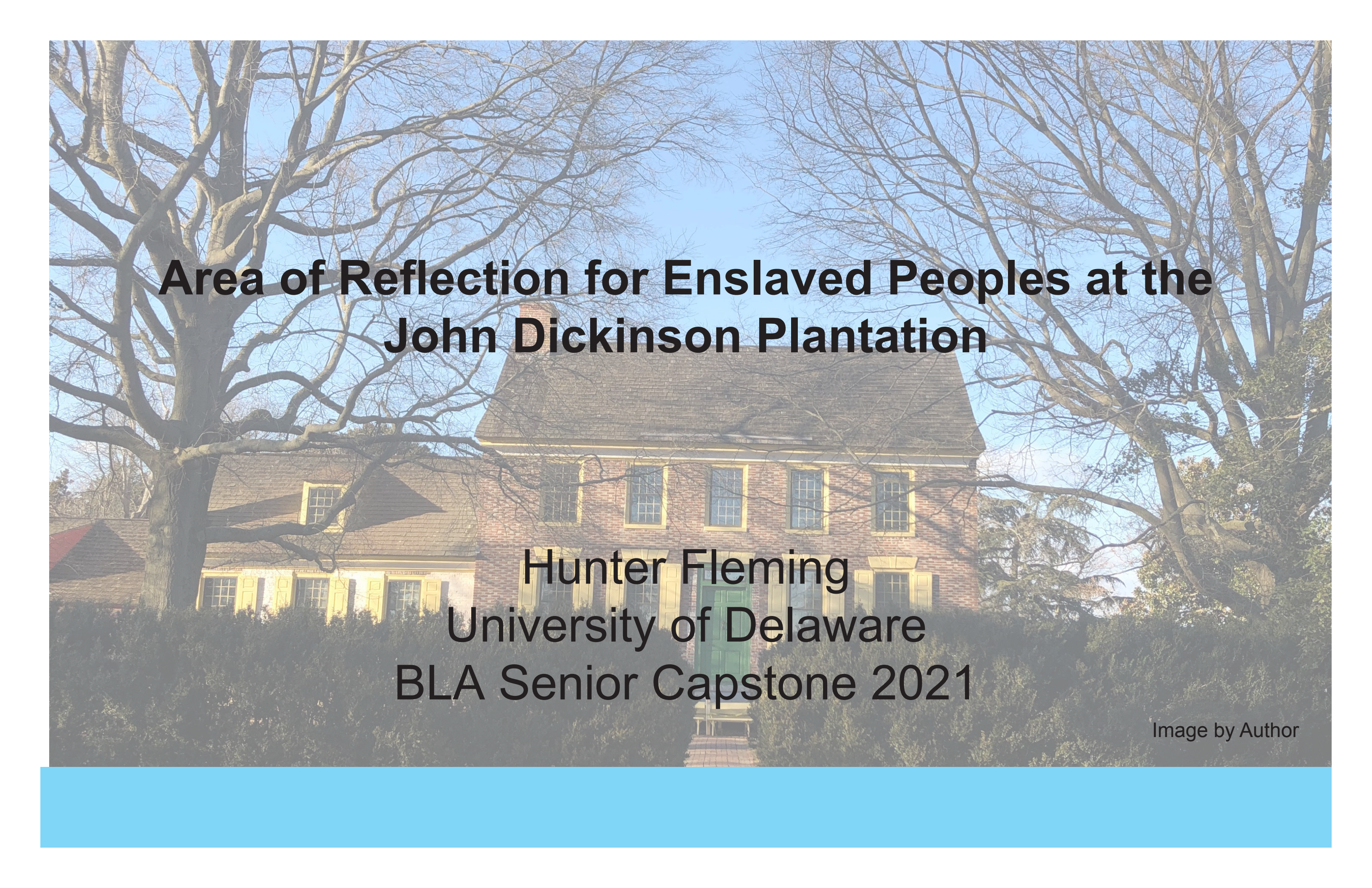




# **Area of Reflection for Enslaved Peoples at the John Dickinson Plantation**

Hunter Fleming  
University of Delaware  
BLA Senior Capstone 2021

Image by Author



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Farm field south of the mansion

Image by Author



# JOHN DICKINSON PLANTATION

340 Kitts Hummock Road, Dover, DE 19901



Figure 1. State of Delaware

The John Dickinson Plantation is located in south Dover in Kent County, Delaware. It is located just north of the St. Jones river and is about 4 miles west of the Delaware bay. It provides year-round open and guided tours that combines information about points of intersection between the different communities that resided on the property and along the St. Jones River.

The John Dickinson Plantation is a place for visitors to interpret the colonial experience in Delaware. The plantation has been going through a master planning process over the past few years to incorporate a new visitors center, parking lot, and circulation throughout the site. A programmatic element that was desired for the site was to be an area of reflection for visitors and staff to unite the history and legacy of slavery on the site.

lack of alignment/ left justification



Plantation in regards to Dover, Delaware.



Plantation Property Boundary.

I was very new to the term landscape of slavery and after visiting the site for the first time and listening to the staff members on our tour I was very interested in learning more about these landscapes. I chose to do a precedent study of Mulberry Row at Monticello to help familiarize myself more with the terminology as well as the different uses of these landscapes of slavery.

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**NARRATIVE**



# MULBERRY ROW AT MONTICELLO

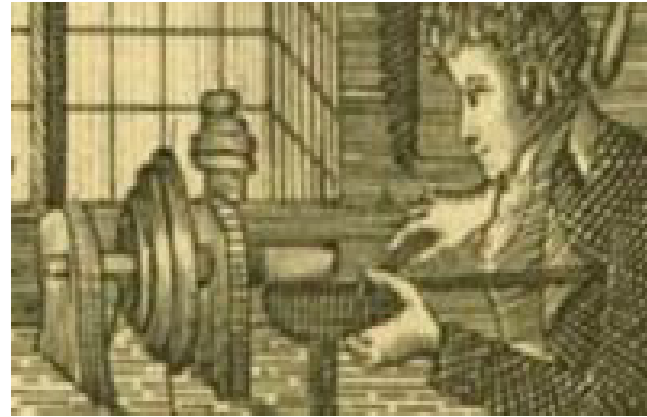


Figure 2. Jefferson with enslaved. Figure 3. Weaving machine.

Figure 4. Slave trade.

Figure 5. Overall view of Monticello.

Mulberry Row was a complex community influenced by circumstances beyond Virginia. The American and French Revolutions and the War of 1812 made American commerce unstable, causing Thomas Jefferson to shift from tobacco to wheat cultivation and to add industries to Mulberry Row. His ability to achieve his goals depended on a work force of free, indentured, and mainly enslaved people. Monticello's dozens of enslaved men, women, and children formed strong family bonds to counter their oppression.

The site was designed by Thomas Jefferson and was built to be his home, farm, and plantation. Built on the "Little Mountain", the house embodies the ideals of the American Enlightenment. More than one hundred enslaved African Americans and paid laborers supported the cultivation of vegetable gardens, livestock and crops, orchards, and a terraced garden. The landscape is very orderly, with little shops and buildings carefully arranged to create a balanced theme and design.

The house is built upon a leveled summit outside of Charlottesville, Virginia. The house sits slightly higher than the surrounding buildings and fields. The overall history of Mulberry Row differs from other landscapes of slavery because it had over twenty shops along its Main Street. It is considered by historians to be the heart of slave life at Monticello.



Figure 6. Structure along the main street.

## PRECEDENT STUDY



# MULBERRY ROW AT MONTICELLO



Figure 7. Vegetable garden terrace. Figure 8. Mulberry Row.

Figure 9. Vegetable garden.

Mulberry Row was not only a place where enslaved African Americans were forced to work, but a place where all kinds of people worked. It was the center of work and domestic life for all different types of people. There were free men that worked with their enslaved wives on the plantation. It was not a place where the smaller enslaved houses were lined and overlooked by the main house. It was a place that Jefferson saw as a place where he could display spatial and symbolic architecture to use as a visual representation of the new nation's purpose.

