HUNTLEY MEADOWS PARK
AND THE HUNTLEY VILLA
FAIRFAX COUNTY
LEARNING CENTER
ADAPTIVE REUSE
AND RENOVATION
FAIRFAX COUNTY LEARNING CENTER
ADAPTIVE REUSE AND PRESERVATION
HUNTLEY MEADOWS VILLA
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

RICHARD C. LUCENTE

THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
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FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

SUSAN PIEDMONT-PALLADINO

JAAN HOLT

MARCO FRASCARI

RON KAGAWA

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WASHINGTON ALEXANDRIA ARCHITECTURE CONSORTIUM
‘IMAGINATION IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN KNOWLEDGE’
Albert Einstein
IN DOING RESEARCH FOR THE DOCUMENTATION OF THE HUNTLEY MEADOWS PLANTATION FOR PUBLIC RECORD AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS AND ASSESSING A POSSIBLE USE FOR THIS SITE FOR THE FRIENDS OF HUNTLEY, I SAW A HUMBLE LITTLE PIECE OF VIRGINIAN HISTORY DECAYING AND BEING SWEPT AWAY BY SPRAWLING DEVELOPMENT. SUFFICIENT RESEARCH OF HISTORICAL AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE IS IMPORTANT TO DETERMINE WHETHER IT HAS CULTURAL OR ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE. THIS THESIS DOES NOT PROVIDE A SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM OF PRESERVING ARCHITECTURE. IT IS A CASE STUDY FOR PRESERVING AND REACTIVATING HUNTLEY MEADOWS PLANTATION AND HUNTLEY MEADOWS PARK THROUGH ADAPTIVE REUSE AND RENOVATION.
THE HUNTLEY MEADOWS VILLA IS A LANDMARK IN THE MIDST OF RUNAWAY DEVELOPMENT. THE INTENTION HERE IS TO PRESERVE ONE PIECE OF ARCHITECTURE THAT REMINDS US OF A GENERATION AND A MOMENT IN AMERICAN AND VIRGINIAN HISTORY. THIS IS AN AERIAL VIEW OF THE HUNTLEY MEADOWS VILLA (DARK AREA TO THE RIGHT) AND SURROUNDING URBAN SPRAWL. HUNTLEY MEADOWS PARK IS TO THE RIGHT OF THE PHOTOGRAPH (NORTH).
‘TO LOOK BACKWARD FOR A WHILE IS TO REFRESH THE EYE TO
RESTORE IT, AND TO RENDER IT MORE FIT FOR ITS PRIME FUNC-
TION OF LOOKING FOWARD’
Margaret Fairless Barber
VIEW OF THE SITE FACING EAST TOWARDS THE HUNTLEY VILLA WITH THE PRIVY ON THE LEFT, ICEHOUSE LOCATED IN THE MIDDLE AND THE MAIN HOUSE TO THE RIGHT. THIS VIEW IS FROM WHERE THE FARMLAND USED TO BE. THE PORCH SEEN IN THE PHOTOGRAPH IS ORIENTED TO CAPTURE THE VIRGINIA LANDSCAPE. THE APPROACH TO THE SITE WAS FROM THE REAR (NORTH) SIDE AND WAS THE ROUTE TO ALEXANDRIA, APPROXIMATELY 6 MILES AWAY.

HUNTLEY VILLA - CIRCA 1940
Huntley was built on a hill overlooking the Hybla Valley and Potomac River adjacent to the Mount Vernon property and was run as a highly productive farm. The complex included a spring house, tenant house, ice house root cellar and a four person privy. The architectural style was of the early federal period originally designed in the shape of an "H" with a central mass rising to three stories on the south and two on the north. The architectural design and detail are attributed to the style of several prominent architects of the time. The actual architect has not yet been identified but it is suggested that it may be Latrobe, an architect who is known for many historically significant buildings.

