A Viewshed Protection Plan for Cultural Resources at Stagville
Durham, NC

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Introduction

My first knowledge of Stagville came in 2002, as the result of conversation with David Southern. David is a driven researcher of North Carolina history, and takes a particular interest in the Cameron family because of its ties to Durham County. He is fascinated also by the Trading Path, a Native American route that crosses from Virginia through North Carolina to points south and west. My interest in architectural history prompted an ongoing exchange between us about the place. When David asked if I would be interested in serving on the Historic Stagville Foundation’s Board of Directors, I readily agreed. As my involvement progressed, I quickly realized that the many cultural resources at Stagville are remarkably varied, covering a long time line from prehistory to the present day.

This spectrum of resources is part of what makes Stagville a site worthy of study, understanding and preservation. Fragments of the Trading Path traverse the site as well as documented pre-historical archaeological sites scattered throughout the area. The Horton House represents the pre-Revolutionary life of North Carolina. A range of later buildings tell the story of the complicated relationships of plantation life, most notably a street of slave houses, while the Bennehan House has long been considered the primary asset to the place. Built in 1851, Horton Grove was continuously inhabited by African-Americans until only 40 years ago. That use represents an exceptionally long expanse of African-American, agrarian cultural history, from slavery to tenant farming. The site includes over 70 acres, almost all of which is undeveloped, a rare expanse of stable fields and woods in the pressured development environment of the Triangle area. The primacy of interpretation of plantation life is still strong, but waning as the site’s many vestiges of history draw support and interest from individuals with a variety of interests. While the spectrum of resources present at Stagville is remarkable, the most unique feature of the site is the breadth of African-American cultural history embodied in the buildings at Horton Grove. The houses at Horton Grove are the only original quarters open to the public in the United States, and they represent Stagville’s connection to the earliest African-American experience in southern plantation life. Inhabited well into the twentieth century, Horton Grove represents the shifts and transitions of African-American life in the southern United States after the Civil War through the days of the Civil Rights Movement. While the buildings at Horton Grove do not necessarily represent happy memories to cherish, they make valuable contribution to the understanding of the experience, the history, and the culture of African-American people from enslavement to freedom.
The past five years have been ones of transition for the site. Stagville is State of North Carolina property, and as such, its management and care has shifted among various agencies of the Department of Cultural Resources. Since 2001 (Wise), Stagville has been designated as one of North Carolina’s State Historic Sites. While the place has been State property for 30 years, it has only been subject to interpretation for public visits in the past few years. Turmoil between staff of the non-profit foundation that aims to support the site and state staff at the site was followed by personnel changes in both organizations that put the site on steady, if new footing. Jennifer Farley arrived as the site manager, May 2003 (Wise), and her energy and enthusiasm have gone a long way to expanding the site’s audience.

This document comes at the introduction of new neighbors to Stagville. In 2003 (Book 3852), Arlen Park, LLC bought land that surrounds two small, outlying parcels of State property. These parcels are the sites of Horton Grove and the Great Barn. While the State owns the land that these resources sit on, the parcels are so small that they afford little lasting stability for the structures. While these resources currently exist in a relatively timeless context of forest edged fields, expected development could well compromise their integrity. Now is the time to settle the surroundings of these resources more thoughtfully. Northern Durham County has taken a slow road to development, but it is surely coming as growth in the Triangle continues at a ferocious pace. Establishing a stable, lasting, and sympathetic context for Horton Grove and the Great Barn is necessary and achievable. This report steps through some of the most essential information for that purpose:

- Summary of site history
- Recording physical attributes of the site, including cultural resources
- Identifying relevant real property tools
- Considering the stake holders, their interests, and other relevant facts of the matter
- Synthesizing all of this information to generate an action plan

Realizing that the Department of Cultural Resources moves slowly on all matters, if at all, the Historic Stagville Foundation has taken up this effort. To that end, the Foundation has organized a Land Stewardship Committee. Willing volunteers with applicable expertise seem hard to come by in the non-profit realm, so Stagville is lucky in its advocates. My collaborators are a small committee led by Rich Shaw, Orange County Land Resource Conservation Manager and including: John
Compton, Executive Director Historic Preservation Society of Durham; Jane Korest, Durham Open Space and Real Estate Manager; and David Southern, Historian. This committee’s first piece of work has been to take stock of what Stagville already has, and what resources are present in the immediate vicinity of the site. Having completed this inventory, the committee agrees that the site would be best served by the development of a comprehensive master plan that charts interpretation and development. The committee also concurs that the moment is ripe for stabilization at Horton Grove and the Great Barn, and that this task takes precedence over the master plan.
**Viewshed: definition and application**

Viewshed is generally defined as all points visible from a single site (Wikipedia). The most personal viewshed that we all know is the first glimpse of the new day out a bedroom window. Growing up, my family home was moved from its foundation to a new location. Subsequent visits to the bedroom window of my childhood produced views of the wrong things. Unnervingly, instead of seeing an old Osage Orange Tree and a swing-set, there was a street view that included a three-story office building and a bright morning light that had never shone before in the previously west facing room.

