



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Historic Resources

Molly Joseph Ward
Secretary of Natural Resources

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Director

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July 24, 2017

Fred Missel
Director of Design & Development
University of Virginia Foundation
PO Box 400218
Charlottesville, VA 22904

Dear Mr. Missel:

We appreciate your interest in our opinion regarding the proposed Golf Practice Building at the Birdwood Golf Course. I am writing to confirm the points discussed during our conference call on Thursday, July 13th. DHR has commented on a previous design for a practice facility, when invited to review by Albemarle County Planner Margaret Maliszewski, in 2015. We had indicated, in that previous review, that the 2015 proposal would not impact the property's eligibility for the state/federal registers. DHR works regularly with the University of Virginia under the State Environmental Review Process (SERP) where property is state owned. In those cases, our staff applies the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (SOIS/and occasionally, the Standards for Restoration) in a very direct manner. We are invited into the process early, and we have purview over the designs as they develop. Our agency has a seat on the Art and Architectural Review Board (AARB under the Department of General Services). In this case, Birdwood is owned by the University of Virginia Foundation. The Foundation is not subject to SERP or review by the AARB. Our recommendations in this case, as it would be with any private steward of a register listed property, are informal and are meant to provide guidance and encouragement that will result in retaining the state/federal listing. In these informal recommendations, we keep the SOIS in mind, but the ultimate goal is to support the eligibility of the property. In our discussions with the County and with the Foundation, on this matter, we make clear that the eligibility bar is a case by case matter and not a strict application of the SOIS. For Birdwood, we might recommend removing the property from the registers, if the house were severely remodeled: interior alterations and incompatible additions; or if, for instance, large-scaled imposing buildings or a housing development were planned within the generally rural designed landscape (especially inside the listed boundary). In some cases, a remedy can be reduction of boundaries for incompatible redevelopment or loss of significant secondary resources or setting, and not full removal from the registers.

DHR reviewed the Foundation-provided renderings, a site plan and project area photos. We also reviewed the DHR archive file on Birdwood (DHR#002-0003), containing documentation, photos, articles, notes that date as far back as 1968. I asked Adrienne Birge-Wilson, Architectural Historian for State Review to review the materials with me before we had a conference call with Foundation. In addition to considering Foundation-submitted materials, we also reviewed the 2003 nomination and used DHR GIS aerials and Google aerial views. Our recommendation for the Foundation on how the proposed project would impact the eligibility of Birdwood:

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The proposed building will not compromise the site's eligibility and current individual listing on the Virginia Landmark Register and National Register of Historic Places:

The new construction is planned behind the historic carriage house and maintains a low profile; the roof gables are lower than the historic building's gable roof.

The connection between new construction and the rear of the carriage house is minimized; we recommended as much reversibility as possible on this connection (the least wall penetration or demolition on the Carriage House), even giving thought to making it an open air or glass causeway.

We found the board and batten siding on the new construction to be an acceptable fabric; within the vernacular architectural vocabulary for an agricultural site. The scale and form of the complex was compatible, due to the drop in the rear elevation and the simple design.

Overall the design was more compatible than the 2015 design. The current approach appears to be less of a direct visual impact on the house than the 2015 design, based on what we have reviewed previously (documentation provided by the County to us in 2015).

The proposed adaptive reuse of the historical structures is a benefit to the site:

We applaud the idea of putting the historic buildings back into service. The carriage house is a wonderful designed building and bringing attention to it for this use may extend its life, as well as the small shop building and silo. These buildings will be more of a showcase for visitors. In addition to what we said during the conference call we assume/hope that the buildings will get more attention, maintenance. Historic tile silos are fragile—the Birdwood silo may require need some stabilization. There is also the possibility that the brick dairy barn (not part of this project, but in the project area) could be used more actively for storage, possibly for golf carts—also extending its longevity.

The proposed parking layout and screening methods are acceptable:

We realize that parking lot siting is always a challenge for a multiple-vehicle facility. We found the design acceptable if the site plan accurately shows the trees and the hedge screening that are planned or that are planned to be retained. We recommended that as many of the older trees be retained as is possible.

Archaeological monitoring during site work construction would be beneficial:

We expressed concern about how the construction might impact potential archaeology. The areas in the rear of plantation houses often have sites relating to service buildings; quarters for enslaved Africans; kitchens; smokehouses, livestock buildings; granaries; offices; overseer's houses, and potentially, as you get a little further from the dwelling, cemeteries. The Foundation stated that they will have Archaeologist Ben Ford/Rivanna Archaeology on site monitoring excavation at critical points. We are comfortable with this approach.

Adrienne and I discussed the design of the parking lot after the conference call and we propose a possible design consideration; the parking lot could be surfaced in grasscrete (plastic or concrete). The grasscrete would have positive visual enhancements and would be cooler than asphalt (less likely an impact on new and retained trees).

Overall, we were satisfied that the new construction would not impose itself significantly to alter the historic feeling of Birdwood. We believe that if the practice facility is built as planned, it will not trigger our need to reconsider the eligibility of the Birdwood listing.

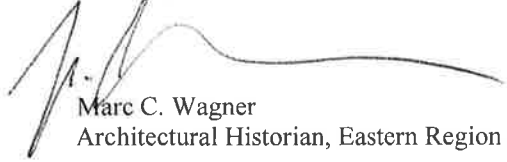
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Please feel free to follow up with me as needed. We appreciate the Foundation's interest in our opinion and our technical advice.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Marc C. Wagner', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Marc C. Wagner
Architectural Historian, Eastern Region Office

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