructed from bricks removed from the "footways" along Queen and Washington Streets in 1833. Similarly, numerous hand-made square nails are set (not driven) into the mortar of the wall, suggesting that they were installed at the time of construction. Most of the nails are concentrated in the western third of the wall, and may have been used to train and support ornamental plants, such as vines, roses, or espaliered fruit trees. There are also a number of small iron loops set into the mortar of the wall approximately 4 feet from its eastern end along the Washington Street.

□ remnants of a picket fence in the brick wall.

A piece of wood securely embedded in the north side of the brick wall (17 courses above the grade of the sidewalk) near Washington Street appears to be a remnant of an ornamental rail for a picket fence. Similarly, an empty pocket in the wall (27 courses above the grade of the sidewalk) has an identical profile to the wooden

stub. Due to the excellent condition of the wood and the presence of a small amount of paint on its surface, it is likely that the rail dates from the 20th century -- probably the picket fence pictured in a 1963 newspaper article about the Lloyd House. Since there is a chance that it may date from the Lloyd residency, however, the wooden remnant is worthy of note and further study.

□ Linden tree on Washington Street.

In 1833, John Lloyd planted 12 "Linden Trees" along the frontage of his property on Washington Street. Today, only one Linden stands in front of the Lloyd House, and it is highly likely that this tree is either one of the original twelve Lindens, or a 19th century replacement. Historic photographs from the turn-of-the-century document 4 mature deciduous trees planted in front of the Lloyd House, with one tree standing in the same location as the existing Linden. Similarly, newspaper photographs and the HABS site plan document a single mature tree in this location circa 1960.

The tree in question may be a Little-leaf Linden, a variety introduced to America from Europe early in Colonial times and known for its slow growth and relatively small size compared with other lindens. Aside from the inherent growth characteristics of Little-leaf Lindens, a number of other factors may account for the tree's relatively small size (18 inches in diameter; 22 foot spread), including: root and branch competition from other trees which were originally planted about 12 feet to either side; harsh urban growing conditions (brick and asphalt pavement, summer heat, underground utilities, etc.); and stunted growth due to old age, disease and crown damage.

In an effort to confirm the age of the Linden, DOELL & DOELL contacted the City of Alexandria's arborist (Mr. John Noelle) and requested that the tree be cored with an incremental borer so its annual growth rings could be counted. Mr. Noelle declined to perform these services, however, citing a lack of manpower and equipment in his office, as well as his concern for the health of the tree following the core sample. Consequently, the age of the tree remains in the realm of speculation.