Most Americans are also familiar with a number of public viewsheds, such as the view from Mount Vernon across the Potomac, the many views into the Grand Canyon or Mount Rushmore. In the case of each of these places, society has identified the viewshed as valuable. For example, friends of Mount Vernon collaborated with property owners in Maryland to limit development on the acres across the Potomac River from the house so that the view George Washington cast his eyes over would remain in tact for visitors to the site (mountvernon.org). The Grand Canyon is arguably America’s best-known landscape, and it is easy to agree that it should not be compromised with billboards, buildings and the like. The sights of Yosemite are similarly prized, and in fact were protected by the first American landscape preservation efforts in 1890 (Smardon). These examples capture common themes of wilderness or rural preservation in the current academic conversation of viewshed protection (Stipe).

Viewshed protection also recognizes the value of scenes that are wholly human constructs (Stipe). For example, the National Mall in Washington, D.C. has enjoyed more than one landscape interpretation over the years. Its form today, a grand open space with numerous terminated vistas, is commonly held in the American mind as a great national space. Similarly, Doane Robinson’s undertaking at Mount Rushmore, though incomplete, is indisputably part of the American landscape (moru).

While Stagville is certainly on a different scale than the previously mentioned great American landscapes, it is of more than local significance. Stagville, specifically, Horton Grove, is of regional, even national importance because of its association with African-American experience that spans the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. At Stagville, the sights of the viewshed are not grand, but they
are the setting, a context for the place. Historic resources have an unquestionable relationship to their surroundings and physical context. Like a frame around a picture, a site presents an historic resource to the viewer (Harris). At its most basic, viewshed preservation is simply the academic language for maintaining a semblance of context for the Great Barn and Horton Grove’s resources.

The existing viewshed at Horton Grove is limited, mostly by vegetation. This defined viewshed creates a timeless site for the historic resources present. While the tree lines visible from the place are not historical, they limit the scope of the viewshed, which limits the amount of acreage necessary for control of views. The most basic goal is to maintain the existing viewshed at Horton Grove and the Great Barn. This would preserve a neutral context for the buildings that avoids anachronism. The current juxtaposition of the buildings with field and forest is benign. Introducing playing fields, single-family housing or commercial buildings would shatter the vintage quality of the current experience delivered to visitors.
Figure 1: Horton Grove & the Great Barn today. The structures enjoy a timeless context thanks to open fields and forest edges. 1:3,000.

More ideal would be to restore site lines between Horton Grove, the Great Barn, and the Bennehan House. It is well documented that all three were visible to each other when the plantation was actively in operation. Ultimately, to restore the historic landscape that surrounded Horton Grove, including the orchard, fences, road, and service buildings would offer the best interpretation of the site to the public and enhance the value of the site.
A constructed landscape is the best description of the potential at Horton Grove. This working landscape that included fence-lines, an orchard, service buildings, and vegetable plots could be reconstructed to tell the story of African-American domestic life through the lens of a rural, agrarian, and subsistence landscape (Lounsbury).
Site History

It is certain that there was human activity before European contact in the neighborhood that is now called Stagville; the immediate vicinity of the site includes vestiges of this prehistory, in particular Native American history. Three identified sites “were inhabited in the Archaic (preceramic) cultural period and reflect intensive use for over 4,000 years (PRG, Inc., 6).” Three other archaeological sites are also significant, while not as old. All six sites merit further study. More obvious to the casual visitor are various routes of the Trading Path that crisscross the landscape. In modern terms, the Trading Path is one of America’s earliest interstate highways. This network consisted of stream and river crossings linked together by trails and roads that traversed the Carolinas from Virginia’s Chesapeake Region south to Georgia. Linking Native American villages of the Cherokee, Catawba and others, this corridor later served European settlers as they found their way in America (tradingpath.org).

