

Mary McLeod Bethune Council House

National Capital Parks - East, National Park Service

Cultural Landscape Report

Urban Heritage Project

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Figure 1: View of the front yard and entrance walk at the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House (Lester 2022)



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 6

INTRODUCTION 10

PART 1: HISTORY + EVALUATION 16

Statement of Significance 18

Chronology 26

Physical History 60

Period Plans 114

Analysis + Evaluation 122

Bibliography 212

PART 2: TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS 218

Introduction 220

Framework for Treatment 221

Treatment Recommendations 228

APPENDIX 242

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House is a nationally significant historic site in the Logan Circle neighborhood of Washington, D.C. Located at 1318 Vermont Avenue NW, the cultural landscape is associated with the life and work of civil rights leader Mary McLeod Bethune, as well as the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW, or the Council), which Bethune founded in 1935. The cultural landscape includes a front yard, a three-story brick rowhouse, a rear courtyard, and a rear carriage house, and is managed today by the National Park Service. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing resource within both the Logan Circle Historic District and the Greater Fourteenth Street Historic District. In addition, a draft nomination for individual designation of the property is underway as of 2023.

The site was developed in the late 19th century as part of a block of rowhouses within D.C.'s Square 242. It took on added levels of significance in 1943, when Bethune and the NCNW purchased the property to establish the first permanent headquarters for the organization. In addition to functioning as a headquarters for the NCNW, the Council House also served as Bethune's primary residence from 1943 to 1949. Owning this dedicated space in the heart of D.C. allowed the NCNW to lobby for Black women's rights in the seat of the nation's power; it also enabled Bethune to hold several significant positions as an educator, political activist, presidential advisor (to Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S Truman), institution builder, diplomat to Libera, and civil rights leader.

Bethune lived at 1318 Vermont Avenue NW until 1949; she died in 1955, just a few years after moving out of the Council House. The NCNW continued to use the house as its headquarters, but in 1966, a fire broke out in the basement of the primary building, causing extensive damage. The NCNW moved out of the Council House, leaving it unoccupied until 1975. In the late 1970s, the organization undertook a restoration campaign for the primary building, resuming operations in the building in 1977 (although the NCNW's headquarters remained elsewhere).

That same year, the NCNW hired Dr. Bettye Collier-Thomas to develop a museum and archives for Black women's history, with the intention of interpreting those collections for the public at 1318 Vermont Avenue NW. The Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial Museum and National Archives for Black Women's History (NABWH) officially opened on November 11, 1979. The museum occupied the Council House, while the archives were stored in the Carriage House.

The NCNW spearheaded additional rehabilitation projects in the late 20th century. The urn was placed in the front yard in 1979, and the rear courtyard area was redesigned in 1988-89, establishing its present-day configuration. The Council House and Carriage House remained in use as the museum and archives.

In 1994, the National Park Service acquired the Council House at 1318 Vermont Avenue NW and assumed responsibility for stewarding the property. The site continued to operate as a museum and archives until 2014, when the National Park Service moved the contents of the National Archives of Black Women's History from the Carriage House to the NPS Museum Resource Center in Landover, Maryland. After a closure from 2016-18 to install a fire suppression and security system, and another closure from 2020-22 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the site is once again open to the public as the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site.

The historic site's cultural landscape exhibits 11 of the 13 landscape characteristics defined by the National Park Service, including:

- Natural Systems and Features
- Land Use
- Topography
- Spatial Organization
- Cluster Arrangement
- Views and Vistas
- Cultural Traditions
- Buildings and Structures
- Circulation
- Vegetation
- Small-Scale Features

The CLR addresses the historic and existing landscape conditions of each characteristic, building an understanding of how much the site today reflects its character and appearance during the periods of significance. Among the key conclusions of this analysis, this CLR finds:

Overall, the front yard retains its historic integrity. This cannot be said for the rear courtyard area, which was substantially altered in the 1980s. As a result, the front and rear yards function as two different character areas within the cultural landscape. This finding has substantial implications for the CLR's treatment recommendations.

The urn in the front yard is a non-contributing feature of the cultural landscape. It was not extant during the period of significance, and its placement on the square pedestal (which was extant during Bethune's and the NCNW's association with the site) actually disrupts the understanding of the front yard as a gathering space and speaker's podium for significant guests and events.

This CLR recommends **rehabilitation** as the treatment for the cultural landscape. This approach allows for the careful management of historic vegetation and the repair and in-kind replacement of historic circulation features responding to water damage due to extreme weather events and climate change. It also allows park managers to re-establish the historic character of vegetation, small-scale features, and other landscape features according to the historic conditions established during the period of significance. The treatment reference date is 1966.

The treatment recommendations of this CLR are organized spatially, according to the **front character area, rear character area, sitewide recommendations, management policies,** and **areas for further research and documentation.** In addition, the treatment recommendations include suggestions for seasonal maintenance and cyclical planning.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site (NHS) Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) is to help the National Park Service (NPS) develop an informed and consistent approach to managing change at the historic site located in the Logan Circle neighborhood of Washington, D.C. This guide builds on previous documentation efforts and offers holistic, coordinated management strategies. The project began with a kickoff meeting in January 2022, and the final report was presented in 2023.

Public Law 102-211 (December 11, 1991) authorized the incorporation of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Sites into the National Park System. The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site interprets the life and legacy of Mary McLeod Bethune and the work and legacy of the National Council of Negro Women, Inc. (NCNW). From 1943 to 1966, the house served as the first national headquarters of the NCNW and served as Bethune's final residence in the nation's capital from 1943 to 1949.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THIS CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service CLRs are the primary tool to inform long-term management decisions regarding cultural landscapes. The CLR documents the history and existing conditions of a cultural landscape, evaluates its significance according to National Register of Historic Places program standards, and provides design and management recommendations for the property. The CLR is part of the park's planning process and is a fundamental tool for integrating information and determining relationships between the cultural landscape and other resource types, and site objectives.

The CLR goal is to preserve, restore, or rehabilitate the historic character of the historic district, while providing for opportunities to enhance facilities maintenance, resource management, and interpretive opportunities within the historic district. The CLR is the primary planning document for the treatment of the cultural landscape and provides site managers with a comprehensive understanding of the physical evolution of the cultural landscape, its current condition, and guidance for the future landscape management.

The CLR scope includes identifying cultural landscape significance and current condition, and developing treatment strategies to preserve, restore, and rehabilitate resources within the cultural landscape.

REPORT METHODOLOGY

A thorough investigation and evaluation of the cultural landscape has been conducted using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes and the NPS Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques. Documentation of historic significance and evaluation of integrity of the landscape serves as a framework upon which treatment recommendations are developed.

The history is documented to focus on the changes to the cultural landscape over time within the previously established National Register eligibility of the cultural landscape under specific contexts and period of significance. These contexts and period of significance were re-examined to provide the full context needed to establish the character-defining features of the cultural landscape. Period plans were prepared to understand the change over time.

The historical documentation was utilized to compare existing site conditions to historic conditions. Through this analysis, contributing and

non-contributing features and characteristics of the cultural landscape were identified. This information was then used as the basis for the treatment recommendations, with the goal of preserving character-defining features and characteristics, restoring character-defining features when important to conveying the historical significance of the cultural landscape, and rehabilitating features to preserve their character-defining qualities to allow for current and future uses within the cultural landscape.

In keeping with the National Park Service's best practices and issued guidance for Cultural Landscape Reports, this project was designed according to several different (at times, overlapping) tasks:

RESEARCH

Using primary and secondary sources, the team conducted research to understand the physical history of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS. Key repositories and archives included: the National Archives for Black Women's History collections; existing documentation (including a draft National Register of Historic Places nomination and a Historic Structure Report); a General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement; a historic resource study; and biographies of Bethune.

Based on the research, the team prepared a chronology and physical history to document the evolution of the historic site.

DETERMINATION OF PERIODS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Using the physical history and prior documentation as a guide, the periods of significance were determined as 1875-1900 and 1943-1966 (refer to the Statement of Significance, beginning on page 50, for explanations of these periods.)

FIELDWORK AND DATA COLLECTION

The team conducted fieldwork and site visits during the project. An initial site visit with park and regional staff took place in March 2022. Fieldwork to document existing conditions and geolocate extant features took place between May and August 2022. During this time, researchers collected and recorded GIS data using Eos Arrow equipment. The team identified, photographed, and recorded characteristic landscape features that date to, or postdate, the period of significance at the historic site.

MAPPING

Maps for this CLR were produced following National Capital Regional Office's (NCRO) contemporary GIS standards. There was no previous GIS data recorded for the historic site. The team collected data in the field, including small-scale features, circulation features, structures, and vegetation. This data was then edited in ArcPro and exported to Adobe Illustrator for graphics and final production.

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

Based on our understanding of the NHS, compiled through research, fieldwork, and mapping, our team evaluated the current conditions and integrity of these features. This feature-by-feature assessment, contextualized within a larger study of each applicable landscape characteristic, comprises the Analysis & Evaluation section of the CLR.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT + TREATMENT WORKSHOPS

The team consulted with National Park Service staff throughout the project, including members of the National Capital Regional Office and National Capital Parks – East administration. Most intensively, our team convened a treatment

workshop on December 5, 2022, to present our findings-to-date and our preliminary treatment priorities.

TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the feedback received at the treatment workshop, and all other phases of work, the team prepared treatment recommendations for the historic site.

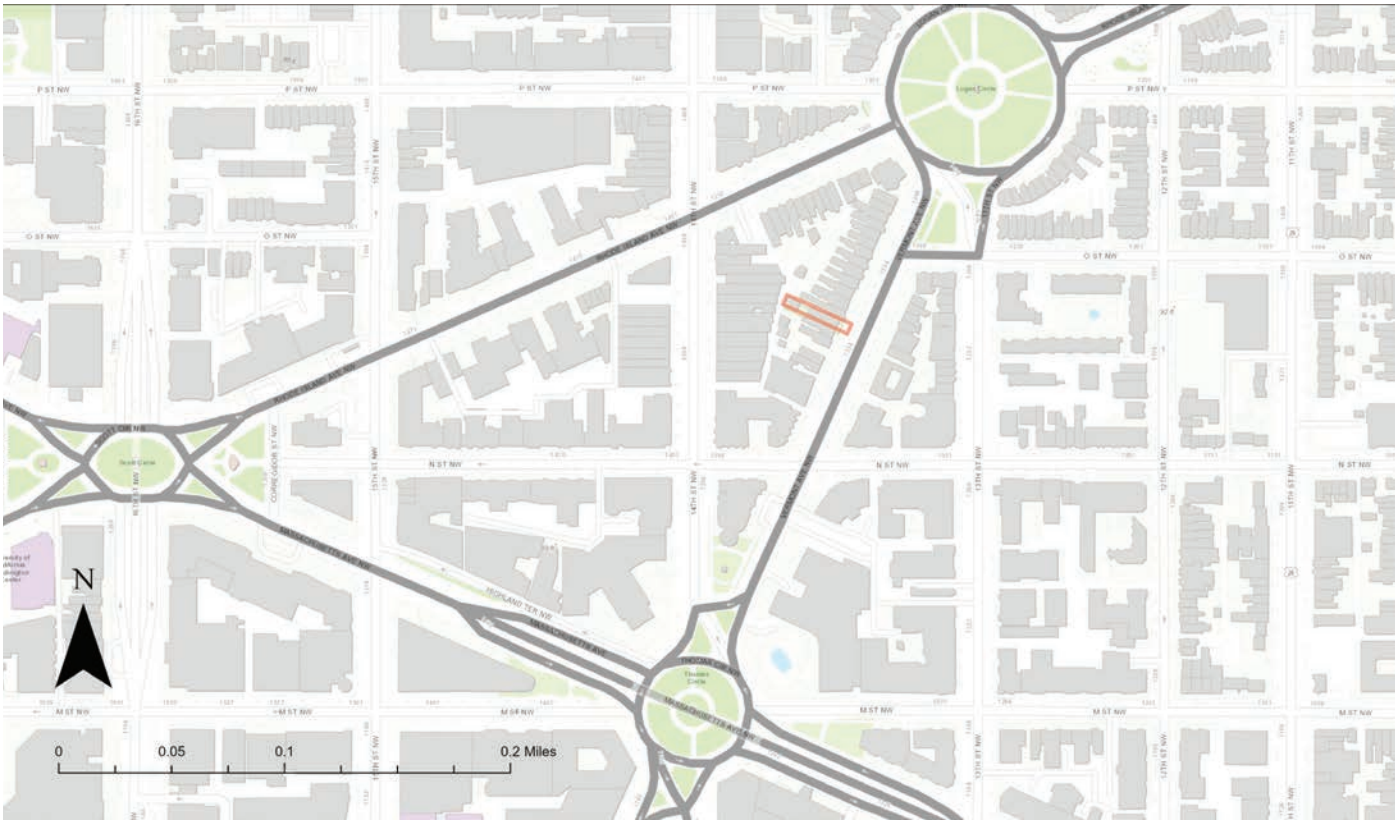


Figure 2: Location map for the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House, located at 1318 Vermont Avenue NW in Washington, D.C. The cultural landscape boundaries are annotated in orange. (Urban Heritage Project 2023)

PART 1: HISTORY + EVALUATION

Statement of Significance 18

Chronology 26

Physical History 60

Period Plans 114

Analysis + Evaluation 122

Bibliography 212

Statement of Significance

Introduction and Boundary

The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House (Council House) National Historic Site (NHS) interprets the life and legacy of Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune and the work and legacy of the National Council of Negro Women, Inc. (NCNW, or Council). From 1943 to 1966, the Council House served as the first national headquarters of the NCNW, and as Bethune's residence from 1943 to 1949.

The boundary of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS cultural landscape encompasses Lot 55 in Square 242 at 1318 Vermont Avenue N.W., in the Logan Circle Historic District of Washington, D.C. Covering 0.07 acres, the property includes the front yard, Council House, rear courtyard, and Carriage House. This boundary also corresponds with the management of the NPS and the MAMC unit. Located within a dense residential neighborhood flanked by commercial development, the Council House is defined to the southeast by Vermont Avenue N.W., to the northwest by a public alley at the rear of the property, and to the northeast and southwest by rowhouses.

Following Bethune's resignation as president of the Council in 1949 and her death in 1955, the house remained the NCNW's headquarters until 1966, when a fire damaged the building and the Council moved to a new location in the Dupont Circle neighborhood of Washington, D.C. The building stood vacant until 1975, when the Council received a grant to restore the building. While the headquarters remained elsewhere, the NCNW resumed operations in the Council House following the restoration and established the Bethune Museum and Archives on site in 1979, to celebrate Bethune's legacy.

The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House was designated a National Historic Site by Congress on October 15, 1982, and the National Park Service (NPS) acquired the site in 1994. The National Capital Parks-East unit of the NPS currently manages the Council House as a historic house museum dedicated to the life of Mary McLeod Bethune and the NCNW. The NPS also manages the museum collections and the National Archives for Black Women's History (NABWH). The NABWH seeks to "identify, collect, develop, interpret, and preserve the legacy of Mary McLeod Bethune including her unique focus on the individual and collective history of African American women" (National Park Service 2021). Formerly located in the Carriage House, the archives moved to the NPS's Museum Resource Center in Landover, Maryland, in 2014.

National Register of Historic Places Summary

The National Register of Historic Places (National Register) provides the basis for documenting and evaluating the historical significance and integrity of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site cultural landscape. The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House was listed in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites in 1975. Although a National Register of Historic Places nomination form was prepared and served as the basis for the D.C. Inventory, the 1975 National Register nomination form was never submitted to the Keeper of the National Register (Babin 2019: 7-4). On October 15, 1982, under Public Law 97-329 (96 Stat. 1615), Congress designated the property as the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site. Congressional designation as a National Historic Site administratively lists a property in the National Register. A document from December 10, 1999, records the Council House as undocumented by the National Park Service under reference number: 82005389. In 2000, the NPS determined that the decorative wrought iron fence around the

front yard of the NHS is a contributing feature to the property.

The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House is a contributing resource to both the Logan Circle Historic District (NRHP# 72001426) and the Greater Fourteenth Street Historic District (NRHP# 94000992), listed in the National Register in 1972 and 1994, respectively. The Logan Circle Historic District falls within the boundaries of the Greater Fourteenth Street Historic District. The period of significance for the Logan Circle Historic District was recorded as 1875 through 1900, and eligible in the areas of Architecture and Urban Planning, at the state level. No criteria for eligibility is listed. In 2001, a Determination of Eligibility recorded the Carriage House as a contributing resource to the Logan Circle Historic District. The Greater Fourteenth Street Historic District was originally listed in 1994, with a boundary expansion completed in 2007 (NRHP# 07000421). The district was recorded in 1994 as eligible at the state level under Criteria A and C in the areas of Architecture (with a period of significance from 1859 through 1920), Transportation (with a period of significance from 1862 through 1936), and Heritage (Black) (with a period of significance from 1871 through 1920). The 2007 boundary expansion, which includes both the north and south sides of the 1400 block of Rhode Island Avenue, nominates the district for listing under Criteria A and C in the areas of Architecture and Commerce, with a period of significance from 1855 through 1940.

At the time of this report's preparation in 2022-23, a National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House is in progress. The draft nomination records the property at the national level of significance under Criteria A and B in the areas of Social History and African American Heritage. The period of significance in the draft nomination extends from 1943 through 1966.

Statement of Significance Summary

The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS's cultural landscape is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the national level of significance under Criterion A in the areas of African American Heritage, Social History, and Politics/Government. The Council House was the first national headquarters of the NCNW, serving as the center of the organization's efforts to develop programming and strategies to address issues impacting African American women. Founded in 1935 by Mary McLeod Bethune, a prominent educator, political leader, and activist, the NCNW is an active coalition of organizations that continues to serve as an influential national institution with the mission to "lead, empower and advocate for women of African descent, their families and communities" (NCNW 2018).

The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House is also nationally significant under Criterion B of the National Register in the areas of African American Heritage, Social History, and Politics/Government in association with Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, one of the country's most influential African American leaders who served as the founding president of the NCNW and used the Council House as her residence from 1943 until she resigned as NCNW president in 1949. The Council House also speaks to Bethune's legacy in greater Washington, D.C., where she served in advisory roles to Presidents Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and Harry Truman. In addition to being appointed to several committees in the federal government, Bethune served as the Director of the Division of Negro Affairs under Roosevelt from 1936 through 1944, representing the highest federal appointment held by an African American woman at the time.

The Council House is eligible for listing at the state level of significance under Criterion C in the areas of Architecture and Community Planning and Development with a period of significance from 1875 through 1900. As a contributing resource within the Logan Circle Historic District and Greater Fourteenth Street Historic District, the Council House is the northernmost of three nearly identical rowhouses that blend seamlessly with the greater Vermont Avenue N.W. streetscape. The homes on Vermont Avenue N.W. are unified by scale, height, plan, and character. The Council House sits within a continuum of Late Victorian and Richardsonian Romanesque-style rowhouses that have maintained their appearances and plans since construction in the late 1800s.

There are two periods of significance for the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS cultural landscape. The first is from 1875 through 1900, encompassing its construction and the development of the Logan Circle neighborhood. The second period of significance extends from 1943, when Bethune and the NCNW purchased the property to serve as the Council headquarters, and ends in 1966, when the Council relocated is operations due to a fire in the House.

CRITERION A

Areas of Significance: African American Heritage, Social History, and Politics/Government

Level of Significance: National

Period of Significance: 1943-1966

The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the areas of African American Heritage, Social History, and Politics/ Government. Prior to its use by the NCNW, the Council House at 1318 Vermont Avenue N.W. served as an upper-middle-class, single-family dwelling in the late 19th century, and as a residence, boarding house, and tailor shop in the early 20th century. Mary McLeod Bethune and the NCNW purchased the property in 1943 as the first permanent headquarters for the Council, eight years after the establishment of the organization. The organization used the property as the central hub from which to further the Council's mission to unite Black women's organizations; to develop nationwide programming; to provide a clearinghouse of information relevant to African American women; to house an archive; and to meet with national and international leaders.

On December 5, 1935, Bethune gathered representatives from a range of institutions and established the National Council of Negro Women with the overall purpose of uniting Black women's organizations across the country as a collective voice. With Bethune at the helm, "the NCNW concentrated on empowering women by helping them find ways to achieve economic independence, teaching lessons in citizenship training, and instructing them in techniques for bringing about long-term political change" (Hanson 2003: 172). The programs and projects of the NCNW addressed many issues, including education, employment, healthcare, housing, racism, poverty, and international relations, in addition to the organization's founding objective "to work for the complete elimination of any and all forms of discrimination and segregation based on race, religion, color, national origin, and sex" (National Park Service 2020). The NCNW created an enduring political network that gave African American women visibility and leverage in their efforts of working towards racial and gender equality.

The Council initially focused its efforts on the challenges faced by African Americans during the Great Depression and, in its time at the 1318 Vermont Avenue headquarters, grew to advocate for Black women as integral in the political process. Among its many activities while active at this site, the NCNW sought to secure positions for Black women in the federal government and played an active role in the inclusion of Black women in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps during World War II. Working to improve postwar conditions for African Americans, the NCNW created opportunities for Black women within the conditions and constraints of Jim Crow. Bethune recognized that securing a headquarters for the Council meant "the acquisition of a permanent meeting place which would be available to all national groups as well as to the local groups in that community, and which building

would reflect the competence of Negro women to purchase and manage an institution" (Smith 2003: 215). Purchased in 1943, the establishment of the Council's first national headquarters at 1318 Vermont Avenue N.W. solidified the presence of the Council in the nation's capital and allowed the organization to meet and expand its mission. From the Council House, the NCNW's committees implemented the organization's national program and worked with local affiliates across the country on issues impacting Black women. The Council House provided a space from which the NCNW could execute social and business activities, hold meetings and workshops, and develop programming and strategies that advanced the organization's goals.

The NCNW also capitalized on the physical characteristics and capacity of this site as it assembled an archive of Black women's history. In 1940, prior to the purchase of the Council House, Bethune noted that "the ownership of a building in which we could house historical archives of particular significance to Negro women is in itself a worthwhile thing" (Smith 2003: 215). A "National Archives Day" was held in 1946 and in 1948, the NCNW dedicated a library and archives within the Council House for documenting and preserving the legacy of Black women. By 1949, the NCNW updated its constitution to include mention that the Council was to "preserve information particularly affecting women." Today, the National Archives of Black Women's History (which originated at this site) continues to be the only archive solely dedicated to the history of African American women and "tells the story of the often undervalued and overlooked civil rights work conducted 'under the radar' and within the system. It tells a story of leadership, collaboration, coordination, and perseverance to make progress in civil rights for all people" (National Park Service 2019).

The Council House headquarters allowed the NCNW to further its work and Bethune to cement her legacy after her retirement as organization president. Upon retirement in 1949, Bethune noted that:

> I feel a sense of peace. Women united around the National Council of Negro Women, have made purposeful strides in the march toward democratic living. They have moved mountains. Our headquarters is symbolic of the direction of their going, and of the quality of their leadership in the world of today and tomorrow (McCluskey and Smith, eds. 1999: 193).

Under the leadership of subsequent presidents Dr. Dorothy Ferebee (1949-1953), Vivian Carter Mason (1953-1957), and Dorothy Irene Height (1957-1997), the work of the NCNW continued at the headquarters on 1318 Vermont Avenue N.W. even after Bethune stepped down and moved elsewhere. In the 1950s and early 1960s, the NCNW's efforts focused on the Civil Rights Movement and the War on Poverty, expanding its programming with nationwide impacts. The Council House continued to serve as the organization's headquarters until a fire in 1966 forced the organization to relocate its operations.

The NCNW exists to this day as an organization with the mission "to lead, empower and advocate for women of African descent, their families and communities." Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the NCNW "promotes education with a special focus on science, technology, engineering and math; encourages entrepreneurship, financial literacy and economic stability; educates women about good health and HIV/AIDS; promotes civic engagement and advocates for sound public policy and social justice" (NCNW website, Our Mission).

CRITERION B

Areas of Significance: African American Heritage, Social History, and Politics/Government

Level of Significance: National; Local

Period of Significance: 1943-1966

The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS's cultural landscape is also significant under Criterion B in association with Dr. Bethune. Bethune was the founder and first president of the NCNW and used the Council House as her primary Washington, D.C., office and residence from 1943 until 1949, during which time she served as both president of the NCNW and as a senior-level director in President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration. In both

those roles, Bethune used the Council House as the nucleus from which to engage her activism on behalf of racial and gender equality.

Mary Jane McLeod Bethune (July 10, 1875 - May 18, 1955) was an educator, political activist, presidential advisor, institution builder, diplomat to Liberia, and visionary who devoted her life to the advancement of civil rights and racial equality. Bethune was born in Mayesville, South Carolina, the fifteenth child of Patsy and Samuel McLeod, who were formerly enslaved. Against the backdrop of the Reconstruction South, Bethune attended a local missionary school, then received scholarships to attend Scotia Seminary and Moody Bible Institute. After holding several teaching positions around the South, Bethune founded the Daytona Normal and Industrial School for Negro Girls in Daytona, Florida, in 1904, an institution that evolved into what is today Bethune-Cookman University. Bethune acted as president of the school from 1936 through 1942, while simultaneously acting as president of the NCNW and working with the National Youth Administration (NYA) under President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Bethune worked with other civil rights leaders, including fellow educators Booker T. Washington and Carter G. Woodson. Woodson, who was a neighbor and colleague, founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Inc. (ASALH, today known as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, Inc.) in 1915. Bethune served as the first female president of ASALH from 1936 until the early 1950s.

Bethune collaborated with national civil rights and suffrage activist Mary Church Terrell through the National Association of Colored Women. Terrell helped found the organization in 1896, serving as president from 1896 through 1901; Bethune served as president of the NACW from 1924 through 1928. Terrell, who was among the founders and charter members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909, was also present for the meeting on December 5, 1935, in which the NCNW was established.

Bethune's work caught the attention of political leaders, including Presidents Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover, who invited her to serve on several committees. These positions introduced Bethune to prominent politicians and greatly expanded her political reach and influence in the following decades. After befriending future First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt in 1927, Bethune later became an adviser to President Roosevelt, for whom she served numerous positions, including as the Director of the Division of Negro Affairs at the NYA from 1936 through 1944, representing the highest role of an African American woman in the federal government at the time. Roosevelt's New Deal programs provided Bethune with the platform from which she developed her political leadership, and she in turn helped shape Roosevelt's policies from her position in the administration's "Black Cabinet."

Bethune's positions within the federal government in Washington, D.C., led her to national importance. These roles and experiences strengthened her view that Black women needed a centralized organization to be recognized on a federal level, which inspired Bethune to establish the NCNW in 1935. This was among Bethune's most important and lasting achievements.

After the NYA lost its funding in 1942, Bethune focused on her work with the Council. Bethune believed that the Council required a permanent headquarters in order to gain visibility and more fully achieve its goals. Bethune advocated for a headquarters building that would be a "memorial and shrine in honor of those pioneer Negro women leaders who hewed a pathway for us to follow" (Smith 2003: 215). The cultural landscape's building and property were purchased in 1943, becoming the first NCNW headquarters. From the Council House, Bethune used the tools of engagement, education, and coalition building to advance the mission of the NCNW for the six years that she served as president and lived on-site.

While acting on the national stage, Bethune also understood the relationship between protest and policy change at the local level. In Washington, D.C., she actively participated in the fight for desegregation in the capital city. Bethune joined the New Negro Alliance (NNA) in picketing and protesting the People's Drug Store, which operated 44 stores in predominantly Black neighborhoods, but did not proportionally hire Black workers (Jones

2013: 52-53). Bethune also protested the Daughters of the American Revolution's (DAR) refusal to allow singer Marian Anderson to perform at DAR Constitution Hall on account of Anderson's race.

Born during Reconstruction and living through the Great Depression and two world wars, Bethune dedicated her life to the pursuits of racial and gender equality and civil rights—two social and political causes that were greatly advanced by her time at 1318 Vermont Avenue N.W. With the NCNW headquarters as a hub of her work, Bethune's leadership and life of public service fundamentally laid the groundwork for the modern Civil Rights Movement and seminal civil rights legislation passed in the following decades.

CRITERION C

Areas of Significance: Architecture and Community Planning and Development

Level of Significance: State

Period of Significance: 1875-1900

The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House is located within the Logan Circle neighborhood, a late 19th century, predominantly residential neighborhood. The Council House and its rowhouse context were constructed for the upper and middle class in the years following the Civil War, before becoming an important center of African American life in Washington, D.C., by 1920. The Council House is eligible for listing at the state level under Criterion C in the areas of Architecture and Community Planning and Development. The Council House is a contributing resource in the Logan Circle Historic District (NRHP# 72001426) and the Greater Fourteenth Street Historic District (NRHP# 94000992).

Several smaller groupings of rowhomes were individually designed and built along Vermont Avenue N.W., becoming a fully developed block by 1890. This first grouping included the Council House at 1318 Vermont Avenue N.W., the northernmost in a set of three similar Second Empire-style brick rowhouses built between 1874 and 1876. Constructed ca. 1875, the Council House is a three-story brick rowhouse, L-shaped in plan. It features a three-sided projecting window bay at the first story, a raised basement, a mansard roof with dormers, and decorative elements. The two rowhouses to the south (1314 and 1316 Vermont Avenue N.W.) are almost identical in appearance and plan, including: their massing (a three-story main block over a raised basement and three-story rear ell); projecting three-bay windows; a side-hall main entrance with double-leaf door and decorative wood surround; symmetrical windows on the second and third floors; and architectural details such as a stone entry stoop with cast iron railings, balusters, and newel posts and an iron fence surrounding comparable front yards. (1310 Vermont Avenue N.W. is also comparable in appearance and plan.) While research to date has not determined an architect for the Council House, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) documentation suggests that "the nearly identical facades and plans of 1318 and 1316 Vermont and their strong resemblance to 1314 Vermont make it clear that all had the same designer" (HABS DC-775 1993: 3).

To the north of the Council House is a continuous set of brick rowhouses constructed during the 1870s and 1880s. The homes on Vermont Avenue N.W. are similarly set back from the street by a small yard enclosed by an iron fence and overall unified by scale, height, and character, with a mix of Victorian-era architecture, including Second Empire, Italianate, Queen Anne, and Romanesque Revival styles.

The 1972 Logan Circle Historic District National Register nomination describes the homes on Vermont Avenue N.W. as "an excellent example of late nineteenth century domestic architectural styles. The houses are well-scaled to the street, and trees and front yards enhance them" (Taylor 1972: 7-3). The Council House sits within a continuum of rowhouses that have maintained their appearances and plans since construction in the last quarter of the 19th century. The Council House is a contributing resource within both the Logan Circle Historic District and the Greater Fourteenth Street Historic District as a characteristic example of a late 19th century Second Empire home that complements and blends with surrounding streetscape.

Conclusion

The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS is eligible for listing in the National Register at the national level of significance under Criteria A and B in the areas of African American Heritage, Social History, and Politics/Government, and at the state level of significance under Criterion C in the areas of Architecture and Community Planning and Development. The property is significant as the first headquarters of the NCNW and in association with Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, the founder and first president of the NCNW, and one of the country's most influential African American leaders in the 20th century. The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS provided the space for the NCNW to lobby for Black women's rights in the seat of political power, Washington, D.C. The headquarters was the hub of social and business activities of the NCNW, in addition to serving as a community meeting space, archive, and residence.

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Chronology

This chronology for the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS includes major events that occurred within the cultural landscape and contextual events that impacted the development of the property and its occupants. The chronology begins with Paleo-Indian settlement and concludes in 2022.

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
c. 1500 BCE	c. 8000 BCE		Paleo-Indian Period. Paleo-Indian peoples formed social groups that hunted, gathered plants, and fished in the coastal plains along what are now called the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers (Hanna 2001: 3; Virginia Department of Historic Resources 2018).
c. 8000 BCE	c. 1200 BCE		Archaic Period. Subsistence for Archaic-Indian peoples was based on hunting, fishing, and gathering plants. During the late Archaic period, some groups began living in semi-permanent or permanent settlements, and Archaic-Indian peoples seasonally camped along the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers (Virginia Department of Historic Resources 2018).
c. 1200 BCE	1600 CE		Woodland Period. Native Americans, including the Nacotchtank people, established organized villages and trade networks along the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers. At this time, Native American groups began farming and cultivating crops (Hanna 2001: 4; NPS Native Peoples of Washington, DC).

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
c. 1650s	c. 1650s		In the mid 17th century, tobacco became an increasingly important cash crop and plantations developed in the colonies of Maryland and Virginia, including the land of the future capital city. Enslaved laborers harvested the tobacco. The site was located in the Jamaica tract depicted in the 1791 map representing tracts of land in Prince George's County, Maryland, conveyed to the federal city (Mann 2019).
1790	1790		July 16. The Residence Act of 1790 established the District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.) as the nation's capital. Maryland and Virginia ceded the area within a 10-square-mile diamond, laid out by Andrew Ellicott and others, to the federal government. Pierre L'Enfant created a plan for the new federal city that featured a network of broad diagonal axes superimposed over a grid system of east-west and north-south streets (Robinson and Associates 2016: 101-102).

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
1798	1798	June 19. The Office of the Surveyor platted and recorded Square 242 in Washington, D.C., the future site of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House and surrounding neighborhood. Book 1 of the 1798 District of Columbia Office of the Surveyor described Square 242 as being bounded by N Street on the south, Fourteenth Street on the west, Rhode Island Avenue on the northwest, Vermont Avenue on the southeast, and by the arc of a circle on the northeast (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 45).	
1800	1800		The federal government officially moved from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C. The Washington, D.C., area was largely undeveloped at this time, consisting primarily of fields, woods, and farmland. The building stock consisted of "109 habitable brick houses and 263 wooden" (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 17).
c. 1800	c. 1899		The Logan Circle area, previously called Blodgett's Wilderness, consisted of sparsely settled farmland during much of the 19th century (National Park Service 2000: 6).
1853	1853	February. Book B of the 1853 District of Columbia Office of the Surveyor recorded that Anton and Alfred Heitmuller subdivided Square 242 into 17 lots. The Heitmullers operated a dairy farm within Square 242 and surrounds (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 45).	
1861	1870	An 1861 map drawn by Albert Boschke illustrates the extent of residential development prior to the Civil War in Washington, D.C. Most of the blocks in the greater Logan Circle area, including Square 242, were still largely undeveloped, with construction limited to the area south of O Street. The population of Washington, D.C., grew substantially over the following decade after the end of the Civil War (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 45).	

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
1872	1873	Vermont Avenue Northwest (N.W.), between Massachusetts Avenue and Logan Circle, was paved with wood by 1872. By the following year, Logan Circle was graded, paved with concrete, and planted with grass and trees. These improvements were led by Alexander Robey "Boss" Shepherd, an influential and controversial figure who acted as head of public works from 1871 until 1873, and as D.C. governor from 1873 through 1874 (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 45; National Park Service 2000: 65).	
1873	1873	May 15. Within Square 242, F. Olmstead subdivided portions of Lots 14, 15, and 16 into Lots 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, and 61. Lot 55, the future site of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House, was the largest lot within the Olmstead subdivision (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 46).	
1874	1874	William S. Roose, a merchant and developer, purchased Lots 55, 56, 60, and 61 of the Olmstead subdivision (Land Records, Deed Books, Liber 720, Folio 120). The real estate assessment for the fiscal year 1873-74 indicates that Lot 55 had not yet been developed (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 20).	
1875	1875		July 10. Mary Jane McLeod (hereafter referred to as Bethune, under her married name) was born in Mayesville, South Carolina, to Patsy (McIntosh) and Samuel McLeod. Mary spent her early years on a small farm owned by her family (Hanson 2003: 4).

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
c. 1875	c. 1875	A real estate assessment from 1873-1874 indicates that Lot 55 in Square 242 was unimproved. In 1876, the property was valued at $8,000, and the assessment included a "brick" house (Taxbook, Washington City, Volume 146 [1875] and Assessors Returns, City of Washington, Volume 17 [1875-76]). HABS documentation suggests that James Robbins, a carpenter and contractor, may have constructed the building at 1318 Vermont Avenue N.W. within Lot 55 in the Logan Circle neighborhood of Washington, D.C., in 1875. Robbins, who owned nearby lots, likely built the house for real estate developer James S. Roose. No original plans or drawings have been located for the house. John J. McElhone purchased the property from Roose for $20,000. The deed was recorded on June 10, 1875, and the terms of sale were $12,000 cash and "a house and lot valued at $8,000." McElhone used the house as a single-family residence. The property is described in deed records as, "all that certain piece or parcel of ground or real estate situate and lying in the said City of Washington and known and described as being lot numbered fifty five (55) in Olmstead's recorded subdivision of lots" (Deed recorded 10 June 1875, Deed Books, Liber 786, Folio 294, Land Records). While the precise date of construction is unknown and the tax record from 1875 indicates that the lot was undeveloped, it is believed that the house at 1318 Vermont Avenue N.W. was constructed in 1875 (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 20).	
1875	1887	Workers constructed a two-story brick carriage house with a slate or tin roof on Lot 55 at 1318 Vermont Avenue N.W., behind (west of) the main residence (Babin 2019: 7-5).	
1882	1886		Bethune attended Trinity Presbyterian Mission School near her home in South Carolina, beginning her formal education (Babin 2019: 8-31).

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
1887	1887	A map created by G.M. Hopkins dated 1887 indicates that by this date, Vermont Avenue N.W. was paved with asphalt or concrete, water and sewer lines had been laid, and the street was illuminated with streetlamps. McElhone still owned Lot 55, with the house recorded as brick construction with a front bay and a "stable" at the rear of the lot (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 48).	
1888	1888	An 1888 Sanborn map depicts the house at 1318 Vermont Avenue N.W. as a two-story brick rowhouse with a bay and a basement. The map depicts empty lots at 1310, 1312, and 1322 Vermont Avenue N.W. (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 20).	
1888	1903	An 1891 description of the house describes the residence as a three-story dwelling, in contrast with the 1888 Sanborn map, which indicates a two-story building. A 1903 Sanborn map describes the building as three stories; thus, a third story may have been added between 1888 and 1903. Alternatively, the 1888 map description may not have considered the mansard roof as a full third story. It is also likely that the rear ell was enlarged from two stories to three at some point between 1888 and 1903 (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 22).	
1891	1891	A case file described the property at 1318 Vermont Avenue N.W. as follows: "The lot is 23 feet in width and has an average depth of 138.832 feet, front on Vermont Avenue between N and O street, N.W., and has on it a large three-story brick dwelling, with 14 rooms, 2 bathrooms, 2 pantries and cellar, all the modern conveniences and improvements, and with all its appointments is in excellent condition, and is located in an attractive neighborhood. It has a two-story brick stable, with a servant room in the rear" (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 22).	
1891	1912	Frank G. and Joanna D. Carpenter purchased the property at 1318 Vermont Avenue N.W. Carpenter was a well-known journalist (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 28; National Park Service 2000: 66).	

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
1892	1892	Maps indicate that by 1892, Square 242 was nearly completely developed (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 28-29).	
1893	1893		Bethune finished high school at Scotia Seminary in North Carolina (National Park Service 2000: 55)
1895	1895		Bethune completed studies at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. Bethune sought to serve as a missionary in Africa but was refused acceptance by the Presbyterian Mission Board on account of her race. Bethune returned to South Carolina and taught at the Trinity Presbyterian Mission School, followed by a teaching position at the Industrial and Normal Institute in Augusta, Georgia (Babin 2019: 8-31).
1897	1897		Mary McLeod married Albertus Bethune (Babin 2019: 8-32).
1897	1898		Bethune taught at Kindell Institute in Sumter, South Carolina (National Park Service 2000: 55).
1898	1898		The Bethunes moved to Savannah, GA, to further Albertus's business career in menswear sales (National Park Service 2000: 55).
1899	1899		Mary McLeod Bethune gave birth to her only child, Albert McLeod Bethune (Babin 2019: 8-32).
1899	1899		The Bethune family relocated to Palatka, Florida, where Bethune established a Presbyterian Missionary School (National Park Service 2000: 55).
1903	1903	A 1903 Sanborn Map identifies 1318 Vermont Avenue N.W. as a three-story brick rowhouse with a frame cornice, front bay, and slate or metal roof. The Carriage House is labeled as a two-story brick structure with a slate or metal roof (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 50).	

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
1904	1904		Bethune established the Daytona Normal and Industrial School for Negro Girls in Daytona, Florida; Bethune modeled it after the Scotia Seminary. The school initially served five girls, aged eight to twelve. Within ten years of the school's establishment, Bethune graduated her first class of eighth graders (Babin 2019: 8-32).
1910	1920		1910s. Bethune joined the African American women's club movement. The clubs provided a platform to express local and regional concerns and address issues impacting Black women. The clubs allowed Bethune to develop her leadership skills and make national connections (Babin 2019: 8-33).
1912	1912	The Carpenters sold the house at 1318 Vermont Avenue N.W. to Alphonso and Anna Gravalles. The Gravalles rented out rooms and operated a tailoring business from the house (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 28).	
1915	1915		Bethune expanded the Daytona School to serve high school students with her first class graduating in 1915 (Babin 2019: 8-32).
1917	1924		Bethune served as the first president of the Florida Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, expanding her leadership (Babin 2019: 8-33).
1918	1918	September. The Gravalles received a building permit to install two beams over the door of the Carriage House, described in the permit as a two-story brick structure with a tin roof (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 25).	
1920	1929		President Calvin Coolidge appointed Bethune to the National Council Welfare Commission as an expert on education for African American youth (Hanson 2003: 4, 118).

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
1920	1925		Bethune served as president of the Southeastern Federation of Colored Women's Club (Babin 2019: 8-33).
1923	1923		The Daytona Normal and Industrial School for Negro Girls merged with the Cookman Institute, founded in 1872 in Jacksonville, Florida, as a school for African American boys. Renamed the Daytona-Cookman Collegiate Institute, the school became the first fully accredited four-year college for African American students in Florida, with 42 faculty members and 800 students (Hanson 2003: 4).
1923	1942		Bethune served as president of Daytona-Cookman Collegiate Institute (Hanson 2003: 4).
1924	1928		Bethune served as president of the 10,000-member National Association of Colored Women (NACW). During her tenure as president, Bethune revised the constitution, grew the organization, undertook fundraising activities, and strengthened communication between its members. Through this position, Bethune attended meetings of the National Council of Women of the United States, which expanded her contacts and leadership across the United States (Babin 2019: 8-48).
1927	1927		Bethune met Eleanor Roosevelt for the first time, establishing a lifelong friendship and working relationship (Babin 2019: 8-44).
1928	1928		As president of NACW, Bethune acquired the first national headquarters building for the organization at 12th and O Streets in Washington, D.C. (Babin 2019: 8-48).
1928	1928		President Calvin Coolidge named Bethune as a delegate to a Child Welfare Conference in Washington, D.C. (National Park Service 2000: 58).

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
1929	1929		President Herbert Hoover appointed Bethune as a member to the National Committee on Child Welfare and the Commission on Home Building and Home Ownership (Marx 2011).
1930	1930		March. Bethune met with 20 women at Daytona-Cookman Collegiate Institute and suggested the establishment of a new council of Black women's organizations. At the time, the vision for a new organization did not come to fruition (Babin 2019: 8-35).
1931	1931		Founders renamed Daytona-Cookman Collegiate Institute to Bethune-Cookman College (Babin 2019: 8-32).
1932	1932		Bethune-Cookman College received regional accreditation as a junior college (National Park Service 2000: 56).
1934	1934	September 19. Alfonso Gravalles received a permit to "erect open rear porch, brick and steel framing, wood floor and roof" on the west elevation of the residence at 1318 Vermont Avenue N.W. and, as part of the same project, to "convert one kitchen window to door, no toilet or bath windows affected." The architect is listed as W. Eaton. The porch had an open construction with "brick and steel framing, wood floor and roof." It measured the entire length of the back wall of the house and extended 8 feet 6 inches into the back of the lot (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 51-52; National Archives and Records Administration, Permit No. 174494).	
1935	1935		Bethune moved to Washington, D.C. (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 31).

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
1935	1935		December 5. Bethune gathered leaders from 14 Black women's organizations and founded the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW or the Council), with the overall purpose of uniting Black women's organizations across the country as a collective voice. Bethune was unanimously voted president of the newly established Council. As an organization of organizations, the Council sought to address issues of segregation and discrimination in education, employment, health, housing, civil rights, and international relations (Babin 2019: 8-36). The first office of the NCNW was in Bethune's living room in Washington, D.C., at 1812 Ninth Street, N.W. (National Park Service 2000: 59).
1935	1935		The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) awarded Bethune the Spingarn Medal, the highest honor given by the organization, in honor of Bethune's leadership and service to education (Babin 2019: 8-37).
1935	1935		President Franklin Roosevelt appointed Bethune to the 35-member National Advisory Committee of the National Youth Administration (NYA), part of the Works Progress Administration. The primary purpose of the agency was to help young people find employment during the Great Depression and later during World War II (Babin 2019: 8-45).
1935	1944		Bethune served as a Special Advisor on Minority Affairs for President Franklin D. Roosevelt (Babin 2019: 8-28).

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
1935	c. 1950		Beginning in 1935, organizations and institutions recognized Bethune's leadership and growing influence by awarding her several honorary degrees and awards. During a 15-year period, Bethune received honorary doctoral degrees from eight colleges and universities: LL.D. from: Lincoln University, Oxford, PA, 1935 Howard University, Washington, D. C., 1942 Atlanta University, Atlanta, GA, 1943 Wiley College, Marshall, TX, 1943 Doctor of Humanities from: Bennett College, Greensboro, NC, 1936 West Virginia State College, Institute, WV, 1947 Rollins College, Winter Park, FL, 1949 Benedict College, Columbia, SC, 1950 (National Park Service 2000: 58)
1936	1936		July 25. The NCNW officially incorporated (Babin 2019: 8-37).
1936	1942		Bethune simultaneously administered Bethune-Cookman College, the NCNW, and worked for the NYA. As explained by historian Bettye Collier-Thomas, "These positions, her friendship with Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, and her location in the nation's capital solidified her power and propelled her and the National Council of Negro Women to a position of national and international importance" (Babin 2019: 8-45).
1936	1944		Bethune served as Director of Negro Affairs at the NYA (Babin 2019: 8-28).

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
1936	1945		Established August 7. Bethune organized and chaired President Roosevelt's Federal Council on Negro Affairs, known as the "Black Cabinet." The Black Cabinet originally consisted of Bethune and seven other Black government employees who advised President and Mrs. Roosevelt on issues relating to African Americans. The informal group met in Bethune's home and worked to support New Deal programs and advance efforts towards nondiscrimination in government jobs and facilities (Watts 2020: 221; Babin 2019: 8-46).
1936	1951		Bethune served as president of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (Babin 2019: 8-28).
1938	1948		Bethune served as the vice president for the Southern Conference for Human Welfare (Smith 2003: 302).
1939	1939		President Roosevelt selected Bethune as the Director of the Division of Negro Affairs. The directorship represented the highest federal appointment held by an African American woman to that time. Bethune influenced the agency to adopt non-discriminatory employment policies; it eventually employed 27 African American administrative assistants at the state level (National Park Service 2000: 60).
1940	1940		At the annual NCNW meeting in 1940, the Council agreed that a national headquarters should be established in Washington, D.C., that would be a "memorial and shrine in honor of those pioneer Negro women leaders who hewed a pathway for us to follow" and a place to "house and preserve historical archives depicting the history of Negro women." The NCNW established a committee to begin planning for a headquarters building (Babin 2019: 8-48).

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
1940	1955		Beginning in 1940 and continuing until her death in 1955, Bethune served as vice president of the NAACP (National Park Service 2000: 60).
1941	1941		June 12. Alphonso Gravalles died (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 53).
1942	1942		Bethune resigned as president of Bethune-Cookman College in order to focus on her work with the NYA. However, the NYA lost its funding 15 months later (Babin 2019: 8-47).
1943	1943	Bethune and the NCNW purchased the property at 1318 Vermont Ave N.W. (the Council House) for $15,500 as the first permanent headquarters for the Council and moved into the facility in December of 1943. The Council House also served as the residence for Bethune from 1943 to 1949 (Deed recorded 22 December 1943, Deed Books, Liber 7923, Folio 318, District of Columbia, Recorder of Deeds). The Council hired contractor Henry Byrd to complete work throughout the Council House for $2,950. Improvements included wallpapering rooms; renovating the bathroom on the second floor and adding a bathroom on the third floor; installing new radiators; and other minor work (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 53-55; Babin 2019: 8-49, 50).	
1943	1949	1940s. The Council House hosted over 4,000 visitors during the 1940s, including 62 overnight guests who stayed on the third floor of the Council House (Babin 2019: 8-51).	
1943	1966	The Council House served as the NCNW's headquarters until a fire damaged the building in 1966. The Council headquarters thereafter moved to Dupont Circle (Babin 2019: 8-77, 78).	

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
1944	1944	October 15. Following multi-day Council meetings, the NCNW officially dedicated the Council House with a ceremony that included Mary McLeod Bethune and Eleanor Roosevelt as speakers, among others, including: Agnes E. Meyer, journalist, philanthropist, education activist, and wife of Eugene Meyer, owner and publisher of the Washington Post; and Charlotte Hawkins Brown, educator and founder of the Freeman Palmer Memorial Institute. For the occasion, 400 guests gathered at 1318 Vermont Avenue N.W. in the front yard and on the street in front of the Council House. Photographs depict a square platform in the front yard upon which stood a microphone for the ceremony's speakers. Speakers and program participants sat in folding chairs in a semi-circle on the higher ground of the front yard facing Vermont Avenue N.W. The front yard appears to be maintained turf. There is no urn present in the front yard, and the wrought iron fence is visible in photographs (Babin 2019: 8-51, 52).	
1945	1950	The NCNW held annual receptions at the Council House for recipients of its "Roll of Honor," an awards program honoring women in their efforts towards equality (Jones 2013: 91).	
1946	1946	June 30. The NCNW held a "National Archives Day" to advance its goal of collecting material for its archives on Black women's history (Babin 2019: 8-57).	
1946	1947		Bethune again served as president of Bethune-Cookman University (National Park Service 2000: 56).
1948	1948	The NCNW dedicated a library and archives, located in the board room of the Council House, to Mrs. S.E. Bailey, who donated $1,000 for the development of a historical exhibit on Black women (Babin 2019: 8-57).	
1949	1949	The NCNW amended its constitution to include the mission to "preserve information particularly affecting women" (Babin 2019: 8-57).	

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
1949	1949	Bethune stepped down as president of the NCNW due to failing health. Bethune retired to her house in Daytona, Florida, on the campus of Bethune-Cookman University. By the end of her tenure as president, the Council was the largest federation of African American women's clubs, including 22 national organizations (National Park Service 2000: 60).	
1949	1953		Dr. Dorothy Ferebee assumed the role of president of NCNW. Ferebee was head of medical services at Howard University (Babin 2019: 8-27).
1951	1951	April 17. A photograph shows the front yard of the Council House comprised of turf, with the square pedestal visible in the front yard (MLK Library files, The Washington Afro-American, April 17, 1951, page unknown).	
1953	1957		Vivian Carter Mason served as president of NCNW (Babin 2019: 8-68).
1953	1953		Bethune established the Mary McLeod Bethune Foundation as a nonprofit to promote her social and educational ideals (Babin 2019: 8-64).
1953	1955	Rehabilitation work on the Council House included: general cleaning; painting; plastering and painting the kitchen; electrical repairs; replacing the carpet; replacing the linoleum office floors; repairing the roof; replacing windowpanes; and painting the front of the building (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 35).	
1955	1955		May 18. Mary McLeod Bethune died from a heart attack at the age of 79 (Babin 2019: 8-65).
1957	1997		Dorothy Irene Height served as president of the NCNW. Height led the organization during the 1960s, as racial violence in the South increased and the Council shifted its focus to the Civil Rights Movement and the War on Poverty (Babin 2019: 8-27).

