

Leah Michalak

From: Lois Tryon <ltryon@infionline.net>
Sent: Thursday, March 5, 2020 3:42 PM
To: Leah Michalak
Subject: Clermont Lee Garden in Savannah

Importance: High

As a member of the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, I am appalled at the thought that the Girl Scouts of America would even consider the destruction of this garden, let alone actually doing it. Savannah has always thrived on it's history and the preservation of it, so this does NOT fit in with this concept in any way. It sounds like it may be too late to stop the project, but in my opinion those involved with such a travesty should be ashamed of themselves.

Lois. M. Tryon
Columbus, GA

Leah Michalak

From: Jacquelyn Wright <auggierw@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 5, 2020 6:23 PM
To: Leah Michalak
Subject: Low House Garden

Dear Leah,

The decision by the Low House to essentially destroy their important historic garden is both a puzzle and a surprise in a city known for preservation. As a leader in this field, Savannah must surely be aware of the importance of this property, and how careful preservation efforts have made Savannah the beautiful, attractive city it is today, and a major contributor to your economy.

Juliette Low is one of your most celebrated citizens. It would send a tremendously negative message to young women for the Girl Scouts of America to destroy the work of one of our country's pioneer female landscape architects.

Please reconsider. Thank you for your attention.

Jacquelyn Wright

Sent from my iPad

Leah Michalak

From: Sonya Poole <Sonya.Poole@oceanagold.com>
Sent: Friday, March 6, 2020 9:56 AM
To: Leah Michalak
Subject: Clermont Lee Garden

This would be an absolute travesty to destroy this historic garden. The city of Savannah, architects from around the country, especially women, and all historians, should rise up in arms about this. Our history and environment is being destroyed fast enough without this organization fast tracking this magnificent historic garden into oblivion. Please STOP this destruction. PLEASE!

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

This email is intended only for the person to which it is addressed and may contain confidential or legally privileged material. Any dissemination or other use of or taking of any action in reliance upon the content of this email by persons other than the intended recipient is prohibited. If you received this in error, please contact the sender and delete the email from any computer. Opinions and other information in this email that do not relate to the business of my employer are not given nor endorsed by it. Unencrypted email is not secure and may not be authentic. If you have any doubts as to the contents please telephone to confirm. Oceana Gold Corporation and its related entities accept no responsibility for changes made to this email or its attachments after transmission from Oceana Gold Corporation and its related entities and do not guarantee that this email or attachments are virus or error free.

Leah Michalak

From: Pam Benton <pambbenton@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 6, 2020 11:12 AM
To: Leah Michalak
Subject: Clermont Lee's Garden at the Juliette Gordon Low Girl Scout National Center

Dear Ms. Michalak

My name is Pam Benton and I have been a Girl Scout for over 50 years, as a girl, leader, trainer, and member of the local G.S. board of trustees.

As the JGLGS National Center's first volunteer in the 1970s, I had the privilege of working with Clermont Lee as she oversaw and refined plantings and design elements in the center's garden.

I am writing to express my great disappointment over the destruction of Clermont Lee's parterre garden at the JGLGSNC. Ms. Lee was one of the first female landscape architects in the country and her legacy in Savannah and the low country should be honored in our city and especially by an organization in the business of training girls to be leaders and pioneers in myriad career paths.

Having hosted and worked with many, many Girl Scout troops over the years, I can assure you the girls are awed by the historic details of their visit to the JGLGSNC - the room she slept in, the garden she played in,- a glimpse back to the time of Daisy's childhood. Sometimes looking backward can give girls the courage or the hope or the glimmer of an idea to propel them forward into their futures.

Perhaps the national board, headquartered in New York City, may be less aware of the historically unique aspects of the birthplace to visiting girls. With a little more thought and effort, I am sure a win-win design, restoring "the good bones" of Clermont Lee's parterre plan and incorporating elements for new uses of the garden space could be agreed upon. Surely it is worth the effort for Girls Scouts everywhere and for Clermont Lee.

Pam Benton

2 Pierpont Circle, Savannah, GA 31404

on the National Register of Historic Places

modeled after the JGLGSNC

built by Juliette Gordon Low's brother William Washington Gordon III Resident of Gordonston, formerly the Gordon Family Farm, now an historic neighborhood Lifetime Member of the Girl Scouts of America

Leah Michalak

From: Earlene Hamilton <hamiltonearlene@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, March 6, 2020 3:09 PM
To: Leah Michalak
Subject: The Clermont Lee-designed garden at the Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace

Ma'am,

I am emailing to ask that this garden be protected. I am a former Girl Scout from Jones County, GA and visited Juliette Gordon Lowe's home several times over the years.

Back in the late '80's, I donated several of my Girl Scout items - through someone else with whom I worked whose daughters were at that time Scouts - for the home. I doubt I can get them back, but if this plan to basically obliterate the original garden goes through, I will most certainly try.

Thank you,

Earlene Hamilton

Leah Michalak

From: Tiffany Alewine <tiffanybalewine@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 8, 2020 9:46 AM
To: Leah Michalak
Subject: Opposal to destruction of Clermont Lee Gardens

Dear Leah,

I am writing to you requesting the Savannah Historic Review Board please not allow for the alteration and destruction of the original Clermont Lee designed garden at the Juliette Gordon Low House. As a Savannah citizen and mother of a Girl Scout I am devastated that this would even be entertained, especially in such a crucial hour when the city experiencing such change. We must hold our locals, organizations, and businesses accountable for maintaining what has made this city so unique as we all carry responsibility in this regard. As you know, once it is gone, its gone and we can't afford to loose this precious space! Let's continue to honor those that made their stamp on the city including Clermont and her contribution to the Gordon Low garden.

With highest regards,

Tiffany Burckhalter Alewine

Leah Michalak

From: Caroline B. Bailey <cbbailey@esf.edu>
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 3:36 PM
To: Leah Michalak
Cc: Charles Birnbaum
Subject: Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace - Clermont Lee Garden Design

Importance: High

I was dismayed to learn of plans that will potentially destroy the historic Clermont Lee garden at the Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace in Savannah. As a life-time member of Girl Scouts USA, each of my visits to our founder's birthplace has always included spending time in that peaceful garden, which should certainly have been registered as a historic site. Therefore, I am hopeful that the Savannah Historic District Board's decision will save the garden from being destroyed and preserve it for future girls to enjoy.