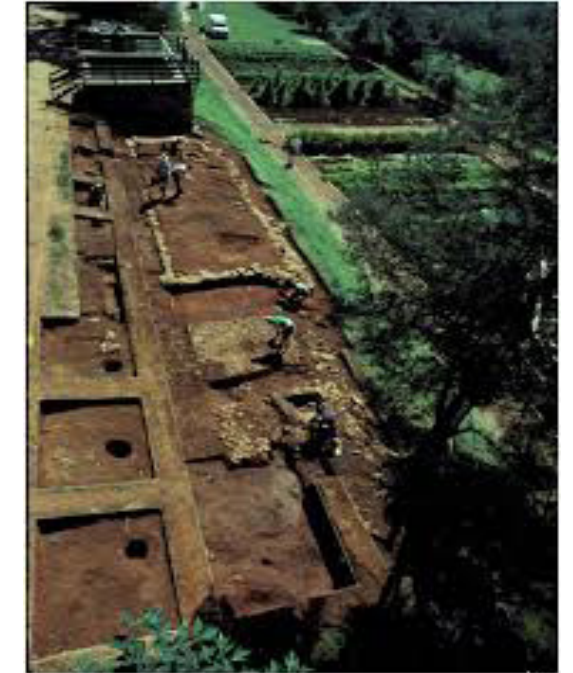


Figure 10. Archaeology at Mulberry Row.

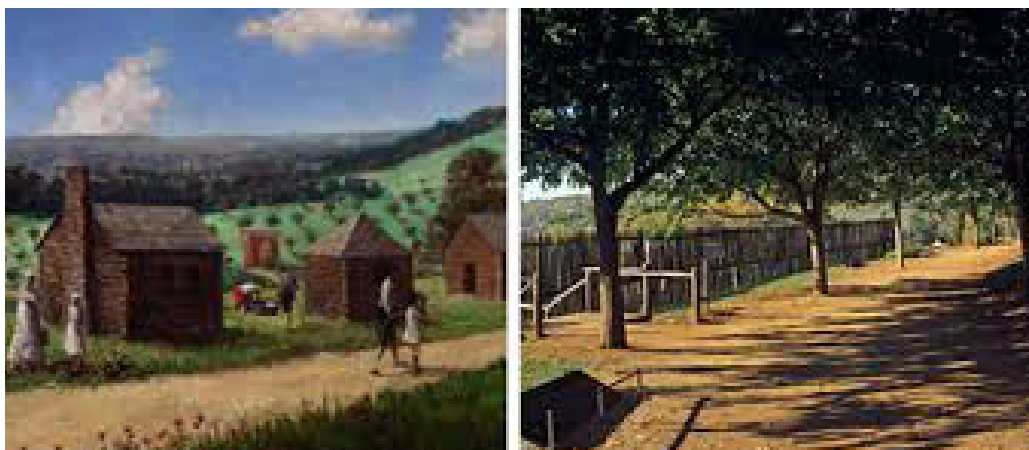


Figure 11. (Left) Dwellings. (Right) Mulberry Row today.

Very few buildings and structures remain at Monticello. It is an area of interest that has been expressed by many people and that has gained the funding it needs to build representational shops and buildings where the old ones once stood to recreate and bring back historical reckoning of the site.

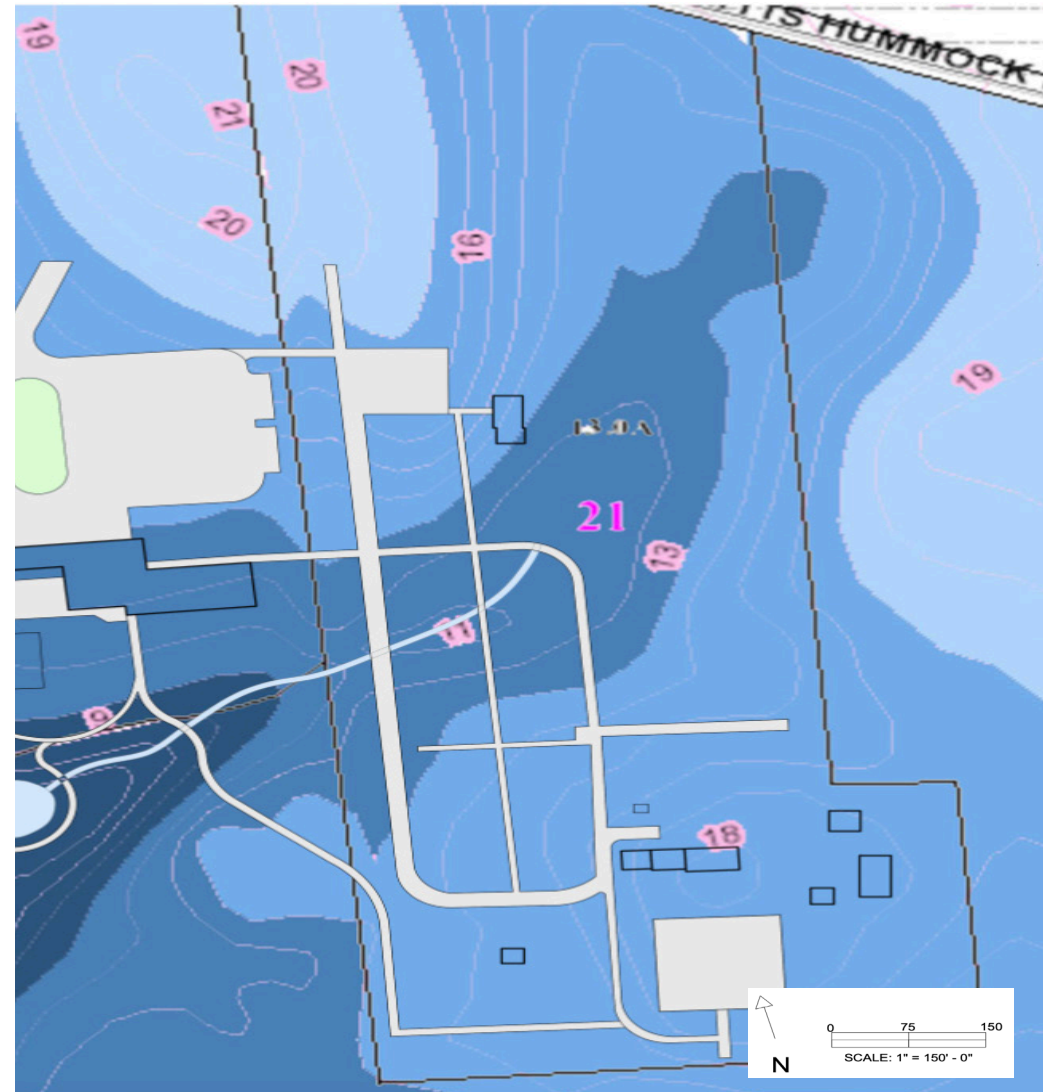
## PRECEDENT STUDY



This study as well as the studies of my classmates helped me to become more familiar with what these landscapes of slavery really were and how they functioned. The next step in my design process was to complete a site analysis that would inform me of useful information for my overall design.



## HYDROLOGY



- Poor drainage has resulted in a wet area in the center of the site south of the existing visitor center.
- With an average height of 13ft. above sea level, the site has a limited depth of excavation before wet soil is reached.
- The pond south of the proposed visitor center feeds into the Spring Branch which runs to the St. Jones River.

## TOPOGRAPHY



- Overall the site is fairly flat with minor slopes in the wetland area
- The flatness of the site leaves little concern for design elements being added to the site
- Areas with larger slopes outside of the wetlands would be good spaces for plants that thrive in wet areas to help combat the wet areas

## HYDROLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY ANALYSIS





## LEGEND

- VEHICULAR CIRCULATION
- PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION
- COMBINATION CIRCULATION

Current circulation on the site involves three main types of movement with vehicular, pedestrian, and combination. The site will benefit greatly from the new location for the proposed visitor center to the west as it will eliminate vehicular flow on the site near pedestrian movement.