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
1960	1966	Improvements to the Carriage House during the 1960s included: installing new doors and aluminum casement windows; replacing the roof; replacing damaged roof rafters; installing a kitchen and bathroom on the ground floor; and installing new interior wood steps. The work also included new heating, plumbing, and electric systems, and air conditioning (Babin 2019: 7-20; Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 77).	
1962	1963	The NCNW planned to modernize the façade of the Council House and hired architect David R. Byrd to redesign the building. Byrd's plan called for re-facing the building with a Gothic-style façade in marble, stained glass, and aluminum. 300 Council delegates approved the design at their annual meeting in 1963. Neighbors opposed the plan, which was never carried out (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 74-75).	
1963	1963	August 28. NCNW members participated in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, illustrating their shift toward more direct action in the Civil Rights Movement. Photographs depicting NCNW members leaving the Council House for the march show the front yard consisted of well-maintained turf. The square pedestal is visible in front yard, and no urn is present (Babin 2019: 8-26, 73).	
1965	1965	The NCNW received a building permit for work on the Carriage House. Work included: updates to the roof and windows; masonry and framing repairs; installing dry wall; interior and exterior painting; installing a new metal gutter and fascia board at the roofline; installing a new concrete floor on the ground level; replacing damaged wood rafters; installing a kitchen and bathroom on the ground floor; and installing new interior wood steps; in addition to other updates. Of the three permits filed, one included building a seven-foot brick fence in the rear courtyard. This fence may have been a privacy fence between neighboring properties (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 35-36).	

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
1966	1966	January 27. A fire broke out in the basement of the Council House, causing extensive damage. The Council insurance covered the fire damage but did not cover the water damage from the firefighters and the pipes that burst thereafter without heat in the building. A fire report recorded that "smoldering oil covered the floor of the basement–firemen had to use masks to enter. The very speed with which they fought off explosion spread [spared?] the building damage. They cut through the living room floor, tore down doors and released heavy fumes of oil, still gripping walls throughout the house..." (Babin 2019: 8-77).	
1966	1974	Following the fire, the NCNW moved out of the Council House (Babin 2019: 8-77).	
1966	1966		March. After occupying a temporary location at 1110 Vermont Avenue NW, the NCNW relocated its headquarters to 1346 Connecticut Avenue, in the Dupont Circle neighborhood (Babin 2019: 8-78).
1972	1972	The Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places listed the Logan Circle Historic District in the National Register (NRHP# 72001426). The Historic District includes 1318 Vermont Ave N.W. as a contributing resource.	

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
1974	1978	The NCNW began efforts to renovate the Council House, with plans completed in 1974. The work was accomplished between 1975 and 1977, designed by Turner Associates, Architects and Planners and carried out by AMSC, Inc., a local contractor. The work included: repairing and replacing windows; replastering walls; refinishing floors; removing partition walls; removing existing radiators and light fixtures; replacing doors; and adding a new tin roof and central heating/ air. The exterior of the Council House was painted at this time. The Carriage House was converted into an office and storage space. The architectural drawings from this effort do not include detailed representations of the front yard or rear courtyard areas (HABS Data sheets 1993: 5; Babin 2019: 7-8, 20). Photographs from this time depict the front yard in turf with a sign for AMSC, Inc. in the front yard near the square pedestal. The basement windows are boarded over.	
1974	1974		December 2. Bethune's home in Florida was listed as a National Historic Landmark (Mary McLeod Bethune Home, Bethune-Cookman College Campus, Volusia County, Florida, NRHP# 74000655_NHL).
1975	1975	A photograph of the Council House exterior in 1975 depicts the bay windows and basement windows boarded over, and the visible portion of the front yard appears to be in turf (HABS Document No. DC-530-1).	
1975	1975	Washington, D.C., listed the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House within the DC Inventory of Historic Sites.	
1977	1977	The NCNW resumed operations in the Council House (even as its main headquarters remained in Dupont Circle) and reactivated its preservation efforts for archival materials and hired Dr. Bettye Collier-Thomas to direct the Bethune Historical Development Project to develop a museum and archives for Black women's history (Babin 2019: 8-79).	

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
1978	1978	Architect Ward Bucher prepared drawings for the Carriage House and Courtyard, titled "Proposed Plans: Carriage house, Court, and Front Yard" and dated September 10, 1978. The plans for the front yard and rear courtyard areas do not appear to have been executed. The Front Yard Plan drawing depicts an urn on the square pedestal within the front lawn. The urn and pedestal are surrounded by four plants, spaced evenly around the urn, each in line with one side of the urn pedestal (and with the overall property lines), creating an organic shaped cross. The four plantings and urn are encompassed by a curvilinear line, indicating a planting bed. This is the first time the urn is represented. The Ground Floor Carriage House and Court drawing depicts a central water feature with semi-circular planters on either side (east and west). There is a curvilinear planter along the north property line that mimics the shape of the semi-circular central planters, and a smaller planter to the south. There is a planter on the east side of the rear courtyard, separated from the Council House by the rear patio. There is a walkway along the east elevation (front) of the Carriage House and along the south side of the rear courtyard leading to the Council House. One bench is depicted in the southwest corner of the rear courtyard. The drawings include a building section of this proposal of the rear courtyard, depicting the fountain and plantings (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 601).	
1979	1979	November 11. The Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial Museum and National Archives for Black Women's History officially opened. The museum occupied the Council House, with the archives located in the Carriage House. A low rectangular sign in the front yard by the bay window was likely added around this time; it read: Bethune Museum - Archives (Babin 2019: 7-5).	

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
1979	1979	Around the time of the opening of the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial Museum and National Archives for Black Women's History, workers undertook projects in the front yard of the Council House. Alterations included the addition of a metal cast-iron urn in the front lawn, atop the square pedestal (Babin 2019: 7-18). The NCNW contracted blacksmith Nol Putnam for the restoration of the front wrought iron metal gate, which included: the fabrication and installation of approximately half of the gate that was missing; cleaning and straightening the existing half; and installing replacement finials for those missing along the gate and fence (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 89-90).	

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
1980	1981	The NCNW began a major restoration of the property with funding from grants from the D.C. Department of Housing and Community Development and the Department of the Interior's Heritage Conservation and Recreation Services, as well as from the NCNW's general funds. The Bethune Historical Development Project, directed by Dr. Collier-Thomas, coordinated the effort. In an effort to return the Council House to an appearance reminiscent of the 1880s, the NCNW hired specialist William Seale to "consult and advise on the historical accuracy, design, furnishings, colors, window and wall hangings, floor coverings, lighting, and decoration." Not all of the planned work took place during this time due to budget limitations. Grounds work completed as part of the major restoration work at the Council House included: replacement of the balustrade (which was to be removed, sand blasted, and reinstalled); repair of the front stoop and lower walk stair; and landscaping. While there are references to possible work done in the rear yard according to a list of items that "should be done," there is no indication of what work in the rear yard was accomplished at this time. A list from approximately Sept 1981 regarding Phase 2 projects includes the following tasks (with notes): "8. Repair front walk (money waiting) 10. Landscape front yard (money waiting) 11. Landscape rear yard (decision from Dr. Thomas – how, what money?)"	

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
[cont'd]	[cont'd]	Other major work categories on the Council House at this time included: repointing the brick exterior and painting the exterior; exterior roof repair; window repair; repair of the first floor shutters; staining and refinishing wood work; cleaning and repairing plaster ornaments; removing fluorescent fixtures; replicating missing brackets; repairing built-in gutters and downspouts; and mortar analysis, in addition to substantial interior upgrades and alterations. The wooden entry doors were likely replaced with wrought iron entry doors during this time. The wrought iron doors were later removed around 2012. While not all of the initially planned work was accomplished due to budget constraints, a supplemental budget was approved for $25,000. According to a July 21, 1981, memorandum, the work to be accomplished included "landscape front yard" and "landscape rear yard." (Memorandum, Guy McElroy to Dr. Dorothy Height, 23 June 1981, National Park Service, Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site, DcWaMMB; BMA Records; Series 139, Box 101, Terrence Lamb Folder; Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 38-39).	

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
1981	1981	The Council hired Joan Brooks, a landscape designer who lived nearby at 1334 Vermont Avenue NW, to design a landscape plan for the Council House. Brooks communicated to Dr. Collier-Thomas that, "The enclosed landscape design reflects plants and designs of the Victorian era. It can be done in the summer or early Fall; finished, mulched and ready for the grand opening of the house. The cost for the entire project would be approximately $1,055. This includes the nursery fee, which would include a guarantee to replace dead plants within a year at one-half price, and my fee for the design, the finished drawing and the supervision of the actual work" (Joan Brooks to Dr. Bettye Thomas, 7 July 1981, National Park Service, Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site, DcWaMMB; BMA Records; Series 139, Box 101, Ms. Joan Brooks Folder; Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 95). Payment documents indicate that Joan Brooks provided a planting plan for the front yard. Additionally, there is a $900 expense voucher for "Landscaping for the NCNW Restoration Project, Back Yard" from October 10, 1981. There is no indication what type of work was done in the back yard area at this time. Plants on an October 15, 1981, request for payment for landscaping work include: Gumpo azalea (Rhododendron eriocarpum), Vinca, Pachysandra, Euonymus fortunei, and Euonymus sieboldii. Mulch and stepping stones were also purchased. Joan Brooks' 2017 obituary states that she "enhanced numerous urban parks and residential gardens in Washington, D.C., including the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House and National Historic Site" (Joan Brooks obituary, Washington Post, 2017).	

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
1982	1982	October 15. Congress designated the property as the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site (NHS), recognizing the significance of Bethune's legacy and the NCNW, the role the Council House played as the NCNW's first national headquarters, and the importance of the archives and museum in Black women's history. The legislation assured the "preservation, maintenance, and interpretation" of the Council House and the continuation of the museum and archives, which were "necessary for the continued interpretation of the history of black women in America" (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 41).	
1982	1982	October. The NCNW received a Historic Preservation Award from the Washington Chapter of the American Institute of Architects for the restoration project (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 100).	
1982	1982	The NCNW formally incorporated the museum and archives into a separate organization known as the Bethune Museum and Archives, Inc. (BMA). The NCNW continued to own the property while the Bethune Museum and Archives operated and maintained the National Historic Site (National Park Service 2000: 67).	
1982	1982		November 17. The Council and Secretary of the Interior approved a cooperative agreement between the two entities (National Park Service 2000: 67).

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
1984	1984	A 1984 one-sheet Garden Plan of the Council House rear courtyard, prepared by Brouse, contains representations of a plan, planting plan, and brick paving and edging details. The plan depicts a brick terrace courtyard, irregularly shaped planting beds along the south and north property lines (continuing around to the west along the front façade of the Carriage House), and a planter within the courtyard adjacent to the Council House porch/patio. The plan depicts chain link fence along the north and south property line to be faced with bamboo mats. A walkway between the planters leads from the rear brick courtyard to the entrance of the Carriage House. While the planters are similar to those currently in the rear courtyard, they are not the same and it is assumed that this plan was never executed. The 1984 planting list includes: **Shrubs** Azaleas 'Pink Pearl' (*Rhododendron 'Pink Pearl'*) Drooping laurel (*Leucothoe fontanesiana*) **Groundcover** Leather woodfern (*Dryopteris marginalis*) Sweet woodruff (*Galium odoratum*) Fragrant plantain lily (*Hosta plantaginea*) Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*) **Vines** Wintercreeper (*Euonymus fortunei*)	
1985	1985		March 5. The United States Postal Service issued a 22-cent stamp commemorating Bethune, in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the NCNW (Women on Stamps: Part 2, National Postal Museum, Smithsonian Institute).

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
1988	1989	With the help of federal funds, the NCNW completed an additional phase of building restoration beginning in 1988. The architect was Architectnique, with Terry Lamb acting as the restoration consultant. Exterior work in the front yard included: repairing the black and white marble front walkway and concrete; installing new brownstone steps at the front entry stoop; and refabricating the iron railing and gates. Work in the rear courtyard included: the installation of brick planters along the north (and continuing west) and south property lines; landscaping of new "period" plantings in the planters; laying black and white marble squares in a checkerboard pattern to match the front walkway in the area between the planters; the addition of the rear brick section in herringbone pattern on the west elevation of the Council House; and the addition of wood lattice privacy fences on the north and south property lines (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 101-102; Babin 2019: 7-18). The Historic Structure Report notes that "Landscaping consisted of replanting the rear yard and laying a marble patio to match the front walkway," suggesting that the rear courtyard had already been planted (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 43). The 1988 Architectnique drawings of "Enlarged Plan of Front Yard – Existing Conditions" show the existing conditions within the front yard, with the urn in the front lawn area, the wrought iron perimeter fence, wrought iron gate at the front walkway entrance, museum sign location near the bay window, and the front walkway with marble pavers (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 606).	

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
[cont'd]	[cont'd]	Work completed on the Council House at this time included the replacement of the tin roof, gutters, downspouts, and rotted wood framing beneath the roof. Workers stuccoed the west elevation of the Council House, and the kitchen door previously leading to the rear courtyard was sealed. Workers added a new one-story porch to the back of the Council House, spanning the width of the ell with a slightly sloping roof, supported by two fluted metal Doric columns. Workers installed new air-conditioning units on the roof of the ell (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 161). Work accomplished on the Carriage House included: the replacement of the roof, gutters, and downspouts; the replacement of the heating and air-conditioning system; the enlargement and replacement of the windows; and the installation of security grilles on the windows and doors. The interior was converted into a climate-controlled space to house the archives (HABS no. DC-775).	
1991	1991	December 11. Public Law 102-211 (105 Stat. 1652) authorized the National Park Service (NPS) to acquire and manage the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site to "preserve and interpret the life and work of Mary McLeod Bethune," to "preserve and interpret the history, lives, and contributions of African American women," and to "preserve and interpret the struggle for civil rights" in the United States. The legislation also created a 15-member Federal Advisory Commission for the NHS. The advisory commission participates in an advisory capacity and helped to develop the General Management Plan for the NHS.	

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
1993	1993	The Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) completed documentation for the Council House (HABS No. DC-775) and the Carriage House (HABS No DC-775-A), including photographs, measured drawings, and written narratives. The HABS written narrative describes the site as follows:*The house is set on a slight rise of land above street level. A black wrought iron fence, about 3' high, surrounds the front yard. Identical gates run along the sidewalk and around the yards of the neighboring buildings. Just inside the two arched wrought-iron gate doors is a short sidewalk with black and white marble squares laid in concrete in a checkerboard pattern. Three stone steps lead to the next sidewalk with the same checkerboard pattern. This walk leads to the front stoop. The entire walk has been restored. Flower beds line the perimeter of the yard and border a central lawn to the left of the front steps. In the center of the lawn stands a large black iron um on a pedestal. This planter is similar to one that was original to the site. The backyard has been completely redesigned.* The HABS drawing titled "Site Plan and First Floor Plan" depicts the front and rear yards of the Council House. The front yard includes: representations of the wrought iron fence; the urn location within the lawn area in front of the bay window; and the front walkway, divided by steps leading to the front entry stoop, with marble squares laid in concrete in a checkerboard pattern. The rear yard depicts the ell, the porch on the west wall of the Council House, the rear courtyard featuring marble squares laid in concrete in a checkerboard pattern, the L-shaped planter on the north property line, and two adjoining planters on the south property line.	

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
[cont'd]	[cont'd]	The HABS photographic documentation shows plants within the urn in the front yard and shrubs along the front fence line, approximately 3' in height. The Bethune Museum - Archives sign is located near the bay window. Photographic documentation of the rear yard shows all the planters full with shrubs, ground cover, and plants and vines growing on the lattice fences. Round tables with chairs are located in the rear courtyard (HABS no. DC-775 and DC-775-A-1).	
1994	1994		The Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places listed the Fourteenth Street Historic District in the National Register; it includes 1318 Vermont Ave N.W. as a contributing resource (NRHP# 94000992).
1994	1994	The NPS acquired 1318 Vermont Avenue N.W. and assumed stewardship of the cultural landscape. The NPS hired staff to manage the site the following year (National Park Service 2000: 9).	
1995	1995	October 1. The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site opened to the public as a museum dedicated to the interpretation of the life and legacy of Mary McLeod Bethune (National Park Service 2000: 9). Around this time, the NPS installed an oval-shaped sign adjacent to the front walkway. It featured decorative iron work details and reads: *Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site, Department of the Interior, National Park Service*. The low rectangular Bethune Museum - Archives sign seems to have been removed at this time. The NPS hosted an opening reception in the rear courtyard of the Council House. Images show the planters full with ground cover, vines, flowers, and shrubs. Images from the front yard show the front lawn planted with unidentified yellow flowers.	
1995	1995		The NCNW purchased its new headquarters on Pennsylvania Avenue N.W. (Babin 2019: 8-80).

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
2000	2000	The decorative iron fence around the Council House property was determined eligible as a contributing element to the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 104).	
2000	2000	The NPS completed a Final General Management Plan, Environmental Impact Study for the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site (National Park Service 2000).	
2000	2001	The NPS completed exterior repair and rehabilitation work on the Council House. Work consisted of: abating lead-based paint; removing mildew and fungus from the exterior walls; replacing rotted, deteriorated, or missing wood on the front elevation; rehabilitating the windows; repairing or replacing gutters and downspouts on the front elevation; repairing the parapet cover on the front elevation; restoring the masonry; and selectively replacing the slate on the mansard roof at the front elevation (Babin 2019: 7-8). Plan drawings for the exterior rehabilitation work show the front yard and rear courtyard area are similar to the conditions depicted in the HABS documentation. The front yard features the urn within the lawn area, and the walkway appears to be in checkerboard pattern and surrounded by the wrought iron fence. The rear yard depicts the rear courtyard with marble pavers and planters along the north and south property boundaries, in addition to wood fences along the north and south property boundaries (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 636.)	

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
2000	2020	NPS photographs taken at various dates between 2000 and 2020 depict the front yard and urn planted with various types of flowers, including tulips (*Tulipa*), pansies (*Viola × wittrockiana*), daffodils (*Narcissus*), or other flowers; at times, the turf is unplanted. The front yard appears to be primarily maintained in turf in more recent years. Undated photographs from this period also depict the urn ringed by a brick border. Between the urn and brick border are small landscaping rocks, while the area outside the brick border is mulched with planted flowers. NPS photographs of the rear courtyard show the planters planted with a range of undetermined flowers, shrubs, ground cover, and vines. Some photographs from this time period also show the rear courtyard with no plantings.	
2001	2001	A Determination of Eligibility established the Carriage House as a contributing element to the Logan Circle National Register Historic District ("Determination of Eligibility, National Capital Parks East," 30 July 2001. NPS ftp documents. Photocopy.)	
2003	2003	Workers replaced the roof of the Carriage House.	
2008	2008	Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP completed a Historic Structure Report (HSR) for the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS. Contemporary photographs show the front yard was planted with pansies (*Viola × wittrockiana*). The HSR's drawings, executed in 2007, depict the lawn area of the front yard with the urn in front of the bay window, atop the square pedestal (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008).	

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
2012 / 2013	2012 / 2013	The NPS removed the wrought iron entry doors (likely installed during the 1980/81 rehabilitation project) of the Council House and replaced them with wooden doors, resembling doors from the period of significance.	
2014	2014	As the Carriage House lacked a fire suppression system, the NPS moved the contents of the National Archives of Black Women's History from the Carriage House to the National Park Service's Museum Resource Center in Landover, Maryland (Babin 2019: 7-5).	
2014	2016	Preservation work to the Council House at this time included: the repair of the front façade; repointing of exterior masonry; and the repair of plumbing and drains (Babin 2019: 7-8).	
2015	2015	An update to the 2008 Historic Structure Report noted that on the front stoop, the "sandstone landing is exfoliating and crumbling at bottom surface; visible loss of mortar, separation and deterioration of collar joint between sandstone veneer and brick backup at cheek walls." The drawing also noted, "hollow cast iron balusters rusting around base; rail pieces out of alignment, baluster cap damage" (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2015 update).	
2016	2018	The NPS closed the Council House to the public to install a fire suppression and security system in the Council House to protect the building and its collections (Babin 2019: 7-8).	
2018	2018	A wooden fence composed of vertical panels replaced the lattice fence on the north property line of the Council House rear courtyard.	
2020	2021	Work on the Council House included replacing the roof and HVAC (PEPC 82850), graffiti removal on the Carriage House exterior facing the public alley (PEPC 105545).	
2020	2022	The NPS closed the Council House to the public due the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council House reopened in April 2022.	

Start Year	End Year	Site Events	Contextual Events
2022	2022	Work on the Council House included graffiti removal from the Carriage House (PEPC 110556), planting in the urn in the front yard (PEPC 109421), cutting of vines on the exterior of buildings (PEPC 110555), and dressing of the planting beds in the rear courtyard (PEPC 108707).	

Physical History

Pre-Colonial History and Early Colonization (11,000 BCE – 1789 CE)

Humans arrived in the Middle Atlantic Coastal Plain and Piedmont by 11,000 BCE (Louis Berger 2016: 6). The Paleo Indian period is defined as approximately 15000 to 8000 BCE, and the area now occupied by Washington, D.C., was home to Paleo Indian peoples who formed social groups that hunted deer and elk, gathered plants, and fished in the coastal plains along what are now called the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers, which were rich in natural resources (Virginia Department of Historic Resources 2018). Early in the period, coniferous forests of spruce (*Picea* sp.) and pine (*Pinus* sp.) trees were dominant. Deciduous trees, such as oak (*Quercus* sp.) and chestnut (*Castanea* sp.), became more prevalent as the climate slowly warmed in the mid-Atlantic.

The Archaic Period, spanning from approximately 8000 BCE through 1200 BCE, and commonly divided into Early, Middle, and Late sub-periods, was characterized by Archaic-Indian peoples beginning to live in semi-permanent or permanent settlements, with seasonal encampments along the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers (Virginia Department of Historic Resources 2018). Subsistence for Archaic-Indian peoples was based on hunting, fishing, and gathering plants. By the late Archaic period, the climate was warm and dry, supporting deciduous dominated forests. It is likely that early attempts at horticulture took place during this time.

Native Americans, including the Nacotchtank people, established organized villages and trade networks along the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers during the Woodland Period, spanning from approximately 1200 BCE to 1600 CE. At this time, knowledge of plant husbandry transferred from Piedmont groups to the middle Chesapeake, and Native American groups began farming the floodplains and cultivating crops, such as corn, beans, squash, and potatoes, demonstrating a greater reliance on horticulture. By the late Woodland period, they established large villages with economies based on maize agriculture; after 1300-1400 CE, stockaded villages, often dispersed, characterized the upper and middle Potomac. The confluence of two river systems may have been an important location for the exchange of ideas and trade of resources and materials across wide networks (National Park Service 2018).

In the years immediately preceding European settlement in 1608, Eastern Algonquin tribes inhabited the area around present-day Washington. The inner coastal plain of the Potomac River attracted a wide range of species, including herring, shad, salmon, and sturgeon, which sustained local tribes. Subsistence among Algonquian-speaking people also included hunting and foraging and slash-and burn agriculture. They cultivated corn, beans, gourds, pumpkins, and other crops—practices that continued after European contact (Louis Berger 2016: 24). Most of the tribes were centered on a single community of villages. By 1607, the tribes were coalescing into larger entities led by powerful chiefs—notably, Powhatan, who ruled in southeastern Virginia, and the Piscataway Tayac, or Emperor, who dominated Eastern Maryland (Louis Berger 2016: 24).

English colonizers claimed the area described in John Smith's accounts, and on June 20, 1632, King Charles I granted the land that would become Washington, D.C., to Cecilius Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore, who renamed the land Charles County (Riggs 1946/47: 250). In 1662, Lord Baltimore awarded the first patent in the region to George Thompson, a clerk of the Charles County Court. Thompson was granted 800

acres comprising three tracts: Duddington Manor, Duddington Pasture, and New Troy. These tracts, built upon the ancestral lands of the Nacotchtank (or Anacostan), comprised the majority of what would become the District of Columbia. As Calvert continued to grant patents at the confluence of the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers, by 1670, all the land in future Washington, D.C., had been claimed by colonists, forcibly pushing the Nacotchtank further from the Potomac region.

In the mid-17th century, tobacco became an increasingly important cash crop, and plantations developed in the colonies of Maryland and Virginia, including the area that would later become the capital city. As European colonization expanded in the Washington, D.C., area in the 1700s, the tobacco industry became increasingly formalized, and enslaved laborers harvested tobacco in the fields across the Potomac region.

In 1703, Ninian Beall received the first patent of land in the present-day neighborhood of Georgetown in Washington, D.C. This land had previously been inhabited by the Anacostan tribes and either taken by force or abandoned (Elder and Weldon 2018: 39). Beall, a Scotsman, was granted a 795-acre parcel he named the "Rock of Dumbarton" (Elder and Weldon 2018: 30). Several years later, the first known mention of a dwelling in present-day Washington, D.C., appeared in the will of Thomas Fletcher, who in 1714 purchased Widow's Mite from William Langworth's daughters, and built a house thought to be located near present-day 19th and M Streets (McNeil 1991: 37).

Towns emerged from the plantation society and in 1730, a warehouse for tobacco was constructed on the western bank of the Potomac River, which became part of the town of Alexandria, Virginia. The 1730 Inspection Act enforced quality control of tobacco and required the establishment of a "rolling house" every 12 to 14 miles. Two 40-foot tobacco houses were constructed in Georgetown in 1732. The addition of rolling houses and the establishment of taverns in the following years encouraged additional settlement in the growing port settlement of Georgetown (Elder and Weldon 2018: 30, 40). Georgetown, encompassing 60 acres and divided into 80 lots, was officially incorporated in 1751 as a tobacco port and shipping center—the only urban development in the area (Werner 1968 8-15). Tobacco remained the dominant crop in Georgetown until the early 19th century, when it was surpassed by grain (Werner 1968: 13).

The "Map Showing Tracts of Land in Prince George's County, Maryland, Conveyed for the Federal City and Ownership of the Land on June 28 and 29, 1791, when the first Trust Deeds were signed," depicts the land encompassing the future site of the capital city. This area comprised 30 large tracts of land belonging to merchant families who purchased the properties in anticipation of the establishment of the capital city. The future Logan Circle area, and the future site of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House in particular, was part of a large tract known as Jamaica. The Jamaica tract was transferred to John Peerce (sometimes spelled Peirce or Pearce) in 1687.

Development of 1318 Vermont Avenue NW (1790 - 1942)

The Residence Act of 1790 authorized President George Washington to select the location for the permanent capital of the country. Washington established the District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.) on a diamond-shaped tract at the confluence of the Potomac River and the Eastern Branch (Anacostia River). Access to trade routes, also important to the Nacotchtanks, was one of the reasons Washington chose the location of the capital city. Additionally, those who supported siting the capital city between two slave-holding states believed that the federal government would guarantee protection of the institution of slavery. Maryland and Virginia ceded the 100 square miles of land to the federal government (Robinson and Associates 2016: 101-102).

Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant, a French artist and engineer who had formed a friendship with George Washington while serving in the Revolutionary War, requested the honor of planning the new capital. L'Enfant's final design encompassed approximately 6,111 acres, an area that was double the combined area of colonial Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. The area within the boundaries of L'Enfant's plan

was largely agricultural or undeveloped, giving the federal city's founders the unique opportunity to create an entirely new capital city (Leach and Barthold 1997: VIII.7).

After surveying the site, L'Enfant developed a plan that featured ceremonial spaces and grand radial avenues inspired by Baroque city planning, while respecting the natural contours of the land in the manner of picturesque English garden design. L'Enfant's plan drew on both European and colonial traditions, transforming the practicality of the ubiquitous American grid through a more profound native understanding of the European Baroque style (Comeau 2000: 47).

Notations on L'Enfant's original 1791 plan explain how he first chose the location for significant buildings and squares, including the sites for the President's House and Congress. They were located on small, centrally located hilltops whose higher elevations provided "the most advantageous ground, commanding the most extensive prospects" (Bednar 2006: 11). Connections between prominent sites were established via wide, diagonal avenues—oriented NW to SE and NE to SW—which L'Enfant specified should be grand and lined with trees, to emphasize reciprocal views (Miller 2002: 32-4).

On top of this, L'Enfant overlaid an orthogonal grid of streets, oriented in the cardinal directions. The size of individual blocks varied, ranging from small squares to larger rectangles. While the diagonals would provide sweeping vistas toward monuments and significant buildings, the intersection of the streets and the avenues would create opportunities for ornamental green spaces filled with fountains, obelisks, or statues dedicated to military and political heroes (Leach and Barthold 1997: VIII.7-8). The entire plan encompassed the area between the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers, beginning at their convergence and extending north toward present-day Florida Avenue, which was originally named Boundary Street (Bednar 2006: 11-12).

Andrew Ellicott and Benjamin Banneker, working under the direction of the D.C. Commissioners, marked out a diamond-shaped area, measuring ten miles on each side, and encompassing territory in Maryland and Virginia, including the forks of the Potomac River and its Eastern Branch, which would eventually be renamed as the Anacostia River. Forty boundary stones, laid at one-mile intervals, established the boundaries based on celestial calculations made by Banneker, a self-taught astronomer of African descent, and one of the few free Black men living in the vicinity (Leach and Barthold 1997: VIII.7).

The first sale of federal lots in the city of Washington took place in October 1791. Believing the sale would hinder the city's development, L'Enfant refused to furnish his plan for use. The sale was a failure, with only 35 of the potential 10,000 potential lots sold. Under pressure from the D.C. Commissioners, President Washington relieved L'Enfant of his position and retained Andrew Ellicott to reproduce a city plan based on L'Enfant's original. Ellicott's map largely followed the L'Enfant Plan, the most notable change being his straightening of Massachusetts Avenue. Streets and avenue names first appeared on Ellicott's plan, although the convention of naming avenues after states in the union (e.g. Vermont Avenue) is thought to have been originally conceived by L'Enfant (Leach and Barthold 1997: VIII.9-10). In 1792, Ellicott and Banneker set to work implementing the final plan, focusing on the area between the President's House and the Capitol. Their work continued into the 19th century.

In 1800, the federal government officially moved from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Washington, D.C. At this time, the Washington, D.C., area was largely undeveloped, consisting primarily of woods and maintained fields and farmland. The building stock was described as "109 habitable brick houses and 263 wooden [houses]" (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 17). Fields, woods, and farmland were used to grow tobacco, corn, and other crops.

Logan Circle was constructed in 1873. It was originally known as Iowa Circle, until Congress renamed it in 1930 for John Logan, Union general during the Civil War and a former United States Representative from Illinois. During much of the 19th century, Logan Circle consisted of sparsely settled farmland and was known as Blodgett's Wilderness (National Park Service 2000: 6). On June 19,

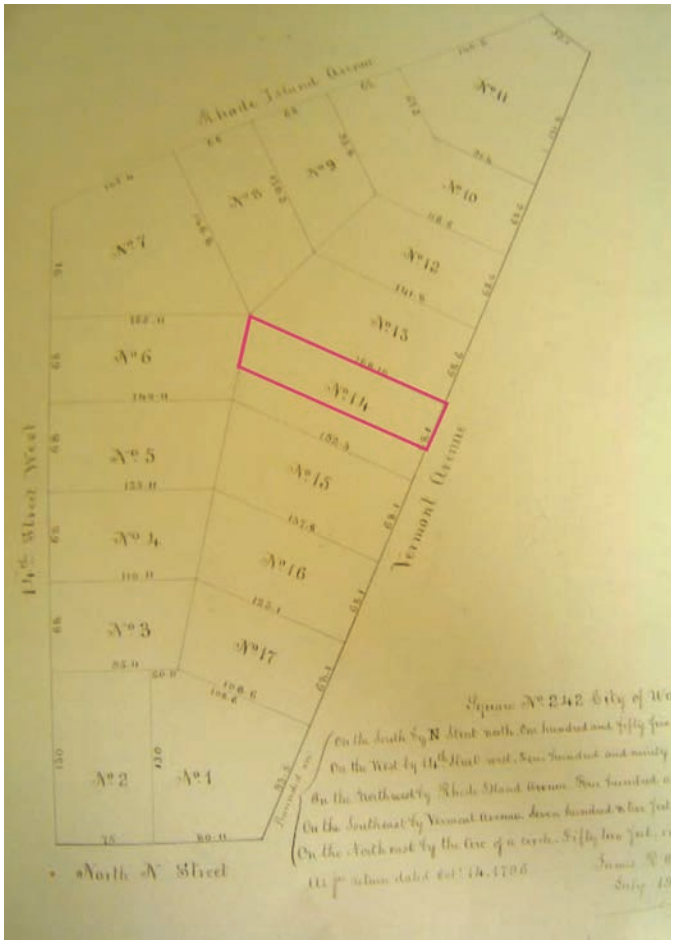


Figure 3: Square 242 as recorded by the D.C. Office of the Surveyor on June 19, 1798. The approximate location of the future Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site is annotated in red. (Source: Liber 1, Folio 242, Office of the Surveyor of the District of Columbia, reprinted in Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 18).

1798, the D.C. Office of the Surveyor platted and recorded Square 242 in Washington, D.C., the future location of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House and surrounding Logan Circle neighborhood (*see Figure 3*). The Surveyor described Square 242 as being bounded by N Street on south, Fourteenth Street on the west, by Rhode Island Avenue on the northwest, Vermont Avenue on the southeast, and the arc of a circle on the northeast (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 45).

In 1853, the District of Columbia Office of the Surveyor recorded that Anton and Alfred Heitmuller subdivided Square 242 into 17 lots. The Heitmullers, originally from Hanover, Germany, owned and operated a dairy farm (at an unknown location) in Square 242 and parcels of surrounding squares. The Heitmullers lived in the unimproved lots within Square 242, and owned a home at 1307 Fourteenth Street until early 1900s (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 45).

An 1861 map drawn by Albert Boschke depicts residential development in Washington, D.C., prior to the Civil War. Most of the blocks in the greater Logan Circle area, including Square 242, are depicted as largely undeveloped, with construction limited to the area south of present-day O Street.

The passing of the Compensated Emancipation Act in 1862 made Washington, D.C., a safe location for enslaved individuals from nearby Virginia and Maryland, with an estimated 40,000 formerly enslaved men, women, and children arriving in the capital region by the end of the Civil War in 1865. Camp Barker was established as a contraband camp–a term used by Union forces to describe formerly enslaved persons, who were considered captured enemy property–north of Logan Circle, in spring of 1862 (*see Figure 4*). The barracks used for housing were originally built for Union soldiers, and a hospital also served the community. The inhabitants of Camp Barker influenced the growth of the surrounding neighborhood, as Dawn Chitty,



Figure 4: Camp Barker, previously occupied by the Union Army, was converted to a "Contraband Camp" for formerly enslaved African Americans. Camp Barker was established by the War Department at 12th Street NW and R Street NW near present day Logan Circle in DC, 1862. (Source: Library of Congress. Control Number: 2014645761).

education director at the African American Civil War Museum, explains: "The significance of the camp is in what becomes of the inhabitants afterwards. Many of the inhabitants bought property and built homes, and many of them built homes around the Camp Barker site. This became U Street." An archeological survey of the contraband camp area was conducted behind the grounds of Garrison Elementary School in 2012 (Acosta 2013). Today, Garrison Elementary School features a memorial to Camp Barker that was dedicated in May 2019.

After the Civil War, the population of Washington, D.C., grew substantially over the following decade, propelled by the arrival of formerly enslaved men and women and the growth of the federal work force (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 45). The population of the city grew from approximately 75,000 in 1860 to 132,000 in 1870, with a respective boom in housing and infrastructure.

The topography of the Logan Circle neighborhood was established during the 1871-1874 Territorial Government period of city improvements led by Mayor Alexander Robey "Boss" Shepherd. Mayor Shepherd, an influential and controversial figure, acted as head of public works for the city from 1871 until 1873, and as D.C. governor from 1873 through 1874. Shepherd encouraged growth and development in the city through public works improvements, which had a significant impact on the future growth and development of the city with the addition of gas and water lines; public sewers; and street grading and paving. The latter of which was one of the first projects undertaken within the greater Logan Circle area. By 1872, Vermont Avenue between Massachusetts and Logan Circle was graded and paved with wood (Eig and Williams 1994: 8-13). By the following year, Logan Circle was constructed, graded, paved with concrete, and planted with grass and trees (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 45; National Park Service 2000: 65) (*see Figure 5*).



Figure 5: Aerial view of Logan Circle depicting paved roads and pathways, lighting, and plantings, 1909 (Source: Library of Congress. Control Number: 2001706302).

These infrastructural improvements in the Logan Circle neighborhood, including the addition of streetlights, street trees, and paved streets, established the area from 14th Street to Logan Circle as prime for residential development. Newly established streetcars that traveled along 14th Street, and throughout the northwest quadrant of the city, were an additional benefit that allowed residents to easily commute from the neighborhood to the city center. These infrastructural improvements occurred prior to the development of Vermont Avenue and led to the construction of speculative housing, primarily in the form of rowhouses marketed to the upper middle class.

In May of 1873, F. Olmstead subdivided a portion of Lot 14, and all of Lots 15 and 16, into Lots 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, and 61 within Square 242 (*see Figure 6*). (Research to date has not been able to confirm the identity of "F. Olmstead" beyond this information.) Lot 55, the largest lot within the Olmstead subdivision and the future site of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House, was an irregularly shaped parcel on Vermont Avenue (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 46). William S. Roose, a merchant and developer, purchased Lots 55, 56, 60, and 61 of the Olmstead subdivision the following year (Land Records, Deed Books, Liber 720, Folio 120).

Circa 1875, a house was constructed within Lot 55 of Square 242. This construction date is based on the window of time between an 1873-74 real estate assessment, which indicated that Lot 55 had not yet been developed, and a deed recorded on June 10, 1875, that referred to a house on the property (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 20). John J. McElhone, a stenographer for the House of Representatives, purchased the property from Roose for $20,000 in 1875; the terms of sale were $12,000 cash and "a house and lot valued at $8,000." The property is described in deed records as, "all that certain piece or parcel of ground or real estate situate and lying in the said City of Washington and known and described as being lot numbered fifty five (55) in Olmstead's recorded subdivision of lots in square numbered two hundred and forty two (242)...the said lot being one of the lots, which were conveyed to said William S. Roose by a certain deed duly recorded

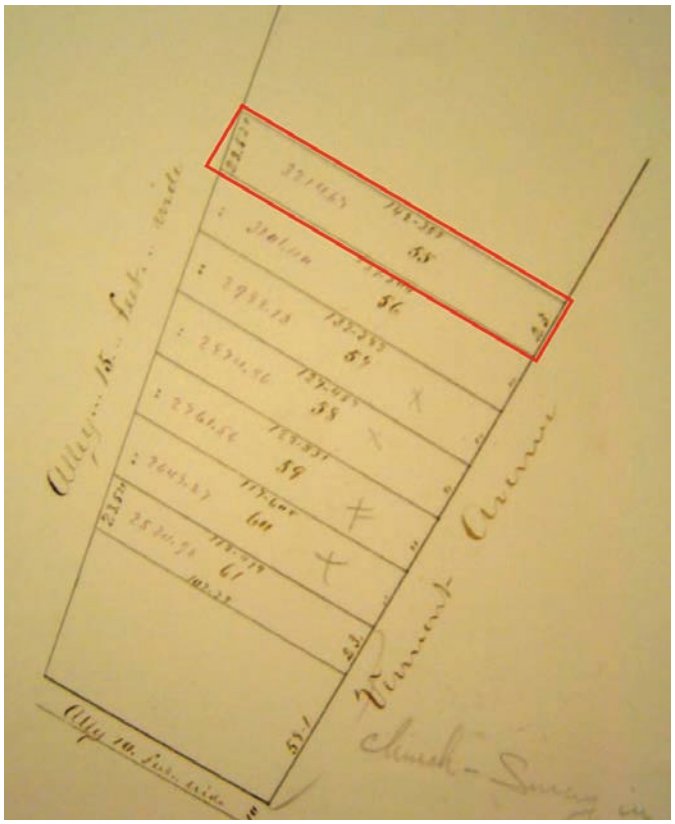


Figure 6: Map of Lots 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, and 61 from Olmstead's 1873 subdivision of Lots 14, 15, and 16 within Square 242. Lot 55, the furthest north, is the location of the future Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site and the largest lot in the subdivision (Source: Liber H.D.C, Folio 195, Office of the Surveyor of the District of Columbia, reprinted in Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 19).

in Liber No. 720 folio 120" (Deed recorded 10 June 1875, Deed Books, Liber 786, Folio 294, Land Records). By 1876, the property was valued at $8,000 with a "brick" house (Taxbook, Washington City, Volume 146 [1875] and Assessors Returns, City of Washington, Volume 17 [1875-76]).

No original plans or drawings have been located for the house at 1318 Vermont Avenue NW within Lot 55. The main building at 1318 Vermont Avenue NW is a three-story Second Empire-style brick row house with an L-shaped footprint, a raised basement, a projecting first story window bay, and a prominent mansard roof. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) documentation completed in 1993 suggests that James Robbins, a carpenter and builder who owned nearby lots, may have constructed the building; Robbins likely built the house for Roose, the real estate developer. 1314 and 1316 Vermont Avenue NW are very similar in appearance to house at 1318 Vermont Avenue and were likely constructed at the same time and by the same contractor.

Between 1875 and 1887, a two-story brick Carriage House, sometimes referred to as a stable on early maps, was constructed to the west/northwest of the main residence, at the rear of the property located at 1318 Vermont Avenue NW. The Carriage House had either a slate or tin roof at the time of construction (Babin 2019: 7-5).

A map created by G.M. Hopkins and dated 1887 indicates that by this date, Vermont Avenue NW was paved with asphalt or concrete, water and sewer lines had been laid, and the street was illuminated with streetlamps (*see Figure 7*). McElhone continued to own Lot 55, with the house recorded as brick construction, L-shaped in plan, with a front bay and a "stable" at the rear of the lot (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 48). This is the first time the Carriage House appears in area maps.

An 1888 Sanborn map depicts the house at 1318 Vermont Avenue NW as a two-story brick rowhouse with a basement (*see Figure 8*). The map depicts a cluster of rowhouse residences at 1314, 1316, 1318, and 1320 Vermont Avenue NW In addition to 1318, these are two houses immediately south of 1318 (1316 and 1316), and one house to the north of 1318 (1320). Immediately north of 1320 Vermont

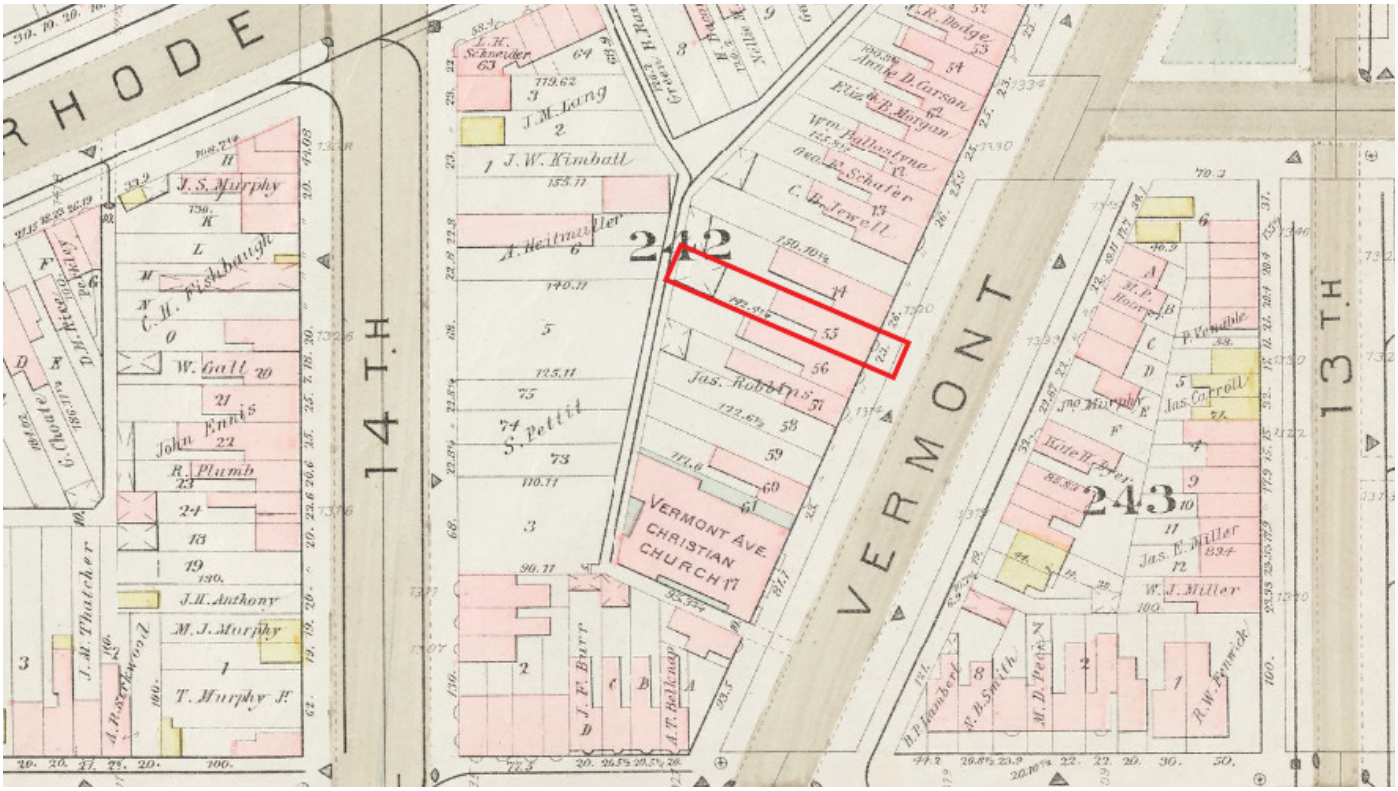


Figure 7: 1887 map by G.M. Hopkins depicting the buildings on Vermont Avenue, including buildings in lots 54, 55, 56, and 57. The future Council House is visible in lot 55 with the Carriage House at the rear of the lot (Source: DC Public Library, Washingtoniana Map Collection, Plate 10; dcpl_map_hopkins1887_12.tif).

Avenue NW is an empty lot (1322), and south of 1314 Vermont Avenue NW are two empty lots (1310 and 1312) (Library of Congress).

An 1891 Equity Case File (#12892, titled Green vs. McElhone, from the Records of District Courts) described the property at 1318 Vermont Avenue NW as follows:

> The lot is 23 feet in width and has an average depth of 138.832 feet, front on Vermont Avenue between N and O street, N.W., and has on it a large three-story brick dwelling, with 14 rooms, besides 2 bathrooms, 2 pantries and cellar, all the modern conveniences and improvements, and with all its appointments is in excellent condition, and is located in an attractive neighborhood. It has a two-story brick stable, with a servant room in the rear. (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 22)

An 1892 map by G.M. Hopkins shows the majority of Vermont Avenue to be developed by this time, with no construction in lot 58 (*see Figure 9)*. A 1903 Sanborn Map identifies 1318 Vermont Avenue NW as a three-story brick rowhouse with a frame cornice, front bay, and slate or metal roof (*see Figure 10*). Based on the difference in descriptions

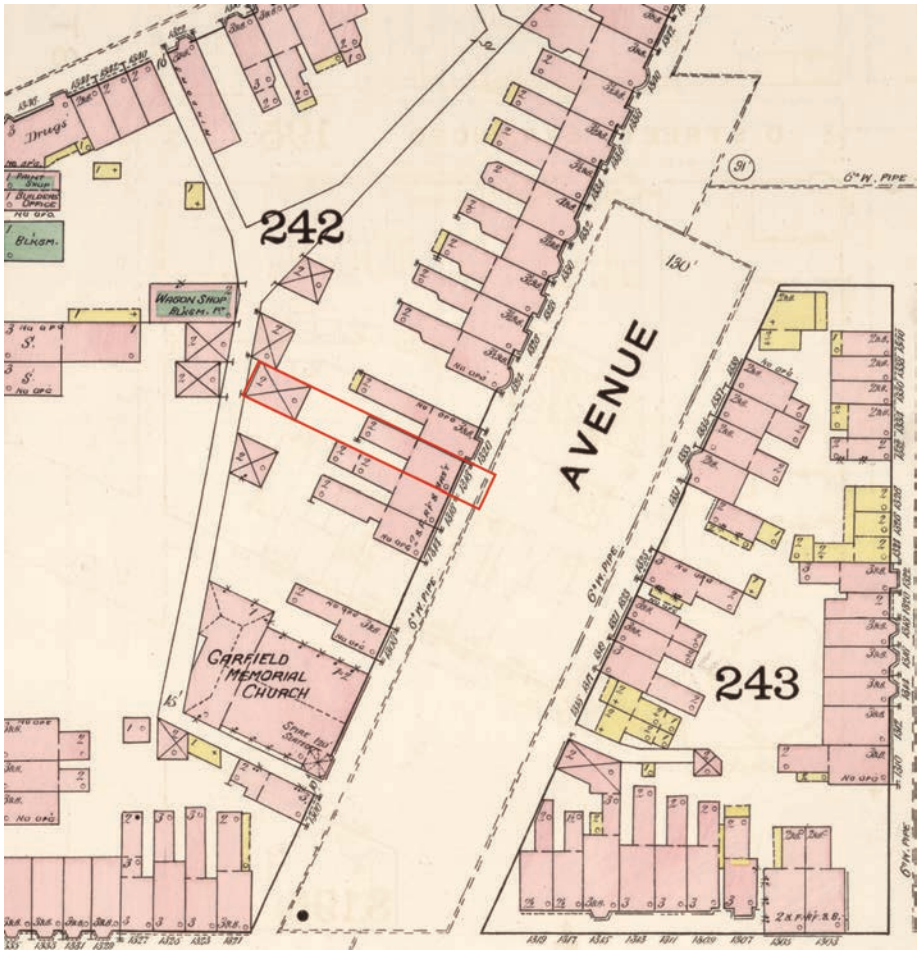


Figure 8: Detail from 1888 Sanborn Map showing buildings on Vermont Avenue, including cluster of homes from 1314 through 1320. The Council House at 1318 Vermont Avenue is depicted as two stories, with the Carriage House at the rear of the lot (Source: Library of Congress).

