

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: LANDSCAPE AND ARCHITECTURE: A
BALANCE FOR FELLOWSHIP AND
CONTEMPLATION AT DUMBARTON OAKS

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Masters of Architecture, 2016

Thesis Directed By: Brian Kelly, Professor, School of Architecture,
Planning, and Preservation

This thesis will explore ideas relating to the engagement of man and nature by promoting the experiences of contemplation and fellowship. The focus will be an urban academic retreat facility to provide an escape from distraction of typical modern urban life. Set within the historic Washington D.C. neighborhood of Georgetown, Dumbarton Oaks is an active academic research institution The Institute is holistically designed; architecture integrated with its surrounding landscape The Institute selects diverse scholars to think, live, and commune within the facility and landscape for up to two years. This thesis will use the existing site, themes, and history of Dumbarton Oaks as a launching point to explore the relationship between architecture, man, and landscape. A proposal to relocate the Fellow's residences and reorganize the western edge of the site will help reactivate this forgotten piece of the site realize its potential.

LANDSCAPE AND ARCHITECTURE: A BALANCE FOR FELLOWSHIP AND
CONTEMPLATION AT DUMBARTON OAKS

by

Andrew R. O'Brochta

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University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Figures	iv
Chapter 1: Background	1
<i>Introduction</i>	<u>1</u>
<i>Landscape and Architecture</i>	<u>1</u>
<i>Places for Retreat</i>	<u>5</u>
Chapter 2: Dumbarton Oaks	7
<i>History of Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection</i>	<u>7</u>
Chapter 3: Proposal	9
<i>Proposal</i>	<u>9</u>
Chapter 4: Site Description and History	11
<i>Neighborhood Context and History</i>	<u>11</u>
<i>Site Description and History</i>	<u>18</u>
<i>Site Documentation</i>	<u>36</u>
Chapter 5: Site Analysis	38
<i>Dumbarton Oaks</i>	<u>38</u>
Chapter 6: Program	41
<i>Program Objectives</i>	<u>41</u>
<i>Existing Program</i>	<u>44</u>
<i>Detailed Program Description</i>	<u>48</u>
<i>Program Precedent Analysis</i>	<u>49</u>
Chapter 7: Design Approach	56
<i>Design</i>	<u>56</u>
Appendix A	64
<i>Dumbarton Oaks Design History Timeline</i>	<u>64</u>
Bibliography	66

List of Figures

Figure 1 Falling Water by Frank Lloyd Wright exterior blends into its environment, as if it had always been there	3
Figure 2 Villa Savoy by Le Corbusier roof top window framing view of surrounding landscape	4
Figure 3 Problem Diagram: Utilitarian portion of the site (Source: Author)	10
Figure 4 Intention Diagram: Connect Back to Gardens/ Institute and Park (Source: Author)	10
Figure 5 Location of Georgetown within Washington D.C. (Source: Modified by Author)	12
Figure 6 Georgetown Boundary Diagram (Source: Author)	13
Figure 7 Georgetown Building Uses-Red Commercial, Purple Institutional, Yellow Residential (Source: Author)	14
Figure 8 Georgetown Historic District Boundaries (Source: Author).....	15
Figure 9 Queen Ann Victorian town houses in Georgetown.....	16
Figure 10 Federal-Style town houses in Georgetown	16
Figure 11 Wisconsin Avenue Storefronts	17
Figure 12 M St. Storefronts.....	18
Figure 13 Dumbarton Oaks development from 1922-1934 (Source: Author).....	21
Figure 14 Dumbarton Oaks Development 1935-1963 (Source: Author)	22
Figure 15 Dumbarton Oaks Development 1964-2012 (Source: Author)	23
Figure 16 Dumbarton Oaks Garden and Institute Boundary (Source: Author)	24
Figure 17 Dumbarton Oaks Park and Garden and Institute (Source: Author).....	25
Figure 18 Jelleff Recreation Center and Dumbarton Oaks Park, Gardens, and Institute (Source: Author)	25
Figure 19 Dumbarton Oaks Gardens Location- DO. Gardens (Source: Author).....	26
Figure 20 Arbor Terrace	27
Figure 21 Ellipse Fountain.....	27
Figure 22 Dumbarton Oak near the Forsythia Dell	28
Figure 23 Dumbarton Oaks Park Location-DO. Park (Source: Author)	29
Figure 24 Dumbarton Oaks Park Creek Trail	30
Figure 25 Dumbarton Oak Trail Meadow	30
Figure 26 Dumbarton Oaks Institute Location- DO. Institute (Source: Author)	31
Figure 27 Gardeners Court.....	32
Figure 28 Greenhouse Court	32
Figure 29 The Dell: Pathway	33
Figure 30 Jelleff Recreational Center Location- Rec. Center (Source: Author).....	34
Figure 31 Jelleff Recreation Center playing field	35
Figure 32 Existing Dumbarton Oaks Site Plan (Source: Author)	36
Figure 33 Dumbarton Oaks Existing Site Model (Source: Author).....	37
Figure 34 Zoomed in image of utilitarian portion of Dumbarton Oaks (Source: Author)	37
Figure 35 Dumbarton Oaks and Adjacent Property Boundaries (Source: Author).....	38
Figure 36 Site Edges as Barriers: Walls, Fences, and Steep Topography (Source: Author)	39

Figure 37 Public/ Private Organization (Source: Author)	39
Figure 38 Dumbarton Oaks Topography and Spot Elevations (Source: Author)	40
Figure 39 Dumbarton Oaks: Yearly Residential Schedule (Source: Author).....	42
Figure 40 Existing Gardeners Court Program Table (Source: Author).....	45
Figure 41 Existing Site Program Square-footage (Source: Author).....	46
Figure 42 Existing Dumbarton Oaks Fellows housing typical floor plan	47
Figure 43 Existing 1700 Wisconsin Avenue Dumbarton Fellows Housing Square Footage Overlaid on Site (Source: Author).....	47
Figure 44 The Smithsonian-Mason School of Conservation Campus Aerial View....	50
Figure 45 SMSC Rentable Retreat Program Table (Source: Author)	51
Figure 46 The American Academy of Rome- Second Floor Plan	52
Figure 47 The American Academy of Rome- First Floor Plan	52
Figure 48 The American Academy in Rome Program Table (Source: Author)	54
Figure 49 Middleton Place Square Footage Overlaid on Site (Source: Author).....	54
Figure 50 Middleton Place Inn Program Table (Source: Author).....	55
Figure 51 Proposed Plan- Location and Orientation of Buildings (Source: Author)..	56
Figure 52 Location of Formal and Natural spaces of the Plaza and the Dell in relation to the Fellow’s residents (Source: Author).....	57
Figure 53 Proposed Panoramic and Framed Views (Source: Author)	58
Figure 54 Location of Proposed Communal and Individual Spaces (Source: Author)	59
Figure 55 Aerial View from the North (Source: Author)	60
Figure 56 View of Landscape from Residence (Source: Author).....	60
Figure 57 View from Plaza across the Dell (Source: Author)	61
Figure 58 Interior of Study Pavilion (Source: Author).....	62
Figure 59 Fellowship Hall (Source: Author)	63

Chapter 1: Background

Introduction

This thesis will explore ideas relating to the engagement of man and nature by promoting the experiences of contemplation and fellowship. An urban academic retreat facility to provide a get away from the typical daily life will be the focus of this exploration.

Set within the historic Washington D.C. neighborhood of Georgetown, Dumbarton Oaks is an active academic research institution. It is holistically designed; interior spaces are integrated with its surrounding natural landscape. A manicured classical garden sited close to the facility leads to a picturesque wilderness comprises one of America's most iconic garden landscapes.

The institute selects diverse humanities scholars to think, live, and commune within the facility and landscape for up to two years. This thesis will use the existing site, themes, and history of Dumbarton Oaks as a launching point to explore the relationship between architecture, man, and landscape. A proposal to relocate the fellows' residences and the reorganization of the western edge will help this forgotten piece of the property realize its potential.

Landscape and Architecture

Throughout history, man has had an evolving relationship to nature. Norman Crowe explains in *Nature and the Idea of a Man-Made World* that initially humans lived within nature, as small hunter gathering groups, fighting to survive within it for

thousands of years. Eventually, man learned to shape the land to benefit from its resources with development of agriculture. This led to the development of a new habitat to live in, the city, that people were able to control. It became man's second nature, the manmade world, set apart from the first nature but based on its geometric and organizational principles¹.

“The man-made world is an alternative nature, so to speak, created by artifice and born as a human reflection of the wonder we find in the natural world.

The assumption is that there is a direct connection between the two worlds [the natural and the man-made] at both the subliminal and conscious levels.”²

Man's success and efficiency in leeching the land of its resources has left humans disassociated from where they came. Ultimately, the way in which man designs and shapes his second nature is a direct reflection on how he views nature.

Norman Crowe believes that the interpretation of the ideal relationship between architecture and landscape has changed historically. These differences come about through the designer's cultural experiences. Designers of the past have taken different approaches toward the relationship of architecture and landscape. Crowe refers to two extreme views that come from architects who practiced around the early twentieth century. Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier had different ideas on how man should relate to the landscape³. Wright wanted to set his architecture within a

¹ Norman Crowe, *Nature and the Idea of a Man-Made World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), 5.

² Norman Crowe, *Nature and the Idea of a Man-Made World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), 7.

³ Norman Crowe, *Nature and the Idea of a Man-Made World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), 10-11.

landscape, try to blend in with the surrounding environment bringing the outside in as if it were naturally meant to be there (Figure 1). Le Corbusier set his work apart from nature but carefully uses it as a lens in which to view the landscape (Figure 2) and use metaphors referencing the natural world.

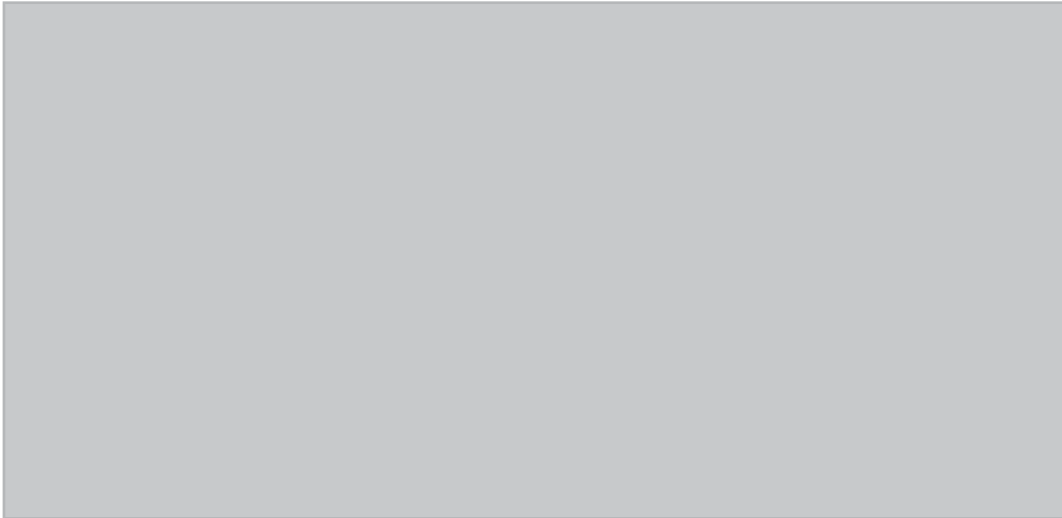


Figure 1 Falling Water by Frank Lloyd Wright exterior blends into its environment, as if it had always been there ⁴

⁴ “Home Assets,” Fallingwater Home Assets, accessed October 20, 2015, http://www.fallingwater.org/img/home_assets/FW_FALL_01.jpg.