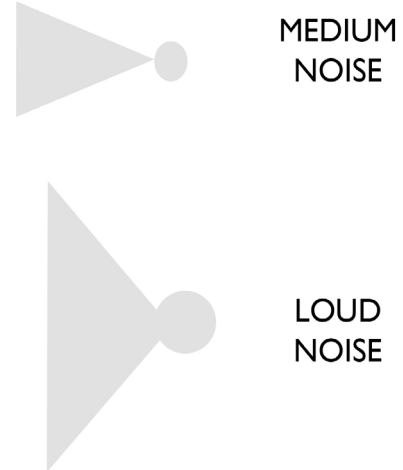
## CIRCULATION



## NOISE

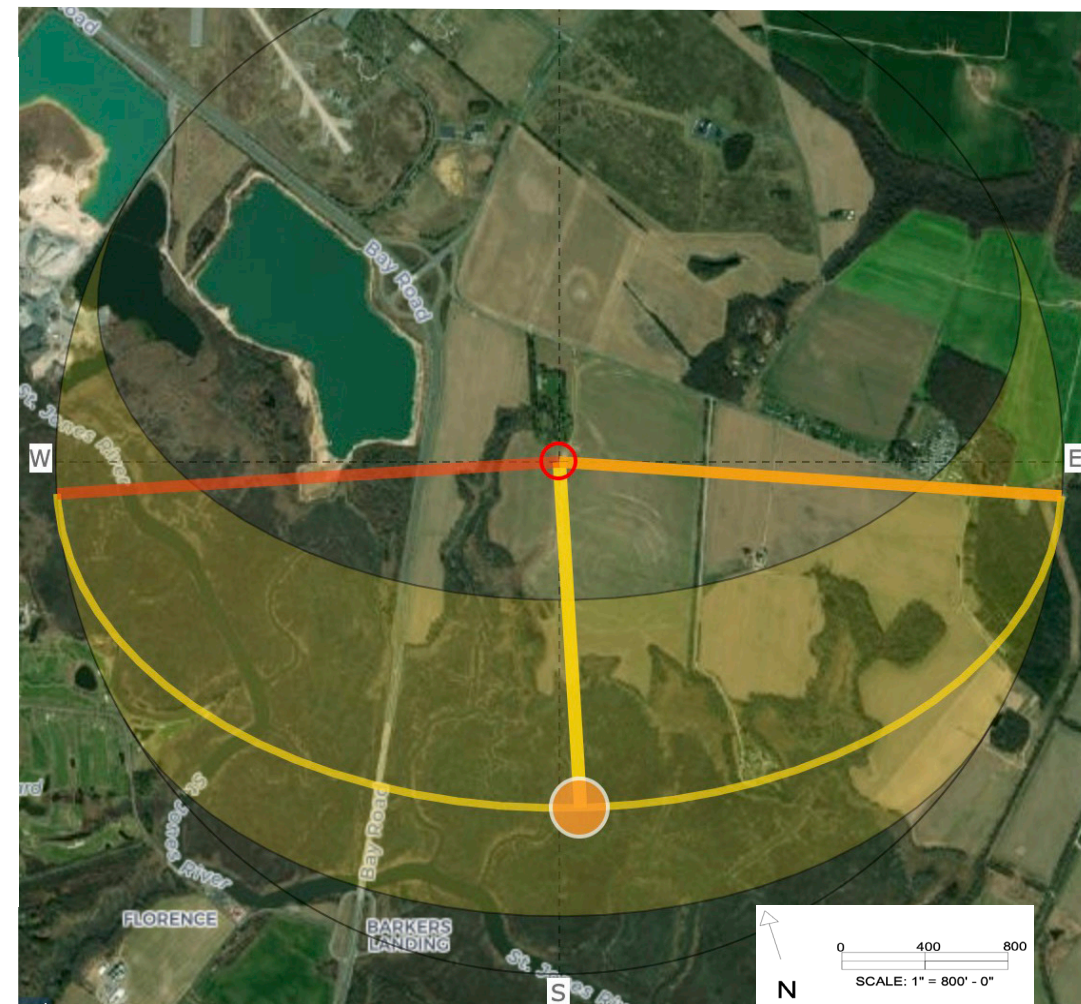


### LEGEND

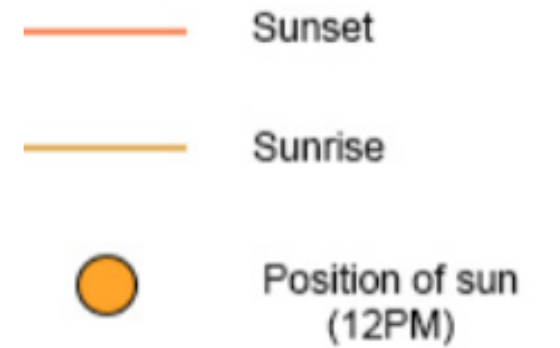


The main source of noise on the site comes from Interstate 1 to the west of the site and Dover Air Force Base to the north. The location of the proposed visitor center will help to quiet the noise of the surroundings.

## SUN AND SHADE



### Legend



This diagram highlights where the sun hits the site throughout the day and how its position changes throughout the year. Sun position is important on the site because it helps to promote and prevent shade in areas and is important to keep in mind when it comes to plant placement.

## NOISE, SUN AND SHADE ANALYSIS





Figure 12.

*Ilex opaca*  
American holly

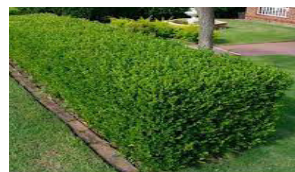


Figure 13.

*Buxus sempervirens*  
Boxwood

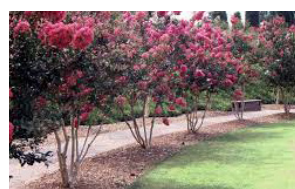


Figure 14.

*Lagerstroemia*  
Crape myrtle



Figure 15.

*Cedrus deodara*  
Deodar cedar



Figure 16.

*Magnolia grandiflora*  
Southern magnolia



Figure 17.

*Quercus bicolor*  
Swamp white oak

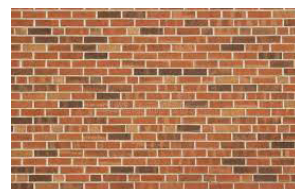


Figure 18.

Mansion made of  
Flemish bonded  
brickwork



Figure 19.