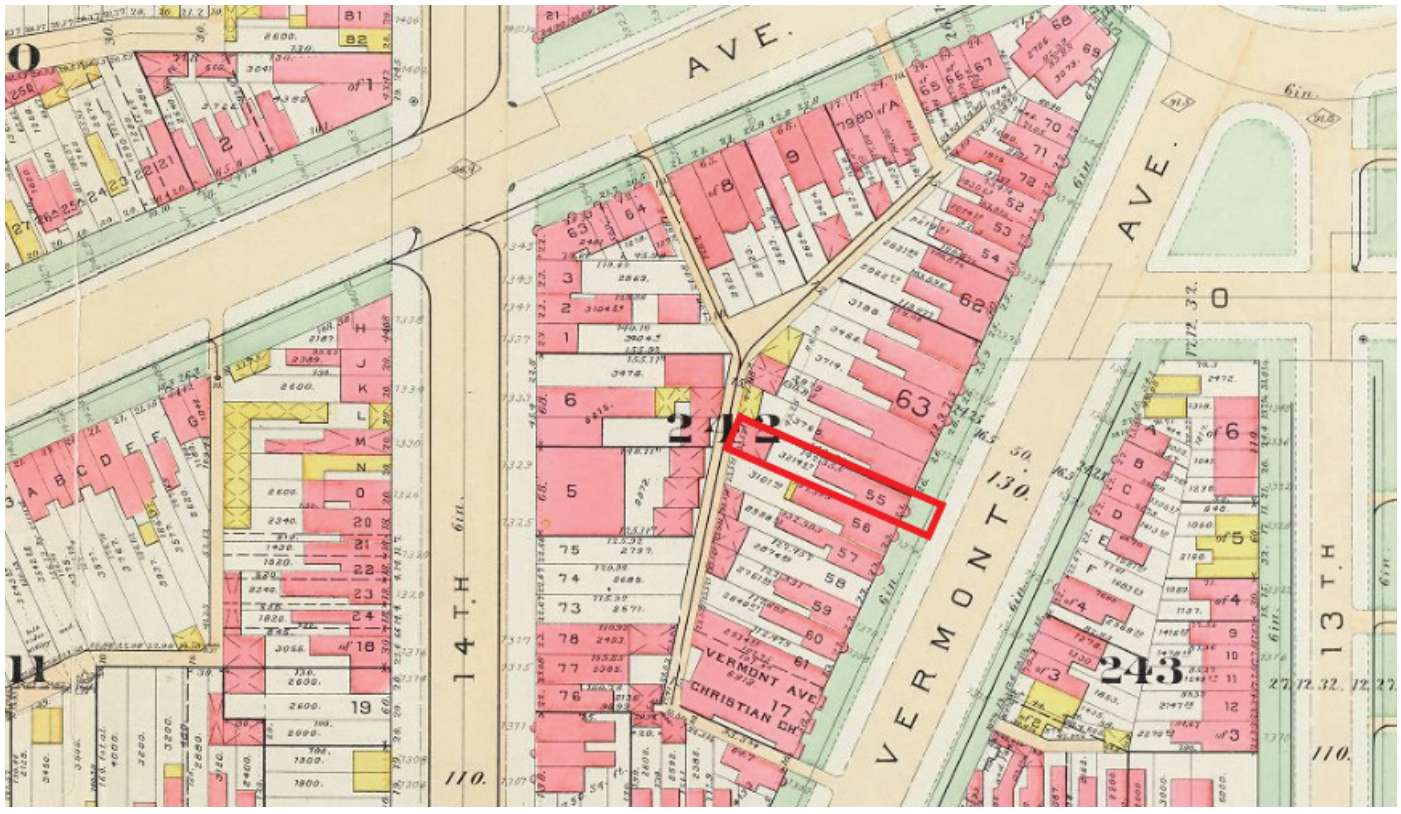


Figure 9: 1892 map by G.M. Hopkins showing development on Vermont Avenue (Source: DC Public Library, Washingtoniana Map Collection, Plate 20; dcpl_map_hopkins1892v1_22.tif).

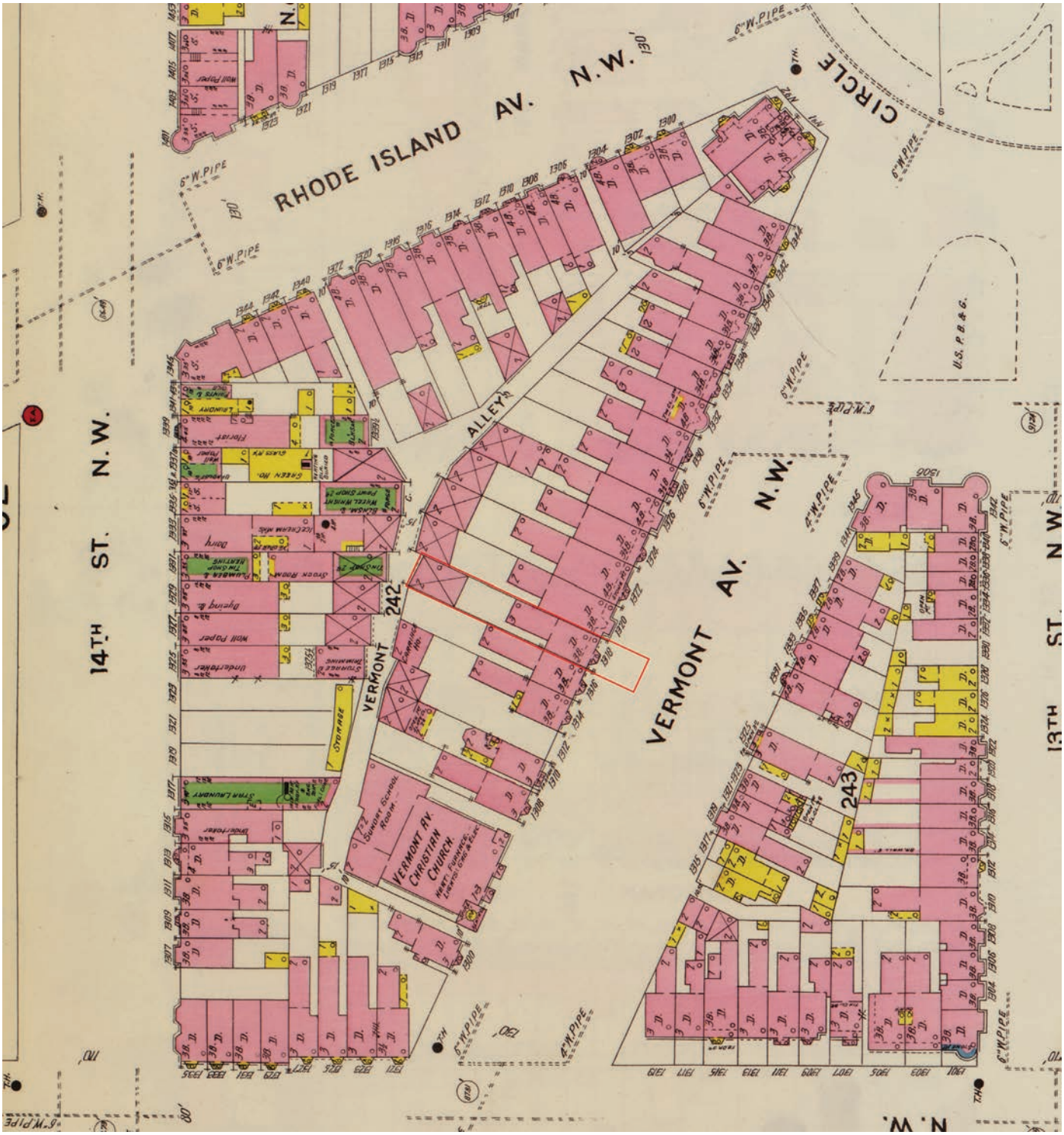


Figure 10: Detail from 1903 Sanborn Map showing the Council House at 1318 Vermont Avenue as three stories (Source: Library of Congress).

between the 1888 and 1903 Sanborn maps, a third story may have been added to the house between 1888 and 1903.

Alternatively, the 1888 map description may not have considered the mansard roof as a full third story. It is also likely that the rear ell of the house was enlarged from two stories to three at some point between 1888 and 1903. The rear ell is labeled as two stories in the 1888 Sanborn map and labeled as three stories in the 1903 Sanborn map (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 22). The Carriage House is consistently labeled as a two-story brick structure with a slate or metal roof, according to the 1903 Sanborn Map (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 50).

Joanna D. and Frank G. Carpenter purchased the property at 1318 Vermont Avenue NW in 1891, and occupied the property until 1911. Carpenter was a well-known writer and journalist at the time, writing articles widely-published articles as a correspondent for the American Press Association. Carpenter traveled the world and authored nearly 40 books and countless magazine articles about his journeys, including a series called *Carpenter's World Travels*. The Carpenters sold the property to Alphonso and Anna Gravalles in 1912 (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 28). The Gravalles rented out rooms and operated a tailoring business – A. Gravalles & Co. – from the house, residing in the property for several decades (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 28).

In September 1918, the Gravalles received a building permit to install two beams over the door of the Carriage House, described in the permit as a two-story brick structure with a tin roof (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 25). In September 1934, the Gravalles received a permit to "erect [an] open rear porch, brick and steel framing, wood floor and roof" on the west elevation of the residence at 1318 Vermont Avenue NW and, as part of the same project, to "convert one kitchen window to door, no toilet or bath windows affected" (*see Figure 11*). The architect is listed as W. Eaton. The porch measured the entire length of the back (northwest) wall of the house and

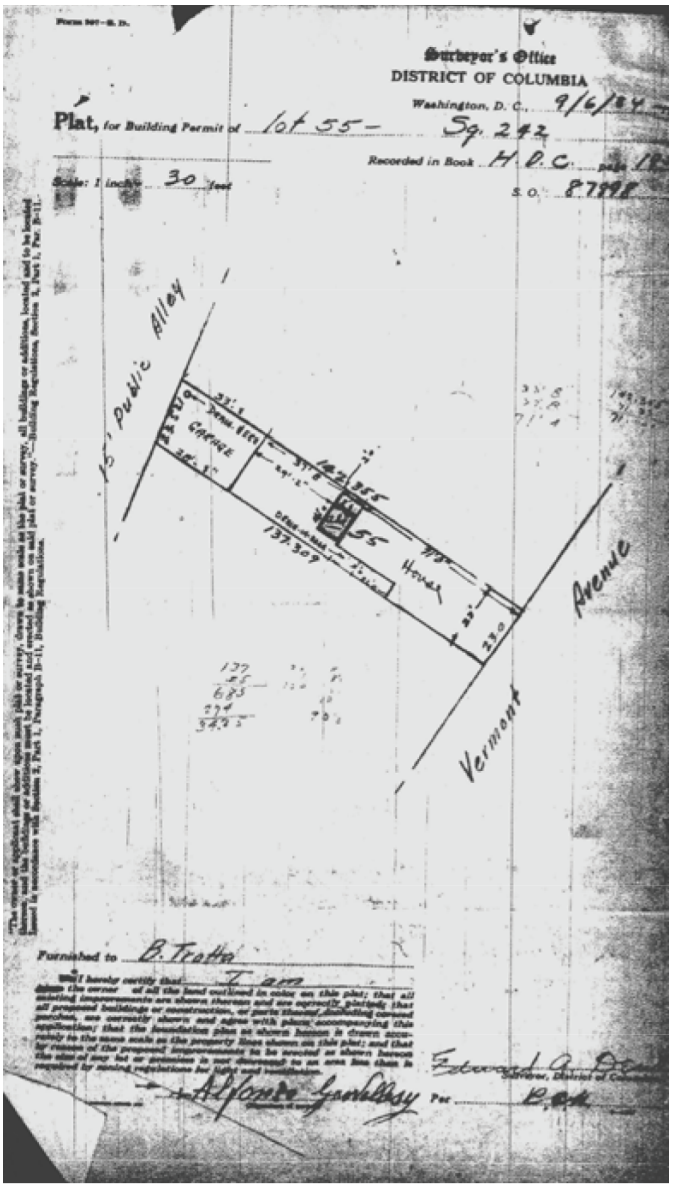


Figure 11: Permit for porch added to rear of Council House, 1934 (Source: NARA, Permit No. 174494, reprinted in Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 27).



Figure 12: Portrait of Mary McLeod Bethune, c. 1930s. Photographer: Addison Scurlock (Source: NMAH, Smithsonian Institution).

extended 8 feet 6 inches from the back wall (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 51-52; National Archives and Records Administration, Permit No. 174494). The Gravalles continued to occupy the residence at 1318 Vermont Avenue NW until Alphonso's passing in the early 1940s (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 53). No additional improvements to the property occurred during this time.

Mary McLeod Bethune and the Founding of the NCNW (1875-1935)

THE EARLY LIFE OF MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE

Mary Jane McLeod was born on July 10, 1875, in Mayesville, South Carolina, to Patsy (McIntosh) and Samuel McLeod (*see Figures 12 and 13*). The fifteenth of seventeen children, Mary McLeod was the first child to be born free in her family. The future educator, civil rights activist, and presidential advisor spent her early years on the small farm owned by her family in South Carolina, dedicated to pursuing an education (Hanson 2003: 4). Mary



Figure 13: The cabin where Bethune was born in Mayesville, South Carolina. Bethune's sisters, Rachel and Maria, are in front of the cabin, c. 1870s (Source: Florida State Archives. Image number: PR00786).

McLeod (Bethune) was the first in her family to receive a formal education, which began at age 11 when she enrolled in Trinity Presbyterian Mission School near her home in South Carolina (Babin 2019: 8-31). Bethune completed high school on a scholarship to Scotia Seminary in Concord, North Carolina in 1893, and completed additional studies at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois (National Park Service 2000: 55). Bethune sought to serve as a missionary in Africa, but was refused acceptance by the Presbyterian Mission Board on account of her race. She thus returned to South Carolina and taught at the Trinity Presbyterian Mission School in Mayesville, followed by a teaching position at the Industrial and Normal Institute in Augusta, Georgia, under the tutelage of renowned educator Lucy Craft Laney (Babin 2019: 8-31). Thereafter, from 1897 through 1898, Bethune taught at Kindell Institute in Sumter, South Carolina (National Park Service 2000: 55).

Mary McLeod married Albertus Bethune in 1897, and two years later, the couple moved to Savannah, Georgia to further Albertus's business career (Babin 2019: 8-32). In 1899, Bethune gave birth to her only child, Albert McLeod Bethune (Babin 2019: 8-32). Shortly thereafter, the Bethune family relocated to Palatka, Florida, where Bethune established a missionary school for the Presbyterian Church (National Park Service 2000: 55).

DAYTONA NORMAL AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL FOR NEGRO GIRLS / BETHUNE-COOKMAN COLLEGE

After teaching at several schools across the South from 1895 through 1903, Bethune used $1.50 in cash to establish the Daytona Normal and Industrial School for Negro Girls in 1904 in Daytona, Florida (*see Figure 14*). The school was housed within a four-room cottage. Bethune modeled the school after the Scotia Seminary. The curriculum focused on a combination of academics, agriculture, and



Figure 14: Mary McLeod Bethune with students at the Daytona Normal and Industrial School for Negro Girls, 1905 (Source: Library of Congress. Control number: 2021669923).

animal husbandry. The schools academics included math, science, English, business, and foreign language, in addition to a religious education component, secretarial work, and homemaking skills. A farm on the school grounds focused on the production and handling of food products to meet the school's needs and provided an income for the school (National Park Service 2000: 56).

Bethune's school initially served five girls, aged eight to twelve. Within ten years of the school's establishment, Bethune graduated her first class of eighth graders and soon expanded the Daytona School to serve high school students, graduating her first class in 1915 (Babin 2019: 8-32). By April 1920, 47 girls completed the full high school curriculum, ten of whom went on to teach in Florida public schools upon completing the institution's teacher training program (National Park Service 2000: 56).

The Daytona Normal and Industrial School for Negro Girls merged in 1923 with the Cookman Institute, a school for African American boys founded in 1872 in Jacksonville, Florida. Renamed the Daytona-Cookman Collegiate Institute, the school became the first fully accredited four-year college for African American students in Florida, with 42 faculty members and 800 students (Hanson 2003: 4). In 1931, school leaders renamed Daytona-Cookman Collegiate Institute to Bethune-Cookman College to recognize the contributions of Bethune (Babin 2019: 8-32). The school received regional accreditation as a junior college the following year, and continues to to serve students today as Bethune-Cookman University (National Park Service 2000: 56).

Located in Daytona Beach, Florida, the campus includes the resources within the Bethune-Cookman College Historic District (NRHP# 96000298), listed in the National Register in 1996. The seven-acre historic district includes a cluster of eight contributing properties constructed between 1914 and 1942, located on either side of what is today called Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune Boulevard. The contributing buildings contain four vernacular designs, two examples of Classical Revival architecture, one Late Gothic Revival church, and one building of Modern design. All buildings have brick structural systems, with the exception of the wood-frame Mary McLeod Bethune Residence, which is a National Historic Landmark (NRHP# 74000655) (Olausen and Jones 1996).

MCLEOD HOSPITAL

Meanwhile, from 1911 through 1927, Bethune responded to an urgent need by establishing and operating a hospital for Black Americans; the institution was affiliated with the school that served the local community (Jones 2013: 37). Bethune named it McLeod Hospital, in honor of her parents, and teamed up with Dr. T.A. Adams, who had recently returned to Daytona and sought a permanent facility from which to offer care. Bethune outfitted a campus cottage with two hospital beds for local patients (Jones 2013: 37). Nurses received hands-on training at the facility, including during the 1918 influenza pandemic.

Bethune's close friend and biographer Frances Reynolds Keyser wrote: "When the hospital was filled to overflowing, cots were stretched in our large new auditorium and everyone who was on her feet cheerfully enlisted in the service of caring for the sick. The Institution spared neither pains nor money in the discharge of this important duty... and the spread of the disease was checked" (Jones 2020). At the end of its tenure, Bethune gave the hospital equipment to the city of Daytona.

BETHUNE AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN'S CLUBS

During the 1910s, Bethune joined the African American women's club movement. The clubs provided a platform and a national network to express and address local and regional concerns about issues impacting Black women, including but not limited to segregation, economic inequalities, healthcare, voting rights, employment, and education. The clubs allowed Bethune to develop her dynamic leadership skills and make national connections (Babin 2019: 8-33). Through these connections, Bethune established the Daytona chapter of the Circle for Negro War Relief to promote Black women's participation in World War I efforts; she spearheaded the chapter from 1915 through 1918 (Babin 2019: 8-33). Expanding her

leadership, Bethune served as the first president of the Florida Federation of Colored Women's Clubs from 1917 through 1924, and as the president of the Southeastern Federation of Colored Women's Clubs from 1920 through 1925 (Babin 2019: 8-33). Among her numerous efforts, Bethune organized a Black female voter drive in Florida following the adoption of the 19th amendment in 1920 (National Park Service 2000: 56). From 1923 through 1924, Bethune served as president of the National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools, a professional association of Black teachers primarily in Southern states (National Park Service 2000: 56). Through her work in women's clubs, "Bethune began to focus on making systemic changes to improve the status and conditions of the race" (Hanson 2003: 119).

From 1924 through 1928, Bethune served as president of the 10,000-member National Association of Colored Women (NACW). Founded in 1896, the NACW brought together church, regional, civic, and other groups to respond to the racism of the late 19th century, advocating for a range of reforms. During her tenure as president of the nationwide organization, Bethune revised the constitution, grew the organization, undertook fundraising activities, and strengthened communication between members. As president of the NACW, Bethune acquired the first national headquarters building for the organization in 1928, located at 12th and O Streets in Washington, D.C. (Babin 2019: 8-48). While the onset of the Great Depression decreased the NACW's programming capacity, condensing 38 departments down to two, Bethune viewed the Great Depression as an opportunity for important engagement, focusing her efforts on universal advances for African American women. In response to the reduction in programming by the NACW, Bethune wrote letters to several influential Black women in January of 1930, communicating her intention to establish a "National Council of Negro Women in America." She wrote that the new organization would:

> ...give opportunity to those who are interested in the many phases of work



Figure 15: Mary McLeod Bethune and Eleanor Roosevelt, undated (Source: NABWH Series 14 Photograph 0496).

> among our women in this country to cope with the problems affecting our status in America and to cement a spirit of cooperation and unified effort in the shaping of our destiny... I am concerned about the central Wheel, composed of the many spokes of religious, educational, fraternal, political, economic, welfare and business organizations of Negro women – developing the ideals of our several groups. (Babin 2019: 8-35)

A few months later, in March of 1930, Bethune met with 20 women at Bethune-Cookman College to discuss establishing a new Black women's council. While this new organization would not be solidified just yet, the conversation planted an important seed and created a committee to further study the idea (Babin 2019: 8-35).

Through her position as NACW president, Bethune attended meetings of the National Council of Women of the United States, which expanded her network of women leaders across the United States (Babin 2019: 8-48). Bethune met future First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt for the first time in 1927. The women established an important lifelong friendship and working relationship (Babin 2019: 8-44) (*see Figure 15*).

On top of her teaching duties and activities within the women's club movement, Bethune remained active in several organizations and commissions. Bethune's work caught the attention of influential politicians, and President Calvin Coolidge appointed Bethune to the National Council Welfare Commission in the 1920s (National Park Service 2000: 56). In 1928, President Coolidge named Bethune as a delegate to a Child Welfare Conference in Washington, D.C., and in 1929, President Herbert Hoover appointed her as a member to the National Committee on Child Welfare (National Park Service 2000: 58).

President Hoover invited Bethune to a White House conference and appointed her to the Commission of Home Building and Home Ownership in the early 1930s. She also served an appointment on a planning commission established by the Federal Office of Education for Negroes in 1933 (Babin 2019: 8-44, 45; National Park Service 2000: 56).

Bethune was a colleague, neighbor, and friend of author and historian Carter G. Woodson, who in 1915 founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Inc., which is today known as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, Inc. (ASALH). Woodson founded *The Journal of Negro History* in 1916, and a decade later on February 7, 1926, initiated the first celebration of Negro History Week. There was an immediate response to the annual celebration, which was observed by organizations and in schools across the country with study materials, lessons, and posters of important individuals and dates provided by ASALH.

An educator like Bethune, Woodson welcomed women as equals. Bethune served as the first female president of ASALH from 1936 until the early 1950s. Bethune understood the importance of documenting African American history and in 1937, she urged Woodson to establish the *Negro History Bulletin*, which was accessible to teachers and students and focused on the established theme for each annual Negro History Week celebration. Negro History Week led to the establishment of Black History Month, marked every February since 1976. Woodson and Bethune both shaped the direction of American history and were fundamental in preserving and documenting African American history and the Black experience (Scott 2011).

BETHUNE AND THE NATIONAL YOUTH ADMINISTRATION (NYA)

Significant changes took place in Bethune's life in 1935. That year, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) awarded Bethune the Spingarn Medal, the highest honor given by the organization, in honor of Bethune's leadership and service in education (Babin 2019: 8-37). Impressed by her many accomplishments, President Franklin Roosevelt considered Bethune for federal appointment and nominated her to the 35-member National Advisory Committee of the National Youth Administration (NYA) in 1935. At this time, she moved to Washington, D.C., to focus on her work with the NYA, all while maintaining her many other activities and pursuits (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 31).

President Roosevelt established the NYA, a program of the Works Progress Administration, by executive order on June 26, 1935. The agency operated under the direction of Aubrey Williams and offered programs for youth ages 16 to 25 focused on job placement, vocational training, and scholarships during the Great Depression and later, during World War II. While many New Deal programs were discriminatory in their segregationist policies, the NYA offered opportunities to African American youth (Babin 2019: 8-45). During its eight-year existence, the NYA worked with more than 4 million individuals, including 500,000 African American youth.

Bethune quickly expanded her role in the NYA and in 1936, she was appointed head of the Office of Minority Affairs of the NYA. In 1939, President Roosevelt selected Bethune as the Director of the Division of Negro Affairs at the National Youth Administration (Babin 2019: 8-28). The directorship represented the highest federal appointment held by an African American woman to that time. Bethune influenced the agency to adopt non-discriminatory employment policies, resulting in the employment of 27 African American administrative assistants at the state level (National Park Service 2000: 60).

Under her guidance as Director, the NYA employed hundreds of thousands of young African American men and women and established a "Negro College and Graduate Fund" that supported over 4,000 students in higher education. While serving under the NYA, Bethune organized two national conferences that were the first federally initiated conferences that brought together Black leaders to discuss issues faced by African Americans.

BETHUNE AND THE NATIONAL STAGE

From 1935 through 1944, Bethune also served as a Special Advisor on Minority Affairs for President Roosevelt (Babin 2019: 8-28). Bethune advocated for African American women to hold political decision-making power and hold high level political positions, believing that "fundamental changes in the American social, economic, and political structure were necessary for racial progress" (Hanson 2003: 165).

Beginning on August 7, 1936, Bethune organized and chaired President Roosevelt's Federal Council on Negro Affairs, known as the "Black Cabinet." The Black Cabinet originally consisted of Bethune and seven other Black government employees who advised President and Mrs. Roosevelt on issues relating to African Americans. The informal group met in Bethune's home at 1812 9th Street NW, Washington, D.C., and worked to support New Deal programs and advance efforts towards nondiscrimination in government jobs and facilities, including assisting in drafting the executive orders that ended exclusion of African Americans in defense industries during World War II. Other issues addressed included anti-lynching legislation and banning poll taxes in the south. The Black Cabinet met for the last time in 1945, when President Roosevelt's term ended (Watts 2020: 221; Babin 2019: 8-46).

Based on these many roles, organizations and institutions recognized Bethune's leadership and influence by awarding her several honorary degrees and awards. During a 15-year period Bethune received honorary doctoral degrees from eight colleges and universities:

LL.D., from:

- Lincoln University, Oxford, Pennsylvania, 1935
- Howard University, Washington, D. C., 1942
- Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia, 1943
- Wiley College, Marshall, Texas, 1943

Doctor of Humanities from:

- Bennett College, Greensboro, North Carolina, 1936
- West Virginia State College, Institute, West Virginia, 1947
- Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida, 1949
- Benedict College, Columbia, South Carolina, 1950
- (National Park Service 2000: 58)

FOUNDING THE NCNW

On December 5, 1935, Bethune gathered leaders from 14 Black business and community organizations—including representatives from education, healthcare, religious associations, and businesses—at the 137th Street branch of the YWCA in New York City. With Bethune's vision, the group founded the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW, or the Council), with the goal to unite existing Black women's organizations across the country as a collective voice.

As an "organization of organizations," the Council sought to address issues of segregation and discrimination in education, employment, health, housing, civil rights, and international relations (Babin 2019: 8-36). As a united body, Bethune sought to advance women as important influencers of public policy, capable of articulating their needs to the federal government. Bethune was voted first president of the Council, and she initially operated the organization from her living room in Washington, D.C., at 1812 9th Street NW (National Park Service 2000: 59). The NCNW officially incorporated on July 25, 1936 (Babin 2019: 8-37).

The hardships of the Great Depression led Bethune to believe, as historian Dr. Bettye Collier-Thomas describes it,

> that there was a need for an organization that would unify and solidify black women into a powerful, active force that could effectively alter the way Afro-Americans were perceived and dealt with. She concluded that she could maximize the power of black women by creating an organization similar to that of the white-controlled National Council of Women. (Collier-Thomas, 1986: 46)

The NCNW's mission is "to lead, empower and advocate for women of African descent, their families and communities." The organization established the following objectives: to promote unity of action among women's organizations in matters affecting the educational, cultural, economic, political and social life in America; to build a fellowship of women devoted to developing friendly relations among all people in the world; to collect and preserve information about and affecting women; and to work for the complete elimination of any and all forms of discrimination and segregation based on race, religion, color, national origin, and sex.

The establishment of the NCNW did not slow Bethune's other pursuits:

- From 1936 through 1942, Bethune also administered Bethune-Cookman College and worked for the NYA;
- From 1936 through 1950, Bethune served as president of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History
- From 1938 to 1949, she was the vice president for the Southern Conference for Human Welfare (Smith 2003: 302);
- Beginning in 1940, Bethune served as vice president of the National Association for the NAACP, a position she held until her death in 1955 (National Park Service 2000: 60).

As explained by historian Dr. Collier-Thomas, "These positions, her friendship with Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, and her location in the nation's capital solidified her power and propelled her and the National Council of Negro Women to a position of national and international importance" (Collier-Thomas 1981: 4).

On April 4, 1938, the NCNW hosted the "Conference on Governmental Cooperation in the Approach to the Problems of Negro Women and Children" at the Department of the Interior and White House (*see Figure 16*). The conference programming articulated Bethune's intention to secure management positions in the federal government for African American women and contribute to policy making decisions (Smith 2003: 48).

Bethune further disseminated her positions when in April 1940, the NCNW launched the quarterly publication the Aframerican Women's Journal, which, under the leadership of editor Sue Bailey, was considered "the first full-fledged periodical publication by Negro women" (Jones 2013: 173). In June of 1943, the NCNW published its inaugural issue of Telefact, the NCNW monthly newsletter (Smith 2003: 354). Both publications served "the membership and the larger black community to inform, solicit members, celebrate successes of



Figure 16: Conference attendees in front of the Department of the Interior, with Mary McLeod Bethune in front row, center, 1938 (Source: Scurlock Studio Records, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution).

the race and document achievements past and present" (Jones 2013: 66). These publications provided an outlet and voice for national and regional activism that was disseminated to women across the country.

THE NCNW AND WORLD WAR II

Bethune continued to serve as director of the Negro Affairs Division and president of the NCNW as World War II began. In January of 1941, Congressional committee hearings began for a bill drafted by Massachusetts Congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers to establish the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC). The NCNW immediately went into action and lobbied government officials to integrate African American women into the women's corps. However, the NCNW's request to Congress to amend the WAAC bill to include that "there shall be no discrimination against any person on account of race, creed or color" was not successful, and the bill was passed on May 15, 1942, without the amendment.

While the NCNW was not successful in desegregating the women's army corps, the organization tirelessly led war bond drives and blood donation drives. The NCNW was ultimately successful in securing meaningful opportunities and opening the door for Black women to serve in the war effort. At Bethune's urging, the War Department agreed to let African American women enlist and participate in the officers' training camp, although Black women were restricted to a quota of 10 percent of the women serving (Sadrud-Din 2019: 75-76).

As Zaakira L. Sadrud-Din explains in her dissertation *Fighting for a Chance to Fight for Democracy: Mary McLeod Bethune's Involvement with the Women's Army Corps During World War II*: "The Council considered the Second World War an opportunity for black women to be involved in national politics through lending their efforts to help the United States win the war. As the United States' participation in the war proceeded, Bethune steered her organization towards securing African American women's participation in every aspect of the war mobilization" (Sadrud-Din 2019: 65). Serving in the army allowed Black women to progress socially, politically, and economically within a deeply segregated system. Bethune also successfully lobbied President Roosevelt to end segregation in veteran rehabilitation centers (The National World War II Museum 2020).

Bethune served as special assistant to the Secretary of War and member of the Advisory Council of the Women's Interest Section of the War Department, overseeing the creation of the first officer candidate schools for the Women's Army Corps and working as an advocate for African American women who sought to serve in the armed forces. Bethune picked the first African American women to attend the Officers' Candidate School at the First Women's Training Center at Fort Des Moines, Iowa. Due to the 10 percent quota, Bethune chose 40 Black women from 4,000 applicants, 39 of whom were admitted to the WAAC and 36 became commissioned officers on August 29, 1942 (Sadrud-Din 2019: 81). Despite the burden of segregation by race and gender, Black women that served in the WAAC/WAC during World War II achieved remarkable successes, bolstered by the advocacy of the NCNW.

The NCNW Council initiated a "Hold Your Job" program in 1942, and sponsored employment clinics for Black women who entered the industrial sector during World War II. The clinics trained women to retain better paying industrial positions as veterans returned from abroad. That same year, Bethune resigned as president of Bethune-Cookman College. (She later briefly resumed presidency of the college, from 1946 through 1947.) Upon her resignation in 1942, Bethune primarily shifted her focus to the NYA (which operated for one more year, ending in 1943) and the NCNW (Babin 2019: 8-47).

The Council House as NCNW Headquarters and Bethune's Residence (1943-1949)

At the annual NCNW meeting in 1940, the Council agreed that a national headquarters should be established in Washington, D.C., that would be a "memorial and shrine in honor of those pioneer Negro women leaders who hewed a pathway for us to follow" and a place to "house and preserve historical archives depicting the history of Negro women" (Smith 2003: 215). The NCNW established a committee to begin planning for a headquarters building (Babin 2019: 8-48).

In 1943, Bethune and the NCNW purchased the property at 1318 Vermont Avenue NW (the Council House) for $15,500, establishing it as the first permanent headquarters for the organization. On November 18, 1943, the NCNW received a $10,000 donation from Marshall Field, the Chicago-based department store owner, and that same day, Bethune made a down payment on the property. The Council moved into the facility in December of 1943. In addition to functioning as the headquarters for the organization, the Council House also served as Bethune's primary residence from 1943 to 1949 (Deed recorded 22 December 1943, Deed Books, Liber 7923, Folio 318, District of Columbia, Recorder of Deeds). The establishment of a national headquarters fulfilled Bethune's dream to house a national organization to lobby on behalf of the right of African American women that, "...in effect created a new power base from which black women could articulate their concerns and act as a unit" (Collier-Thomas 1986: 48).

The Council House's new headquarters provided the space for the NCNW to lobby for Black women's rights in Washington, D.C., the seat of the nation's political power. The NCNW chose a property in Washington, D.C., in proximity to the U Street district and other predominantly African American neighborhoods. The property was seamlessly integrated into the surrounding predominantly residential neighborhood. Like the other homes on the west side of Vermont Avenue NW, the Council House is a rowhouse with a front yard surrounded by a fence and set back from the street, providing a transitional space between the dense urban streetscape and interior happenings of the building.

Upon purchase, the Council hired contractor Henry Byrd to complete work throughout the Council House for $2,950. Improvements included wallpapering rooms; renovating the bathroom on the second floor and adding a bathroom on the third floor; installing new radiators; and other minor work (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 53-55; Babin 2019: 8-49,50).

The interior of the Council House was organized to accommodate the business, social, and residential needs of the NCNW. The first floor included a reception room for social gatherings; the Bailey



Figure 17: Mary McLeod Bethune speaking at the Council House dedication, surrounded by speakers and guests in the front yard of the Council House, October 15, 1944. Note Bethune is standing on a pedestal (Source: NABWH Series 14 Photograph 0051).

Memorial Room was used as a boardroom for conference and formal dining; and a kitchen. The second floor included NCNW offices and the presidential suite, also called the Walker Room, that served as Bethune's bedroom, and a dressing room for Bethune. The third floor included bedrooms for out-of-town guest accommodations, a housekeeper's bedroom, and a kitchenette. Bethune lived and worked in the house from the date of purchase until moving permanently to Florida in 1949. Following her departure, several bedrooms were converted to offices in 1954.

Following multi-day Council annual meetings, the NCNW officially dedicated the Council House on Sunday, October 15, 1944 (*see Figures 17 through 20*). The ceremony featured Mary McLeod Bethune and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt; other speakers included Agnes E. Meyer, journalist, philanthropist, education activist, and wife of Eugene Meyer, owner and publisher of the Washington Post; and Charlotte Hawkins Brown, educator and founder of the Freeman Palmer Memorial Institute. For the occasion, 400 guests gathered in the front yard and on the street in front of the Council House at 1318 Vermont Avenue NW.

A commentary on the building dedication (with no recorded author) states:

> This building is dedicated to the united service of the women of America and the world, regardless of creed, class or color. A place where women can meet and secure current and discerning information, facts



Figure 18: Mary McLeod Bethune (with back to camera) speaking to guests filling Vermont Avenue, N.W., at the Council House dedication, October 15, 1944. Note iron fence surrounding front yard and some grass visible (Source: NABWH Series 14 Photograph 00548).



Figure 19: Eleanor Roosevelt speaking at Council House dedication, October 15, 1944. Note Roosevelt is standing on the pedestal surrounded by grass (Source: NABWH Series 14 Photo 00049).



Figure 20: Mary McLeod Bethune speaking at Council House dedication, October 15, 1944. Note iron fence and grass surrounding pedestal, with shrub visible along fenceline in lower left of photograph. (Source: NABWH Series 14 Photograph 0530).

> and sound direction. Here women of all nationalities can come together without fear or hesitancy secure in the knowledge that they meet as equals and as workers striving together. We can think together, objectively and opportunely and coordinate for the greater benefit of mankind all the able and fine things that women are doing. (Jones 2013: 70)

Photographs from the opening ceremony depict a square platform in the front yard upon which stood a microphone for the ceremony's speakers. (There was no urn on the platform at this time.) Speakers and program participants sat in folding chairs in a semi-circle on the higher ground of the front yard, facing Vermont Avenue NW. The front yard appears to be maintained turf. The wrought iron fence surrounding the front yard is visible in photographs from the event.

From the time of its purchase in 1943, the Council House was the central hub from which the NCNW worked to achieve its mission, and where the organization developed its programming; met internally and with national and international leaders; housed an archive; provided space for guests; and other core functions. With programs and projects addressing many issues, including education, employment, healthcare, housing, racism, poverty, and international relations, the Council House functioned as a clearinghouse of information for African American women. Historian Joyce Hanson writes that, "Bethune's effectiveness as a leader allowed African American women to create both informal and formal networks, develop new concepts of female leadership, and promote political activism designed specifically to influence the direction of public policy" (Hanson 2003: 206). All of these roles of the NCNW took place at the organization's new headquarters at 1318 Vermont Avenue NW.

The Council House hosted over 4,000 visitors during the 1940s, including 62 women who stayed overnight on the third floor (Babin 2019: 8-51). As explained by Dr. Ida E. Jones in Mary McLeod Bethune in Washington, DC, "Property ownership provided safety and wholeness, which Reconstruction America and, later, segregated cities did not afford" (Jones 2013: 17).



Figure 21: Mary McLeod Bethune with W.E.B. DuBois and Walter White in San Francisco at the United Nations Conference, April 1945 (Source: NABWH Series 14 Photograph 0474).

In 1944, the State Department denied Bethune's request that the NCNW participate in the establishment of the United Nations Charter at United Nations Conference on International Organization in San Francisco. Bethune nonetheless participated in the 1945 conference along with W.E.B. DuBois and Walter White, serving as an associate consultant as part of the NAACP (Babin 2019: 6-60, 61) (*see Figure 21*). Bethune was the only woman of color in attendance at the conference.

In 1945, Bethune represented the NCNW before a congressional committee on the Wagner-Ellender-Taft general housing bill, which led to the American Housing Act of 1949 (Pub.L. 81–171), an expansion of the government's role in mortgage insurance and public housing (Babin 2019: 8-62). Another part of President Truman's domestic agenda, the NCNW supported the president's Committee on Civil Rights, established in 1946, in addressing voting restrictions (*see Figure 22*). The NCNW also worked toward legislation that would outlaw restrictive covenants and other forms of housing discrimination. Bethune and the NCNW also continued to work toward an anti-lynching bill. Expanding beyond the domestic agenda, the NCNW participated in the first post-World War II meeting of the International Council



Figure 22: Mary McLeod Bethune (seated) and other leaders with President Harry S. Truman at the White House (Source: NABWH Photograph 0330).

of Women in 1947, an organization founded in 1888 to bring international attention to women's rights and connect women's organizations from all countries (Babin 2019: 8-60). All of this work, among countless other projects, was accomplished from the new headquarters.

Within a decade of its inception, Bethune declared the Council "a great social force, offering services of information, morale building, leadership training, representation and national unity to Negro women…offering information and opportunity for constructive fellowship of all women" (Smith 2003: 213-214). From 1945 through 1950, the NCNW held annual receptions at the Council House for recipients of its "Roll of Honor" (*see Figures 23 and 24*). The Roll was an awards program conceived of by Bethune to honor outstanding women in their efforts towards equality and civil rights (Jones 2013: 91). Receptions were held at the Council House in honor of the award recipients.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES DAY

Bethune noted in 1941 that "the ownership of a building in which we could house historical archives of particular significance to Negro women is in itself a worthwhile thing" (Smith 2003: 215). While publications like the Telefact documented the actions of the NCNW, Bethune sought to broaden horizons and preserve the greater experience of Black women. Bethune "understood the importance of history and was determined to see that black women and men received recognition for their contributions to American life and history" (Collier-Thomas 1986, 44). On June 30, 1946, the NCNW held a "National Archives Day" to advance its goal of collecting material for its archives on Black women's history. The day was advertised through churches, libraries, and other organizations, marking the formal beginning of collecting physical documents associated with the social, cultural, economic, and political achievements of African American women. Advertised on the radio, Bethune described the purpose of the National Archives Day as:

> …A project designed to give impetus to the building of a National Museum at [the] Council House – where the records, letters, books, pictures, medals and other authentic materials, suggestive of the struggles and accomplishments of Negro women, can be assembled.

In 1948, the NCNW dedicated a library and archives, located in the board room of the Council House,



Figure 23: Bethune presenting "Roll of Honor" awards to Eleanor Daily and Carol Brice outside the Council House, late 1940s (Source: NABWH Series 14 Photograph 0318).



Figure 24: Bethune at far right with recipients of the 1947 "Roll of Honor" on the front steps of the Council House. Note concrete area to the left of walkway (Source: NABWH Series 14 Photograph 0326).



Figure 25: The original Archives Committee of the NCNW, c. late 1940s. From left to right: an unidentified woman, Mary McLeod Bethune, Jeanetta Welch Brown, Sue Bailey Thurman, and Arabella Denniston (Source: NABWH Series 14 Photograph 0291).



Figure 26: NCNW members leave the Council House for the March on Washington, August 28, 1963. Note iron fence surrounding front yard, pedestal in front yard, and grass. Photographer: Fred Harris (Source: NABWH Series 14 Photograph 03999).

to Mrs. S.E. Bailey, who donated $1,000 for the development of a historical exhibit on Black women (Babin 2019: 8-57) (*see Figure 25*). This realized Bethune's long-sought goal of a dedicated location to house historical archives. In 1949, the NCNW amended its constitution to include the mission to "preserve information particularly affecting women" (Babin 2019: 8-57).

BETHUNE'S RETIREMENT AS PRESIDENT OF THE NCNW

In 1949, Bethune stepped down as president of the NCNW due to failing health. She moved out of the NCNW headquarters building and retired to her home in Daytona, Florida, on the campus of Bethune-Cookman University. By the end of her tenure as president, the Council was the largest federation of African American women's clubs, including 22 national organizations (National Park Service 2000: 60). In an article written for the



Figure 27: Members of Zeta Phi Beta on the steps of the NCNW Council House waiting to board buses for the March on Washington, August 28, 1963. Photographer: Fred Harris (Source: NABWH Series 14 Photograph 01636).

journal Women United at the end of her tenure as president of the NCNW, Bethune wrote:

> Our headquarters is symbolic of the direction of their going, and of the quality of their leadership in the world of today and tomorrow. I have no fear for the future of women. I was sixty years old when this dream first took shape on December 5, 1935. Now, at seventy-four, with the minds and hearts of thousands of women united to the task, I step aside and I can rest awhile! (Jones 2013: 164).

After Bethune announced her retirement, President Truman spoke of her accomplishments:

> She has been in the forefront of those who worked for better housing and for larger employment opportunities through improved training and through the extension of fair employment practices. . . Mrs. Bethune, as you retire from the presidency of this organization, I join with your members in thanking you for your leadership, which will forever be an inspiration to those who seek to carry forward the noble purposes to which your life has been devoted. (Smith 2003: 175).

Following her retirement from the NCNW, Bethune nonetheless remained active and involved. In 1951, Bethune was appointed to the Committee of Twelve for National Defense by President Truman and became president of the Central Life Insurance Company of Florida to provide insurance to African Americans (Smith 2003: 312). The following year, Bethune traveled to Liberia as an official United States representative to the second inauguration of President William VS Tubman. While in Liberia, she received the Star of Africa award (Smith 2003: 134). In 1953, Bethune established the Mary McLeod Bethune Foundation as a nonprofit to promote her social and educational ideals (Babin 2019: 8-64).

On May 18, 1955, Mary McLeod Bethune died from a heart attack at the age of 79 (Babin 2019: 8-65).

The Council House after Bethune's Retirement (1950 - 1973)

Dr. Dorothy Ferebee, then the head of medical services at Howard University, assumed the role of president of the NCNW in 1949, serving until 1953 (Babin 2019: 8-27). Vivian Carter Mason

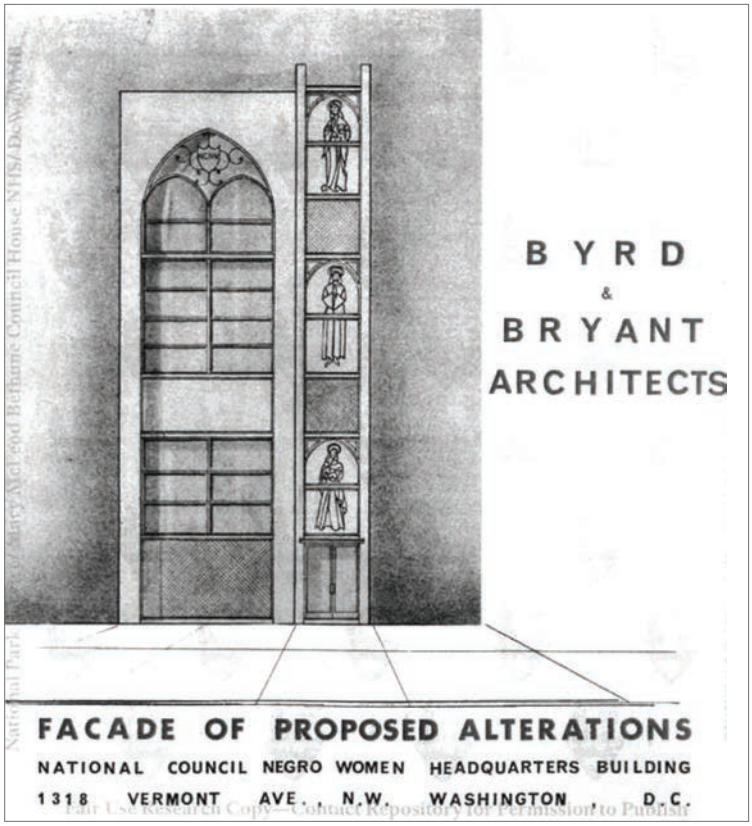


Figure 28: Proposed alterations (never implemented) to the Council House façade, ca. 1964. (Source: NABWH Series 10, Box 19, Folder 9, reprinted in Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 75).

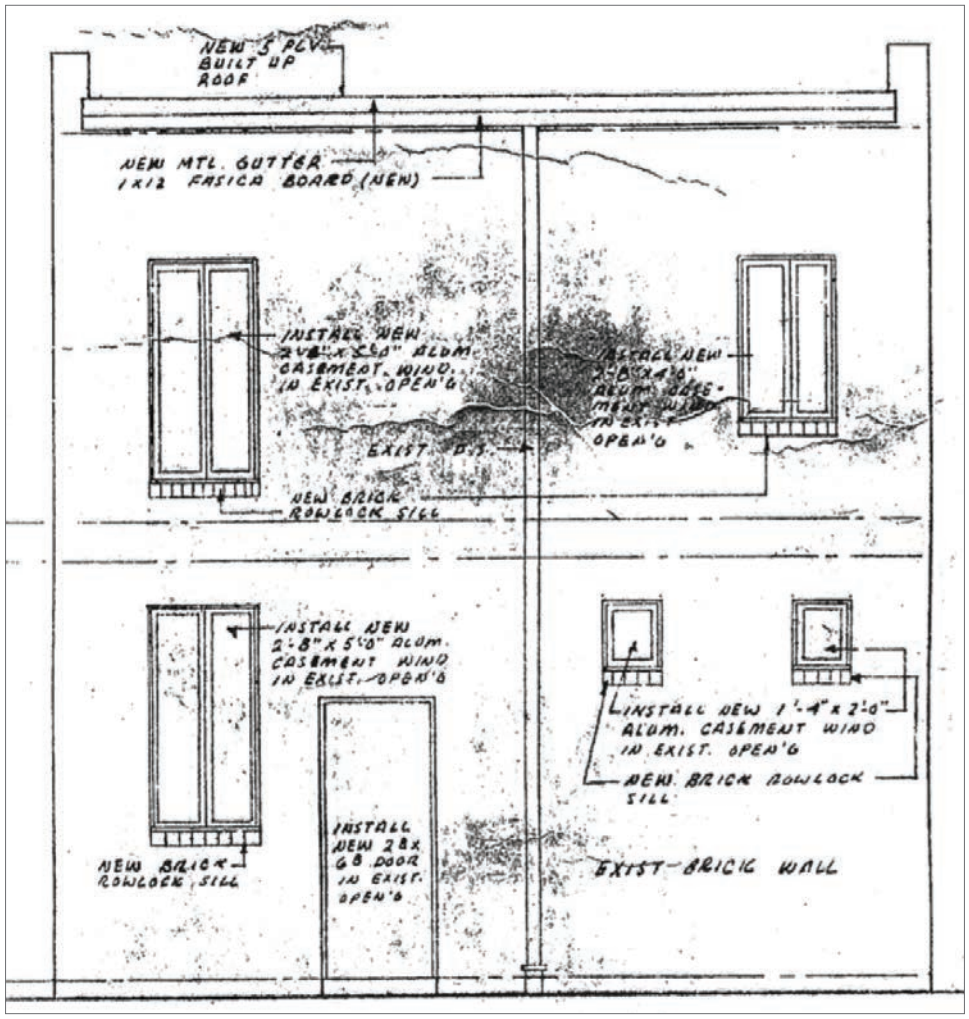


Figure 29: Carriage House rehabilitation, 1965 (Source: Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 36).

took over from Ferebee in 1953, serving in 1957 (Babin 2019: 8-68). An April 1951 photograph from The Washington Afro-American shows the front yard of the Council House in turf, with the square pedestal visible in the front yard (MLK Library files, *The Washington Afro-American*, 17 April 1951). The pedestal was still empty at this time, with no urn.

After 10 years of being headquartered at the Council House, the NCNW undertook significant interior rehabilitation work between 1953 and 1955, including general cleaning; painting; plastering and painting the kitchen; electrical repairs; carpet replacement; replacing the linoleum office floors; roof repairs; replacing windowpanes; and painting the front of the building (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 35). At this time Bethune's bedroom, no longer occupied, was converted to an office for the NCNW president. There are no known changes to the front or rear yards during this undertaking, and it is assumed based on photographs from 1951 and from the early 1960s that the front yard was in turf at this time.

Dorothy Irene Height assumed leadership from Mason in 1957, and served as president of the NCNW for 40 years until 1997. Height led the organization during the 1960s as racial violence in the South increased and the Council shifted its focus to the Civil Rights Movement and the War on Poverty (Babin 2019: 8-27). On August 28, 1963, NCNW members participated in the March on Washington. Photographs depicting NCNW members leaving the Council House for the March show the front yard in well-maintained turf (*see Figures 26 and 27*). The square pedestal (with no urn) and wrought iron fence are visible in front yard (Babin 2019: 8-26, 73).

In the early 1960s, the NCNW planned to modernize the façade of the Council House and hired architect David R. Byrd to redesign the building. Byrd's plan entailed a Gothic-style façade in marble, stained glass, and aluminum (*see Figure 28*). While 300 Council delegates approved the design at the NCNW annual meeting in 1963, neighbors opposed the plan, and it was never executed (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 74-75).