Figure 3: Moseley’s map of the Trading Path. Approximate Stagville vicinity indicated by red circle.
Some lengths of the Trading Path are still in use, covered over with a think layer of asphalt that affords automobiles a smooth ride through the Triangle. Other segments of the Trading Path have become obsolete, but although they are unused, they are still visible. Many years of traffic over the same path have compacted and compressed the earth to leave the roadbed obvious. These channels are depressed and rutted, and bushes and trees in these paths are sparse and poorly developed. These markers in the landscape are reminders that this area was “on the way” long before Richard Bennehan would build a store here.

The earliest evidence of European influence is the Horton House. This small frame structure represents the experience of early settlers in pre-Revolutionary North Carolina. William Horton, a yeoman and carpenter is the documented resident of this one-room house with a second story loft. Horton settled on 320 acres in the mid-1700’s and stayed here until he sold his house and land to Richard Bennehan (TLC).

Richard Bennehan was a second son, and came to North Carolina to seek a fortune greater than what he could expect to inherit. On arriving in North Carolina, he was a partner in a local store. His partner’s death produced a change in circumstances that made it possible and necessary for him to venture out on his own. On the property that he purchased from Horton, Bennehan built himself a house and in 1790 opened a store to serve travelers on the Trading Path. Bennehan had chosen his site prudently, and so his business grew. In turn, so did his holdings in the area, as well as the size of his house. In 1799 he remodeled, and this endeavor resulted in the house that stands at Stagville today (Anderson). Modest by today’s standard, for the time the Bennehan House’s parlor, outfitted with very fin paneling and heavy woodwork, told all who were entertained there of its owner’s prosperity.

Figure 4: The Bennehan House. Two stories and three bays on the left-side are the 1799 addition to the original 1790 building.

Richard Bennehan and his wife Mary Amis raised their family here. They enjoyed success and a resulting
increase in their land holdings, but their fortune is not superlative among North Carolinians. In 1803, their daughter, Rebecca, marries Duncan Cameron. Cameron is of an even more prosperous family; together the two families’ holdings swell to the largest plantation in the southeast, totaling almost 30,000 acres at its apex (Anderson, hsf.org).

Shortly after marrying, Rebecca and Duncan Cameron move to Fairntosh, built between 1810 and 1823. Sadly, Rebecca’s mother dies while the project is underway, and her father dies shortly after its completion. This leaves Rebecca’s only brother, Thomas Dudley, as the last resident at Stagville. He resides there until his death in 1847, at which time the house passes to his nephew Paul Carrington Cameron (Anderson).

Paul is a capable manager of the family holdings, the bulk of which pass to him. In 1851 he undertakes some construction. He expands the Horton House to its current two-room form. At the same time he builds a “Grove” of houses that take their name from the pre-Revolutionary house nearby. Each house is a center hall, two-story structure with end chimneys. The form yields four rooms in each building, and each is home to a family of enslaved African-Americans. A precious few relics of the first residents here have been uncovered, including a cowry shell and divining rod (Anderson, hsf.org). These same residents of Horton Grove build the Great Barn in 1860. One hundred and thirty five feet long, the barn was the largest agricultural building in the State before the ware, and is still considered exceptionally large (Tour Notes). Subsequently known by the names of the families that inhabit them, the Umstead, Holman, Hart, and Cameron Houses are inhabited by descendants of the first residents long after the Civil War.

Stagville was identified early in the preservation movement in North Carolina as important and worthy of protection. One of the Historic Preservation Society of Durham’s first projects spawns the creation of a volunteer organization, Stagville Associates, which leads the push for preservation of the site. Their efforts result in its listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 and conveyance by Liggett and Myers to the State in 1976. Stagville is subsequently managed as a professional training facility for preservationists until 2000, but is now operated as one of NC’s twenty-seven state historic sites (Wise).
The State has clearly taken a position that the assembled resources at Stagville are worth preserving, if nothing else continued ownership of the property is good evidence. However, North Carolina has tendency to short change all its State Historic Sites, especially during the lean times that have resulted in decreases in the State budget since 1991. The Department of Cultural Resources is rarely spared by State budget cuts, perhaps because it is perceived by the Legislature as a non-essential function or luxury. This ongoing trend has given rise to volunteer, non-profit organizations, such as the Historic Stagville Foundation, at most State Historic Sites. The activities of these organizations vary, but they generally include lobbying and fundraising on behalf of the sites to supplement the few resources that the State allocates (Wise).

Stagville’s initial preservation was undoubtedly based on its significance for association with the Cameron Empire. As such it represents a fragment of the vast land holdings that the family had amassed. The ample acreage that surrounds the Bennehan House identifies it as the favored
resource of the many on the site. The Great Barn and Horton Grove sit on smaller parcels that suggest these structures were not as well understood in the first preservation efforts. The culture of preservation has changed in the intervening years. Historic preservation is no longer the exclusive purview of old southern families or Colonial Dames, and today the movement is striving to protect markers of American culture besides those of planters’ families. Preservation is gaining momentum in efforts to preserve the previously overlooked mining and mill villages of the working class, as well as resources associated explicitly with slavery. Horton Grove is a staggering opportunity to preserve the built environment of African-American experience from the time of slavery to Reconstruction.

