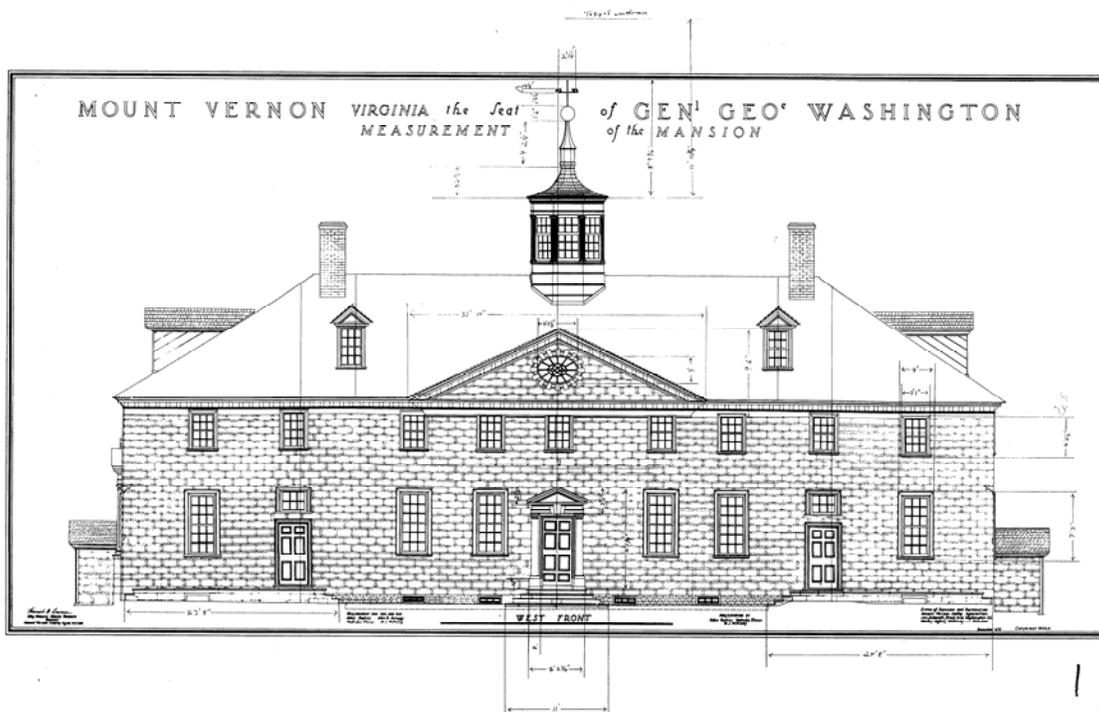


*George Washington's*  
**MOUNT VERNON**  
ESTATE & GARDENS

APPLICATION FOR INCLUSION  
ON THE  
U.S. WORLD HERITAGE TENTATIVE LIST



*George Washington's*  
**MOUNT VERNON**  
ESTATE & GARDENS

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*George Washington's*  
**MOUNT VERNON**  

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**ESTATE & GARDENS**

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# Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens, Mount Vernon, Virginia

## Prerequisites for U.S. World Heritage Nominations

### Prerequisite 1 - Legal Requirements:

#### A. National Significance:

Has the property been formally determined to be nationally significant for its cultural values, natural values, or both (in other words, has it been formally designated as a National Historic Landmark, a National Natural Landmark, or as a Federal reserve of national importance, such as a National Park, National Monument, or National Wildlife Refuge)? If not, are there on-going processes to achieve any of the above designations and what is their status? (*Listing in the National Register of Historic Places is not equivalent to National Historic Landmark status.*)

YES:   X                      NO: \_\_\_\_\_

Comment: The property was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1960.

#### B. Owner Concurrence:

Are all the property owners aware of this proposal for the inclusion of the property in the U.S. Tentative List and do all of the property owners agree that it should be considered? If any agreement is uncertain or tentative, or if the ownership situation is disputed, otherwise complicated, or unclear, please explain the issues briefly.

YES:   X                      NO: \_\_\_\_\_

Comment: Estate owned by the Mount Vernon Ladies Association of the Union

#### C. Willingness to Discuss Protective Measures:

If the property is nominated to the World Heritage List, it will be necessary for all of the property owners to work with the Department of the Interior to document fully existing measures to protect the property and possibly to devise such additional measures as may be necessary to protect the property in perpetuity. Are all the property owners willing to enter into such discussions?

YES:  X  NO: \_\_\_\_\_

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

### **D. Scheduling:**

If you wish a property to be nominated to the World Heritage List in a particular year during the period 2009-2019, please indicate the reason(s) why and the earliest year in which you feel it will be possible to meet all requirements for nomination. *(Please review this entire **Questionnaire** before finally answering this question.)*

Preferred Year: No particular year

Reasons: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Prerequisite 2 - Specific Requirements for Nomination of Certain Types of Properties:**

#### **E. Serial (multi-component) Properties:**

If you are proposing a nomination that includes separate components that could be submitted separately over several years, do you believe that the first property proposed would qualify to be placed on the World Heritage List in its own right?

*Explanation: There will be a very limited number of sites nominated over the next decade. Owners of similar properties likely will be encouraged to work together to present joint proposals for serial nominations. An example would be a proposal to nominate several properties designed by the same architect. It is critical to note that the first property presented in a serial nomination must qualify for listing in its own right.*

YES: \_\_\_\_\_ NO: \_\_\_\_\_

Comment:  NA  \_\_\_\_\_

—

#### **F. Serial (multi-component) Properties:**

Are you proposing this property as an extension of or a new component to an existing World Heritage Site?