Broom finished  
concrete walkways

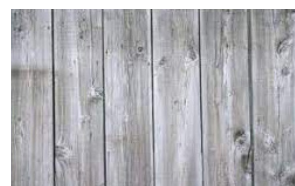
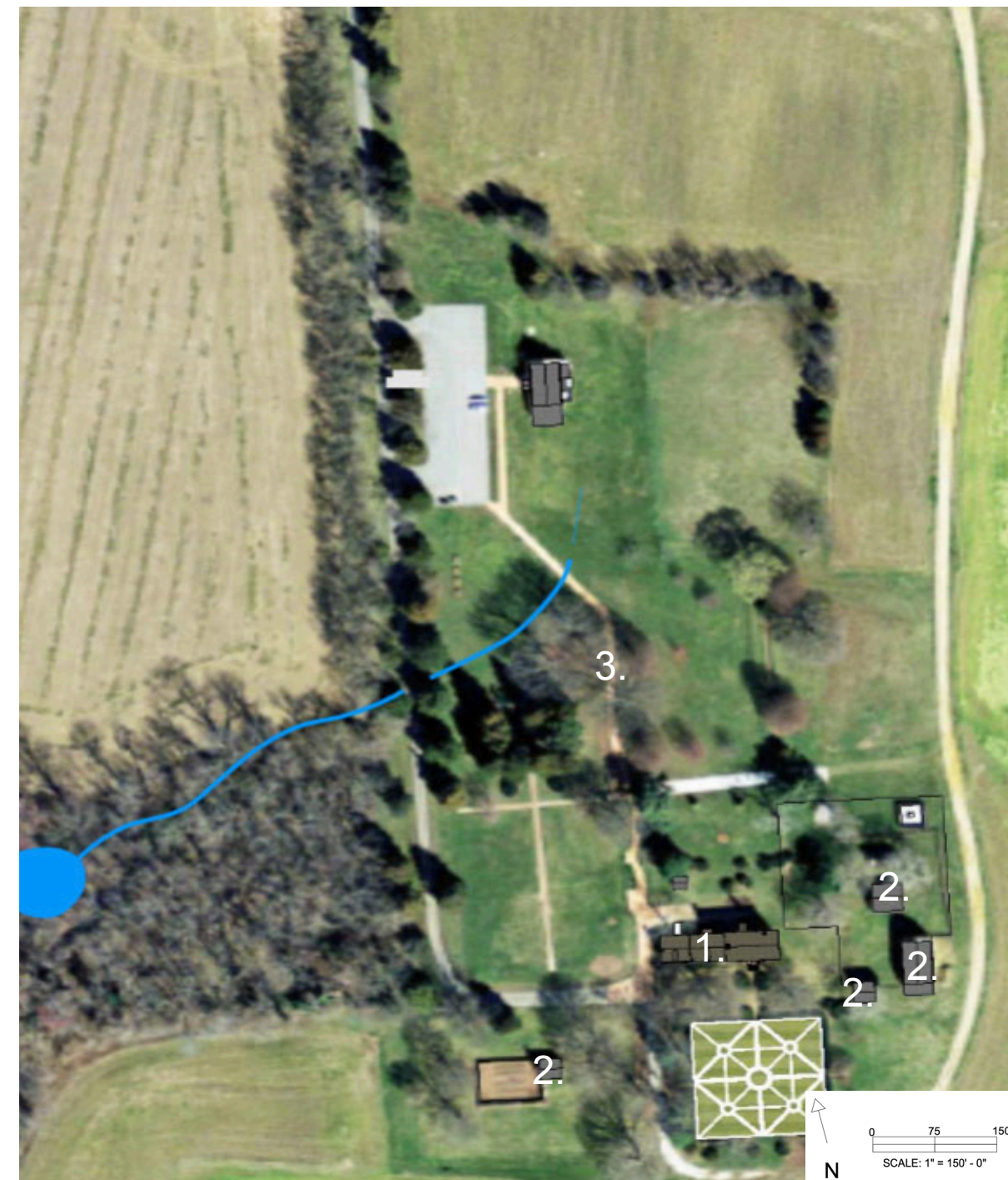


Figure 20.

Wooden structures  
and fences

These landscape materials such as the (1.) brickwork and (2.) wooden structures are highlighted in the reconstructed structures on site as well as the mansion. The concrete walkway (3.) highlights the pathway from the visitors center to the mansion. The vegetation is located along the driveway coming in as well as in front of and behind the mansion.



## VEGETATION AND MATERIALS



The full analysis of the site gave a lot of useful information. Of all the analysis sun and shade, noise, and topography were the three most influential to me when it came to choosing a location for my design. Between the site analysis and the site visit, I was able to gain a few ideas for potential designs of healing or therapeutic gardens as well as the concept of a swept yard.



# The Healing Garden

Author: Stacy McNall

This research summary describes the feelings that nurses experience everyday in their line of work. St. Mary Janesville Hospital is a women's and infants hospital that assists with child birth as well as assisting in physical healing as they journey into motherhood. The staff also has to assist with mourning during times of pregnancy loss and stillbirth. Hospital rooms overlook the healing garden located in between the two wings of the hospital. It was built to bring peace to the staff, community, and patients. One family had experienced a stillbirth and in their initial time of grief and sorrow asked if they could experience some time in the garden so that their son could experience God's beautiful creation and to give them a few moments in a peaceful place. The elements and features of the garden were taken in by the family and was able to guide them on their path to healing. The garden helps visitors to experience the beauties of nature and the elements that are present in the garden to help pave a path for them to continue down in their process of healing.

The history of enslavement on the John Dickinson Plantation affects visitors mental health. The creation of pathways that lead to small healing gardens and spaces would give visitors and workers a place to sit and reflect on the legacy of enslaved peoples. The use of different plantings as well as the openness of the site allowing for visitors to experience the elements of nature are all helpful for someone who needs time to reflect on a space and to mourn in their own ways.



Figure 21. The Healing Garden at St. Marys Janesville Hospital



Figure 22. The Healing Garden at St. Mary's Janesville Hospital



# Therapeutic Gardens in Healthcare : A Review

Thaneshwari, Thaneshwari & Kumari, Poonam & Sharma, Rishu & Sahare, H.A.

This research review summarizes how green environments around the world have been able to have a successful asset for hospitals and health centers. Depression, among many other health concerns, has become a severe problem worldwide due to changing lifestyles. India has made great progress in improving health in urban populations through their use of green environments. Green environments help to decrease psychological well being while reducing stress, anxiety, and depression. One example of these green environments is a therapeutic garden. These gardens meet the needs of particular users by improving the spirit of someone who is ill or battling bad health conditions. Therapeutic gardens also contribute to mental relief and help to enhance the overall well-being of patients as well as staff members. Research has shown that nature and plant encounters are connected to mental and cognitive health in humans and that these encounters can improve on faster healing times for recovering patients.

John Dickinson Plantation would benefit greatly from small areas occupied by therapeutic gardens. The use of plantings and raised beds for horticulture activities would be a great way for visitors and workers to take their minds off of things. It would provide a positive sense of escape from the stress and emotion of their jobs and help to create a more positive outlook on the workplace.



Figure 23. Therapeutic garden in India



Figure 24. Therapeutic garden in India



# A Case Study on the Use and Experience of the Healing Garden at Alnarp

Author: Carina Tenngart

This case study explores the uses and experience of a healing garden in Sweden and how it works. This study used a series of studies that aimed to get a closer look at how healing gardens worked for people with different kinds of stress orders. People with different burnout diseases were offered rehabilitation through a horticultural therapeutic program run by multiple types of therapists. Patients would stay for approximately twenty weeks and work in groups of eight. The patients were to use the garden in different ways whether it was for gardening, resting, or personal hobbies. The design of the garden was based off of several theories regarding restorative effects from the environment and how they help with psycho physiological stress and recovery from mental fatigue. The patients as well as a group of healthy people were both put to these tasks to determine which group would have lower stress levels and feel more positively revived. The results were determined by where the participants spent the most of their time between the garden and building.

Having a healing garden that is used for a getaway space for visitors and staff members would be a great addition for the John Dickinson Plantation. Having a space like this I feel would be more beneficial to the staff members and interpreters of the site because it would give them a place to go in between tours or on breaks to take a bit of time and relax or do something momentarily puts their minds at ease. It would also be beneficial to visitors as a place where they could stop to take in all the information received on the tour.

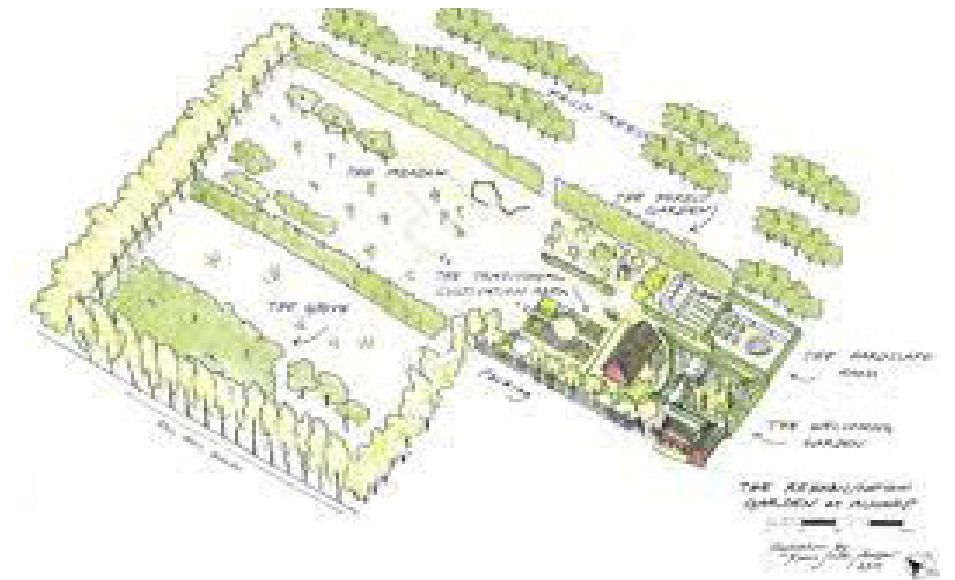


Figure 25. Concept diagram of Alnarp



Figure 26. Rendering of Alnarp





Figure 27. Children sweeping the yard.