Figure 6: The Holman House at Horton Grove.
Survey and Analysis

In many respects, Stagville is a well-documented place. The Cameron Family is notorious for being meticulous in recording business and personal transactions. The Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill holds their papers, totaling over 30,000 items, a remarkable body of primary source material about the place. Jean Bradley Anderson’s writings about the people associated with the place are quite thorough, too. Additionally, Stagville’s resources have been surveyed and mapped a number of times.

Interpreted collectively, along with the many layers that modern Geographic Information Systems allow us to study, these maps begin to illustrate the range of acreage that needs to be controlled to protect the viewshed at Horton Grove and the Great Barn.

Built Environment Inventory

The Great Barn is sited on a parcel of 0.20 acres. The building’s drip line essentially describes its parcel boundary. The Durham County Spatial Data Explorer indicates the length of half of the building as in the highway right of way. At Horton Grove, the situation is not as extreme, but still tenuous. The houses sit on just over 3 acres. While this ell shaped parcel affords over 120’ of road frontage, it does not coincide with the site driveway. These parcels do not give the stability of context that the valuable resources require.

Environmental Inventory

The area around Horton Grove and the Great Barn has an elevation of about 300 feet above sea level. These buildings are sited on the nominally highest places in a large flat area. This same area is not the highest land; in fact a good bit of the immediate area is projected as being in a 100-year flood zone by FEMA. Just north of the Great Barn is a perennial stream; Triangle Land Conservancy holds title to land that buffers it. To the south of Horton Grove is a second stream. Both parcels are in the Falls/Jordan watershed. Soils in the vicinity are characterized as sandy loam or silt loam.
Figure 7: 100 year flood zone as projected by FEMA.
Figure 8: Soils are two kinds of sandy loam, both 2 - 6% slopes.
Archaeological Inventory

There are two archaeological sites that are of interest in the vicinity, but neither has been systematically investigated. Including these sites in the treatment area would be ideal, but the majority of their value could be sustained by careful excavation and removal of artifacts before development of the land.
Figure 10: Identified areas of archaeological interest near Stagville. Prepared by PRG, Inc.
Analysis
The context of the architectural resources of Horton Grove and the Great Barn are threatened by current conditions. Preservation of additional acreage around these buildings would greatly stabilize their context. The environmental resources in the vicinity are not pressing factors for preservation. The Triangle Land Conservancy’s protection of significant acreage around the stream to the north addresses the most ecologically sensitive features. The 100-year flood zone projected by FEMA may make some acreage undesirable for development. The archaeological resources in the area are known, but unexplored. Protecting these sites, at the very least until they can be better understood would be culturally responsible.
Real Property Tools

Successful negotiation requires knowledge beforehand of the players involved and their interests, as well as a clear understanding of acceptable outcomes. Viewshed protection is essentially a negotiation of real property, which requires an additional layer of knowledge. The following paragraphs describe some real property tools that might be employed to achieve viewshed protection, as well as the benefits and liabilities of employing each. A layperson can easily understand the most basic concepts of real property to prepare for negotiation, but for execution of any negotiated agreement it would be wise to consult an attorney with relevant expertise.

Fee Simple Ownership
Historically, fee simple ownership has been North Carolina’s most common strategy for protecting and preserving cultural resources of importance to the State. Property rights are commonly likened to a “bundle of sticks.” Each stick in the bundle represents one of a number of rights. Fee simple ownership rests every stick in the bundle in the hands of the owner; the individual owns the land outright, with all associated rights and responsibilities. This arrangement has advantages. When properly accomplished it is incontrovertible. Fee simple ownership’s most glaring disadvantage is its expense. Buying land can be cost prohibitive, especially in the Triangle where development pressures loom large. Fee simple ownership carries with it not only rights, but responsibilities of stewardship. Additional liabilities for an owner include maintenance, management and insurance. There are a number of organizations that might hold title to land around Stagville. Preservation North Carolina, Triangle Land Conservancy, Durham County, the State of North Carolina, or the Historic Stagville Foundation each are possibilities. All of these organizations are non-profits that enjoy tax-exempt status, so that is one expense spared.