YES: \_\_\_\_\_ NO  X \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Existing Site: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Prerequisite 3 - Other Requirements:**

### **G. Support of Stakeholders**

In addition to owners, please list other stakeholders and interested parties who support the property's proposed inclusion in the Tentative List. Also note any known to be opposed.

Supporters: \_\_\_\_\_

Opponents: NONE KNOWN \_\_\_\_\_

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

## Executive Summary

State Party: United States

State, Province or Region: South End of George Washington Memorial Parkway  
Mount Vernon, Virginia

Name of Property: George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens

### Geographical Coordinates:

UTM Coordinates 18 317717 E 4285428 N  
18 317717 E 4287185 N  
18 319191 E 4287527 N  
18 320034 E 4286423 N

38.70792 Latitude 77.0861 Longitude

### Textual Description:

Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens consists of a 202 ha. (500 a.) tract located in Mount Vernon, Virginia, eight miles south of the city of Alexandria, adjoining the Potomac River to the east and surrounded on three sides by residential development. The historic core of the property is roughly 20 ha. (50 a.) in extent, and is positioned within the larger tract so as to be effectively buffered from modern development.

### Letter size maps (See attached):

Identification of property, globally and nationally	Page 10
Identification of property boundaries	Page 11
Identification of Extant 18 <sup>th</sup> century structures on property	Page 12
Aerial of 18 <sup>th</sup> century landscape on property	Page 13

### Justification Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:

George Washington's home and the associated gardens and grounds together form a remarkably well preserved example of an evolved cultural landscape of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century American south that may well be unique in its high level of documentation.

As a consequence of the site's association with the life of George Washington, one of the most famous men in world history as well as in the history of the United States, Mount Vernon was acquired by the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association in 1858, and since 1860 it has been open to the public. Over the years, Mount Vernon has become both an

international icon of colonial architecture and a catalyst for the preservation of historic structures in America and around the world.

Criteria under which Property is Nominated:

- iv. An outstanding example of a type of building and a landscape which illustrate a significant stage in human history;
- vi. That is tangibly associated with events and ideas of outstanding universal significance.

Name and Contact Information of Official Local Institution:

The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union  
South End of George Washington Memorial Parkway  
Mount Vernon, Virginia 22121  
703-799-8625  
703-799-8670  
[dpogue@mountvernon.org](mailto:dpogue@mountvernon.org)  
[www.mountvernon.org](http://www.mountvernon.org)

# 1. Identification of the Property:

The Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens consists of a tract @202 ha. (500 a.) in size, located along the Potomac River, approximately eight miles south of the city of Alexandria, in Fairfax County, Virginia. Mount Vernon is open to the public 365 days each year, and is accessible via private and public transportation by the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. From April through October visitors also may reach Mount Vernon via boat service from Washington, DC, and Alexandria.

The property is a remnant of the @324 ha. (8,000 a.) plantation assembled by George Washington between 1754 and 1786. The current property conforms to what was historically identified as the “Mansion House Farm,” which made up the core of the plantation where the Washington family lived, along with almost 100 enslaved workers who served as house servants and craftsmen. As such, the property encompasses all of the structures and activities that were carried out at the Mansion House Farm.

## 1a. Country:

The United States of America

## 1.b. State:

Virginia

## 1.c. Name of Property:

George Washington’s Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens

## 1.d. Geographical Coordinates:

UTM Coordinates	18 317717 E	4285428 N
	18 317717 E	4287185 N
	18 319191 E	4287527 N
	18 320034 E	4286423 N

38.70792 Latitude 77.0861 Longitude

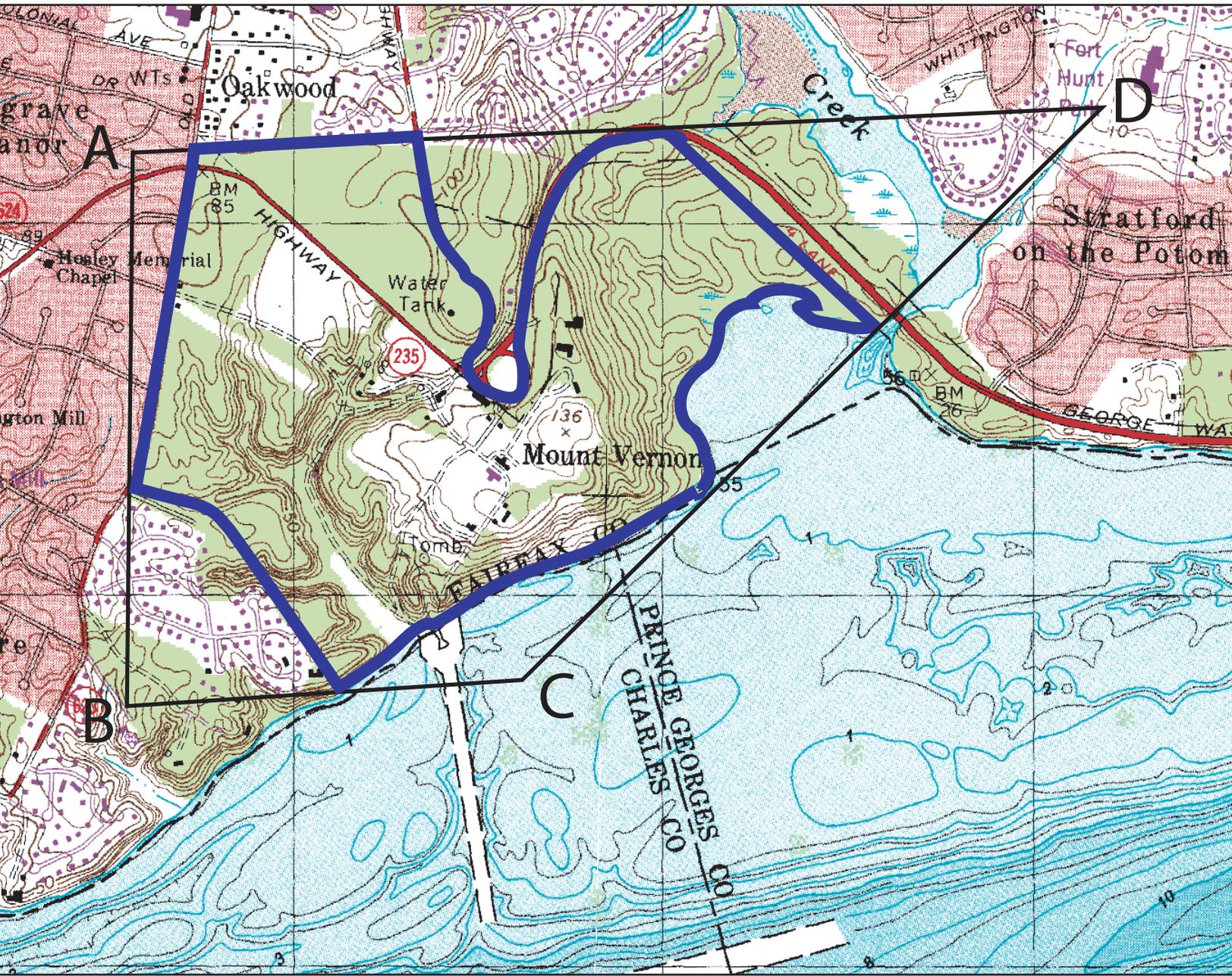
## 1.e. Maps and Plans (See attached):