Caroline B. Bailey
Senior Staff Assistant
Department of Landscape Architecture
SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
331 Marshall Hall ▪ 1 Forestry Drive ▪ Syracuse, NY 13210-2787
Phone: 315-470-6543 ▪ Fax: 315-470-6540
cbbailey@esf.edu

Leah Michalak

From: John Sykes <JSykes@brec.org>
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 3:40 PM
To: Leah Michalak
Subject: Letter to Chairman Stephens
Attachments: 200309gsa.pdf

Dear Ms. Leah Michalak:

Please see the attached letter from the Southern Garden History Society regarding the Clermont Lee garden at the Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace. Would you please provide a copy to Chairman Stephens?

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
John Sykes

John Sykes
President



CED DOLDER
Historic Preservation Consultant
410 W. Spalding Drive
Atlanta, GA 30328

March 7, 2020

Mr. Dwayne Stephens
Chairman
Savannah Historic District Board of Review
112 East State Street
Savannah, GA 31401

Dear Sir:

I am writing to strongly protest the planned demolition of the Clermont Lee-designed garden at the Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace. This parterred garden is a signature work of Savannah landscape architect Clermont Lee. To have this garden destroyed and basically paved is a disgrace to the reputation of the Girl Scouts and their stewardship of this historic home. I cannot help but think the management of the Girl Scouts is looking at the bottom line of their economic statement by installing a "maintenance free" stone gathering place. In a climate like Savannah's, it can only be imagined the amount of heat the stone will generate, as opposed to the existing light-filtering garden.

As a past employee of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation Division, and as a private consultant, I have over 30 years experience in historic preservation. I know the Department of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation very well. The garden as it stands, designed and installed in 1954, is in itself a historic garden. That it is a garden designed by a nationally renowned landscape architect doubles the significance of this space. Clermont Lee was the first female landscape architect registered in Georgia. She is recognized for her well-researched and historically accurate landscape designs throughout the city, at a time when it had not been typical to install such landscapes. She re-designed five historic Savannah squares in the 1960s that had become unsavory spaces, but stand today as proud sanctuaries for the public. She has been the subject of articles, guided tours and lectures for historic landscape scholars and the public as a whole. The importance of her work continues to expand. In 2017 she was placed in the Georgia Women of Achievement's Hall of Fame and just recently named as SCAD's 2020 Woman of Vision.

Ripping out her garden for a primarily paved "gathering place" is a terrible tragedy. Again, do we lose a historically significant landscape, designed by a noted figure in women's landscape architecture for the sake of convenience? The Girl Scouts pride themselves on empowering the young girls of today to become the women of distinction tomorrow. A petition generated by the pending demolition of this garden garnered hundreds of signatures all protesting this destruction. Yet destroying the cornerstone work of an early pioneer female landscape architect is the legacy the Girl Scouts are promoting? Could not the expense of this demolition and installation be better used to maintain the plantings in the already existing garden? Shouldn't yet more hard paved surfaces in the Historic District be of concern to the Historic Review Board?

As a past Girl Scout myself, I am astonished at the short-sighted vision of the organization's stewardship of this historic landmark. Please reconsider giving permission for this demolition.

Sincerely,

Ced Dolder
Historic Preservation Consultant
Clermont Lee Researcher and Author



THE GARDEN CONSERVANCY

20 NAZARETH WAY | PO BOX 608, GARRISON, NY 10524 | 845.424.6500/6501 FAX | GARDENCONSERVANCY.ORG

James Brayton Hall
President and CEO

March 10, 2020

Ms. Leah Michalak, Historic Preservation
Metropolitan Planning Commission
110 East State Street
Savannah, Georgia 31412

Dear Ms. Michalak,

In July 2018, the Garden Conservancy, the nation's leading nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving, sharing, and celebrating America's gardens and diverse gardening traditions for the education and inspiration of the public, joined a growing number of organizations and individuals expressing serious concern about the proposed renovation of the Clermont Lee designed garden at the Juliette Gordon Low House, which is owned by the Girl Scouts of the United States of America (GSUSA), in Savannah, Georgia.

We appreciated that the plans that were included in the GSUSA's press release in November 2019 reflected renderings created by Tunnell and Tunnell, which made important reference to the original Clermont Lee designs. Since then, however, new plans that were recently presented at a groundbreaking ceremony at the Gordon Low House on February 21, 2020, abandon the rehabilitation of the garden altogether, replacing it with a hardscape. Claremont Lee's parterre design is gone, completely razed and replaced with hard surfaces.

Claremont Lee, the first female registered landscape architect in Georgia, is an important American landscape architect with connections to the historic landscapes of Georgia, and of Savannah in particular. Her life and work are a worthy example for young women, consistent with the mission of the Girl Scouts USA. The garden is an example of the increasingly rare colonial revival style and is appropriate to the Gordon Low House.

The Garden Conservancy recognizes gardens as fragile cultural resources. The works of landscape architects are living works of art, worthy of celebration and preservation. From a preservation perspective, it is important to keep house museums and their gardens intact to preserve an accurate historical context and a complete educational experience. While the Garden Conservancy also recognizes the necessity of dynamic organizations to adapt to changing needs, we strongly urge that the GSUSA return to the proposed alternative solutions, solutions that would preserve Claremont Lee's legacy. It is important

Page 2

Metropolitan Planning Commission

for all of us to steward carefully our shared cultural legacy, especially in a prominent location where it can continue to inspire so many young people.

On behalf of the Garden Conservancy and its Preservation Committee of the Board of Directors, we hope that, in reviewing the new plans, you will take into consideration the importance of preserving the cultural legacy of Clermont Lee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Brayton Hall", written over the printed name and title.

James Brayton Hall
President and CEO



TUNNELL & TUNNELL LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Landscape Architecture • Historic Preservation • Restoration • Project Management

Mr. Dwayne Stephens, Chairman
Savannah Historic District Board of Review
112 East State Street
Savannah, Georgia 31401

March 10, 2020

Dear Mr. Stephens and Board of Review Members,

I'm asking that you deny the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of new gates along Oglethorpe Avenue until a compromise can be reached that honors the heritage and legacy of the Girl Scouts.

