

August 7, 2017

Albemarle County Planning Commission
401 McIntire Rd, Charlottesville, VA 22902**Birdwood Rehabilitation**

Dear Commissioners:

I appreciate the opportunity to provide background information on the proposed design for the rehabilitation of the Birdwood property. The groundwork for our rehabilitation process has included:

1. Professional documentation and analysis of the historic property
2. Commitment to the Secretary of the Interior's Rehabilitation Standards for the treatment of the landscape
3. Evaluation of multiple design options for their impacts on the historic landscape

Documentation and Analysis

The University of Virginia Foundation hired my firm in 2015 to undertake a historic landscape study for the Birdwood property, based on my 20 years of experience as a historical landscape architect and preservation planner. The resulting report synthesized information from the National Register of Historic Places nomination (2003) for the property; the University's own historic landscape documentation for the mansion and farm; Historic American Building Survey (HABS) data; and primary sources such as historic aerial photographs. The report documented the property's contributing and character-defining features and outlined general preservation guidelines for the protection of historic resources. The recommendations contained in the report are consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* and address the long-term stewardship of landscape characteristics and features such as topography, spatial organization, vegetation, views, circulation systems, and buildings.

Rehabilitation Standards

The information in the report has guided our proposal for the rehabilitation of the historic garage, granary, and silo buildings as part of the design for a new UVA golf program facility. The resulting plan preserves the Birdwood property's contributing resources including historic buildings, the road, and historic vegetation (both vegetation patterns and individual specimens). The proposed facility's direct driveway connection to Golf Course Drive minimizes vehicular impacts to the historic core of the landscape.

The introduction of new paved parking to a historic landscape is often one of the most challenging aspects of a site's rehabilitation. Views of parked cars are rarely desirable, yet are a feature of contemporary life that often accompanies compatible new uses of a historic property. We believe the proposed design for the golf facility parking identified as Option C is compatible with the historic character of the property. Although the view between the Birdwood mansion and the garage/granary/silo has never been identified as a primary or significant characteristic of the landscape, Option C minimizes the impacts of the new parking on this view. For example, the proposed design preserves large historic trees around the parking area and could include a low topographic berm (or "ha ha") and naturalized plantings to screen the parking from the mansion. New compatible vegetation and topographic modifications that subtly screen parking areas are appropriate rehabilitation options; therefore, we believe that the design meets the



requirements of general preservation practice. Virginia Department of Historic Resources has concurred by advising that the proposed parking and screening are acceptable treatments.

Design Options

Several other design options were also put forth. While these options provide some distance between the proposed parking and the mansion, they also affect historic resources by altering topography, requiring tree removal, or impeding views towards the historic building ensemble at the garage/granary/silo/barn. While these options likely satisfy the rehabilitation standards for historic landscape treatment in many respects, they may have other impacts on views along Golf Course Drive or on pedestrian access to the proposed golf facility.

I am grateful for the chance to have worked with the Albemarle County planners during this design project and trust that our extensive analysis and evaluation process will result in a plan that the county can support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Rachel Lloyd".

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