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Aerial of 18 <sup>th</sup> century landscape on property	Page 13

## 1.f. Area of Nominated Property:

202 ha. (500 a.)

# Boundaries, Mount Vernon, Virginia, U.S



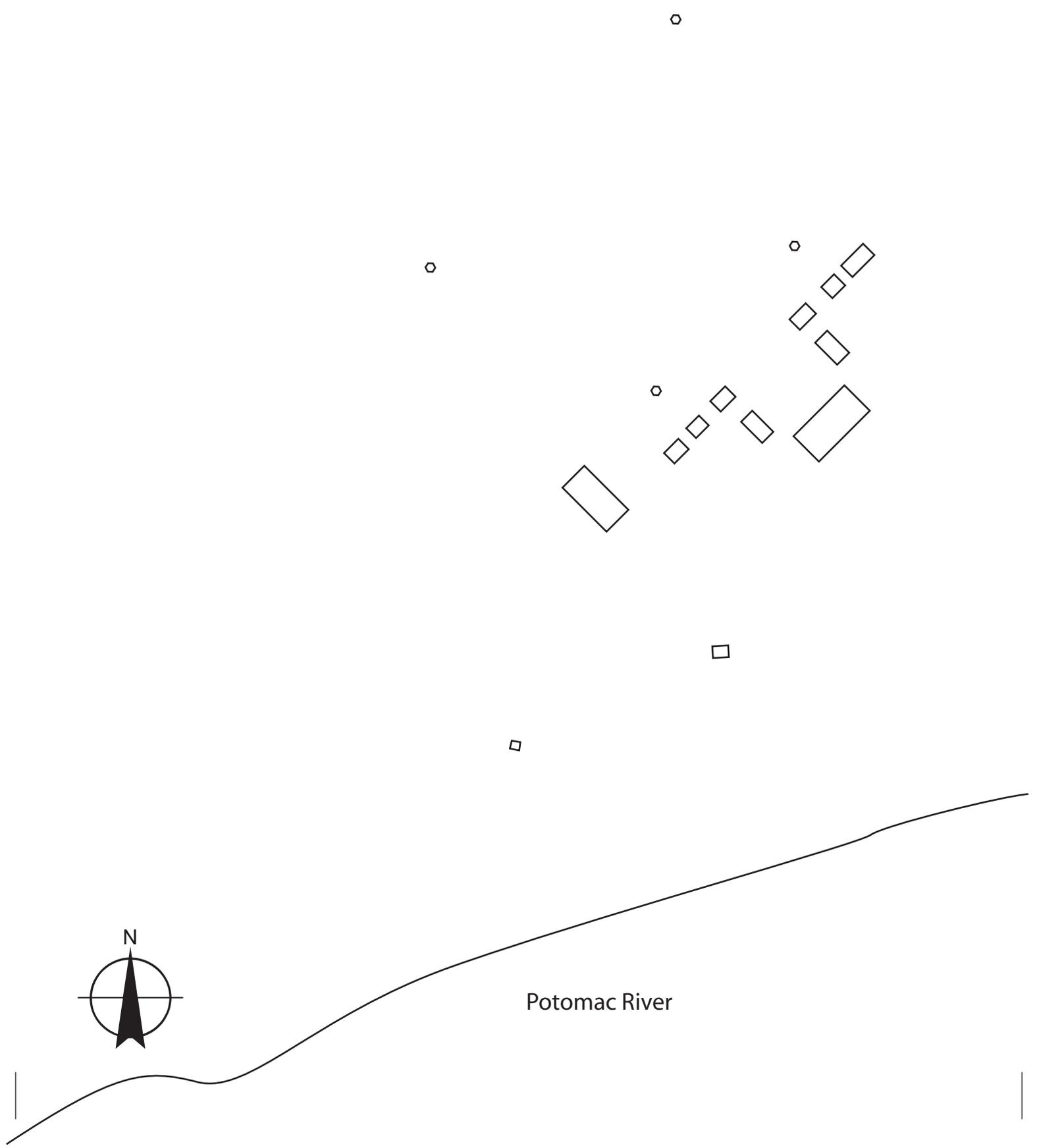
U.S.G.S. 1:24K Series, Mount Vernon, Va. (1983)