As a resolution to negotiation, a fee simple ownership transaction would be good news for development interests because it would generate income. From a preservation standpoint, it is a challenging strategy. Money must be found to purchase the land, and a recurring management expense is likely incurred as well.

Options
An option is, “the exclusive right, usually obtained for a fee, to buy or sell something within a specified time at a set price (answers.com).” An option is usually established with an eye toward a
fee simple transaction. For example, if fee simple ownership was the outcome of negotiation with development interests, then an option might be negotiated to allow preservation interests to raise capital necessary to complete the purchase.

An option might be employed more creative to establish a relationship between development and preservation interests. For example as a means for Historic Stagville Foundation to prolong the period of negotiation, or buy time to postpone the development of a critical area. An option’s biggest advantage is its relative inexpense – it might be secured for as little consideration as a dollar.

An option’s biggest disadvantage it that it is not a standalone transaction, but rather a step in a larger process. Securing an option is a first step that requires additional actions to resolve the transaction. While binding, an option is not inescapable. If for either party the transaction becomes undesirable the larger process might still unravel.

An option seems like an unlikely solution to problems of uncertainty surrounding Horton Grove. Its employment would ease the demands on preservation interests if a fee-simple transaction was required resolution, as it would allow time to fundraise for purchase of property at market or reduced price.

Easements
Think back on the bundle of sticks analogy that is so commonly used to describe property rights. An easement assigns a stick or two to an interested party other than the fee simple owner. This couple of sticks is an increasingly popular way for conservation and preservation interests to collaborate for mutual benefit with private landowners. This passage from Preservation North Carolina’s website captures the essence of conservation easements:

"The easement is a legal document, which restricts the use of privately owned property. Usually a permanent restriction, it is written in deed form and is filed with the county register of deeds, thereafter running with the title to the land and affecting each succeeding owner just as it does the original grantor. The easement is simply a legal agreement between the property owner and a preservation organization into which the parties enter for the mutual benefits of historic preservation, continued private ownership, and possible tax advantages or other compensation to the owner. The organization takes on the responsibility and legal right to enforce the easement. If a future owner or someone else violates the easement (perhaps by erecting a building the easement does not allow), the organization has the authority to require that the violation be corrected and may resort to legal means if necessary."
Easements are flexible tools. The easement should protect the historic resources on the property but can be custom designed to meet the personal and financial needs of the landowner. Historic preservation easements are intended to protect the architectural and historical integrity of a site by imposing limitations on the types of alterations that may be made. In some cases, the owner may choose only to protect the exterior of the building. A preservation easement may also be designed to protect a building’s interior and important elements of the landscape surrounding a structure, such as outbuildings or associated archaeological remains. The extent of the restrictions placed on the property is decided together by the parties to the agreement.

An arrangement of this kind could be advantageous to preservation and development interests. In this particular case, an easement would likely include affirmative rights allowing North Carolina State Historic Sites to bring scholars and visitors onto the property on a regular basis in the future. Language might go so far as to establish a vegetative buffer and allow replanting of historic landscape features such as gardens and orchards. Such an arrangement would facilitate future research about Stagville and also allow interpretation of the historic landscape to the public. The same agreement would also include a description of prohibited action such as disallowing development in a specified area.

A more non-traditional execution of an easement might be in conjunction with an option. While this is not commonly done, in this situation it would greatly benefit preservation interests. D.R. Bryan has represented to the Historic Stagville Foundation that real property transactions with Triangle Land Conservancy have “maxed out” benefits into the foreseeable future. Further conversation about this situation is merited. Bryan is a common partner in more than one limited liability company, and it is still conceivable that a mutually beneficial transaction might be scripted. Either by managing the necessary transaction through an alternate company associated with Bryan, or by using an option to guarantee the transaction until a time when it can be mutually beneficial to both parties.

Covenant

A covenant is usually implemented by a seller when real property changes hands. This is a way for the grantor to influence the future of the property. This real property tool is not applicable to any of the issues at stake around Horton Grove, but is a tool that preservation interests might rely on in dealing with other neighboring property owners, in particular, Terry Sanford, Jr. Sanford owns considerable acreage adjacent to the Bennehan House tract. Mostly undeveloped acreage is at stake, but Duncan and Rebecca Cameron’s house, Fairntosh is also included in his holdings.
**Donation or Bargain Sale**

Donation of land or an outright gift would be beneficial to preservation and development interests. Such a gift would give fee simple ownership to preservation interests, and would allow development interests the opportunity for a tax deduction. This scenario is likely to generate desirable media attention and would likely bolster public awareness and opinion about the developer involved. Donation of land brings the previously discussed responsibilities of ownership to the beneficiary. For example, the Historic Stagville Foundation is currently ill equipped to manage such a responsibility, and the gift might be subject to better stewardship from the Triangle Land Conservancy or Department of Cultural Resources.