In April 1965, the NCNW received a building permit to "correct deficiencies as ordered by the condemnation board" for completing work on the Carriage House (*see Figure 29*). Work included updates to the roof and windows; masonry and framing repairs; installing dry wall; interior and exterior painting; installing a new metal gutter and fascia board at the roofline; installing a new concrete floor on the ground level; replacing damaged wood rafters; installing a kitchen and bathroom on the ground floor; and installing new interior wood steps; in addition to other updates. Of the three permits filed, one included building a seven-foot brick fence in the rear courtyard. This fence may refer to the extant privacy fence that separates 1318 Vermont Avenue NW from its neighboring properties, but the permit does not include sufficient information about the fence to confirm (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 35-36).

On January 27, 1966, a fire broke out in the basement of the Council House, causing extensive damage (Babin 2019: 8-77). A fire report recorded that "smoldering oil covered the floor of the basement–firemen had to use masks to enter. The very speed with which they fought off explosion spread [spared?] the building damage. They cut through the living room floor, tore down doors and released heavy fumes of oil, still gripping walls throughout the house…" The Council's insurance covered the fire damage, but did not cover water damage caused by the firemen and by pipes bursting due to lack of heat in winter (Babin 2019: 8-77).

Following the fire, the NCNW moved out of the Council House, initially occupying a temporary location at 1110 Vermont Avenue NW, and then relocating its headquarters to 1346 Connecticut Avenue, in the Dupont Circle neighborhood (Babin 2019: 8-78). The Shaw and U Street neighborhoods surrounding the Council House were heavily impacted by the 1968 protests following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. After the fire and protests, the Council House was left unoccupied until 1974, allowing the building and landscape to fall into disrepair.



Figure 30: Exterior of Council House during rehabilitation work, showing the pedestal in front of the house and boarded up basement windows, c. 1975-1977. Some grass is visible in the front yard (Source: NABWH Series 14 Photograph 3520).

Restoration Efforts (1974 – 1981)

In 1972, the Logan Circle Historic District (NRHP# 72001426) was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register), with 1318 Vermont Avenue NW as a contributing resource. The NCNW began efforts to renovate the Council House with project plans by Turner Associates, Architects and Planners completed in 1974. The work was completed between 1975 and 1977, carried out by AMSC, Inc., a local contractor. The work included repairing and replacing windows; replastering walls; refinishing floors; removing partition walls; removing existing radiators and light fixtures; replacing doors; and adding a new tin roof and central heating/air. The exterior of the Council House was painted at this time, and the Carriage House was converted into an office and storage space (HABS Data sheets 1993: 5; Babin 2019: 7-8, 20).

The architectural drawings from this effort do not include detailed representations of the front yard or rear courtyard areas (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 593). Photographs from this time depict the front yard in turf with a sign for AMSC, Inc. in the front yard near the square pedestal (again, still without the extant urn) (*see Figure 30*). A pre-renovation photograph of the Council House exterior in 1975 depicts the bay windows and basement windows boarded over, and the visible portion of the front yard appears to be in turf (HABS Document No. DC-530-1) (*see Figure 31*).

In 1975, the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House was listed in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites. At this time, a National Register nomination was completed but not submitted to the Keeper of the National Register, and thus not listed at the time.

In 1977, the NCNW resumed operations in the Council House (with its main headquarters in Dupont Circle) and reactivated its preservation and archival efforts. In 1977, the NCNW hired Dr. Bettye Collier-Thomas to direct the Bethune Historical Development Project to develop a museum and archives for Black women's history, building on Bethune's legacy (Babin 2019: 8-79). The collection



Figure 31: Composite photograph of 1308-1326 Vermont Avenue, N.W., c. 1975. The Council House (outlined in red) is the building in the center, with boarded-up windows (Source: HABS DC-530-1).

focused on documents from the early days of the NCNW.

In 1978, Ward Bucher was the lead architect on a rehabilitation project at the Council House. Bucher referred to a large cast iron urn (quoted in "Undated Summary Recommendations" below) that sat on a brownstone base; the architect apparently was familiar enough with the original design that he thought it might be possible to reproduce a copy. However, research for this CLR did not uncover any historic images or documentation of an earlier urn to corroborate this information. There is no documentation of an urn present during the period of significance (1943-1966), with photographs from 1944 through 1963 depicting the base without an urn. However, neighboring properties on Vermont Avenue NW have urns in their front yards.

Drawings prepared by architect Bucher in 1978 for the Carriage House and Courtyard titled "Proposed Plans: Carriage house, Court, and Front Yard" and "Building Section - Carriage House and Court" depict plans for the front yard and rear courtyard areas that do not appear to have been executed (*see Figures 32 and 33*). The Front Yard Plan drawing depicts an urn on the square pedestal within the front lawn. The urn and pedestal are surrounded by four plants, spaced evenly around the urn, each in line with one side of the urn pedestal (and with the overall property lines), creating an organic shaped cross. The four plantings and urn are encompassed by a curvilinear line, indicating a planting bed. This is the first time the urn is represented.

The Ground Floor Carriage House and Court drawing depicts a central water feature with semi-circular planters on either side (east and west). There is a curvilinear planter along the north property line that mimics the shape of the semi-circular central planters, and a smaller planter to the south. There is a planter on the east side of the rear courtyard, separated from the Council House by the rear patio. There is a walkway along the east elevation (front) of the Carriage House and along the south side of the rear courtyard leading to the Council House. One bench is depicted in the southwest corner of the rear courtyard. The drawings include a building section of this proposal of the rear courtyard, depicting the fountain and plantings (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 601).

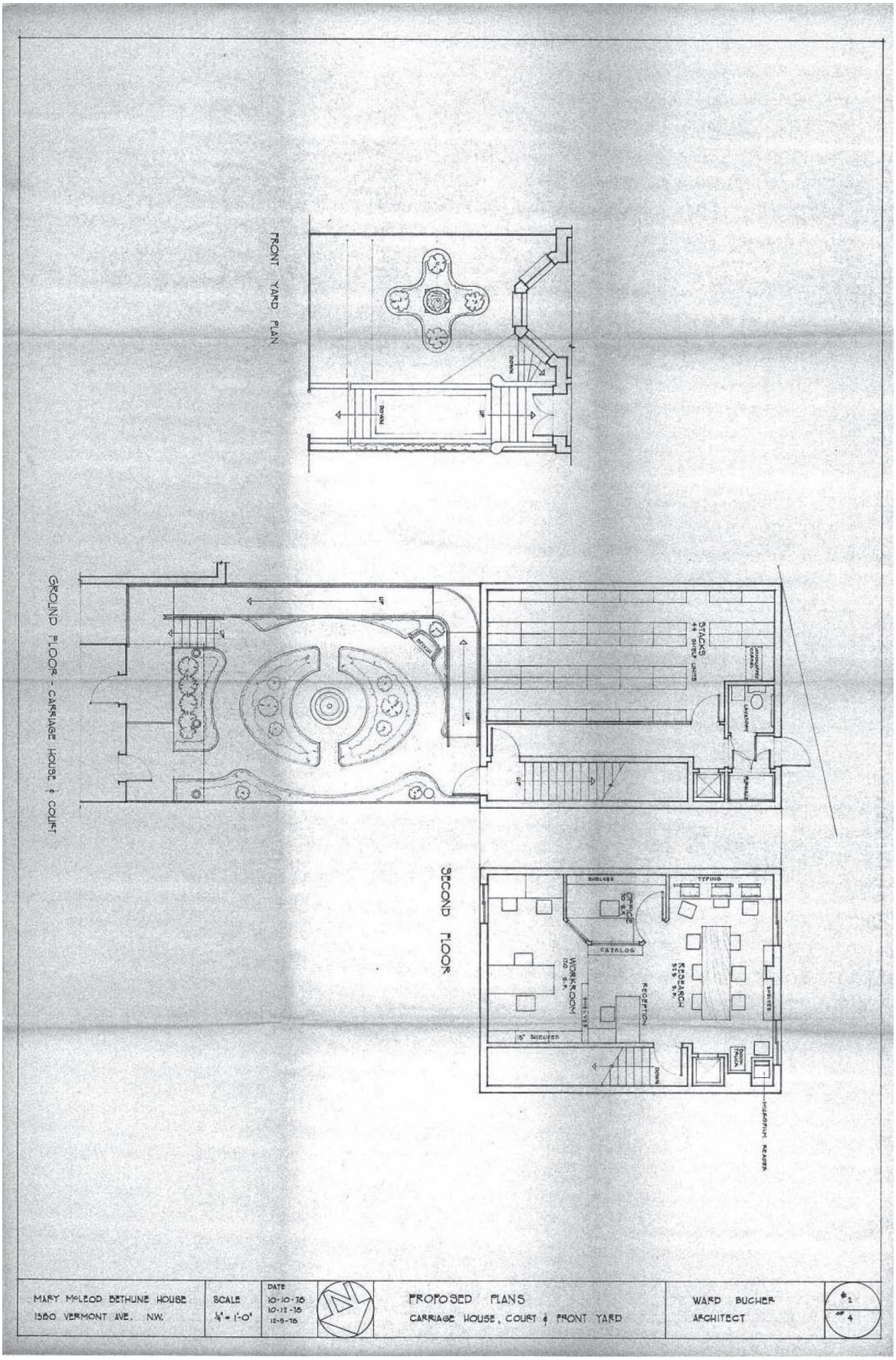


Figure 32: Ward Bucher drawing of "Proposed Plans Carriage House, Court, and Front Yard," 1978 (Source: Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 601).

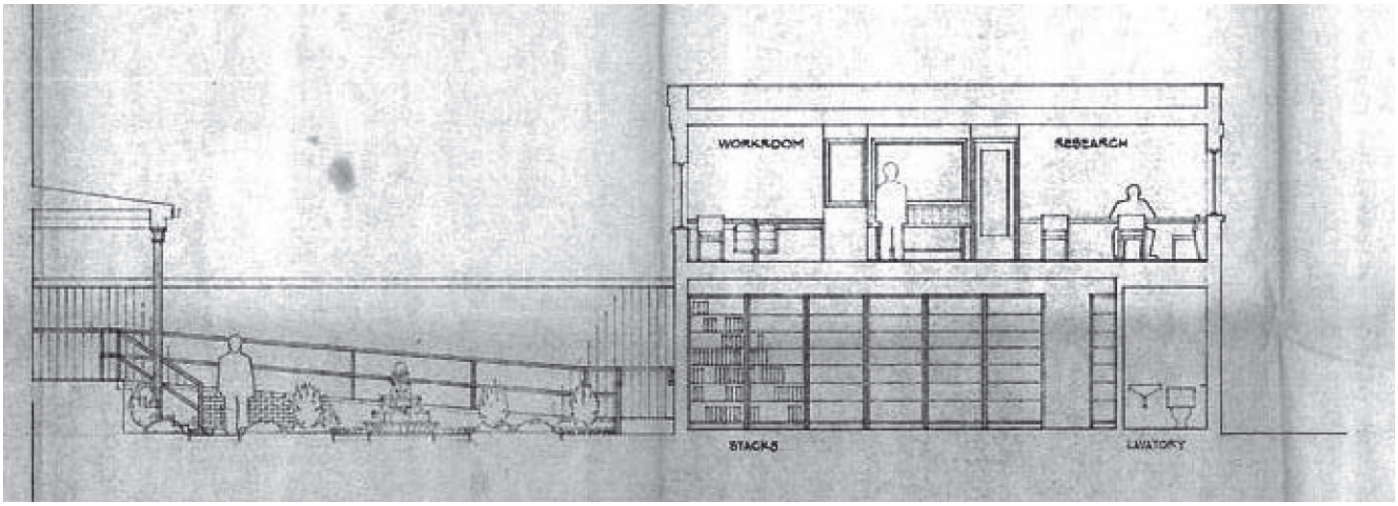


Figure 33: Excerpt from Ward Bucher drawing of "Building Section - Carriage House and Court," 1978 (Source: Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 600).

Reflecting the aforementioned drawings, a document titled "Undated Summary Recommendations" that likely dates to 1978 includes the following information from the architect regarding landscaping at the Council House:

> The exterior spaces of 1318 Vermont Avenue, N.W. include the front yard and the courtyard between the main house and the carriage house. They will be treated in a manner which will reflect the period of construction of the buildings. Landscape design in this period included both large picturesque strolling gardens and smaller geometric formal gardens. Due to the limited amount of space at the Council House, landscape here will be designed around small formal focal points.
>
> Front Yard
>
> The front yard at one time had a large cast iron urn which sat on a brownstone base. Although the base remains, the urn has disappeared. An appropriate period urn (possibly a copy of the original) will be installed on the existing base. This urn will be the focus of a cross shaped planting bed. Plant material will include rose bushes and low flowering ground cover. The bed will be edged with cast iron wickets.
>
> The rest of the front yard will be planted in grass. This area will be regraded so that the slope will follow that of the first flight of steps. The fence will be repaired and painted and the missing gate replaced. The narrow planting strip between the walk and the north fence will be planted with low flower. (See drawings #1 and #3)
>
> Courtyard
>
> The courtyard will be designed as an oval shaped garden with a Victorian fountain at the center. It will be surrounded by a colored concrete path which will connect the archives to the main house. The fountain will be a series of cast iron dishes with water cascading from top to bottom. Planting will include roses and flowers. In the corner formed by the ramp there will be a cast iron bench. The path will be edged with cast iron wickets. (See drawings #2 and #4) (Archives NCNW Records: Bethune Council House 1972-1979, SG2 S1 SSA B4 F1).

An agreement from December 19, 1979, describing the tasks of Council House caretakers includes: "sweep back and front walks," suggesting that the rear courtyard had a formal walk at this time. No further documentation has been found to confirm the appearance and features of the rear courtyard during this time period.

THE MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE MEMORIAL MUSEUM AND NATIONAL ARCHIVES FOR BLACK WOMEN'S HISTORY

The Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial Museum and National Archives for Black Women's History officially opened on November 11, 1979. The museum occupied the Council House, with the archives located in the Carriage House. A low rectangular sign in the front yard was likely added around this time and was in place until approximately 1995; it was located by the Council House bay window and reads *Bethune Museum – Archives* (Babin 2019: 7-5).

The mission of the National Archives of Black Women's History (NABWH) is "To identify, collect, develop, interpret, and preserve the legacy of Mary McLeod Bethune including her unique focus on the individual and collective history of African American women" (National Park Service 2021). The goals of the NABWH are to promote knowledge and understanding of Mary McLeod Bethune and African American women; to assist in the interpretation of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site; to serve as a clearinghouse of information on African American women's history resources; and to provide facilities for the research use of its collections. The archive also documents the ongoing preservation and interpretation of the Bethune legacy.

In 1979, likely prior to the opening of the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial Museum and National Archives for Black Women's History, workers undertook several projects in the front yard of the Council House that included the addition of a metal cast-iron urn in the front lawn atop the square pedestal that was long present in the front yard (Babin 2019: 7-18). As recorded in the above landscaping notes, it is believed that an urn had been in place in years past, though no urn is present in photographs from the 1944 Council House dedication or in photographs of the following decades. The NCNW contracted blacksmith Nol Putnam for the restoration of the front wrought iron metal gate, which included the fabrication and installation of missing material, which comprised approximately half of the gate; cleaning and straightening the existing half of the



Figure 34: Workers in front yard of Council House with urn present and rectangular Bethune Museum-Archives sign in place, c. 1980 (Source: NABWH 055 Series 1 Photograph 0001).

gate; and installing replacement finials for those missing along the gate and fence (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 89-90).

In 1980, the NCNW began efforts for a major restoration of the property with funding by grants from the D.C. Department of Housing and Community Development and the Department of the Interior's Heritage Conservation and Recreation Services, as well as from the NCNW's general funds (*see Figure 34*). The Bethune Historical Development Project, directed by Dr. Collier-Thomas, coordinated the effort.

Major work categories on the Council House at this time included: repointing the brick exterior and painting the exterior; exterior roof repair; window repair; repair of the first floor shutters; staining and refinishing wood work; cleaning and repairing plaster ornaments; removing fluorescent fixtures; replicating missing brackets; repairing built-in gutters and downspouts; and mortar analysis, in addition to substantial interior upgrades and alterations. The NCNW hired specialist William Seale to "consult and advise on the historical accuracy, design, furnishings, colors, window and wall hangings, floor coverings, lighting, and decoration," in an effort to return the Council House to an appearance reminiscent of the 1880s. Not all of the planned interior and exterior work took place during the 1980-1981 project due to budget limitations. In the front yard, grounds work completed as part of the major restoration work at the Council House included: replacement of the balustrade (which was removed, sand blasted, and reinstalled); repair of the front stoop and lower walk stair; gate replication; cresting replication; and landscaping efforts completed by Joan Brooks, described below.

While there are references to possible work completed in the rear yard on a list of items that "should be done," there is no indication of what work in the rear yard was completed at this time.

A list from approximately Sept 1981 regarding Phase 2 projects includes the following items with parenthetical notes:

8. Repair front walk (money waiting)

10. Landscape front yard (money waiting)

11. Landscape rear yard (decision from Dr. Thomas – how, what money?

As noted, while not all the initially planned work was accomplished due to budget constraints, a supplemental budget was approved for $25,000. The work to be accomplished, according to a July 21, 1981, memorandum included "landscape front yard" and "landscape rear yard" (Memorandum, Guy McElroy to Dr. Dorothy Height, 23 June 1981, National Park Service, Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site, DcWaMMB; BMA Records; Series 139, Box 101, Terrence Lamb Folder; Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 38-39). Again, it is unclear what work occurred in the rear yard at this time.

In 1981, the Council hired Joan Brooks, a landscape designer who lived nearby at 1334 Vermont Avenue NW, to design a landscape plan for the Council House. Brooks communicated to Dr. Collier-Thomas that,

> The enclosed landscape design reflects plants and designs of the Victorian era. It can be done in the summer or early Fall; finished, mulched and ready for the grand opening of the house. The cost for the entire project would be approximately $1,055. This includes the nursery fee, which would include a guarantee to replace dead plants within a year at one-half price, and my fee for the design, the finished drawing and the supervision of the actual work. (Joan Brooks to Dr. Bettye Collier-Thomas, 7 July 1981, National Park Service, Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site, DcWaMMB; BMA Records; Series 139, Box 101, Ms. Joan Brooks Folder; Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 95).

Payment documents indicate that Joan Brooks provided a planting plan for the front yard. Additionally, there is a $900 expense voucher for "Landscaping for the NCNW Restoration Project, Back Yard" from October 10, 1981. There is no indication what type of work was completed in the back yard area at this time. Plants on an October 15, 1981, request for payment for landscaping work include: Gumpo azalea *(Rhododendron eriocarpum), Vinca, Pachysandra, Euonymus fortunei,* and *Euonymus Sieboldii.* Mulch and

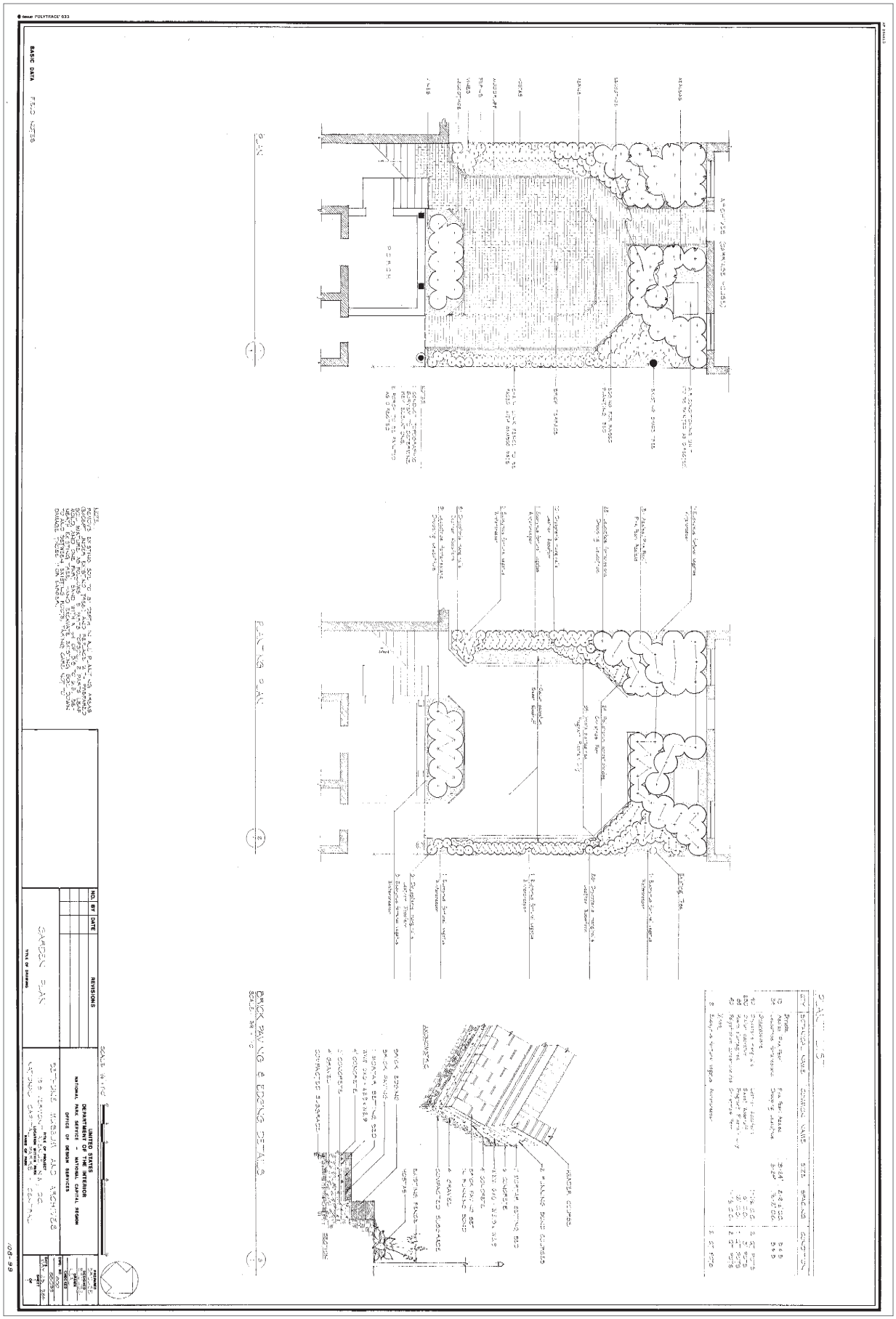


Figure 35: Brouse Garden Plan, 1984 (Source: Nationanl Park Service 1984).

stepping stones were also purchased, which may have been installed in the rear yard.

Joan Brooks' 2017 obituary states that she "enhanced numerous urban parks and residential gardens in Washington, D.C., including the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House and National Historic Site" (Joan Brooks obituary, Washington Post, 2017).

In October of 1982, the NCNW received a Historic Preservation Award from the Washington Chapter of the American Institute of Architects for this major restoration project (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 100).

Establishment of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site (1982 - 1990)

On October 15, 1982, the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site (NHS) was established by Congress under Public Law 97-329, recognizing the significance of Bethune's legacy and the NCNW; the role the Council House played as the NCNW's first national headquarters; and the importance of the archives and museum in Black women's history. The purpose of the legislation assured the "preservation, maintenance, and interpretation" of the Council House and the continuation of the museum and archives, which are "necessary for the continued interpretation of the history of black women in America"' (Public Law 97-329).

The NCNW formally incorporated the museum and archives into a separate organization known as the Bethune Museum and Archives, Inc. (BMA) in 1982. The NCNW continued to own the Council House property while the BMA operated and maintained the National Historic Site (National Park Service 2000: 67). Later that year, on November 17, the NCNW and the Secretary of the Interior approved a cooperative agreement between the NCNW and the National Park Service (National Park Service 2000: 67).

A 1984 one-sheet Garden Plan of the Council House rear courtyard contains representations of a Plan, Planting Plan, and Brick Paving and Edging Details (*see Figure 35*). Prepared by Brouse, the plan depicts a brick terrace courtyard, irregularly shaped planting beds along the south and north property lines (continuing around to the west along the front façade of the Carriage House), and a planter within the courtyard adjacent to the Council House rear patio and back wall. The plan depicts a chain link fence along the north and south property line, to be faced with bamboo mats. A walkway between the planters leads from the rear brick courtyard to the entrance of the Carriage House. While the planters are similar to those currently in the rear courtyard, they are not the same as the current configuration, and it is assumed that this plan was never executed. It appears that the idea for the layout of the rear courtyard was established, but not executed at this time.

The 1984 Brouse planting list includes:

Shrubs

Azaleas 'Pink Pearl' (*Rhododendron 'Pink Pearl'*)

Drooping laurel (*Leucothoe fontanesiana*)

Groundcover

Leather woodfern (*Dryopteris marginalis)*

Sweet woodruff (*Galium odoratum)*

Fragrant plantain lily *(Hosta plantaginea)*

Christmas fern *(Polystichum acrostichoides)*

Vines

Wintercreeper *(Euonymus fortunei)*

1988 REHABILITATION

With the assistance of federal funds, the NCNW completed an additional major phase of building restoration beginning in 1988 and continuing through 1989. The architect was Architectnique, with Terry Lamb acting as the restoration consultant. Exterior work in the front yard included: repairing the black and white marble front walkway and concrete; installing new brownstone steps at the front entry stoop; and refabricating the wrought iron railing and gates.

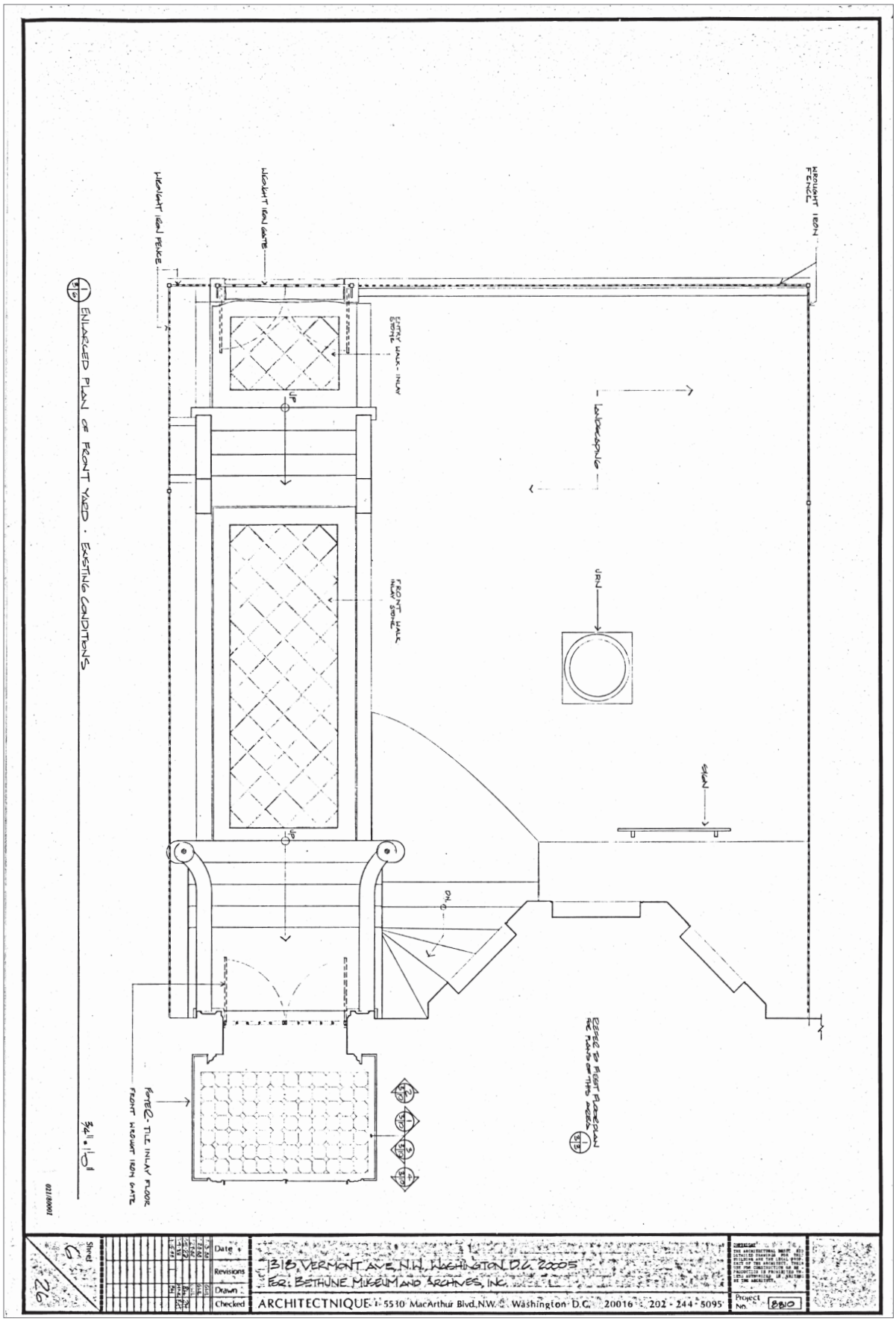


Figure 36: Architectnique drawing of "Enlarged Plan of Front Yard – Existing Conditions," 1988 (Source: Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 606).

A description of Phase Two work for the 1988 and 1989 project includes the following:

> Marble Walkway: Install new marble where inlay is fractured or broken. Excavate old concrete cradle and pour new concrete cradle. Excavate and pour new concrete framing around inlay section.
>
> Brownstone Staircase: Install New York brownstone staircase. Specified New York brownstone to replace Seneca due to proven durability. Replacement pending availability to New York brownstone. (Brownstone freight, installation and removal)
>
> Ironwork: Historic restoration and refabrication of staircase railing. Rehang and realign iron gates. Fabricate iron gate to lower exterior stairwell for security.
>
> Woodwork: Refabricate balustrade in an exterior hard wood (redwood). (Erroneously, poplar was specified in 1981 by Ward Bucher, architect, prior to the hiring of restoration consultant, Terry Lamb.) Refurbishment of exterior decorative finishes around eaves and third floor windows. Add flashing to ground floor level window trim to alleviate water damage. Weather treat and faux grain vestibule.
>
> Landscaping: Victorian plantings and professional maintenance specified (Renovation/Restoration Archive folder NABWH_001_SG2_S01_SSA_BX04_FL04_wm).

The Executive Director's Report from July 24-September 25, 1989, of the BMA Development Plan reports that: "Main site and front yard—Contact Ms. Joan Brooks to refurbish Victorian front garden and simulate same in rear." It is unknown if Joan Brooks, who worked on the property in 1981, was involved in the 1989 project.

At this time, significant work occurred in the rear yard, including: laying the rear courtyard with black and white marble squares in a checkerboard pattern to match the front walkway; the addition of the rear brick patio in herringbone pattern on the west elevation of the Council House; the installation of raised brick planters along the north (and continuing west) and south property lines; landscaping of new "period" plantings in the planters; and the addition of wood lattice privacy fences on the north and south property lines (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 101-102; Babin 2019: 7-18). The Historic Structure Report notes that "Landscaping consisted of replanting the rear yard and laying a marble patio to match the front walkway," suggesting that the rear courtyard had already been planted in some form (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 43). Other than the 1981 Joan Brooks planting list, research completed for this CLR did not locate any documentation of earlier planting plans that are known to have been executed.

The 1988 Architectnique drawings of "Enlarged Plan of Front Yard – Existing Conditions" show the existing conditions within the front yard (*see Figure 36*). They indicate: the urn in the front lawn area; the wrought iron perimeter fence; wrought iron gate at the front walkway entrance; museum sign location near the bay window; and the front walkway with marble pavers (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 606). A building section drawing from the 1988 Architectnique drawings depicts the rear yard between the Council House and Carriage House, and shows nothing present in the rear yard (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 626).

A drawing from the same 1988 Architectnique series depicts building sections of the rear of the Council House and the front of the Carriage House. The space between the buildings is labeled "rear yard" and does not include any details (*see Figure 37*). It is clear whether the rear courtyard was undeveloped at this time, or whether the renderers simply chose not to include any extant courtyard features, focusing on the buidlings instead.

Work completed on the Council House at this time included the replacement of the tin roof, gutters, downspouts, and rotted wood framing beneath the roof. Workers stuccoed the west elevation of the Council House, and the kitchen door previously leading to the patio was sealed. Workers added a new one-story porch with a slightly sloping roof to the back of the Council House, spanning the width of the ell; the porch roof was supported by two fluted metal Doric columns. They also installed new air-conditioning units on the roof of the building ell

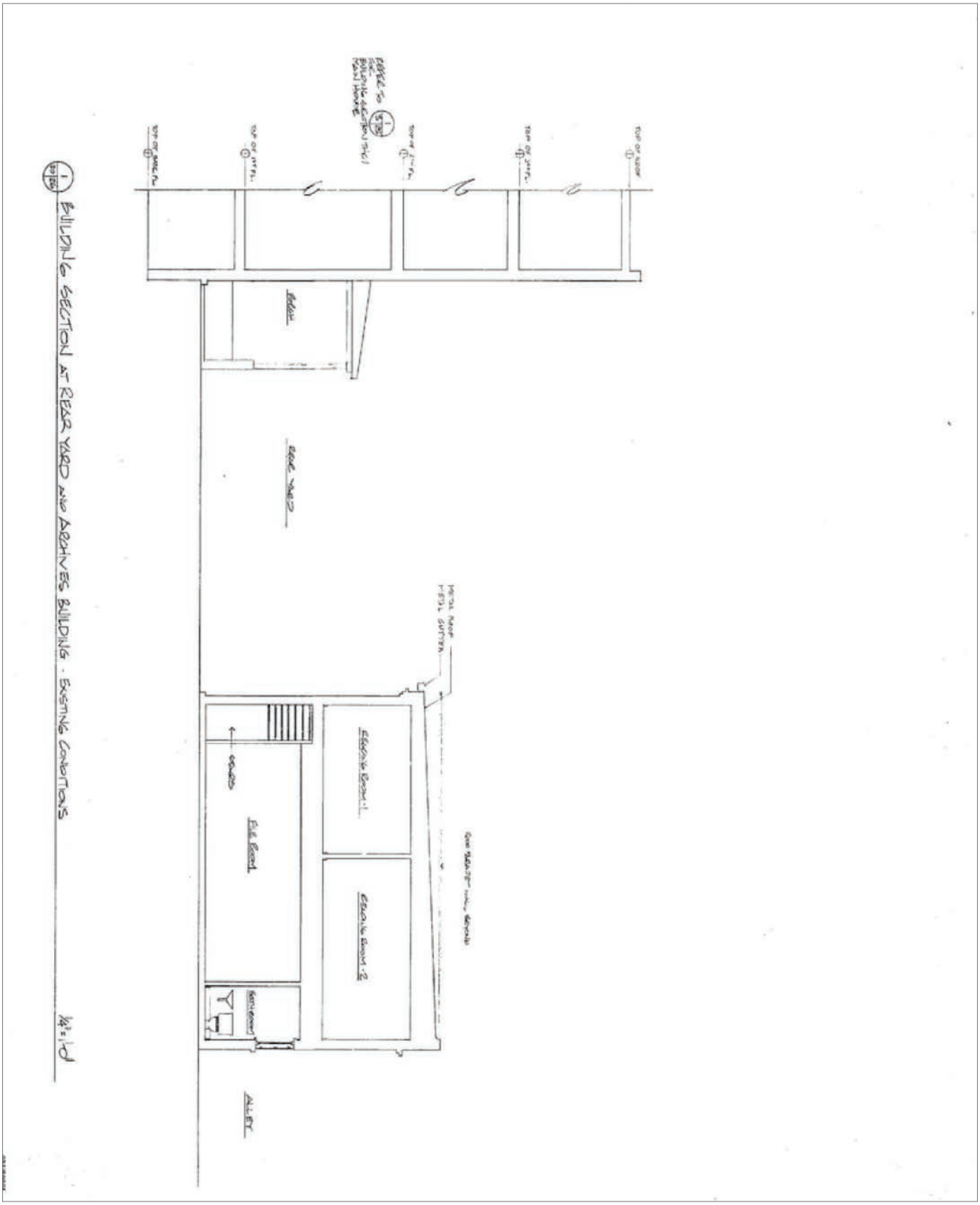


Figure 37: Architectnique drawing of "Building Section at Rear Yard and Archives Building – Existing Conditions," 1988 (Source: Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 626)

(Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 161).

Work completed on the Carriage House included the replacement of the roof, gutters, and downspouts; the replacement of the heating and air-conditioning system; the enlargement and replacement of the windows; and the installation of security grilles on the windows and doors. The interior was converted into a climate-controlled space to house the archives (HABS no. DC-775).

Archival documents from Phase Four of the project (1992) suggest that additional grounds work was to occur:

> Landscaping: Level back to facilitate handicap access to basement conference room entrance. Install decorative foliage and wooden deck. Area to be used for small outdoor events. TOTAL $15,000.

However, this does not appear to have taken place (NABWH_001_SG2_S01_SSA_BX04_FL04_wm).

Early National Park Service Management (1991 - 1999)

On December 11, 1991, Public Law 102-211 (105 Stat. 1652) authorized the National Park Service (NPS) to acquire and manage the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site to "preserve and interpret the life and work of Mary McLeod Bethune"; to "preserve and interpret the history, lives, and contributions of African American women"; and to "preserve and interpret the struggle for civil rights" in the United States (Public Law 102-211). The legislation that granted the NPS the authority to acquire and manage the property also created a 15-member Federal Advisory Commission for the NHS, known as the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site Advisory Commission. The advisory commission helped to develop the General Management Plan for the NHS, completed in 2000.

In 1993, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) documentation was completed for the Council House (HABS No. DC-775) and the Carriage House (HABS No DC-775-A) including photographs, measured drawings, and written narratives. The HABS written narrative describes the Council House as follows:

> The house is set on a slight rise of land above street level. A black wrought iron fence, about 3' high, surrounds the front yard. Identical gates run along the sidewalk and around the yards of the neighboring buildings. Just inside the two arched wrought-iron gate doors is a short sidewalk with black and white marble squares laid in concrete in a checkerboard pattern. Three stone steps lead to the next sidewalk with the same checkerboard pattern. This walk leads to the front stoop. The entire walk has been restored. Flower beds line the perimeter of the yard and border a central lawn to the left of the front steps. In the center of the lawn stands a large black iron um on a pedestal. This planter is similar to one that was original to the site. The backyard has been completely redesigned. (Historic American Buildings Survey. "HABS Review." Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, Historic American Buildings Survey, DC-775).

The HABS drawing Site Plan and First Floor Plan depict the existing conditions of the front and rear yards of the Council House. The front yard includes representations of the wrought iron fence; the urn location within the lawn area in front of the bay window; and the front walkway, divided by steps leading to the front entry stoop, with marble squares laid in concrete in a checkerboard pattern.

The rear yard depicts the alleyway; porch on the west wall of the Council House; rear courtyard featuring marble squares laid in concrete in a checkerboard pattern; the L-shaped planter on the north property line; and two adjoined planters on the south property line (*see Figure 38*).

The HABS photographic documentation shows unidentified plants within the urn in the front yard and shrubs planted along the front fence line, approximately 3' in height (*see Figure 39*). The "Bethune Museum - Archives" sign is visible near the bay window. Photographic documentation of the rear yard shows all the planters fully planted with unidentified shrubs, ground cover, and plants and vines growing on the lattice privacy fences. Round tables with chairs are located in the rear

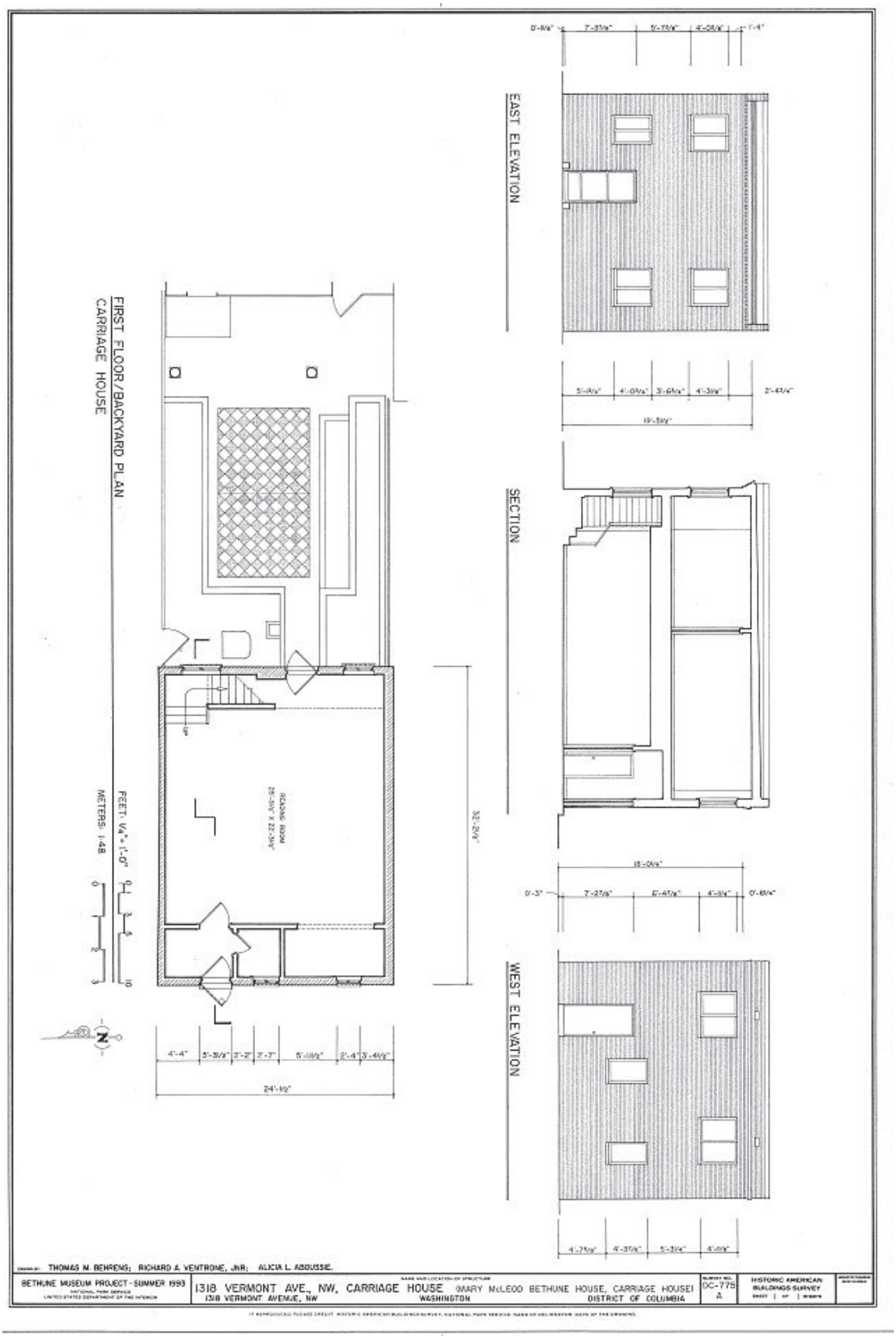


Figure 38: HABS documentation of the Carriage House depicting existing conditions in the rear courtyard, 1993 (HABS DC-775-A).

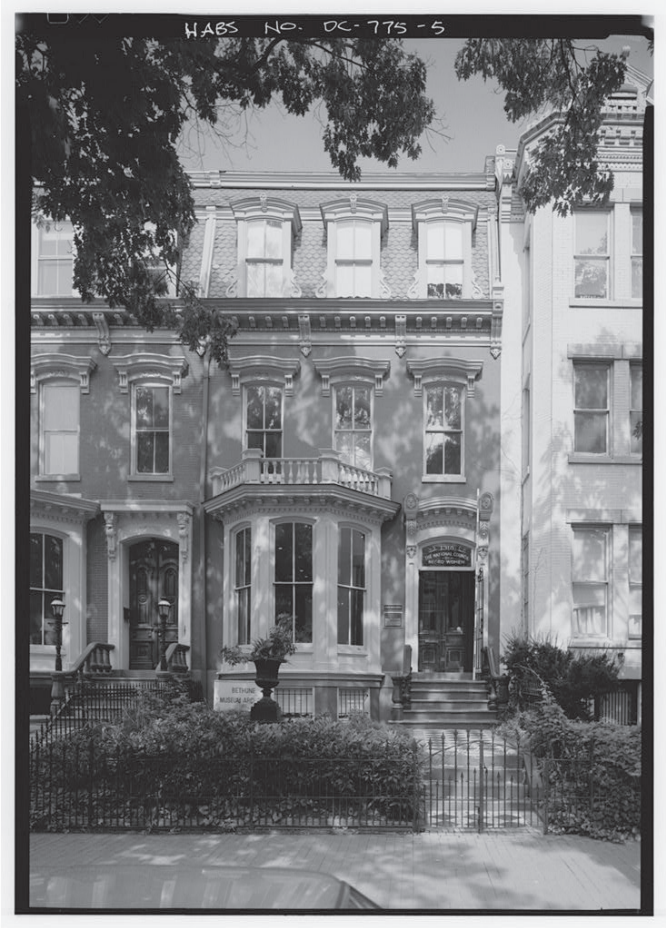


Figure 39: HABS photographic documentation of the Council House front facade, 1993 (HABS DC-775).



Figure 40: HABS photographic documentation of the rear courtyard, 1993 (HABS DC-775-A).

courtyard (HABS no. DC-775 and DC-775-A-1) (*see Figure 40*).

In 1994, the NPS acquired the Council House at 1318 Vermont Avenue NW and assumed stewardship of the property. The following year, the NPS hired staff to manage the site (National Park Service 2000: 9). Also in 1995, the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places listed the Greater Fourteenth Street Historic District in the National Register (NRHP#94000992), which includes 1318 Vermont Avenue NW as a contributing resource. The Historic District was expanded in 2007 (NRHP# 07000421) (*see Figure 41*).

On October 1, 1995, the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site opened to the public as a museum dedicated to the interpretation of the life and legacy of Mary McLeod Bethune (National Park Service 2000: 9). Photographs from around this time depict guests entering through the front entryway and receptions held in the rear courtyard of the Council House (*see Figures 42 through 45*). Images show the planters full with ground cover, vines, flowers, and shrubs, including impatiens (Impatiens walleriana), roses (*Rosa* sp.), Blue plantain lily (*Hosta ventricosa*), and Japanese yew (*Taxus cuspidata*), in addition to other unidentified plants. Images from the front yard from around this time show the front lawn planted with unidentified flowers.

Around this time, the NPS installed an oval-shaped sign in the front yard adjacent to the front walkway. It features decorative iron work details and an inscription reading: *Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site, Department of the Interior, National Park Service*. The lower-profile, rectangular *Bethune Museum - Archives* sign appears to have been removed at this time.

Recent Activities at the Council House NHS (2000 - Present)

In 2000, the decorative wrought iron fence surrounding the Council House property was determined eligible as a contributing element to the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 104). Around 2000, the NPS completed exterior repair and rehabilitation work on the Council House, including: lead-based paint abatement; removal of mildew and fungus from the exterior walls; replacement of rotted, deteriorated, or missing wood on the front elevation; rehabilitation of windows; repair or replacement of gutters and downspouts on the front elevation; repair of the parapet cover on the front elevation; masonry restoration; and selective slate replacement on the mansard roof at the front elevation (Babin 2019: 7-8).

Plan drawings completed for the exterior rehabilitation work show the front yard and rear courtyard area with conditions similar to the 1993 HABS documentation drawings. The front yard contains the urn (installed in 1979) within the lawn area, and the walkway appears to be in a checkerboard pattern and surrounded by the wrought iron fence. The rear yard drawing depicts the courtyard with marble pavers and planters along the north and south property boundaries, in addition to wood lattice fences along the north and south property boundaries (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 636).

NPS photographs of the front yard from 2000 to the present day (2022) depict the yard and urn planted with various types of flowers, including tulips (Tulipa), pansies (Viola × wittrockiana), daffodils (Narcissus), or other flowers, and occasionally unplanted (see Figures 46 through 48). The front yard appears to be primarily maintained in turf in more recent years, beginning in approximately 2012. Undated photographs from within the past decade also depict the urn ringed by a brick border. Between the urn and brick border are small landscaping rocks, while the area outside the brick border is mulched with planted flowers. NPS photographs of the rear courtyard show the planters with a range of flowers, shrubs, trees, ground cover, and vines, including Blue plantain lily (*Hosta ventricosa*), English ivy (*Hedera helix*), Crepe myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*), Lilyturf (*Liriope muscari*), and Japanese yew (*Taxus cuspidata*). The planters have also occasionally remained unplanted.

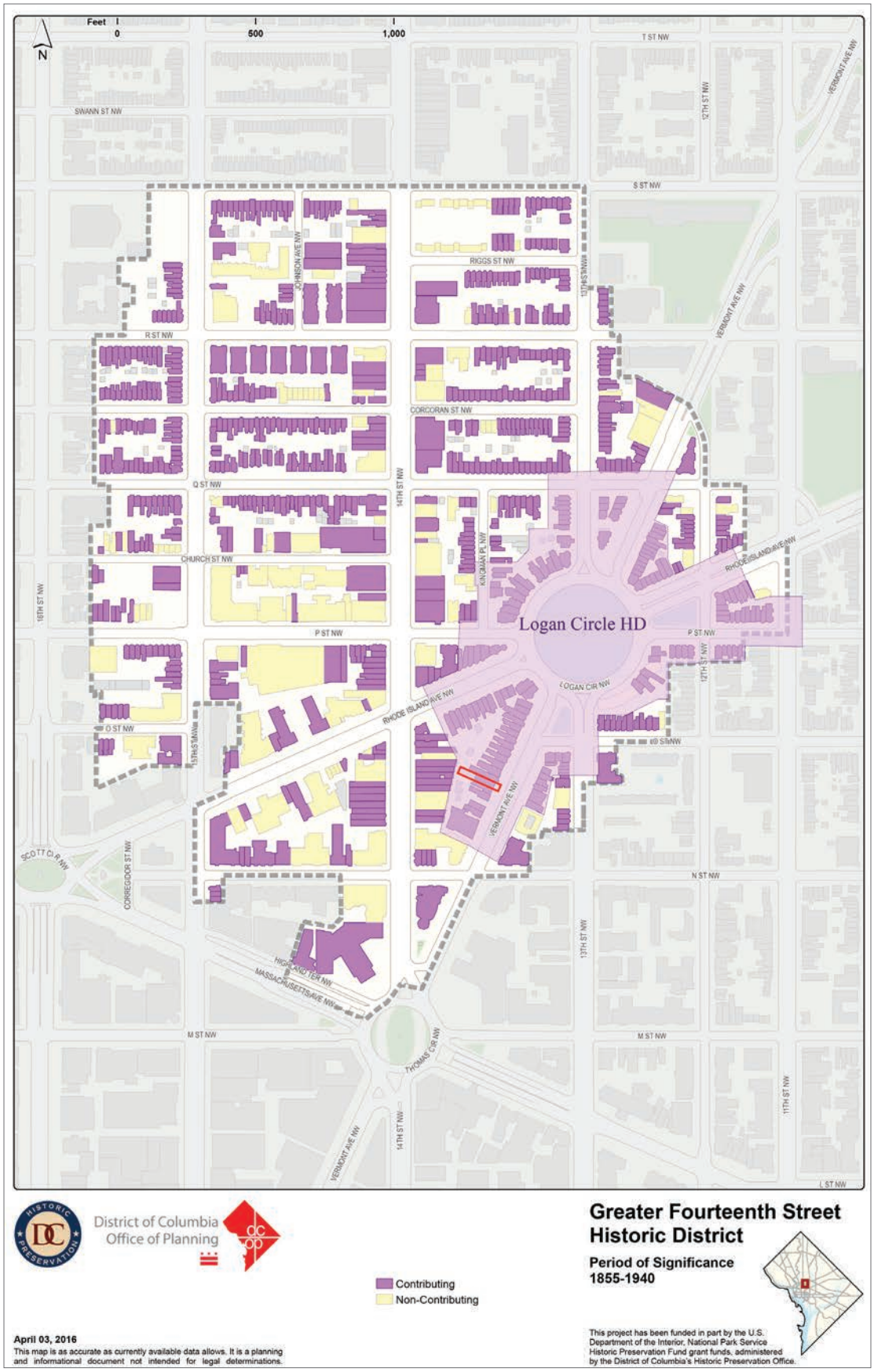


Figure 41: Map of contributing and non-contributing resources within the Greater Fourteenth Street Historic District, also including the boundaries of the Logan Circle Historic District (Source: DC Office of Planning). The NHS is located within the red rectangle.