UTM References:

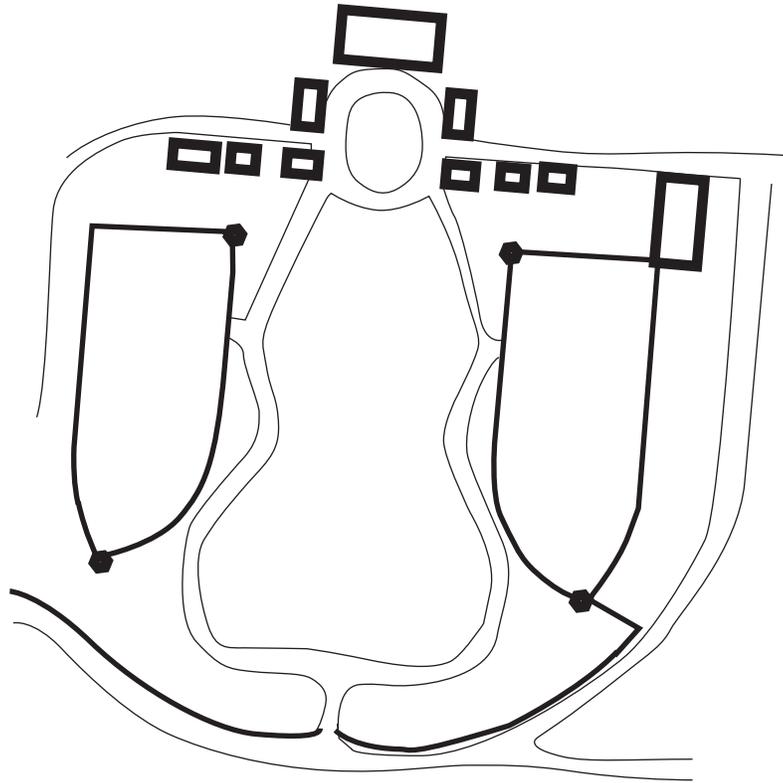
- (A) 18 320034 E 4286423 N
- (B) 18 319191 E 4287527 N
- (C) 18 317717 E 4287185 N
- (D) 18 317717 E 4285428 N



# Extant 18th Century Structures, Mount Vernon, Virginia, U.S.



# 18th Century Landscape, Mount Vernon, Virginia, U.S.



## 2. Description:

### 2.a. Description of Property:

The property consists of a core of 16 surviving 18<sup>th</sup>-century structures situated within a cultural landscape of associated gardens, fences, lanes, walkways, and other features. The mission of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association is to preserve the surviving Washington-era resources and to present and interpret the estate as it existed in 1799, the year of George Washington's death. Certain structures and other features that did not survive have been reconstructed based on data provided by extensive archaeological excavations and a rich body of documentary evidence. The "historic core" of the property is contained within an area that is roughly 20 ha. (50 a.) in size and has been identified as the main locus of occupation and activity at the Mansion House Farm. The surviving 18<sup>th</sup>-century structures consist of the Mansion, the kitchen, the servant's hall, the gardener's house, the salt house, the spinning house, the store house, the smoke house, the wash house, the stable, the ice house, the original tomb, and four garden buildings (two necessaries and two seed houses). While 19<sup>th</sup> century in construction the tomb where the Washington's are interred represents another significant resource. Non-extant 18<sup>th</sup>-century structures that have been reconstructed are the greenhouse-slave quarter complex (burned in 1835, reconstructed in 1950-51), the coach house (burned in 1845, reconstructed in 1894), and the dung repository (demolished by ca. 1820, reconstructed in 2001). Landscape features that survive consist of the upper and lower gardens, the east lawn, the bowling green, ha-ha walls, and the north and south lanes. The vineyard inclosure originally was established in 1786 and it was recreated in 1996 based primarily on the findings from extensive archaeological excavations. The assemblage of structures and the associated gardens and grounds evoke the appearance of the site at the time of George Washington's death in 1799.

A 1.6-ha. (four-a.) parcel has been created (in 1996) as an interpretive feature to portray agricultural activities that were carried out at Mount Vernon in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. A treading barn and four associated structures and a barn yard have been reconstructed, based on intensive documentary research. The buildings and six fields where crops are grown are located outside of the historic core, in an area where a swamp had existed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The property has been open to visitors continuously since 1860, and a variety of service-oriented facilities have been constructed over the years to support the visitor experience. The main structures consist of an orientation center, an education center, and a retail center that includes eating establishments, shops, an auditorium, and other visitor amenities. These structures are clustered in an area roughly 1.6 ha. (4 a.) in size, that is located beyond the area designated as the historic core.

Two main structures, the Anne Pamela Cunningham Building and the Collections, Conservation, and Volunteer Center, along with several other smaller buildings, have been constructed to house staff and other functions associated with the organization's

mission to preserve and interpret George Washington's home. These structures and activities also are located outside of the historic core.