A swept yard is a place where enslaved peoples were able to have their own space that was separate from the land owner. It provided an extension of their small household dwellings to have more shared communal space. This space was theirs and it was up to them what was done with it and how it was used.

Swept yards were spaces made out of compacted clay. These outline of these spaces were often lined by small berms or large tree branches and boulders. These yards were bare with no plantings and were swept clean daily to clear the space of any debris. This sweeping was done in the mornings as part of a ritual to cleanse not only the yard but the household and individuals as well. This space was used for cooking, cleaning, personal hobbies and other personal interests.



Figure 28. Daily housekeeping being shown by Catherine Waiters.

## SWEPT YARD



The concept of a healing or therapeutic garden seemed like a great idea as it would be a space where people could go to reflect, but it didn't seem to be effective enough to me to provide a powerful enough space. After more research into swept yards it became clear to me that a swept yard was what I wanted the area of reflection to be.



## *Goals:*

## *Objectives:*

### *Mission:*

*The John Dickinson Plantation project will create a peaceful and powerful space for reflection on the enslaved peoples.*

- 1. Allow visitors to experience the space by walking along the path and in the yard.*
- 2. Promote space for rest and reflection.*
- 3. Use forms to promote the legacy of the enslaved peoples.*

*Create a swept yard design that is split by the trail.*

*Allow visitors to observe and move through the space where hobbies and tasks were performed.*

*Provide seating for visitors with benches as well as seating on the berm.*

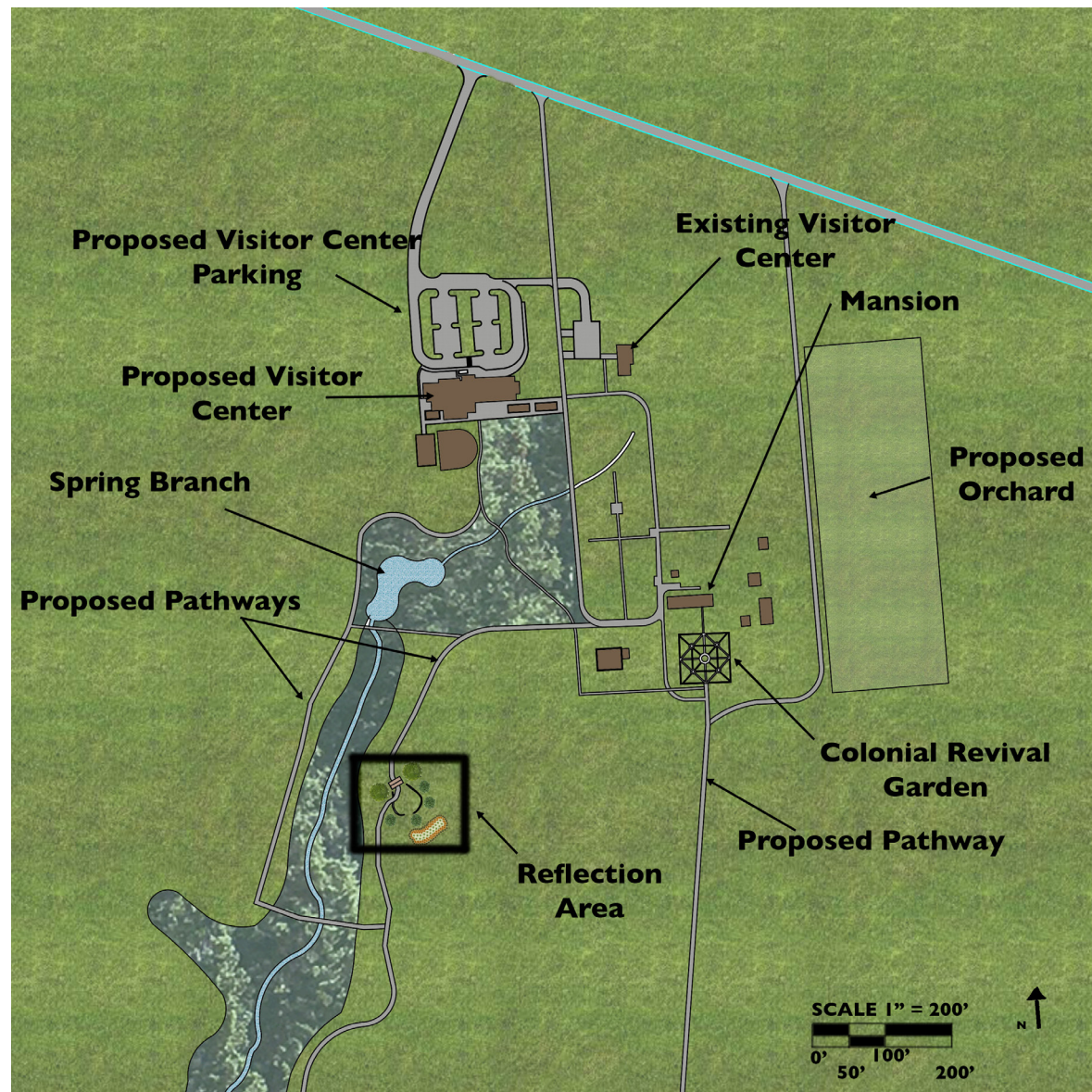
*Install plantings that provide nature healing aspects as well as the ability to be made into tools.*