Figure 42: Dr. Dorothy I. Height (then president of NCNW, in teal), Cicely Tyson (actor, in gold), Robert G. Stanton (former Director of the NPS), and others at the dedication of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS as a unit of the national park system, 1995 (Source: National Park Service).



Figure 43: Reception in rear courtyard with plantings visible, including roses (Rosa sp.), on the right and Blue plantain lily (Hosta ventricose) on the far left, undated (Source: NABWH 057 Series 01 Photograph 0137).



Figure 44: Rear courtyard with plantings visible, including impatiens (Impatiens walleriana) on the left and Japanese yew (Taxus cuspidata) at the rear, undated (Source: NABWH 057 Series 01 Photograph 0004).



Figure 45: People sitting in the rear courtyard with plantings visible, including roses (Rosa sp.), and vines, undated (Source: NABWH 057 Series 01 Folder 02 Photograph 0029).

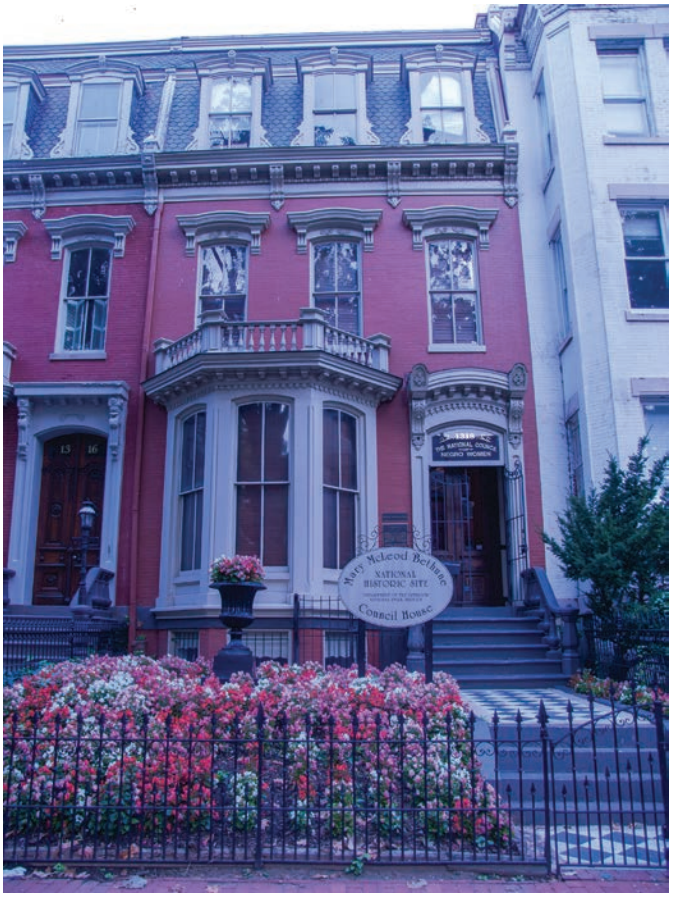


Figure 46: Exterior of the Council House with plantings and oval NHS sign visible, 2007 (Source: MAMC 070320).



Figure 47: Front yard of Council House planted with colorful pansies (Viola tricolor var. hortensis) and rectangular NPS sign visible, 2010 (Source: MAMC 105150).



Figure 48: Front yard of the Council House planted with bicolor tulips (Tulipa sp.), 2012 (Source: National Park Service).

A 2001 Determination of Eligibility established the Carriage House to be a contributing element to the Logan Circle Historic District National Register listing ("Determination of Eligibility, National Capital Parks East," 30 July 2001. NPS ftp documents. Photocopy). In 2003, workers replaced the roof of the Carriage House.

In 2008, Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP completed a Historic Structure Report (HSR) for the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS. Photographs from this time (approximately 2007) show the front yard planted with pansies (*Viola × wittrockiana*). Drawings from the HSR completed in 2007 depict the lawn area of the front yard, with the urn in front of the bay window atop the square pedestal (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 302) (*see Figure 49*).

An update to the 2008 Historic Structure Report completed in 2015 noted that on the front stoop, the "sandstone landing is exfoliating and crumbling at bottom surface; visible loss of mortar, separation and deterioration of collar joint between sandstone veneer and brick backup at cheek walls." The drawing also notes, "hollow cast iron balusters rusting around base; rail pieces out of alignment, baluster cap damage" (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2015 update).

Circa 2009, the oval-shaped NHS sign was removed, and the extant rectangular standard NPS signage was installed in the front yard next to the walkway. It reads "Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site."

In approximately 2012, the NPS removed the wrought iron entry doors of the Council House and

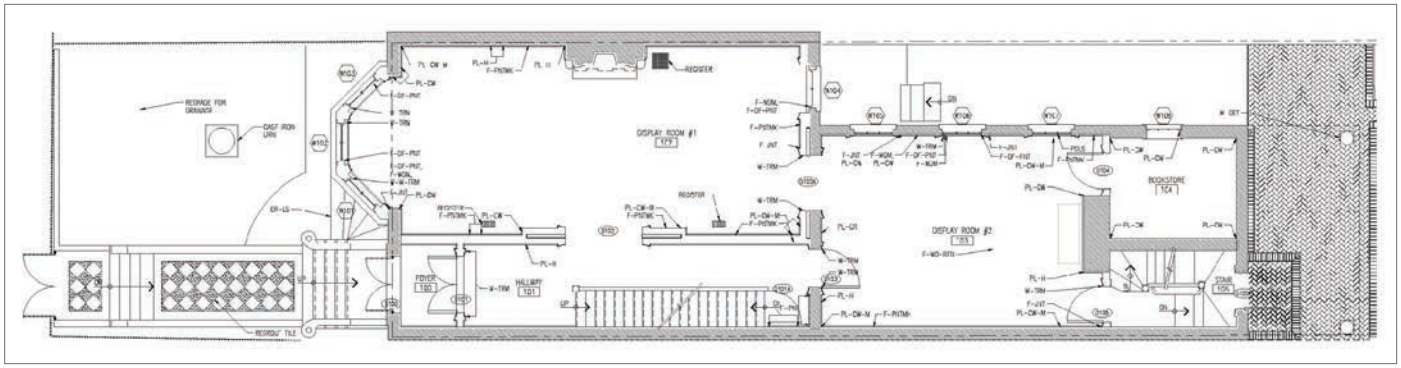


Figure 49: First Floor - Diagram of Conditions Assessment from the Mary McLeod Bethune NHS Council House Historic Structure Report, 2008 (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 302).



Figure 50: National Park Service employees planting the front yard urn with impatiens (Impatiens walleriana), 2019 (Source: National Park Service).

replaced them with wooden doors, resembling doors from the period of significance (1943-1966). The wrought iron entry doors were likely added during the 1980/81 rehabilitation work when work included the fabrication of exterior doors. From 2014 through 2016, preservation work to the Council House included the repair of the front façade; repointing of exterior masonry; and the repair of plumbing and drains (Babin 2019: 7-8).

In 2014, the NPS moved the contents of the National Archives of Black Women's History (NABWH) from the Carriage House to the National Park Service's Museum Resource Center in Landover, Maryland, citing concerns regarding the lack of fire suppression in the Carriage House (Babin 2019: 7-5). The archives remain at the Museum Resource Center. Ivy was removed from the exterior of the Council House in 2015 (PEPC 61631).

The NPS closed the Council House to visitors between 2016 and 2018 to install a fire suppression and security system to protect the building and its collections (Babin 2019: 7-8). Circa 2018, a wooden vertical panel fence replaced the lattice fence on the north property line of the Council House's rear courtyard. From March 2020 through April of 2022, the NPS again closed the Council House to the public due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2020, additional work on the Council House included replacing the roof and HVAC (PEPC 82850). Also in 2020, graffiti was removed from the Carriage House exterior facing the public alley (PEPC 105545); in 2022, workers again removed graffiti from this wall (PEPC 110556). Other projects in 2022 included new plantings in the urn in the front yard (PEPC 109421) (*see Figure 50*), cutting of vines on the exterior of buildings (PEPC 110555), and dressing of the planting beds in the rear courtyard (PEPC 108707). In 2022, the NPS reinstated the federal advisory board for the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS.

Conclusion

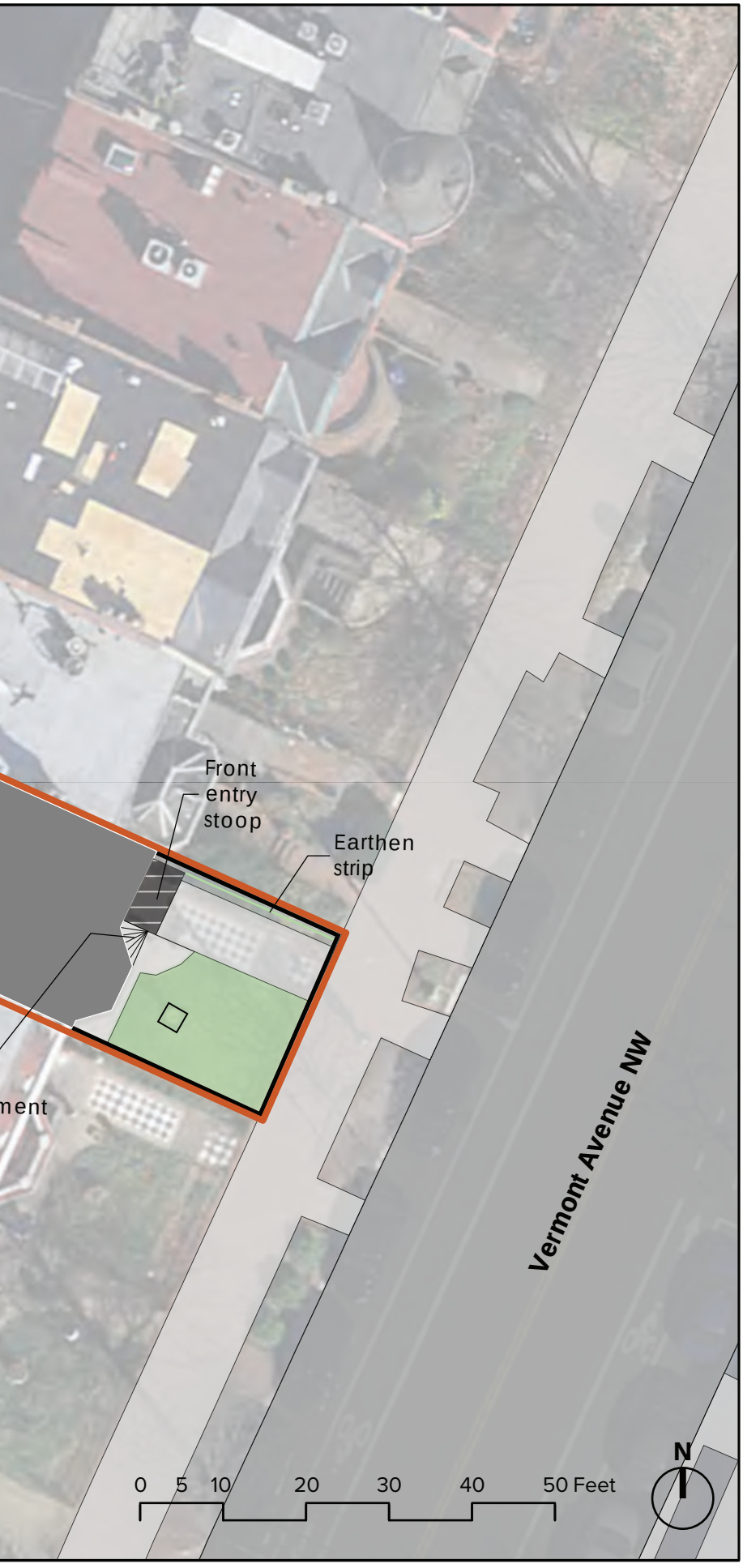
In July 2022, Bethune was enshrined in the U.S. Capitol building, when a sculpture of her likeness replaced one of Confederate General Edmund Kirby Smith in the National Statuary Hall. Bethune dedicated her life to the fight for racial and gender equality and over the course of her lifetime, was affiliated with at least 75 organizations including the NAACP, the National Urban League, the United Negro College Fund, Commission on Interracial

Cooperation, Southern Conference for Human Welfare, Southern Conference Educational Fund, National Committee to Abolish the Poll Tax, NACW, and of course, the NCNW. The NCNW laid the groundwork for the modern Civil Rights Movement and pivotal civil rights legislation.

Today, the NCNW, almost 90 years after its founding, continues to be engaged in nationally important activities and programs both within and outside of the political system. As historian Hanson concludes, “Through its work, the NCNW created a female sphere of influence, authority, and power… The council worked to make black women astute political activists and lobbyists; to build women’s political strength by gaining appointments to policy-making boards and committees; and to eliminate discriminatory legislation in housing, health, employment, public accommodations, and political representation” (Hanson 2003: 9). The first headquarters of the NCNW at 1318 Vermont Avenue NW was the central hub from which the Council developed programs, strategies, and activism on behalf of African American women, with national and international impacts. The Council House, where Bethune achieved her greatest recognition, stands as an important symbol of the legacy of the NCNW.

Period Plans


Rear Alley (Unnamed)
Carriage House
[Condition unknown]
Rear porch roof
Council House
Council House alley (rear ell)
Stair to baser



Cultural Landscape Report
Mary McLeod Bethune
Council House National Historic Site
1943 - 1966 Period Plan

Weitzman School of Design
University of Pennsylvania

Urban Heritage Project
Graduate Program in Historic Preservation /
PennPraxis, Weitzman School of Design
www.cultural-landscapes.org

SOURCES
1. Open Data DC, https://opendata.dc.gov/, accessed Sept 2022
2. Field Survey and Data Collection, 2022
3. Commonwealth of Virginia, DC GIS, Maxar, Microsoft (base imagery)

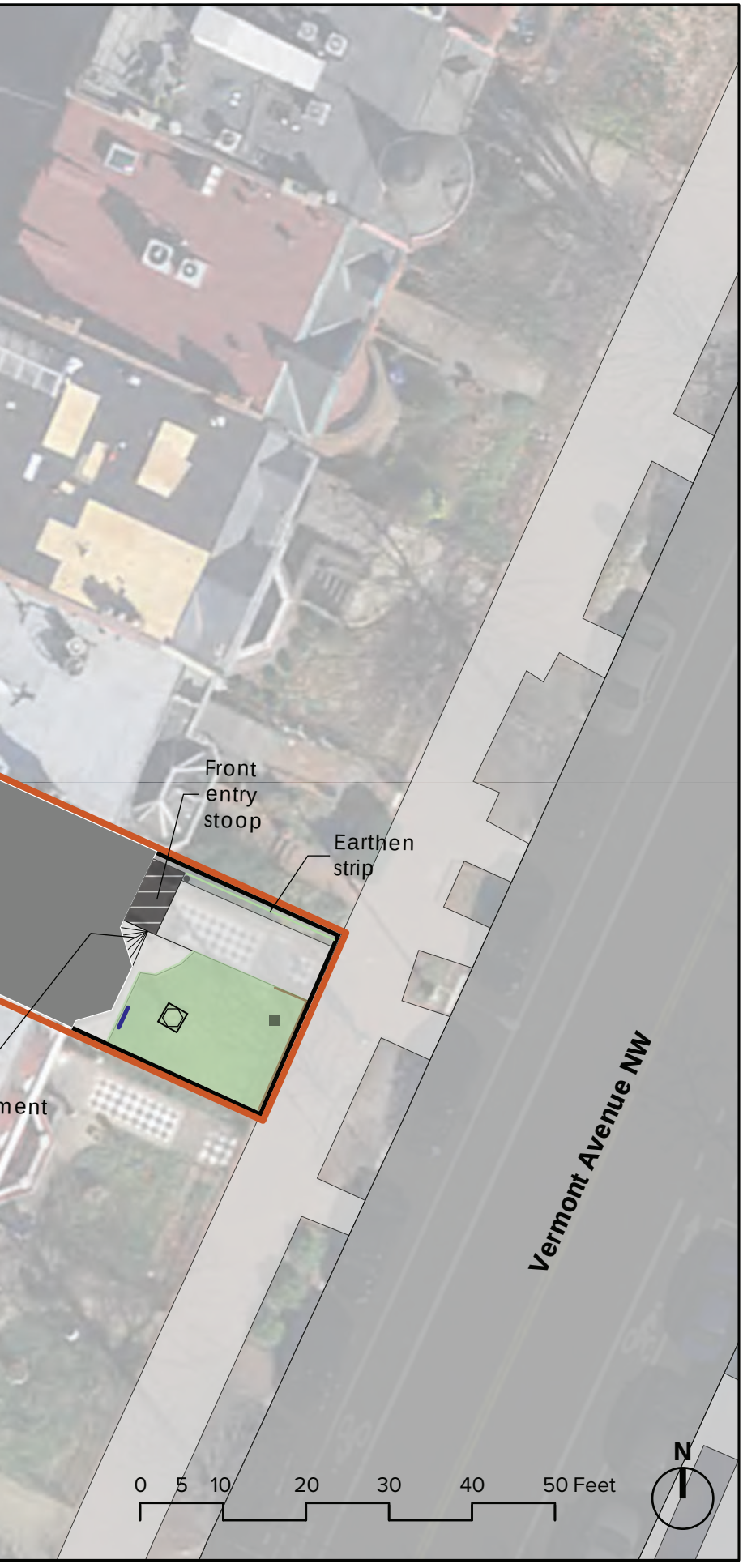
DRAWN BY
Molly Lester and Meg Frisbie,
University of Pennsylvania
ArcGIS Pro, Adobe Illustrator, 2022

LEGEND
- CLR Boundary
- Building
- Front Fence and Gate
- Pedestal only (No urn)
- Road
- Walk / Stair
- Front Yard
- Earthen Strip

NOTES
1. All features shown in approximate scale and locations; small-scale features not to scale.

Drawing 1


Rear Alley (Unnamed)
Carriage House
Rear porch roof
Council House
Lattice gate at alley
Council House alley (rear ell)
Stair to baser



Cultural Landscape Report
Mary McLeod Bethune
Council House National Historic Site
1989 Period Plan

Weitzman School of Design
University of Pennsylvania

Urban Heritage Project
Graduate Program in Historic Preservation /
PennPraxis, Weitzman School of Design
www.cultural-landscapes.org

SOURCES
1. Open Data DC, https://opendata.dc.gov/, accessed Sept 2022
2. Field Survey and Data Collection, 2022
3. Commonwealth of Virginia, DC GIS, Maxar, Microsoft (base imagery)

DRAWN BY
Molly Lester and Meg Frisbie,
University of Pennsylvania
ArcGIS Pro, Adobe Illustrator, 2022

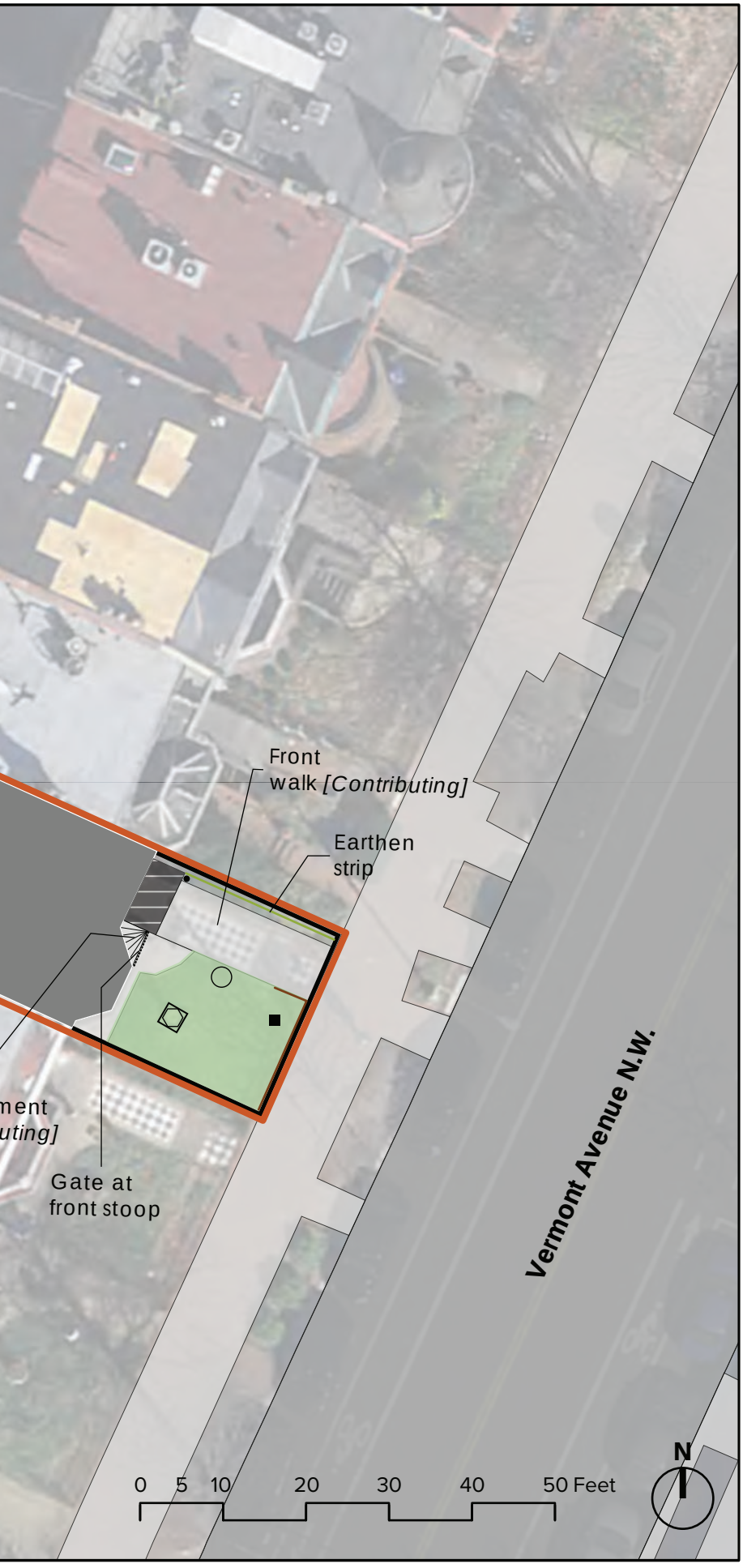
LEGEND
- CLR Boundary
- Building
- Front Fence and Gate
- Planter
- Rear Courtyard Fence
- Gate (Small-Scale Feature)
- Urn
- Pedestal
- Museum Sign
- Drainage Feature
- Air-Conditioning Unit
- Road
- Walk / Stair
- Rear Courtyard
- Front Yard
- Earthen Strip
- Courtyard Plantings (various)

Likely in place as of 1989 (unconfirmed)
- Pipe
- Metal Square (Corroded)
- Rail Tie

NOTES
1. All features shown in approximate scale and locations; small-scale features not to scale.
2. Dates of pipe, metal square, and rail ties are unknown; these features were likely in place in 1989.

Drawing 2


Rear Alley (Unnamed)
Carriage House
Rear porch roof
Walkway to Carriage House
[Non-contributing]
Lattice gate at alley
Council House
Council House alley (rear ell)
[Contributing]
Stair
to baser
[Contrib



Cultural Landscape Report
Mary McLeod Bethune
Council House National Historic Site
2022 Existing Conditions

Weitzman School of Design
University of Pennsylvania

Urban Heritage Project
Graduate Program in Historic Preservation /
PennPraxis, Weitzman School of Design
www.cultural-landscapes.org

SOURCES
1. Open Data DC, https://opendata.dc.gov/, accessed Sept 2022
2. Field Survey and Data Collection, 2022
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DRAWN BY
Molly Lester and Meg Frisbie, Univ. of Penn.
ArcGIS Pro, Adobe Illustrator, 2022

LEGEND (by characteristic)
- CLR Boundary
- Road
- Walk
- Building *[Contributing]*
- Front Fence/Gate *[Contributing]*
- Iron Gate *[Contributing]*
- Planter *[Non-contributing]*
- Rear Courtyard Fence *[Non-contributing]*
- Rear Courtyard *[Non-contributing]*
- Front Yard Lawn Panel *[Contributing]*
- Earthen Strip *[Contributing]*
- Urn *[Contributing]* and Urn Plantings *[Non-contributing]*
- Yew *[Non-contributing]*
- Rear Courtyard Plantings (various) *[Non-contributing]*
- Pedestal *[Contributing]*
- Sign *[Non-contributing]*
- Metal Ramp *[Non-contributing]*
- Drainage Feature *[Non-contributing]*
- Pipe *[Non-contributing]*
- Lattice Gate *[Non-contributing]*
- Air-Conditioning Unit *[Non-contributing]*
- Metal Square *[Undetermined]*
- Rail Tie *[Undetermined]*

NOTES
1. All features shown in approximate scale and locations; small-scale features not to scale.

Drawing 3

Analysis + Evaluation

Summary of Integrity

PERIODS OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1875-1900, 1943-1966

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its historic significance. National Register of Historic Places Bulletin 16A defines historic integrity as "the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's prehistoric or historic period." The U.S. Secretary of the Interior defines seven aspects or qualities of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

In order to retain historic integrity, a property must possess several, and usually most, of these seven aspects. Evaluating historic integrity involves first determining the historic significance of a property, and then identifying the existing features that contribute to our ability to recognize and understand this significance. Character-defining features are those distinctive features or qualities that make a property unique. They are the individual parts that make the whole place special and worthy of our recognition as a historic property.

The cultural landscape of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site maintains integrity in location, setting, design, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association. The integrity of materials and workmanship in particular are slightly diminished on account of additions to the rear courtyard after the period of significance, but these aspects of integrity remain evident in the overall existing conditions of the landscape. The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site conveys its historic significance based on the character-defining features associated with each of the seven aspects of integrity.

LOCATION

Location is the place where the cultural landscape was constructed or the landscape where the historic event occurred. The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS is located at 1318 Vermont Avenue, N.W. in the Logan Circle neighborhood of Washington, D.C. The cultural landscape has maintained its current, consistent position since the site and its most significant features (certain buildings and structures, spatial organization elements, etc.) were first developed in the first period of significance (1875-1900). The current location of the cultural landscape is also consistent with the second period of significance (1943-1966), when Bethune lived in the primary building and the NCNW used the property as its organizational headquarters until 1966. The footprint of Lot 55, where the cultural landscape is located, and the property boundaries have remained the same since the original parceling and development of the Logan Circle neighborhood. These existing boundaries reflect the original character of the neighborhood's development in the late 19th century, as well as the character of the historic period when the NCNW and Bethune occupied the property. The cultural landscape continues to occupy its historic location at 1318 Vermont Avenue, N.W., in Washington, D.C., and maintains integrity of location. Collectively, the features that contribute to the significance of the cultural landscape remain in their original locations and maintain their historic relationships.

SETTING

Setting is the physical environment of the cultural landscape. The setting of the Mary McLeod

Bethune Council House NHS retains integrity to both periods of significance. The cultural landscape is located in a line of rowhouses within the dense residential neighborhood of Logan Circle in northwest Washington, D.C. The homes on Vermont Avenue, constructed between 1875 and 1890, are all similarly set back from the street by small yards enclosed by iron fences. Unified by scale and character, the residences are a mixture of Second Empire, Italianate, Queen Anne, and Romanesque Revival architectural styles, reflecting the original development and historic character of Vermont Avenue and the Logan Circle Historic District specific to the late 19th century. While there is some construction on Vermont Avenue that postdates the periods of significance, the views along the street and the land use patterns in the surrounding area have remained largely the same, reflecting the historic period, and the setting overall retains a high degree of integrity.

DESIGN

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. The design of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS cultural landscape retains much of its historic integrity. The overall organization of the landscape is the same as during the first period of significance (1875-1900), based on the intact spatial relationship of the primary building (Council House) and front yard to Vermont Avenue, and the relationship of the primary and secondary buildings, separated by a rear courtyard. The spatial relationship of the cultural landscape to the surrounding neighborhood of rowhouses has not changed since construction.

As prominent features in the cultural landscape, the form and plans of the buildings (the Council House and Carriage House) have not been altered. Additionally, many of the landscape features in the front yard have seen only minimal alteration since the periods of significance, as the front yard lawn panel, front walkway, and perimeter fence reflect their historic designs.

The two buildings were originally constructed with a rear courtyard separating them. While this overall spatial layout remains intact as a significant open space, the individual elements within the courtyard have been altered since the periods of significance with the addition of a marble patio, brick planters, and rear porch installed in the late 1980s. Despite these added features, the designed footprint and the spatial relationship between the Council House and the Carriage House remain consistent with their historic conditions during the period of significance.

The overall design of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS cultural landscape retains integrity, as expressed by its front yard area, Council House, rear courtyard, and Carriage House, and individual elements within those features.

MATERIALS

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a distinct period of time in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. The materials of the cultural landscape retain their overall integrity to the historic period. The material components which make up the major features of the front yard all contribute to the integrity of materials, including: the marble front walkway; the wrought iron perimeter fence and gate; the brownstone stairs and other front stoop features; urn pedestal; and lawn panel. While many of these features have undergone restoration, in-kind materials have been used.

The rear courtyard was redesigned in the late 1980s, and there is little documentation of the original materials used in that space during the periods of significance. Materials in the rear courtyard, including the vegetation, brick planters, marble courtyard, and rear porch, postdate the periods of significance.

Although these alterations do not contribute to the integrity of materials, they are confined to the secluded and private rear courtyard, and affect smaller features without infringing on the material integrity of the most significance features of the site. The public-facing features of the site retain their material integrity, including most elements in the front yard and the buildings and structures that anchor the site. For this reason, the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS cultural landscape retains its overall integrity with respect to materials.

WORKMANSHIP

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during a given period. The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS cultural landscape retains evidence of workmanship that convey the property's significance. The craftsmanship and architectural detailing of the primary building (Council House) have been preserved, including much of the woodwork that surrounds the doorway, lintels, balustrade, and cornices. The workmanship of the Council House is an example of residential development and craftsmanship in the Logan Circle area during the late 1800s, during the first period of significance (1875-1900).

Within the front yard of the cultural landscape, the major features have all been in place since the period of significance, including the walkway, the wrought iron fence and gate, and the front stoop. While some features have been restored or replaced, most of the landscape features continue to reflect the original workmanship established during the periods of significance.

The rear courtyard was redesigned in the late 1980s, after the second period of significance. Little is known about the workmanship in this area of the cultural landscape prior to the 1980s. The changes to the rear courtyard do not alter the overall historic character of the cultural landscape's workmanship, as they are confined to the private courtyard and do not detract from the workmanship of the public-facing front yard features, as well as the dominant buildings and structures. With these character-defining features intact, the cultural landscape continues to retain its overall integrity of workmanship.

FEELING

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. The existing historic features of the cultural landscape contribute to the integrity of feeling at the site. The appearance of the cultural landscape from Vermont Avenue contributes to the historic character of the property, with the intact historic spatial relationship, circulation features, front lawn panel, wrought iron fence and gate, and overall design between the street, front yard, and Council House contributing to the integrity of feeling. The experience of approaching the cultural landscape from the sidewalk of Vermont Avenue, entering through the wrought iron gate, progressing up the marble walkway, and ascending the entry stoop contributes to the integrity of feeling as it would have existed during the first period of significance—when the property was initially developed—and during the second period of significance, when the NCNW and Bethune occupied the site.

There is little information on the design or use of the rear courtyard during the periods of significance. While the additions to the rear courtyard do not contribute to the feeling of the property, the cluster arrangement and general layout of the space have remained consistent since the cultural landscape's initial construction. The scale of the courtyard—created by neighboring buildings and property fences—creates an enclosed private space, shaping an experience of the landscape that contributes to the integrity of feeling. The overall integrity of feeling is retained, including the relationship to the streetscape, the experience approaching and entering the Council House, and the connections between the interior and exterior spaces.

ASSOCIATION

Association is the direct link between the important historic event or person and a cultural landscape. Bethune and the NCNW purchased the Council House property as the organization's national headquarters in 1943, and occupied the site until 1966. The cultural landscape is the location from which Bethune achieved her greatest recognition and where she made her primary residence for several years within the second period of significance. Over the course of 20 years, the NCNW maintained its direct association with the cultural landscape, both as its headquarters and as the site as the Bethune Museum and Archives and later, the National Archives of Black Women's History.

The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS cultural landscape maintains integrity of association with Bethune and the NCNW through

its retention of landscape features and overall spatial organization that date to the second period of significance and continue to express those associations. The front yard reflects the historic period and welcomes visitors to the NHS exhibits within the Council House that commemorate the history and achievements of the NCNW and Bethune. Although the National Archives of Black Women's History have been removed from the site, their absence does not compromise the overall integrity of the cultural landscape's associations, because the interpretive and educational activities of the archives remain in place with the ongoing use of the site as a museum. Due to the direct association with the NCNW and Mary McLeod Bethune, the cultural landscape retains integrity of association.

Analysis + Evaluation of Landscape Characteristics

Documenting existing conditions and analyzing and evaluating natural and human-made historic resources is critical in the development of a strategy for their management and treatment. This chapter presents an evaluation of the historical significance of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site (NHS) cultural landscape and a comparative analysis of historic and existing landscape conditions. The objective of this analysis is to identify the specific features associated with the historic period and assess to what degree they continue to convey their historic significance.

Cultural landscape analysis involves two primary activities: evaluating historic significance and assessing historic integrity. Both use criteria determined by the National Register of Historic Places, which has developed nationally recognized methods for evaluating the significance and integrity of historic buildings and landscapes. The evaluation of historic significance identifies the important historical associations of the property, as well as its architectural, archeological, and social value. The property's significance is tied to the period(s) of significance in which its important contributions were made and the broader historic contexts (historic context themes) within which the activities that occurred on the property may be placed.

The focus of this study is the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS, managed by the National Capitol East unit of the National Park Service. The 0.07-acre property is located at 1318 Vermont Avenue, N.W. in the Logan Circle neighborhood of Washington, D.C. The site was the first headquarters of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW or Council) and was Bethune's last home in Washington, D.C. From here, Bethune and the NCNW spearheaded strategies and developed programs that advanced the interests of African American women. The National Park Service (NPS) has managed the property since its acquisition in 1994.

This section of the CLR inventories the existing conditions of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site using a combination of photographs, narrative description, and plan-view graphics. This inventory organizes the site features by landscape characteristics, which are the broad patterns, systems, and feature categories that compose the cultural landscape. Landscape characteristics are the "tangible and intangible aspects of an inventory unit which have either influenced the history of the development of the landscape, or are products of its development" (Page, Gilbert, and Dolan 1998: 139). The NPS identifies 13 landscape characteristics, defined as follows:

- **Natural Systems and Features**: Natural aspects that often influence the development and resultant form of a landscape.
- **Spatial Organization**: Arrangement of elements creating the ground, vertical, and overhead planes that define and create spaces.
- **Land Use**: Organization, form, and shape of the landscape in response to land use.
- **Cultural Traditions**: Practices that influence land use, patterns of division, building forms, and the use of materials.
- **Cluster Arrangement**: The location of buildings and structures in the landscape.
- **Circulation**: Spaces, features, and materials that constitute systems of movement.
- **Topography**: Three-dimensional configuration of the landscape surface characterized by

features and orientation.

- **Vegetation**: Indigenous or introduced trees, shrubs, vines, ground covers, and herbaceous materials.
- **Buildings and Structures**: Three dimensional constructs such as houses, barns, garages, stables, bridges, and memorials.
- **Views and Vistas**: Features that create or allow a range of vision, which can be natural or designed and controlled.
- **Constructed Water Features**: The built features and elements that utilize water for aesthetic or utilitarian functions.
- **Small-Scale Features**: Elements that provide detail and diversity combined with function and aesthetics.
- **Archeological Sites**: Sites containing surface and subsurface remnants related to historic or prehistoric land use.

While most sites contain several of the 13 characteristics, not all are necessarily present in one landscape. In total, the existing Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS cultural landscape contains 11 of the 13 landscape characteristics: Natural Systems and Features, Land Use, Topography, Spatial Organization, Cluster Arrangement, Views/Vistas, Cultural Traditions, Buildings/Structures, Circulation, Vegetation, and Small-scale Features. There are no constructed water features represented in the landscape, and no archeological surveys have been undertaken.

The comparative analysis explores the similarities and differences between historic and existing landscape conditions. Through this comparison, the CLR builds an understanding of how much the historic site today reflects its character and appearance during the periods of significance (1875-1900 and 1943-1966). To aid in this assessment, landscape features are categorized based on their contribution to the historic character of the landscape during the period(s) of significance. These categories are:

- Contributing
- Non-contributing
- Non-contributing but compatible
- Undetermined

Resources that retain integrity and are associated with the periods of significance of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS (1875-1900; 1943-1966) are referred to as “contributing” features. Contributing landscape features survive from the periods of significance and continue to reflect their historic appearance and function. Resources that originated after the periods of significance and do not relate to the site’s significant historic contexts are identified as “non-contributing.” Non-contributing landscape features include those added to the site since the periods of significance, or those that no longer retain enough physical integrity to convey their historic appearance or function. Resources that originated after the periods of significance but relate to the site’s significant historic contexts are identified as “non-contributing but compatible.” Undetermined features include those whose age cannot be determined or whose contribution to the historic landscape is unknown.

Each section of the comparative analysis concludes with an inventory of resources. This information is summarized in the tables at the end of each landscape characteristic, which lists each of the features described in this chapter. The table conveys the names for inventoried landscape features through time, identifies which features contribute to the significance of the landscape, and lists dates of origin for each feature, if known.

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Natural Systems and Features

HISTORIC AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

GEOMORPHOLOGY

The contiguous United States are divided into physiographic provinces according to their geomorphology, which refers to the physical features and processes of landforms, and their relation to geologic structures. Washington, D.C., sits on the Fall Line (or Fall Zone) of the Potomac River, which constitutes the boundary of two major geological provinces: the Piedmont and the Coastal Plain. The northwestern portion of Washington, D.C., is part of the Piedmont province, while the southeastern portion of the city is part of the Coastal Plain province. The location of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS is at the western edge of the Atlantic Coastal Plain physiographic province near the Fall Line, which divides the Coastal Plain from the Piedmont to the west.

The Atlantic Coastal Plain extends from the state of New York to Mexico and consists of primarily flat terrain, ranging from sea level to approximately 300' above sea level in Maryland. The province extends east from the Fall Line to the Atlantic Ocean and continues as the submerged continental shelf for 75 miles to the east.

The Coastal Plain consists of younger, largely unlithified deposits of gravel, sand, mud, and shells that have been and continue to be eroded by the Potomac and other rivers. Deposition occurred intermittently during periods of higher sea level over the past 100 million years, which resulted in a wedge-shaped sequence of soft sediment deposits more than 7,900' thick at the Atlantic Coast. This wedge of sedimentary rocks and deposits continues to this day and forms the province. The sedimentary deposits include cobbles, gravel, sand, silt, and clay that grow thicker further inland. The deposits have been impacted by fluctuating sea levels and the continual erosion from waves along the coastline. Sediments have been eroded and redeposited over vast periods of time, becoming smooth and rounded. In Washington, D.C., the thin inland edge of the Coastal Plain province overlaps the Piedmont bedrock.

The Piedmont Plateau province lies to the west of the Coastal Plain, encompassing the area west of the Fall Line to the Blue Ridge Mountains. Here, the sedimentary rock of the Atlantic Coastal Plain intersects with the harder, more durable metamorphic rocks to the west, forming an area of ridges, waterfalls, and rapids (Withington and Coulter 1964).

The Piedmont Plateau comprises considerably older and relatively erosion-resistant high-grade metamorphic rocks and igneous intrusions, including schists, phyllites, slates, gneisses, and gabbros, from the Ordovician through Devonian Age. At that time, the area was covered by a tall, ancient mountain range. Erosion gradually re-formed the masses of rock into low, rounded mountains. The eastward-sloping Piedmont formed through a combination of folding, faulting metamorphism, uplift, and erosion. The result is a landscape of gently rolling hills in the east starting at 200' in elevation, gradually becoming steeper toward the western edge of the province, where they reach 1,000' in elevation.

The Piedmont rocks in and near Washington, D.C., are crystalline metamorphic rocks that resist weathering and are quite hard. These crystalline rocks can be seen most easily in valleys where the soil cover has been stripped away by erosion. Most of the crystalline rocks on the uplands were deposited about 550-600 million years ago; over the ages, they have weathered to saprolite, a

porous, spongy, red-brown clay-rich material that can be as much as 200' thick. The final product of weathering, seen near the surface throughout much of the Piedmont, is a sticky clay, generally having a reddish color.

URBAN SOILS

The soils within the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site and surrounding neighborhood are classified by the USGS Web Soil Survey as 100% Urban Land (see Figure 51). USGS defines urban land as “Land mostly covered by streets, parking lots, buildings, and other structures of urban areas.” The Geologic Map of National Capital Parks – East depicts the surficial geologic units of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS and surroundings as upper-level fluvial and estuarine deposits (Qfe), which contains modern swamp deposits overlying bedrock in the Washington, D.C., area (*see Figure 52*). This geologic unit underlies much of metro Washington, D.C.

HUMID SUBTROPICAL CLIMATE ZONE

Washington, D.C., is located in the humid subtropical climate zone, according to the Koppen climate classification system. Annual precipitation in Washington, D.C., averages approximately 43.7" per year, with almost half of the rain coming in the summer months.

Climate change “refers to long-term changes in global temperature, precipitation, wind patterns, and other aspects of climate” (Washington, D.C., Department of Energy and Environment 2021). According to the Washington, D.C., Department of Energy and Environment, in recent years, Washington, D.C., has experienced extreme weather, including: heat waves and snowstorms; higher tides caused by rising sea level; heavy rains and flooding; and warmer average temperatures and two to three times as many dangerously hot days. Climate change impacts people, property, and cultural and natural resources. However, there are no known immediate climate change threats to the cultural landscape.

Climate scientists project that these changes will continue, and they anticipate more frequent and more intense impacts, including rising temperatures, heatwaves, and dangerously hot days; more intense and unpredictable storms; and sea level rise and storm surges (Washington, D.C., Department of Energy and Environment 2021).

HYDROLOGY

There are no natural hydrological resources present within the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS landscape, although rainwater runoff is present.

EVALUATION

Located within a 0.07-acre lot in a dense urban neighborhood, there are no prominent natural systems or features within the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS cultural landscape. However, the surrounding environment has been shaped by the development of the city, including the removal of forests; alteration of topography by flattening hills and filling valleys; and development of roads and buildings. These actions have resulted in changes to elevation and slope and impacted the Washington, D.C., landscape. As part of the development of the cultural landscape and its surroundings, the soils, geomorphology, and regional climate are all contributing features to the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS.

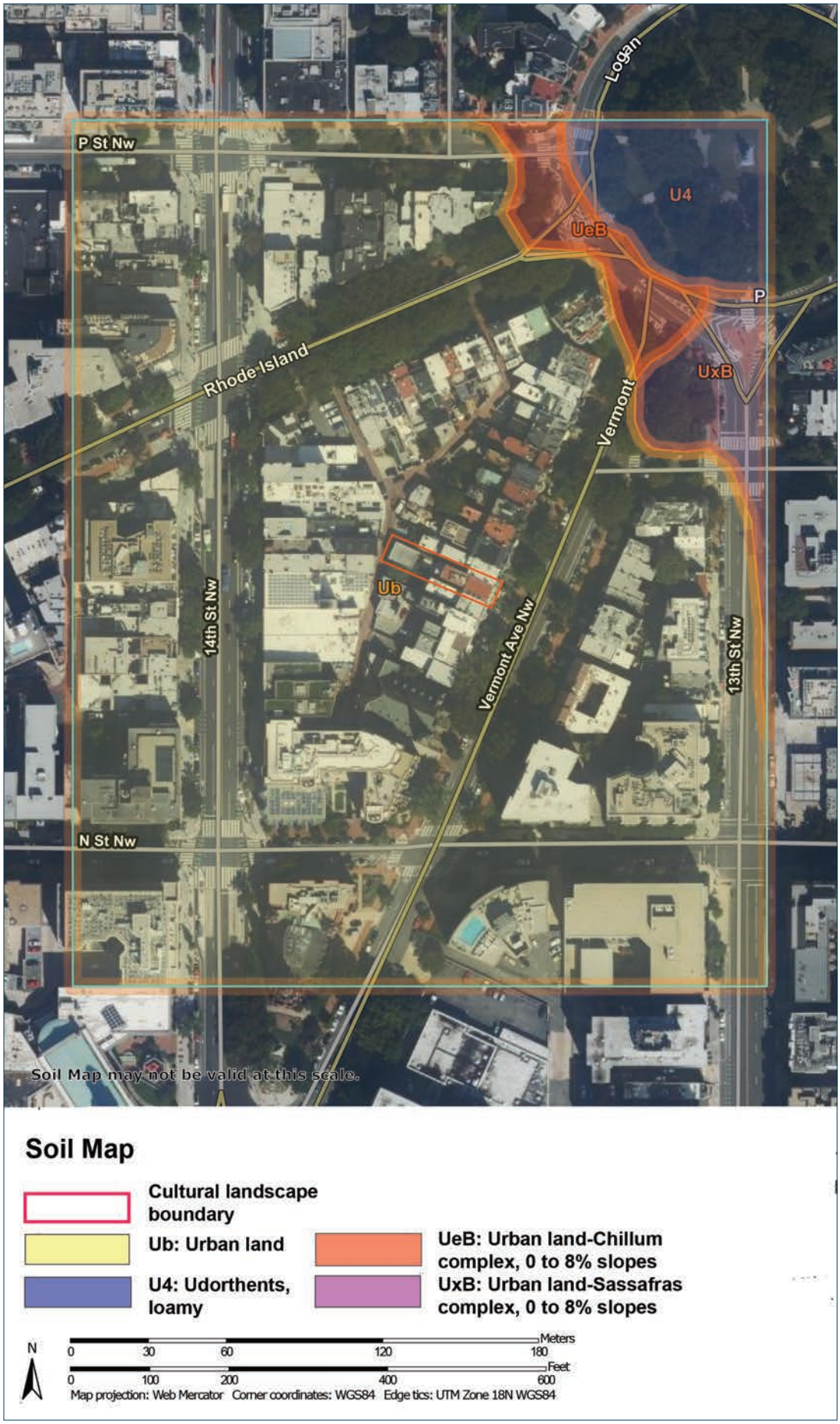


Figure 51: Soil map of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS cultural landscape and surroundings.

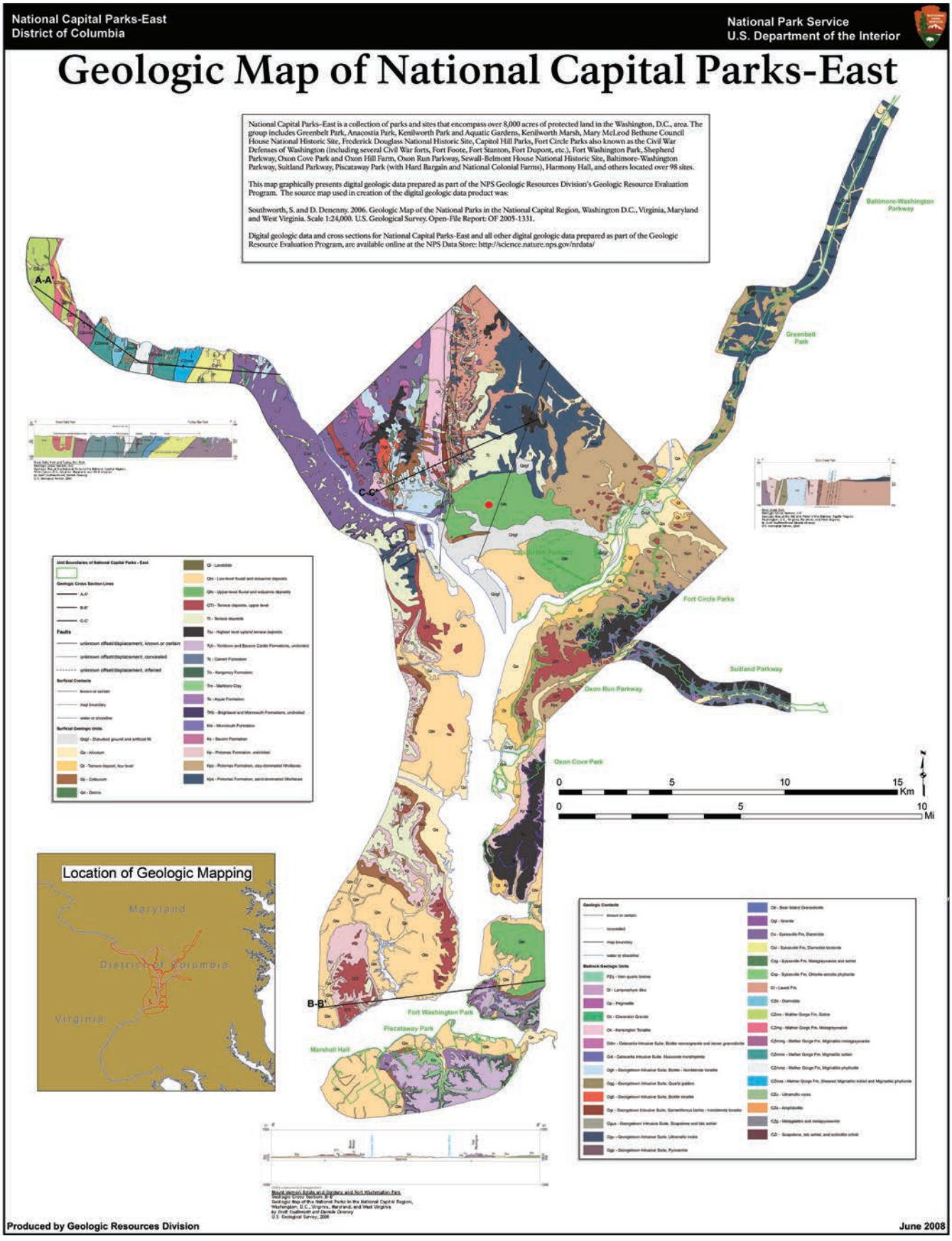


Figure 52: Geology map of Washington, D.C., including the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS location (depicted by red dot).