A bargain sale brings the same public relations boon to development interests, as well as a nominal amount of income and a tax deduction. The seller can write off the difference in value and sale of property as a loss. A bargain sale is a good faith gesture on the part of the seller and the buyer, as both parties make a little sacrifice for the transaction.

**Feasibility Research**

In the preservation field, feasibility research is usually undertaken by the seller to demonstrate to potential buyers that the property in question is desirable because it can produce income (Howard). In this scenario, a little bit of feasibility research might demonstrate to development interests that certain acreage has limited potential. For instance, details about floodplain development restrictions and public interest in the nearby historic resources might be tools for persuasion. If the land in question has very limited potential for profit, then cashing in on positive publicity as a cultural steward might be in a developer’s best interest.
Stakeholders and their Interests

Thoughtful preparation for negotiation includes review of stakeholders involved. Stagville’s largest parcel of 70 acres is dwarfed in size by neighboring parcels which generally represent hundreds of acres each. Such large parcels exaggerate neighboring property owners’ interest in what their neighbors are up to. The following paragraphs describe Stagville’s neighbors, and other parties with an interest in happenings at the site:

\textit{Terry Sanford, Jr.}

Terry Sanford, Jr. is the son of former North Carolina Governor and Duke University President, Terry Sanford. Today, he owns an interest in over 700 acres that border Stagville (Spatial Data). About 250 acres are zoned agricultural; another 500 are classified as Vacant Residential/Developer. Sanford has an interest in history, and has a reputation for being a decent friend to preservation. He recently received the Bartlett Durham award from the Historic Preservation Society of Durham for ongoing contributions to local preservation (Chapman). Observers speculate that he has concerns about documenting cultural resources on his property for fear of poachers. They tell a story about a Native American archaeological site on nearby U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land identified during the survey work prior to the construction of the Falls Lake dam. The site was prematurely publicized and subsequently looted. Many artifacts were removed; as a result the site was compromised. Sanford also has an interest in the continued development of Treyburn Corporate Park. Some individuals suggest that his hesitation to publicize resources on his property is to avoid hindrance of development, as well as bad publicity.

\textit{North Carolina Department of Transportation}

The North Carolina Department of Transportation is responsible for the right-of-way along Jock Road. This area overlaps a significant portion of the footprint of the Great Barn. D.R. Bryan has suggested that this agency might consider closing Jock Road to through traffic, if not, State interests may be in conflict between the Department of Transportation and the Department of Cultural Resources.

\textit{D. R. Bryan}

D.R. Bryan is a common partner among several companies that own property adjacent and near to Stagville. Bryan is a self-proclaimed subscriber of New Urbanism. One of his companies, Bryan Properties, Inc., has enjoyed success locally with this development style in Southern Village in Chapel Hill. He has expressed interest in developing a similar project on the land around Horton
Grove. Bryan seems interested in maintaining a name as a "good developer," and as such he is conscious of public perception. Some of Bryan’s other projects in Durham County are described as moving slowly, which in turn has postponed development around Horton Grove. The delay in development at Horton Grove, as well as Bryan’s care for his image play in favor of preservation interests.

Arlenpark, LLC and Wanderlust, LLC
Arlenpark, LLC holds title to the land immediately adjacent to Horton Grove. Wanderlust, LLC holds title parcels in and around the residential neighborhood called Treyburn. These parcels are commonly described as, “the Treyburn build-out.” Arlenpark, LLC has transferred title for almost 600 acres to the Triangle Land Conservancy in the last year, but still owns over 500 acres in the vicinity (TLC). Bryan Properties, Inc.’s Holly Springs address is the common mailing address for both companies. There is still ample room on Arlenpark’s land for a traditional neighborhood development (TND); after all, Southern Village comprises less than 300 acres. The real question is how practical a TND would be in this context, as there are only thin connections to the closest residential and corporate development at Treyburn. To preservation interests, these two limited liability companies are significant because of the potential that they afford in enlarging the pie at the negotiation table. There is potential to benefit more than one set of business partners.

Treyburn corporate neighbors
There are a number of businesses located in Treyburn Corporate Park. Only a few, such as Merck, Cormetech, and EMD Pharmaceuticals own the land that their businesses sit on. The land is generally held by Treyburn Corporate Park, LLC, which leads back to Terry Sanford, Jr.