*Create berms that outline the boundary of the yard.*

*Use barn wood to represent the footprint of an old dwelling.*

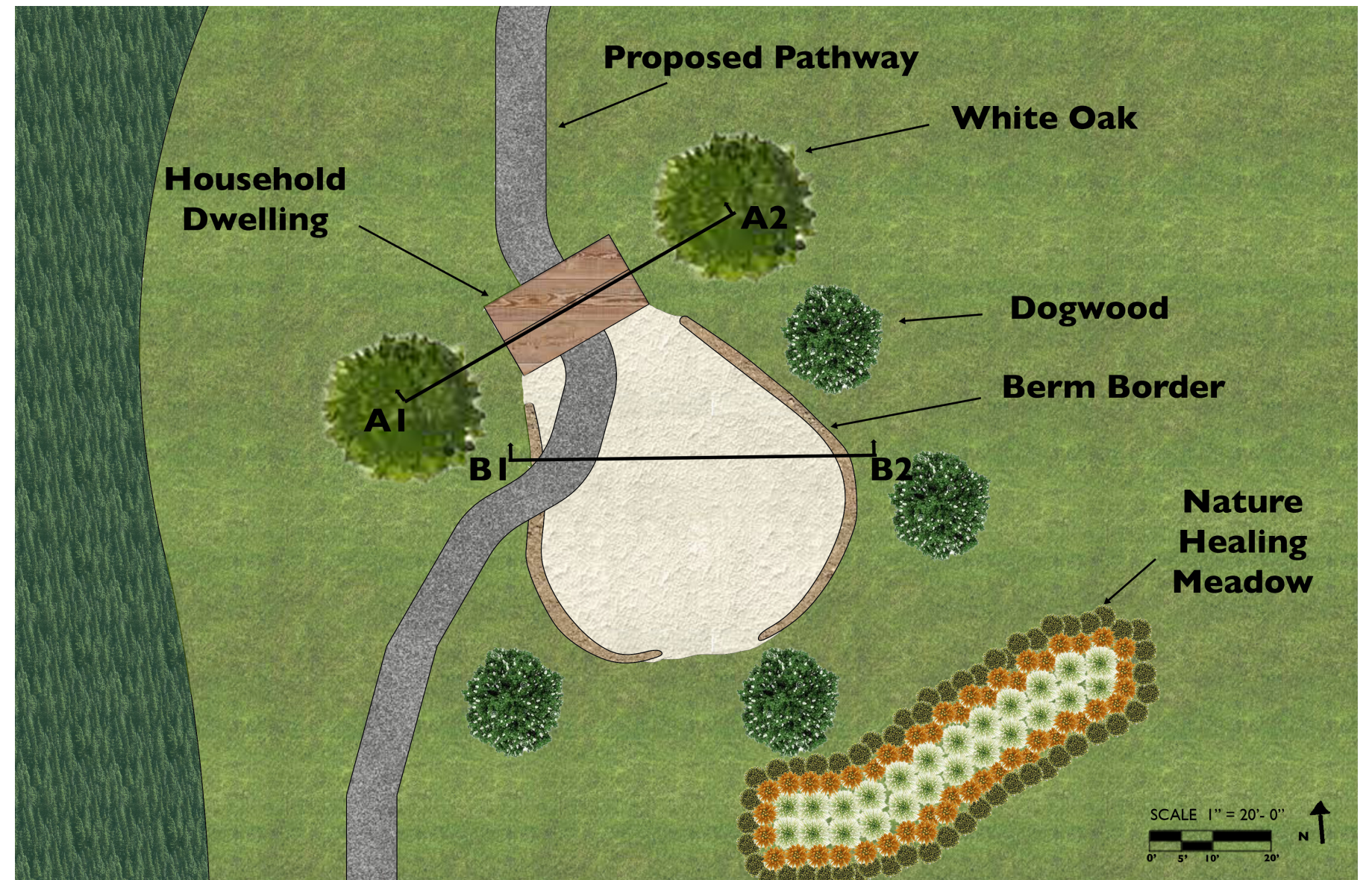
**PROJECT PROGRAM**





OVERALL PLAN VIEW

The Master Plan of the site highlights a number of existing as well as proposed structures and pathways. The reflection area is located along the proposed pathway near the hedgerow that borders spring branch.

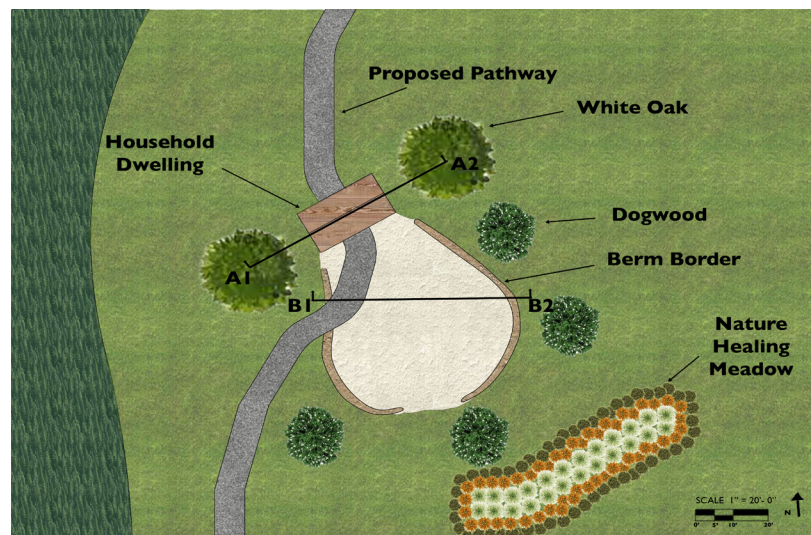


ENLARGED PLAN

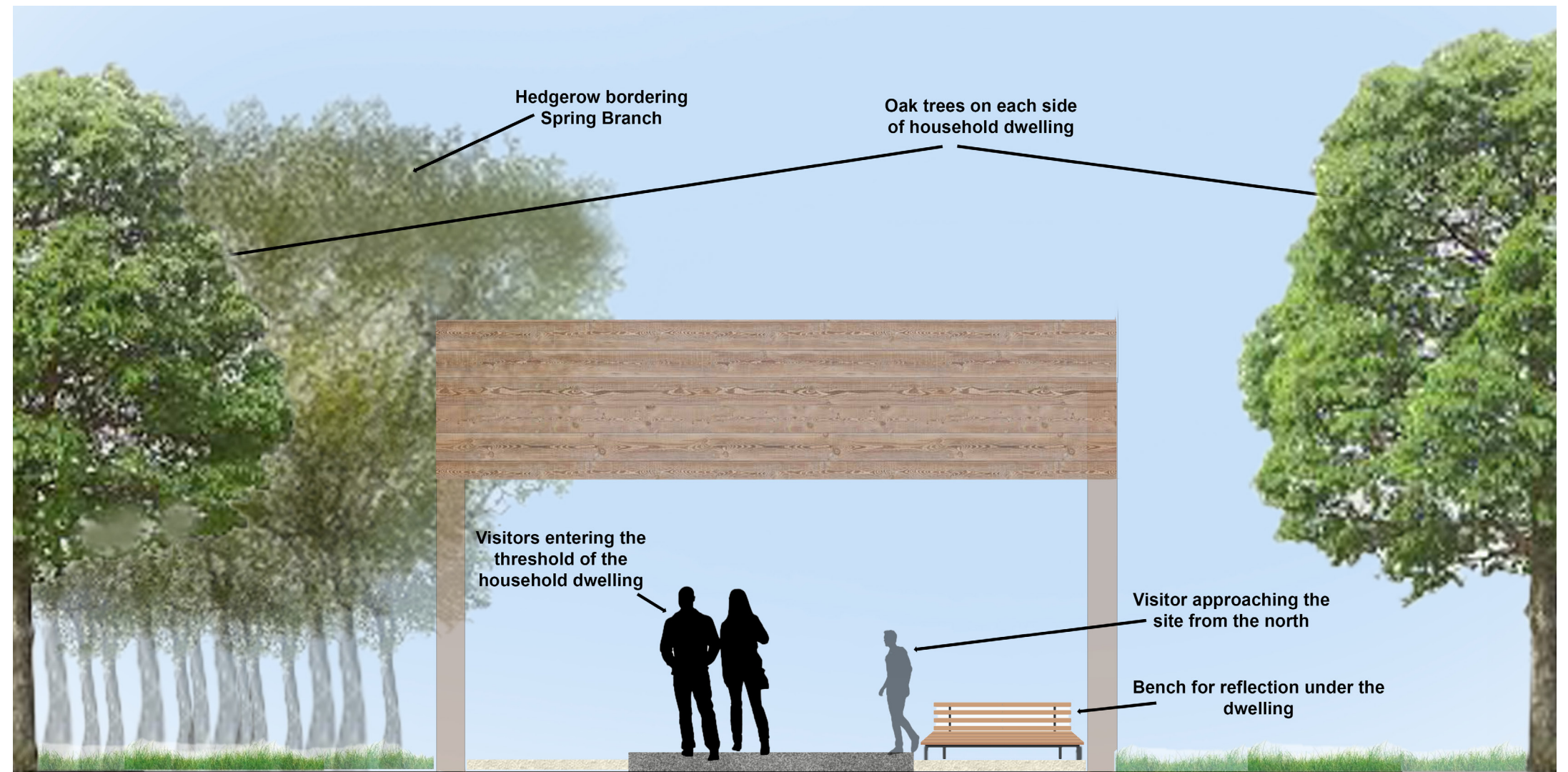
The design space is partially disturbed by the pathway to represent a sense of intrusion. Intrusion was a part of everyday life for enslaved peoples. There was always the chance of someone intruding on them no matter where they were.

## REFLECTION AREA





Section A is cut through the household structure to show the experience of moving through the threshold and into this reflection space with the hedgerow bordering Spring branch as well as a visitor in the background.