## 2.b. History and Development:

In 1674 John Washington, the great grandfather of George Washington, purchased a tract of roughly 810 ha. (2,000 a.), initially referred to as Little Hunting Creek plantation, that formed the core of what became the Mount Vernon plantation. The property passed through successive generations of the Washington family, with George Washington's father, Augustine, inheriting it in 1726. Beginning in 1735, Augustine and his family – including his young son, George – lived at the property for several years. Little is known about the house where the Washington family lived during this period, but it is believed to have been located on the same site as the Mount Vernon mansion, and remnants of its stone foundation were likely incorporated within the brick footprint of the extant structure. Lawrence Washington, George Washington's older half-brother, was given the plantation by his father in 1741. Lawrence appears to have razed the earlier house and built a new one and one-half-story dwelling, slightly wider and longer than the original, before he died in 1752. The house consisted of four rooms and a central passage on the first floor and three rooms on the floor above (Dalzell and Dalzell 1998, Greenberg 1999).

George Washington first rented Mount Vernon from Lawrence Washington's widow beginning in 1754, and finally acquired full title to the property in 1761. Washington expanded the house, replaced the outbuildings, and redesigned the surrounding gardens and grounds during two major campaigns of construction. The first, begun in 1757 and only nearing completion when Washington brought his new bride (Martha Dandridge Custis Washington) to live at Mount Vernon in the spring of 1759, entailed raising the structure to two and one-half stories. Exterior closets to the gable ends were also added, "rusticated" pine boards were incorporated into the facades to give it the appearance of stone, and the interior spaces were extensively redecorated (Dalzell and Dalzell 1998, Greenberg 1999, Griswold 1998).

In 1774 Washington began a second, even more extensive series of improvements. He added a wing to the south that accommodated his study on the first floor, with a bedroom for him and Martha on the floor above, and a storage room on the floor above that. In the spring of 1775 Washington left to serve in the Second Continental Congress and then for eight years as commander in chief of the American revolutionary army. His plantation manager and cousin, Lund, supervised constructing the north wing and the other planned additions to the house, along with changes to the outbuildings (Dalzell and Dalzell 1998, Greenberg 1999).

In 1776 Lund Washington began construction of the addition to the north end of the house, which accommodated a two-story dining room and a storage room on the floor above. The north wing was enclosed by 1777 but the interior decorations were not completed until after George Washington's return from the war in December 1783. As completed in 1787, the spaces comprised a distinct separation of the high-style public

rooms from the more intimate private chambers. Also in 1777, the piazza, a highly unusual double-height porch supported by eight pillars, was added, running the length of the east façade of the house. To the west side, Washington added a pediment and cupola, most likely aimed at providing a strong central axis to the completed assemblage, to divert attention from the asymmetry of that front which was the result of the sequential campaigns of construction. Finally, curving open colonnades were built to link the Mansion with the Kitchen and Servants' Hall dependencies (Dalzell and Dalzell 1998, Greenberg 1999).

Many elements of the expanded house were clearly influenced by then-fashionable tenets of Anglo-Palladian architecture, and Washington made reference to numerous English pattern books to inform his designs (Owen 1991). The surrounding landscape was likewise reconfigured according to English principles of naturalistic design, and again Washington primarily used published sources as his inspiration. Finally, the unusual features of the piazza and the colonnades relate directly to Washington's desire to integrate the Mansion within its environment and to take advantage of the natural beauty of the site (Dalzell and Dalzell 1998, Greenberg 1999, Griswold 1999, Leighton 1976, Martin 1991). He was highly successful in this goal, as testified by the account of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, at the time of his visit to Mount Vernon in 1796:

Towards the East Nature has lavished magnificence, nor has Art interfered but to exhibit her to advantage. Before the portico a lawn extends on each hand from the front of the house and of a Grove of Locust trees on each side, to the edge of the bank. Down the steep slope trees and shrubs are thickly planted. They are kept so low as not to interrupt the view but merely to furnish an agreeable border to the extensive prospect beyond (Carter 1977).

Bushrod Washington inherited the Mansion and 1620 ha. (4,000 a.) of surrounding land in 1802, following the deaths of his uncle, George Washington, and his wife, Martha. Although steadily diminishing in size, the mansion and the core of the property remained in the possession of three succeeding generations of the Washington family. Finally, in 1858 George Washington's great grand-nephew, John Augustine Washington, agreed to sell the Mansion and 81 ha. (200 a.) of land to the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union. John Augustine Washington was unable to afford the expense of maintaining the dilapidated structures and in satisfying the demands of the growing numbers of sightseers, and he hoped that the property could be preserved as a testament to the legacy of his famous ancestor (Lee 2001).

Founded by Anne Pamela Cunningham in 1853, the Ladies' Association sought to acquire and preserve Washington's home for the benefit of all. The Ladies' Association is notable as the first national historic preservation organization, as well as one of the first organizations to be run solely by women, in America (West 1999). Between 1853 and 1860 Cunningham and her allies were able to raise almost all of John Washington's \$200,000 asking price and in February 1860 the Ladies took over the estate. The donations made to the Ladies' cause all came from private sources and the Association is highly unusual in that it continues to operate completely independently of government

support. Ms. Cunningham's address presented at the time of her retirement from the Ladies' Association in 1874 continues to frame the Mission of the organization:

Ladies, the home of Washington is in your charge – see to it that you keep it the home of Washington. Let no irreverent hand change it; no vandal hands desecrate it with the fingers of progress. Those who go to the home in which he lived and died wish to see in what he lived and died. Let one spot in this grand country of ours be saved from change. Upon you rests this duty (Rees 1998).