NATURAL SYSTEMS + FEATURES - CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES				
Feature Description	*Date Established*	*Associated Period*		*Contributing Status*
		1875-1900	*1943-1966*	
Geomorphology (Fall Line of the Potomac River)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Urban soils	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Humid subtropical climate zone	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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Land Use

HISTORIC AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

Early habitation and land use within the greater Washington, D.C., area includes occupation by Paleo Indian peoples who lived in the coastal plains along the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers (as they are known today) from around 15,000 to 8000 BCE (Virginia Department of Historic Resources 2018). From the Paleo Indian hunter-gather peoples to the Archaic-Indian peoples, human habitation of the region evolved into semi-permanent settlements along these rivers between roughly 8000 BCE and 1200 BCE (National Park Service 2018). During the Woodland Period from 12,000 BCE to 1600 CE, groups formed villages in the area and cultivated the land.

In the late 14th and early 15th centuries (CE), Algonquian-speaking people settled in the area and continued farming and fishing the waters of the Potomac and the Anacostia rivers. In 1608, colonizer Captain John Smith explored the region, which was thereafter claimed by European colonizers. Charles I granted the land to Cecilius Calvert, who in turn awarded the first patent to George Thompson (Riggs 1946/47: 250). The patent comprised the majority of what would become the District of Columbia. As Calvert continued to grant patents at the confluence of the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers, by 1670, all the land in future Washington, D.C., had been claimed by colonists, forcibly pushing the Nacotchtank further from the Potomac region.

In the mid-17th century, plantations worked by enslaved laborers developed across the Potomac region as tobacco became an important cash crop. Towns developed around the plantations as the region became more settled. Within this context, the specifics of land use at the location of the Council House during the colonial period are unknown.

At the turn of the 19th century, the Logan Circle area (as it is known today) was wooded and undeveloped, with some sparse farmland. The history of land use at the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House from this point forward is categorized into two main phases: residential and institutional. In 1798, the D.C. Office of the Surveyor platted Square 242, which includes the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS cultural landscape (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 45). In 1853, the District of Columbia Office of the Surveyor recorded that a dairy farm was operated by the Heitmuller family within Square 242. That year, the family subdivided the square into 17 lots, including Lot 55, the future site of the Council House (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 46).

RESIDENTIAL

The residential land use of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS cultural landscape was part of the speculative housing construction boom in Washington, D.C., in the 1800s. Within Lot 55, the rowhouse at 1318 Vermont Avenue was built in c. 1875 (*see Figure 53*). It was designed as a single-family residence, which is reflected in its form, style, and setting in the primarily residential Logan Circle neighborhood.

The land use as a residence began with construction of the primary building (now known as the Council House), serving three families over the next several decades, until the NCNW purchased the property in 1943. When the NCNW purchased the property, Mary McLeod Bethune used the Council House as her primary residence until she stepped down as president of the organization in 1949. The Council House also provided lodging for individuals visiting the capital city. The cultural landscape included a residential use, for which it



Figure 53: Georeferenced Sanborn Map depicting the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House in 1888, with the cultural landscape boundary annotated in orange.

was originally designed, from c. 1875 through 1949, during the first and second periods of significance (1875-1900; 1943-1966). The residential use ceased in 1949, and has not been reintroduced in the intervening decades.

COMMERCIAL

In the early 20th century, the Gravalles family lived in the cultural landscape's primary building and operated a tailoring business from the first floor of the building, while also renting out rooms to boarders. During this phase, the Gravalles family introduced a commercial use, in addition to the main residential use of the property. The commercial land use of the property ended with the Gravalles' sale of the property in 1943.

Since it is no longer used as a residence or commercial establishment, the Mary McLeod

Bethune Council House NHS cultural landscape does not retain its historic residential or commercial uses.

INSTITUTIONAL

In 1943, the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) purchased the property as the organization's headquarters, ushering in a new land use. During the second period of significance (1943-1966), the NCNW and Mary McLeod Bethune herself adapted some of the residential spaces of the primary building to meet the needs of the Council's headquarter operations. From the Council House (as it became known at this time), the NCNW furthered the Council's mission to unite Black women's organizations; developed nationwide programming; provided a clearinghouse of information relevant to African American women; and met with national and international leaders. The NCNW converted the interior residential living spaces of the home for its institutional needs, such as office space and a board room, and established a library and archives at the Council House in 1948.

The NCNW used the exterior spaces of the cultural landscape to host events, notably the 1944 dedication ceremony of the headquarters during which Mary McLeod Bethune and Eleanor Roosevelt delivered speeches in the front yard. Other prominent figures attended the event, as the front yard functioned as the ceremonial backdrop for the celebration of the NCNW's first dedicated headquarters.

No information has been discovered on the use of the rear courtyard during the periods of significance. The rear courtyard space likely functioned as a transitional space between the Council House and Carriage House while in use by the NCNW, preserved as open space and put into use for occasional events.

The Council House functioned as the NCNW national headquarters from 1943 through 1966, when a fire in the basement forced the NCNW to relocate. From 1966 until 1977, the cultural landscape's buildings stood vacant until the NCNW began rehabilitation projects at the property. Through the efforts of the Bethune Historical Development Project, The Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial Museum and National Archives for Black Women's History opened on site in 1979. With the museum located in the Council House building and the archives in the Carriage House, the cultural landscape maintained its institutional use (established in 1943, and only briefly interrupted by the period of vacancy). In 2014, the contents of the National Archives for Black Women's History were moved offsite to the NPS Museum Resource Center in Landover, Maryland, ending this aspect of the institutional use of the property.

In 1982, three converging events reiterated the cultural landscape's institutional use and affiliations: Congress designated the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site (NHS); the NCNW officially incorporated the archives into the Bethune Museum Archives, Inc.; and the National Park Service (NPS) signed a cooperative agreement with the NCNW.

The cultural landscape retains its historic institutional land use, based on its association with—and management by—the National Park Service (*see Figure 54*). The NPS acquired the property and assumed stewardship of the site in 1994, and continues to manage the cultural landscape as a National Historic Site. The NPS's role in site management maintains the institutional use of the property established by the NCNW in 1943.

INTERPRETIVE AND EDUCATIONAL

Land uses that postdate the periods of significance but are compatible with the historic character of the cultural landscape include interpretive/educational and commemorative uses (*see Figure 54*).

The Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial Museum and National Archives for Black Women's History opened on site in 1979, beginning the interpretive/educational land use of the property. When the cultural landscape became a National Historic Site in 1982, and the NPS assumed stewardship in 1994, the site managers maintained this land use. The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS cultural landscape currently serves as a house museum that interprets the life, work, and legacy of Mary McLeod Bethune and the NCNW. These uses of the site are

facilitated by the visitor service and administrative functions of the NPS.

The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS cultural landscape opened to the public in 1995, expanding the institutional and educational land uses. The front yard and the Council House were incorporated into this expanded use.

COMMEMORATION

The Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial Museum and National Archives for Black Women's History opened on site in 1979, initiating a commemorative land use honoring Mary McLeod Bethune and the NCNW. Receptions for the grand opening event took place in the Council House, and the site's open spaces were accessible to the public, as evidenced by photos from this period that depict gatherings of individuals, families, and children in the rear courtyard (*see Figure 55 and Figure 56*). The National Park Service maintains this use today. While the commemorative land use at the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS postdates the periods of significance, it is compatible with the history and use of the site.

EVALUATION

As a house museum managed by the National Park Service, the institutional use of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS maintains integrity. The site has been used continuously for institutional use since 1943, when the NCNW first established its national headquarters on site. The current interpretive/educational and commemorative land uses are non-contributing but compatible. The historic residential and commercial uses of the property no longer exist.

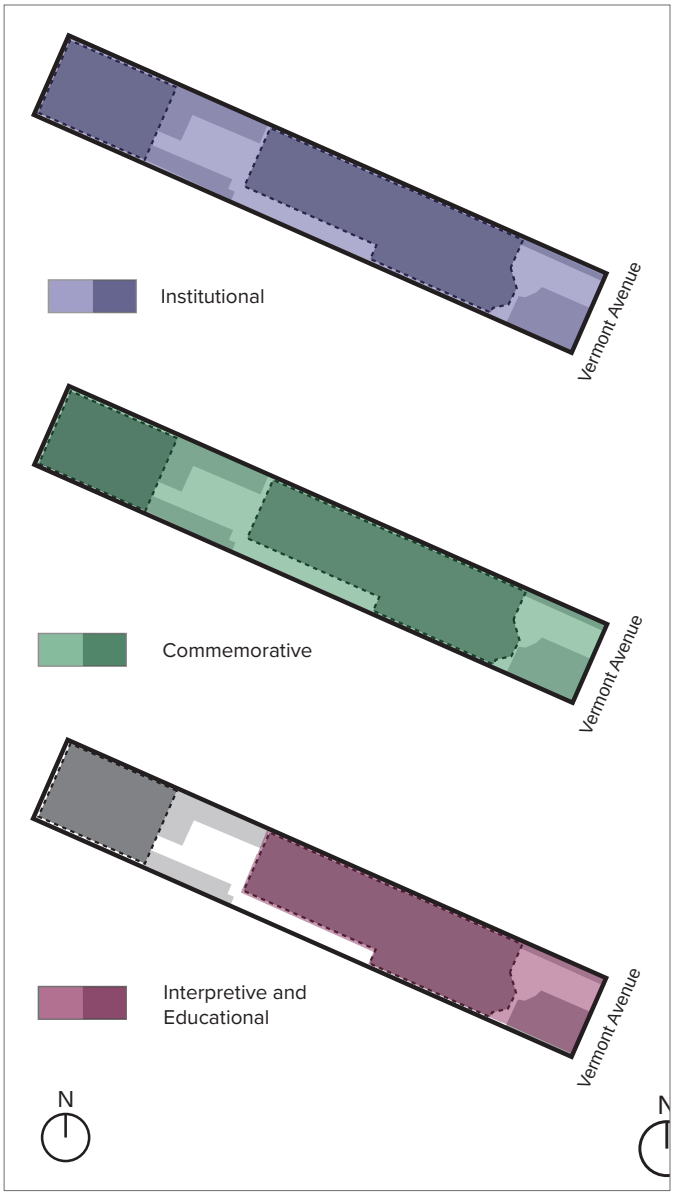


Figure 54: Diagram of existing land uses within the cultural landscape (Frisbie 2023)



Figure 55: Individuals in the rear courtyard of the Council House at an unspecified event in 2006 (Source: MAMC 142928)



Figure 56: Individuals in rear courtyard, at special event (Source: NABWH 057 S01 SS1 0136).

LAND USE - CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES				
Feature Description	*Date Established*	*Associated Period*		*Contributing Status*
		1875-1900	*1943-1966*	
Institutional	1943-1966, 1979, 1994		X	Contributing
Interpretive and Educational	1979			Non-contributing but compatible
Commemoration	1979			Non-contributing but compatible

Topography

HISTORIC AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

RISE OF FRONT YARD FROM VERMONT AVENUE SIDEWALK TO THE COUNCIL HOUSE

The topography of the Logan Circle neighborhood was established during the 1871-1874 Territorial Government period of city improvements led by "Boss" Shepherd. The paving and grading of Logan Circle was one of the first improvement projects undertaken in the neighborhood. By 1872, Vermont Avenue between Massachusetts and Logan Circle was graded and paved with wood (Eig and Williams 1994: 8-13). These infrastructural improvements occurred prior to the development of Vermont Avenue, with the first building constructed in 1875. The nature of the topography on Vermont Avenue prior to these improvements is unknown. Further, it is unknown when the slight rise in topography in the front yard from the sidewalk to the front Council House was established.

Photographs of the cultural landscape taken during the second period of significance (1943-1966) depict a rise in the front yard, with the lawn panel sloping upward between the Vermont Avenue sidewalk and the Council House's front elevation and entrance (*see Figure 57*). The Council House was constructed set back from Vermont Avenue by a front yard. While the precise date of the establishment of the contour of the front yard is unknown, it likely dates to the first period of significance (1875-1900,) since its form relates to the design of the front walkway, which dates to the original development of the site. Beginning from the Vermont Avenue sidewalk, the first portion of the cultural landscape's front walkway is initially on grade with the public right-of-way; then, a brief staircase with four steps leads to the remainder of the front walkway, which is slightly elevated above the public right-of-way and is situated at the same level with the highest point of the lawn panel. This topography was present during the second period of significance (1943-1966).

Today, the Council House remains slightly elevated above the Vermont Avenue right-of-way; the building is set back from the road and sidewalk by an upward sloping lawn panel (*see Figure 58*). The first story of the Council House is approximately 48" above grade, and the total rise from the sidewalk to the highest point of the lawn is approximately 7'. This change in elevation from Vermont Avenue to the Council House is a contributing feature of the cultural landscape, and aligns with the front yards of neighboring properties.

SUNKEN ALLEY (REAR ELL) ON SOUTHWEST SIDE OF COUNCIL HOUSE

The Council House is L-shaped in plan, with a sunken alley on the southwest side of the site, at the back of the building. The sunken alley separates the rear portion of the Council House's southwest wall from the neighboring rowhouse to the southwest (*see Figure 59*). No photographs of the sunken alley's condition during either period of significance have been located, though the alley is visible in early maps dating back to the original construction of the cultural landscape's primary building.

The difference in elevation from the rear courtyard to the sunken alley below is 3'-2"; the alley then continues further down a set of steps for another 2'-2" to the basement level door of the Council House building. There is a moveable metal ramp within the sunken alley, providing access between the rear courtyard and the Council House's basement level. There is evidence of brick stairs in this same location, but at the time of this CLR's survey, these stairs are mostly rubble and no longer usable. The sunken alley is a contributing feature for the cultural landscape's topography.



Figure 57: (right) NCNW members leave the Council House for the March on Washington, August 28, 1963. Note rise in front lawn, iron fence surrounding front yard, and pedestal in front yard. Photographer: Fred Harris (Source: NABWH Series 14 Photograph 03999).

Figure 58: (below) Front yard of the Council House, depicting the slope from the sidewalk to the entry stoop.





Figure 59: Sunken alley on the south side of the Council House with former brick stairs visible.

REAR COURTYARD

Since there is no documentation of the rear courtyard during the historic periods, the nature of the topography between the cultural landscape's primary and secondary buildings (the Council House and Carriage House) during the periods of significance is unknown.

Today, the topography in the rear courtyard between the Council House and the Carriage House is generally flat. Brick planters lining the property boundaries on the northeastern and southwestern sides introduce some variety to the topography (*see Figure 60*). The planter on the northeastern side is 6½" in height, while the two-tiered planter on the southwestern side is 1′-10" in height, with the lower tier 11½" in height. There are no other major elevation changes in this small area, creating a single level patio within the outline of the raised brick planters. The flat topography of the rear courtyard is a non-contributing feature, since these courtyard features were added in 1989, after the second period of significance (1943-1966).

EVALUATION

The topography of the front yard of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS, which exhibits a rise from the street to the house entryway, is consistent with the documented condition during the second period of significance (1943-1966), and is a contributing feature that likely dates to the first period of significance (1875-1900). The sunken alley (rear ell) on the southwestern side of the Council House building also dates to the first period of significance (1875-1900), and is contributing. The extant flat topography of the rear courtyard, punctuated by the raised brick planters, postdates the second period of significance and is non-contributing. The configuration and topography of the rear courtyard before the late 1980s is unknown.



Figure 60: Flat topography of rear courtyard, with variation from brick planters.

TOPOGRAPHY - CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES				
Feature Description	*Date Established*	*Associated Period*		*Contributing Status*
		1875-1900	*1943-1966*	
Rise of front yard from Vermont Avenue sidewalk to the Council House	Pre-1944; likely ca. 1875	X	X	Contributing
Sunken alley (rear ell) on southern side of Council House	ca. 1875	X	X	Contributing
Flat topography of rear courtyard	Current configuration dates to 1988/89			Undetermined

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Spatial Organization

HISTORIC AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

RELATIONSHIP OF COUNCIL HOUSE TO ABUTTING BUILDINGS ON VERMONT AVENUE N.W., AS PART OF A ROWHOUSE BLOCK

The cultural landscape is located within the Logan Circle neighborhood of northwest Washington, D.C., a late 19th century predominantly residential neighborhood that developed following the Civil War. Vermont Avenue developed when several rowhouses were designed and constructed in small groupings, including the cultural landscape's primary building (Council House) and neighboring properties on the northwest side of the street (*see Figure 61*). The primary building, constructed ca. 1875, and the two neighboring properties to the south were the first grouping of rowhouses on the street, all built between 1874 and 1876. To the north of the cultural landscape is a continuous set of brick rowhouses, constructed during the 1870s and 1880s; the street was a fully developed block by 1890.

The cultural landscape (including its primary and secondary buildings) continues to share property lines and party walls on the northeast and southwest property boundaries. As the primary building within the cultural landscape, the Council House is thus located within a continuous line of rowhouses along Vermont Avenue, creating an uninterrupted façade along the street. The other homes on Vermont Avenue are similarly set back from the street by small yards, enclosed by iron fences. As a block, these rowhouses remain unified in scale, height, character, and style. This relationship between the property and its context dates to the first period of significance (1875-1900),



Figure 61: The Council House in the center with 1316 Vermont Avenue to the left and 1320 to the right.

continues to this day, and is a contributing feature to the overall cultural landscape.

OPEN SPACE IN FRONT OF COUNCIL HOUSE, CREATED BY SETBACK FROM VERMONT AVENUE AND SIDEWALK

The cultural landscape is located on the northwest side of Vermont Avenue. Typical of many of the rowhouses along Vermont Avenue, the primary building (Council House) was constructed set back from the street, creating a front yard that is similar in dimension and form to neighboring properties. The front yard setback is original to the late 19th century construction of the property and consistent with rowhouse development at the time in Washington, D.C. The open space creates a buffer between the private sphere of the rowhouses and the public sidewalk and street.

As it was during the historic period, the extant open space in front of the Council House includes walkways, a front lawn panel, and small-scale features (*see Figure 62*). This setback, which dates to the first period of significance (1875-1900), creates an open space that is comparable with other rowhomes along the street. This open space in front of the Council House is considered a contributing feature.

PUBLIC ALLEYWAY BEHIND THE CARRIAGE HOUSE

The unnamed public alleyway at the rear of the property, behind the Carriage House, was first depicted in Olmstead's 1873 subdivision map of Square 242, predating the construction of the cultural landscape's buildings. The alleyway was depicted on all historic maps thereafter, immediately northwest of the rear building (Carriage House). Then and now, the alleyway begins on Vermont Avenue south of the cultural landscape and trends roughly north-south to the rear of the Vermont Avenue rowhouses until a point north of the Carriage House, where it forks with two separate alleyways accessing Rhode Island Avenue, N.W., to the north.

The alleyway was extant during the first period of significance (1875-1900), and retains its historic configuration today. Paved and wide enough for vehicle access, the passageway provides an access point to the rear of the property, via a door on the rear (northwest) elevation of the Carriage House building. The alleyway behind the Carriage House



Figure 62: Council House front yard on right side with sign, set back from Vermont Avenue and sidewalk.

is a contributing feature of the spatial organization of the cultural landscape.

RELATIONSHIP TO LOGAN CIRCLE AND ASSOCIATED NEIGHBORHOOD

The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS cultural landscape is located southwest of Logan Circle and is a contributing resource to the Logan Circle Historic District (NRHP# 72001426) and Greater Fourteenth Street Historic District (NRHP# 94000992), listed in the National Register in 1972 and 1994, respectively. The cultural landscape is part of the post-Civil War development of the neighborhood, and it was developed in close proximity to, and association with, Logan Circle (constructed in 1873, and originally known as Iowa Circle).

Today, as during both periods of significance (1875-1900; 1943-1966), the cultural landscape is situated within the Logan Circle neighborhood. The relationship with Logan Circle has not changed since the first period of significance (1875-1900), and is a contributing feature of the spatial organization of the site.

REAR COURTYARD SPACE BETWEEN THE COUNCIL HOUSE AND CARRIAGE HOUSE

Between the cultural landscape's primary building (Council House) and secondary building (Carriage House) is a courtyard. The overall spatial organization of this open space between the was established when the buildings were constructed sometime between 1875 and 1887. The rear courtyard is located to the northwest of the primary building, accessed from the rear elevation of the building, and consists of an open space that provides access to the front (southeast) elevation of the secondary building. While there is no known documentation of the courtyard space during either period of significance (1875-1900; 1943-1966), the rear courtyard space likely functioned historically as a transitional open space between the two buildings on the property.

Today, the rear courtyard features raised brick planters and marble pavers (*see Figures 60 and 63*). While these features postdate the second period of significance (1943-1966), the spatial organization of the buildings in relation to this open space is original to the construction of the site and is considered contributing. The organization of the rear courtyard space within the cultural landscape



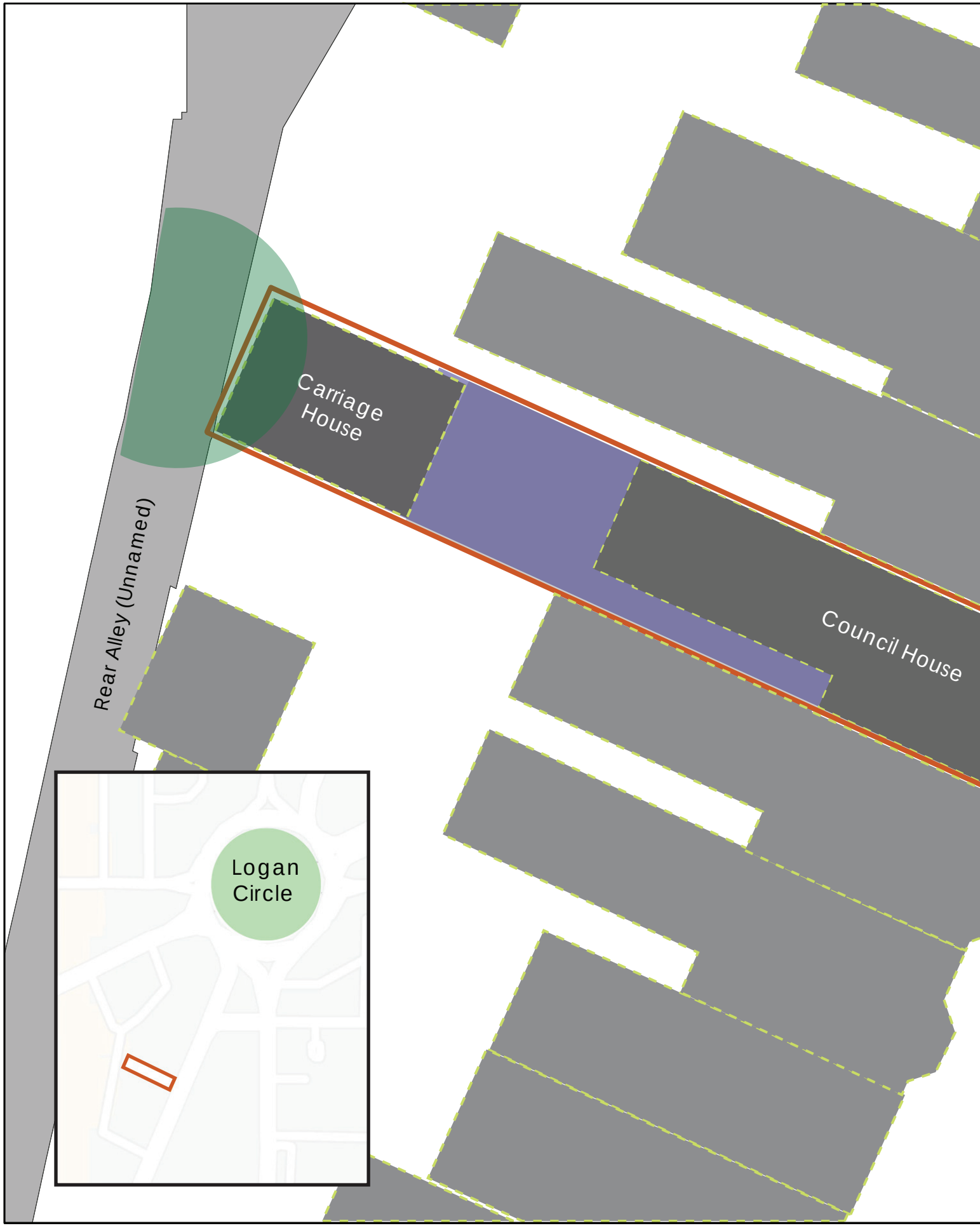
Figure 63: View of the northwest elevation of the Council House, from the entry of the Carriage House, looking southeast across the rear courtyard with brick planters visible on the right and left.

imparts a feeling of urban intimacy, creating an enclosed courtyard away from the street.

EVALUATION

The spatial organization of the study area is characterized by the location and relationship of features established during the first period of significance (1875-1900). Since the construction of the cultural landscape's buildings between 1875 and 1887, and development of the Logan Circle neighborhood primarily between 1875 and 1900, the overall spatial organization of the site has not changed and is consistent with the first period of significance.

Despite changes of ownership and several renovations to the buildings and landscape, there have been few changes to the overall spatial organization of the cultural landscape and surrounding streetscape. The front yard continues to create a setback from Vermont Avenue; the rear courtyard space continues to separate the Council House and Carriage House; the public alleyway remains in place behind the Carriage House; the cultural landscape retains its relationship with neighboring properties in Logan Circle; and the site maintains its physical and historic relationship to Logan Circle. All of these features maintain their historic integrity and are representative of the cultural landscape's configurations during the periods of significance.


Carriage House
Council House
Rear Alley (Unnamed)
Logan Circle



Cultural Landscape Report
Mary McLeod Bethune
Council House National Historic Site
Spatial Organization

Weitzman School of Design
University of Pennsylvania

Urban Heritage Project | PennPraxis
Graduate Program in Historic Preservation
Weitzman School of Design
www.cultural-landscapes.org

SOURCES
1. Open Data DC, https://opendata.dc.gov/, accessed Sept 2022
2. Field Survey and Data Collection, 2022
3. Commonwealth of Virginia, DC GIS, Maxar, Microsoft (base imagery)

DRAWN BY
Molly Lester and Meg Frisbie,
University of Pennsylvania
ArcGIS Pro, Adobe Illustrator, 2023

LEGEND
- CLR Boundary
- Building
- Open Space in Front of Council House
- Rear Courtyard Space between the Council House and Carriage House
- Alleyway Behind the Carriage House
- Relationship of Council House and Carriage House to Abutting Buildings on Vermont Avenue N.W.

NOTES
1. All features shown in approximate scale and locations; small-scale features not to scale.

Drawing 4

SPATIAL ORGANIZATION - CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES				
Feature Description	*Date Established*	*Associated Period*		*Contributing Status*
		1875-1900	*1943-1966*	
Relationship of Council House and Carriage House to abutting buildings on Vermont Avenue N.W., as part of a rowhouse block	c. 1875-1887	X	X	Contributing
Open space in front of Council House, created by setback from Vermont Avenue and sidewalk	c. 1875	X	X	Contributing
Public alleyway behind the Carriage House	By 1873	X	X	Contributing
Relationship to Logan Circle and associated neighborhood	c. 1875	X	X	Contributing
Rear courtyard space between the Council House and Carriage House	c. 1875-1887	X	X	Contributing

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Cluster Arrangement

HISTORIC AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

ARRANGEMENT OF COUNCIL HOUSE AT FRONT OF PROPERTY AND CARRIAGE HOUSE AT REAR, SEPARATED BY OPEN COURTYARD

The cultural landscape's historic cluster arrangement was established ca. 1875, when the site's rhythm of open spaces and buildings were established. Beginning at Vermont Avenue and progressing toward the rear of the site (at an unnamed public alleyway), the cluster arrangement was historically dictated by the 25′ setback at the front of the property, and the open courtyard that separates the site's two buildings. Thus, the cluster arrangement consisted of an A-B-A-B progression of open spaces (A) and buildings (B) (*see Figure 64*). This configuration dates to the time of construction and was in place during both periods of significance (1875-1900; 1943-1966).

Today, the historic cluster arrangement remains in place. The Council House retains its historic setback, and remains separated from the Carriage House by the private rear courtyard. This arrangement, akin to its historic configuration, is a contributing feature.

EVALUATION

The cluster arrangement is consistent with the historic period at the cultural landscape and is a contributing feature of the cultural landscape.



Figure 64: Diagram of existing cluster arrangement within the cultural landscape, with alternating sequence between open space (A) and buildings (B). (Lester 2023)

CLUSTER ARRANGEMENT - CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES				
Feature Description	*Date Established*	*Associated Period*		*Contributing Status*
		1875-1900	*1943-1966*	
Arrangement of front yard on the southeast side of the property in front of the Council House, which is separated from the Carriage House at the northwest side of the property by an open courtyard	c. 1875-1887	X	X	Contributing

Views + Vistas

HISTORIC AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

RECIPROCAL VIEWS BETWEEN VERMONT AVENUE AND THE COUNCIL HOUSE

Vermont Avenue was a fully developed block by 1890, establishing views within the residential corridor. Sanborn maps from 1888 and 1903 depict the block lined with residences of comparable massing, all similarly set back from the street. The cultural landscape's views to the northeast and southwest along Vermont Avenue would have been towards neighboring rowhouses and their front yards, creating a fairly uniform corridor, bounded by residences in both directions and both sides of the street. From Vermont Avenue, views towards the cultural landscape would have included the site's front yard and primary building situated in context with neighboring rowhouses that were similar in style, massing, and scale, set back from the street with front yards enclosed by wrought iron fences.

Today, the cultural landscape retains views northeast and southwest along Vermont Avenue (*see Figures 61 and 62*). From the front of the Council House, views are directed along the street by framing lines of street trees and neighboring historic rowhouses. Non-historic additions to the streetscape visible from the Council House include: plantings, streetlights, bicycle lanes, and a wayside for the Logan Circle Heritage Trail, installed by the City of Washington, D.C., outside of the Council House. Rowhouses across the street at 1313 Vermont Avenue N.W. were constructed in 1982 and are the only modern development near the Council House. In spite of these non-historic additions, views from the cultural landscape maintain their overall integrity to the historic period.

From Vermont Avenue, as during the historic period, views towards the cultural landscape include the neighboring rowhouses on Vermont Avenue. These views are a contributing feature, highlighting the relationship that has existed between the cultural landscape and its context since the earlier period of significance (1875-1900).

VIEWS FROM REAR COURTYARD TO CARRIAGE HOUSE AND COUNCIL HOUSE

While there is no photographic documentation of the rear courtyard during the second period of significance (1943-1966), it is assumed that the courtyard enjoyed reciprocal views toward the Council House and the Carriage House. Early maps do not depict fence lines between properties in the backyards on Vermont Avenue, and thus, this CLR could not determine if fencing narrowed the views across the courtyard, or if views existed to the northeast and southwest into neighboring properties' backyards.

Today, the courtyard retains its historic views toward both the rear (northwest) elevation of the Council House and the front (southeast) elevation of the Carriage House. These views reinforce the open space and relationship between the buildings that are a contributing feature to the cultural landscape (*see Figure 63*). At present, privacy fences are located on the northeast and southwest sides of the courtyard, limiting views into neighboring properties.

VIEWS TOWARDS LOGAN CIRCLE AND THOMAS CIRCLE

Logan Circle, originally called Iowa Circle, was constructed in 1873 as the centerpiece of its neighborhood; it was built shortly before the cultural landscape was initially developed ca. 1875. At this time, any street trees would have been young; as a result, views from the cultural landscape to the northeast towards Logan Circle almost certainly would have been uninterrupted

during the first period of significance (1875-1900). In the 20th century, when the NCNW occupied the property during the second period of significance (1943- 1966), the plantings along the street would have matured, limiting views towards Logan Circle during the summer months.

Views southwest along Vermont Avenue are punctuated by Thomas Circle, one and a half blocks south of the cultural landscape. Depicted in the L'Enfant Plan, Thomas Circle was graded and planted in 1871 and redesigned as a park in 1872.

At present, mature trees line Vermont Avenue, limiting the cultural landscape's views to the north toward Logan Circle and to the south toward Thomas Circle. As noted previously, there are modern additions to the streetscape, including streetlights and a wayside. Nonetheless, overall views along the residential street towards Logan Circle and Thomas Circle resemble the historic views and maintain integrity (*see Figure 65*).

EVALUATION

The cultural landscape's significant views retain integrity to the historic period, including views to Vermont Avenue, towards the Council House and its site, within the rear courtyard, and towards Logan Circle. While some construction within the viewshed postdates the second period of significance (1943-1966), and some modern additions intrude on Vermont Avenue, all views contribute to the historic integrity of the cultural landscape.



Figure 65: View northeast along Vermont Avenue towards Logan Circle, with the cultural landscape on the left.


Rear Alley (Unnamed)
Carriage House
Council House



Cultural Landscape Report
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Views and Vistas

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2. Field Survey and Data Collection, 2022
3. Commonwealth of Virginia, DC GIS, Maxar, Microsoft (base imagery)

DRAWN BY
Molly Lester and Meg Frisbie,
University of Pennsylvania
ArcGIS Pro, Adobe Illustrator, 2023

LEGEND
- CLR Boundary
- Reciprocal Views Between Vermont Avenue and the Council House (see Figures 55 and 56)
- Views from the Rear Courtyard to the Carriage House and Council House (see Figure 57)
- Views along Vermont Avenue toward and from Logan Circle (see Figure 58)
- Views along Vermont Avenue toward and from Thomas Circle

NOTES
1. All features shown in approximate scale and locations; small-scale features not to scale.

Drawing 5

VIEWS + VISTAS - CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES				
Feature Description	*Date Established*	*Associated Period*		*Contributing Status*
		1875-1900	*1943-1966*	
Reciprocal views between Vermont Avenue and the Council House	c. 1875-1887	X	X	Contributing
Views from rear courtyard to Carriage House and Council House	c. 1875	X	X	Contributing
Views toward Logan Circle and Thomas Circle	c. 1875	X	X	Contributing

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Cultural Traditions

HISTORIC AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

USE AS A SITE OF CIVIL RIGHTS ADVOCACY AND POLITICAL ORGANIZING IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

The cultural landscape served as the first national headquarters of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) upon the organization's purchase of the property in 1943. Mary McLeod Bethune—a prominent educator, political leader, and activist—founded the NCNW in 1935, to unite Black women's organizations as a unified voice to leverage political power. The headquarters solidified the presence of the NCNW in the nation's capital and allowed the organization to meet and expand its mission. Bethune achieved her greatest recognition based on her tenure at the Council House, and the NCNW created an important political network that gave African American women visibility and leverage in its efforts to address a range of causes, including education, employment, healthcare, housing, racism, poverty, and international relations.

Located within Washington, D.C., the seat of political power, the NCNW used the property as its headquarters, implementing the organization's nationwide programming. The Council House provided a space from which the NCNW could execute social and business activities, hold meetings and workshops, and develop programming and strategies that advanced the organization's goals.

Today, the National Park Service operates the cultural landscape as a house museum that interprets the life and legacy of Mary McLeod Bethune and the NCNW. Dedicated a National Historic Site in 1982, the site tells the story of the NCNW, thus maintaining strong integrity of association with the organization's use as a site for civil rights advocacy and political organizing in Washington, D.C.

While the NCNW is no longer headquartered in the building, the organization is still affiliated with the Council House's museum and operations. The property's ongoing association with the NCNW's use as a site of civil rights advocacy and political organizing in Washington, D.C., is a contributing cultural tradition.

EVALUATION

Founded in 1943, the NCNW is an active organization with the mission to "lead, advocate for, and empower women of African descent, their families and communities" (National Council of Negro Women, Inc. 2018). The first dedicated national headquarters of the NCNW at 1318 Vermont Avenue, N.W., is today a nationally significant historic site committed to telling the story of Mary McLeod Bethune and the NCNW. The overall setting and extant associations contribute to the integrity of the cultural traditions at the cultural landscape.

CULTURAL TRADITIONS - CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES				
Feature Description	*Date Established*	*Associated Period*		*Contributing Status*
		1875-1900	*1943-1966*	
Association with National Council for Negro Women (NCNW) use as a site of civil rights advocacy and political organizing in Washington, D.C.	1943		X	Contributing

Buildings and Structures

HISTORIC AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE COUNCIL HOUSE

The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House is the centerpiece of the cultural landscape, functioning as the site's primary building. Circa 1875, the building was constructed in Lot 55 of Square 242 in the Logan Circle neighborhood of Washington, D.C., on the northwest side of Vermont Avenue. The three-bay building was constructed with an L-shaped plan, and was clad in brick. The Second Empire style was popular in Washington, D.C. (and other cities) throughout the latter half of the 19th century, and is represented in the building and its surrounding properties.

In 1934, the Gravalles family acquired a permit to add a porch and a doorway to the northwest elevation of the Council House, accessing the rear courtyard. The doorway, which replaced a kitchen window opening, provided an access point from the interior to the rear courtyard. The one-story porch roof extended into the courtyard area and ran the entire length of the northwest elevation of the house (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 51-52; National Archives and Records Administration, Permit No. 174494).

In 1943, the NCNW purchased the property and began minor renovations to the interior of the building to convert it to use as the organization's headquarters (*see Figure 66*). From this point forward, the primary building within the cultural landscape was known as the Council House. The building provided the setting for the NCNW to operate as a national organization, and served as the residence for Mary McLeod Bethune and as temporary living quarters for members and guests of the NCNW as they visited Washington.

Over the ensuing years of use by the NCNW, the organization continued to make additional renovations to the building through the mid-1960s. Following the 1966 fire in the basement of the Council House, the NCNW moved out of the property. After the fire, the organization made significant repairs and renovations to the Council House during the 1970s and 1980s. Beginning in 1975, the improvements addressed issues from the fire and ensuing vacancy, including the addition of central heating and air, replacement and repair of windows and doors, and alterations to other finishes including flooring and walls (HABS Data sheets 1993: 5; Babin 2019: 7-8, 20). In 1980, the NCNW undertook a major restoration of the cultural landscape, including the Council House building. This work comprised repairs to the brick exterior, replication of missing woodwork, and repair of gutters and downspouts. A historic specialist consulted on the improvements to the interior, including lighting, furnishings, colors, and other interior details that maintained historic accuracy.



Figure 66: The Council House, as depicted on the cover of Aframerican Woman's Journal, Annual Workshop – Convention Issue, Fall 1944 (Source: National Archives of Black Women's History)





Figure 67: (above left) Council House front (southeast) façade, looking north/northwest from Vermont Avenue sidewalk. A portion of the neighbor's walkway is visible in lower left.

Figure 68: (above right) Council House rear (northwest) elevation

In 1988, renovations resumed, continuing through 1989. The roof and gutters were replaced at this time, and the kitchen door to the patio was sealed, eliminating one of the access points from the Council House to the rear courtyard. The 1934 porch was replaced with a new porch that spanned the rear (northwest) elevation of the building (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 161).

Around 2000, work to the exterior of the Council House centered on rehabilitation tasks such as lead paint abatement, mold removal, and the cleaning, repair, and replacement of rotting wood elements (Babin 2019: 7-8). In 2012, additional work to the Council House exterior included the removal of iron doors at the main entry; they were replaced with wooden doors that resemble the front doors extant during the second period of significance (1943-

1966). Later, in 2014 and 2016, additional restoration projects included repointing of the masonry on the primary façade and other repairs to drainage features and plumbing (Babin 2019: 7-8).

Based on these restoration campaigns, the building retains its historic appearance today, consistent with the periods of significance (*see Figure 67*). The first two stories of the building are clad in brick on the front elevation, with a three-sided window bay projection containing three 2/2 windows next to the ornamented front entryway on the first story. There are three bays on the second story, each of which is topped with decorative lintels with scroll motifs and moulding. The third story consists of a prominent mansard roof with three smaller bays that are symmetrical to those on the second story. The third-story bays also have decorative rounded lintels, although the lintels differ from their second-story counterparts. A cornice separates the second and third stories and features ornate modillions, corbels, and spindled wood details running the width of the façade.

The northwest elevation is two bays wide, with a single entry on the first story (*see Figure 68*). It is much simpler than the primary façade facing Vermont Avenue. On the second and third stories, this elevation features two symmetrical 6-over-9 windows on the north side, with an additional matching window that splits the two stories asymmetrically. Added in 1989, a covered porch projects out from the first story, supported by two white fluted columns with Doric capitals. The southwest elevation, visible from the alley of the building, features windows of varying types on every story of the building.

The Council House is one of the primary historic elements within the cultural landscape and is a contributing feature, maintaining integrity to both periods of significance (1875-1900; 1943-1966).

CARRIAGE HOUSE

Following the construction of the primary building (now known as the Council House), a secondary building (now known as the Carriage House) was built between 1875 and 1887 at the rear of the property, abutting the alley on the northwestern edge of the site. Two stories in height, the Carriage House occupies a square footprint and is clad in red brick laid in a seven-course American Bond pattern (*see Figure 69*). It is arranged in two bays



Figure 69: The front façade (southeast) of the Carriage House.

on its primary (southeast) façade, with a central entry facing the rear courtyard. On the rear (northwest) elevation of the Carriage House, facing the alley, the building has two smaller windows and an entry on the first story, and two larger windows on the second story (*see Figure 70*). The northeast and southwest elevations are uninterrupted brick walls, without any fenestration. The roof is flat, with a low parapet covered in metal flashing. Along the flat roofline is a row of brick dentils that have weathered, resulting in missing brick dentils in a few spots along the roofline.

The Carriage House was originally used as a stable and servants' quarters. Since its construction, the building has undergone alterations, including replacement of windows and doors, among other changes. Renovations to the Carriage House during the 1960s included repairs to masonry, roofing, windows, and flooring. In addition, a kitchen and bathroom were added to the building, but did not alter the footprint (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 35-36).

In the 1980s, work on the Carriage House included replacement of downspouts, roofing, and the air conditioning system, as well as the enlargement of windows. The use of the building for archives required improvements to climate-control systems (HABS no. DC-775). The minor alterations and improvements to the Carriage House have not detracted from its integrity, and it remains a contributing feature of the cultural landscape.

COUNCIL HOUSE FRONT STOOP AND STAIRS

Dating to the original construction of the primary building (Council House), solid brownstone steps comprise the front entry stoop to the house. Accessed from the front walkway, the entry stoop has a landing that sits at the top of straight-run solid brownstone steps, which feature six risers and five treads with projecting bullnose edges painted grey. The landing and stairs feature decorative cast iron railings, balusters, and newel posts that are finished to simulate limestone. Historic photographs and paint analysis completed by Beyer Blinder Belle Architects in 2008 indicate that these cast-iron elements were originally finished with a sand and paint finish to simulate limestone. The front stoop was rehabilitated around 1980 to reflect the simulated limestone finish. Today, the front stoop and stairs reflect their original appearance (1875-



Figure 70: Northeast and northwest elevations of the Carriage House from the back alley.



Figure 71: Front stoop leading to Council House entrance with portion of front walkway in foreground.

1900) and are contributing elements to the cultural landscape (*see Figure 71*).

WROUGHT IRON FENCE AND GATE AROUND FRONT YARD

Photographs from the second period of significance (1943-1966) depict a low-profile wrought-iron fence surrounding the front yard of the Council House property (*see Figure 72*). As depicted in those photographs, the fence structure encompassed the northeast property boundary, southeast property boundary along the Vermont Avenue sidewalk, and the southwest boundary, separating the cultural landscape from the adjacent properties and public sidewalk (*see Figures 73, 74, and 75*). At the front walkway, a matching gate with an opening at its center punctuated the larger perimeter fence. It featured round balusters and fleur-de-lis finials. The date of installation of the front fence and gate is unknown.

In 1979, the NCNW contracted blacksmith Nol Putnam to complete the restoration of the front wrought iron metal gate and fence. Putnam's work included the fabrication and installation of missing material, which comprised about half of the gate; the cleaning and straightening of the existing half of the gate; and the installation of replacement finials for those missing along the gate and fence.

The wrought iron fence stands today in its historic location surrounding the front property, and maintains its historic appearance. The fence is roughly 38" tall, including the finials. In 2000, Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP evaluated the fence and determined it to be eligible as a contributing element of the historic site (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 104). This CLR concurs: the fence is a contributing feature to the cultural landscape.

WROUGHT IRON GATE AT FRONT STOOP (WITH ATTACHED MAIL DROP BOX)

A non-historic wrought-iron gate is located in the front yard of the property, immediately south of the front stoop and in front of the stairway to the basement level (*see Figure 76*). The gate blocks off the basement stairway and is accessed from the secondary walkway along the front (southeast) elevation of the Council House. The gate is secured by posts at either end, and closes at the center with two moving parts that swing open. There is a locking mechanism at the center, as well as a black, metal mail-drop box secured to the gate. The style



Figure 72: Mary McLeod Bethune (with back to camera) speaking to guests filling Vermont Avenue, N.W., at the Council House dedication, October 15, 1944, with wrought iron fence surrounding front yard and some grass visible (Source: NABWH Series 14 Photograph 00548).



Figure 73: Wrought iron fence and gate surrounding the Council House front yard, looking southeast.



Figure 74: Wrought iron fence surrounding the Council House front yard, along front walkway, looking east/northeast.



Figure 75: Wrought iron fence and gate surrounding the Council House front yard, looking south/southwest from front yard.



Figure 76: Wrought iron gate above stairs to basement.

and material of the gate matches the other wrought iron features within the Landscape that are original. The fence measures approximately 5'-7" across.

Rehabilitation project notes from 1988 recommended that this feature be added for security. However, the recommendation does not appear to have been implemented until sometime after 1993; HABS documentation completed that year does not include the gate (*see Figure 79*). This gate, post-dating the second period of significance (1943-1966), is a non-contributing feature but is compatible with the historic conditions of the cultural landscape.

REAR COURTYARD PLANTERS

Raised planters run along the northeast and southwest property lines in the rear courtyard, between the Council House and Carriage House (*see Figures 77 and 78*). Added in 1989, these structures are composed of red brick laid in a running bond pattern. Along the southwest property boundary, the planter is two-tiered, with the higher tier forming an “L” shape along the property boundary and the southeast wall of the Carriage House. The lower tier is nested within the L of the higher tier. The taller tier is 1'-10" in height, while the lower tier measures 11½". Along the northeast property boundary, a single-tiered planter measures approximately 6½" in height. This planter also resembles an “L” shape, with the leg of the L along the main (southeast) façade of the Carriage House. The planters, which were added in 1989 after the second period of significance (1943-1966), are non-contributing.

FENCES IN REAR COURTYARD

Privacy fences are located on the northeastern and southwestern property boundaries in the rear courtyard that runs between the Council House and the Carriage House. On the northeastern side, the fence is composed of vertical wood panels (*see Figure 80*), while the southwestern privacy fence is made up of wooden lattice (*see Figure 81*). The fence on the northeast side runs the entire length of the northeast property boundary between the



Figure 77: Planter on southwest side of the courtyard. Small drainage feature is visible in foreground.

Figure 78: Planter on northeast side of the rear courtyard. The leg of the L-shaped structure continues around southeast side of Carriage House.



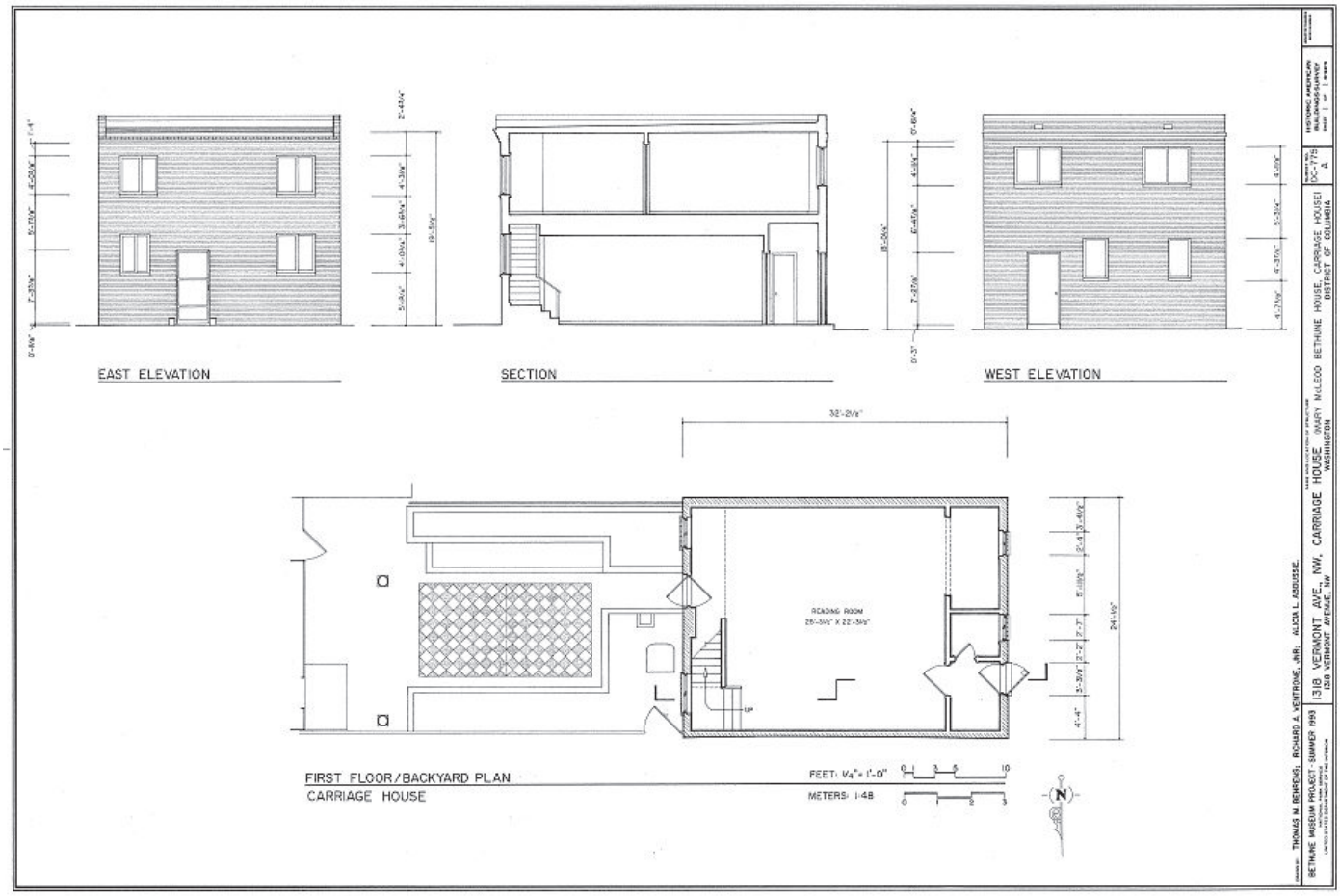


Figure 79: HABS documentation from 1993 of the Carriage House depicting existing conditions in the rear courtyard, including the planters four years after construction (HABS DC-775-A).