Figure 2 Villa Savoy by Le Corbusier roof top window framing view of surrounding landscape⁵

Garden and park designs also transmit man's idea of nature. While there are many types of gardens and parks three distinctly different ideas of nature can be described by dominance, preservation/ re-creation, and metaphor. As identified by Norman Crowe dominance is seen in the garden design of Versailles, characterized by the reorganizing and constant maintenance of natural elements to define straight axes and symmetry. The opposite of this is the idea of a garden design to recreate nature, to look like a preserved piece of nature. Central Park is an example of this type. It appears to be a preserved piece of nature when in-fact it was meticulously designed to appear to be naturalistic. The Japanese, kare-sansui garden is a small bed of sand with boulders and bushes as isolated figures. This can be read as a metaphor

⁵ "Villa Savoy," Static Flickr, accessed October 20, 2015, https://c1.staticflickr.com/9/8233/8538291623_e770ee91fc_b.jpg

at multiple scales as the vast expanse of nature surrounding human existence and human existence is a small isolated island within it⁶.

Places for Retreat

Designed landscapes are reflections of man's view of nature and they allow people a moment to reflect on their own lives⁷.

They provide a place of quiet retreat from the distractions of life and allow one to more easily focus on their own thoughts. Regular access to fresh air and interaction with natural landscapes has been shown to increase both individual productivity and improve one's mental health⁸. The idea of a remote cabin in the woods and of being alone surrounded by the natural world in order to think and write, like Walden, is a classic illustration of the belief in the productivity of a natural setting. Retreats for groups of high level thinkers to get away from the distractions of their typical lives and spend extended time in one place focused on the research of a specific topic exist for these reasons.

That ideal setting is realized in institutional academic and research retreats today. Many are remotely located campuses designed with a connection to the landscape. They promote time for individuals to get away from their normal life to

⁶ Norman Crowe, *Nature and the Idea of a Man-Made World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), 15.

⁷ Norman Crowe, *Nature and the Idea of a Man-Made World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), 15.

⁸ "Health, Well Being, and Productivity in Offices," World Green Building Council, Accessed October 26, 2015, http://www.worldgbc.org/files/6314/1152/0821/WorldGBC__Health_Wellbeing__productivity_Full_Report.pdf.

enter voluntary isolation, and focus on their task. At the same time these retreats allow moments throughout the day that allow them to engage in social activities and share ideas with like-minded colleagues in an ideal setting. How can the treatment of the landscape and architecture be used to enhance these experiences?

This thesis will use Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, an iconic garden landscape combined with an academic institution, as a site to test what the appropriate balance between architecture and the landscape is and how it can promote the personal experience that one receives from natural landscape and the social experience that enriches the experience of an academic setting.

Chapter 2: Dumbarton Oaks

History of Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection

U.S. diplomats Robert and Mildred Bliss were the driving force of what Dumbarton Oaks is today. They bought the property to have a permanent country home within the city after years of living around the world. Although they did not live there for long periods due to their continued travels, it was a place where they could store and display their growing collection of art, artifacts, and garden library. Immediately after purchasing the 53-acre property in 1920, they began renovation on the run down home and a comprehensive landscape design with landscape architect Beatrix Ferrand.

The Blisses were lifetime lovers of art and history. They considered preserving artifacts of the past and the study of topics in humanities as a contribution to the progress of humanity. They donated of their home, garden, art, and rare book collection to Harvard University, Robert Bliss's alma mater, to maintain and continue their vision. They thought "there was a need in this country... of a quiet place where the advanced students and scholars could withdraw, the one to mellow and develop, the other to write the result of a life's study".⁹

The Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection opened in 1940 and has grown, changed, and adapted ever since. The garden library and Pre-Columbian pavilion opened in 1963. Tennis courts were removed and a pebble garden designed in its place. In 2005, a library addition was opened and in 2008 a museum and home

⁹ "History," Dumbarton Oaks, accessed October 25 2015, <http://www.doaks.org/>.

renovation was completed.¹⁰ The program of the facilities has shifted and moved many times to adapt for new additions and an increase in Fellows and scholars on the grounds.

The Dumbarton Oaks current mission statement- “[Our] mission is, first, to maintain what we have been entrusted by the Blisses to preserve. Second, to support the pursuit of the humanities as a whole, with particular focus on the disciplines of Byzantine, Pre-Columbian, and Garden and Landscape Studies. Third, to honor the intention of the donors by achieving the greatest mutual advantage between Harvard and Dumbarton Oaks. Fourth, to serve the larger public through the museum, gardens, and Friends of Music.”¹¹

Today, Dumbarton Oaks, realizes the mission of the Blisses in a variety of ways. It is owned and administered by the Harvard University Trustees who each year appoints an Administrative Committee, a Board of Scholars, a Visiting Committee,¹² and a Garden Advisory Committee. They select and offer residential fellowships for up to one academic year scholars from around the world. They have expanded their research opportunities to include special endowed fellowships, one-month research awards, and other grants. The Institute disseminates the research generated each year through a symposium that includes public lectures, informal talks, colloquia and publications.

¹⁰ “History,” Dumbarton Oaks, accessed October 25, 2015, <http://www.doaks.org/>.

¹¹ “Mission,” Dumbarton Oaks, accessed October 26, 2015, <http://www.doaks.org/>.

¹² “About,” Dumbarton Oaks, accessed October 25, 2015, <http://www.doaks.org/>.

Chapter 3: Proposal

Proposal

This thesis will explore ideas dealing with the relationship between man and the natural environment. Dumbarton Oaks provides a launching point, an existing platform on which these ideas can be tested. Dumbarton Oaks has had rich history of architectural and landscape design for almost a century and is one of the most influential American designed garden landscapes. The Institute also presents an existing programmatic opportunity, as a residential fellowship for academic researchers, for the design of the space foster individual contemplation as well as social collaboration.

The physical site itself also provides an opportunity to strategically navigate steep topography to unify the site as a cohesive whole. The western area has been arranged around parking and maintenance functions losing the beauty and cohesiveness that makes the Dumbarton Oaks special (Figure 3). This offers an opportunity to suggest a proposal on that part of site to solidify the vision of the whole site, reconnecting it to the gardens to the east and the park to the north (Figure 4).

This project proposes a new design of the western portion of Dumbarton Oaks. The site currently suffers from an under-designed section of the site, west of the Greenhouse court. From the court, a footpath winds along a hill to the mechanical service building and the parking lot. Architectural and landscape features continuing the established traditions and themes of Dumbarton Oaks, have the potential to revitalize this area of the site.

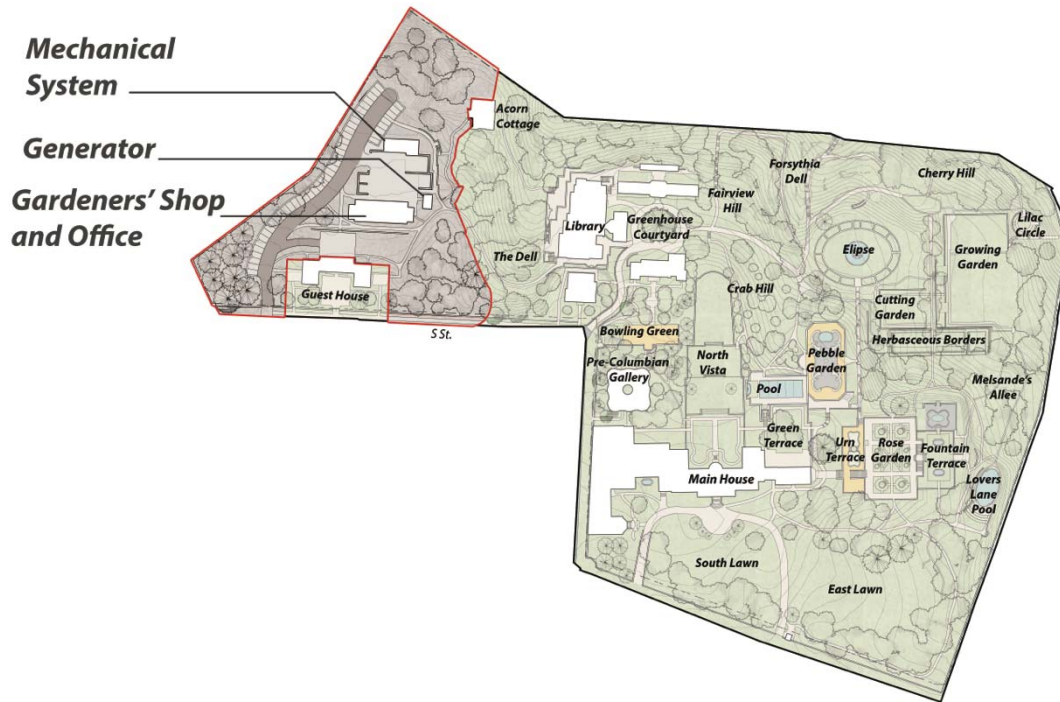


Figure 3 Problem Diagram: Utilitarian portion of the site (Source: Author)



Figure 4 Intention Diagram: Connect Back to Gardens/ Institute and Park (Source: Author)

Chapter 4: Site Description and History

Neighborhood Context and History

History of Washington D.C. and Georgetown

Dumbarton Oaks is located on the northeast edge of the Washington D.C. neighborhood of Georgetown (Figure 5). Georgetown, founded in 1751, was a successful port and industrial town located at the mouth of Rock Creek and into Potomac River. Almost fifty years later Washington D.C. was established as the new Nation's Capitol, centered East of Georgetown¹³. Washington's growth was driven by the growth of the federal government¹⁴. Georgetown was officially included as a part of Washington following the end of the Civil War¹⁵. The economic success that characterized the area early on went through downfall in the late 1800's with the Canal Company's bankruptcy and revitalization in the 1930's with the implementation of the New Deal¹⁶. Today, Georgetown is a thriving historic district. It draws tourist, residents, and student to its upscale dining, retail shops, and university campus.

¹³ "Washington DC History," Washington DC Information, accessed November 14, 2015, <http://washington.org/DC-information/washington-dc-history>.

¹⁴ "Washington DC History," Washington DC Information, accessed November 14, 2015, <http://washington.org/DC-information/washington-dc-history>.

¹⁵ "Georgetown Historic District," NPS Georgetown Historic District, accessed November 14, 2015, <http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/wash/dc15.htm>.

¹⁶ "Georgetown Historic District," NPS Georgetown Historic District, accessed November 14, 2015, <http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/wash/dc15.htm>.

Context Description: Washington D.C. and Georgetown

The Georgetown neighborhood is bound to the north by Reservoir Road and Dumbarton Oaks Park, to the east by Rock Creek Park, to the south by the Potomac River and to the west by the Archbold Parkway (Figure 6). Today the western edge of Georgetown is anchored by Georgetown University. The main commercial corridors are M Street, running east-west, and Wisconsin Avenue, running north-south and bisecting the neighborhood. The area South of M Street consists of office and multifamily residential apartments while the area to the north consist of historic town homes (Figure 6, Figure 7).