Upton Herbert, the first superintendent of Mount Vernon, immediately took steps to tend to the deteriorating walls, walkways, and other site amenities. By 1861 Herbert had begun to make repairs to the Mansion, but that work was interrupted by the outbreak of the Civil War, and restoration work was largely suspended until the conflict ended four years later. After the war, restoration work recommenced and by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the Association had adopted its ongoing policy to interpret the estate as it existed at the end of George Washington's lifetime. To that end, the Association has committed to preserving the remnants of the structures and other features that survive from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. At the same time, over the last 100 years the Association has conducted exhaustive documentary research and extensive archeological excavations to document non-extant structures, features, and activities relating to the 18<sup>th</sup>-century plantation (Pogue 2006).

In the 1930s the Ladies' Association embarked on a dynamic period of research and restoration aimed at commemorating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Washington's birth but also marked a rising level of sophistication in preservation practice. Morley J. Williams, an engineer and landscape architect who was initially a member of the faculty of Harvard University, was eventually hired to serve as Mount Vernon's Director of Research and Restoration. Over the next eight years, Williams carried out an intensive study of the layout of the gardens and grounds, including conducting archaeological excavations at several sites around the estate. These constituted the first "modern" archaeological excavations performed at Mount Vernon and archaeology has played a significant role within the larger preservation program ever since (Pogue 2006).

In 1950-51 the Ladies' Association completed a long-anticipated project when they reconstructed the brick greenhouse-slave quarters complex that had burned in 1835. As part of that effort, the Association became one of the first historic sites in the country to develop an interpretive program focusing on slavery, by furnishing one of the rooms in the complex as domestic housing for enslaved workers. This focus on studying the many dimensions of the lives of Mount Vernon's enslaved community was given additional support in the 1980s when archaeologists uncovered and excavated a trash-filled cellar associated with a slave quarter (Pogue and White 1991, Pogue 2001).

The 1950s witnessed the beginning of another major initiative that has had significant ramifications in terms of preserving Mount Vernon as well as setting an example for many other preservation groups worldwide. Plans to construct industrial facilities on the Maryland shore of the Potomac River, directly across from Mount Vernon, was the

impetus for a broad-based effort lead by the Ladies' Association to preserve the viewshed from the east lawn of Mount Vernon. Together with the National Park Service and various other private organizations, the Association ultimately succeeded in preserving the 80-square mile viewshed. This marks one of the first successful attempts to protect the views from an historic site in addition to preserving the site itself (Johnson 2002).

In 1979 Mount Vernon launched a project to research and restore the paint colors throughout the interior of the Mansion. The goal was to determine what colors were in use in the building in 1799, the year of Washington's death, so that they could be replicated. A historic paint expert was hired to take more than 2,000 samples of paint and to analyze those samples using various recently developed techniques. Generally speaking, the colors found to have been in place in 1799 were much more vibrant than those used in succeeding years, reflecting the bright colors that were in vogue during the period at the end of Washington's life. These findings and the resulting repainting represented a major advancement in knowledge as well as a surprise to the general public. Mount Vernon's prominence as the most widely recognized historic property in America provided a boost for such sophisticated analyses, which now have become commonplace throughout the profession (Mosca 1994).

In the 1980s and 1990s the Ladies' Association undertook several important initiatives to further develop an infrastructure that is not only suited to preserving and maintaining the historic resources, but also provides the platform for additional cutting edge research aimed at allowing the site to be more effectively and accurately portrayed and interpreted. These measures included: establishing a permanent program of archaeological research in 1984; preparing a Historic Structure Report for the Mansion which was completed in 1991 (and for several outbuildings over the ensuing decade); and establishing an integrated Restoration Department in 1994.

More recently, the intensive program of research has borne fruit in several other projects aimed at enhancing the authenticity of the site. In 1996 the "George Washington, Pioneer Farmer" site, a 1.6 ha. (4 a.) tract located on reclaimed land near the river, was opened as a means of interpreting the agricultural component of Mount Vernon, with focus on 18<sup>th</sup>-century farming practices, Washington's commitment to improved techniques of husbandry, and the contributions of enslaved African-Americans in all of these enterprises (Pogue 2001). After many years of archaeological excavation, in 2001 Washington's composting building, or "dung repository," was reconstructed on the original site. In 1998 the Servant's Hall and in 2007 the Gardener's House, the last two 18<sup>th</sup>-century structures to be returned to an interpretive function, were restored and opened to visitors. Finally, in 2005 a program of dendrochronological testing (tree ring dating) of selected trees and structures was begun, in order to further refine the basis for dating these crucially important features.

### **3. Justification for Inscription:**

#### 3.a. Criteria under which Inscription is Proposed:

- iv. An outstanding example of a type of building and a landscape which illustrate a significant stage in human history.

The Mount Vernon Mansion and its associated outbuildings, gardens, and grounds, together constitute a rare survival from one of the most iconic and internationally significant periods of American architectural history. Aside from its significance as the most compelling and tangible expression of George Washington's accomplishments in architectural design, Mount Vernon embodies the essence of the trajectory of Anglo-American building and landscape design that occurred in the American colonies and then the United States over the course of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. As Washington expanded the house and the gardens and grounds associated with it, the design evolved from the functional vernacular Georgian ensemble characterizing elite mid-18<sup>th</sup>-century American estates to a more ambitious rendering of English high style design that combined Adam-esque architectural ornamentation with a picturesque or naturalistic landscape. As such, the developments at Mount Vernon not only document this process in relatively close detail, but they also epitomize the international influence of Anglo-Palladian design (Parissien 1994).

- v. That is tangibly associated with events and ideas of outstanding universal significance.