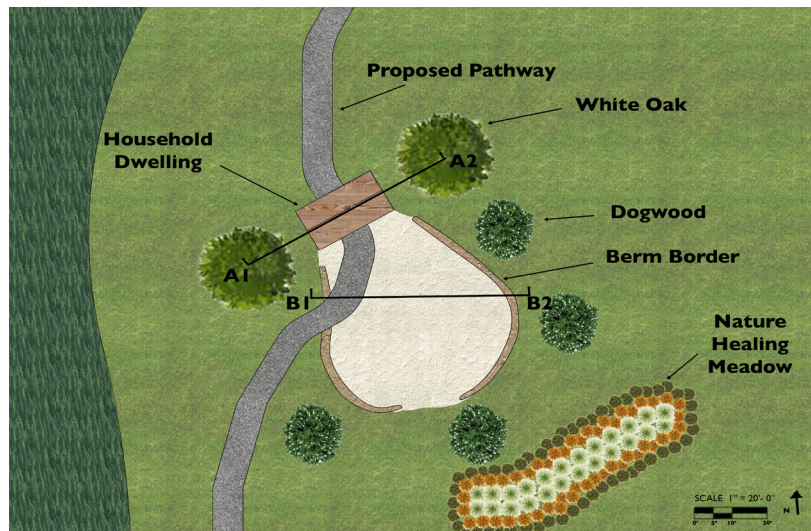
SECTION A

Scale: 1/8" = 1' - 0"

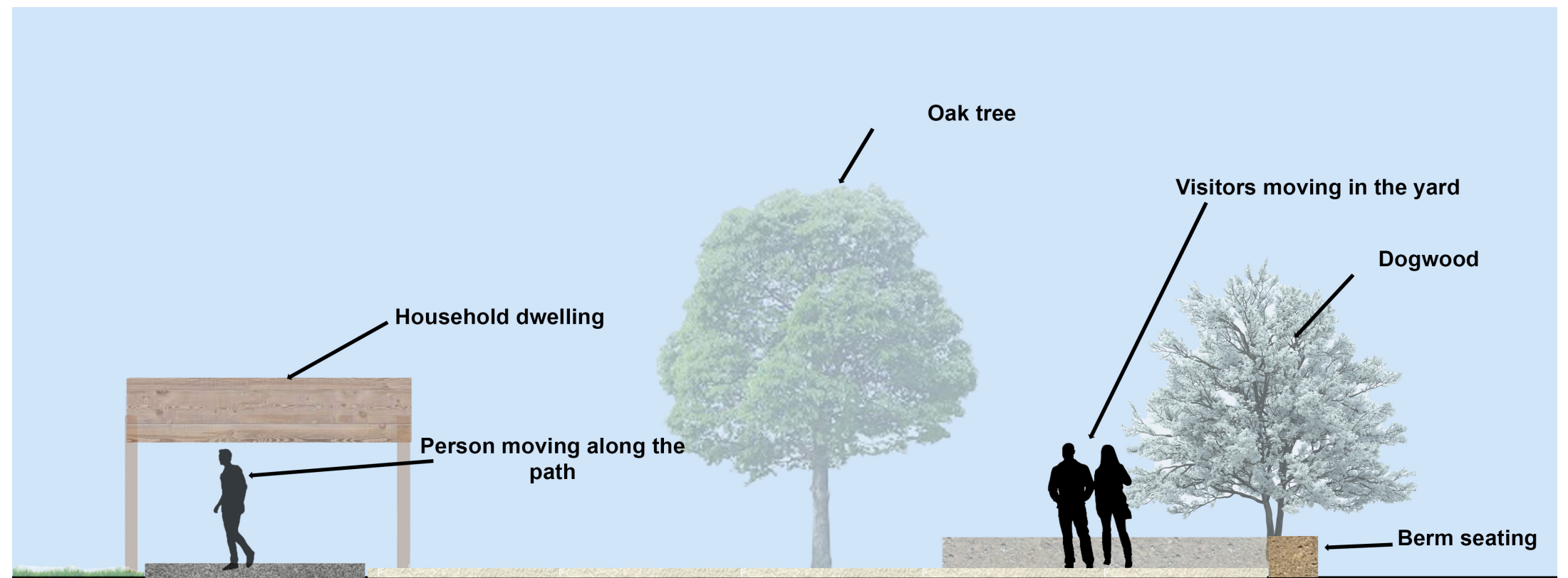


## REFLECTION AREA SECTION A





Section B is cut through the space showing the area of the swept yard and the path moving out of the space. This section shows how the space can be experienced along the path as well as in the yard itself with the household dwelling, oak, and dogwood tree in the background.



SECTION B

Scale: 1/8" = 1' - 0"

## REFLECTION AREA SECTION B



PLANT MATERIALS

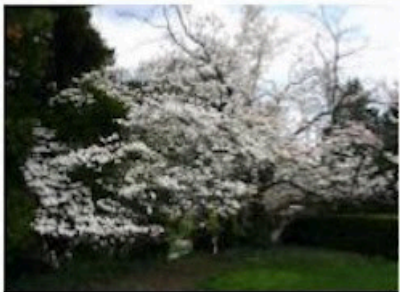
Botanical name: Quercus Alba  
Common name: white oak  
Color: na  
Size: 50-80'

Figure29.



Botanical name: Cornus florida  
Common name: flowering dogwood  
Color: White  
Size: 15-30'

Figure 30.



Botanical name: Panicum virgatum  
Common name: switchgrass  
Color: not showy  
Size: 3-6'

Figure 31.



Botanical name: Sorghum bicolor  
Common name: sorghum  
Color: orange  
Size: 2-3'

Figure 32.



Botanical name: Hypericum calycinum  
Common name: St. John's Wort  
Color: yellow  
Size :1-2'

Figure 33.



MATERIALS

Style: Barn wood  
Size: 2" x 8" x 16'  
Finish/color: Gray

Figure 34.



STRUCTURES

Wellspring bench from Landscape forms  
Material: Wood  
Size: 72" x 34" x 28"  
Finish: Wood

Figure 35.