The creation of these gates spells the death of a garden designed by a notable Girl Scout and Landscape Architect. It represents a garden that is important to the historic district as it provides a continuity of context and the very intimate texture and human scale that helps make Savannah one of the most livable cities in the world. This garden is part and parcel of why people make their pilgrimage to the birthplace itself. They have nothing like it in Wyoming or Texas or New Hampshire.....or anywhere else besides this unique and beautiful city that is Savannah.

The proposed landscape that would be reached by these new gates cannot be called a garden in the Savannah sense of the word; it will be a harsh, hot, unwelcoming, charmless space that has as little to do with Savannah, Juliette Gordon Low, and Clermont Huger Lee as the mid-town Manhattan offices from where this idea originated. What was, until recently, an open space that delighted 60 years of Girl Scouts and their relatives, will become a lobby, a sea of pavement with immovable built in benches and planter walls worthy of a suburban office park. This design will not "read" as garden to the public that passes by. It will appear as a discontinuous and disharmonious intrusion into the historic district. If the National Register District were reviewed post this proposed construction, the proposed garden would be listed as "non-contributing".

In my practice of landscape architecture, I have been involved in the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction of many historic cultural landscapes. I was contacted by The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF) to produce studies for this site that would expand accessibility for the disabled as well as the general public. These three schemes dated September 25, 2018, were reviewed by TCLF, published on their website, and distributed to a member of the GSUSA Advisory Committee; they were far from a secret document. I was contacted in May of 2019 to determine my interest in submitting a proposal to provide landscape architectural services to the Girl Scouts. I read with initial interest and hope. Perhaps the tide had turned. Then hope turned to dismay when I read the following from Sherryl Lang of the Girl Scouts:

In order to be eligible to submit a proposal a firm must sign and return the enclosed [sic] NDA [non-disclosure agreement] in advance of the release of the RFP [request for proposal]. (bold print in original correspondence, explanation of abbreviated terms added)

It felt to me that a "bait and switch" was in the works. The preservation of the Lee designed garden had been long discussed and appropriate lip service paid to those who cared deeply for this aspect of the site. I was concerned that had I been selected, I would be "window dressing" to a charade and then unable to speak and reveal the truth. I feared that the design was a foregone conclusion decided a long way away from Savannah by people with little caring for place, the city, the heritage. I hoped against hope that my fears were unfounded and then with the release of the proposed Lee design replacement, I saw that my worst fears had come true. If serving the mission of the organization involves such wanton destruction, what would be next?

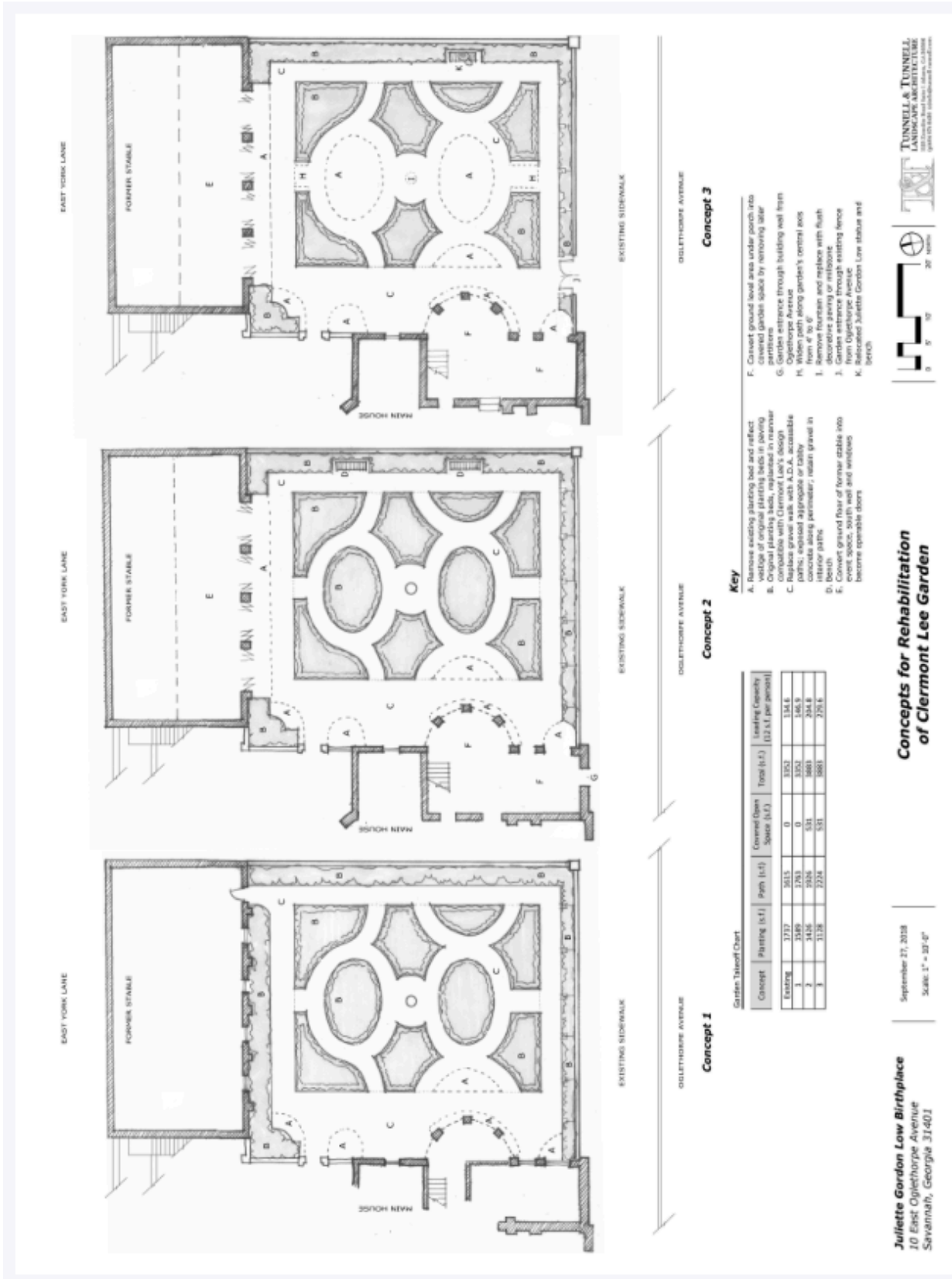
Is there a solution that avoids the binary? That avoids an either/or solution? I heartily believe so. We developed three such schemes and I'm convinced that there are many more waiting to emerge from paper and pen. But, it begins with a position that holds that context matters. That human scale matters. That the delight of generations of girls becoming women matters. That the work of a pioneering woman, Clermont Lee, who succeeded in a male dominated world matters too.