As the first national historic preservation organization in America, the cause of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association to acquire, preserve, and interpret George Washington's home to visitors has attained international significance. With an average of more than one million visitors annually since the end of World War II (1.1 million as recently as the year 2000 and 970,000 visitors in 2006), Mount Vernon is one of the most visited historic properties in the world. As the model for the building representing the Commonwealth of Virginia and/or the United States in several world expositions and because of the direct association of the house with George Washington, one of the most famous men in world history, Mount Vernon has become an international icon of American architecture and a tangible expression of the importance and the success of the global historic preservation movement (Hosmer 1965).

#### 3.b. Proposed Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:

George Washington's home and the associated gardens and grounds together form a remarkably well preserved example of an evolved plantation cultural landscape of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century American south that is unique in its high level of documentation. The main dwelling and the associated grounds were first erected in the 1730s, then were expanded

in the 1750s, and finally were almost completely redesigned in the 1780s-90s. As such, the site documents both the architectural and landscape designs prevalent at gentry sites in the mid-18<sup>th</sup>-century American south, but also portrays how the ascendant architectural fashions were adapted to update a vernacular Georgian design into a fashionable early Federal ensemble. At the same time, the surrounding gardens and grounds were reinvented according to the tenets of picturesque or naturalistic landscape design espoused by the prominent English authors, Capability Brown and Batty Langley. The combination of surviving structures and landscape features, archaeological data, and archival evidence make the Mount Vernon site arguably the best documented and most completely preserved example of this internationally important period in cultural landscape design. The success of Washington's incorporation of these ideas at Mount Vernon is succinctly captured by the account of Julian Niemcewicz, a Polish nobleman who visited Mount Vernon in 1798:

In a word the garden, the plantations, the house, the whole upkeep, proves that a man born with natural taste can divine the beautiful without having seen the model. The G[enera]l has never left America. After seeing his house and his gardens one would say that he had seen the most beautiful examples in England of this style (Budka 1965:98).

As a consequence of the site's association with the life of George Washington, one of the most famous men in world history as well as in the history of the United States, Mount Vernon was acquired by the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association in 1858 and since 1860, has been open to visitors. The Ladies' Association has the distinction of being the first nation-wide historic preservation organization in the United States and over the years Mount Vernon has become both an international icon of early American architecture and a catalyst for the preservation of historic structures both in America and around the world. Over a 40-year period that began in 1893, Mount Vernon was selected to represent the United States in at least four major world expositions (Chicago 1893, San Francisco 1915, Paris 1931, and Brooklyn 1932) which ensured that the house became one of the most recognizable structures around the world, and gave the preservation of historic sites an international impetus. Furthermore, since the end of World War II, visitors to Mount Vernon have averaged more than one million people annually, including tens of thousands of visitors from foreign countries each year. Finally, Mount Vernon has remained a leader in refining both the methods employed by preservationists to study historic properties and the philosophical underpinnings that guide the field.

### 3.c. Comparative Analysis:

No other sites currently included on the World Heritage List trace their international significance to its impact on the worldwide historic preservation movement or to its high level of preservation and documentation pertaining to the development of cultural landscape design in the early American south. Only Monticello, Thomas Jefferson's home near Charlottesville, Virginia, has the potential to relate to these topics in a substantive way. However, the statement of significance for Monticello and the University of Virginia is based largely on the single contributions of Thomas Jefferson as

an architectural visionary rather than the universality of design and completeness of understanding of the cultural landscape. Other than Monticello, it is highly unlikely that any other sites of this time period have the potential – either in terms of level of preservation or of currently available evidence – to contribute significantly to these criteria.

#### 3.d. Integrity/Authenticity:

With 16 surviving 18<sup>th</sup>-century structures incorporated within an extremely well preserved cultural landscape and with a protected viewshed of more than 207 square kilometers (80 square miles), Mount Vernon possesses an unusually high level of integrity. In addition, over the years the Association has conducted exhaustive research to support an authentic presentation of the appearance of the plantation during the last years of George Washington’s life. The Mansion, the tomb, and all of the surviving outbuildings have undergone many campaigns of research and sensitive restoration. Several non-extant 18<sup>th</sup>-century structures – such as the greenhouse-slave quarter complex, the coach house, the barn and associated support buildings at the “George Washington, Pioneer Farmer” site, and the dung repository – have been reconstructed as highly authentic versions of the originals.

## **4. State of Conservation and Factors Affecting Property:**

### 4.a. Present state of Conservation:

The condition of the structures, gardens, grounds, and other features that make up George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens is excellent. Under the almost 150-year-stewardship of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union, the property has been and continues to be maintained according to the standards established by various preservation organizations. The Association endorses the following guidelines and protocols and has a staff of trained professionals whose duty it is to ensure their compliance: Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics, American Association of Museums (AAM) Code of Ethics, APTI Williamsburg Resolutions on Architectural Fragments, and the New Orleans Charter for Joint Preservation of Historic Structures and Artifacts.

### 4.b. Factors affecting the Property:

#### (i). Development Pressures:

No development pressures directly affect Mount Vernon. However, the viewshed across the Potomac River from Mount Vernon continues to be under moderate threat. Much of the 207 square kilometer (80 square mile) area identified as making up the viewshed has been protected from development as the result of a number of ongoing initiatives dating from the 1950s. The Ladies' Association continues to take an active role in working with various private and public entities and agencies to ensure the protection of the viewshed.

#### (ii). Environmental Pressures:

No environmental pressures directly affect Mount Vernon.

