



**Recommendations for
The Luke Miller House
and Adjoining Property
Madison, New Jersey**

Historic Landscape Preservation Case Study

Drew University's Historic Preservation Program

March, 2006



The Course

Historic Landscape Preservation: History, Theory, and Methods

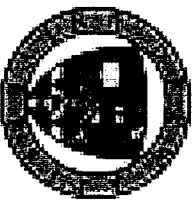
A survey of American landscape history from the colonial period to the present. An exploration of theories of design, influences from abroad, and the people and places that shaped the discipline. In a case study using the Luke Miller House in Madison and through slide lectures, videos, and field trips, students learn the principles of recreating and preserving gardens for historic sites.



The Students

Ten students with a wide variety of backgrounds participated in the program, including historic preservation professionals, an engineer, an architect, a librarian and an interior designer. They are:

Andrew Bater
Margaret Kearns
Deidre Kravec
Mary Montray
Karl Nichol
Bob Pelligrini
Bill Schroh
Bill Smith
Mark Texel
Bernita Waller



The Project

Each student researched the history of the Luke Miller property and the appropriate landscape treatments for the period of significance, 1750-1800. Student projects are assembled into a complete binder, provided to the Historic Preservation Commission.

The student recommendations are creative and cover a broad range of issues. The instructor, Marta McDowell, has selected among those recommendations and presents in this summary those that are, in her opinion, the highest priority for the Borough of Madison and the property owner to consider.

The Property



Photo from the HABS Survey, 1936 (Note that the oldest extant image found is dated 1894.)

Located at 105 Ridgedale Avenue, the house is in the Bottle Hill Historic District and on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places. And yes, George Washington was here. He visited during the Loantaka Valley Encampment of the Revolutionary War in the winter of 1777. Local lore says George's horse was shod at the forge.

The period of significance for the project was set at 1750-1800.



Ridgedale Avenue Frontage and Forge

Recommendations for Ridgedale Avenue and Forge

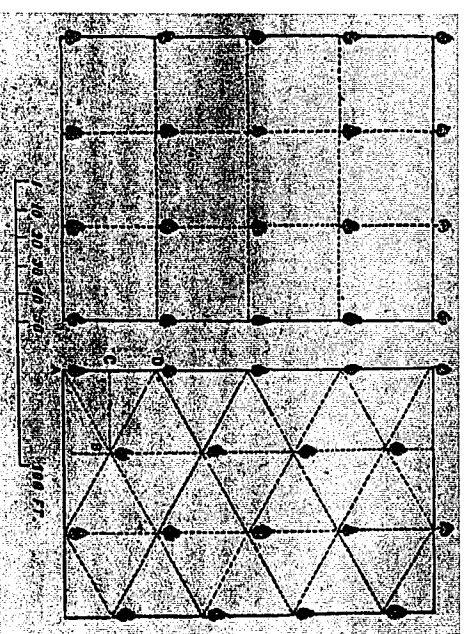
- Ridgedale Avenue Frontage
 - Remove junipers and replace with low-growing, period-appropriate ground covers such as thyme (*Thymus spp.*), mountain pinks (*Dianthus*), sweet woodruff (*Galanthus odorus*), lady's mantle (*Alchemilla mollis*) and spring bulbs.
 - Remove boxwood.
 - Repair fence. Consider replacing with natural cedar if the house colors are changed.
 - Repair sidewalk.
 - Put utility lines underground.
- Forge
 - Remove all shrubbery, trellising and exterior additions such as light fixture and storm door.
 - Add interpretive signage.