Please deny this application so that something worthy of the Girl Scouts' heritage and Savannah's beauty can be recovered and recreated.

Very truly yours,

Spencer Tunnell II

attachmnt



EDWARD L. DAUGHERTY
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Context of the Juliette Gordon Low Garden

The “birthplace” of girl scouting does not exist in a vacuum. The house and its grounds are part and parcel of the fabric of the historic 19th Century Savannah, Georgia from which girl scouting sprang. The solids and voids of the house, garden and out buildings are typical of Savannah residential architecture to this day. That’s context.

A garden is the captive open space that makes tight living possible. The adaptations of the 1880’s without a doubt included space for multiple uses: gardening, play, strolling, entertaining, airing bed linens and room to wring a chicken’s neck.

Flower beds were designed to be traversed and observed from above. Shade trees were planted to relieve midday heat. It was a private Eden in a compact city.

In that environment a creative, strong willed woman advocated independence, self-respect and decisiveness for girls and young women. Juliette Gordon Low and landscape architect Clermont

Lee were two of a kind. Strange it is that their sensibilities should be ignored now.

I knew Clermont personally and professionally as independent, decisive and self-aware. She was thorough in research, precise in design and demanding in execution. Her 1953 plan for the resurrected Low Garden acknowledges life's demands.

What a great new idea for girls and young women to enter into the gated "birth place" through a flowering Eden, a virginal beginning. Young women learn transition and change of life

The young girl from afar will learn that a semi-tropical humid Savannah environment is different from grassland prairie. A museum house requires a museum garden.

The frippery of restored interior Victorian furnishings does not excuse the loss of the honest and organic lesson of its garden support. The story is incomplete. Trees in pots and pavement are death defying. Trees in gravel and oyster shells are rooted in life. That is a life lesson of scouting.

Edward L. Daugherty
Daugherty Landscape Architects, FASLA
Georgia License 43



Directors

Charles Bradberry
Nacogdoches, TX

Ced Dolder
Atlanta, GA

Lee Dunn
Atlanta, GA

Randy Harelson
New Roads, LA

Susan L. Hitchcock
Columbia, SC

Kathleen Perilloux
Baton Rouge, LA

William D. Rieley
Charlottesville, VA

Andrea Sprott
Charlotte, NC

Justin Stelter
Franklin, TN

Officers & Ex Officio

John Sykes
Baton Rouge, LA

Perry Mathewes
Purcellville, VA

Susan McLeod Epstein (interim)
Charleston, SC

Gail Griffin
Bethesda, MD

Susan Haltom
Ridgeland, MS

Peggy L. Cornett
Charlottesville, VA

Honorary

A. Jefferson Lewis, III
Athens, GA

Kenneth M. McFarland
Fredericksburg, VA

Ben Page
Nashville, TN

Mary Anne Pickens
Columbus, TX

Jane Campbell Symmes
Madison, GA

William C. Welch
College Station, TX

Staci Catron
Atlanta, GA

March 9, 2020

Mr. Dwayne Stephens
Chairman

Savannah Historic District Board of Review
112 East State Street
Savannah, GA 31401

Dear Chairman Stephens and Members of the Board of Review

I write on behalf of concerned members of the Southern Garden History Society regarding the planned total demolition of the garden at the Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace. Located on a prominent corner of Oglethorpe and Bull Streets, it is owned by the Girl Scouts USA. The Birthplace has been the steward of a Victorian-inspired formal garden designed by Clermont Lee since 1954. It is understood that this garden is not original to the historic house, nor to Juliette Gordon Low. Thus, it was not part of the original National Register nor the National Historic Landmark designations. Additionally, the garden was less than 50 years old at the time of these designations, preventing inclusion in the nominations.

The garden, however, is now over 65 years old, eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, for more than one category. It was designed, created and maintained by Clermont Lee, a nationally recognized female landscape architect. Lee, a pioneer in landscape design, was instrumental in providing well-researched, historically correct gardens to Savannah in an era that did not normally contemplate such research. The structural elements used in the Birthplace garden design, for example the fencing, the tiles, the brick walls were meant to provide containment and garden bed edging in an historically correct manner. Her work should be recognized and respected. We urge your board to deny any changes being requested to this historically important garden. Alternative solutions to the stated needs of the JGL Birthplace could be investigated.

The Girl Scouts have always promoted their obligation to the next generation of girls, to empower them to become the women of tomorrow. What lesson is taught when the Scouts see the seminal work of a determined pioneering woman be destroyed? As it is the mission of our organization to protect and recognize historic Southern gardens and landscapes, this is a landscape directly within the Girl Scouts of USA's range of responsibility to preserve.

Sincerely,

John Sykes
President

Leah Michalak

From: Charles Birnbaum <info@tclf.org>
Sent: Friday, March 6, 2020 12:26 PM
To: Leah Michalak
Cc: mmcdonald@georgiatruster.org; Betsy Merritt; sadler@myhsf.org
Subject: TCLF Letter to Savannah Historic District Board of Review
Attachments: TCLF_JGL_SHDBR_letter_3-4-20_0.pdf

Dear Ms. Michalak,

I am submitting the attached correspondence to the Savannah Historic District Board of Review on behalf of The Cultural Landscape Foundation. The letter pertains to the petition by Barge Design Solutions seeking approval of alterations to the Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace, and I trust it will reach the board members well prior to the March 11 meeting during which that petition will be considered.

Yours sincerely, Charles

Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA, FAAR
President + CEO
The Cultural Landscape Foundation
1711 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20009
(t) 202.483.0553 (m) 202.255.7076 (f) 202.483.0761
www.tclf.org

[FACEBOOK](#) | [TWITTER](#) | [LINKEDIN](#) | [INSTAGRAM](#) | [PINTEREST](#)

Learn about the new [Cornelia Hahn Oberlander International Landscape Architecture Prize](#)



March 4, 2020

Mr. Dwayne Stephens
Chairman
Savannah Historic District Board of Review
112 East State Street
Savannah, GA 31401

Dear Chairman Stephens and Members of the Board of Review,

I write on behalf of The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF) to express our profound disappointment upon recently learning that the parterre garden designed by Clermont Lee at the Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace in Savannah, Georgia, has been destroyed. That disappointment was compounded by the simultaneous revelation that the garden will be replaced by a design that can accurately be described as but a faint attempt to acknowledge the importance of the cultural landscape that has been erased and the pioneering woman who created it. It is worth noting that the *New Georgia Encyclopedia* refers to the latter as "one of the earliest women active in landscape architecture in Georgia" and "the foremost expert in recreating historic landscapes in mid-twentieth-century Savannah."