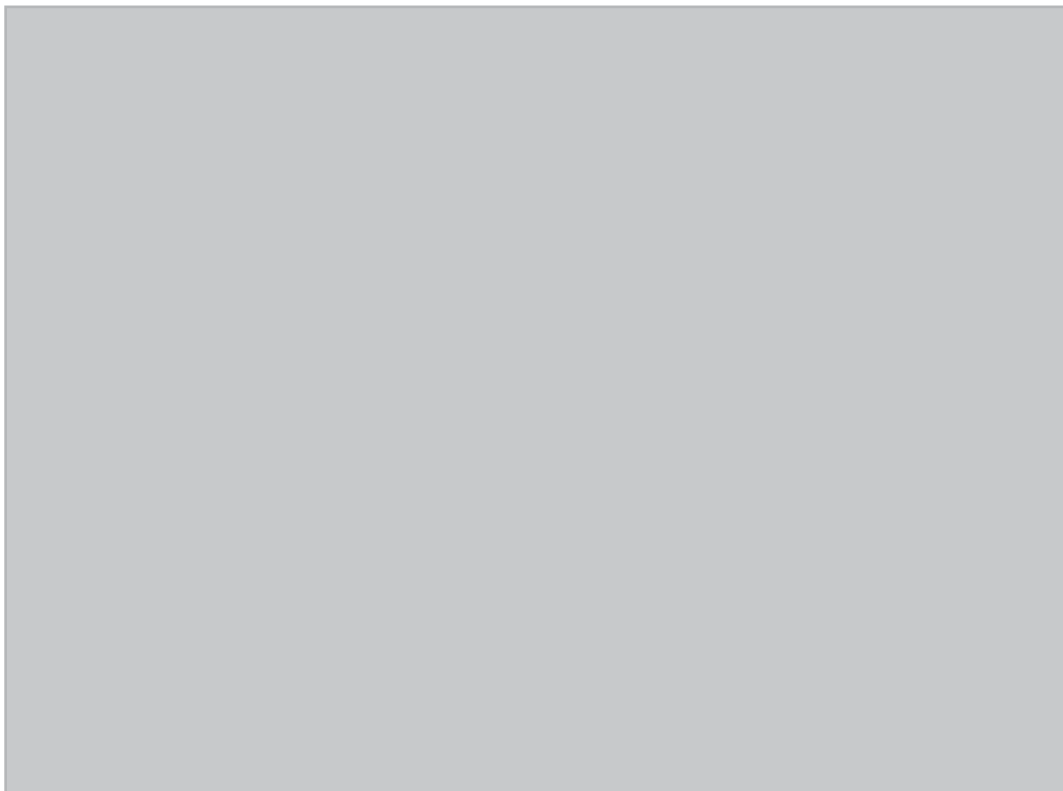


Figure 5 Location of Georgetown within Washington D.C.¹⁷ (Source: Modified by Author)

¹⁷ “Georgetown, Washington DC,” Georgetown Washington DC, accessed October 15, 2015, [https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Georgetown_\(Washington,_D.C.\)](https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Georgetown_(Washington,_D.C.)).



Figure 6 Georgetown Boundary Diagram (Source: Author)



Figure 7 Georgetown Building Uses-Red Commercial, Purple Institutional, Yellow Residential (Source: Author)

The historic architectural character of Georgetown has been preserved and was named a National Historic Landmark in 1967¹⁸. The entire neighborhood is classified as a historical district (Figure 8). The historical district classification adds a layer of protection that helps maintain Georgetown’s original architecture and landscape. The neighborhood continues to be isolated from the drastic architectural change that much of D.C. has gone through in the past and today. The prevailing residential building typology is the three-story row house with a variety of styles throughout the neighborhood, ranging from Queen Ann Victorian to the Federal and

¹⁸ “Georgetown Historic District,” NPS Georgetown Historic District, accessed November 14, 2015, <http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/wash/dc15.htm>.

Colonial style ¹⁹ (Figure 9, Figure 10). On Wisconsin Avenue and M St., the main commercial corridor type is a brick colonial style town houses with store fronts and two to three stories of office or residential above (Figure 11, Figure 12).



Figure 8 Georgetown Historic District Boundaries (Source: Author)

¹⁹ “Georgetown Historic District,” NPS Georgetown Historic District, accessed November 14, 2015, <http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/wash/dc15.htm>.

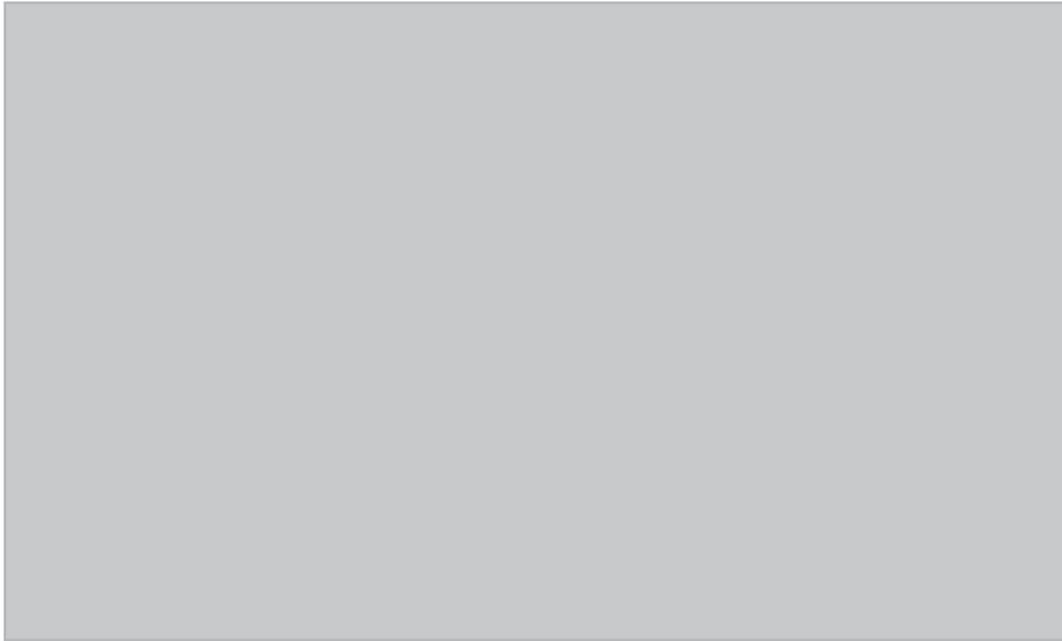


Figure 9 Queen Ann Victorian town houses in Georgetown²⁰



Figure 10 Federal-Style town houses in Georgetown²¹

²⁰“Georgetown Houses,” America’s Brainiest Cities, accessed October 10, 2015, http://i2.cdn.turner.com/money/2010/10/01/pf/college/Americas_brainiest_cities/georgetown_house.ju.top.jpg.

²¹“Users,” CDN, accessed October 20, 2015, <http://cdn.patch.com/users/86497/2014/07/T800x600/bd8efb7494cc7f3019025f39ac7b7d14.jpg>.



Figure 11 Wisconsin Avenue Storefronts²²

²² “Georgetown Picture,” Georgetown Images, accessed October 12, 2015, <http://living-in-washingtondc.com/images/georgetown/georgetownpicture11.jpg>



Figure 12 M St. Storefronts²³

Site Description and History

History of Dumbarton Oaks Site Development

The site of the current Dumbarton Oaks property began in the early 18th century when Queen Anne gave the property to Colonel Ninian Beall in 1702. Beall named his new property the Rock of Dumbarton as an ode to a distinctive rock outcropping in his native Scotland. The property passed through several owners after this. In 1801, Hammond Dorsey purchased the property and built the original central block and orangery of the existing home. Edward Linthicum expanded the property limits and renamed it The Oaks, in 1850, for the great amount of oak trees that

²³“Georgetown Stock Photo,” Washington DC, accessed October 22, 2015, <http://previews.123rf.com/images/woodkern/woodkern1304/woodkern130400084/19108184-Washington-DC-June-17-Street-scene-at-the-intersection-of-Wisconsin-Avenue-and-M-Street-in-Georgetow-Stock-Photo.jpg>.

populated the property, many of which do not exist today. The home and property switched hands several times over the next 70 years. The site and home were left relatively unchanged since Hammond Dorsey established the home and they began to fall into disrepair.

In the 1920, Robert and Mildred Bliss purchased the property and were immediately interested in transforming the property (Figure 13). The Blisses hired Mckim Mead, prominent New York architects, and Beatrix Farrand, a highly desired landscape architect. By 1928, the major architectural renovation to repair the home and expansion was complete with the Music Room and buildings forming the beginning of the Greenhouse Courtyard (Figure 13). At that time, too, the east terraces, the pool, and the north vista were being completed as well. By 1935, Farrand had come a long way in laying the framework for the major spaces of the garden including the Ellipse, the Forsythia Dell, the Dell, and the pathways that define the current Dumbarton Oaks Park. She had even designed the Guest House on R Street. In the late 1940's, Farrand had completed the majority of her vision for the Garden and retired but still maintained a minimal advisory position to and friendship with Mildred Bliss.

The next major additions were to help ease the transition from a residence to a Harvard University institution. The property was officially transferred to Harvard in 1940, but the Blisses maintained an active role in the institute's development. A new museum courtyard was added to hold the Byzantine collections in 1946 (Figure 14) Twenty years later, in 1963, Philip Johnson was commissioned to design the Pre-

Colombian museum in the Copse, a designed wooded landscape (Figure 15). A rare book and garden library was also added in 1964²⁴.

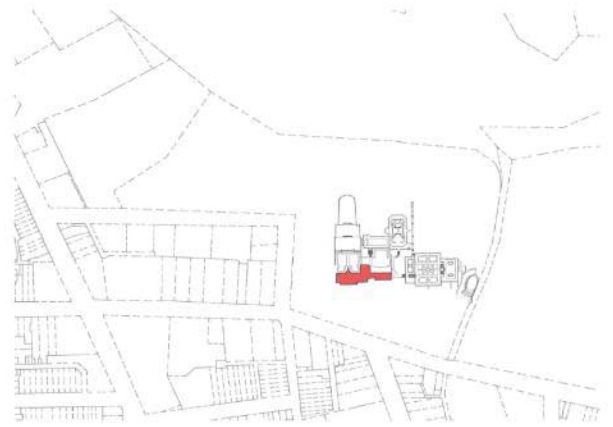
The third major development phase was completed in 2005 and was a major consolidation of several smaller buildings in the Greenhouse Courtyard. The Institute commissioned Robert Venturi to design a new library, refectory, and service buildings (Figure 15). The library defines the western edge of the courtyard. The service buildings were grouped around the Gardener Courtyard built on a historic landfill across the western edge of the site.

The most recent development is the addition of the Dumbarton Oaks Fellows Housing by Cunningham Quill architects in 2012. It is an adaptive reuse of a historic building with 25 units, located off site but close by on Wisconsin Avenue. (See *Design Timeline* in Appendix)

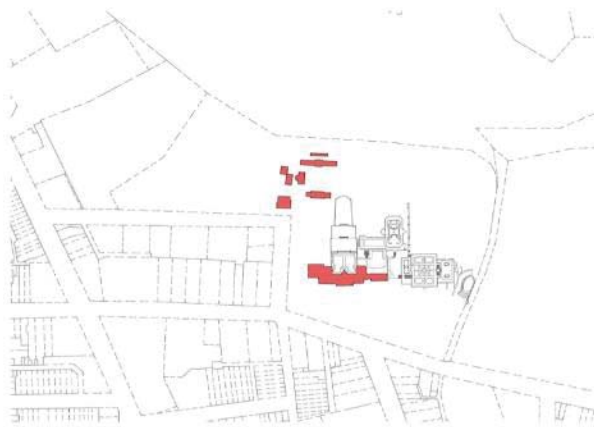
²⁴ Diane McGuire and Lois Fern, *Beatrix Farrand (1872-1959): Fifty Years of American Landscape Architecture* (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Trustees for Harvard University), XIV.