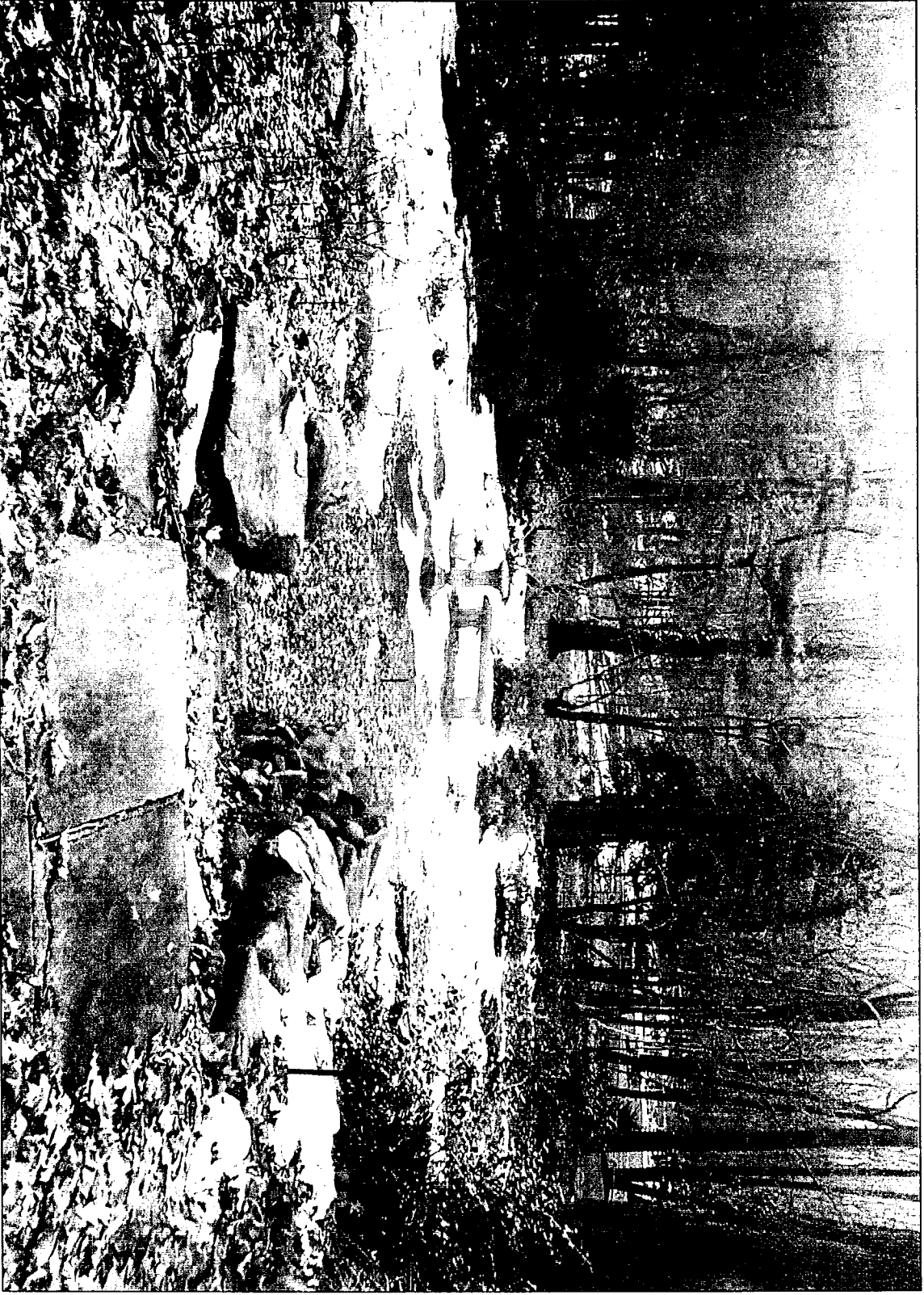


Front of the House (Northwest)

Recommendations for the Front of the House

- Remove boxwoods and yew. At the northwest corner of the house, consider planting a lilac or a bridalwreath spirea.
- Cover air conditioning unit with non-descript trellising.
- When the house is in need of paint, consider getting a historic exterior analysis of shingles and paint, or using one of the color schemes suggested.
- Remove blue spruce.
- Consider a small orchard of five crabapples planted in a quincunx, possibly as a replacement for the magnolia.