TCLF enrolled the Birthplace garden in its *Landslide* program, which monitors significant threatened landscapes, in January 2016. We did so after being alerted to the announcement by the Girl Scouts of the USA, which owns and operates the property, that it would demolish Lee's parterre design and replace it with a paved space in order to increase the capacity for outdoor events and achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

As a national non-profit organization that provides technical assistance and consultation on the stewardship of designed landscapes, TCLF knows better than most that change is inevitable as the demands placed on historic resources increase and evolve. Indeed, we routinely help municipalities and private entities develop interpretive solutions that balance the stewardship of historic landscapes with contemporary needs and requirements. Thus we have never taken the position that the Birthplace garden must remain unchanged. In fact, in October 2018, TCLF released three conceptual plans for rehabilitating the garden, which offered ways to maintain the integrity of the historic design while addressing programmatic objectives, as well as safety and accessibility concerns. Commissioned by TCLF with support from descendants of Girl Scouts founder Juliette Gordon Low, the schematic rehabilitation plans were developed by the Atlanta-based landscape architecture firm Tunnell and Tunnell, which has considerable experience with historic designed landscapes.ⁱ

We understand, of course, that the Girl Scouts of the USA is under no obligation to adopt any of the professionally produced rehabilitation plans that we commissioned and offered for consideration free of charge, but we were very encouraged to find that a minimally altered version of those plans appeared in drawings by Greenline Architecture, which accompanied a press release from the Girl Scouts organization in November 2019.ⁱⁱ We were, therefore, all the more surprised to find that the most recently revealed plans have entirely abandoned the parterre design, replacing it with a hardscape that would both change the essential character of the space and alter the borrowed view and the integrity of setting for the streetscape along E. Oglethorpe Avenue, a prominent route within the National Historic Landmark District.ⁱⁱⁱ

Those recent plans also do little to respect the integrity of what is likely a National Register-eligible work of landscape architecture at the Birthplace, where, beginning in the 1950s, Lee designed an historically appropriate garden after thoroughly researching planting plans from the mid-nineteenth century. Lee's rigorous approach, well ahead of its time, was a hallmark of her unique commitment as a designer, and the professional relationship that she shared with the Girl Scouts was the longest of her career.

I know I needn't remind this board of review of the importance of Clermont Lee and her groundbreaking career—of her significance as the first woman to register as a landscape architect in the State of Georgia and the first professionally licensed practitioner in the City of Savannah; of her recent induction as a 'Woman of Vision' by the Savannah College of Art and Design, where she joins fewer than twenty women to receive that honor; of her prominent place in the scholarly literature on the history of landscape architecture in the American South; or of her prescient and courageous renovation of five of Savannah's historic squares, which, despite initial opposition from the city, prevented drive-through lanes from cutting across the beloved and historic communal spaces—a proposition that today seems unimaginable.

On a personal note, as the former coordinator of the National Park Service's Historic Landscape Initiative (1992-2007) and the author of the *Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, I know all too well that in the realm of historic preservation, our understanding of cultural landscapes has much catching up to do. Ever since the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards* was renamed in 1992 to reflect the treatment of "Historic Properties" rather than "Historic Buildings," my work has aimed to elevate the visibility and value of landscape architects like Clermont Lee and Atlanta's Edward Daugherty.

In many ways, the situation at the Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace is not too dissimilar from that at The Frick Collection in New York City. The Frick Collection was designated a New

York City Landmark in 1973 at a time when the celebrated British landscape architect Russell Page was engaged in designing a viewing garden there, from 1972 to 1977. In 2014 that garden was threatened with erasure because it was outside of the property's Period of Significance in the landmark listing. Happily, in 2015 that decision was reversed, and today a museum expansion project will instead result in the garden's renewal. The Juliette Gordon Low Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places more than half a century ago, in 1966. Although Lee's work at the Birthplace began in the mid-1950s, her career canon could not be bracketed when the listing was established. But as with Page's work at The Frick, Lee's work at the Birthplace is now ripe for reappraisal and should certainly inform stewardship decisions going forward.

We therefore ask the board of review to exercise the vigilance anticipated in its charge and appropriate to the matter before it. The avowed mission of the Girl Scouts is to "build girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place," a motto that most certainly applies to the life and career of Clermont Lee. It would thus be truly regrettable if the erasure of Lee's work were to become an indelible emblem of poor stewardship and shortsightedness while there is yet an opportunity to maintain a lasting symbol of local and organizational pride.

Sincerely,



Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA, FAAR
President + CEO
The Cultural Landscape Foundation

cc: Mark C. McDonald, President and CEO, The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation;
Elizabeth Merritt, Deputy General Counsel, National Trust for Historic Preservation; Susan
Adler, Interim CEO and President, Historic Savannah Foundation

ⁱ The plans commissioned by TCLF and produced by Tunnell and Tunnell are attached to this correspondence.

ⁱⁱ The drawing produced by Greenline Architecture, which was included in a press release issued by the Girl Scouts of the USA on November 15, 2019, and which closely follows 'Concept 3' in the plans made by Tunnell and Tunnell, is attached to this correspondence.

ⁱⁱⁱ The recent rendering of the proposed landscape by BARGE is attached to this correspondence.

Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace
Historic Landscape Rehabilitation
September 27, 2018

We began from a position that acknowledges that 60 years of continuous use by the Girl Scouts has invested the garden designed by Clermont Lee with enormous cultural importance and meaning for the city of Savannah, the state of Georgia and the broader community of Girl Scouts. This masterwork by Clermont Lee, the first licensed woman landscape architect in Georgia, should be treated with a deference and respect accorded the principle structure itself, for both house and garden have functioned together as a pilgrimage site for Girl Scouts.