Treyburn residential neighbors
Residential development at Treyburn can be characterized as large lot, single-family houses. The neighborhood has its own country club and golf course. Most houses have access or views on the golf course, which is widely regarded as one of the best in the
Triangle. These neighbors have concerns typical of most residential property owners, only with substantial assets to influence the situation. There is noticeable interest among neighborhood residents in the cultural resources at Stagville. The Orange Factory Questers are all residents of Treyburn, a local chapter of an international women’s group with the purpose, “to educate by research and study of antiques and to donate funds to the preservation and restoration of artifacts, existing memorials, historic buildings, landmarks, and educational purposes (Questers).” This group has adopted Stagville as its main beneficiary, which has certainly raised awareness about the place among the neighbors. Treyburn residents are concerned about traffic volume and noise in and around the neighborhood that will come with development around Horton Grove. Preserving acreage around this State Historic Site would mean less development, and in turn less traffic to bother these home-owners.

**Triangle Land Conservancy**
The Triangle Land Conservancy (TLC) is the new owner of about 600 acres in the neighborhood. This land is a protective buffer around a sensitive perennial stream, and also surrounds the north end of the State’s property at the Great Barn. TLC is perceived as sympathetic to historic preservation interests. Not partnering with them sooner is regrettable.

**Department of Cultural Resources, State of North Carolina**
The Department of Cultural Resources (DCR) owns 3 discontinuous parcels that comprise Stagville of 65.06, 3.09, and 0.2 acres respectively. Each is the site of some aspect of built environment that is considered historically significant. The most complicating factor with regards to DCR is bureaucracy. Currently, the administration of State Historic Sites is in transition, a new director has been hired since January 2006. DCR will not hinder preservation efforts at Stagville, nor will it be the catalyst.

**Historic Stagville Foundation**
The Historic Stagville Foundation (HSF) was founded in 1975. The foundation is comprised of about 100 members, who are represented by a board of directors that meets every other month. HSF envisions itself as a booster group for the State Historic Site, and was instrumental HSF has limited annual revenue, but does have some capital resulting from grants from the State. HSF is hopeful that the land around Horton Grove and the Great Barn can be secured with minimal expense, so that the bulk of funds in hand can be directed toward stabilizing and interpreting the
Hart House. This building is at Horton Grove, and has the strongest association with sharecropping’s history at Stagville.

Figure 11: The Hart House, built 1851.
**Pertinent Events**

Two particular events that are sure to be useful background information for the negotiation team are charrettes hosted by Durham Area Designers (DAD) in 2003 and 2004. Bryan Properties, Inc. collaborated with DAD to engage the neighborhood in conversation about Horton Grove, which has raised awareness about the historic resources on the site.

*Horton Grove at Treyburn Charette*

Arlenpark, LLC purchased the Horton Grove tract in the spring of 2003. The Horton Grove tract describes about 1,000 acres that encompass Horton Grove and the Great Barn. The development plan on file with the Durham planning department is for predominantly large lot single-family housing clustered around a golf course. Shortly after the property changes hands, Bryan Properties, Inc. collaborates with Durham Area Designers (DAD) to host a design charette at Treyburn Country Club on Saturday, September 6, 2003 (Author 1). Collaboratively, DAD and Bryan Properties, Inc. advertised and organized this event to gather community input about imminent development. Ten or twelve groups of about a half dozen people each come together for the process. Based on objectives presented by DAD, each group produces a sketch land use map/site plan, as well as a few notes about their project. In the broadest terms, DAD is promoting a traditional neighborhood development with a village center surrounded by housing that recedes in density. DAD has collaborated with the Department of City and Regional Planning, so that each group has a quasi-objective planner or designer at the table. The groups are made up of neighbors, as well as community interest representation, and elected officials. Each groups’ efforts are presented briefly at the end of the session, and subsequently DAD uses these materials to generate 3 development scenarios for the area.
Figure 12: One of DAD's development scenarios for Horton Grove.
This event generates a considerable amount of sympathetic publicity for Horton Grove and the upcoming development. Another outcome is a second charrette.