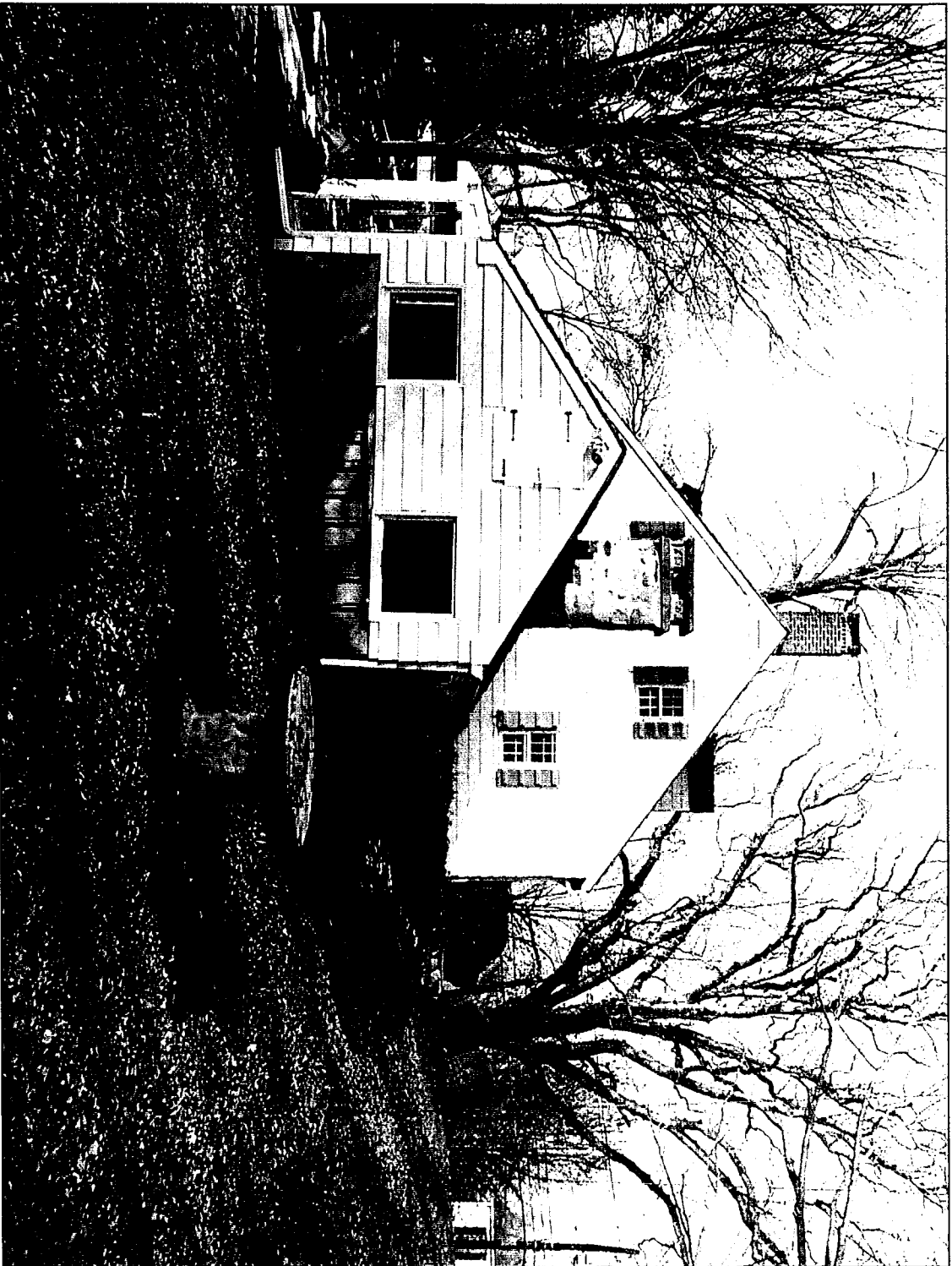




The “Sunken Garden”: South side of the house

Recommendations for the south side of the house

- Remove climbing euonymus from shade trees.
- Remove invasive species such as Norway maples and pachysandra.
- Replace blacktop with a rolled, pea gravel surface.
- Remove modern features such as pond and ornaments such as statuary.
- Create a small kitchen garden on the terrace near the house patterned after the Tempe Wick Garden.
- Replace the stacked bluestone walls with fieldstone retaining walls.
- Create a small, symmetrical herb garden in the sunken area around the sundial.
- Remove the dog run.



Back of the Property and Interface to Summerhill

Recommendations for the Interface to Summerhill Park

- Create a path from Central Avenue. Consider creating additional parking on Central Avenue side of the park.
- Clear an area for sledding and snowboarding.
- Use the main parking/picnic area for the Madison Farmers' Market during the High School construction project.
- Add more interpretive signage.

The Instructor



Marta McDowell is a garden consultant specializing in historic landscapes. She teaches landscape history at the New York Botanical Garden and Drew University, and works in the restored gardens at Reeves-Reed Arboretum in Summit, NJ. She is currently working on an interpretive plan for the Emily Dickinson Museum's landscape in Amherst, Massachusetts.

Questions about the recommendations?

Contact Marta at 973/635-5658 or

mm@criso.net.