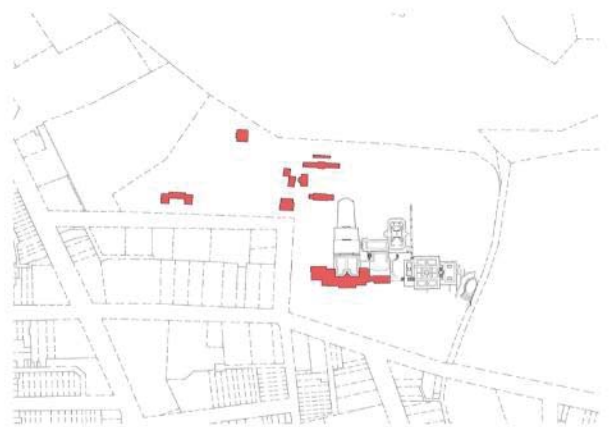
1922



1924

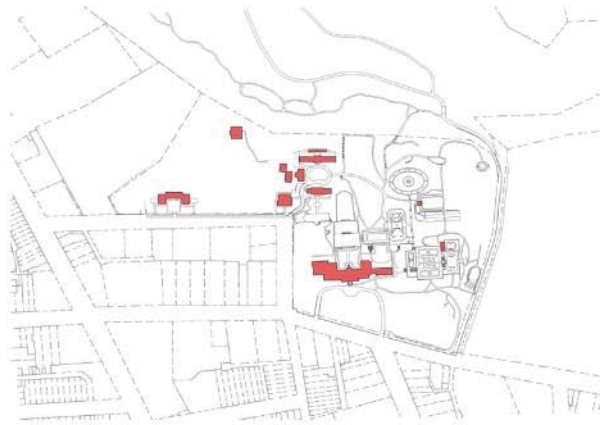


1928

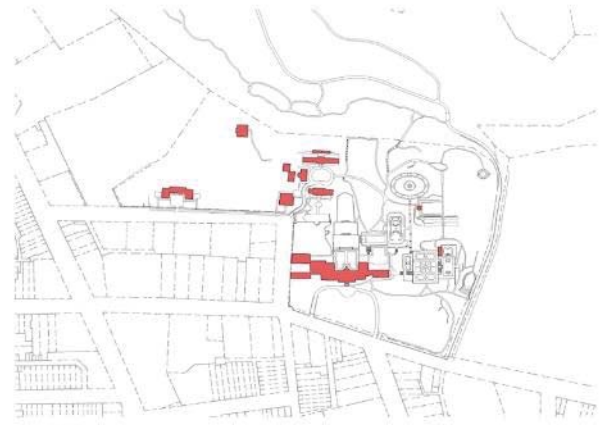


1934

Figure 13 Dumbarton Oaks development from 1922-1934 (Source: Author)



1935



1946



1950

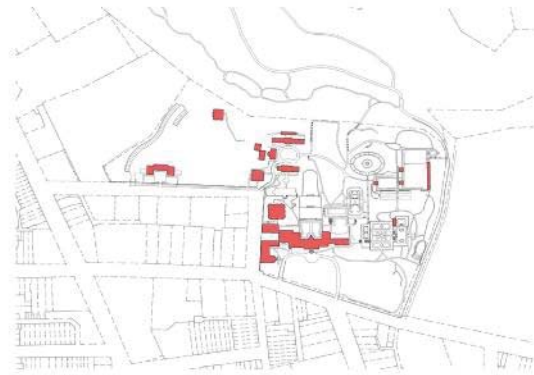


1963

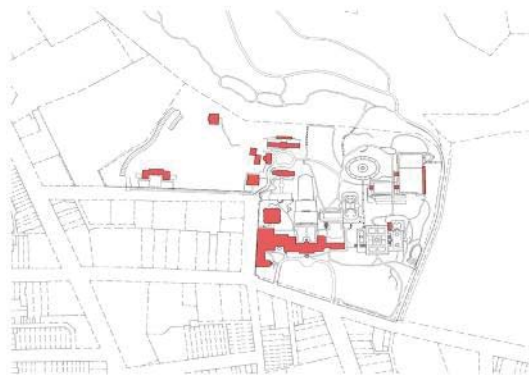
Figure 14 Dumbarton Oaks Development 1935-1963 (Source: Author)



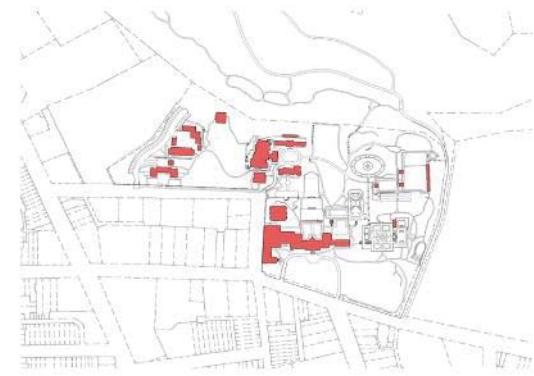
1964



1970



1987



2005



2012

Figure 15 Dumbarton Oaks Development 1964-2012 (Source: Author)

Site Description: Dumbarton Oaks Institute and Dumbarton Oaks Park

Today, Dumbarton Oaks is divided into two parcels. The Gardens and Institute are owned and operated by Harvard University, while the Park is owned and operated by the National Park Service as part of the Rock Creek National Park system. While owned by separate entities today, the parcels were designed and used as one unified whole until 1940 when the Bliss family donated the property to the current owners.

The Gardens and Institute are located off of R and Q Streets and are bounded by the Park to the north, the Jelleff recreation center to west (Figure 16) and Montrose Park to the east. The Dumbarton Oaks Park is bounded by the Gardens and Institute to the south and surrounded by Rock Creek Park and the back of many properties around the other edges (Figure 17).

There is a possibility of utilizing the current recreational field to the west of the site (Figure 18). Originally the Dumbarton property extended to west Wisconsin Avenue.



Figure 16 Dumbarton Oaks Garden and Institute Boundary (Source: Author)



Figure 17 Dumbarton Oaks Park and Garden and Institute (Source: Author)

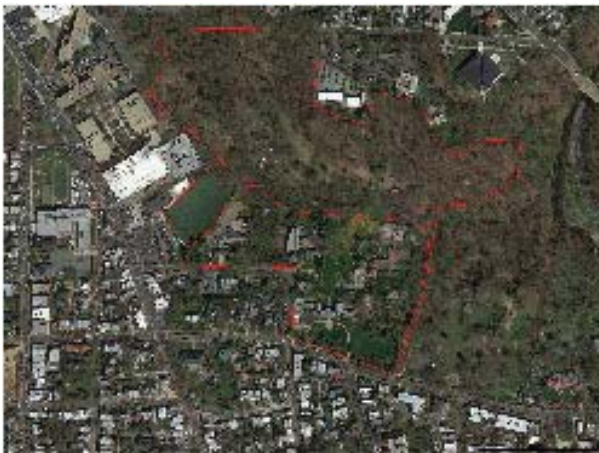


Figure 18 Jellef Recreation Center and Dumbarton Oaks Park, Gardens, and Institute (Source: Author)

The Garden, Institute, Park, and Recreation Center have different characters. The Garden is characterized by axial vistas framed by manicured vegetation. The Garden gradually transitions from the formal gardens to the more informal spaces (Figure 22). Terraces address the steep topographic conditions close to the original house and meandering paths navigate along sloping hillsides further from the house

(Figure 20, Figure 21). Beatrix Farrand designed for peak beauty during the spring and fall while also designing for a lush green during the winter²⁵.

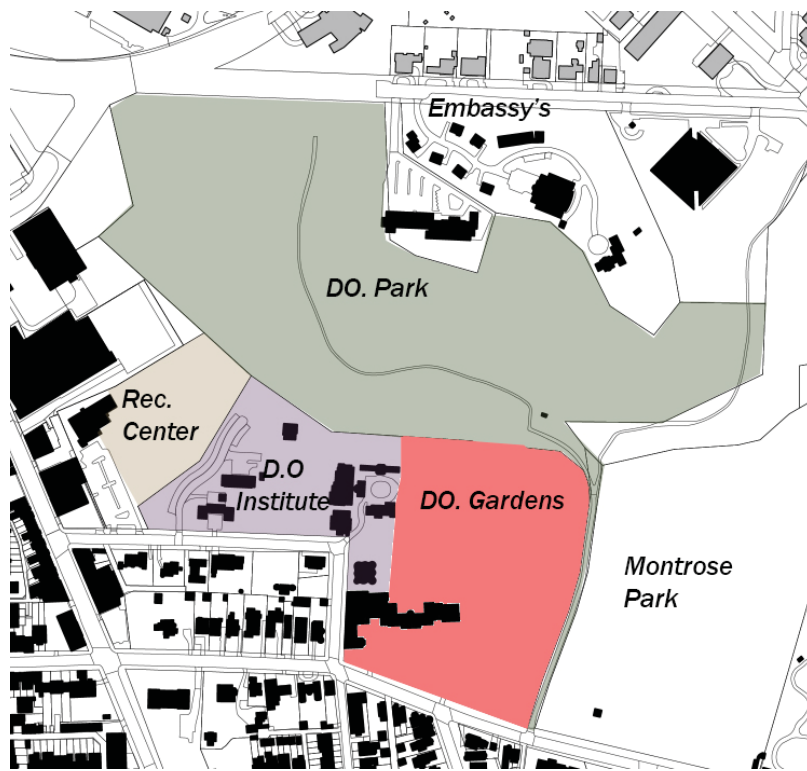


Figure 19 Dumbarton Oaks Gardens Location- DO. Gardens (Source: Author)

²⁵ Beatrix Farrand and Diane McGuire, *Beatrix Farrand's Plant book for Dumbarton Oaks*. Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University, 1-10.



Figure 20 Arbor Terrace²⁶

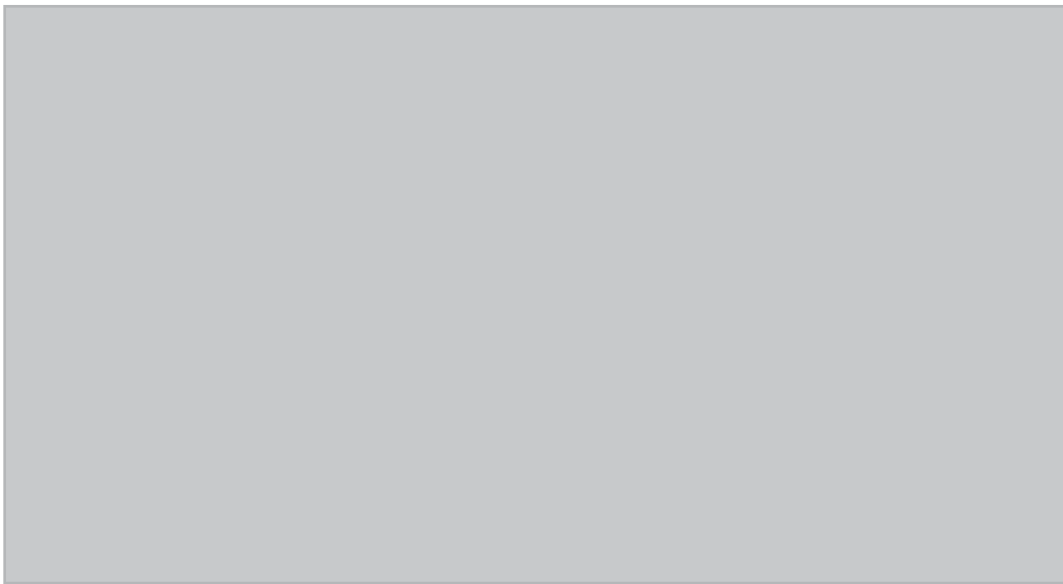


Figure 21 Ellipse Fountain²⁷

²⁶ “Dumbarton Oaks Cloud Terrace,” Dumbarton Oaks Cloud Terrace, accessed October 28, 2015, <http://www.botanicaatlanta.com/dumbarton-oaks-temporary-art-cloud-terrace-arbor-terrace.jpg>.