More information on the park and the history can be found at http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/parks/huntley.htm
THE HUNTLEY VILLA IS AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF EARLY NINETEENTH ARCHITECTURE, IT IS AN ADAPTATION FROM THE PAST AND WAS A RESPONSE TO “MODERN” IDEAS AND LIFESTYLES AT THE TIME. IT REFLECTS AN EVOLUTION IN AMERICAN CULTURE: A MARRIAGE BETWEEN DESIGN, LOCAL MEANS AND METHODS OF CONSTRUCTION AND AVAILABLE MATERIALS. THE INTENTION IS TO RESTORE THE MAIN HOUSE AND THE DEPENDENCES TO THEIR ORIGINAL STATE AND TO DESIGN AND PLACE THE LEARNING CENTER ADDITION IN SUCH A WAY AS TO NOT INTERFERE OR OVERPOWER THE INTEGRITY OF THE HUMBLE, YET ELEGANT DESIGN OF THIS PLACE.
ALL DOCUMENTATION WAS DRAFTED AT 1/4" = 1'-0".
THE FOLLOWING IMAGES ARE REDUCED.
The Huntley Estate includes the main house which sits atop terraced slopes and views the rich Virginia landscape. It used to be part of a 2000 acre site of which only 2-3/4 acres now remains. The architectural style is considered late Georgian, early Federal period which was considered an innovative and independent style of the time. The main building is in the shape of a 'H' with a central three storey mass in the center and two adjacent wings both one storey containing two rooms each. Due to the sloped site a basement was created so that symmetry could be maintained both in the front and in the rear. The site was designed as a whole not only in the design of the main building but in the placement of the dependencies and the elaborate terracing of the landscape which they all rest on. History suggests that this was not only a self sufficient plantation but a place for entertaining.
THIS UNIQUE STRUCTURE SHOWS A SKILL IN DESIGN AND CRAFTSMANSHIP. IT IS COMPLETELY UNDERGROUND WITH A STONE OPENING AT GROUND LEVEL WHICH ALLOWS ACCESS TO THE TOP OF THE DOME. A ENTRANCE 12 FEET BELOW THE DOME CAN BE REACHED THROUGH THE STORAGE AREA. THE BASE OF THE DOME IS APPROXIMATELY FIFTEEN FEET IN DIAMETER.
‘CREATIVITY OFTEN CONSISTS OF MERELY TURNING UP WHAT IS ALREADY THERE. DID YOU KNOW THAT RIGHT AND LEFT SHOES WERE THOUGHT UP ONLY A LITTLE MORE THAN A CENTURY AGO?’

Bernice Fitz-Gibbon
"ARCHITECTURE IS THE BEAUTIFUL GAME OF SPACE. HE IS ORIGINAL WHO COMES, IN THE MOST NATURAL WAY, TO THE AMAZINGLY SIMPLE SOLUTIONS, WHICH LEAD TO UNLOOKED-FOR NEW FORMS. IN THIS WAY, BUILDING CAN BECOME A REFLECTION OF THE 'PRACTICAL.'

Dudok

"IT WOULD BE DEADLY IF WE NARROWED OUR SIGHTS TO THE POINT WHERE WE ONLY HAD ONE KIND OF ARCHITECTURE, ONE SOLUTION, ONE KIND OF MATERIAL, FOR OUR TOTAL ENVIRONMENT, MONOTONOUS AND BORING."

Yamasaki
THESE BUILDINGS INFLUENCED THE WAY I DEVELOPED THIS PROJECT AS I BECAME MORE INVOLVED IN ARRIVING TO THE BEST POSSIBLE SOLUTION. TO ME THEY REPRESENT A UNIQUE AND TIMELESS SOLUTION TO GEOGRAPHICAL, ARCHITECTURAL, CULTURAL AND PROGRAMATIC PARAMETERS.

‘ARCHITECTURE IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR LIFE, A THING DYNAMIC, NOT STATIC. IT LIVES, IT CHANGES, IT EXPRESSES THE INTANGIBLE THROUGH THE TANGIBLE. IT BRINGS INERT MATERIALS TO LIFE BY RELATING THEM TO THE HUMAN BEING’

Walter Gropius

PYRAMIDE DU LOUVRE- PARIS - I.M. Pei

KENTUKNOB-PENNSYLVANIA

Frank Lloyd Wright

FOUNDATION CARTIER BUILDING - PARIS

Jean Nouvel
‘THE SPACE OF THE BUILDING PRESERVED, ENLARGED, EXPANDED, PRESENTED MAKES AN ENTIRELY NEW ARCHITECTURE’

Frank Lloyd Wright
PROCESSION TO THE PARK

PROCESSION TO THE HUNTLEY VILLA

BETWEEN NATURE AND ARCHITECTURE

HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURE GENERATES THE IDEA AND THUS THE FORM

HUNTLEY MEADOWS PARK

VISITOR CENTER

HUNTLEY SITE

SITE PLAN- ORIGINAL SCALE: 1:200
THE WALL IS TIMELESS AND SCULPTURAL. IT SYMBOLIZES A SOCIAL CENTER AND IS A PROTECTOR. THE WALL REFLECTS LIGHT AND MARKS THE PASSAGE OF TIME.
SECTION THROUGH THE EXHIBITION SPACE AND THE AUDITORIUM - ORIGINAL SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"
The Visitor Center marks the site and creates a visual connection to the park.

The Visitor Center is where one gets oriented to the site and is informed about the activities and attractions of the Huntley Villa, the park, and any exhibit or classes that are being held. The mass and location help to mark and make a presence from the street which connects to the park.
"THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION, BETWEEN CRAFT AND INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION, AND BETWEEN THE BUILDING AND ITS ENVIRONMENT INEVITABLY INVOLVES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATION AND PRACTICE."

Susan Piedmont-Palladino
PATHWAY FROM THE HUNTELEY VILLA TO THE SOUTH GALLERY ENTRANCE
'THE STUDY OF ARCHITECTURE, AS IN OTHER DISCIPLINES, SHOULD LEGITIMATELY INVOLVE THE STUDY OF ITS PAST, OF PRIOR EXPERIENCES, OF ENDEAVORS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM WHICH MUCH CAN BE LEARNED AND EMULATED.'