Council House and the Carriage House, and is approximately 6'-3½" in height. The fence on the southwest side runs from the Carriage House to the neighboring building at 1316 Vermont Avenue, N.W., and is approximately 10'-3" in height. Both fences were likely added in the 1980s (contemporaneous with other additions in the rear courtyard), and were originally lattice. The northeastern boundary fence was replaced in 2018 with the vertical panels. The fences postdate the periods of significance and are non-contributing features.

EVALUATION

The buildings and structures within the cultural landscape of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS evolved throughout the periods of significance. In the late 19th century, the buildings that are now known as the Council House and Carriage House were built as part of a speculative housing boom in Washington, D.C. Since then, minor improvements, renovations, rehabilitation, and repair work has been completed to the interior and exterior of the buildings, without compromising the overall integrity of the buildings' historic conditions. The Council House and Carriage House maintain integrity to both periods of significance (1875-1900; 1943-1966), as does the front stoop and wrought iron fence surrounding the front yard. A metal gate in front of the stairway to the basement postdates the second period of significance (1943-1966) and is non-contributing, but compatible.

Structures in the rear courtyard–the planters and perimeter fences—were added beginning in the 1980s, postdating the later period of significance (1943-1966). These structures do not contribute to the historic integrity of the cultural landscape.



Figure 80: Wooden fence at northeast property line in rear courtyard.



Figure 81: Lattice fence at southwest property line in rear courtyard.


Rear Alley (Unnamed)
Carriage House
Rear porch roof
Council House



Cultural Landscape Report
Mary McLeod Bethune
Council House National Historic Site

Existing Conditions: Buildings + Structures

Weitzman School of Design
University of Pennsylvania

Urban Heritage Project | PennPraxis
Graduate Program in Historic Preservation
Weitzman School of Design
www.cultural-landscapes.org

SOURCES

1. Open Data DC, https://opendata.dc.gov/, accessed Sept 2022
2. Field Survey and Data Collection, 2022
3. Commonwealth of Virginia, DC GIS, Maxar, Microsoft (base imagery)

DRAWN BY

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ArcGIS Pro, Adobe Illustrator, 2022

LEGEND

- CLR Boundary
- Building *[Contributing]*
- Front Fence and Gate *[Contributing]*
- Iron Gate (Structure) *[Contributing]*
- Planter *[Non-contributing]*
- Rear Courtyard Fence *[Non-contributing]*

NOTES

1. All features shown in approximate scale and locations; small-scale features not to scale.

Drawing 6

BUILDINGS + STRUCTURES - CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES				
Feature Description	*Date Established*	*Associated Period*		*Contributing Status*
		1875-1900	*1943-1966*	
Mary McLeod Bethune Council House	c. 1875	X	X	Contributing
Carriage House	1875-1887	X	X	Contributing
Council House front stoop and stairs	c. 1875	X	X	Contributing
Wrought iron fence and gate around front yard	pre-1944	Undetermined	X	Contributing
Wrought iron gate at front stoop (with attached mail drop box)	c. 1994			Non-contributing but compatible
Rear courtyard planters	1989			Non-contributing
Fences in rear courtyard	1988/89; 2018			Non-contributing

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Circulation

The circulation features within the cultural landscape boundaries are limited to pedestrian-centric features. These features are concentrated in the front and rear character areas; the only circulation between the two areas is via the interior of the Council House. Vehicular circulation is restricted to the public right-of ways beyond the boundaries of the cultural landscape.

HISTORIC AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

FRONT WALKWAY FROM PUBLIC SIDEWALK ON VERMONT AVENUE TO THE COUNCIL HOUSE

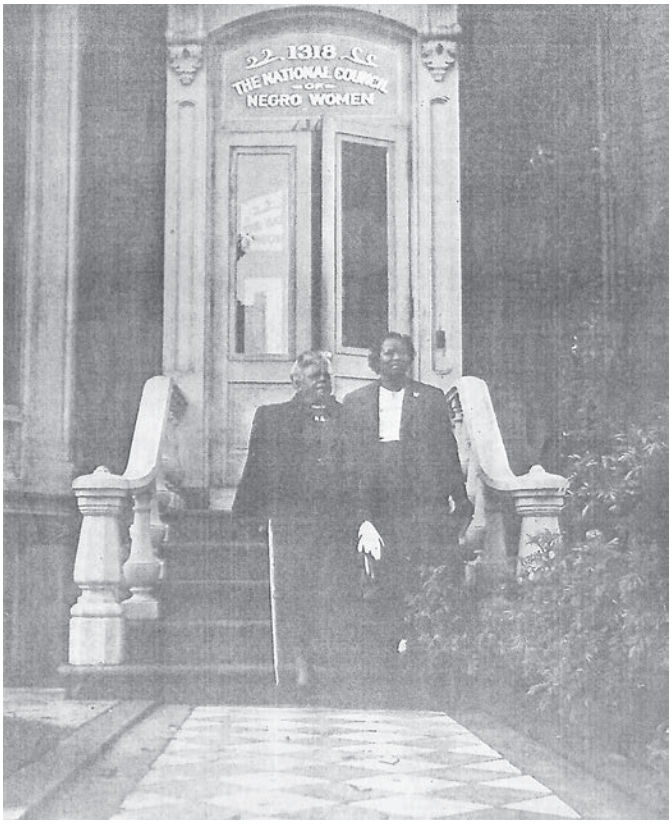
Since the first period of significance (1875-1900), a front walkway has connected the public sidewalk on Vermont Avenue to the entrance of the Council House (*see Figure 82*). The 2008 Historic Structure Report for the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House records the walkway as original to the property (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 159). At a southeast to northwest angle, the front walkway consists of a concrete walk with marble pavers laid in a black-and-white checkerboard pattern, set at a 45-degree angle within concrete curbing. Leaving the public sidewalk along Vermont Avenue N.W., the walkway is initially at grade with the public right-of-way. It progresses to a set of four cast-in-place concrete steps, which provide a transition in topography for the walkway. Beginning at the top of those steps, the second section of walkway ends at the first step of the front entry stoop.

The front walkway is visible in photographs from the second period of significance (1943-1966), included in pictures from the period of NCNW use (*see Figure 83*). The walk was rehabilitated around 1980. Today, the front walkway resembles its historic appearance in those photographs. The front walkway continues to function in its original purpose and is a contributing circulation feature.



Figure 82: (above) Front walkway leading from Vermont Ave, N.W., to the Council House entryway

Figure 83: (below) Undated photograph of Mary McLeod Bethune and companion in front of Council House with front walkways and front stoop visible (Source: shared by National Archives of Black Women's History, unknown source, unknown date).



WALKWAY AROUND THE COUNCIL HOUSE FRONT ELEVATION

On the southeast side of the front entry stoop, a paved walkway runs northeast-southwest along the primary façade of the Council House, connecting the primary front walkway (which runs southeast-northwest) to the southwest property line (*see Figure 84*). At a point where the primary walk meets the stoop, the secondary walk begins in a quarter-circle shape and then extends straight along the exterior walls, following the angles of the projecting bay on the primary elevation of the Council House.

While the walkway does not appear in the 1993 HABS drawings, it is partially visible in a 1947 photograph (*see Figure 85; refer also to Figure 83 on opposite page*) and is depicted in the 1988 Architectnique existing conditions drawings (NABWH Series 14 Photograph 0326). The date of construction (or reconstruction) of this feature is unknown and it is unclear if the walkway was removed after the 1988 drawings and re-installed at a later date. Today portions of the paving of the secondary walk differ in color, suggesting the materials were added at different



Figure 84: Concrete walkway around Council House front façade.



Figure 85: Bethune at far right with recipients of the 1947 "Roll of Honor" on the front steps of the Council House. Note concrete area to the left of front walkway in lower left of photograph (Source: NABWH Series 14 Photograph 0326).



Figure 86: Stairs to the basement from the concrete walkway around Council House front façade.

Figure 87: Council House rear alley with metal ramp, mechanical equipment, and door into Council House basement visible.



times. Nonetheless, a portion of the walkway was present during the second period of significance (1943-1966). It retains its overall integrity and is considered a contributing feature.

STAIRWAY TO BASEMENT FROM FRONT WALKWAY

A quarter-turn stairway—part of the original Council House design—is located to the southwest of the entry stoop, accessed from the walkway around the Council House front elevation (see above). The stairway features bluestone treads and descends below grade to an entrance at the basement level of the Council House. The stairway dates to the first period of significance (1875-1900), and is a contributing feature to the cultural landscape (*see Figure 86*).

COUNCIL HOUSE ALLEY (REAR ELL)

On the southwest side of the Council House, a paved alley (or ell, as the 2008 HSR refers to it) is lower in elevation than the rest of the rear courtyard area (*see Figure 87*). Today, the alley is accessed by a moveable metal ramp, which descends from the grade of the rear courtyard to the lower level of the ell. Loose bricks underneath the ramp suggest that a brick stairway may have existed, but they are in disrepair and there is no measurable staircase.

This rear ell's plaza, part of the original plan of the Council House and extant during both periods of significance (1875-1900; 1943-1966), accesses the basement level of the Council House and is a contributing feature.

REAR COURTYARD PLAZA AND PAVERS

The Council House and Carriage House are separated by a rear courtyard, which was established when the two buildings were constructed. Research for this CLR (drawing on previous documentation efforts as well) has not determined the quantity and design of circulation features in the rear courtyard during either period of significance (1875-1900; 1943-1966). Historically, there was likely some circulation feature that provided access to the Carriage House from the



Figure 88: Rear courtyard section of black and white marble pavers, looking west/northwest.

Council House, through the open space between the buildings.

Constructed in 1989, the extant courtyard features include a section of black and white marble pavers set in a checkerboard pattern, with the checkerboard grid rotated 45 degrees from the surrounding granite paver border (*see Figure 88*). (This pattern is consistent with the historic paving pattern on the walk in front of the Council House building.) The section of marble pavers measures approximately 12' by 19'-1½".

A sailor-course brick border separates the granite and marble pathway from a herringbone-patterned section of brick pavers on the west elevation of the Council House. This area of brick pavers is partially covered by the rear porch roof (also added in 1989). The brick section of the rear courtyard measures approximately 23' by 10'-3".

The circulation features in the rear courtyard postdate the second period of significance (1943-1966) and are non-contributing.

WALKWAY BETWEEN REAR COURTYARD AND THE CARRIAGE HOUSE ENTRANCE

In the rear courtyard area, a short brick walkway connects the marble and granite patio to the Carriage House entrance. As with the rear courtyard's broader plaza, this short, brick-paved walk is also laid in a herringbone pattern, with the same sailor-course brick border around the edges. This walkway is framed by two brick planters (addressed separately, under Buildings and Structures). This walkway was created when the planters were constructed in 1989, after the second period of significance (1943-1966). As such, it is non-contributing.

EVALUATION

The circulation features at the site facilitate pedestrian access within and around the site. Most of the circulation features in the front yard of the Council House were in place by end of the first period of significance (1875-1900). These include the front walkway from the public sidewalk to the front stoop of the Council House and the stairway to the basement. The rear alley plaza of the Council House also existed during the first period of significance. These features are all considered contributing. The walkway around the front façade of the Council House was in place during the second period of significance (1943-1966) and is a contributing feature. The rear courtyard plaza and pavers, in addition to the short brick walkway between the rear courtyard and the Carriage House, were installed when the courtyard was redesigned in 1989. They postdate the second period of significance (1943-1966) and are considered non-contributing features.


Rear Alley (Unnamed)
Walkway to
Carriage House
[Non-contributing]
Council House
alley (rear ell)
[Contributing]
Stair
to baser
[Contrib



Cultural Landscape Report
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Council House National Historic Site
Existing Conditions: Circulation

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Urban Heritage Project
Graduate Program in Historic Preservation /
PennPraxis, Weitzman School of Design
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SOURCES
1. Open Data DC, https://opendata.dc.gov/, accessed Sept 2022
2. Field Survey and Data Collection, 2022
3. Commonwealth of Virginia, DC GIS, Maxar, Microsoft (base imagery)

DRAWN BY
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ArcGIS Pro, Adobe Illustrator, 2022

LEGEND
- CLR Boundary
- Building
- Road
- Walk *[see drawing for contributing status]*
- Rear Courtyard *[Non-contributing]*

NOTES
1. All features shown in approximate scale and locations; small-scale features not to scale.

Drawing 7

CIRCULATION - CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES				
Feature Description	*Date Established*	*Associated Period*		*Contributing Status*
		1875-1900	*1943-1966*	
Front walkway from public sidewalk on Vermont Avenue to the Council House	c. 1875	X	X	Contributing
Walkway around the Council House front elevation	c. 1940s		X	Contributing
Stairway to basement from front walkway	c. 1875	X	X	Contributing
Council House alley (rear ell)	c. 1875	X	X	Contributing
Rear courtyard plaza and pavers	1989			Non-contributing
Walkway between rear courtyard and the Carriage House entrance	1989			Non-contributing

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Vegetation

HISTORIC AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

Prior to European colonization of the region, Indigenous species of vegetation existed in the area that would become Washington, D.C. During the Paleo Indian period, from 15,000 to 8000 BCE, coniferous forests dominated the area, with species including pine and spruce. As the climate warmed, deciduous species of oak and chestnut trees populated the area of the Potomac River Valley. During the Archaic Period, from 8000 BCE to 1200 BCE, deciduous forests dominated.

Native American groups introduced horticulture, and farmed species of crops like corn, beans, squash, and potatoes. The introduction of horticulture marked a shift in vegetation from wild growth of native species to controlled and manipulated crops for human consumption and sustenance.

English colonizers claimed the area that is today Washington, D.C., in the early 17th century. By mid-century, they cultivated tobacco as a major cash crop, relying on enslaved individuals to plant and harvest the crop across the Potomac region.

Little is known about the specifics of vegetation within the cultural landscape until 1944, when photographs taken of the NCNW's headquarters dedication ceremony depict the front yard of the Council House. There is no native vegetation at the cultural landscape today; all vegetation at the cultural landscape is cultural vegetation.

FRONT YARD LAWN PANEL BETWEEN THE COUNCIL HOUSE AND PUBLIC SIDEWALK

Depicted in photographs from the 1944 Council House dedication ceremony, vegetation in the front yard included a grass lawn panel and some unidentified foliage near the Council House front façade (*see Figure 89*). Research for this CLR has not determined when the lawn panel was originally installed, but it was in place by the second period of significance (1943-1966).



Figure 89: Mary McLeod Bethune speaking at Council House dedication, October 15, 1944. Note grass lawn surrounding pedestal and unidentified foliage (likely a rose bush) at lower left (Source: NABWH Series 14 Photograph 0530).

A 1963 photograph of the Council House, which depicts women preparing to depart for the March on Washington, shows minimal changes to the vegetation in the front yard of the Council House (*refer to Figure 26 on page 86*). By this time, the lawn panel appeared to be planted with grass, with no other vegetation. Following the fire of 1966, the house stood vacant until restoration efforts began in 1975, but landscape features were not addressed at that time. As of 1975, vegetation in the front yard was minimal, with rough patches of grass in the front lawn panel. Near the northeast property line and the front entry stoop, overgrown shrubbery from neighboring properties infringed on the cultural landscape (HABS DC-530-1).

The NCNW hired landscape designer Joan Brooks to design a landscape plan for the Council House

in 1981. There is no photographic documentation of her work, but a message from Brooks to Dr. Bettye Thomas, director of the Bethune Historical Development Project, stated the following:

> The enclosed landscape design reflects plants and designs of the Victorian era. It can be done in the summer or early Fall; finished, mulched and ready for the grand opening of the house. The cost for the entire project would be approximately $1,055. This includes the nursery fee, which would include a guarantee to replace dead plants within a year at one-half price, and my fee for the design, the finished drawing and the supervision of the actual work. (Joan Brooks to Dr. Bettye Thomas, 7 July 1981, National Park Service, Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site, DcWaMMB; BMA Records; Series 139, Box 101, Ms. Joan Brooks Folder; Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 95)

Historic American Building Survey (HABS) documentation completed in 1993 records some types of vegetation that existed at the site. The HABS documentation showed unidentified plants within the front yard urn (addressed below, under Small-Scale Features), and shrubs, approximately 3' in height, along the fence line.

Photographs from the early 1990s depict several different plantings, including annual species within the front lawn panel in the front yard of the Council House where previously, there had only been a grass lawn panel (*see Figure 90*). Specific dates associated with the photos are unknown, but the planting palette at this time included ornamental cabbages (*Brassica oleracea*), flowering begonias (*Begonia cucullate*), geraniums (*Pelargonium hortorum*), pansies (*Viola wittrockiana*), and tulips (*Tulipa* sp.) (*see Figure 91*). In the late 1990s, a variety of species were present in the front yard including ivy, an unidentified tall grass species



Figure 90: Guests at the dedication of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS as a unit of the national park system, 1995, with the front lawn planted in unidentified yellow flowers (Source: NPS).



Figure 91: Front yard of the Council House planted with cabbages, date unknown, likely 1990s or 2000s (Source: NABWH 057 S01 0540).



Figure 92: Front yard of Council House planted with pansies (Viola tricolor var. hortensis), 2005 (Source: MAMC 094854).

and flowers in the urn. In the 2000s, the front yard continued to have a variety of plantings in the front yard, and the urn included tulips (*Tulipa* sp.), pansies (*Viola witttrockiana*), daffodils (*Narcissus*), and other flowers (*see Figure 92*). Beginning in approximately 2012/2013, the front panel was planted primarily in turf (conversation with Kenneth Chandler, NPS archivist, 2022).

Today, the front yard of the Council House is dominated by the lawn panel (*see Figure 93*). It measures approximately 15' by 20' and occupies the area between the sidewalk of Vermont Avenue, the primary entry walkway, the secondary walkway that borders the Council House's front elevation, and the southwest property boundary. Ivy lines the southwestern boundary along the fence. It is unknown precisely when the ivy was planted, but it is visible in photographs from the 2000s through present.



Figure 93: Grass panel in Council House front yard, looking west/northwest.

The front lawn panel is consistent with the conditions that were present during the second period of significance (1943-1966), and is a contributing feature.

NARROW EARTHEN STRIP BETWEEN FRONT WALKWAY AND NORTHEAST PROPERTY FENCE LINE

Along the northeast property boundary, a narrow earthen panel separates the front walkway and the wrought iron property fence in the front yard (*see Figure 94*). Historic and recent photographs depict that this area was planted at times with ivy and flowers (*see Figure 95*). Since the front walkway is original to the site, this earthen panel along the northeast property line may date to the first period of significance (1875-1900).

At the time of this CLR survey in 2022, the panel is not planted with formal vegetation, although some



Figure 94: Narrow panel of dirt between the front walkway and fence along the northern edge of the property.



Figure 95: Pansies planted in the narrow earthen panel on the northeast property line, likely 2000s.

Figure 96: Exterior of Council House building with tulips planted in urn and surrounding lawn panel, 2012 (Source: NPS Facebook).



volunteer growth of weeds or other nearby plants has sprouted. As part of the overall planting plan, this panel is a contributing feature associated with the original design of the front yard of the cultural landscape. However, it unknown what was originally planted in the earthen strip. Partially visible in the lower right of a 1947 photograph (*refer to Figure 85 on page 181*), the earthen panel does not appear to be extensively planted, though there may be a tuft of grass.

PLANTINGS IN URN IN FRONT YARD

A decorative urn located within the front yard panel was installed in 1979. (The pedestal on which is rests was installed earlier. Both the pedestal and the urn are addressed in Small-Scale Features, below.) A variety of species have been planted within the urn since its initial installation, generally matching those in the planting panel surrounding the urn. Photographs taken since 1979 show English ivy (*Hedera helix*), tulips (*Tulipa* sp.), daffodils (*Narcissus* sp.), and pansies (*Viola x wittrickiana*), planted at different times in the urn (*see Figure 96*).

Because the urn itself was installed after the second period of significance, the plantings in the urn all postdate the periods of significance and are non-contributing.

REAR COURTYARD PLANTINGS IN PLANTERS

Very little is known about the materials, design, and vegetation of the rear courtyard throughout the period of NCNW use of the Council House and into the early 1980s, as no archival documentation, photographs, or descriptions of the rear courtyard have been located.

As noted previously, the Council hired landscape designer Joan Brooks in 1981 to design a landscape plan for the Council House. A $900 expense voucher for “Landscaping for the NCNW Restoration Project, Back Yard” from October 10, 1981, does not indicate what type of work was completed in the back yard area at this time. Plants on an October 15, 1981, request for payment for landscaping work include: Gumpo azalea (*Rhododendron eriocarpum*), Vinca, Pachysandra, Euonymus fortunei, and Euonymus sieboldii. These



Figure 97: Reception in rear courtyard with plantings visible, including roses (Rosa sp.), on the right and Blue plantain lily (Hosta ventricose) on the far left, undated (Source: NABWH 057 Series 01 Photograph 0137).



Figure 98: Reception in rear courtyard with unidentified plantings in planters (Source: NABWH 057 Series 01 Photograph 0083).

plants, in addition to the mulch and stepping stones listed in the document, may have been installed in the rear yard, but research has not been able to confirm this, or what the planting plan was if these species were in fact added.

From 1988 through 1989, restoration work on the property included significant work on the rear courtyard, including the addition of brick planters that were planted with "period" plantings (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 101-102; Babin 2019: 7-18). HABS documentation from 1993, prepared a few years after the planters were constructed, shows a variety of unidentified plantings within the brick planters, including undetermined species of shrubs, ground cover, and plants, in addition to vines growing on the lattice fences.

The National Park Service acquired the site and began managing the museum and grounds in 1994.

Following the acquisition, a reception was held in the rear courtyard of the cultural landscape. Images depict the brick planters filled with different flowers, vines, shrubs, and ground cover, such as impatiens (*Impatiens walleriana*), roses (*Rosa* sp.), Blue plantain lily (*Hosta ventricosa*), and a Japanese yew (*Taxus cuspidata*), as well as other unidentified species (*see Figures 97 and 98*).

At the time of survey in 2022, the brick planters in the rear courtyard feature various plantings including: Blue plantain lily (*Hosta ventricosa*), American pokeweed (*Phytolacca decandra*), Slender yellow woodsorrel (*Oxalis dillenii*), Petty spurge (*Euphorbia peplus*), Japanese yew (*Taxus cuspidata*), English ivy (*Hedera helix*), Lilyturf (*Liriope* sp.), Honeyvine (*Cynanchum laeve*), Spindle tree (*Euonymous* sp.) and Crepe myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*) shoots.

The Blue plantain lily (*Hosta ventricosa*) are arranged in a line running the length of the planter along the southwest boundary fence (*refer to Figure 60 on page 143*). The lower level of the southern brick planter contains several plant species, including American pokeweed (*Phytolacca decandra*), Slender yellow woodsorrel (*Oxalis dillenii*), and Petty spurge (*Euphorbia peplus*). At the northwest side of the planter, along the Carriage House front façade, is a Spindle tree (*Euonymous* sp.) and Crepe myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*) shoots.

Lilyturf (*Liriope* sp.) grasses dot the northern brick planter along with the same weed species which have sprouted randomly in the southwest planter (*see Figure 99*). A Japanese yew (*Taxus cuspidate*) is located within the planter along the front façade of the Carriage House.

Postdating the second period of significance (1943-1966), the plantings in the rear courtyard planters are non-contributing.

VEGETATION GROWING ON WEST ELEVATION OF COUNCIL HOUSE

On the northwest elevation of the Council House, facing the rear courtyard, unidentified vines have grown up the side of the house and into one bay of the second-story and third-story windows (*see Figure 100*). At the first story on this elevation, remnants of the vine's growth show damage to the exterior paint under the covered porch. This vegetation postdates the second period of significance (1943-1966) and is considered non-contributing.

COMMON IVY (HEDERA HELIX) GROWING ON LATTICE FENCE IN REAR COURTYARD

In the rear courtyard along the southwest property fence, common ivy (*Hedera helix*) is growing through the lattice fence in clusters (*see Figure 101*). The ivy on the lattice fence is the result of overgrowth extending from the neighboring property to the south. The ivy growth is non-historic, postdating the second period of significance (1943-1966). This vegetation feature is non-contributing.

EVALUATION

Some of the vegetation features at the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS cultural landscape have been in place since the historic period, while others have been added in more recent decades. The front yard lawn panel was in place by the second period of significance (1943-1966) and contributes to the historic integrity of the cultural landscape. Additionally, the narrow strip of land between the front walkway and the fence on the northeast side of the property is visible in historic photos. Based on the footprint, it is believed to be to be a planting bed, which is consistent with the periods of significance; this feature is also contributing, although it does not currently feature any extant plantings.

The urn was installed in 1979; its plantings, therefore, postdate the second period of significance (1943-1966) and are considered non-contributing. Likewise, the plantings in the rear courtyard planters postdate the second period of significance and are not contributing. Vegetation growing on the buildings and rear courtyard fences is non-historic and also considered non-contributing.



Figure 99: Plantings in northern planter in rear courtyard with Petty spurge (Euphorbia peplus), May 2022.

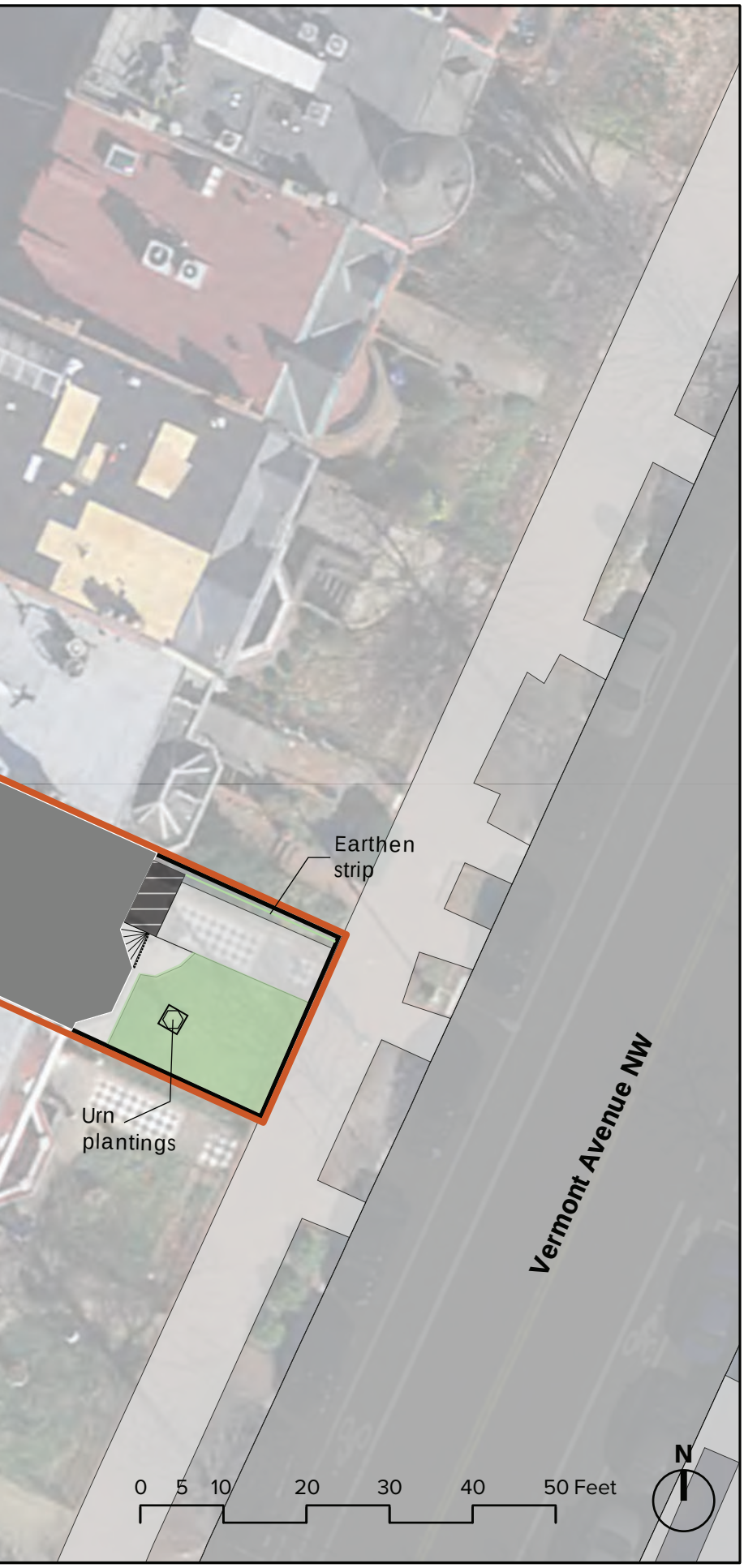


Figure 100: Vines on the west elevation of the Council House, looking southeast. Evidence of vine removal on first story.



Figure 101: Common ivy (Hedera helix) growing on the lattice fence along the south property boundary in the rear courtyard.


Rear Alley (Unnamed)
Rear courtyard plantings
English ivy on lattice fence



Cultural Landscape Report
Mary McLeod Bethune
Council House National Historic Site
Existing Conditions: Vegetation

Weitzman School of Design
University of Pennsylvania

Urban Heritage Project
Graduate Program in Historic Preservation /
PennPraxis, Weitzman School of Design
www.cultural-landscapes.org

SOURCES
1. Open Data DC, https://opendata.dc.gov/, accessed Sept 2022
2. Field Survey and Data Collection, 2022
3. Commonwealth of Virginia, DC GIS, Maxar, Microsoft (base imagery)

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LEGEND
- CLR Boundary
- Building
- Front Yard Lawn Panel *[Contributing]*
- Earthen Strip *[Contributing]*
- Urn plantings *[Non-contributing]*
- Yew *[Non-contributing]*
- Rear Courtyard Plantings (various) *[Non-contributing]*

NOTES
1. All features shown in approximate scale and locations; small-scale features not to scale.

Drawing 8

VEGETATION - CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES				
Feature Description	*Date Established*	*Associated Period*		*Contributing Status*
		1875-1900	*1943-1966*	
Front yard lawn panel between the Council House and public sidewalk	Pre-1944	Unknown	X	Contributing
Narrow earthen strip between front walkway and northeast property fenceline	ca. 1875	X	X	Contributing
Plantings in urn in front yard	1979			Non-contributing
Rear courtyard plantings in north and south planters, and portions of west planter	c. 1989 (date of planter construction)			Non-contributing
Vegetation growing on rear elevation of Carriage House	Recent			Non-contributing
English ivy (Hedera helix) growing on lattice fence in rear courtyard	Recent			Non-contributing

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Small-scale Features

The site exhibited various small-scale features in the front yard during the periods of significance, as documented by historic maps, drawings, and photographs from those periods. Several of those features remain in place today, and are documented and evaluated below.

With respect to the rear courtyard/open space, no photographic documentation of the rear courtyard during either period of significance (1875-1900; 1943-1966) has been located to date.

It is thus unknown what small-scale features were present in that area of the cultural landscape during the periods of significance. Extant small-scale features in the rear courtyard area are documented in this CLR, but they are either non-contributing or of undetermined status.

HISTORIC AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

SQUARE PEDESTAL

Photographs from the 1944 Council House dedication ceremony depict a square pedestal in the front yard, upon which a microphone was placed for the ceremony (*see Figure 102*). While its precise date of installation is unknown, the pedestal was present throughout the second period of significance (1943-1966); based on HABS documentation related to the urn that now rests on this base (see below), the pedestal may date to the original development of the site, during the first period of significance. Centered on the bay window, the pedestal is made of brownstone and measures 30" square, and is 7½" in height (*see Figure 55 on page 138*). An urn rests on the pedestal base today.

The pedestal has been within the landscape since at least the second period of significance (if not earlier) and is a contributing feature.



Figure 102: Eleanor Roosevelt standing atop the pedestal at the Council House dedication, October 15, 1944 (Source: NABWH Series 14 Photo 00049).

Figure 103: Cast iron handrail, balusters, and newel posts at front stoop.



CAST IRON HANDRAIL, BALUSTERS, AND NEWEL POSTS AT FRONT STOOP

The small-scale features of the front entry stoop of the Council House include a cast-iron handrail and newel posts (*see Figure 103*). The handrail is supported by heavily proportioned, turned-looking balusters. All of the elements of the front entry stoop, including the handrail and newel posts, are painted grey to simulate the appearance of limestone. The paint has deteriorated in areas, exposing the underlayer of wrought iron. The cast iron handrail, balusters, and newel posts at the front stoop are original to the building and date to the first period of significance (1875-1900), and are



Figure 104: Metal urn in Council House front yard stop pedestal.



Figure 105: National Historic Site designation plaque on Council House front façade.

contributing features (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners LLP 2008: 157).

METAL URN PLANTER

As described above, a square pedestal has been positioned in the front lawn of the Council House since the second period of significance (1943-1966). Installed in 1979, a metal urn planter rests on the square pedestal (*see Figure 104*). The urn is classical in style, made of wrought iron and painted black, matching similar urns in neighboring properties. The urn, including the pedestal, is 53½" tall.

While the urn postdates the second period of significance (1943-1966), according to a narrative history prepared by the Historic American Building Survey, "this planter is similar to the one that was original to the site" (HABS No. DC-775). It is unclear what sources HABS used to make that determination, or which urn was original to the site; research to date for this CLR has not identified any sources that describe an urn within the cultural landscape prior to 1979.

This metal urn is not a contributing feature of the landscape, as it was installed after the second period of significance, but it is compatible since it resembles other urns at neighboring properties and (if the HABS source can be corroborated) one that may have been located at the Council House historically.

NHS PLAQUE ON COUNCIL HOUSE FRONT FAÇADE

Two metal plaques are fastened to the front elevation of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House (*see Figure 105*). The smaller, top-mounted plaque reads, "Bethune Museum-Archives" on a black background with embossed, brass-colored text. The lower plaque reads, "Mary McLeod Bethune 'Council House' National Historic Site," with a designation date and description below. The plaques attached to the front of the Council House were added in 1982, when the property was designated a National Historic Site and are non-contributing but compatible.



Figure 106: National Historic Site sign in front yard of Council House.



Figure 107: Air conditioning unit immediate southeast of the Carriage House.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE NHS SIGN IN FRONT YARD

Within the grass panel in the front yard of the Council House, the National Park Service's Mary McLeod Bethune NHS identity sign stands next to the front walkway (*see Figure 106*). The sign reads, "Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site," and depicts the NPS arrowhead logo in the upper right of the sign. It hangs from a square black metal post topped with a beveled square post topper, all of which measures approximately 10'-5" in height. While there have been various signs in the front yard historically, this NPS sign dates to approximately 2009. As a later installation associated with NPS management of the cultural landscape, the sign is not a contributing feature.

AIR-CONDITIONING UNIT IN REAR COURTYARD IN FRONT OF CARRIAGE HOUSE

An air-conditioning unit in the rear courtyard sits within the leg of northeast planter, against the southeastern wall of the Carriage House (*see Figure 107*). The A/C unit is screened by the Japanese yew, which limits visibility of the feature from the courtyard or Council House. The unit was present by 1993, as it is visible in drawings and photographs prepared by HABS. The air conditioning unit is non-contributing.



Figure 108: Mechanical equipment in the rear alley of the Council House.



Figure 109: Short metal pipe visible in center of photograph at base of stoop stairs.

MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT IN THE ALLEY (REAR ELL)

There is mechanical equipment located in the rear alley, between the Council House and the wall of the neighboring rowhouse to the southwest (see Figure 108). The large air-conditioning unit that serves the Council House is modern and is non-contributing.

METAL RAMP IN ALLEY (REAR ELL)

A metal ramp leads from the rear courtyard down into the below-grade rear alley on the southwestern side of the property (*see Figure 108, and refer to Figure 59 on page 142*). The ramp provides access to the mechanical equipment, storage area, and an entry to the basement. This metal ramp is a non-contributing small-scale feature of the cultural landscape.

SHORT METAL PIPE AT BASE OF FRONT STOOP

A metal gas pipe is extant beside the front stoop in the front yard of the Council House, within the narrow earthen panel. Measuring 1' tall, it projects up from the ground (*see Figure 109*). The date of installation is unknown, but the metal pipe is considered non-contributing as it does not relate in a significant way to the historic use and associations of the cultural landscape.

DRAINAGE FEATURES IN REAR COURTYARD

The rear courtyard includes round metal drainage features in both the main courtyard area and the sunken alley (*see Figure 110*). Likely added in 1989, when the current courtyard configuration was designed and installed, these features are non-contributing.

REMOVABLE/TEMPORARY ADDITIONS TO THE REAR COURTYARD FOR PEST MANAGEMENT

Temporary interventions have been installed to address pest management in the rear courtyard, including: wire mesh lining in the raised planter beds and fences; landscaping fabric laid within the planter beds; and decorative red lava rocks as infill in the planters (*see Figures 111 and 112*). These temporary features are modern and non-contributing.

LATTICE GATE AT ALLEY (REAR ELL)

At the access point to the rear alley, a wooden lattice gate is attached to the wall of the neighboring property southwest of the Council

House (*see Figure 113*). This lattice gate can be used to close off access to the rear alley. It is visible in 1993 HABS photographs, and likely dates to the installation of the lattice privacy fences along the southern property boundary in 1988/1989. This fence was installed after the second period of significance (1943-1966), and is non-contributing.

WOODEN RAIL TIES IN FRONT YARD

Wooden rail ties run along the front lawn panel at the Vermont Avenue N.W. sidewalk, in line with the fence. The rail ties are also located along the first section of the cultural landscape's primary walkway, stacked two rail ties high (*see Figure 114*). The date of their installation is unknown, although they do not appear to be visible in a 1963 photograph that depicts the front yard (refer to Figure 26 on page 86). Since the date of installation of the wooden rail ties is unknown, the contributing status of this feature is undetermined.

SMALL (CORRODED) METAL SQUARE AT FENCE IN FRONT LAWN

A small, corroded metal square, measuring approximately 6½" square, is embedded within the lawn panel in the front yard of the Council House near the front of the property (*see Figure 115*). The purpose and history of this feature are unknown.

EVALUATION

There is minimal information on the small-scale features present at the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS cultural landscape during the historic period, particularly with respect to the rear courtyard area. The majority of the extant small-scale features postdate the second period of significance and are considered non-contributing.

The only contributing small-scale features within the cultural landscape are: the cast-iron handrail, balusters, and newel posts at the front stoop; and the pedestal in the front yard. These features were in place during the second period of significance (1943-1966), if not earlier.

While the pedestal located in the front yard was present during the second period of significance (1943-1966), the urn that sits on the pedestal was added in 1979. Thus, while the pedestal is a contributing small-scale feature, the urn is considered non-contributing but compatible. Similarly, the NHS plaque on Council House front façade postdates the second period of significance (1943-1966), but is compatible.

The National Park Service Mary McLeod Bethune NHS sign, a modern addition to the front yard of the cultural landscape, does not contribute to the historic integrity of the cultural landscape. A short metal gas pipe at the base of the front stoop is also considered non-contributing. Small-scale features in the rear courtyard—including the mechanical equipment, drainage features, metal ramp, lattice gate, and temporary additions to the rear courtyard for pest management—were added after the second period of significance (1943-1966), and are non-contributing.

The significance of wooden rail ties is undetermined. Additionally, a small, corroded square of unknown origin is also undetermined.



Figure 110: Drainage features in rear courtyard.



Figure 111: Wire mesh along planter edge to deter rodents.



Figure 112: Landscaping fabric and lava rock, in addition to wire mesh covering a drainage feature, to deter rodents.



Figure 113: Lattice fence at rear alley in rear courtyard.



Figure 114: Rail ties are located around the front yard from a portion of the front walkway (visible to the right of photography) and along the length of where the front yard meets the sidewalk.



Figure 115: Corroded metal square of unknown purpose in front yard near sidewalk.


Rear Alley (Unnamed)
Carriage House
Council House
Lattice gate at alley



Cultural Landscape Report
Mary McLeod Bethune
Council House National Historic Site
Existing Conditions: Small-Scale Features

Weitzman School of Design
University of Pennsylvania

Urban Heritage Project | PennPraxis
Graduate Program in Historic Preservation
Weitzman School of Design
www.cultural-landscapes.org

SOURCES
1. Open Data DC, https://opendata.dc.gov/, accessed Sept 2022
2. Field Survey and Data Collection, 2022
3. Commonwealth of Virginia, DC GIS, Maxar, Microsoft (base imagery)

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LEGEND
- CLR Boundary
- Building
- Pedestal *[Contributing]*
- Urn *[Non-contributing, compatible]*
- Sign *[Non-contributing]*
- Metal Ramp *[Non-contributing]*
- Drainage Feature *[Non-contributing]*
- Pipe *[Non-contributing]*
- Lattice Gate *[Non-contributing]*
- Air-Conditioning Unit *[Non-contributing]*
- Metal Square *[Undetermined]*
- Rail Tie *[Undetermined]*

NOTES
1. All features shown in approximate scale and locations; small-scale features not to scale.

Drawing 9

SMALL-SCALE FEATURES - CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES				
Feature Description	*Date Established*	*Associated Period*		*Contributing Status*
		1875-1900	*1943-1966*	
Square pedestal	Pre-1943	Unknown	X	Contributing
Cast iron handrail, balusters, and newel posts at front entry stoop	ca. 1875	X	X	Contributing
Metal urn planter	1979			Non-contributing but compatible
NHS plaques on Council House front elevation	1982			Non-contributing but compatible
National Park Service Mary McLeod Bethune NHS sign in front yard	2009			Non-contributing
Air conditioning unit in rear courtyard in front of Carriage House	By 1993			Non-contributing
Mechanical equipment in the alley (rear ell)	Modern			Non-contributing
Metal ramp in alley (rear ell)	Modern			Non-contributing
Short metal gas pipe at base of front stoop	Unknown			Non-contributing
Drainage features in rear courtyard	Late 1980s			Non-contributing
Removable/temporary additions to the rear courtyard for pest management	Modern			Non-contributing
Lattice gate at alley (rear ell)	Modern			Non-contributing
Wooden rail ties in front yard	Unknown			Undetermined
Small (corroded) metal square in front lawn	Unknown			Undetermined

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PART 2: TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction 220

Framework for Treatment 221

Treatment Recommendations 228

Introduction

Building on the research, documentation, and evaluation conducted for Part 1 of this Cultural Landscape Report, this Part 2 presents a treatment strategy for long-term preservation and management of the cultural landscape at the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House.

According to National Park Service policy, the cultural landscape report serves as the primary supporting document guiding the treatment of a cultural landscape and is required before major interventions. Treatment is the collective set of actions taken within a cultural landscape, intended to ensure the protection and preservation of the resources and characteristics that contribute to its historic character. Treatment guidance may range from broad guidelines and principles to specific tasks. The overall goal of treatment is to provide a basis for the sound stewardship of the cultural landscape according to the National Park Service Cultural Resource Management Guidelines (1997) and The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (1996).

The treatment strategy for the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House is focused on managing significant landscape features and enhancing the interpretation of the site, based on its historic association with Mary McLeod Bethune and the National Council for Negro Women (NCNW). The treatment framework is grounded in the findings of the site historic and the analysis and evaluation chapters of this report. The recommendations were developed in collaboration with park staff and resource specialists, and were refined based on a treatment workshop convened virtually in December 2022.

Framework for Treatment

Enabling Legislation, Mission, and Policies

On October 15, 1982, under Public Law 97-329 (96 Stat. 1615), Congress designated the property as the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site. Congressional designation as a National Historic Site administratively lists a property in the National Register. (Refer to the National Register of Historic Places Summary on pages 50-51 for more on this legislative history.)

The site is also a contributing resource to both the Logan Circle National Register Historic District and the Greater Fourteenth Street National Register Historic District. As such, the site is subject to the statutes and provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which stipulates how historic resource should be identified, documented, evaluated, and managed. According to the law, the National Park Service assumes the responsibility for the preservation of the historic properties within its jurisdiction, which includes the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House. This includes the treatment of contributing buildings and structures, vegetation, circulation, small-scale features, and other significant landscape characteristics identified in the National Register and cultural landscape documentation. The NPS must take into the consideration the historic value of these resources when undertaking any actions that may affect the resources, and must comply with The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.[1]

Treatment for the cultural landscape is also subject to the National Park Service Organic Act (1916),which established the National Park Service and defines its purpose "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and by such a means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."[2]

Additional guidance shaping treatment choices is included within the National Park Service Management Policies (2006), Director's Order #28, Cultural Resource Management, and National Park Service Resources Management Guidelines (NPS-28). NPS-28 provides guidance on management and landscape preservation, including biotic systems, which are defined as plant and animal communities associated with human settlement and use. NPS-28 directs management of specimen vegetation—such as trees, shrubs, and orchards—to ensure health and vigor and, if appropriate, provide for propagation of the next generation, especially for rare plants or those unavailable in commerce. For natural systems, NPS-28 calls for managing landscape patterns to allow for natural dynamics. Exotic plant species, which are often found in cultural landscapes, should be monitored and controlled to avoid spreading and disrupting adjacent natural plant communities. In addition to biotic systems, NPS-28 states that historic circulation features are to be rehabilitated to accommodate health and safety codes in ways that minimize impact on historic character.

The provisions of Public Law 102-211 (105 Stat. 1652), December 11, 1991, authorized the National Park Service to acquire and manage the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site as park of the national park system. The site was acquired by the National Park Service in 1994, and in 1995, staff were hired to manage the site. The site was opened to the public as a national park system site on October 1, 1995.

1. 16 USC Sec. 470 (October 15, 1966).

2. 16 USC Sec. 1—4 (August 25, 1916) and Sec. 403 (May 22,1926).

Planning Documents

The National Park Service expresses its priorities and goals for the management of its resources through its publicly reviewed planning documents, including General Management Plans, Master Plans, Development Plans, and Foundation Documents. These planning documents articulate the park's purpose and fundamental resources, establish long-term goals and strategies, and provide opportunities for public review and input. These documents provide umbrella guidance under which the treatment recommendations of the Cultural Landscape Report are developed.

The most recent General Management Plan for the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House was developed in 2000, in concert with an Environmental Assessment. That report considered four alternatives for managing the site for the public:

1. Alternative 1 (No Action) presents what would happen under a continuation of current management trends, and provides a basis for comparing the other alternatives;

2. Alternative 2 (Preferred Alternative) expands interpretation of the house and the life of Bethune and the archives. It recommended the purchase and rehabilitation of an adjacent rowhouse to provide space for orientation, restrooms, and offices.

3. Alternative 3 expands interpretation to those people wanting longer, more in-depth information on the site and expands outreach programs to accommodate wider audiences. This alternative proposed the purchase or lease of additional nearby space for offices, meetings, and orientation.

4. Alternative 4 emphasizes interpretation of the life and legacy of Mary McLeod Bethune. This alternative proposes building a larger structure to replace the carriage house and moving the archives offsite to a leased space.[3]

As this plan was developed over 20 years ago, some proposed actions have been completed (namely, moving the archives offsite to the Museum Resource Center). Others, including actions associated with the Preferred Alternative, remain unresolved.

The site also operates according to the guidance of a Foundation Document developed in 2016. A foundation document serves as the underlying guidance for all management and planning decisions in a unit of the national park system. It describes the core mission of the park unit by identifying the unit's purpose, significance, fundamental and important resources and values, interpretive themes, assessment of planning and data needs, special mandates and administrative commitments, and the unit's setting in the regional context. The Foundation Document for the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House identifies the site's purpose as follows:

> Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site preserves and interprets the life, legacy, and home of Mary McLeod Bethune and her pioneering work in establishing the National Council of Negro Women. The site also preserves and manages the National Archives for Black Women's History, a living repository that allows for the continued interpretation of the history and influence of African American women in America.

This purpose is expressed not only by the Council House and the Carriage House, but by the surrounding cultural landscape that links the significance of this site with its context in Washington, D.C. This Cultural Landscape Report thus addresses the park's data needs (with respect to historic research, analysis and evaluation, and treatment recommendations) and serves to guide future management of the site according to the guidance delineated in the Foundation Document.

Treatment Planning + Workshop

The treatment recommendations presented in this CLR were developed in collaboration with NPS officials. The project team developed the treatment framework in Fall 2022—including a SWOT

3. Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site, *Final General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 2000), iii.

(Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, treatment principles and assumptions, and preliminary recommendations—and presented it to park staff in a treatment workshop convened virtually in December 2022. Based on the feedback from that workshop, the project team revised and refined the final recommendations.

Principles + Assumptions

The treatment recommendations presented in this Cultural Landscape Report are centered on the cultural landscape's role as a National Historic Site, not on its role in the streetscape. In other words, the site's treatment decisions should not conform to neighborhood fabric without a grounding in the evaluation of historic landscape features and their significance.

Moreover, the treatment and management of the landscape (including both the front yard's character area and the rear character area) should align with the treatment and management of the buildings/ structures.

However, these treatment recommendations also recognize that the front yard and the rear courtyard represent different character areas that demand their own treatment approaches, based on their divergent conditions and the disparities in their historic functions and varying documentation of their evolution. Thus, the treatment recommendations are organized according to each character area, with additional recommendations for sitewide treatments and policies.

Finally, the treatment recommendations presume that the site will remain open for ongoing public visitation and use, under the stewardship of the National Park Service. As part of that stewardship, the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site Advisory Commission should be involved, with a consulting role in treatment decision-making.

Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation

The Secretary of the Interior is responsible for establishing professional standards on the preservation of cultural resources listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, revised in 1992, were codified as 36 CFR Part 68 in the 12 July 1995 Federal Register (Vol. 60, No. 133). The standards define four primary treatment approaches according to preservation goals: preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. Preservation standards require retention of the greatest amount of historic fabric, including the landscape's historic form, features, and details as they have evolved over time. Rehabilitation standards acknowledge the need to alter or add to a cultural landscape to meet continuing or new uses while retaining the landscape's historic character. Restoration standards allow for the depiction of a landscape at a particular time in its history by preserving materials from the period of significance and removing materials from later periods. Reconstruction standards establish a framework for re-creating a vanished or demolished landscape with new materials, primarily for interpretive purposes.

At Mary McLeod Bethune Council House, rehabilitation is the recommended treatment for the cultural landscape because it provides the flexibility needed to preserve the resources and enhance the historic character of the site, while accommodating current conditions and expected futures, and meeting the objectives outlined in the treatment framework. Rehabilitation allows for the careful management of historic vegetation, including the replacement of plantings lost to natural die-off and other causes, and the repair and in-kind replacement of historic circulation features based on water damage due to extreme weather events and climate change. It also allows park managers to re-establish the historic character of vegetation, small-scale features, and other landscape features, according to the historic conditions established during the period of significance and the features' associations with Mary McLeod Bethune and the NCNW.

Rehabilitation also allows for adaptation within each character area (at the front and rear of the site) to accommodate modern needs for visitation and interpretation—such as updating signage, addressing accessibility, and adapting the form and use of the rear courtyard area.