²⁷ “Fountain- Dumbarton Oaks,” Portfolio Garden, accessed October 28, 2015, <http://pmfranklin.com/Portfolios/Garden%20Portfolio/images/Fountain,-Dumbarton-Oaks,-Washington-DC,-USA.jpg>.



Figure 22 Dumbarton Oak near the Forsythia Dell²⁸

The Dumbarton Oaks Park, North of the Gardens, is a continuation of the transition from formal to informal. The path and organic spaces of the outer Garden lead to trails along a creek tributary of Rock Creek (Figure 24). The location in a valley and the tall thick vegetation block almost all views of the surrounding urban context (Figure 25).

²⁸ “Summer Interns,” Research Opportunities, accessed October 29, 2015, http://www.doaks.org/research/opportunities-for-students/summer-interns/DSC_0067.JPG/@images/6d9b2527-079e-4a3a-8838-b8d71f43de42.jpeg.



Figure 23 Dumbarton Oaks Park Location-DO. Park (Source: Author)



Figure 24 Dumbarton Oaks Park Creek Trail²⁹

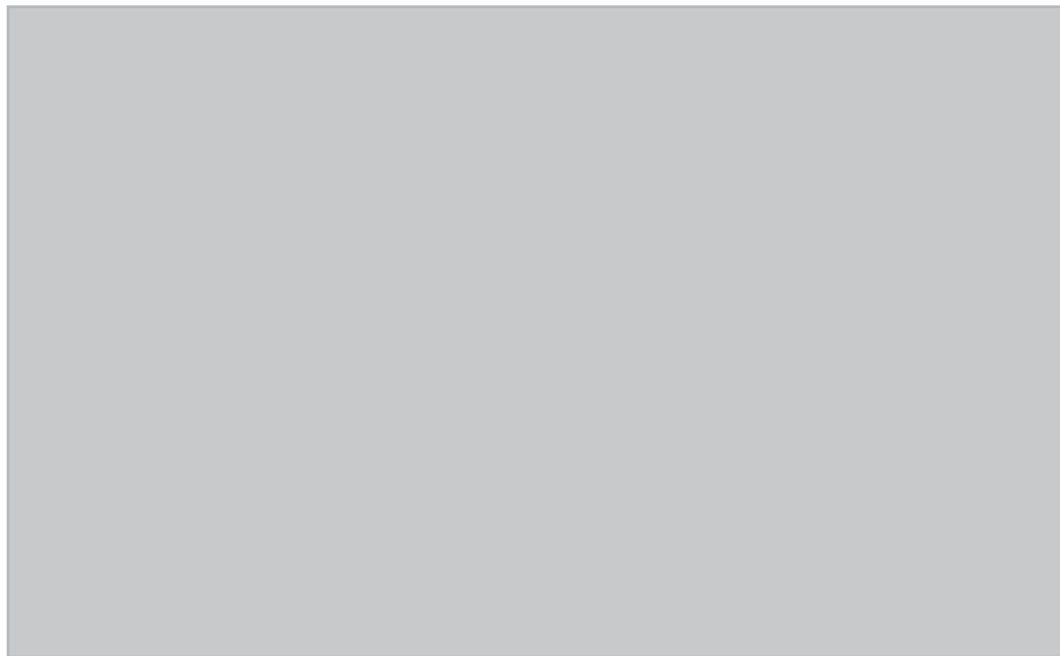


Figure 25 Dumbarton Oak Trail Meadow³⁰

The private institute portion of the site has a unique character separate from the semi-public Garden area. The Institute is made by the main house and two main

²⁹ “Video,” Vimeocdn, accessed October 28, 2015, https://i.vimeocdn.com/video/519004622_640.jpg.

³⁰ “Georgetown Metropolitan,” Georgetown Metropolitan Files, accessed October 28, 2015, <https://georgetownmetropolitan.files.wordpress.com/2014/04/dsc0071.jpg>.

clusters of buildings forming two courtyards. The Gardeners Court and the Greenhouse Courtyard are separated by the Del, a wooded area in a steeply sloping valley (Figure 27, Figure 29). The courts are linked by a path that follows the contour of the slope (Figure 29).

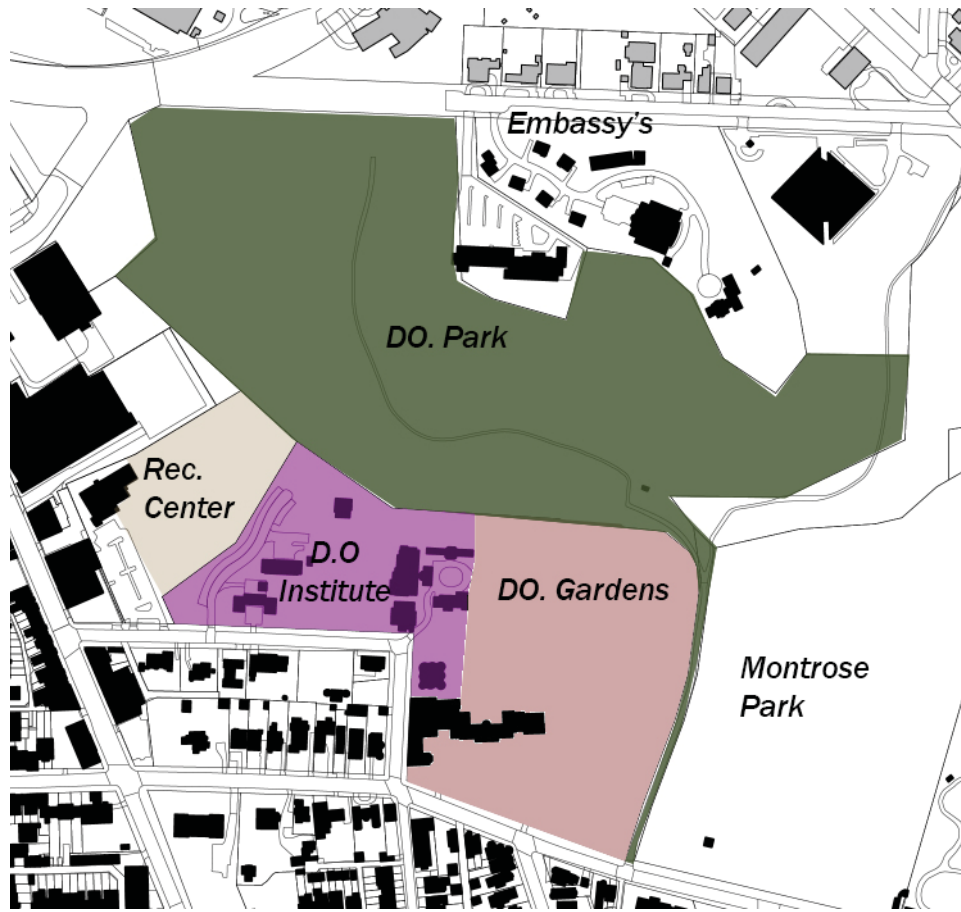


Figure 26 Dumbarton Oaks Institute Location- DO. Institute (Source: Author)

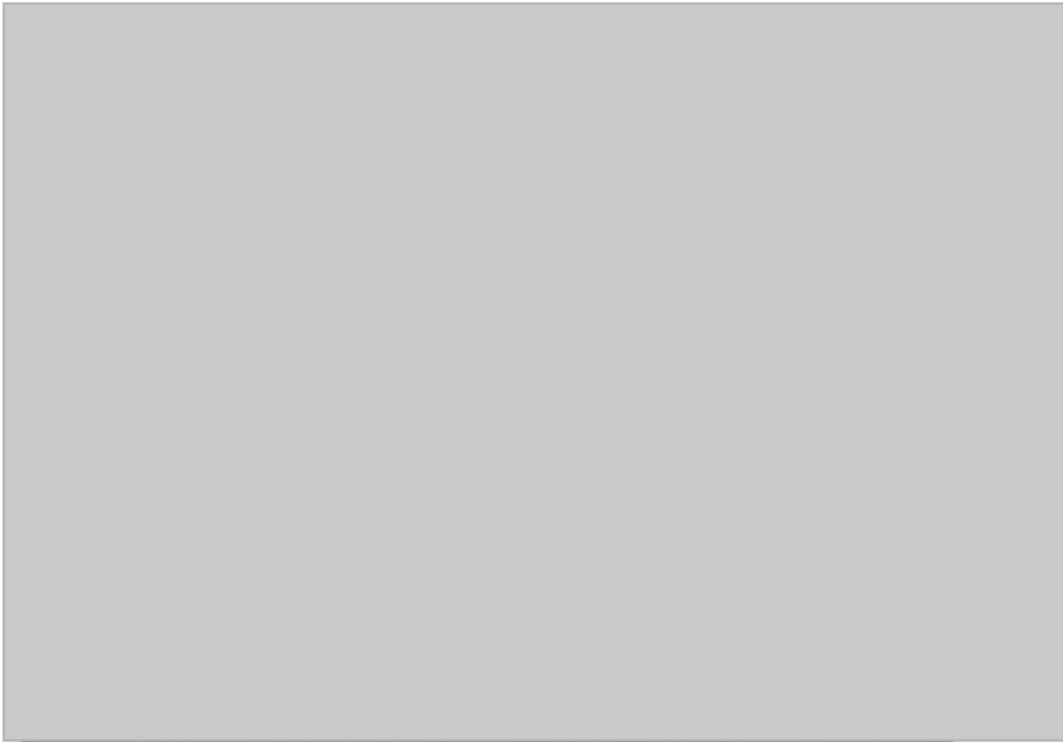


Figure 27 Gardeners Court³¹

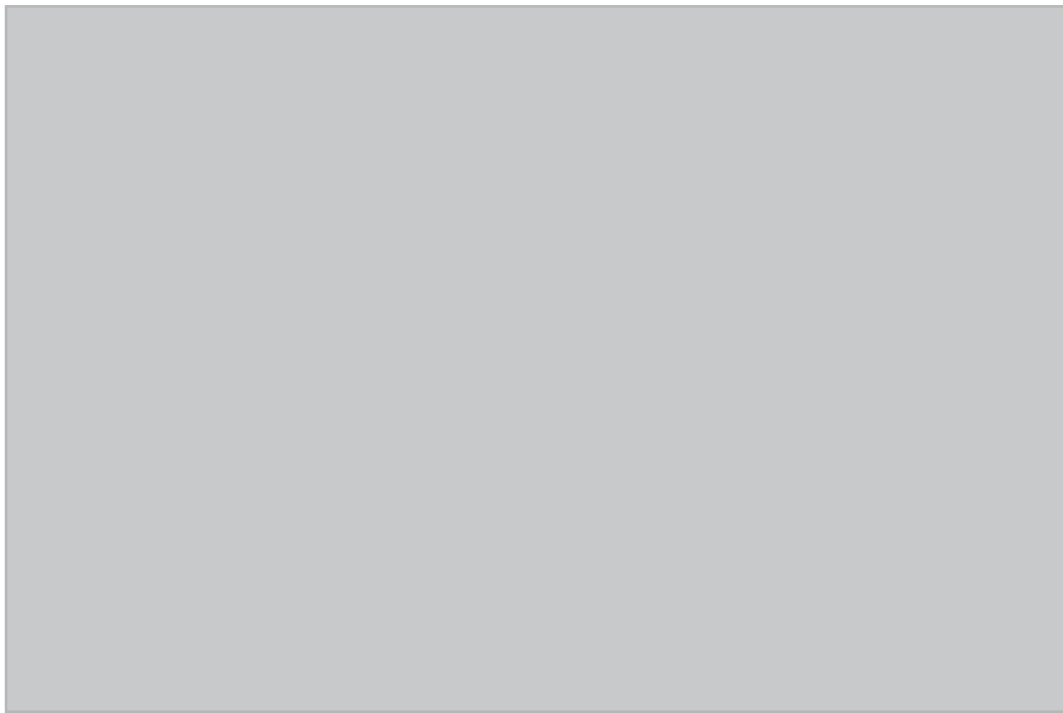


Figure 28 Greenhouse Court³²

³¹ Brian Kelly, *Gardeners Court*, November 16, 2015, Dumbarton Oaks Washington DC.