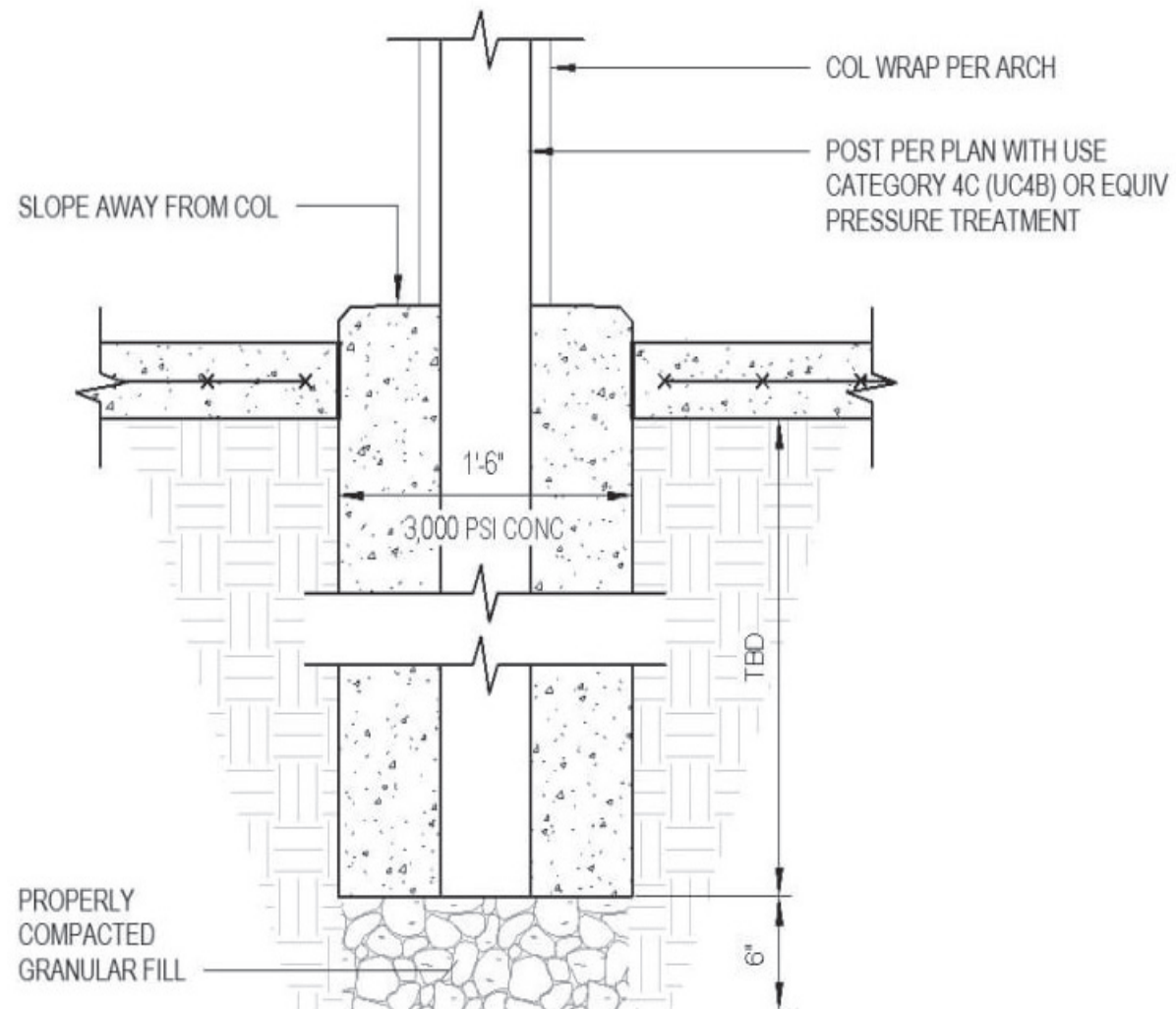


A brief materials palette showing the horticulture as well as the materials used for structure and seating.

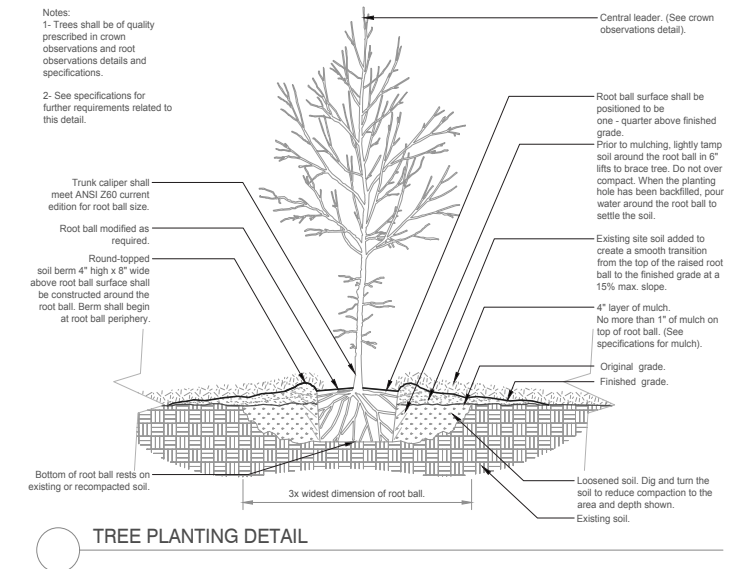
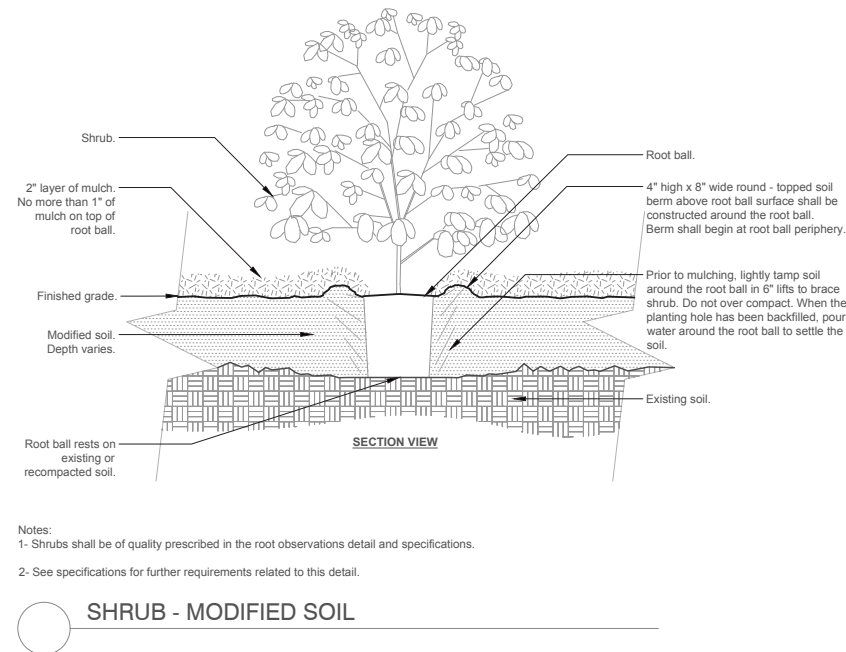
MATERIALS PALETTE



## POST DETAIL FOR STRUCTURE



## SHRUB DETAIL



These details highlight the process of how the plants should be planted as well as how the berm is formed. The berm should be compacted to avoid erosion and plantings should be installed according to the guidelines stated above.

## REFLECTION AREA DETAILS



Overall, my design functions as a space that is dedicated to reflecting the footprint and legacy that was left behind by the enslaved peoples. Visitors and staff will be able to move through the space and experience the emotional response of what it would have been like and what this constant feeling of intrusion would have felt like to the enslaved peoples. It provides space for stopping to reflect and experience the passing through of others as they move throughout the site along the pathway. The space works to provide an eternal reminder that even though change is inevitable and that time marches on the legacy the enslaved peoples left on this landscape will always remain.

I would like to thank the stakeholders, including the Delaware Historical and Cultural Affairs as well as The Friends of John Dickinson Plantation. I would also like to thank the professors in the Landscape Architecture Department, especially Anna Wik, for their tremendous help and support throughout this entire process.

## CONCLUSION



Figure 1. - Google. (n.d.) Google Search. [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/4/49/USA\\_Delaware\\_location\\_map.svg/500px-USA\\_Delaware\\_location\\_map.svg.png](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/4/49/USA_Delaware_location_map.svg/500px-USA_Delaware_location_map.svg.png)

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Figure 13. - Home. Buy Buxus sempervirens: Green or Common Boxwood Seeds Online in USA, Buxus sempervirens: Green or Common Boxwood Seeds Price- TreeHelp.com. (n.d.). <https://www.treehelp.com/green-or-common-boxwood-seeds/>.

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Figure 16. - *Magnolia grandiflora* (*Southern Magnolia*). Gardenia.net. (n.d.). <https://www.gardenia.net/plant/magnolia-grandiflora>.

Figure 17. - *Swamp White Oak* (*Quercus bicolor*). The Conservation Foundation. (n.d.). <https://tcf.givecloud.co/product/SwampWhiteOak/swamp-white-oak-quercus-bicolor>.

Figure 18. - Cshirk2. (n.d.). Red And Brown Color Brick Wall Background With Flemish Stretcher Bond Pattern Stock Photo - Image of bond, brick: 156355122. Dreamstime. <https://www.dreamstime.com/red-brown-color-brick-wall-background-flemish-stretcher-bond-colorful-bright-unique-brickwork-pattern-image156355122>.

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Figure 24. - Google Image Result for [https://www.nparks.gov.sg/-/media/nparks-real-content/gardens-parks-and-nature/therapeutic-gardens/therapeutic\\_garden\\_bishanangmokio.jpg?la=en&hash=52FF6C3128D15774040D833986136102CE7BA2FA](https://www.nparks.gov.sg/-/media/nparks-real-content/gardens-parks-and-nature/therapeutic-gardens/therapeutic_garden_bishanangmokio.jpg?la=en&hash=52FF6C3128D15774040D833986136102CE7BA2FA). (n.d.). <https://images.app.goo.gl/4XeZc7MEMV31Q5XC9>.

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