Attached are three schemes for the preservation of the Clermont Lee designed garden at the Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace. Each one successively removes more of the Lee designed original fabric in order to accommodate more visitors. We asked ourselves the question: Shouldn't this be a garden that Lee would recognize? We believe she would.

Concept 1

The majority of the Lee planting beds remain intact and are replanted in a manner compatible with the original design. Subordinate beds nearest the main house are removed. The exterior pathway around the garden beds is paved with either exposed aggregate or tabby, while the internal beds remain crushed gravel. Estimated carrying capacity for this scheme would be between 60 to 134 persons at a range of 24 to 12 square feet per person.

Concept 2

The garden space itself is treated as in Concept 1. The planting bed along the south face of the original stable structure is removed and the first floor of the stable is converted to space for programs or events. Doors to this space can be opened to allow easy flow from inside to outside. A redesigned second and even third floor above could be utilized for a variety of activities. Under the bow porch of the main house, at ground level, later additions are removed expanding covered outdoor space adjacent to the garden. A new entrance from Oglethorpe Avenue gives pedestrians access to the garden without having to enter the main building. Estimated carrying capacity for this scheme would be between 100 to 200 persons at a range of 24 to 12 square feet per person.

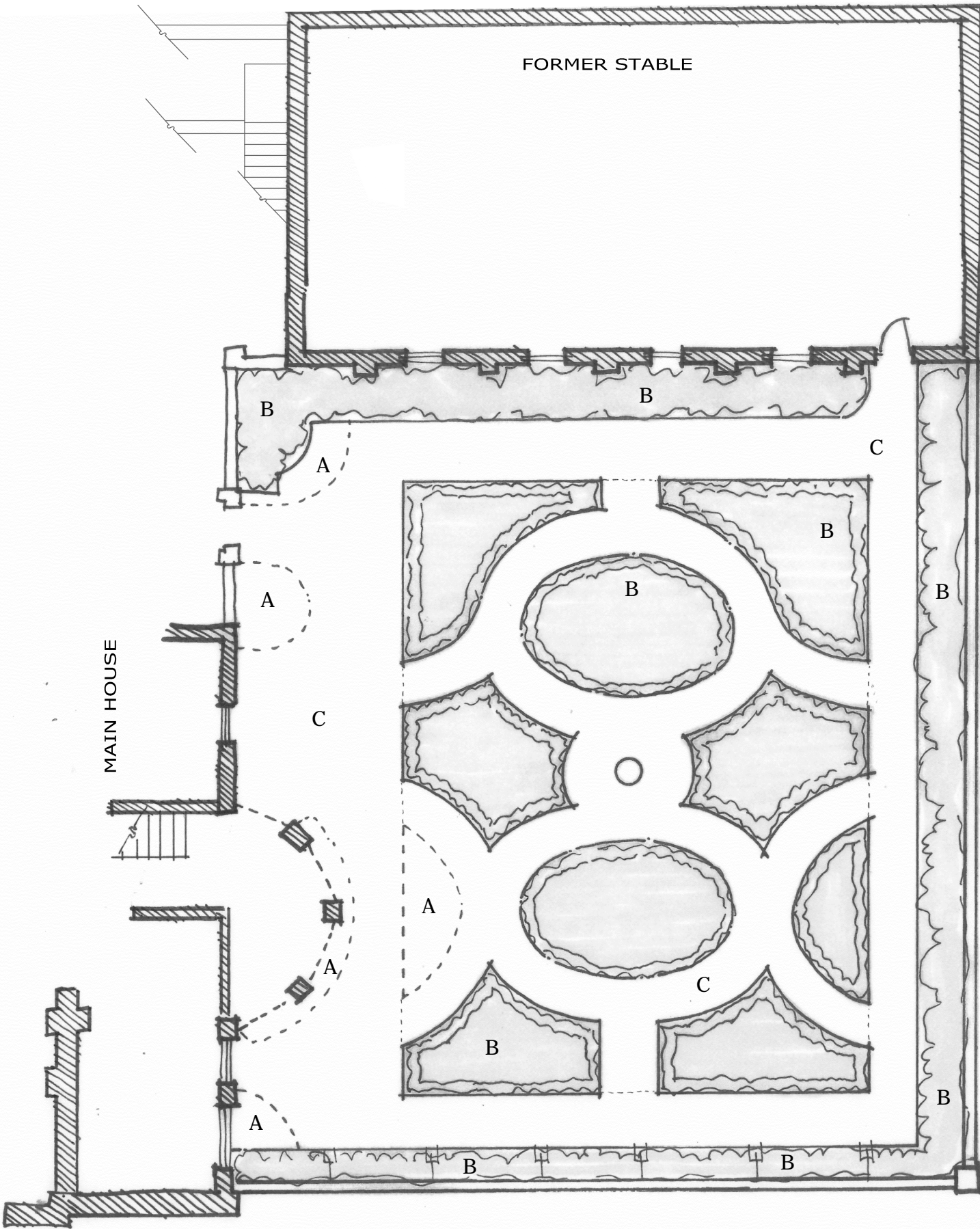
Concept 3

The architectural changes are the same as in Concept 2. The large oval planting beds that form the core of the garden are replaced with decorative pavement that depict the outlines of the original beds. A gate is opened through the fence to provide access to Oglethorpe Avenue. The statue of Juliette Gordon Low is relocated to a position of honor opposite the characteristic bow porch. The garden paths leading into the center of the garden are enlarged and the fountain removed. This scheme could accommodate between 115 and 230 people.