³² Brian Kelly, *Greenhouse Court*, November 16, 2015, Dumbarton Oaks Washington DC.

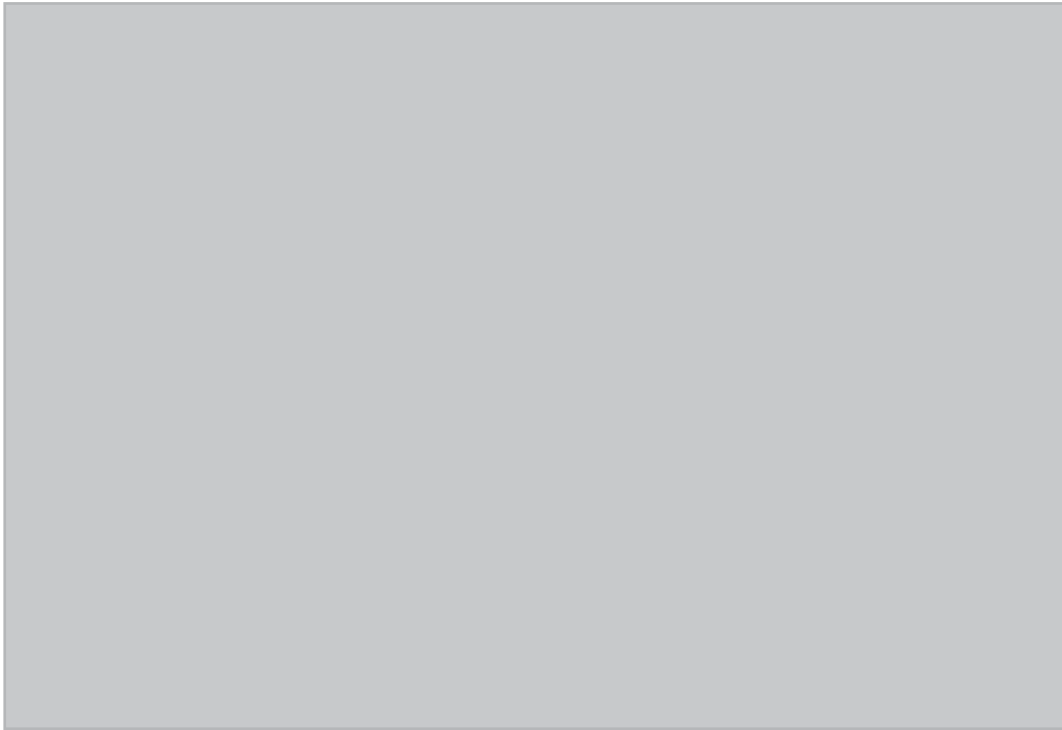


Figure 29 The Dell: Pathway³³

The Jelleff Recreational center borders Dumbarton Oak's western edge. A full sized artificial turf playing field abuts Dumbarton Oaks (Figure 31). The recreation center is home to the Boys and Girls Club of America local chapter and also contains an outdoor swimming pool, community center, indoor gym, and outdoor basketball courts on the western edge of their site.

The recreational field provide a large relatively flat area of land that would be valuable to the expansion of the Dumbarton facilities in the future.

³³ Gail Griffin, *The Dell*, November 16, 2015, Dumbarton Oaks Washington DC.

The program of the field could be relocated to another site in the neighborhood. There are several schools with suitable land within the Georgetown neighborhood.

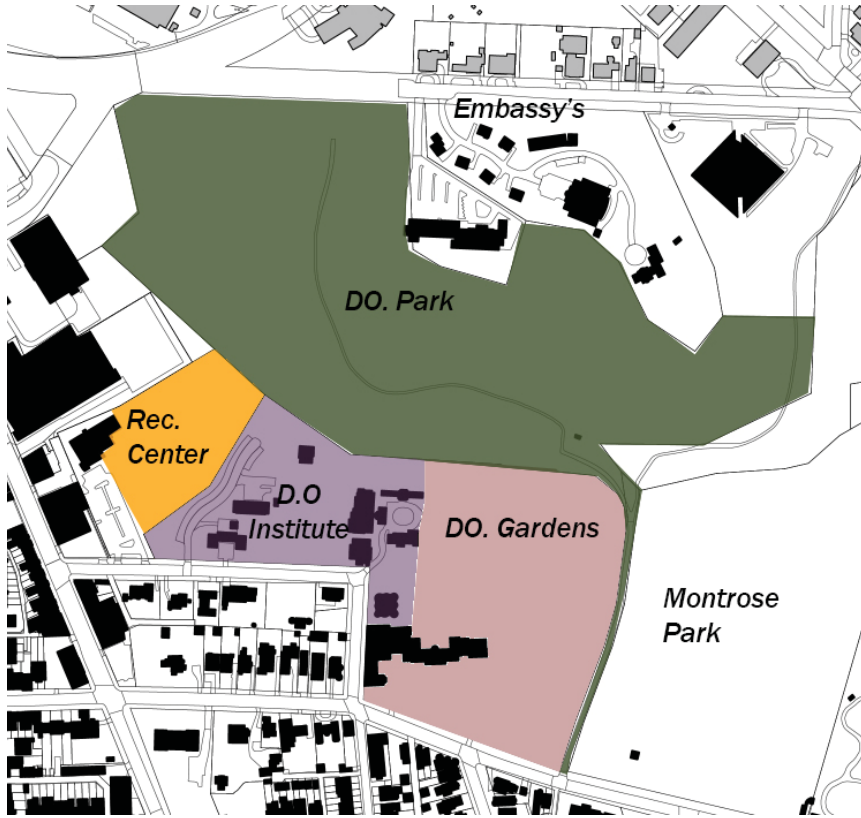


Figure 30 Jelleff Recreational Center Location- Rec. Center (Source: Author)

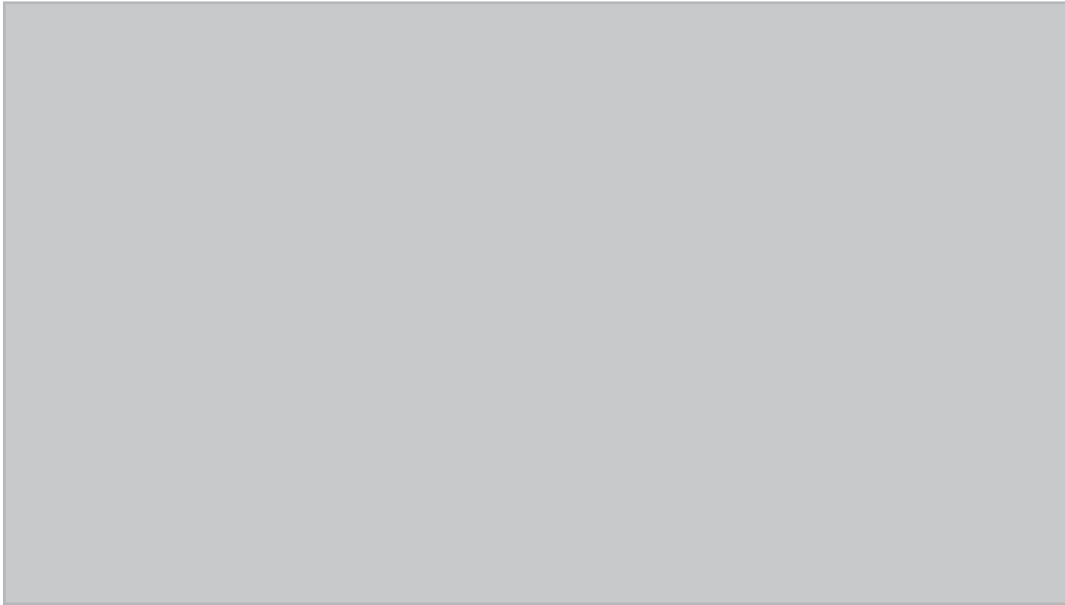


Figure 31 Jelleff Recreation Center playing field³⁴

Montrose Park located to the west of Dumbarton Oaks and is part of the Rock Creek National Park system. It is a recreational park that is centered on large open grassy spaces, several tennis courts and a playground.

³⁴ Brian Kelly, *Jelleff Rec. Center*, November 16, 2015, Dumbarton Oaks Washington DC.

Site Documentation

Existing Plan (Figure 32)



Figure 32 Existing Dumbarton Oaks Site Plan (Source: Author)

Existing Site Model (Figure 33)



Figure 33 Dumbarton Oaks Existing Site Model (Source: Author)

Existing Site Model Detail (Figure 34)



Figure 34 Zoomed in image of utilitarian portion of Dumbarton Oaks (Source: Author)

Chapter 5: Site Analysis

Dumbarton Oaks

The Dumbarton Oaks Garden and Institute acts as an insular campus that is closed off to the Georgetown neighborhood to the South and now closed off to the National Parks controlled Dumbarton Oaks Park to the north (Figure 36). The Garden and Institute museums are privately owned and have strictly controlled access. The Park can be accessed any time from the Lovers Lane entrance off R Street. Inside the walls that separate Dumbarton Oaks from the city there is another level of public private separation. The public has limited access to the major section of the gardens and orangery on the eastern side of the site and the two museum galleries on the western side of the site. The western half of the site is closed off from the eastern half for the fellows, researchers, and staff that maintain and operate the site (Figure 37).