*Cultural Park Charette*

This second charette takes place several months later on Saturday, February 21, 2004 (Author 2). Again, DAD is facilitating at the request of D. R. Bryan. The development plan of record designates about 80 acres surrounding Horton Grove and the Great Barn as a “Cultural Park.” This is not a conventional land use designation, and in all likelihood was a negotiated way of acknowledging the sensitivity of the area without defining the treatment. At the conclusion of the first charette, DAD and D.R. Bryan both recognized that more information needed to be gathered about the cultural resources on and around the Horton Grove tract, as well as a better articulation of a Cultural Park. As a result, this second session is organized to bring together a more focused group of experts to assess what resources are present, as well as contemplate the possibilities of a Cultural Park. Again, small groups collaborate to generate a plan and talking points that are presented to the assembled gathering. Several weeks later, DAD and D.R. Bryan present a more refined plan in phases. This plan calls for restoration of site lines between the Great Barn, Horton Grove, and the Bennehan House, as well as establishing a pedestrian route between Horton Grove and the Bennehan House. The later phases include development of parking, trail, and picnic facilities, as well as introducing the possibility of a museum or educational building at the site along with a sculptural collection of rescued historic buildings.

When development finally commences on the Horton Grove tract, it seems certain that the leading project will not be the Cultural Park. At best, the Cultural Park is an amenity for the project, but more than likely its construction will be a financial loss. That said, while D.R. Bryan is far from making a commitment to actually developing the Cultural Park, the second charette is a noticeable investment in the concept. Even more encouraging to preservation interests, the western edge of the Cultural Park has migrated farther away from the rear facades of the houses at Horton Grove. In fact, the area allowed for the site affords room for a 50’ vegetative buffer, as well as restoration of the landscape documented by Carl Lounsbury.
Figure 13: A detailed drawing of the amenities in the Cultural Park at Horton Grove.
Synthesis and Plan

Based on all of the information considered to this point, additional efforts for preservation of the historic resources at the Great Barn and Horton Grove are necessary, and the circumstances indicate that the likelihood of success is great. As representatives of preservation interests approach the negotiation table, it is important to recognize the range of outcomes that might be acceptable. While certain outcomes might certainly be viewed as better than others, it is most important to keep an eye on the broad objective, and an open mind as to how that might be accomplished.

The most minimal stabilization of context would be to establish 50’ vegetative buffers around the outlying parcels that contain the Great Barn and Horton Grove. This strategy, while not ideal, requires the least land concession from development interests; all told less than 3 acres would be necessary. To preserve all of the natural and cultural resources outlined in this document’s survey would require about 100 acres from 3 parcels owned by Arlenpark, LLC. Forgoing the development of this area is not necessarily an absolute loss for development interests. This scenario leaves ample acreage for the desired New Urban village and relieves the developer of a considerable liability with regards to the cultural resources in the vicinity.

Preservation interests have an additional piece of homework to complete before initiating negotiation. It is essential that HSF and DCR plan for the stewardship of any additional acreage that might come into their possession. To that end, these organizations may find it helpful to talk with TLC and Preservation North Carolina about the responsibilities and expenses of fee-simple ownership or easement administration.

With all of this information in mind, it is time for preservation interests to reach out to D.R. Bryan to begin negotiation. Bryan’s interest in each of the companies that own land in the vicinity make him the most logical point person for negotiation on this matter. The efforts of HSF’s Land Stewardship committee make those individuals best suited to conversation with Bryan, and the balance of the board of directors is well aware of the facts of the situation and supportive of additional preservation efforts at Horton Grove and the Great Barn.
Figure 14: About 100 acres that would preserve archaeological, as well as built environment resources at Horton Grove.

After preservation of the Great Barn and Horton Grove has been addressed, there is still work ahead for responsible stewards of preservation. Today, Terry Sanford, Jr. is a good steward of Fairntosh, but efforts must be made to influence the future of this property when his ownership ends. Those who consider themselves friends of Stagville and historic preservation in Durham County at large should be encouraging Sanford to protect Fairntosh with a preservation easement.

Another, thornier preservation issue lies across the Old Oxford Highway from Stagville and Fairntosh. A little place called Shop Hill that was once part of the Cameron lands includes additional slave houses in the same form, if not condition, as Horton Grove, as well as tobacco curing barns. These buildings have all long been in disrepair. While the land is not for sale, nor is it
likely that these buildings could be successfully relocated, they should at least be documented for posterity.
Summary

The Historic Stagville Foundation is in the midst of drafting a strategic plan for the next 5 years. Land stewardship issues surrounding the Great Barn and Horton Grove are already being discussed in this context, as is the idea of a master plan for all of Stagville. All work done by committee is accomplished slowly, but it is imperative that HSF seize the moment at hand for negotiation with D.R. Bryan. His other projects in the area are moving slowly, which provides a window of opportunity for deliberate conversation that facilitates maximizing the benefit for all parties involved.

The natural and cultural resources at and around Horton Grove and the Great Barn have local, State, even national significance, and as such merit better a better preservation context than they are currently afforded. This improvement of circumstance is not only desirable, but also feasible and should be pursued with optimism and energy.
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