EAST YORK LANE

EAST YORK LANE

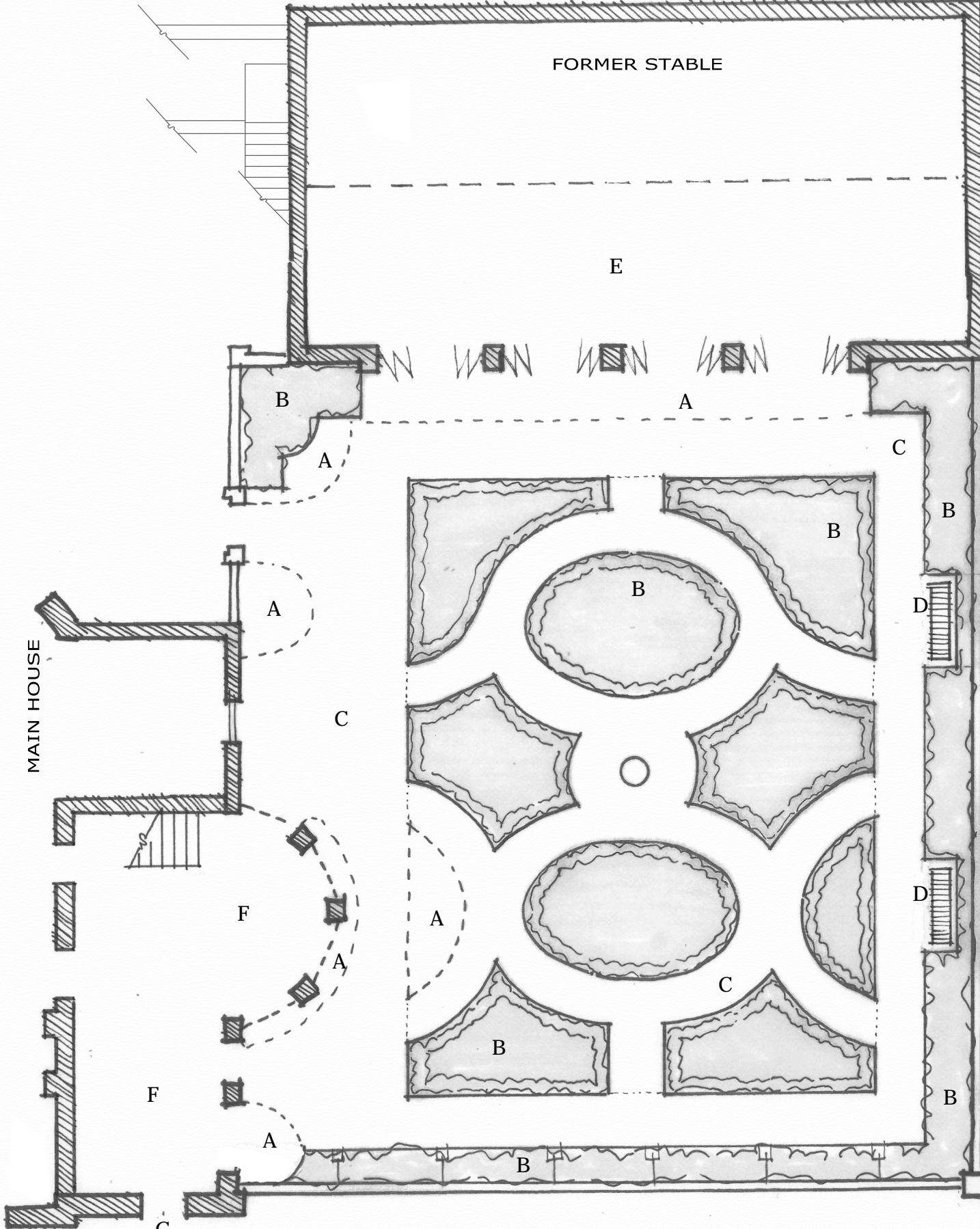
EAST YORK LANE



EXISTING SIDEWALK

OGLETHORPE AVENUE

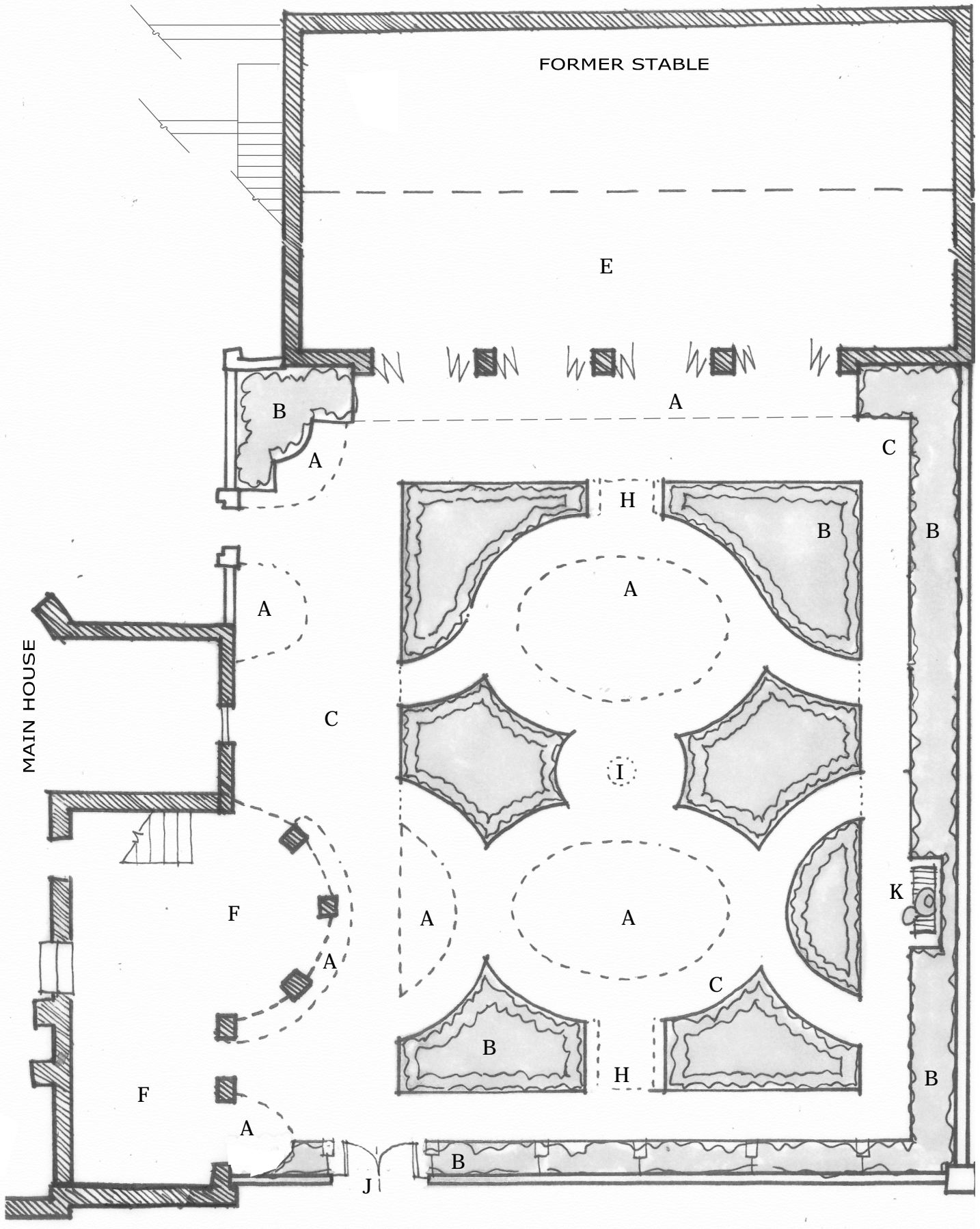
Concept 1



EXISTING SIDEWALK

OGLETHORPE AVENUE

Concept 2



EXISTING SIDEWALK

OGLETHORPE AVENUE

Concept 3

Garden Takeoff Chart

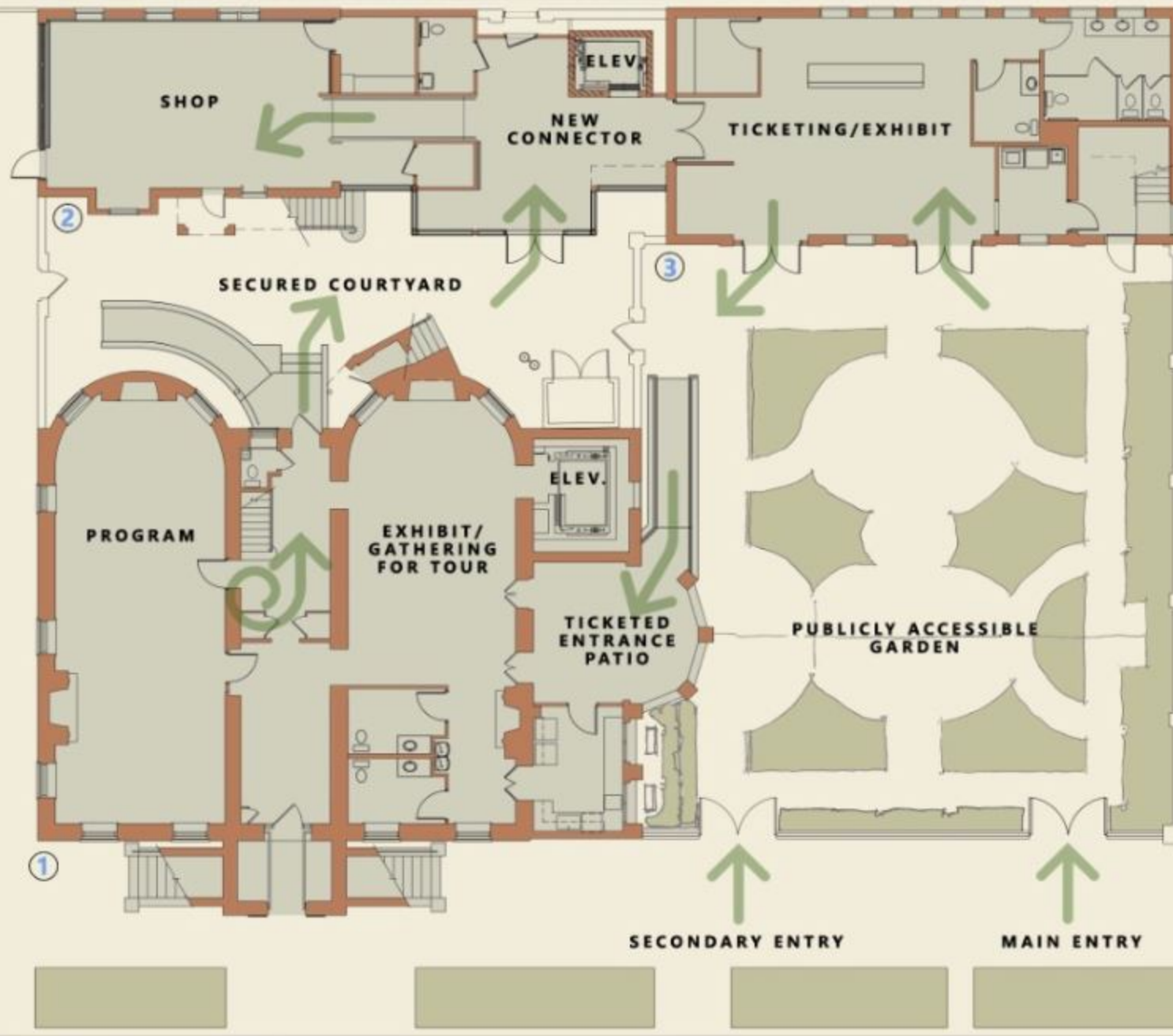
Concept	Planting (s.f.)	Path (s.f.)	Covered Open Space (s.f.)	Total (s.f.)	Loading Capacity (12 s.f. per person)
Existing	1737	1615	0	3352	134.6
1	1589	1763	0	3352	146.9
2	1426	1926	531	3883	204.8
3	1128	2224	531	3883	229.6

Key

- A. Remove existing planting bed and reflect vestige of original planting beds in paving
- B. Original planting beds, replanted in manor compatible with Clermont Lee's design
- C. Replace gravel walk with A.D.A. accessible paths; exposed aggregate or tabby concrete along perimeter; retain gravel in interior paths
- D. Bench
- E. Convert ground floor of former stable into event space, south wall and windows become operable doors

- F. Convert ground level area under porch into covered garden space by removing later partitions
- G. Garden entrance through building wall from Oglethorpe Avenue
- H. Widen path along garden's central axis from 4' to 6'
- I. Remove fountain and replace with flush decorative paving or millstone
- J. Garden entrance through existing fence from Oglethorpe Avenue
- K. Relocated Juliette Gordon Low statue and bench

BULL STREET



OGLETHORPE STREET

GROUND LEVEL
JULIETTE GORDON LOW BIRTHPLACE

Savannah, Georgia, U.S.A.



VIEW FROM OGLETHORPE



VIEW OF MAIN HOUSE
FROM GARDEN



VIEW OF OUTBUILDING EAST

- ① MAIN HOUSE
- ② OUTBUILDING WEST
- ③ OUTBUILDING EAST



SCHEMATIC PLAN

Site Plan - Garden