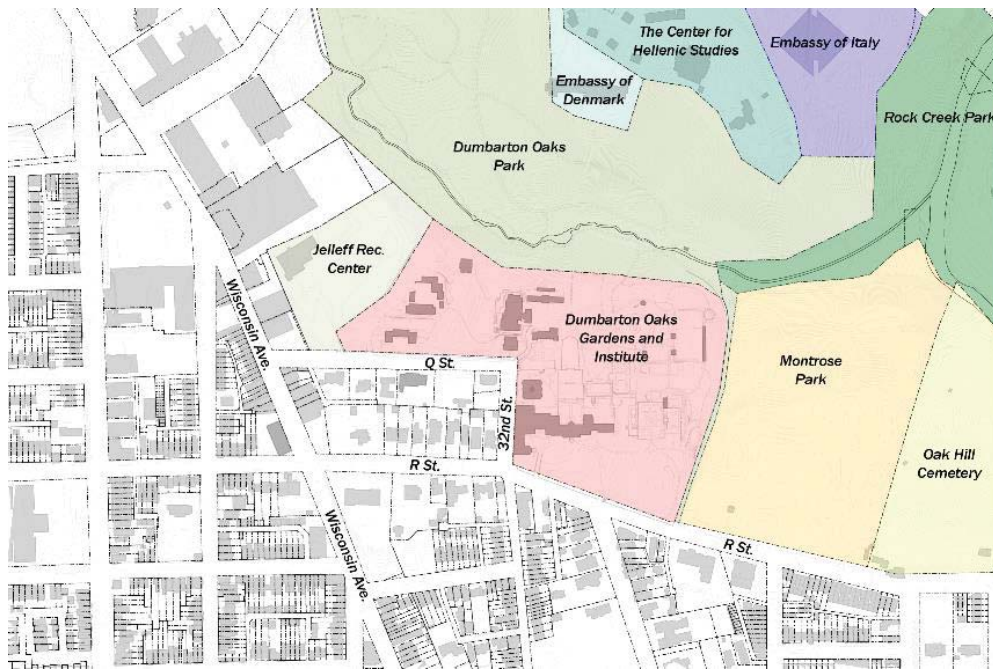


Figure 35 Dumbarton Oaks and Adjacent Property Boundaries (Source: Author)



Figure 36 Site Edges as Barriers: Walls, Fences, and Steep Topography (Source: Author)

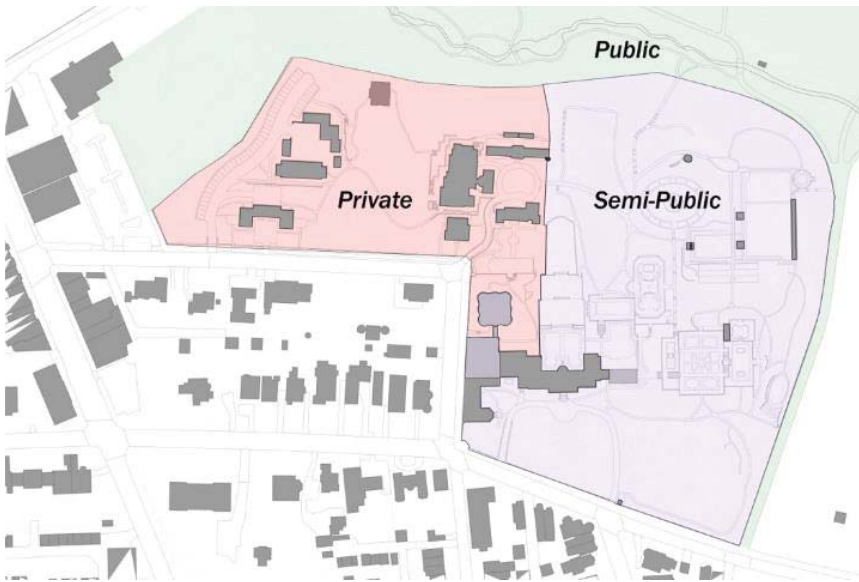


Figure 37 Public/ Private Organization (Source: Author)



Figure 38 Dumbarton Oaks Topography and Spot Elevations (Source: Author)

Chapter 6: Program

Program Objectives

This thesis will explore a counter-proposal to the current Fellow's residence site. The site is currently located on Wisconsin Avenue, apart from the Institute campus. The program is an addition to the existing facilities at Dumbarton Oaks. If needed, it will include reorganized existing programmatic elements and consolidating them within the new facilities. The program will reconsider the Cunningham Quill Fellow's Residential Housing if it were designed all on the Dumbarton Oaks site. The incorporation of fellows residence housing on site give a sense of immersion in the institute and garden, opposed the current dynamic of living in the city and making a short commute to work. There is an opportunity in the western area of the site that is under-designed, used for service, to reimagine use and organization to realize a complete vision for the whole site. The completed architecture and landscape design will aim to connect back to the rest of the site and gardens.

The interior space will house capacity of fellows 25-35 fellows during their fellowship period. Fellows typically stay at Dumbarton Oaks for a full year, but there are other fellowship schedules as well (Figure 39).



Figure 39 Dumbarton Oaks: Yearly Residential Schedule (Source: Author)

The values and spirit of Dumbarton Oaks will serve as the foundation for the proposed design. The completed architecture and landscape design will aim to connect back to the rest of the site and gardens. The following are a series of goals and guidelines for the Fellow’s Residence addition to the Institute.

Embrace the Landscape

Landscape has been an integral part of the site since the Blissés first purchased the property as an oasis within the city. The landscape became the lifetime work of the Blissés and landscape designer Beatrix Farrand, and together they transformed the gardens into what they are today. It is the gardens and landscape make Dumbarton Oaks a truly unique experience. In order to respect the historical

importance that landscape has on the site, had the new addition will continue to treat the landscape with the same reverence.

Create a Stimulating Environment for Research

The institute is ultimately a place for high-level academic research to advance the individuals' humanities. Creating healthy, functional, and productive indoor and outdoor environments for the fellows will be crucial in aiding their research.

Design Buildings of their Time and Place

While the proposed expansion is in context with existing historical buildings at Dumbarton Oaks and the Georgetown neighborhood, the design should be representative of the 21st century. The facilities, when appropriate, should utilize the state-of-art landscape, architectural technologies, and ideas. The spaces will need to reflect cotemporary research needs. The buildings themselves mark the evolution of the institute through time. A design that is contemporary will signal the institutes desire to be relevant in today's society.

The Built and Natural Form have Educational and Humanistic Value

The founding donors, the Blisses, charged the board of trustees "that the house itself and the gardens have their educational importance and that all are of humanistic value"³⁵.

³⁵ "History," Dumbarton Oaks, accessed October 25 2015, <http://www.doaks.org/>.

Respond to the Human Aspects of Life

Be sensitive to the human needs and experience of the daily life of the users.

Graphical Analysis of Program Description Existing Site Program

Existing Program

Dumbarton Oaks Site

The existing proposal area on the western edge of the site is the Gardeners Courtyard, the service court, and parking for the facilities. These spaces are critical to the upkeep and function of the Gardens and Institute and need to be incorporated into the proposal. The following is a table of the existing program of the Gardeners Courtyard.

Room Type		Total SQFT
Service Garage		
3 Truck Garage	22'x41'	902
Large Equipment Storage	45'x32'	1,440
Small Storage	13'x9'	117
Small Storage	13'x9'	117
Tools/Work space	30'x18'	540
Office	14'x20'	280
Bathroom	6'x8'	48
Total		3444
Trash/ Recycling Space		
2 Roll Off Dumpster	24'x34'	880
Trash/ Recycling Space	16'x21'	350
Total		1230
Generator		
Emergency Generator	12'x20'	240
Total		240
Parking		
55 Parking Spots		16000
Total		16000
Mechanical Space		
Mechanical Space	17'x51'	950
Total		950
Courtyard		
Service Access	58'x64'	3200
Total		1900
Total Interior		5864
Total Gross		23764

Figure 40 Existing Gardeners Court Program Table (Source: Author)



Figure 41 Existing Site Program Square-footage (Source: Author)

Existing Off-Site Housing

The existing Dumbarton Oaks Fellows housing is located at 1700 Wisconsin Avenue. It is designed with 25 units, a mix of studio, one bedroom, and two bedroom apartments. The top and bottom floors contain a fitness space, a multipurpose event space, and smaller flexible group spaces.



Figure 42 Existing Dumbarton Oaks Fellows housing typical floor plan³⁶



Figure 43 Existing 1700 Wisconsin Avenue Dumbarton Fellows Housing Square Footage Overlaid on Site (Source: Author)

³⁶ “Fellow’s Housing Plan,” Dumbarton Oaks Fellow’s Housing, accessed November 12, 2015, <http://cunninghamquill.com/2012/dumbarton-oaks-fellows-housing/>.

Detailed Program Description

Residential Units

The residential units are the personal space of the fellows to stay for an academic year, semester, or summer. They contain a bedroom, small kitchen, and eating area. Residential fellowships for an academic year, semester, or summer are awarded. Dumbarton Oaks try's to accommodate couples and small families when they are able to. The units should be primarily one-bedroom and studios but also have two-bedroom units to accommodate fellows with families.

Unit Types

22-Studio Units (550 sqft)

6-2 Bedroom Units (750 sqft)

Kitchen

Eating Area

Support Program Elements

Parking

Mechanical/ Service Space

Fellowship Space

Fellowship Hall (3,800 sqft)

The fellowship hall will be a used daily by the fellows and the guest of institute and be able to hold nightly dinner and lectures. The room will be in used every evening meals and/or lectures and events. The kitchen/cooking area should be

easily accessible. The room should also be designed to adapt to become a space for group discussions and informal meetings. The space should also open up to an exterior space that could be used when the weather permits.

Individual Space

5- Study Pavilions (200 sqft)

The study pavilions are designated for distinguished Fellow's and scholars. They are for a single scholar to have access to for the duration of their stay. They will include interior and exterior space that is private. They should also offer specific views of the surrounding landscape.

Program Precedent Analysis

Smithsonian-Mason School of Conservation- Living and Learning Community

The Smithsonian-Mason School of Conservation is a University and academic research institute, in Front Royal, Virginia near the Shenandoah Valley, focused on biological and land conservation (Figure 44). The University invites researchers and conservation groups to get away from their everyday working lives and use their facilities to conduct research and conferences located in the scenic Virginia countryside. The following is program of rooms that are available.³⁷

³⁷ "Facility Rental Spaces," George Mason University Facilities, accessed October 29, 2015, <http://smconservation.gmu.edu/facility-rental-special-events/room-specifications/>.



Figure 44 The Smithsonian-Mason School of Conservation Campus Aerial View³⁸

³⁸ “Cropped Wide Shot,” WP Content Uploads, accessed November 20, 2015, <http://smconservation.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Cropped-Wide-Shot-1.jpg>.

Room Type		Total SQFT
Academic Center		
General Classroom	30 Seats	92
Computer Classroom	24 Terminals/ 30 Seats	1143
Outdoor Academic Green		608
Total		1235
Housing		
Atrium		1320
Multipurpose Room		673
Study Lounge		1061
Conference Room	6-10 Seats	261
Dining Room	118 Seats	1636
Outdoor Patio		408
Private Room		72
Total		5431
Net Sqft		6666

Figure 45 SMSC Rentable Retreat Program Table (Source: Author)

American Academy in Rome

The American Academy in Rome is research institute that selects 25 fellows each year to study and live at the Academy³⁹. The Academy has the capacity to host twenty-five fellows, four in sculpture, six in painting, six in architecture, and the remaining seven in archeology, art history, and classical studies.

³⁹“About,” American Academy in Rome, accessed October 29, 2015, <http://www.aarome.org/>.