Walter Gropius

ARCHITECTURE NOT ONLY SYMBOLIZES, IT IS KINETIC AND DYNAMIC, AN EVER EVOLVING COMPONENT OF CIVILIZATION THAT WE INHERIT. THIS THESIS IS THE STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF HISTORICAL DESIGN TO CONTEMPORARY DESIGN, CULTURAL NEEDS AND EXPRESSIONS TRANSFORMING THE OLD INTO NEW. IT IS MY RE-INTERPRETATION OF CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS AS A MEANS TO GENERATE A BUILDING FORM WHICH WILL ACCENTUATE AND ACTIVATE HUNTLEY VILLA. THE CENTER EXPRESSES THE HISTORY, GROWTH ADAPTATION AND EVOLUTION OF THIS UNIQUE PLACE. THERE IS NO ONE CERTAIN SOLUTION FOR ADDRESSING THE ISSUES OF HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE, WHETHER CERTAIN BUILDINGS OR SITES SHOULD BE PRESERVED AS A MONUMENT OR PRESERVED AS A PERIOD PIECE OR TO REACTIVATE IT AS AN ADAPTIVE REUSE PROJECT. HERE THE SOLUTION IS TO REACTIVATE IT AND CHANGE ITS PREVIOUS USE AS A PLANTATION AND SUMMER VILLA TO A HISTORIC LANDMARK AND LEARNING CENTER. A WALKWAY LINK TO THE PARK CONNECTS TO THE ALREADY EXISTING PROGRAM AT HUNTLEY MEADOWS PARK. THE PARK PROVIDES PRESERVED LAND AND WILDLIFE EDUCATING VISITORS ABOUT THE LOCAL NATURE AND WILDLIFE. THE LEARNING CENTER IS A LANDMARK ITSELF THAT SPEAKS OF THE PAST AND THE PRESENT AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE FUTURE.

‘ARCHITECTURE IS THE CO-EXISTENCE BETWEEN MAN AND MATERIAL, LIGHT AND SPACE’ Walter Gropius

‘WHAT IS ARCHITECTURE? THE CRYSTALLINE EXPRESSION OF MAN’S NOBLEST THOUGHTS, HIS ARDOUR, HIS HUMANITY, HIS FAITH, HIS RELIGION! THAT IT ONCE WAS! BUT WHO OF THOSE LIVING AT THIS TIME, DOES STILL UNDERSTAND THE ALL EMBRACING AND CHEERING NATURE OF ARCHITECTURE ... THE GREY, EMPTY, OBTUSE STUPIDITIES IN WHICH WE LIVE AND WORK WILL BEAR HUMILIATING TESTIMONY TO THE SPIRITUAL ABYSS INTO WHICH OUR OUR GENERATION HAS SLID ... IDEAS PERISH AS SOON AS THEY ARE COMPROMISED. TO HAVE THE GIFT OF IMAGINATION IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ALL TECHNOLOGY, WHICH ALWAYS ADAPTS ITSELF TO MAN’S CREATIVE WILL.’

Walter Gropius
I want to thank Virginia Tech and the faculty at the Washington Alexandria Architecture Consortium for their support, inspiration and insight. I am grateful for all who have nurtured me in my growth as an architect and as an individual over the years. I am fortunate to be part of a family and an institution that has such a passion for architecture and education.

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VITA

RICHARD C LUCENTE
JULY 14 1964

MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE
VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON-ALEXANDRIA ARCHITECTURE CONSORTIUM
1998
GRANT RESEARCH-VIRGINIA TECH-FUNDED BY FRIENDS OF HUNTLEY
1998

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN ARCHITECTURAL STUDIES
FLORIDA AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL UNIVERSITY
1994

ASSOCIATES IN ARTS - PRE ARCHITECTURE
PALM BEACH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
1991

STUDY ABROAD
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
PARIS, FRANCE
1997

CORFINIO COLLEGE
POPOLI, ITALY
1988
MOST OF THE INFORMATION AND HISTORY OF THE HUNTLEY SITE WAS OBTAINED FROM THE FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY ARCHIVES.

UNLESS NOTED ALL DRAWINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS WERE CREATED AND TAKEN BY THE AUTHOR

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COVER AERIAL PHOTO - FAIRFAX COUNTY MAP DEPARTMENT

PAGE 1 AERIAL PHOTO - FAIRFAX COUNTY MAP DEPARTMENT

PAGE 2 RENDERING OF THE PANTHERON DOME PHOTO COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

PAGE 3 HUNTLEY MEADOWS VILLA CIRCA 1940 FAIRFAX COUNTY ARCHIVES

PAGE 4 IMAGE FROM THE FAIRFAX COUNTY GIS SATELLITE MAPPING DEPARTMENT

PAGE 6 MANIPULATED PHOTO FROM FRIENDS OF HUNTLEY COLLECTION

PAGE 9 PHOTOS BY EDMUND BARRETT. FAIRFAX COUNTY LIBRARY ARCHIVES.

PAGE 15 COLOSSEUM PHOTO BY J.C. BASTIAS, CARRÉ D' ART PHOTOS BY JAMES MORRIS. MANIPULATED CENTER PHOTO BY TADAO ANDO