#### (iii). Natural Disasters and Risk Preparedness:

Mount Vernon is not considered to be in an area of unusually high risk from natural disaster. Wind and water damage from tornadoes and/or hurricanes and damage from lightning strikes constitute the most likely causes of damage. Mount Vernon has developed a Disaster and Emergency Preparedness Plan to address these and many more potential natural and man-made sources of impact.

#### (iv). Visitor/Tourism Pressures:

With an average of over one million visitors annually (970,000 in 2006), Mount Vernon is one of the most heavily visited historic properties in the world. Numerous measures have been implemented over the years to mitigate the damaging effects on the historic resources as a consequence of such high visitation and professional staff is employed to monitor and address any negative effects.

(v). Number of Inhabitants:

Five residences are located on the property, where Mount Vernon staff and their families reside. In return for this privilege, staff commit to special duties aimed at safeguarding the property.

## **5. Protection and Management of the Property:**

The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association is a non-profit corporation chartered by the Commonwealth of Virginia to operate Mount Vernon. The Ladies' Association is legally empowered and obligated to maintain and operate the property as an educational enterprise open to the visiting public.

### **5.a. Ownership:**

George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens is owned by The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, a private, non-profit corporation chartered by the Commonwealth of Virginia, with an independent governing board.

Mount Vernon Ladies' Association  
South End of George Washington Memorial Parkway  
Mount Vernon, VA 22121

### **5.b. Protective Designation:**

Mount Vernon is listed as a National Historic Landmark and the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association is chartered by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

### **5.c. Means of Implementing Protective Measures:**

National Historic Landmark designation does not limit the authority of the property owner but it mandates that the National Park Service has the obligation to inspect the property and to report any threats to its integrity to the United States Congress. In addition, no Federal funds may be expended on or Federal licenses extended to projects that have the potential to negatively affect any National Historic Landmark without review of the project in accord with Federal law.

The charter of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association stipulates that the Association must operate the site as a public educational entity, that it is well maintained, and that it is open to the general public. Failure to fulfill these requirements could cause revocation of the charter.

### **5.d. Existing Plans Related to Municipality and Region:**

As a chartered corporation within the Commonwealth of Virginia Mount Vernon enjoys all of the relevant privileges and restrictions. The estate has been open to the visiting public on a regular basis for almost 150 years.

#### 5.e. Property Management Plan:

The mission statement of the Ladies' Association is as follows:

The mission of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association is to preserve, restore and manage the estate of George Washington to the highest standards and to educate visitors and people throughout the world about the life and legacies of George Washington, so that his example of character and leadership will continue to inform and inspire future generations.

The mission statement is supported by a variety of established procedures and studies, such as: a Historic Structure Report for the Mansion which was completed in 1991 (as well as for several of the outbuildings over the course of two decades); a Cultural Landscape Report for the entire property which was completed in 2003; and a Facilities Master Plan that was formulated in 1998 and was revised most recently in 2007.

#### 5.f. Sources and Levels of Finance:

The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association is a private, non-profit corporation that is self-supporting; The Ladies' Association does not receive funding from any government agency. The annual budget (as of 2005) is \$28 million, of which approximately \$13 million is generated by gate receipts, with the remainder provided by other earned income, endowment, and donations.

#### 5.g. Sources of Expertise and Training in Conservation and Management Techniques:

The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association employs several key staff members who are professional preservationists: the Executive Director, Associate Director for Preservation, Manager of Restoration, Restoration Specialist, Director of Archaeology, Assistant Archaeologist, Collections Manager, and Director of Horticulture. In addition, professional curatorial and conservation staff are employed in the Collections Department. All of these individuals hold academic degrees and other training that are appropriate for their areas of expertise.

#### 5.h. Visitor Facilities and Statistics:

Total visitation in 2006 numbered approximately 970,000. Visitors have the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of educational experiences such as: tours of the Mansion, gardens, and grounds; interpretation of the "George Washington, Pioneer Farmer" site and the Gristmill and Distillery complex, which is available April through October; demonstrations of 18<sup>th</sup>-crafts and agricultural activities; lectures and other programs; an introduction film in the Orientation Center; three related museum facilities in the Education Center; and two dining and various shopping outlets, along with basic amenities like restrooms, first aid, and other visitor services, at the Mount Vernon Inn retail complex. In addition, several residential teacher institutes are offered each year in conjunction with the Gilder-Lehrman Institute, the Bill of Rights Institute, and others.

5.i. Policies and Programs Related to the Presentation and Promotion of the Property:

With an average of one million visitors annually since the 1940s, George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens has an enviable track record in terms of transmitting the significance of the property to the widest possible audience.

5.j. Staffing Levels:

The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association employs more than 150 full time staff members, with another 100 individuals employed as part-time or seasonal workers. The departments represented include: Restoration, Collections, Education, Development, Marketing, Public Affairs, Finance, Information Technology, Operations and Maintenance, Horticulture, Licensing, and Guest Services.

## **6. Monitoring:**

### 6.a. Key Indicators for Measuring State of Conservation:

It is the primary responsibility of the members of the Restoration Department to monitor the condition of the structures, grounds, and other features that make up the historic core of the estate. Staff in the Collections Department are responsible for monitoring the condition of the different collections. Various documentary and photographic records are maintained, along with historic structure reports and similar types of reports, as a means of assessing changing conditions. For example, staff of the Restoration Department conduct an annual inspection and assessment of all historic resources.

### 6.b. Administrative Arrangements for Monitoring Property:

Monitoring of the property is performed by the appropriate permanent professional staff.

### 6.c. Results of Previous Reporting Exercises:

The results of the annual assessment are incorporated into the ongoing work program according to their assessed significance and resulting assigned priority.