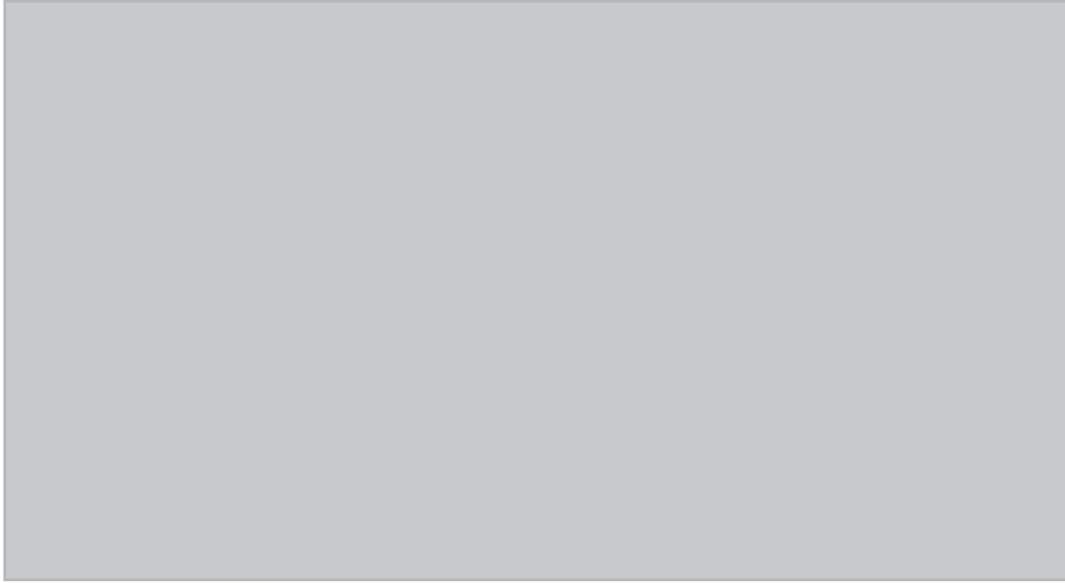


Figure 46 The American Academy of Rome- Second Floor Plan⁴⁰

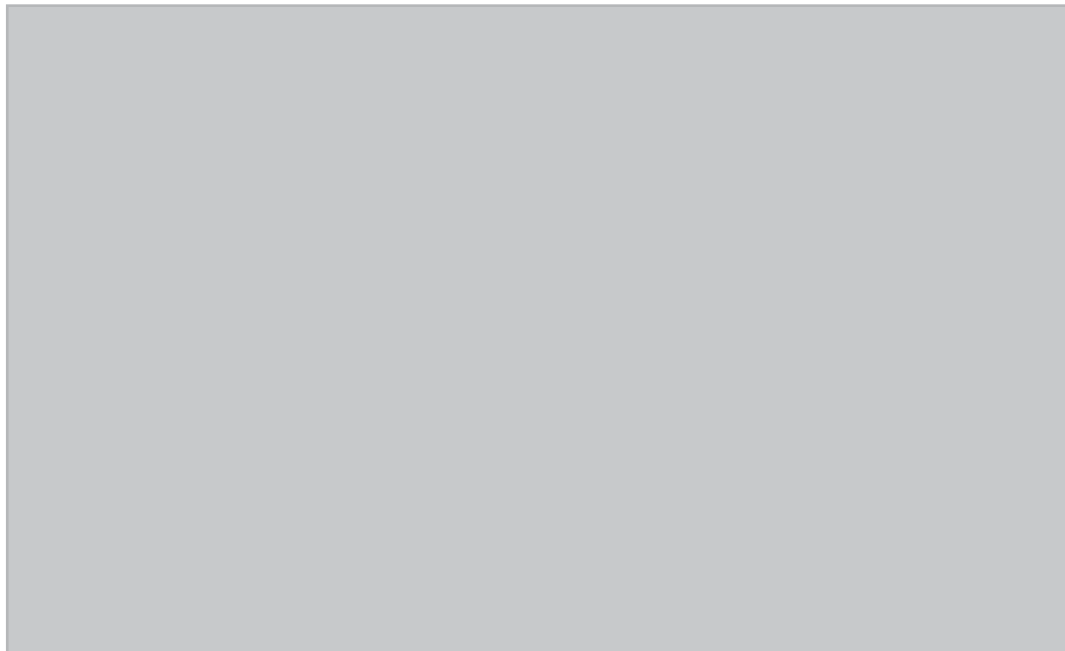


Figure 47 The American Academy of Rome- First Floor Plan⁴¹

⁴⁰ Samuel White, Elizabeth White, and Jonathan Wallen, *McKim, Mead & White: The Masterworks* (New York: Rizzoli, 2003)

⁴¹ Samuel White, Elizabeth White, and Jonathan Wallen, *McKim, Mead & White: The Masterworks* (New York: Rizzoli, 2003)

Room Type	Dimension (LxH)	Square Footage (sqft)	Number of Rooms	Total SQFT
Residence				
Small Bedroom	13'x21'	273	7	1911
Small Bedroom 2	15'x16'	240	12	2880
Large Bedroom	26'x13'	338	2	676
Medium Bedroom	22'x16'	352	3	1056
Medium Bedroom 2	24'x14'	336	6	2016
Total			30	8539
Dining				
Dining Hall	26'x 46'	1196	1	1196
Vestibule	15'x23'	345	1	345
Serving Room	15'x23'	345	1	345
Pantry	30'x26'	780	1	780
Total			4	5286
Studio Spaces				
Architects Studio				
Large	25'x25'	625	2	1250
Medium	20'x25'	500	3	1500
Small	25'x15'	300	2	600
Sculpture Studio	30'x30'	900	4	3600
Painting Studio				
Total			11	6950
Study				
Personal Study	9'x12'	108	7	756
Total			18	7706
Library				
Main	75'x30'	2250	1	2250
Upper	75'x30'	2250	1	2250
Architects	25'x30'	750	1	750
Artist Librarian	10'x15'	150	1	150
Librarian	8'x15'	120	1	120
Total			5	5520
Museum				
Archeology	30'x30'	900	1	900
Cast	30'x30'	900	1	900
Total			2	1800
Common Space				
Open Court	60'x85'	5100	1	5100
Forecourt	105'x180'	15300	1	15300
Common Room Large	28'x33'	924	1	924
Common Room Small	28'x25'	700	1	700
Total			4	22024
Net Sqft				57825
Gross Sqft				
	Ground Floor			48600
	Second Floor			28200
	Third Floor			6600
Total				83400
Efficiency				69%

Figure 48 The American Academy in Rome Program Table (Source: Author)

The Inn at Middleton Place

The Inn at Middleton Place is a residence located near historic Middleton Place, a mansion ruin that burned down, that has been preserved in South Carolina.



Figure 49 Middleton Place Square Footage Overlaid on Site (Source: Author)

Room Type	Dimension (LxH)	Square Footage (sqft)	Number of Rooms	Total SQFT
Residence				
Bedroom	30'x27'	810	24	19440
Bathroom/Changing	35'x13'	455	24	10920
Total			48	30360
Common Space				
Lodge	65'x60'	3900	1	3900
Fire Place Lodge	20'x30'	600	1	600
Second Floor	50'x45'	2250	1	2250
Lodge Terrace	65'x15'+ 15'x50'	1725	1	1725
Total			4	8475
Net Sqft				38835
Gross Sqft				
	Ground Floor			14,620
	Second Floor			14620
	Third Floor			10,120
Total				39360
Efficiency				99%

Figure 50 Middleton Place Inn Program Table (Source: Author)

Chapter 7: Design Approach

Design

The orientation of the fellowship hall and fellow's residences were aligned and placed in relation to the existing buildings and property lines. Their positioning maintains a service court to the south and defines the edge of landscaped spaces the north and east. The small study pavilions are positioned at the edge of the Dell area along the natural curve of the contour (Figure 51).



Figure 51 Proposed Plan- Location and Orientation of Buildings (Source: Author)

The design uses principles that were extracted from the existing Dumbarton Oaks garden to inform the competed design. The principles of The Formal and the Natural, Panorama and Framed Views, and The Individual and Communal were design themes used in the proposed design to link them to the existing Dumbarton Oaks gardens and institute.

The Formal and the Natural are seen in the current Dumbarton Oaks in the variety of type of landscapes that change from formal very close the house, including the Terraces and the North Vista out to more naturalistic designed landscapes such as Cherry Hill or the Forsythia Dell located further from the house. The proposed design uses these principles similarly in the design of more formal spaces near the Fellow's residence like the plaza and fellow's terraces compared to the naturalistic environment of the hillside of the Dell located further from the residence (Figure 52).



Figure 52 Location of Formal and Natural spaces of the Plaza and the Dell in relation to the Fellow's residents (Source: Author)

The existing Dumbarton Oaks gardens have spaces that have broad vistas and other spaces that are intimate framed views. The North Vista and Green Terrace overlook are two expansive spaces found in Dumbarton Oaks in contrast to the Lovers Lane Pool and the Herbaceous Border that are designed at an intimate scale and have framed views. The proposed design also uses these types of spaces like the Fellow's Lawn that has a panoramic view over the landscape to the north and the study pavilions which give framed views north of the Dell (Figure 53)



Figure 53 Proposed Panoramic and Framed Views (Source: Author)

The theme of the individual and the communal are found throughout the current space of Dumbarton Oaks. The refectory and the North Vista are spaces that host large groups. There are also a few garden benches placed through the garden that allow a single person to have an intimate moment. The proposed design too, has these types of spaces in the Fellowship Hall and Fellow's Lawn to be place of communal

gathering. The study pavilions and forecourt garden are intimate spaces for an individual to retreat to (Figure 54).



Figure 54 Location of Proposed Communal and Individual Spaces (Source: Author)

Overall the proposal reconnects the daily life of a fellow with the landscape and nature. Revitalizing the activities to a portion of Dumbarton Oaks that is currently only used for servicing the property. The variety of both individual and fellowship space allow the fellows to have a balance of time to focus and contemplate their own work as and to collaborate and share knowledge through formal and informal way (Figure 55).



Figure 55 Aerial View from the North (Source: Author)

A typical day in-the-life a fellow in the proposed design starts in the Fellow's residence. The residence is oriented with the transparent facade out towards the landscape with a panoramic view putting the individual in a relationship with the landscape from the start of the day (Figure 56).



Figure 56 View of Landscape from Residence (Source: Author)

As a Fellow leaves their residence they can congregate in the Plaza to have informal meeting with their colleagues. The Plaza is a formal space, planted with a regular grid of trees that frame the view out across the Dell toward the library (Figure 57)



Figure 57 View from Plaza across the Dell (Source: Author)

The majority of a Fellow's day is spent in their study, writing, and researching their specific topic. Distinguished scholars and Fellow's would be assigned to one of the special study pavilions that are oriented to contour of the Dell. They are designed for one scholar with a small forecourt garden that gives a private exterior space and separates it from the path. The pavilions frame a view out to the landscape down the Dell (Figure 58).



Figure 58 Interior of Study Pavilion (Source: Author)

The end of each day culminates in a dinner meal at The Fellowship Hall. This is a new tradition to a Fellow's daily routine that's sets aside time for Fellows to gather daily and share a meal together around a single communal table and get to know each other personally and professionally. This addition to the routine will strengthen the identity of Dumbarton Oaks. The Fellowship Hall connects to the landscape both through a series of doors that open up to the Fellow's Lawn to the east and to a small patio to the North (Figure 59)



Figure 59 Fellowship Hall (Source: Author)

In conclusion the design integrates a variety of contemplative and fellowship spaces that are engaged with the surrounding landscape. The proposed plan reactivates a previously underutilized section of the Dumbarton Oaks property through relocating fellows housing and new series of interconnected gardens that relate to principles derived in the iconic Dumbarton Oaks. The residences, the study pavilion, the fellowship hall, and the landscape combine to create a new daily engaged with the landscape.

Appendix A

*Dumbarton Oaks Design History Timeline*⁴²

- 1801** William Hammond Dorsey built the original house
- 1920** Mildred and Robert Bliss acquire the property
- 1923** Frederick Brooke - Hired to restore mansion to original condition in
- 1921** He was fired when his designs were not pleasing to the Blisses
- 1923-1928** McKim Mead White - Greenhouse, Orangery, Woodshed, Gardeners Cottage, Refectory, Music Room, Founders Room, Main House Renovations, Swimming Pool Loggia
- 1923** Beatrix Farrand – Begins design on gardens and landscape
- 1930** Armand Albert Rateau - Redesign founders room and oval salon
- 1940** House, collection, and gardens donated to Harvard University
- 1942** Thomas Waterman – Designed museum wing, library reading room.
- 1946** Gallery constructed
- 1948** Beatrix Farrand steps down as head landscape architect at Dumbarton Oaks.
- 1963** Philip Johnson - Designed the pre Columbia pavilion museum
- 1964** Frederic Rhinelanders King - Designed garden library and rare book room
- 1987** George Hartman - Designed Byzantine Courtyard Gallery

⁴² “History,” Dumbarton Oaks, accessed October 25 2015, <http://www.doaks.org/>.

2005 Robert Venturi- - Designed the Gardeners Lodge and Greenhouse court
library

2012 Cunningham Quill - New 25 unit fellows housing on 1700 Wisconsin
Avenue

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