According to *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties,* rehabilitation treatment actions must conform to the following standards:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

The recommended primary treatment of rehabilitation applies to each character area within the cultural landscape, describing an overall approach to the management of the cultural resources. Under the umbrella of rehabilitation, treatment of different of different areas of the landscape or of individual features may include any of the four treatment approaches (preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and reconstruction), depending on historic integrity, interpretation, natural resource management, and park operations.[4]

Treatment Reference Date

The treatment reference date for the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House is 1966. This cultural landscape has two periods of significance: 1875-1900, when the site was developed as part of a block of rowhouses and streetscape in close proximity to Logan Circle; and 1943-1966, a period that begins with Bethune and the NCNW purchasing the property to serve as the Council headquarters, and ends when the Council relocated its operations due to a fire in the house. The treatment reference date is based on the cultural landscape conditions that existed at the end of the period of significance.

4. Language adapted from The Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, National Park Service.

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis (assessing Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats) is a strategic planning tool that helps identify key internal (strengths / weaknesses) and external (opportunities / threats) influences for a specific park or system of parks. It provides the space for NPS representatives and their partners to evaluate current and future contexts for park planning. The analysis below was completed in 2022 by the authors of this CLR. (The bullet points within each quadrant of the diagram are not arranged in priority order.)

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
• NPS stewardship • Overall integrity of the front yard • Council House has been restored and retains integrity • Manageable scale of the landscape • Robust archives • Institutional memory of NPS staff • Continued existence of the Council • Public access (posted open hours) • Location in walkable neighborhood/ accessible via public transportation • Relative stability re: climate change flooding	• Advisory Commission as partners • Renewed recognition of Bethune's history and significance • Connection to Lincoln Park statue and statue in the U.S. Capitol • Relationship with Council • Staffing/associational ties to other NPS sites (e.g. Carter G. Woodson House) • Exhibit connections to Smithsonian African American Museum • High tolerance for change/new uses in rear courtyard • Some tolerance for change in front yard • Coordination with adjacent property owners • Carriage House as useable space
WEAKNESSES	**THREATS**
• Under-documentation of historic conditions in rear courtyard • Conditions issues (e.g. bio-growth, water infiltration, etc.) • Distance to off-site archives • Pest issues (proximity to food establishments) • Lack of visitor infrastructure (e.g. parking) • Main entrance not accessible • No current use for Carriage House • Underutilized rear courtyard • Not open full-time • Signage/identity issues as public site	• Potential disputes with neighbors (institutional site with residential neighbors) • Climate change: extreme weather's impacts on building fabric, plantings, water issues, etc. • More pests


Rear Alley (Unnamed)
Carriage House
Council House
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Cultural Landscape Report
Mary McLeod Bethune
Council House National Historic Site
Treatment Recommendations

Weitzman School of Design
University of Pennsylvania

Urban Heritage Project
Graduate Program in Historic Preservation /
PennPraxis, Weitzman School of Design
www.cultural-landscapes.org

SOURCES
1. Open Data DC, https://opendata.dc.gov/, accessed Sept 2022
2. Field Survey and Data Collection, 2022
3. Commonwealth of Virginia, DC GIS, Maxar, Microsoft (base imagery)

DRAWN BY
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University of Pennsylvania
ArcGIS Pro, Adobe Illustrator, 2022

LEGEND (by characteristic)
- CLR Boundary
- Building *[Contributing]*
- Front Fence and Gate *[Contributing]*
- Iron Gate (Structure) *[Contributing]*
- Planter *[Non-contributing]*
- Rear Courtyard Fence *[Non-contributing]*
- Road
- Walk *[see drawing for contributing status]*
- Rear Courtyard *[Non-contributing]*
- Front Yard Lawn Panel *[Contributing]*
- Earthen Strip *[Contributing]*
- Urn plantings *[Non-contributing]*
- Yew *[Non-contributing]*
- Rear Courtyard Plantings (various) *[Non-contributing]*
- Pedestal *[Contributing]*
- Sign *[Non-contributing]*
- Metal Ramp *[Non-contributing]*
- Drainage Feature *[Non-contributing]*
- Pipe *[Non-contributing]*
- Lattice Gate *[Non-contributing]*
- Air-Conditioning Unit *[Non-contributing]*
- Metal Square *[Undetermined]*
- Rail Tie *[Undetermined]*

NOTES
1. All features shown in approximate scale and locations; small-scale features not to scale.

Drawing 10

Treatment Recommendations

Front Character Area

1 URN + PEDESTAL

- The urn was not present during the 1943-1966 period of significance. Thus, NPS should remove the non-historic urn and relocate off-site (e.g. to storage).
- While awaiting the urn's removal, NPS should avoid additional plantings within the urn.
- Use the pedestal as an interpretive opportunity on public view: work with the Advisory Commission and artists to design temporary installation(s) that respond to Bethune's (and others') use of the pedestal for public events and speeches.



Figure 116: Urn in front yard of Council House.

2 VEGETATION

- The area in front of the house should be maintained as open space, prioritizing a lawn-like condition (in keeping with appropriate climate change policies) consistent with the historic conditions and the historic use as a gathering space for education and interpretation.
  - Maintain the existing grass, or replace with low-profile native grasses.
- If NPS chooses to maintain additional annual/perennial or shrub plantings, they should be confined to the edges of the front character area, along the fences (including within the earthen strip on the north side of the site). Such plantings should:
  - Defer to the historic fences, not exceeding the height of the fence;
  - Prioritize native species that can be easily maintained, are rodent resistant, and are climate resilient and/or pollinator-friendly.
  - Consider adding an ornamental planting of particular symbolic value resonating with Bethune.
    - NOTE: In the statue installed in the U.S. Congress' National Statuary Hall in July 2022, Bethune's left hand holds a single black velvet rose. According to the Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune Statuary Project, the black velvet rose "symbolizes her belief that 'loving thy neighbor' means interracial, inter-religious and international brotherhood." Although there is no confirmation that this vegetation was planted within the cultural landscape, Bethune was long associated with the black rose, which she first saw upon visiting Europe in 1927. Bethune believed the flower was as a symbol of unity, and "black roses" was a term of endearment she used for her students at Bethune-Cookman University.
    - However, black roses can grow to 3-6



Figure 117: Lawn panel in front of the Council House.



Figure 118: Vines present along southwest fence in front yard.

feet in height; as this would exceed the height of the fence, this particular species may be more appropriate in the rear character area (see below).

- The addition of trees would be inappropriate within the front character area.



Figure 119: Narrow earthen strip along northeast fence in front yard.

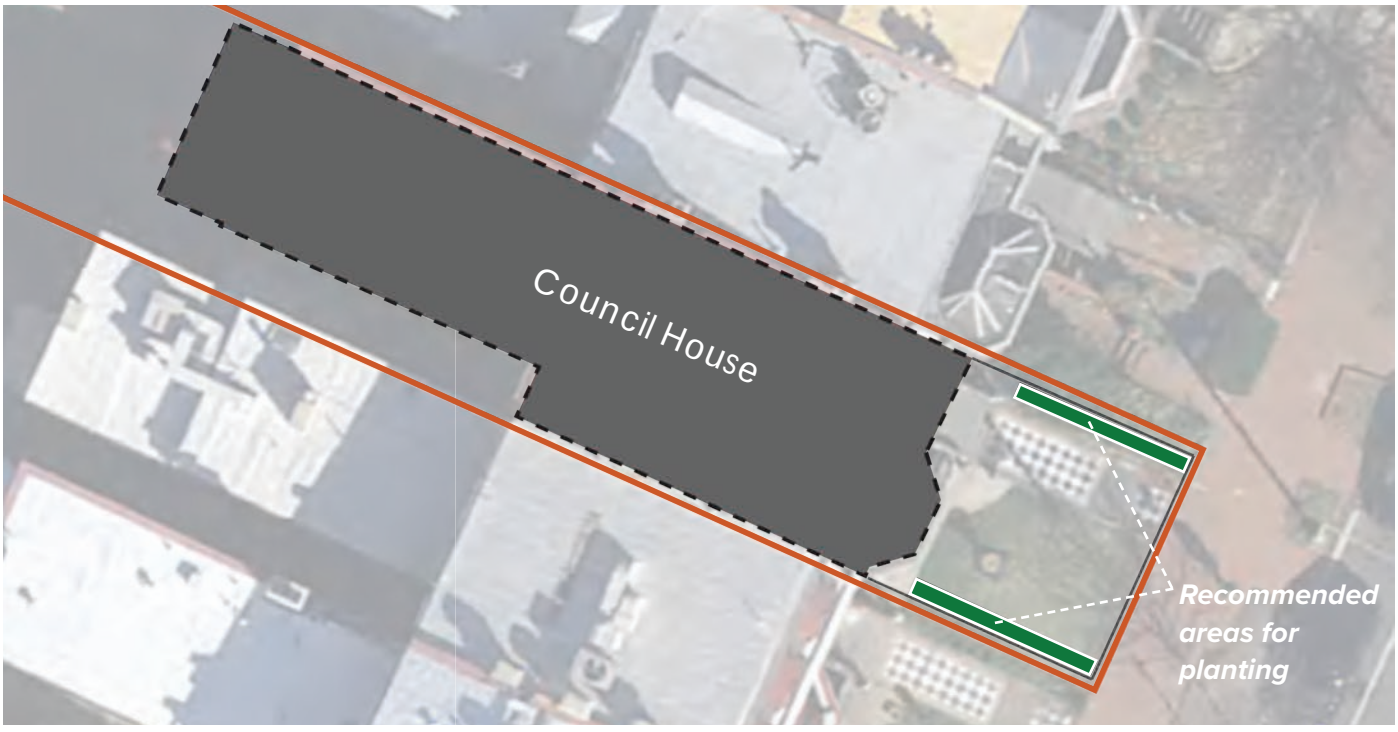




Figure 120: Iron fence between front yard lawn and sidewalk.

3 IRON FENCES

- Retain and preserve the historic fences in-kind and in-situ.
- Clean fence as needed, or at a minimum on an annual basis. Work should be completed under the guidance of the regional architectural conservator.
- Monitor fence for damage annually. If damaged or missing, iron fence should be replicated according to historic design.

4 SIGNAGE

- To make it clear that the site is open to visitors, add removable panels hanging from the bottom of the existing sign to read “Open to the Public”/ “Closed” (to be changed daily) and/or posted public hours. Sign should conform to the Harpers Ferry Center's sign standards.

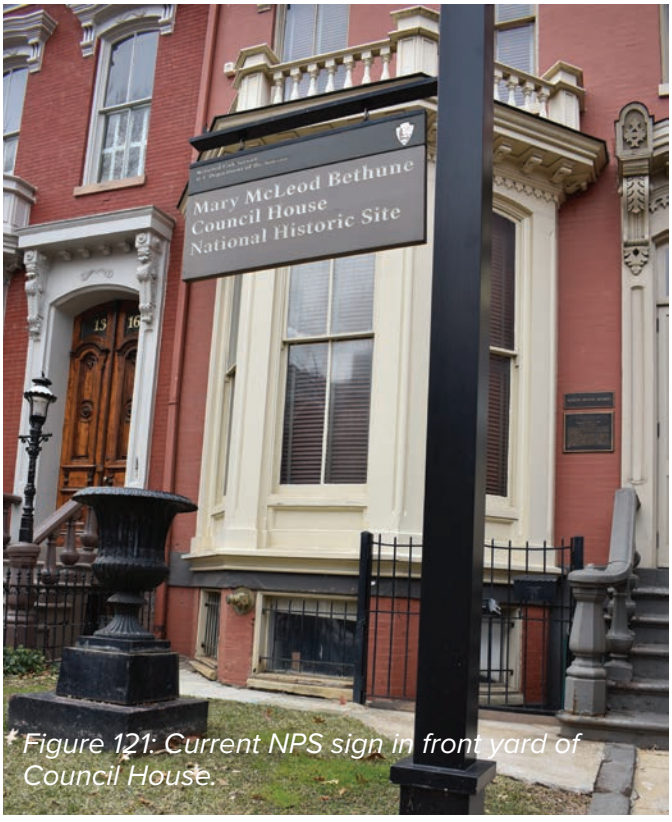


Figure 121: Current NPS sign in front yard of Council House.



Figure 122: Detail of front walkway, featuring black and white marble pavers and deterioration of concrete border and brownstone curbing.

5 FRONT WALK

- Assess and treat weathering/cracking and inappropriate material repairs, including cement patches and skim coating (per National Capital Region [NCR] conditions report, 10/7/22; see appendix.) All work should be completed under the guidance of the regional architectural conservator.

6 COUNCIL HOUSE EXTERIOR (FRONT ELEVATION)

- Address conditions issues (water damage, brownstone deterioration, rotted wood doorframes, etc.), identified in NCR report, 10/7/22. All work should be completed under the guidance of the regional architectural conservator.

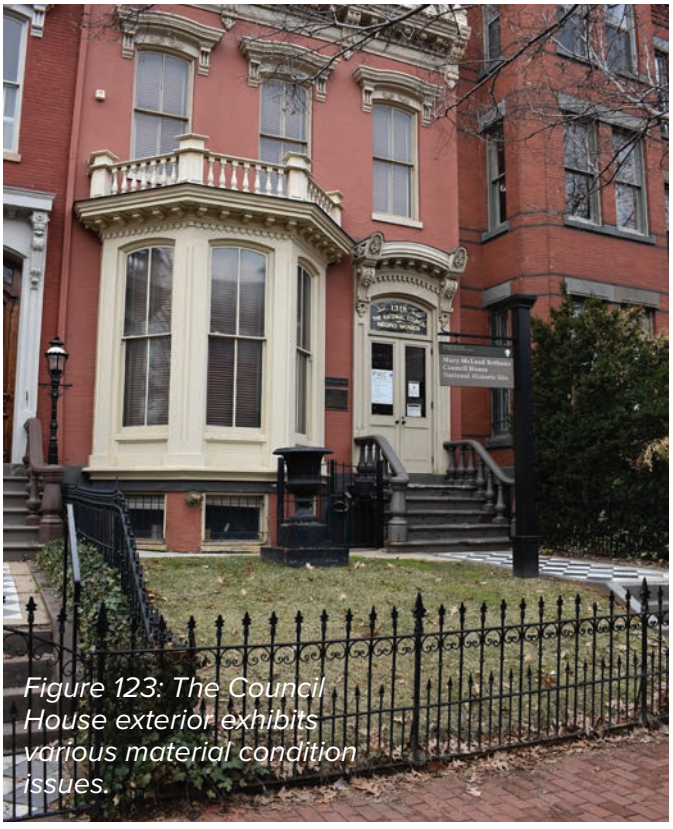


Figure 123: The Council House exterior exhibits various material condition issues.



Figure 124: Front stoop and balustrade. Note the flaking paint and deterioration of brownstone steps and cast iron balustrade.

7 STOOP + BALUSTRADE

- Engage a skilled metals conservator to assess and treat the stoop and balustrade, including removing the existing paint and refinishing with appropriate primer and enamel paint (per NCR report, 10/7/22). Condition issues/treatments identified in the NCR report include:
  - The brownstone stairs and cast-iron balustrade exhibit weathering, damage, and flaking paint due to water runoff, abrasion from traffic, and likely from salting;
  - Where the finishes are failing on the cast-iron, the iron is visible and rusting;
  - Where there is water runoff, the brownstone is visible and eroded;
  - Paint flaking is likely causing moisture retention issues;
  - All brownstone elements should be consolidated, and repairs made with a more appropriate masonry patching material; and
  - The cast iron balustrade should be stripped of paint and the metal structure should be inspected for extensive deterioration and treated where needed; any rust should be removed and repainted with a metal-appropriate enamel paint.



Figure 125: Metal gate in front of basement stairway.

8 BASEMENT STAIR GATE

- The non-historic stair gate can be retained and maintained, as it does not detract from the overall integrity of the cultural landscape. Repair according to recommendations in the NCR report, 10/7/22.

Rear Character Area

This character area has a higher tolerance for change than the front yard, given that it saw large-scale alterations in the 1980s. (Research for this CLR has not been able to confirm the historic conditions that pre-existed those alterations.) However, existing features should not be adapted and/or replaced unless:

- Adaptation is necessary to preserve the Council House, Carriage House, or the relationship between the buildings; and/or
- There is (newfound) archival evidence of the historic conditions during the period of significance associated with Bethune/NCNW.

If, at a later date, NPS seeks to rehabilitate the cultural landscape for physical accessibility, the rear courtyard could offer access on a route from the rear alleyway through the Carriage House. (The building would likely require some alteration to doors and the interior to make this route fully accessible.) The rear courtyard itself would require minimal rehabilitation for physical accessibility. However, accessible entry to the Council House from the rear courtyard presents a challenge, as the exterior Council House stoop and the interior stairs are not accessible at present.



Figure 126: Brick planter along southwest property line in rear courtyard.

9 PLANTERS

- Retain and preserve the existing structures.



Figure 127: Brick planter along northeast property line in rear courtyard.

10 PLANTINGS

- Maintain a robust palette of annual/perennial and shrub plantings within the planters. Prioritize species that:
  - Are native to the region, e.g.:
    - Landscaping with Native Plants (Maryland Native Plant Society), https://www.mdflora.org/ resources/ Publications/Gardeners Guidelines/ Landscaping-Natives.pdf
    - Native Plants for Northern Virginia, https://www.plantnovanatives.org/_files/ ugd/9c55f5_1d2d3e0424f0420dacbfc78a48acfb41.pdf
    - Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Landscaping (Chesapeake Bay Watershed), https://dnr.maryland.gov/criticalarea/ Documents/ chesapeakenatives.pdf
  - Frame the courtyard's open space;
  - Climb the non-historic fences, to create a screening effect;
  - Deter pests (as necessary);
  - Require minimal maintenance; and/or
  - Demonstrate climate resilience.
- Plant selection must be a joint decision between NCR and NACE.
- Invasive plants (https://www.invasive.org/alien/pubs/midatlantic/midatlantic.pdf) should not be introduced.

11 PAVERS (MARBLE AND BRICK)

- Retain and preserve the existing materials; if damaged, replace in-kind. All work should be completed under the guidance of the regional architectural conservator.



Figure 128: Black and white marble pavers in rear courtyard.

12 PESTS

- Continue to treat for pest prevention. If/when issue is mitigated, remove extraneous features (e.g. lava rock), if possible.



Figure 129: Wood fence on northeast side of rear courtyard.



Figure 130: Wood lattice fence on southwest side of rear courtyard.

13 FENCES

- Retain the existing structures. Climbing vegetation may be planted/reintroduced to conceal these structures (see “Plantings” above).

14 COUNCIL HOUSE EXTERIOR (REAR ELEVATION)

- In consultation with the regional architectural conservator, remove biogrowth on exterior wall(s) as it occurs.
- Remove excess debris/storage from rear ell.

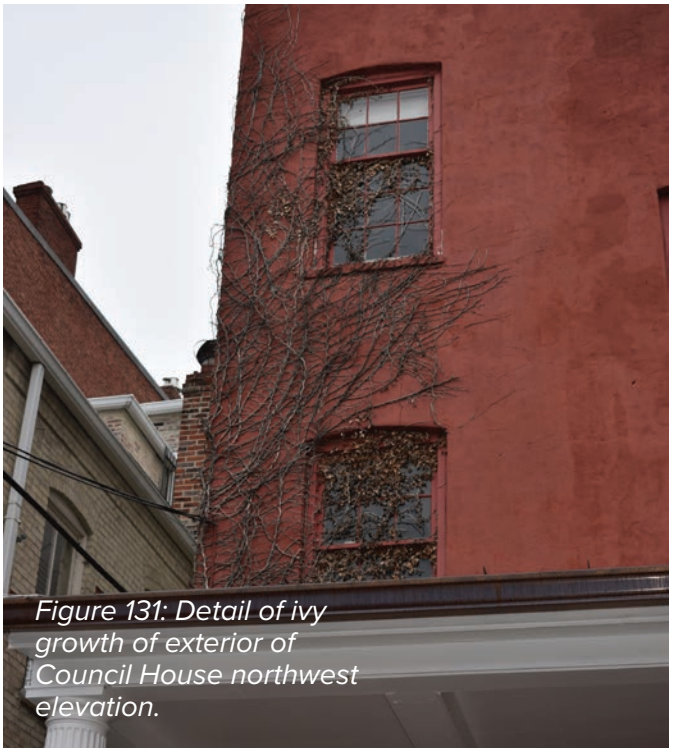


Figure 131: Detail of ivy growth of exterior of Council House northwest elevation.



Figure 132: Exterior of Council House northwest elevation.



Figure 133: Carriage House entrance from the rear courtyard.

15 CARRIAGE HOUSE EXTERIOR (FRONT AND REAR ELEVATIONS)

- In consultation with the regional architectural conservator, remove biogrowth on exterior wall(s) as it occurs.
- Remove ivy growing on the rear of house. Ivy should be cut at the base in spring and removed. Work with the regional architectural conservator to determine the appropriate course of action to address impacts to the mortar.
- Remove graffiti as it occurs.



Figure 134: Exterior of Carriage House from the rear alley showing graffiti and ivy growth on building exterior.

16 MECHANICAL SYSTEMS

- For any future mechanical system upgrades, confine new equipment to the rear ell (for Council House mechanicals) or conceal with plantings (for Carriage House mechanicals).

Sitewide

ACCESSIBILITY

Several grade changes and staircases (both inside and outside the buildings) preclude the site from being fully physically accessible (and new lifts or elevators are structurally infeasible within the historic footprint of the Council House). Site managers have therefore prioritized the digital experience of the site, creating a sophisticated virtual tour at https://www.nps.gov/features/mamc/mamc-web-app/index.html. Thus, our treatment recommendations did not consider further adaptation of the cultural landscape to enhance physical accessibility.

- If future use of the courtyard area for special events, etc. requires new solutions for physical access, work with a historical architect to explore new design solutions to improve access via the Carriage House.

RAINWATER DRAINAGE

- Water ponding is a longstanding issue at the site, particularly in the rear courtyard area. Consult with an engineer to determine if the drains are appropriately sized and placed for this site, to determine the root causes of the issue and identify mitigating solutions.

Policies

CLIMATE CHANGE

Although climate change affects the resources inventoried for this CLR, and climate change resilience is a strong priority that underpins these treatment recommendations, there has not been a study on the effects of climate change on cultural resources at this historic site. Any NACE and NCRO climate studies related to this area of Washington, D.C. should include the cultural landscape as they consider the impacts of climate change.

COUNCIL + ARCHIVES

- The NCNW and the Advisory Commission should maintain a consultative role in decision-making related to the site's archives, and should be actively engaged in the use of those archives for on-site and virtual interpretation.

ADVISORY COMMISSION

- The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site Advisory Commission should maintain a consultative role and be actively engaged in treatment decision-making.

NEIGHBORING PROPERTIES

- NPS officials should convene a stewardship consultation with owners of adjacent properties to discuss shared climate change risk, proactive pest management, and other shared concerns (e.g. invasive vine removal). Such consultation should happen on a recurring basis.

Areas for Further Research + Documentation

- Complete the National Register nomination (in draft form, as of spring 2023).
- If any documentation emerges related to the rear courtyard and its conditions pre-1980s rehabilitation, update this CLR and other documents to reflect this new information.

Maintenance Planning

To guide the ongoing maintenance of cultural landscape features, this framework for cyclical maintenance was developed in consultation with (and at the request of) NPS officials and site managers.

IMPORTANT SAFETY PRECAUTIONS AND BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- When work is scheduled to be done by a contractor, the work should be supervised by NPS official(s) who are experienced in cultural landscape management and the content of this CLR, to ensure best practices with respect to significant features and historic design intent.
- The work plan can be adjusted according to site conditions and priorities.
- Keep records and document by photograph the landscape over the seasons, to maintain a robust archive of historic site conditions.

GENERAL PLANTING GUIDELINES

- All new plantings should be selected and introduced according to best management practices, as specified by NPS and/or the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation.
- Replacement plantings may be introduced, according to the guidance presented elsewhere in this CLR, but please consult the cultural resource compliance official to ensure required documentation and compliance activities are completed before any replacement plantings are installed.

FRONT CHARACTER AREA: VEGETATION				
TASK	**WINTER**	**SPRING**	**SUMMER**	**FALL**
Plan future work for the year ahead.	X			
Inspect turf in front yard for holes, ruts, erosion, drainage problems, wilting, browning, mower damage, and soil compaction.		X	X	X
Mow and maintain turf.		X	X	X
Water turf.		X	X	X
Fertilize turf.		X		
Maintain other plantings.	Tasks will vary based on planting palette selected by NPS. (See pages 224-25.)			
FRONT CHARACTER AREA: CIRCULATION				
TASK	**WINTER**	**SPRING**	**SUMMER**	**FALL**
Inspect front walkways, removing sticks, litter, and other debris.	X	X	X	X
FRONT CHARACTER AREA: DRAINAGE				
TASK	**WINTER**	**SPRING**	**SUMMER**	**FALL**
Remove snow and ice after storms.	X			
Monitor and clear stormwater drains.	X	X	X	X
FRONT CHARACTER AREA: PEST MANAGEMENT				
TASK	**WINTER**	**SPRING**	**SUMMER**	**FALL**
Perform pest management activities associated with rodent prevention.	X	X	X	X

REAR CHARACTER AREA: VEGETATION				
TASK	**WINTER**	**SPRING**	**SUMMER**	**FALL**
Prepare for spring plantings in rear courtyard garden beds.	X			
Monitor condition of shrubs and plantings, inspect for any health issues, and prune as needed.			X	X
Plant any new shrubs and flowers (annuals).		X		
Weed planting beds and spot-water as needed.		X	X	X
Remove vines from building walls.			X	X
REAR CHARACTER AREA: DRAINAGE				
TASK	**WINTER**	**SPRING**	**SUMMER**	**FALL**
Remove snow and ice after storms.	X			
Monitor and clear stormwater drains.	X	X	X	X
REAR CHARACTER AREA: PEST MANAGEMENT				
TASK	**WINTER**	**SPRING**	**SUMMER**	**FALL**
Perform pest management activities associated with rodent prevention.	X	X	X	X
Monitor rodent activity.	X	X	X	X
Check the bases of the Council House and Carriage House for mice holes and seal any with steel wool.	X			X
REAR CHARACTER AREA: OTHER				
TASK	**WINTER**	**SPRING**	**SUMMER**	**FALL**
Inspect wood fences in rear courtyard for deterioration, cracks, water damage, leaning, collapsed, and loose parts.	X	X	X	X
Clean biological growth from walls.				X

APPENDIX

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Interior Region 1-National Capital Region
Regional Preservation Serviced Program
1100 Ohio Drive, SW
Washington, DC 20242

10-7-22

To: Tara Morrison, Superintendent, NACE
Michael Commisso, Deputy Superintendent, NACE
Daniel Weldon, Cultural Resources Program Manager, NACE

From: Courtney Magill, Architectural Conservator, Preservation Services Program, NCR
Julie McGilvray, Preservation Services Program Manager/Regional Historical Landscape Architect, NCR

Subject: Inspection of Exterior Path and Stair of Mary McLeod Bethune House, 1318 Vermont Ave

Overview summary:
Courtney Magill, NCR Architectural Conservator, visited the Mary McLeod Bethune House on April 4, 2022 to assess the condition of the front exterior stair and pathway leading to the main entrance of the house and provide guidance on conservation of these features to inform a potential repair and rehabilitation project.

Project Description:
(associated figures begin on page 8)

The path leading up to the front entrance of the house from the wrought iron gate consists of an entry pavement, 4-riser masonry stair, a long landing, and a second 5-riser masonry stair with a landing that is tied into the entrance area of the house (Figure 1). These entrance features consist of a mixture of materials including black and white marble tiles, brownstone (an industry term for brown sandstone), and concrete with a small aggregate finish. The entry pavement and long landing are composed of a central panel with diamond checkerboard pattern of alternating black and white marble tiles bordered by small aggregate concrete and further surrounded by brownstone curbing (Figure 2). The lower stairs rising from the entry pavement up the grade of the property are composed of brownstone masonry stairs with brownstone curbing on both sides (Figure 3). The upper stairs leading up to the entrance of the house are composed of brownstone masonry stairs with brick support structure underneath the risers and a large single slab of brownstone forming the upper landing; the stairs are flanked by two balustrades of cast-iron (Figure 4). Behind a wrought iron gate, a small curving staircase to the south of the upper staircase leads down to a basement entryway directly underneath the main door; it is composed of brick and bluestone (an industry term for a fine grey limestone or sandstone) masonry (Figure 5).

Upper Stairs

All of the extant brownstone of both the staircases and the curbing has been painted a light to medium cool grey. This paint also extends to the cast-iron elements on the upper staircase and the brownstone trim on the lower part of the façade. Brownstone, while being a popular building material that was heavily used in the American Northeast due to its ease of quarrying and carving, is incredibly susceptible to weathering and damage over time because of its relative softness and bedding planes. The cementation between the grains of quartz and other minerals is easily weathered away and weak points between the bedding planes of the sedimentary stone cause spalling of large areas of the material. It is for this reason that many homeowners have chosen to skim coat or paint their brownstone elements to protect them from water erosion, as has occurred here at MAMC. The paint itself is in bad condition and is flaking in many areas due to weather, abrasion from traffic, and likely salting. In many areas the underlying brownstone and the patching materials used to repair spalls are visible (Figures 6 and 7). The balustrades have a fairly thick coating of paint with evidence of many previous layers notable due to uneven bumps on the surfaces, indicating that previous coating campaigns were not removed or sanded down before application of new paint (Figure 8). Many areas of the finishes on the cast-iron are failing in the form of cracking with a few impact damage points, exposing the iron underneath to weather and causing it to rust (Figures 9 and 10).

The main stone stairs of the upper staircase are all single blocks of brownstone, and, when descending the side staircase to the basement level, it is apparent that the landing consists of a single large stone extending from the doorway to rest on the stair tread and bricked support structure below. At the areas on either side of the landing where water appears to run off and drip down below, the brownstone is heavily eroded, and it is quite friable. This condition has been exacerbated by the thick coating of what appears to be a latex or acrylic paint, as the paint on the stairway is likely causing moisture retention issues with the stone. One particularly damaged area at the south intersection of the landing with the facade contains a large hole that appears to have been partially filled with brick and lined with cement as a quick repair in the past (Figure 11). Water appears to have blown out the repair material and the erosion pattern under the stone suggests extensive water dripping across the stone surface and material loss of many inches over time. This deterioration pattern is also echoed on the north side of the stair (Figures 12 and 13). Additionally, the thick paint layers in this area have begun to curl outward and are the only component attaching a few smaller fragments of the stone to the landing stone still (Figure 12). The small ledge above the basement door and below the brownstone slab holds a pile of eroded stone dust, this is from the stone breakdown, especially underneath the left side of the doorway (Figure 14). It is likely that the landing is so heavily damaged both due to the accumulation/lack of water shedding in this area and to winter salting. The right side of the house lacks a downspout so if the gutter hidden in the wooden cornice overflows, water could be running down the façade. Additionally, the slope of the landing could be leading water into the joint with the building. This issue needs to be investigated and arrested soon or the integrity of the stone landing could be at risk and would become a safety hazard.

Both sets of stairs have been extensively repaired with fills and skim coats of a Portland cement mixture in the past; these patches have been painted over to disguise the color differentiation (Figure 6). Is an unknown the extent to which concrete has been applied to the surface of the stone except in areas where the paint has peeled off. Further investigation should be undertaken before evaluating rehabilitation costs. The concrete skim coat has also been applied to the brown stone curbing as well as the lower side of stairs in areas, though it does appear to be less extensive here (Figure 7). The cement application is especially notable across the entire

top landing by the doorway, but also it appears to have been used to reshape the nosing of the treads on the upper staircase and sharpen the corners of the bottom stairs as well (Figures 15). Additionally, Portland cement has been used to repoint the joints of the staircases and has begun to fail in areas (Figure 16). Portland cement is an incompatible repair material for brownstone in texture, porosity, hardness, and color and should not have been used for these repairs. In being harder than the surrounding stone, the brownstone has become the sacrificial element as the stairs deteriorate, causing further loss of this original material.

Upper Stair Support

The side stairs that wind down to the basement level appear to be constructed from bluestone slabs on a brick support structure, with the top stair being brownstone likely due to visibility of this stair from the street (Figure 5). The supporting structure under the upper staircase visible from the basement level consists of red brick (Figure 17). Access to this area was blocked off by an iron gate, but a few condition issues were still noted from outside of the gate. The brick is also showing signs of water damage and appears to have been painted a reddish brown in the past (likely the same color that the brick façade is currently painted). The paint here is peeling heavily, especially in the center. The brick wall is also heavily coated with crystallized salts both on top of and underneath the paint, likely due to runoff and penetration from salting the staircase above. The visible pointing is tan and mostly out of reach due to the gate, but visually appears stable in areas and eroding in the others. At this time the area is dry, but the patterns of deterioration along with the sandbags in the doorway under the stairs and the rusting bolt of the embedded gate implies that this area receives a lot of run off. There is a drain at the bottom of the stairwell, but it is unknown how well it functions.

Cast Iron Railing

The railing is showing signs of rusting through the thick coating, especially in areas where water gathers such as at the baluster and post bases, creases and turns in the railing, on the flat surfaces of the post tops, and underneath the lip of the railing (Figures 8, 9, 18). In many areas where the paint has begun to come off, rusting and deterioration of the metal surface was noted. There is cracking of the finishes across the surfaces of the railings where exposure to sunlight is greatest. The railing appears to have been painted many times as it has an uneven coating thickness in areas and large, thick drips are visible at overhangs in some places (Figure 19). Any fine detailing has been largely obscured at this point. Additionally, raised bumps across the surfaces indicate that when this railing was painted in the past, previous paint layers were not stripped down to metal before painting (Figure 20). In areas where the paint is peeling off, a layer of brick red, similar to the color of the façade is noted, underneath that it appears to be the same color as the stairs were initially painted: a medium cool brown to likely imitate the brownstone. It is unknown whether the original paint on the cast iron railings was formulated for metal, but at this point it appears that one type of paint is being used to coat both the stairs and the balustrades.

Lower Stairs

The paint noted on the brownstone curbing on the lower set of stairs is much less thick and appears to only consist of few coats as opposed to the many layers of the upper stair. From a paint chip extracted on the lower stair, these areas appear to include a white primer coat underneath the current surface; this current color is the same as that of the upper stairs. It is likely that the lower stairs were not painted originally like the upper stairs since they were not deteriorating as quickly. The repair mortar between the stones of the stairs and the curbing

appears to be grey Portland cement (Figure 16); as indicated before, many of the spall repairs in this area appear to be a cement mixture as well, making the paint necessary to disguise the obvious color change. Additionally, a brick or perhaps a piece of very warm-toned sandstone has been inserted as a Dutchman at some point in the curbing at the top of the lower stairs on the left facing the house. A brown patching material with larger aggregate is noted on the tread of the second stair on the lower stairs; this is likely a previous, more appropriate spall repair as it does match more closely the color of the stone, though it does not exactly match the texture of the rest of the very fine brownstone around it (Figure 21).

Doors

The wooden elements of the doorway are displaying symptoms of finishes failure on both sides, especially where water gathers on the ledges (Figure 22). From gentle probing, it does appear that most of the extant wood is sound, the paint however is peeling off-rapidly and the wood could suffer further damage and deteriorate soon if not protected.

The bronze door hinges appear to be suffering from copper corrosion due to water exposure as well. This is most notable on the lower and middle hinges where there is less coverage for wind-driven rain. The upper hinges do not appear to be deteriorating as rapidly, likely from the protection of the large overhang of the decorative cornice above the doorway. Green staining from copper corrosion runoff was noted on the visible areas of concrete parging on the landing underneath the paint, showing there was extensive corrosion of the hinges in the past (Figure 22).

Notable Observations

It is notable that the houses at 1316 and 1318 (MAMC) Vermont Avenue are twins and so share many of the same architectural features including the exterior pathway and stairs as well as similar deterioration mechanisms. 1316 also appears to have water and erosion issues of its brownstone elements in the same area as MAMC, though perhaps slightly less aggravated. It is through study of 1316, that architectural details that have been changed or have gone missing were discerned. The first of these differences is the lack of masonry veneer on either side of the upper staircase. The masonry veneer that was noted on 1316 is no longer extant on both the north and south sides of the MAMC staircase and evidence of old mortar was noted on the faces of the those support stones inset 1-2” below the tread profile (Figures 23-25). It is notable that the veneer noted on the north side of 1316’s staircase appears to be starting to pop off as well, so it is likely that the veneer at MAMC was entirely removed at some point when a few panels were lost.

Additionally, the concrete borders of the path at 1316 notably have a polished small aggregate finish while those of MAMC are quite fine. Upon further inspection, it was noted that the concrete of MAMC had been skim-coated (likely more than once in areas due to the stratification noted in areas of spalling), covering the detail of the original concrete (Figures 26-27).

Finally, the color chosen to coat the brownstone and cast-iron elements of the staircases on each rowhouse were notably different. The color used on 1316 is a light warm brown color; while not a perfect color match to the underlying brownstone, it is a more appropriate tint to that of the stone. The color used on MAMC, however, is a cool-toned light to medium gray (Figure 28). Upon further inspection of the rowhouse just north of MAMC, 1320 Vermont Ave., it was noted that the paint color matched an element of this property exactly. This was especially

apparent where the two houses meet – though the two pieces of stone trim do not meet up exactly, the color of paint on the stone trim of MAMC unmistakably matched the natural, unpainted bluestone trim of 1320 (Figures 1 and 29-30). Additionally, the trim of the windows and doors appear to have been painted the same light gray color in the recent past before the current color scheme of cream trim. Flaking paint on the second level of the windows shows the gray tone as well as flaking paint at the bottom right corner of the doorway (Figures 31). Flaking paint on the brownstone elements appears to show layers of the light brown noted next door. From inspections, it appears that at least five coats of paint have been applied to the surface of the upper stair masonry; this includes what appears to be at least one layer of a white primer about three layers down. The lowest layer of paint appears to be the same brown color to match the extant stone and that of 1316. Unfortunately, this color choice for MAMC has changed the color palette of the house. While the trim has been addressed, the paint used on the brownstone should be more consistent with its twin 1316.

Conclusions and Next Steps:

To briefly summarize the conditions discussed above, issues noted on the exterior stairs and pathway of the Mary McLeod Bethune House include general water shedding and drainage issues; extensive damage to brownstone elements from water issues and salting, especially on the upper stair; inappropriate material repairs using cement patches and skim coating on both stairs and pathway curbing; salt buildup on the brick support structure; rusting of cast iron elements; inappropriate paint type as well as surface preparation and application; inappropriate paint color choice; and subsequent paint failure on metal, brownstone, and on wood elements.

Ideally all of the components of the path including both staircases and the entry pavement and landing would be rehabilitated at the same time. The ideal treatment plan for the staircases would include first fixing the water runoff issues and then removing all of the extant paint and cement skim coats and patches. The brownstone landing stone element should be assessed by an engineer for structural stability due to material loss around the intersection with the house, especially at the left side underneath the doorway. This stone should be retained and repaired if at all possible. All brownstone elements should be consolidated, and repairs made with a more appropriate masonry patching material. All mortar joints should be repointed with a more appropriate mortar or sealant where needed. The stones should then be regularly treated with a consolidant to prevent further erosion or patching loss. The cast iron balustrade should be stripped of paint, metal structure inspected for extensive deterioration and treated where needed, rust removed, and repainted with a metal-appropriate enamel paint. Further detail on this summary of treatment and maintenance recommendations below:

- Address water issues with attention focused on making sure water does not shed down the façade of the building and collect on the landing, stairways, and in the basement well.
- Arrest the deterioration of the extant brownstone:
    - Carefully remove all paint from stone surfaces, taking care to not damage the friable stone with high pressure water or aggressive scrubbing.
    - Engage masonry/conservation company to assess the integrity of the brownstone, especially the upper stair landing.
    - Further investigate extent of concrete patching underneath paint. Remove incompatible patches where possible without causing major damage to the stone. The cement hardness is much higher than that of the brown stone so aggressive removal will likely cause great damage to the brownstone surface.

    - Install new, appropriate patching material where needed. To return the stone surfaces to a less worn appearance, repair mortars could be used to complete fills in larger areas of loss. These repairs should only be completed by a conservation company and/or masons that are certified in historic preservation work. Note that for these types of fills with mortar, areas would likely have to be cut back to key in the repair mortars.
    - Potentially add a drip edge below the landing to help control water.
    - Treat existing fabric with a consolidant to help prevent further loss of the stone material. Continuing maintenance to make sure the stone is protected and consolidated as needed.
    - Remove Portland cement mortars from all joints and repoint with appropriate mortar or sealant where appropriate to prevent water infiltration and further stone degradation.
    - Consideration of alternatives for deicing the stairways and path. Heavily salting the staircase is causing spalling and major damage.
    - ** If the Park still wants to maintain a painted surface for the brownstone instead of patching with a color-matched repair mortar, shifting to an appropriate masonry paint like a potassium silicate paint is necessary for the health of the stone. However, it should be noted that these types of paints are permanent. In order to repaint with an appropriate paint, all extant paint from masonry surfaces must be stripped down to the base stone to ensure longevity. Additionally, an appropriate paint color would have to be matched to the brownstone as it appears that the original intention of painting was to imitate the stone color underneath.
- Treatment of cast iron balustrades:
    - Engage a metals conservator to assess and treat the balustrade structure as well as analyze stratigraphy of a paint sample to determine appropriate color.
    - Remove all paint and underlying rust from balustrades. Ideally this would involve stripping and sandblasting in a shop, so they might need to be temporarily removed. A metal conservator/shop may be able to address this onsite with the correct setup.
    - Assess underlying metal for deterioration. It does not appear that extensive rusting has occurred yet on the balustrades, but removal of the paint may reveal unforeseen issues.
    - Metal surfaces should be prepped and painted with an appropriate primer and enamel paint to protect from further rusting.
    - All future maintenance of balustrade should be done with appropriate type of paint.
- Repair areas of rotted wood on the doorframe and address failing finishes. Monitor in the future to prevent further rot. Ideally the wooden elements of the doorway would be finished with a linseed oil-based paint rather than the commonly used latex for wood health.
- Clean bronze door hinges to remove corrosion and wax to prevent further deterioration. Implement regular cold waxing of the hinges to protect the metal from water.
- The more modem side gate that leads down to the basement stairway as well as the gate under the stairway should likely be addressed as well during this project if possible. The rusting of the gate in the basement well especially is causing damage to both the stone and the brick around it. They should be cleaned, paint and rust removed, treated with rust inhibitor, and repainted with appropriate pants.
- As an aside, if money permits, the paint coating the side of the building should be

removed and the original brick surfaces restored. Some bubbling of the paint is noted in areas of suspected water shedding, but otherwise looks fine right now. Long-term effects of the inappropriate paint will probably cause damage to the bricks by holding in moisture and causing spalling and powdering, however.

Associated Figures

Photographs taken by Courtney Magill unless otherwise noted
NCR can share any images with the park upon request.



Figure 1. Overview of 1318 (MAMC) and 1320 Vermont Ave. facing NW; note that the color of the paint of MAMC's stairs has been matched to the trim of 1320.



Figure 2. Exterior path of MAMC, facing down and NE; same materials as found on neighbroing twin 1316 Vermont Ave. - white and black marble tiling, small aggregate concrete surround, and painted brownstone border; note that the concrete at MAMC has been skim coated



Figure 3. Detail of MAMC lower exterior stair and pathway, facing NW; note grey paint flaking off of browstone stairs and some previous repairs and/or parging of horizontal surfaces and at corners.



Figure 4. Overview of MAMC exterior upper stair, facing NW.



Figure 5. Detail of MAMC exterior stairs leading down to basement level, facing E; note bluestone and brick construction with top brownstown stair; some light spalling of bluestone, some previous parging of bricks



Figure 6. Detail of MAMC exterior stair, facing NW; note grey paint flaking off of brownstone stairs and some parging of horizontal surfaces and stair noses.



Figure 7. Detail of MAMC lower exterior stair and pathway, facing NW; note grey paint flaking off of brownstone stairs and some previous repairs and/or parging of horizontal surfaces and at corners.



Figure 8. Detail of MAMC exterior stair, facing N; rusting of balusters and flaking of paint on brownstone.



Figure 9. Detail of MAMC exterior stair; north newel post; facing W; note that failure of finishes has caused rusting of the cast iron element and likely both water infiltration and impacts have deteriorated an area of the nose of the brownstone support.



Figure 10. Detail of MAMC exterior stair, facing N; note cast iron construction of rail and failure of paint system likely due to an impact causing rust of iron underneath.



Figure 11. Detail of MAMC exterior stair under S side, facing NW; note extreme stone material loss at intersection with wall likely due to water flowing down these areas from pooling above.



Figure 12. Detail of MAMC exterior stair under S side, facing NW; note extreme stone material loss at intersection with wall likely due to water flowing down these areas from pooling above; rusting embedded element of security gate as well; loss of much of the stone fabric especially at the intersection with the wall.



Figure 13. Detail of MAMC exterior stair underneath top landing, facing N; note extreme spalling and sugaring of brownstone due to water drip.

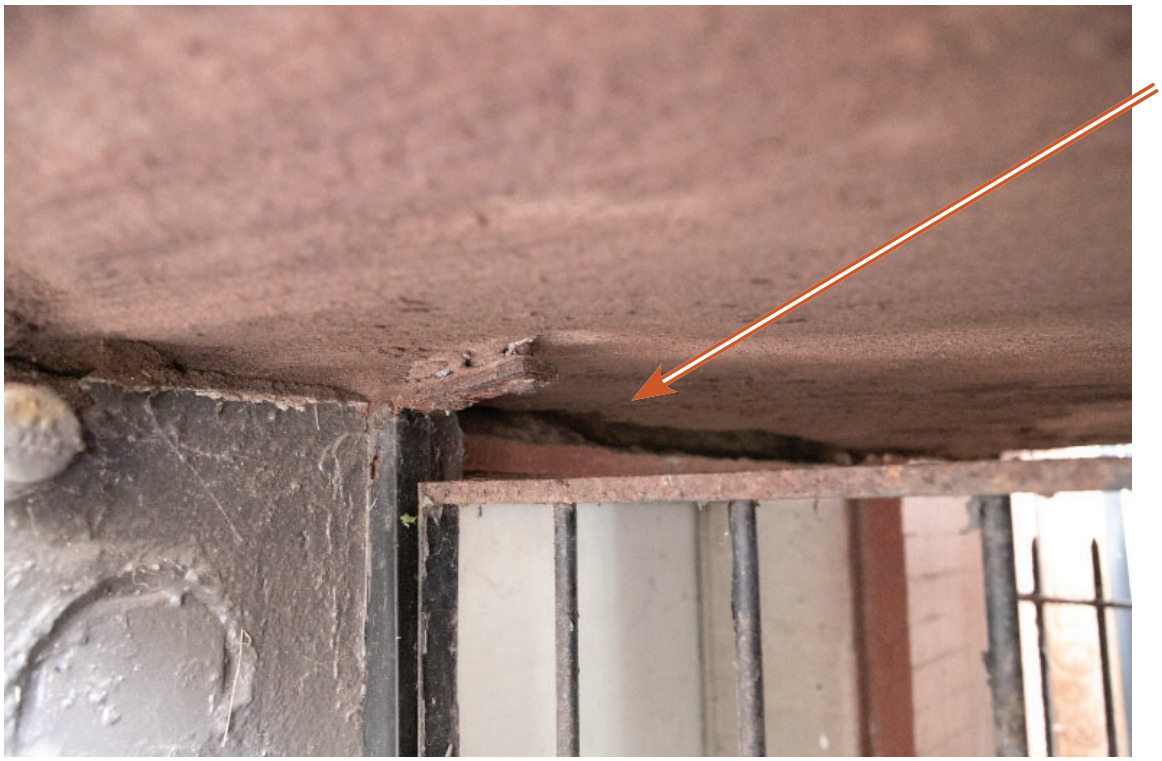


Figure 14. Detail of MAMC exterior stair underneath top landing above basement door, facing NW; note extreme spalling and sugaring of brownstone due to water drip and rusting of embedded gate; powdered stone noted sitting on sill above basement door.



Figure 15. Detail of MAMC exterior stair, facing NW; note grey paint flaking off of brownstone stairs and some previous repair and/or parging of horizontal surfaces and at stair nosing.



Figure 16. Detail of MAMC lower exterior stair facing W; note inappropriate grey portland cement pointing repairs failing as well as grey paint flaking off of browstone stair.



Figure 17. Detail of MAMC exterior stair at basement entry, facing NE; note extreme spalling and sugaring of brownstone above due to water penetration as well as large amount of salts on surface of brick support structure below.



Figure 18. Detail of MAMC exterior stair north newel post, facing NE; note cast iron construction of balustrade and mulitople layers of paint with rust staining in a few areas where water drips and finishes failure is occurring.



Figure 19. Detail of MAMC exterior stair, facing SW; note cast iron construction and multiple tick layers of paint.



Figure 20. Detail of MAMC exterior stair, facing N; note cast iron construction of balustrade and uneven layering of paint from improper preparation between coats.



Figure 21. Detail of MAMC lower exterior stair facing NW; note grey paint flaking off of browstone stairs showing a possible previous patch area with a larger grained texture.



Figure 22. Detail of MAMC exterior stair; facing N; note failing finishes on wood door frame base and concrete parging on top of landing revealed under failing paint. The parging also has green oxidation staining from the oxidizing bronze hinges of the door just above..



Figure 23. Detail of MAMC exterior stair south side, facing NE; note potential loss of stone veneer along side of staircase both here and on the north side of the staircase as compared to stair of neighboring 1316 - grey matter is likely leftover mortar; spalling of remaining brownstone surface.



Figure 24. Detail of north side of MAMC stair, facing W from basement entrance to 1320; note potential loss of stone veneer along side of staircase both here and on the south side of the staircase as compared to stair of neighboring 1316 - grey matter is likely leftover mortar; spalling of remaining brownstone surface.



Figure 25. Exterior Stair and path of neighboring rowhouse twin 1316 Vermont Ave.; note brown paint color chosen to imitate brownstone underneath; also note that side of staircase has 1-2” stone veneer present that is missing on both sides of MAMC stair - they likely would have matched. The veneer here is notably pulling away in areas here as well.



Figure 26. Exterior Stair and path of neighboring rowhouse twin 1316 Vermont Ave., facing down and SE; path materials match that of MAMC. The concrete border of the path shows a small aggregate finish that has been parged over on the path at MAMC.



Figure 27. Detail of exterior path of MAMC; white and black marble tiling, medium aggregate concrete surround, and painted brownstone border; note that the concrete at MAMC has been skim coated multiple times, concealing the small aggregate finish and it is cracking in areas.



Figure 28. Comparison of the color of finishes between 1316 (left) and MAMC (right).



Figure 29. Detail of MAMC exterior stair north side intersection with facade, facing NW; note stone trim matches the natural grey stone of 1320 Vermont Ave next door so it is likely this staircase was incorrectly color matched to the grey bluestone next door instead of brownstone.



Figure 30. Detail of MAMC trim at intersection with 1316 Vermont Ave, facing W; note stone trim paint color does not match that of it's twin next door which is more of a brown color to imitate the brownstone. It is likely that the trim of MAMC was painted to match the grey bluestone next door at 1320 instead of brownstone.



Figure 31. Detail of second level trim on MAMC; note the paint flaking at the right shows a similar grey to that of the stairs and previous door trim color.



Urban Heritage Project
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